

TAJIKISTAN-PAKISTAN RELATIONS, 1991-2014

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis, "TAJIKISTAN-PAKISTAN RELATIONS, 1991-2014", submitted by me for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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To
My Mother

PREFACE

The geographical proximity, religious and cultural similarities between Central Asia and Pakistan have been prominent in determining the course of their relations. Pakistan has been trying to build friendly relations with the region on the basis of religious and cultural affinities but Central Asian countries did not respond to Pakistan's approaches towards them during the Soviet Union. However, breakup of the former Soviet Union and the emergence of five independent Central Asian Republics in its neighbourhood provided a new opportunity for Pakistan to consolidate its geo-political position in the region.

Tajikistan is the closest of all the Central Asian Republics to the geographical territory of Pakistan simply divided by the Wakhan corridor in Afghanistan. Therefore, Pakistan has been seeing great opportunities of developing cordial relations with Tajikistan since a long time, but Afghanistan has remained a challenge. The time period of this study is set after the disintegration of Soviet Union, from 1991 to 2014 and this study would expound in detail all the developments that took place between Tajikistan and Pakistan in their bilateral economic, political, cultural and security arenas during this period.

Pakistan adopted aggressive religious policies just after its emergence regarding the Central Asian region. In the cold war era Pakistan's inclination towards the West made Soviet Union wary of Pakistan's foreign policy objectives. On the other hand, USSR and India had enjoyed friendly relations since a long time which somehow resulted into Pakistan's desperation for countering India's influence in the region. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan played key role in fight against Soviets by providing material help and training to the Afghan *Mujahideen* which resulted into sour relations not only between USSR and Pakistan but also between Tajikistan and Pakistan. Pakistan's relations with Tajikistan further deteriorated when Pakistan extended its support to the opposition forces in Tajik civil war during the 1990s. Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have also affected Tajik-Pak relations because any negative development between Pakistan and Afghanistan has directly or indirectly affected

Tajikistan-Pakistan relations. For example, Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Pakistan's recognition to this regime affected Tajikistan's relations with Pakistan negatively.

It was after the US led war on terror in 2001 when Tajikistan and Pakistan witnessed normalization of bilateral relations. Since then Pakistan has adjusted its policies to lure Tajikistan for promotion of greater economic and trade relations. Tajikistan is significant for Pakistan as it has high potential of providing cheap hydro-electricity to Pakistan and in return can get access to the Pakistani ports for its exports and imports. In this regard both countries have been working through the support of various regional and international organizations such as Dushanbe Four, SCO, ECO, World Bank, ADB, IMF, and United Nations. Many projects to strengthen trade and economy are going on between them. One of them is CASA-1000 project which aims to provide cheap hydro-electricity to Pakistan and Afghanistan by the Central Asian countries of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. There has also been a slight increase in bilateral trade and diplomatic relations between these countries. Constant decline of peace and stability in Afghanistan has been a factor affecting both Tajikistan and Pakistan.

Regional actors such as Russia, China, India, Iran, Turkey and USA also play important role in determining the relations between Tajikistan-Pakistan. These regional and international players have their own geo-political and geo-economic ambitions in the region which also affect Tajikistan-Pakistan relations. Therefore it is of utmost importance that both these countries keep their objectives in mind and try to build more trust with each other and Pakistan tries to relinquish its double folded policies with Tajikistan to develop more friendly and complimentary relation.

The study has been organised in five chapters. The first chapter discusses the historical, cultural and religious affinities and geophysical setting of Tajikistan and Pakistan which determine the course of their relations.

The second chapter analyses the geopolitical specificity of both countries as they complement each other in various aspects and it also gives an account of the external powers affecting their relations. This chapter discusses the extent of diplomatic ties, high level visits between the two countries.

Third chapter examines the trend and patterns of economic ties including bilateral trade, joint ventures, investment etc. it also analyses the role of regional organizations such as ECO, and Dushanbe Four and international organisations such as ADB, World Bank, IMF, UNDP etc contributing to their economic cooperation.

The fourth chapter dwells upon the cultural and educational cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan. Persian language and literature impacting their relations are discussed in detail. Moreover, in this chapter, some literary figures which are popular in both countries and having their influence over the people of the two regions are mentioned.

The fifth chapter discusses the security threats like religious extremism, cross-border terrorism and drug trafficking that both countries face and measures taken by them to counter these problems. Role of regional organizations such as SCO is also evaluated in this context. This chapter also assesses the constraints and hindrances faced by these countries in order to establish mutual political stability and economic uplifting.

This sixth chapter analyses the impact of this relation on the Central and South Asian regional cooperation as a whole. This chapter also investigates as to what extent this relation is feasible for political and economic development of the region.

The last chapter presents the major findings of this study. It also analyses the implications of growing Tajikistan-Pakistan relations for South Asia and particularly for India.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANA	Afghan National Army
APTTA	Afghan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement
APTTTA	Afghanistan-Pakistan-Tajikistan Trilateral Transit Agreement
ASEAN	Association for South East Asian Nations
CACO	Central Asian Cooperation Organisations
CAEWDP	Central Asia Energy Water Development Programme
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CAREC	Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation
CASA	Central Asia South Asia
CASAREM	Central Asian Regional Electricity Market
CASATTF	Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
DCA	Drug Control Agency
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
EIP	Educational Improvement Programme
EU	European Union
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community

FATA	Federally administered Tribal Region
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDA	International Development Association
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IGC	Inter-Governmental Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IPI	Iran-Pakistan-India
IRP	Islamic Revival Party
IRPT	Islamic Revivalist Party of Tajikistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
ITO	International Trade Organization
JEC	Joint Economic Commission
JMCs	Joint Ministerial Commissions
JBC	Joint Business Council
MCWG	Multi Country Working Groups
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MW	Megawatt
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDN	Northern Distribution Network
NSRS	New Silk Road Strategy
NUML	National University of Modern Languages
NWFP	North Western Frontier Province
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIA	Pakistan International Airlines
PID	Program Information Document
POK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
QTTA	Quadrilateral Agreement on Traffic in Transit
RATS	Regional Anti Terrorist Structure
RCD	Regional Cooperation for Development
RCCI	Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry
RECCA	Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization
SECSCA	Sub-regional Economic Cooperation in South and Central Asia
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SPECA	Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
STAP	Special Technical Assistance Programme

TAPI	Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India
TDAP	Trade Development Authority of Pakistan
TFP	Total Factor Productivity
TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
TUTAP	Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan
UCA	University of Central Asia
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USEA	United States Energy Association
UTO	United Tajik Opposition

CHAPTER-1
INTRODUCTION

The Central Asian Republics (CARs) of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan with almost 60 million population and geographically dispersed over 4 million square kilometres are considered to be one of the most strategically important and geopolitically significant region. The region borders Russia in the north, Afghanistan in the south, China in the east and Caspian Sea to the west and plays very important role in political and economic dealings of the entire Asia. It has abundance of energy resources and a strategic location luring external powers to play their geo-politic in order to create their sphere of influence in these countries. Central Asia's relations with Pakistan are based on a number of factors ranging from geographical proximity, historical linkages, religious affinity and common cultural and traditional traits. During the Soviet period, the cold war between the two major world powers USSR and USA for fulfilling their geo-political and strategic ambitions in this region made its impact on these countries as well. During the Cold War, Pakistan being part of Western block SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization) and CENTO (Central Treaty Organization), was a major challenge to the USSR it being the ideological opponent of West led by America. However this scenario changed after the disintegration of Soviet Union, when Pakistan showed serious interest in building bilateral relations with the newly independent CARs.

Historically, Pakistan and Central Asia had close cultural associations starting with the Timur's conquest of Indian sub-continent and subsequent foundation of Moghul Empire by Babur and it had established socio-cultural and economic relations. The contemporary north western region of Pakistan had closest cultural similarities with Central Asia. To Quote Jawaharlal Nehru who had visited Peshawar before partition, "as soon as I cross Attock Bridge across the Indus River I feel as if I am in Central Asia" (**Khan 2009**). At the time of partition and emergence of Pakistan, it was socio-economically weak and required economic and diplomatic assistance for which it looked straight to the USA since the world was set apart into two blocks identified as Western and Communist led by USA and Russia respectively. At this time in order to contain Russia's geo-political ambitions in Asia, USA wholeheartedly provided economic and defence assistance to Pakistan. In 1979 Russia invaded Afghanistan which gave an opportunity to Pakistan to support Afghan *Mujahideen* in order to fight the Soviet forces. Withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989 followed by disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 was

crucial in providing impetus to the Pakistan's interest in the Central Asia.

During the Soviet period Pakistan could not develop cordial relations with former Soviet CARs because it had no contacts with these Republics. However after the collapse of USSR, Pakistan tried to play its cultural and religious card with them in order to secure strategic depth in Central Asia. Pakistan supported Afghan *Mujahideen* because it required 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan against increasing India's influence since 1980s. India had cordial relations with Afghanistan till the rise of Taliban which propelled Pakistan to not only aspire of getting strategic depth in Afghanistan but also to counter India's influence in the region. However Afghanistan's relationship with Pakistan has never been cordial due to the issue of Pashtunistan and demarcation of border between the two countries. As such Pakistan focused on building close alliances with the militant groups in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s in order to have a friendly and pliant government in Afghanistan (Khan 2009).

After the independence of CARs in 1990s, Pakistan followed a policy of maintaining and strengthening relations with them but this was hampered due to Pakistan's active support to religious extremist and militant groups including the Taliban. After the 9/11 incident and USA's 'war on terror', Gen. Musharraf's military regime in Pakistan reluctantly supported North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) army led by USA in Afghanistan. Ironically, the master mind of 9/11, Osama Bin Laden was provided shelter by Pakistan and later was found and killed by US agencies in Pakistan. Around 2010-11 Pakistani officials and politicians actively engaged themselves in rebuilding ties with Central Asia. In this regard, a number of high level bilateral meetings took place with the Central Asian counter-parts to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties between the two regions.

Pakistan's objective to revive bilateral ties with Central Asia is triggered by its yearning of countering India's growing regional influence, reducing monetary dependence on US aid and more importantly to take care of its growing energy demand and securing markets for its trade and investment. There is severe energy crisis that Pakistan is facing today which is affecting trade, industries and economic growth. For this reason, Pakistan is looking forward to Central Asia to cater its energy needs as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan have oil and gas reserves while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have abundance of

hydroelectricity potential. For Pakistan to access Tajikistan, it needs the cooperation of Afghanistan so as to use Wakhan Corridor as transit route. Tajikistan is separated from Pakistan by 14 kilometre long Wakhan Corridor. And Afghanistan would play crucial role in the shaping of regional cooperation. Tajikistan is a landlocked country wanting exposure for its trade and industries and also technical and monetary assistance to keep up its hydroelectric plants, which could meet the escalating energy demand of Pakistan. Therefore, energy cooperation is a dominating aspect of bilateral relations. Pakistan established diplomatic relations with the Tajikistan in 1992 and during the Civil war in Tajikistan (1992-97) it sheltered Tajik refugees for numerous years.

Cultural Linkages

Cultural relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan were enhanced after Pakistan emerged as a separate Islamic nation from British India in 1947. However, during the British rule in India and even before that, cultural connections between the two regions did exist. During the Mughal rule in the Indian subcontinent, Persian language had become very popular and used to be the official language. It continued to be so till the British rule, so it worked as a tool of cultural cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan after 1947. After independence of Tajikistan study and research on the rich Persian literature and literary figures of India and Pakistan who had worked on both prose and poetry, was intensified. This period can be marked as the introductory phase when scholars from both countries got to know and work on the ideas, literary and scientific works of eminent Persian laureates. There have been several exchanges of visits of scholars for participation in different conferences, seminars and symposiums, along with translation, composition and printing of books, articles, brochures, travelogues and memoirs. Several Tajik writers, poets and intellectuals like Sadriddin Ayni, M Tarsunzadeh, M Mir Shakar, B Ghafurov, A Mirzayov and M Asmi acted as a bridge establishing and amplifying relations of Tajikistan with Pakistan and India and specifically with Pakistan. Islam played very important role in rejuvenating cultural and literary ties between the two countries. Some of these writers wrote excellent literary pieces on natural scenery and on laureates of language and literature as well. An exemplary achievement of this period is opening of a branch of oriental studies and literary heritage in the department of the Academy of

Sciences of Tajikistan by the efforts of A. Mirzayov and with indirect support by B. Ghafurov. In this branch of oriental studies along with research related to Central Asia, it also focused on research in history of scholars of Persian literature of India and Pakistan from 11th to 20th century. It was also engaged in research related to the cultural and literary relations of Tajiks with the people of Indian sub-continent. Additionally,

“Tajik researchers through various eras of the history of literature of Persian speakers of India and Pakistan and their famous and distinguished representatives- Masood Sa’d Salman, Atta Yaqub, Usman Mukhtar, Abul-farj Roni, Mohanimad Oofi, Badar Chachee, Khisro Delhvi, Hassan Delhvi, Zia-e- nakhshabi, Faizia Dakanni, Abdul Fazal Alami, urfi Sherazi, Talib A-Mola, Abdu Talib Kalim, Fani Kashmiri, Ghani Kashmiri. Dara Shukoh, Sayeb Tebrizi, Zaib-un-Nisa Baidil, Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Azad, Mirza Ghalib, Hali, Mohammad Iqbal etc. have composed series of research articles” (Mardanov 2009).

The literary works that have been accomplished in Tajikistan on the scholars of Persian speakers of Indian sub-continent and works on Mohammad Iqbal are significant. It was for the first time in 1958 when renowned Tajik poet Mir Syed Mir Shakar on his return from Pakistan wrote an article on him titled as Mohammad Iqbal which got published in *Sharqe-Surkh* magazine. Thereafter, numerous works of Iqbal were published in various forms which became very popular in Tajikistan. For almost 50 years all research work about Iqbal that was done and got published in Tajikistan led to the development of cultural and linguistic affinities between the two countries. Mirza Ghalib is another writer which is very popular in Tajikistan and in the year 1949 and 1977 centenaries of Ghalib along with Mohammad Iqbal were celebrated in Tajikistan with great zeal. The institute of oriental Studies and literary heritage of Tajikistan celebrated birth anniversary of Iqbal by organizing special academic event every year. In the celebration of literary pinnacle achieved by these writers, a number of publications in the form of articles and booklets related to their life and works used to be published in Tajikistan. In Pakistan, also a number of publications related to the works of some great Tajik poets and thinkers took place and in many educational institutions research related to them was started. Therefore language and literature worked as a traditional bond between these two countries which is

continuing in contemporary times (Mardanov 2009). Tajikistan and Pakistan also share religious and spiritual relations with each other. Sufism used to be one of the important factors in strengthening the cultural connection of these countries.

The promotion of education has been facilitated by Diplomatic Academy of Pakistan, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), and the International Islamic University of Islamabad as well as through some military institutions. Both, Pakistan and Tajikistan, have common ethnic peculiarities such as deep, historical, religious, cultural and other similarities which bring them closer. For example 'Nowruz', the national annual festival of Tajikistan is celebrated in both countries for three days, starting from the 21st of March. An important personality which lays solid grounds for spiritual and bilateral relationships between the two countries is Hazrat Mir Kabir Ali Hamdani (Hazrat Shah-e-Hamdani); one of the greatest saints and spiritual leaders in Islamic history. He preached Islam in the whole subcontinent. His shrine is in the city of Kulyab in the Republic of Tajikistan which is frequented by thousands of followers of Hazrat Shah-e-Hamdani every year. The Government of Tajikistan has built his shrine and has also established a museum and a library in the shrine area. In this way, we can confidently say that the heritage associated with Hazrat Shah-e-Hamdani plays a key role in bringing both the nations closer (Gulshan 2010:34-35).

Pakistan's Futile Afghan Policy

Pakistan has a geo-cultural advantage being the only Muslim neighbour of Central Asia sharing Sunni sect of Islam. Pakistan has always projected itself to the west and also to the Central Asian countries that it is the natural trade and transit route for Central Asian countries by which they can expose themselves to the global markets and reduce their economic dependence upon Russia. The Benazir Bhutto government of Pakistan in 1990s worked really hard to convert this hypothesis into reality as it investigated the mountain passes of its northern frontier to discover the most convenient trade routes. As a result, a major trade route through Herat and Kandahar in Afghanistan to Quetta and then to Gwadar Port in Baluchistan was identified in order to develop the practicable trade link between Central Asia and Pakistan in South Asia. However, without the support of

Afghanistan government development of this trade link was not possible and accordingly, Pakistan government worked on its plans to have an approving and pro-Pakistan regime in Afghanistan. Tajikistan is separated from Pakistan by a strip of Wakhan in Afghanistan and the bilateral trade and transit between Tajikistan and Pakistan depends on political stability in Afghanistan. In 1991 the fall of USSR and worsening of law and order in Afghanistan provided an opportunity for Pakistan to build diplomatic connections with the independent Central Asian Republics. However, the conflict in Afghanistan proved to be a greater handicap in achieving Pakistan's objectives in Central Asia. The situation in Afghanistan was so anarchic that the trade and commerce was heavily affected as *Mujahideen* factions extorted the traders several check point across the country, besides robbing the traders and convoys. Pakistan government supported the *Mujahideen* with an expectation that it will attain the desired strategic depth in Afghanistan. Later Pakistan extended support to Taliban in 1994, hoping that it would help to clear the barriers in order to build a trade route through Afghanistan. A test convoy was organised by the then Pakistani Minister of Interior Nasirullah Babar to check the feasibility of a land trade route between Pakistan and Central Asia via Kandhar and Heart, which was held hostage by a local commander in Afghanistan and was freed by the Taliban. However, Pakistan's hopes of securing strategic favours from Taliban did not materialise when even after Taliban controlling 90 per cent of the Afghanistan territory could not help in developing any land route between Pakistan and Central Asia. At the same time, Pakistan's army and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) were still supporting Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. However, Pakistan government also switched its loyalty to Taliban when Hekmatayar was defeated and Taliban were about to take over Kabul. Pakistan's support to Taliban has often been described as a policy motivated by Islamic zeal but it served many pragmatic purposes such as having a pro-Pakistani Taliban regime which provided it with a certain strategic depth vis-a-vis to India. Taliban government was viewed as fruitful prospect of developing smooth relation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as a pro-Pakistan and stable government in Afghanistan could have helped Pakistan in achieving its objectives in Central Asia. Sadly for Pakistan, this did not happen as Taliban's support to its strategic ambitions remained unsatisfactory. Consequently, Pakistan failed to prevent the Taliban forces from committing cruelty and destructive policies towards women,

minorities and the innocent citizens. As a result it ushered in unwelcome international ostracism, sanctions and isolation. Taliban was providing shelter to the Islamic insurgent organization like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) which scared the Central Asian countries about the spreading Taliban influence and extremism in their own territories. As a result Uzbekistan closed its border with Afghanistan and Tajikistan. However, it continued to provide military and political assistance to the Northern Alliance fighting against the Taliban forces. Tajikistan at the moment was vulnerable to these extremist forces due to the ongoing civil war and it made other Central Asian Republics wary of the potential threat from the Taliban in Afghanistan. The Ferghana Valley was the shelter of terrorists and criminals indulging in drugs trafficking and other illegal activities. Around 1998, Taliban was in control of almost all of Afghanistan. The regional resentment against the Taliban simultaneously echoed against Pakistan. Russian policy makers and media projected Pakistan's agenda in Central Asia as an Islamic agenda which supported Taliban led extremist forces to destabilize this region. This made Central Asian countries doubtful of Pakistan's interest in the region thus making its way into Central Asia difficult. Pakistani business-men and diplomats were not trusted in these Republics (Cornell 2003:8-12).

Pakistan's Afghan policy proved highly counter-productive, instead of making Pakistan a trading hub giving transit route to Central Asian countries. It alienated them from Pakistan and generated mistrust which continued for a long time. In 1980, when the military ruler of Pakistan Gen. Zia-ul Haq with the support of United States used radical political Islam to fight the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, it was perceived to be productive. But at the end, it alienated Pakistan from the CARs. The major factor which affected Pakistan's Afghan policy was issue of Pashtunistan which made it vigilant in extending its support to the Pashtun nationalist groups and expecting them to take care of its strategic interests in the region. 9/11 incident had successfully projected Taliban as source of sponsoring terrorism. At this time, Taliban had clearly become a failure and embarrassment for Pakistani government and it forced Pakistan to change its policy towards the Taliban due to international necessities and domestic comprehension that the policy was counter-productive. NATO forces presence in Afghanistan in 2001 to eradicate the Taliban regime and other terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda served

Pakistan's purpose of dismantling the shelters of radical sectarian groups banned by Islamabad. Pakistan at this time hesitantly supported the NATO forces because it received huge financial assistance from America and if it would not have supported America's 'war on terror' then repercussions would have been more dangerous. In their overt opposition to Taliban, Pakistan revived its own war against terror to crack down the sectarian groups. Moreover it cloaked Pakistan's earlier support to Taliban and paved the way for a renewal of its relation with Central Asian countries. The reconstruction of Afghanistan and its infrastructure appeared to be beneficial for Pakistan's role in developing the trade and transit route to the Central Asian countries. Along with this Pakistan also received huge financial aid from western countries as it allied with America in war on terror. Pakistan secured a pledge of 1.5 billion US dollars within four months of September 11 in direct assistance or grants. The United States has been the major contributor of financial aid to Pakistan since its emergence. It is estimated that between 1951 and 2011, Pakistan received 67 billion US dollars from United States of America (Times of India 2nd January 2018). This assistance played a significant role in securing a number of other loans from international financial institutions in addition to signing debt rescheduling agreements with fifteen countries. This has proved to be advantageous for the tormented economic situation in Pakistan as it became stabilized now with the help of pouring financial aids. Now it enjoyed a measure of economic stability at this time, which it hadn't witnessed for decades. Pakistan's growth rate, textile exports and foreign reserves witnessed a rise in this period. Having enjoyed economic and strategic benefits from the war on terror in Afghanistan, Pakistan also faced some serious consequences. First, it no longer had a pro-Pakistani regime in Kabul which it had always wanted to counter external influences in the region. In contrast, after the fall of Taliban in Afghanistan, 'Shura-i-Nazar' the dominant Panjsheri Tajik group of Northern Alliance constituted the most of the Afghanistan government and it was anti-Pakistan. Moreover, over a short span of time, Pakistan was no longer the most influential external power over Afghan government to a position where some other regional players such as USA, Russia, Iran and India probably wielded larger influence than it had. During this time India and Afghanistan relations rapidly developed in all fields. The American presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan's support to this cause also garnered resentment in Pashtun

populated border region of north-western part of Pakistan and Northern Baluchistan. Another serious drawback Pakistan faced at this time was dwindling of cross border illegal trade and smuggling due to the increased military presence on both sides of borders. All these factors affected the socio-political environment of north-western part of Pakistan where victory of an ultra conservative Islamist party *Muttahida Majlise-Amal* proved the strong presence of Pashtun dominated population of Pakistan.

Therefore, all these factors put together led Pakistan to develop and execute a strategy towards CARs. Pakistan did not launch any trade or transport related links with Central Asia via Afghanistan. Its own internal and political challenges kept it so busy that other regional players entered and established more reliable and suitable bilateral ties with these republics than Pakistan ever craved for. Pakistan with the help of China made significant progress in the development of deep water port at Gwadar in Baluchistan which also has plans to link Pakistan's rail and road network with Afghanistan and Central Asia. Pakistan still remains the logical trade and transit corridor for Tajikistan and it has a great potential to become an important geo-political player in the region but only in a condition where Afghanistan supports its endeavours (Cornell 2003:8-12).

In Tajikistan, implementation of large scale hydro power projects such as Suntuda- 1, Sanguta- 2 and construction of a large electricity project on Roghun Dam and some other projects will serve the interest of the Central Asian Republics and would also strengthen ties between the peoples of the region. Taking the advantage of liberal geopolitical environment after the end of the civil war in Tajikistan, both countries together worked actively within the framework of intra-regional organizations such as Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), Central Asia Regional Economic cooperation (CAREC), Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO) and Dushanbe Four. In order to promote bilateral relations, Tajikistan and Pakistan have exchanged numerous high level of diplomatic, trade and commerce delegations for the last few years. They have signed several agreements, protocols and memoranda of understanding (MOU) to expand their cooperation in the field of energy, communication, industry, agriculture, food industry. Moreover investment related to transport and construction of roads, science and technology, education, health, tourism etc also have been on the bilateral agendas, on the

basis of mutual benefits and augmentation in the current level of trade between them. Financial institutions and international organisations like International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), European Union (EU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) have guaranteed their support for the trade and energy cooperation development in the region. In this regard these organisations have also assured their support to the energy transmission line project via Phule-Khumri and Kabul in Afghanistan to Pakistan in order to export surplus hydro electricity from Tajikistan. Tajikistan and Pakistan have also agreed to cooperate for the exploration and extraction of gas and oil products and also to have joint processing unit to accommodate these projects. They are also planning to construct Torkhum-Jalalabad road in Afghanistan as part of Pakistan's strategy of establishing a land route with Tajikistan. Joint economic commission between the two countries is also working towards the enhancement of economic relations for which it conducted a meeting in October 2006 in Dushanbe under the chairmanship of Mr. Liaqat Ali Jatoi the Minister of Water and Power in Pakistan. Even though Tajik consular offices were operational in Karachi and Islamabad, it was in February 2005, Tajikistan inaugurated its embassy in Islamabad which has been seen as a new era of progress and development between the two countries. Opening of the highways of Kulyab-Khorug-Kulam-Karakoram along with the Istiqlal tunnel and four bridges between Tajikistan and Afghanistan are considered as concrete steps for the betterment of communication links between the two countries. Moreover reconstruction of Dushanbe-Qurgantepa highway and construction of the Dushanbe-Nurabad-Jirgatal-Saritash are also giving impetus to bilateral trade and transport development.

The hydro-power potential of Tajikistan is far higher than its household consumption, which would help it to cater the energy needs of the other countries. But at present Tajikistan uses only 4-5 per cent of the total possible energy production due to the lack of proper technical and monetary assistance and inter-regional conflict related to natural resources. Tajikistan is world's third major producer of hydro electricity accounting for almost 76 per cent of total energy production. Therefore, introduction of new hydro power projects in Tajikistan would not only cater to the electricity requirement of the

country but also of the whole of Central Asia and surplus could be exported to the South Asian countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan. The launch of CASA-1000 project between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia and Pakistan, Afghanistan in South Asia is a big development in this regard. The development of Central Asia and South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM) is to facilitate the transmission of electricity for sustainable electricity export by Tajikistan to rest of South Asia. This project consists of three important components; first is to construct the 1,222 kilometres of transmission line and grid stations, subsequent requirement would be technical and financial assistance and project implementation support through Inter Governmental Council (IGC) and its secretariats, and the last component is to develop and implement programmes supported by international organisations and communities for enriching the lives of the people dwelling along CASA 1000 Corridor. This venture is advantageous for all the associated countries as it will generate huge revenue for the economically diffident countries such as Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The successful completion of this project will exemplify the cooperation between the four countries. In addition, it will alleviate electricity shortages in Pakistan and Afghanistan by adding 1,300 MW of electricity along with projecting Afghanistan as a dependable transportation partner in the region. To pursue its geo strategic intentions in Central Asia, Islamabad used Islamic solidarity and brotherhood as its foreign policy tool. Islam has always been considered as privileging the ideological basis of Pakistan's foreign policy. But Pakistan's support to Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan and Tajikistan dented its appeal and made Tajikistan conscious of radical Islam.

Pakistan's geographical location gives its security planners a task to deal with security implications arising from internal Islamic fanaticism, lingering border issues with Afghanistan and India and also unstable political and economic setup. Pakistan's relations with its neighbours: India, Iran, China and Afghanistan determine its policy imperatives in Central Asia. For example, it seeks to transform Afghanistan as a client state and to use Afghanistan as a doorway for its geopolitical and geo-economic ambitions in Central Asia. During the Taliban period, Afghanistan's relations with Iran went from bad to worse and a war like situation was created on the Iran-Afghanistan border. In this situation, Pakistan's representation as a moderate Islamic nation has described as follows, "no

longer a bulwark against falling dominoes in Afghanistan, Pakistan hopes to portray itself as a moderate Islamic state that can buffer extremist Iran, chaotic Afghanistan, and an uncertain Central Asia” (Newberg 1994:161). Pakistan’s projection of itself as a moderate nation does not go well over two decades long status as the focal point of three major internal security cataclysms in J&K in India, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Conflict situations arising in these countries are prompted by religious fundamentalists mainly trained and supported by the radical Islamic parties or Pakistani military. According to Uma Singh, “besides their obvious repercussions in Central Asia and Afghanistan, these struggles could have potentially spill- over effects on India, with the world’s second largest Muslim population and china with its restive Turkic Muslim minorities” (Singh 1997:12). As a result, largely geo-economic and geostrategic composition involving Central and South Asia will keep Pakistan relevant to global power rivalry in the region and it will suffice Pakistan’s effort of undermining India’s presence in this area strategically (Kak 1998:1130-31).

At the time when Tajikistan started to expand strategic links with the South Asian region, it anticipated security risks associated with Islamic fundamentalism, terrorist activities and illicit drug trade. For this, in 2009, it initiated a security quartet named as ‘Dushanbe Four’ to deal with problems like drug trafficking and terrorism, with the cooperation of Russia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This initiative of Tajikistan allowed the member countries to discuss their regional problems along with strengthening of economic ties and undertaking security challenges of the region which to a certain extent were haunting both Russia and Tajikistan. Afghanistan’s relations with its eastern neighbour Pakistan could be helpful in political and economic stabilization of Afghanistan as it provides shortest trade route from Pakistan to Tajikistan. In the past, Kabul had been ready to discuss the problems of open border as it might have provided Taliban to find the refuge on the Pakistan’s side of border. Dushanbe Four initiative provided an alternative platform to discuss this problem. Tajikistan’s interest in the formation of Dushanbe Four was driven from the fact that Iran, its arch rival in Afghanistan, had already held two significant trilateral summits, one with Afghanistan and Pakistan and second with Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Iran’s active role in this regard points towards its regional leadership aspirations while through the Dushanbe Four, Tajikistan is aspiring for a

greater role in strategic affairs between Central and South Asia.

Tajik-Pak relations in itself is strategically important for the increased intra-regional cooperation, USA and Russia both have their geopolitical and security interests in this region and more specifically in Afghanistan. Therefore, both Tajikistan and Pakistan are at a place where they can widen regional initiatives in the fields of trade, energy and commerce and it would be advantageous in promoting long term security and development along with greater intra-regional cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia. This also has some temporary security risks. Tajikistan and Pakistan can work together towards normalizing relations of Tajikistan with Uzbekistan (which has been recently with the visit of new Uzbek President to Tajikistan and his agreement to the construction of 'Roghun dam' which earlier was the bone of contention between the two countries) and Pakistan with India in order to facilitate respective trade in the region. The development of transit route through Wakhan and CASA 1000 projects are an example of exemplary regional dynamics where in the absence of intra-regional cooperation in Central Asia, Tajikistan looks forward for inter-regional cooperation with South Asia.

Review of Literature

Stimulation of Bilateral Geopolitical Interests

Socio-economic, political and security obligations together with facilitation of energy and trade links mainly conclude Tajikistan-Pakistan relations. Pakistan has always wanted to become a regional transit and trade centre by developing its link with CARs, China and other South Asian neighbours. The main objective behind the Pakistan's Central Asia policy has been to get access to the huge energy resources of these countries. Getting a free market zone is the main objective of Tajikistan's policy towards Pakistan.

By describing the geopolitical intentions of Pakistan in Central Asia, Javaid and Naseem (2014) clearly states that,

“A geo-political factor was imminently noticed by Pakistani strategists at Dawn of the Muslim states to the northwest of Pakistan. Pakistan physically is placed in oblong position (1600X855kms) with small depth in front of a hostile neighbour in the East. Northwest beyond Afghanistan was a closed door. The Northern

connections were only apparent in the historical perspective and had little commercial or strategic use for the early policy makers. Pakistan, therefore, continued to shut its eyes to the North, until the emergence of new realities. Both public and government were excitedly awakened to the situation and attempts at all levels commenced forthwith to revive the links” (Javaid and Naseem 2014).

Islamic Party of Pakistan, *Jamat-e-Islami*, supported Tajik fundamentalists in the year 1992-1993. According to Gen. Liashkovskii, in the end of January 1993, an attempt was made to intervene in the civil war of Tajikistan. At Peshawar, an attempt to provide help to Tajik brothers was made in the conference of representatives of Muslim countries. It was the Pakistani Government which gave assistance to Tajik refugees numbering around 80,000 in northern Afghanistan. The head of the ISI Gen. Hamid Gul even had issued a statement in favour of Tajik opposition. In contrast to above situation, when Pakistan supported Taliban and Pashtun faction against the ethnic groups of Tajiks and Uzbeks in Afghanistan, it adversely affected the development of bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan in the year 1994 (Roy 2006). Therefore, geopolitical shifts in affairs of South Asian politics especially of Afghanistan have given chances to both countries to revive their relations.

Whereas Pakistan extended its support to the *Mujahideen* and Taliban, they together fought alongside the opposition forces in the civil war in Tajikistan. This was the period of Taliban rule, which had already given hope to Pakistan to take advantage of being favourite of Afghanistan and it further escalated its efforts to gain strategic depth in Tajikistan by having a pliant government. Simultaneously, India stepped forward on its decision of training Afghan National Army (ANA) and opened an Air base in Tajikistan named as Farkhor airbase operated jointly by Tajik and Indian air force. It planned to conduct joint military exercise with the Tajik Army as well. Consequently, seeing the growing influence of India in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Pakistan felt insecure and the then president Gen. Musharraf warned New Delhi to lay off the region in a national telecast address in October 2001, when America launched its military operations in Afghanistan against terrorists groups. He registered his anxiety by stating that India is circling Pakistan by its ‘Soft Power Diplomacy’ in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. This made

Islamabad desperate to break new grounds of developing ties with Tajikistan, especially after 9/11. Moreover, India's involvement in 'Ayni Airbase' in Tajikistan was of security concern for Pak authorities (Bedi 2002:2, Akbarzadeh 2003:221). However, India's presence in Tajikistan was nominal and it was nowhere near to the Russian or Americans but it distressed Pakistan. In 2003, when General Musharraf met his Tajik counterpart, Emomali Rakhmonov in Almaty, Kazakhstan, he in fact raised the issue of growing Indian presence in Tajikistan. Pakistan was so much worried about this issue that Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov had to pay a special visit to assure Pakistan that there is no threat to Pakistan due to the Indian military presence there (Ramachandran 2003).

Tajikistan's geographical proximity with Afghanistan makes it strategically equally important for both India and Pakistan. Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) is separated by the Wakhan (in Afghanistan) from Tajikistan. This geographical closeness between Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan does have a spill over effect. Any radical occurrence in Pakistan or in Afghanistan would have definite spill over effects on Tajikistan. Therefore, Tajikistan, since independence adopted policy of religious moderation, as it had concerns of religious fundamentalism arising from its neighbouring Afghanistan and Pakistan. Strategically, allowing Russia, USA and Indian military presence in its territory was mainly accorded to this fact. Besides, this spill over effect was to be extended to the Ferghana Valley which is economically backward and susceptible to radicalisation. According to Sharma, "Tajikistan remains critical for peace and stability in Central and South Asia. India has been trying to ensure that radical elements from Afghanistan do not spread to Tajikistan which is necessary to maintain a secular government in Tajikistan" (Sharma 2014). In contrast to the Indian efforts, Pakistan supported radical forces to gain influence over Tajikistan, which is why it supported opposition forces in civil war (Rashid 1994).

In 1992, President of Tajikistan, Rahmon Nabyev paid a three day official visit to Pakistan, where a declaration was signed to promote and consolidate friendly relations between the two countries. The declaration highlighted the deep rooted ties of shared history and culture between Pakistan and Tajikistan. Under its terms, the two countries agreed to maintain regular contacts at political, diplomatic and official levels, to ensure

constant development and strengthening of bilateral relations (Shakoor and Ahmed 1992:2). Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan Sherali Jononov mentioned that following Tajikistan's independence, bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan have penetrated into a new phase. Unfolding the importance of bilateral ties, he stated, "Pakistan is one the first countries which recognised the independence of Tajikistan and established diplomatic ties with it, and opened Pakistan's embassy in Dushanbe in 1993. The Republic of Tajikistan opened its diplomatic mission in Pakistan four years later in 1997. Thus, bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries started developing in different fields" (Jononov 2014). Religious and cultural similarities along with geographical imminence between the nations have played significant role in the growth of mutual links (Satti 2014).

Due to the lack of direct land route between Tajikistan and Pakistan, it is highly imperative to develop road connectivity; therefore, both countries have agreed upon to build 1,306 Km. long Pakistan-Tajikistan highway to link Dushanbe to the Karakorum highway in Pakistan. Tajikistan had also shown interest in exporting energy to the Pakistan although it itself is facing energy crisis but with the help of regional players and development of its hydroelectric plants it could produce surplus of energy. One such plant is Roghun hydropower station which has the potential of producing huge energy but due to Uzbekistan's objections it could not get complete. However, Tajik President, Emomali Rahmon has promised to complete its construction in order to open up the possibility of energy exports (Ranasinghe et al. 2011).

In June 2014 visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the capital of Tajikistan during which discussions were held over a number of projects of mutual benefits. In a joint press conference, Sharif described Tajikistan as the closest Central Asian neighbour to Pakistan, as it is located at the confluence of Central and South Asia and it is gateway to CIS countries. Pakistan's importance to Tajikistan lies in the fact that it offers the shortest possible route to the CARs to Arabian Sea ports in Pakistan. According to him, forward looking vision of Pakistan further elevated the Pakistan-Tajikistan strategic relations based on complimentary strategic and economic benefits.

Complimentarity of Geo-economic Benefits

Tajikistan and Pakistan complement each other in the fields of energy, trade and transport and security engagements. The above mentioned fields of cooperation are crucial factors affecting the national strategies of these countries in bilateral and multilateral arrangements because they try to break their relative seclusion from regional and global trade zones and also influence security trends in Central and south Asian region. Both these countries have disagreements with their respective neighbours, Uzbekistan and India and face the impending threat of instability arising from Afghanistan as well. Pakistan realized the economic capabilities of Central Asian countries in the very beginning of their independence. So in November 1991, it sent a delegation to CARs by which a number of agreements were signed between Tajikistan and Pakistan covering energy, transportation, trade, hospitality and communications. Pakistan also tried to allure Tajikistan by providing financial aid, in January 1994, during the second official visit of Sardar Assef Ahmad Ali, Pakistan provided 20 million US dollars in credits to Tajikistan to buy Pakistani goods. The extremely motivated part of the cooperation plans between the two countries was the completion of the Roghun hydroelectric dam and the construction of a highway between the two countries. However, there was no progress, due to, “Pakistan's own economic problems, political opposition in Tajikistan to allocating state funds on such a large scale to a foreign country, and the continued turmoil in Afghanistan and Tajikistan” (Curtis, 1996).

Tajikistan along with Pakistan played a part in resolving regional issues and contributed towards building up integration processes with the help of regional organizations like ECO. According to Pakistan, it helped countries like Tajikistan to boost up cheaper exports. Pakistan played very important role in bringing all the Central Asian countries into the structure of ECO. “In relations between Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, there is a strong legal base, which covers virtually all areas of bilateral relations” (Jononov, 2014).

Earlier established Joint Economic Commission identified various areas in which bilateral relations between the two countries needed to be revamped. These areas included infrastructure, manufacturing, textiles, cement, banking, oil and gas, capital

markets, science and technology, tourism, extraction industry, energy, irrigation and agriculture. Pakistan extended its help to Tajikistan with an intention to develop its hydropower and irrigation while Tajikistan showed its interest in securing cooperation in cement, cotton production, agriculture and establishing direct air links between the two nations. Pakistan and Tajikistan also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for “sale of electricity to Pakistan and mutual cooperation in the field of hydro power development, particularly high voltage transmission lines. Pakistan would buy thousands megawatts of electric power and expressed interest to open air and land routes between the two countries” (News Nation, Feb. 2006).

The energy transmission project between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan from Central Asia and Afghanistan and Pakistan from south Asia named as CASA-1000 reinvigorated the interest of multilateral economic cooperation in the region. In September 2011, President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan visited Tajikistan and described this project as fundamental in the area of regional energy cooperation. Having emphasised on the excellent relations between the two countries, he said that they still have left unexplored areas where supplementing each other’s interests could be beneficial for the greater good of their internal and external environment. He added, “Our region is infested with poverty, unemployment; underdevelopment and lack of economic opportunities and all these challenges have led our region to an abyss where militancy nourishes” (The Express Tribune, September 2nd 2011). Feasibility study of the CASA-1000 suggested that its transmission facilities would make most of the use of 1300 MW renewable electricity in summer from existing hydroelectricity plants in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and surplus could be exported to consumers in South Asia i.e. Pakistan and Afghanistan. “Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan both generate surplus electricity from hydropower during the summer while these countries suffer electricity shortages during their cold winters. Thus, import of electricity would only be from surplus summer generation of the two countries which is otherwise wasted and would not impact winter generation or make shortage worse” (Dawn, September 17th 2013).

Projections of further expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan were discussed at a meeting of Tajik Ambassador to Pakistan

Sherali Jononov with Khuarram Dastgir Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce of Pakistan in Islamabad on April 8, 2014. According to Tajikistan's Embassy in Islamabad, both sides exchanged views on holding of industrial exhibitions, organization of visits of representatives of business communities of the two countries and participation of Pakistani companies in implementation of investment projects in Tajikistan. They reportedly expressed readiness of their countries for the finalization of a trilateral trade and transit pact between Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Asia Plus, 10th April 2014).

Security Challenges

The geopolitical situation in Central Asia has always been critical and Tajikistan being a key player sharing border with unstable Afghanistan could threaten existing state of affairs in the region. Its internal political and economic stability and solid foothold in regional matters is an outcome of the 'Eurasian security structure'. In spite of its depiction as a fragile and economically unsure state, neighbouring states require Tajikistan's support in order to protect their territories from external threats. In the context of regional security of Central Asia, SCO plays a constructive role in which Tajikistan is a full member while Pakistan held observer status till 2017, when it along with India were granted full membership of SCO. Now, Pakistan as full member of SCO could achieve its security goals in Asia with the help of its close ally China and its re-engaging partner Russia. As the NATO forces withdrew in 2014 from Afghanistan, the security situation once again became susceptible to terrorist organizations like ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant or Daesh in Arabic Language Acronym). Therefore, trade and transport initiatives between Tajikistan and Pakistan reflect both opportunities arising from regional cooperation and challenges stemming from these security factors after US Army pull out of Afghanistan. Through regional organizations, regional players like Russia and China would be elated to control the security situation in Tajikistan by involving themselves militarily (Muzalevsky 2011).

The Islamic insurgent groups in Central Asia which do oppose the Uzbekistan and Tajikistan's governments have direct links with Al-Qaeda and Taliban and have received military training in Afghanistan and tribal Ares of Pakistan. This has been a matter of

critical concern for the authorities in Central Asia for maintaining stability and security in their territories. At the same time, Pakistan does not get away itself from Afghanistan because of its own strategic and security implications, causing a drift between Pakistan and CARs. But it changed after the US led war on terror was diffidently supported by Pakistan and it gave a chance to Central Asian Republics to reach out to Pakistan and increase cooperation in political and economic fields (Rahman 2007:221).

Tajik president visited Pakistan in March 2009. Speaking at an Islamabad banquet honouring President Rakhmon on March 8, 2009, Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said “both countries face the harsh challenges of terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime”. Gilani expressed the hope that enhanced Tajik-Pakistani defence and security ties could root out terrorism. Pakistan reassured to intensify their relations in defence production and provision of training facilities with Tajikistan. He added that Pakistan is a firm advocate of Tajikistan’s regional role in upholding peace and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistan enthusiastically supported the Quadrilateral Initiative (Dushanbe Four) as a crucial step to achieving regional security and stability. Gilani described it as the first initiative in the region to put security and trade issues under a broad framework. Rakhmon discussed terrorism with Zardari and Gilani and sought their support in combating the threat. Rakhmon warned that al-Qaeda could shatter peace in Tajikistan and Central Asia, and called for mutual co-operation in preventing terrorist inroads in the region (Mahmood 2009).

In June 2014, when Pakistan’s Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Dushanbe, both countries signed a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) for more intensification in bilateral cooperation in different areas which had been driving their bilateral relations. He also expressed his concern on the subject of security challenges and stated that Pakistan and Tajikistan are very much worried about the threats cropping up from illegitimate narcotic trade, cross-border organized crime, human trafficking and had determined to jointly fight against these criminal activities (Dawn, June 18th 2014).

Constraints in Bilateral Relations

By describing the cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan, one would definitely talk about the problems faced by these countries in order to cope with their respective geopolitical, economic, and security challenges. A major hurdle in the way of cooperation is that Pakistan cannot make its entry into the Central Asian countries surpassing Afghanistan because its location is crucial for Pakistan's inroads to Tajikistan. During the British rule in India, their insecurities regarding Afghanistan made them insistent to shield the British Indian Empire from Czarist Russia by drawing borders separating the then NWFP with Afghanistan (Ali 1993:64).

Another obstacle in the way of Tajikistan -Pakistan cooperation is financial constraints and this has proved crucial for the economic cooperation between the two countries. Pakistan cannot provide finances needed to embark on several projects that could turn the region into one of the prosperous regions of the globe. The Central Asian states are uncertain about Pakistan's role and therefore, are disinclined to take any bold step in collaboration with Pakistan. They blame Pakistan for exporting extremist policies that help revive insurgencies in those countries. However, all the regional powers i.e. Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, India and Pakistan are in competition with each other (Wasi 2002:24).

Tajik and Afghan civil war had economic consequences for Pakistan as unstable political conditions in the region caused insecurities to other countries. Afghanistan's location is crucial in fulfilling Pakistan's objectives in Central Asia because any pipeline or energy transmission from Tajikistan or Turkmenistan reaching its territory has to pass through southern and eastern Afghanistan (Akbar 2011:10). The development of Gwadar port by China in the Baluchistan region of Pakistan has augmented the geopolitical importance of this province. Although a long suppressed separatist movement is also getting intensified recently but Chinese military presence has somehow incapacitated this movement. Baluchistan is an essential link in expanding economic ties and cooperation of Pakistan with Tajikistan and other CARs. Therefore it becomes imperative for Pakistan to balance law and order situation in this part of the country (Asif 2011:4).

Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

Republic of Tajikistan and Pakistan has some commonalities such as Islam as common religion, political turmoil and economic backwardness which have been a stimulating factor in their relations. This study acquires importance because it deals with the relations of the two countries which have common cultural, historical legacies and political set ups. Tajikistan in the early years of its independence was in a state of turmoil and instability because the fundamentalist groups in the region along with the support of the neighbouring countries tried to promote Islamist politics and government. In this situation Pakistan which claimed to be religiously affiliated to the region played the role of an elder brother.

This study also seeks to find the answers to the question regarding the scenario that prevailed after Tajikistan became independent and in the wake of the situation, the consequent development of relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan. The study also ponders into the realm of the evolution of bilateral relation, the stagnation and the revival of the relations between the two countries.

Pakistan is strategically located on the focal point of Central and South Asia and it offers shortest possible trade and transit corridor for Tajikistan and other CARS as well. By developing this corridor, it can create enormous amount of revenue by playing role of transit corridor and can gain strategic benefits from its Central Asian neighbours. Tajikistan also sees opportunities in Pakistan as it could simply access the global markets through Gwadar port in Baluchistan. So as to develop this port as a centre of economic activities in the region, Pakistan needs to upgrade the transportation networks. Tajikistan can be helpful to Pakistan in this situation where it can persuade other Central Asian countries to facilitate support for implementing a huge project like this since this could not become successful in the absence of regional cooperation. The scope of this study is limited to the period from 1991, when Tajikistan became independent up to 2014.

Research Questions

1. What is the importance of Tajikistan-Pakistan relations in the regional setting of

Central and South Asia?

2. Do the geopolitical interests of both the republics bring them closer to each other?
3. To what extent Dushanbe Four and CASA-1000 Play significant role in developing relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan?
4. What are the security challenges faced by both countries which create obstacles in their relationship?
5. What are the constraints in the Tajikistan -Pakistan relations and how could they be countered by these countries?

Hypotheses

1. Convergence of their interests on terrorism and extremism along with political stability will become a determining factor in Tajikistan-Pakistan relations.
2. Economic and trade relations between Tajikistan-Pakistan will give impetus to the Central Asian regional cooperation with South Asia.

Research Methods

Historical-analytical and descriptive methodology is followed while examining various aspects of Tajikistan Pakistan relations. This research is based on available primary sources such as government documents in the form of various treaties, agreements, and memoranda of understanding (MoU), speeches, statements, statistical data and reports as well as secondary sources such as books, journals and newspapers etc. It analyses a range of materials available on the topic. Official speeches, statements and reports concerning bilateral relations and data on trade and commerce between Pakistan and Tajikistan have been consulted through websites on the internet.

Conclusion

Considering all the developments that these countries have witnessed in their socio-economic and political cooperation for a period of at least more than two decades, it can be interpreted that in spite of having hurdles in their way, they managed to overcome their geopolitical limitations. Cultural and historical linkages between Tajikistan and Pakistan proved to be illustrious in developing improved bilateral relations. However,

economic and diplomatic relations that these countries shared since independence of Tajikistan went through rough patches as the main problem was lack of direct land route between them. Security challenges are the main concern that both countries need to resolve with greater cooperation. And if they achieve what they desire fulfilling each other's imperatives then it will be helpful in the development of cooperation in broader geographical terms connecting Central Asia with South Asia.

CHAPTER 2:
GEOPOLITICS OF TAJIKISTAN-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

In 1904, the propounded theory of geographical pivot of history also known as ‘Heartland Theory’ by Sir Halford John Mackinder a British geographer and politician, proved the geo-political importance of Central Asia as ‘the heartland of history’. According to him, Central Asia is the pivotal area on the earth; therefore whoever has dominance over this region would command Eurasian landscape and further whoever would rule Eurasia would command the world. This theory has brought worldwide attention to the Central Asia, making it the play ground for geopolitical aspirations.

Tajikistan is a small presidential Republic and poorest member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) being governed by an autocratic ruler. It has a population of almost 8 million people with an average age of 23 years. The levels of economic development, urbanization and industrialization are very stumpy. Tajik economy is mainly based on remittances as around 2 million people from Tajikistan are migrant workers in Russia and other Central Asian countries. These migrants’ remittances represent almost half of the GDP of Tajikistan. Poverty is one of the major problems that this Republic is facing and half of the Tajik population lives below the poverty line. The prolonged civil war has been responsible for escalating social and economic challenges of the country making it economically diffident and its agricultural production backward. Civil war started just after Tajikistan became independent, therefore it did not get any chance to recover from its economic dependence on Soviet Union. It had started as a political altercation between the radical Islamist faction and old communist block and later it turned into an ethnic war between the different tribal groups and clans supporting their respective sides. As a result, approximately 1 million civilians were killed and many more fled from Tajikistan to Afghanistan and other parts of the world. Pakistan also hosted Tajik refugees for a long time till 2002 when they went back to their country. The interference of its neighbouring countries and other non-state actors in this war coincided with the slaughter of ethnic and religious opponents. Current President of the country Emomali Rakhmon was actively engaged in the war and since 1992 he has been in power in Tajikistan. After the civil war ended, he fortified his position by eradicating anti-government forces. In this process, he sustained several attempts of assassination. In 2003, constitution of the country was amended making a provision of 2 presidential terms of 7 years each one, commencing from 2006. When elections were held in 2006,

President Rakhmon secured his win by getting 79.3 percent of votes and he began his first of two terms according to the constitution. In 2013, he again got elected as the president of the country and is continuing till now (Fayzullina 2013:1-2).

Tajikistan's geostrategic importance and geo-economic capabilities have made it a significant player in regional politics. This has allowed president Rakhmon to adopt autocratic measures in order to suppress internal political opponents and external threats. International partners and donors have overlooked government's misconduct due to their own strategic privileges from Tajikistan. A stabilized Tajikistan could help in bringing geo-political gains to the region while political disturbances could threaten the security structure of Eurasia. As a scholar puts it, "donors and international actors demonstrate complete indifference to the character of the regime, prioritizing, instead, their strategic interests. This rentier style of political bargaining by Tajikistan demonstrates an essential inability to deal with neighbours on the local level- the entire Central Asian region- and globally (Fayzullina 2013:3).

Tajikistan's relations with Pakistan are embedded into history as in the medieval period people of these countries shared common cultural and literary characters. During the Soviet period, Pakistan and America were actively involved in *Mujahideen* fight against the Soviet regime in Afghanistan leading the Soviet forces to withdraw and later to the collapse of USSR in 1991. In order to destabilize Soviet rule in Central Asia, military campaigns were also carried out by Pakistan against Uzbekistan and Tajikistan since the beginning of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the main objective of Pakistan was to isolate CARs from the CIS which could have weakened the Russian Federation. Therefore, it supported the Tajik rebels in Afghanistan who had lent their support to the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) on the basis of ethno-religious unity to destabilize these Republics (Gulshan 2010: 33).

All these efforts of acquiring favorable geopolitical conditions in newly independent Central Asia and Afghanistan went futile even after exercising perilous methods of harboring extremism in the region. As stated by Christine Fair (2008), "Pakistan has been chastened by successive failed – and dangerous – efforts to develop 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan and the rest of Central Asia" (Fair 2008: 201).

Tajikistan and Pakistan relations have improved with the passage of time and according to the changing security and economic environment of the region. During the reconstruction of Tajik society and economy after civil war, Pakistan has all through extended its support to President Emomali Rakhmon in order to establish peace and stability, improved living standards, development of mutual trade and transportation and confidence building measures to enhance regional cooperation. All these aspects paved the way for the greater good of these neighbouring Islamic countries fighting together with slow economic growth and potential for political volatility. The exchange of official bilateral visits of the heads of these countries in the year 2002 and 2004 initiated a new phase in their relations and strengthened the prospects of development joint cooperation on the complimentary issues. They have also marked concrete directions and appropriate methods to carry out the implementation of more than 20 agreements ranging from economic to diplomatic and security cooperation. The year 2009 is considered significant in the bilateral relations as in July 2009, President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari led a delegation to Tajikistan. During his visit, he stressed on bringing about more diversity to their relations. Moreover, two sides signed a number of agreements related to the energy supply, education, industrial development and communications with an objective of creating more suitable ways to look after the progress of ongoing projects (Gulshan 2010:34-35).

Their bilateral relations have been seriously daunting since the period of Cold war and then during the Afghan war and Tajik civil war. But soon after the independence of Tajikistan, Islamabad realized the opportunity to put back together its relations with its closest Central Asian neighbor Tajikistan. Therefore, it was one of the first countries to recognize the independent status of Tajikistan and also established diplomatic links by opening its embassy in Dushanbe in 1993. However, Tajikistan took much time to open its mission in Pakistan. It was in 2005 when Tajik embassy was opened in Islamabad. According to rough data on Tajik refugees in Pakistan, around one lakh twenty thousand Tajik people are living there without proper documentation and some of them have got settled over there. They are recognized as '*Chitralis*' and '*Gilgilti*'. However, most of the Tajik refugees in Pakistan who came to escape the atrocities arising during the Afghan war and civil war had already gone back to Tajikistan or Afghanistan. Political upheaval and

slow economic dividends in both these countries have been the major factor barricading their bilateral relations. However in recent times, both have clearly understood the geopolitical obligations of the region which compelled it to manoeuvre bilateral ties and push to work together towards improved economic and diplomatic relations (Malik 2015:1-2). According to Shaheen (2011),

“Strategic interest is the most important factor of Pakistan’s foreign policy towards Central Asia. Central Asia can be of greater strategic significance for Pakistan in the face of intense Indian hostility for Pakistani. Furthermore the Indian desire to be dominant in the region also adds to Pakistan’s attempt to find an economic zone in Central Asia. India too has her aims in Central Asia with the motive to find an economic market there and there is no denying the fact that Indian products are now having an access to Central Asia” (Shaheen 2011:220).

Indian factor as a deterrent to Pakistan’s objectives in Afghanistan and Central Asia have given worrisome thoughts to Pakistan’s foreign policy makers since a long time. Due to the lack of direct route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, India has been trying to bridge this gap by developing cooperation with Iran through which it can connect with Afghanistan and then to Tajikistan. The growing presence of India in Central Asia is seen as a serious threat to Pakistan’s interests in these Republics as clearly considered by policy makers of Pakistan. That is the reason, it has been working towards establishing peaceful regime in Afghanistan and its support to the Taliban forces in 1990s was directed at this ambition, which failed disastrously. The changing global situation and worldwide attention to the unstable situation in Afghanistan along with America’s shifting attitude towards it, plus rising global interest in this area have resulted into altered Pakistan’s policies. Pakistan is determined to bring a close consensus to build up strategic alliance among the Muslim nations of the region including Iran, Turkey, Central Asia and Afghanistan in order to counter the rising Indian influence. Moreover, to broaden its influence in Central Asia, “the main policy of Pakistan is to try to maintain stability in Afghanistan for attracting Central Asia for trade and economic ties. The Economic organizations with the membership of the Islamic countries in the region can

strengthen this motive of Pakistan and no doubt ECO can work best to boost this cooperation” (Shaheen 2011:221).

Pakistan has been approaching Tajikistan to establish a 35 kilometer road link across the Wakhan Corridor. This 35- kilometer trespass is to be built between the ‘Ishkhamun Valley’ in Pakistan and the Wakhan Corridor in Afghanistan. Pakistan’s selection of the route may be considered strategic in a way that it would help towards maintaining a stable and commanding distance from ‘Panjshir Valley’ and at the same time have a check on the traditional strongholds of the Northern Alliance that have been critical of Pakistan's past involvement in Taliban (Dhaka 2004:148).

There are several passes in Afghanistan and Pakistan through which they can connect with Tajikistan. Most important ones are ‘Dorah Pass’ and ‘Broghil Pass’ in the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan and ‘Shandur Top’ from Gilgit and ‘Lowari Top’ from Dir which connect Pakistan with Tajikistan. “The Dorah Pass on the Afghan-Pakistan-Tajik border is more than 4,300 meter (14,000 feet) high. The pass crosses the Hindu Kush. Situated at the foot of pass is Lake Hauzi-Dorah (called Lake Dufferin during colonial times). The lake is roughly 2¾ miles long by over 1/4 miles broad” (GB Tribune March 3, 2013). These passes can be connected through roads and ‘Forrah Pass’ in Afghanistan is the most suitable through which Chitral city of Pakistan can be connected to Tajikistan. The proposed road will be connecting Chitral using the 4,550 meters Durah pass and circumlocutory passing its way through ‘Iskatul’ and ‘Ulkhana- Ishkashim’ in Afghanistan and Khorog in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province, Kalaikhum, Kulyab, Khatlon, Kofirnigan in Tajikistan before entering the capital city of Dushanbe. The total distance of road from Chitral to Ishkashim is around 200 kilometers in which 118 kilometers in Afghanistan and the rest of 82 kilometers in Pakistan (GB Tribune March 3, 2013).

Soviet Period

Pakistan’s thrust towards promoting economic and strategic ties with Tajikistan is not totally dependent on Islamic and cultural similarities but on complimentary geographical necessities as well. Pakistan since its existence being the flag-bearer of Islam has maintained its links with West Asia with an intention to break loose from its South Asian

neighbours. Therefore all Pakistan's ruling regimes and their foreign policy ambitions have been directed towards achieving this motive. It was after the partition of East Pakistan in 1971 and establishment of a new nation Bangladesh with direct Indian involvement that Pakistan's military and strategic inabilities vis-a-vis India compelled Pakistani foreign policy makers to search for strategic depth towards India at any cost. Pakistan's intentions aimed at creating a critical mass in order to neutralize India and to take revenge of loosing East Pakistan. Pakistan's membership of South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO, also known as Baghdad Pact) and backing by the members of these organizations could not prevent the bifurcation of Pakistan. Therefore, subsequent Pakistani leaders Julfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq reduced their ties with these blocs respectively. Moreover, Bhutto tried to establish a group of Third World nations. He also formally tested the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) for collective agendas and succeeded in hosting a summit in Lahore in February 1974. When Zia-ul-Haq came to power in 1977 his focus was mainly towards conservative Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia and countries of Persian Gulf. He believed that this strategic depth direly required to counter Pakistan's rival India, could be best achieved by establishing an Islamic bloc between the Arabian Sea and Ural mountains. By describing Bhutto's initiative of third world nations as self obsessed and disparaging affecting the mass opinion in the developing countries, he presented himself as the aspiring leader of the Islamic world. In order to achieve the Muslim unity and difficulties coming on its way, Zia suggested that, "to leave personal preference and individual interest aside and select one of the leaders as a force of unity, as a man of God and as an inspiration for at least directing the Muslim world towards one God" (Reetz 1993:30-32).

Earlier Bhutto had tried to maintain distance from America and he showed inclination towards China along with giving diplomatic recognition to the countries like Korea, Vietnam and Eastern Germany. The April revolution of Afghanistan in 1978 and Soviet invasion of 1979 obligated Pakistan to go back to United States for ensuring security of its frontiers. Withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989 and end of cold war period coincided with giving a global and regional re-evaluation of national securities and its options and making Pakistan irrelevant of holding strategic value for global powers

especially for United States. Role of Pakistan as a partner of U.S in achieving its geo-political ambitions in the region declined at the end of cold war. U.S became hesitant in providing military funding to Pakistan since 1991 suspecting that it had acquired some nuclear production competency. According to Reetz (1993), “this originated much less from Pakistan’s nuclear option than from the rapidly receding need for the U.S. to maintain this quasi- alliance in the face of severe budgetary constraints and a crying need for the ‘peace dividend’ to be spent on the home front” (Reetz 1993:30-32).

In the cold war period, being allied to Western bloc Pakistan was not able to develop close relations with Central Asia. However at a moderate level Central Asian countries tried to build up relations with Pakistan but due to its extreme ideology, Pakistan could not offer them opportunities of developing bilateral relations. It was during the Afghan-Soviet War that Pakistan did all in its power to push USSR out of Afghanistan rather than paying any attention to the internal dynamics that Central Asian countries had with the former Soviet Union. Lack of proper knowledge about internal socio-political and economic dynamics of these countries together with the deficiency of Russian language gave foreign ministry of Pakistan trouble in establishing ties. During the last years of Soviet demise, any Pakistani diplomat who had any leanings for USSR, had to face serious trouble (Bhatty 2008:75-76).

The Afghan *Mujahideen* intervention in Tajikistan and its role in the demise of USSR is reflected in the form of anti-communist demonstrations in Tajikistan in the late 1991. According to former KGB commander Petkel at the time of February 1990 riots in Dushanbe, the Afghan *Mujahideen* mobilized near the Tajik-Afghan border with the purpose of invading Tajikistan in the support of Islamic faction there. There were anti-communist sentiments on the rise (Atkin 1992:34-35).

Post-Soviet Period

The breakup of Soviet Union and Pakistan’s recognition of Central Asian Republics yielded some positive outcomes in developing constructive relationship between the two regions. As early as in 1992, Pakistan sent a delegation to these Republics which resulted into signing of six MoUs in the field of trade, economy, culture and financial sectors. The Government of Pakistan has anticipated establishment of productive relations with them.

However, official dealings between the two regions in the initial phase could not conceive much in reality due to lack of proper implementation of the projects and direct connectivity but it somehow paved the way for further development of cooperation in a long and positive term.

Becoming the frontline member state of 'Global War on Terror' in Afghanistan, Pakistan got a momentum to develop the bilateral relations with Central Asia overcoming the earlier slow process. Tajikistan also became prominent in supporting United States in the 'Global War on Terror' due to its location which has been used by the U.S to build its air bases and other military facilities. Therefore, Tajikistan worked as a transit for the NATO forces and their supplies during this period which has also worked as a bonding factor between Tajikistan and Pakistan. Since this time frequent visits of officials of both countries have added to the improved bilateral relations. To boost cooperation in the field of cultural and educational development, institutional level arrangements have been made along with the establishment of Joint Economic Commissions (JECs) to promote trade and industries.

In the period between 1992-92, Pakistan launched an initiative under Special Technical Assistance Programme (STAP) by which it started providing fully funded training facilities. Under this programme various courses ranging from diplomacy, banking, and accountancy to providing English language training. Pakistan was also preoccupied with the fact that global attention over the Central Asian countries could become unmanageable in setting a string with these Republics. Therefore, Pakistan indulged itself actively in enhancing relationship and particularly with Tajikistan. As a result, trade between Tajikistan and Pakistan had surged from 18 million US dollars in 1998 to 89 million US dollars in 2014 which can be considered a positive sign of cooperation between them. Both have the potential of developing cooperation in energy sector in which Pakistan is lagging behind and facing crisis while Tajikistan has abundance of natural resources to produce energy. In order to meet their demands of energy supply the CASA-1000 project is considered to be one of the major cooperation projects between the two countries. However, ups and downs in the security situation of Afghanistan have jumbled this project making cooperation in security sector their prime agenda. CASA-

1000 has been initiated to use hydro power potential of Tajikistan to subside energy crisis of south Asian countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan, but it depends on the positive security situations in Afghanistan (Khan 2017).

The dynamics of developing cooperation with Central Asian countries was well elaborated in a speech delivered by Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Ali in Lahore in 1995 in which he stressed on this fact that Pakistan's top priority of this time is to develop extensive relations with the Republics. According to him in 1994, a concept of joint liability between Pakistan-Uzbekistan had come up on the issue of deteriorating security situation in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The strategic value of this cooperation was defined by press and information minister at the Pakistan embassy in the U.S. He said "the Pakistani leadership is killing what would seem to be two birds with one stone that is opening up various transportation routes – which will not be controlled by Indian naval and air forces and obtaining access to the Muslim heart of Asia" (Kazakova and Komissina 2001). To solve its domestic economic problems, Pakistan has been striving to take advantage of the western interest in assimilating Central Asia because Pakistan's strategic interest in the region goes well with the rising western intervention in order to balance the security structure of Central and South Asia. Pakistan projected herself to the West as the only visible gateway to these countries which was clearly expressed by the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto during her visit to Germany in 1994.

In 2004, Tajikistan's foreign minister's visit to Pakistan is considered to be a great strategic achievement for Pakistan's Central Asia policy, where he assured Pakistan government that Tajikistan would not allow Indian military bases in his territory. In May 2004, President of Tajikistan visited Islamabad in which around eight agreements related to "abolition of visas for holders of diplomatic passport, avoidance of double taxation, cooperation between the education minister and justice minister, combating drug trafficking, cooperation between official news agencies and promotion and protection of investment" were signed (Roy 2006).

Islamic Revivalism in Tajikistan: Role of Pakistan

Pakistan tried to take advantage of geographical, cultural and religious similarities with Central Asian countries in order to get benefits of economic and financial prospects of these countries by building strong relation with them. Especially to enrich her mission of developing cooperation, Pakistan projected the religious card of Islam as it is the major religion of all these countries. Therefore, religion as a tool of bridging the geo-political gap between and Tajikistan has been in use. However, Emomali Rakhmon, as President of Tajikistan, encouraged the practice of moderate Islam while taking strict measures to control radicalisation of Islam. Pakistan allotted funds for the construction and restoration of mosques and helped in garnering anti-Soviet sentiments and also supported radical Islam. Therefore, this contrasting approach towards the same religion has been responsible for Pakistan's failure of using Islamic card to gain political leverages in Tajikistan. Pakistan allotted funds to a number of students from Central Asia to study Islam, economics, theology, foreign languages etc. at the International Islamic University in Islamabad. Moreover, religious personnel were also trained and sent to work in Muslim countries in order to spread Islam among the Muslim states of the region. Religious literature has also been published and translated into various languages and intense efforts have been made to reinforce the Islam as a religion in the political and ideological arenas of developing countries having Muslim populations in majority. All these religious efforts of restoring Islam by Pakistan were financially supported by the Islamic countries of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey etc. Pakistani religious parties *Jamaat-e-Islam* and *Jamaat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam*, the World Islamic League, and private entities also provided funds for the restoration of Islam. Furthermore,

“Graduates and university students are recruited to work on the Islamic Tajik Committee (Peshawar) and the Islamic Uzbek Centre (Attok). The Uzbek nationalist organization Samarkand- Bukhara, the headquarters of which is located in Karachi, is also noticeably stepping up its activity. This state of affairs is arousing entirely justified concern both in the Central Asian states themselves, and in their neighbours, particularly Russia” (Kazakova and Komissina 2001).

Tajik government's attitude towards Islam has been affected by few factors including Soviet legacy, the Tajik civil war and more importantly the international security concerns arising after 9/11. During the Soviet period, all Central Asian states including Tajikistan viewed Islam as a potential threat which was restricted and regulated. In the post-Soviet period, government of Tajikistan continued with its past attitude towards Islam. Tajik civil war was also instigated by the competing pro-Islamic and anti-radical prospective. The legacy of this war has been evident of the power of political Islam upon the population which alarmed the Tajik government. When United States had become aware of repercussions of radical Islam after 9/11, it agreed with Tajikistan in its policies against the non-state section of radical Islam (Lands 2016:4).

Pakistan's most organized religious political party *Jamat-e-Islami* played key role in Tajik civil war. Its party chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed persuaded government of Pakistan to provide religious guidance rather than economic assistance. He supported the policy of confronting US geostrategic ambitions in Central Asia and building good relations with the newly independent CARs. His attitude was instigating and threatening to the security of Central Asian countries. However, during the Benazir Bhutto regime, Pakistan went through a crucial phase where it was in the mid of civil wars being fought in its neighbourhood in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. She assertively exerted strong measures to control Pakistan's security policy in respect to Afghanistan. Therefore, "through her government's Interior Minister Major General (rtd.) Naseerullah Baber, Benazir Bhutto adopted an aggressive policy vis-a-vis Afghanistan" (Bhatty 2008 76-77).

Pakistan's *Jammat-i-Islami* along with some radical Afghan groups have been actively involved in the training of militants and supplying essentials to the opposition groups during the civil war in Tajikistan. One of the main Islamic political parties of Tajikistan *Islamic Revival Party* (IRP) got divided into two factions one of which was closely linked with Muslim Brotherhood Party and also received support from Ahmed Shah Masood in Kabul while the second group was linked with the Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. IRP Chairman Mohammad Sharif Himatzade while giving an interview in Islamabad disclosed that, "they had bought US-made stinger missiles from Afghan *Mujahideen*. It was reported

that the *Mujahideen* sold the missiles to the Tajiks for less money than the Americans were offering” (Ahmad 1994:88).

Bilateral Diplomatic/Political Contacts

The bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan have developed in different phases. Both countries tried to maintain brotherly ties through their policies. In the Soviet period Pakistan did not get chances of improving its relations with Tajikistan but with the collapse of Soviet Union it got the opportunity to bridge the political, economic and cultural gap between the two countries. In this regard, a number of bilateral visits of high officials from both the countries took place. In 1991, Sardar Assef Ahmad Ali, Minister of Economic Affairs of Pakistan along with a high level delegation visited Central Asian countries of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan and MoU between Tajikistan and Pakistan was signed for increasing economic cooperation between the two countries (Nichol 1995:156). He also signed agreements regarding the export of hydroelectricity from Tajikistan to Pakistan and also ensured monetary help in order to support the energy transmission line. Also barter agreement between the two countries was signed for the supply of tea, wheat, rice and meat from Pakistan to Tajikistan in lieu of cotton and aluminum from Tajikistan to Pakistan (Amin 1994:221).

In July 1992, President of Republic of Tajikistan, Rahman Nabiye b paid an official visit to Pakistan. Consequently, a declaration was signed between the heads of two countries to promote and build up cordial relations. According to the declaration, two countries ensured to maintain regular official, bilateral, political and diplomatic visits to test the velocity of development of cooperation between them. Moreover, Tajikistan and Pakistan also signed three agreements related to the various fields of socio-economic and cultural cooperation. In honor of the visiting Tajik Head of Government, Pakistani President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan in his welcome speech hailed all Muslim countries to consolidate multilateral cooperation in political and economic spheres or their overall development. Tajik President Nabiye v in his speech said that ensuring security and stability in the region is his country’s main concern. The agreements signed between the two countries would help them to increase cooperation in bilateral political and economic fields (Pakistan Horizon 1992:2).

The first official visit of the Emomali Rahmon as the Tajik Head of State to the Islamic republic of Pakistan took place in 1994 which opened the way for promotion of trade and economic relations between the two countries. Foreign Minister of Republic of Tajikistan, Nazarov Talbak paid an official visit to Pakistan in 1998 and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Islamic Republic of Pakistan visited Tajikistan in 2002. Both these visits added to the development of bilateral contact between them (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Tajikistan).

In June 2002, President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf visited Tajikistan in order to keep up the continuity of diplomatic exchanges between the two countries and also to strengthen its relations with Republic of Tajikistan which had deteriorated due to Pakistan's support and recognition to the Taliban Government in Afghanistan. Talking about the bilateral relations, he said that, "both countries are bound through centuries of old ties of history, religion, culture and traditions. President Rahmon and I have just concluded in depth and useful discussions covering the entire range of bilateral issues. We also agreed to make joint efforts to expand and consolidate our cooperation in areas such as trade, tourism, transport and communication education, industry and defense" (Dawn June 3rd 2002). Both leaders also agreed to continue the exchange of high level visit. They also ensured to convene the inaugural session of the Joint Economic Commission in September 2002. The situation in Afghanistan was also discussed by both leaders during the bilateral meeting in which both leaders expressed their willingness to ensure their support towards maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan which is essential for the interests of the whole region (Dawn June 3rd 2002).

Several summits were conducted by both the nations to nurture trade and cooperation. Consular offices of Tajikistan started operating in Islamabad and Karachi from 1997. With an intention to develop good relations, the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan officially visited Pakistan in 1998 and 2004. As a sign of strong relations, Pakistan did not oppose the settlement of many Tajik people in Pakistan due to their poor economic conditions in Tajikistan. In another big move Pakistan opened its land and sea routes to Tajikistan as it remains geographically landlocked. Therefore, both these countries have common agenda of cooperation in the fields of economic, political and educational development with a

broader object of developing their bilateral interest into multilateral cooperation including the rest of Central and South Asian countries (Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

During the sidelines of SCO summit in 2012, Tajik President met with President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and discussed issues related to the developing economic and trade relations between the two countries. Tajik President stated “Positions of Tajikistan and Pakistan are similar on major important issues which allow two states to mutually coordinate actions with the view of addressing regional problems” (President of Republic of Tajikistan, China 2012). There has been constructive discussion between the two leaders over accelerating the implementation of the regional infrastructural projects for linking energy and transportation of Tajikistan with Pakistan using Afghanistan as a transit. Furthermore, it was also decided in this meeting that issues pertaining to agriculture, industry, and regional security should be taken care of through joint efforts. They also discussed arrangements related to the next meeting of Dushanbe Four along with various other subjects of bilateral interest (President of Republic of Tajikistan, China 2012).

In August 2012, 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit was held in Tehran of which Pakistan is a permanent member and Tajikistan holds Observer status. Tajik President Emomali Rahman met with his Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari in the precincts of NAM summit and talked about the issues pertaining to the bilateral and multilateral trust building and cooperation between them was re-evaluated. Both leaders agreed to an indispensable assessment of the course of implementing signed documents and decrees of the Inter-Governmental Commissions (IGCs) on bilateral relations. In order to enhance bilateral trade and economic opportunities, it was stressed that, both nations should work swiftly towards development of railway links, automobile roads, energy corridors and opening of the regular air services between the two countries. Moreover, “the signing of the Trilateral Trade Agreement between Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan and Tajikistan’s joining the Quadrilateral Agreement between Pakistan, China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have also been named as an effective way for boosting trade and business” (President of Republic of Tajikistan, Iran 2012).

Republic of Tajikistan have announced the approach of ‘Open Door Policy’ for the enhancement and promotion of the constructive relations with the foreign countries which can be considered a positive sign for the progressive Tajik-Pak relations. Between these countries, more than 50 projects related to the fields of agriculture and constructions are under process costing almost 2 billion *somoni* (Tajik Currency). If implementation of these projects goes well then it will help Tajikistan to access the ports of Iran and Pakistan and develop trade and commerce. The cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan has been continuing within the structure of regional and international trade and economic organizations such as Economic Organization Cooperation (ECO), International Trade Organization (ITO), Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO), Asian Development bank (ADB), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) etc. A growth in the bilateral trade between Tajikistan and Pakistan has been recorded in the last decade. Tajikistan’s hydropower potential has the scope of developing bilateral energy cooperation as it has the capacity of producing surplus hydroelectricity, but due to lack of financial and technical assistance it has been facing sluggish production. Moreover, it has been trading energy from its neighbouring Uzbekistan in winter when there is a huge consumption of energy in Tajikistan. But Uzbekistan has many times stopped supplies of electricity due to some regional issues which provoked Tajikistan to become self reliant by developing its hydroelectricity production. Currently, Tajikistan’s installed power generation capacity is around 5,244 MW. However, estimated hydropower potential goes higher to 527 billion KW/per hour every year. Installation of new power projects would not only fulfill its own energy requirements but also the whole region would be benefitted including Pakistan. Alternatively, Tajikistan and Pakistan have signed more than 30 agreements, protocols and MOUs to widen cooperation in various fields. Along with this, both countries have extended support in the fields of mining of gas and oil products with an intention of reducing their dependency on other big hydrocarbon producers of Asia. Both countries have not only been expanding cooperation in economy and trade but also in educational and cultural spheres. For this, a number of educational exchange programmes, conferences, seminars, exhibitions related to shared culture, history and literature have

been organized by these countries which further deepens bilateral cooperation (Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

In 2014, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz sharif visited Dushanbe which proved to be a landmark in the development of bilateral ties. Detailed discussions over issues of bilateral importance such as promoting trade and economic investment, scientific and technological assistance and cultural cooperation between the two sides were held. Both sides acknowledged the mutual benefits from cooperation and evinced interests in strengthening their relations. Moreover, they showed keen interest in deepening economic and bilateral trade and finding opportunities to simplify transport and transit as well as finding new ways of communication which can play an assistive role in their mutual interests. In this regard, two developments can be considered very crucial. First, the trajectory that trilateral trade and transit agreement between Tajikistan and Pakistan through Afghanistan had taken. And second, accession of Tajikistan to quadrilateral agreement between Pakistan-China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan.

A number of documents related to the successful implementation of many other regional projects including CASA-1000 Power Transmission Line have been signed alongside this meeting. Both leaders signed joint communiqué related to bilateral partnership development. Some other agreements and MOUs have been signed between Tajikistan Pakistan during this meeting. Both governments have decided to establish joint working group to fight international terrorism. In order to develop hosiery industry Ministry of Industry and New Technologies in Tajikistan have collaborated with Ministry of Hosiery Industry of Pakistan and a MOU between both ministries has been signed. They also seemed confident on building cooperation in the sector of professional education for which national library of Tajikistan and department of libraries signed MOU with administration of city and division of development of the government of Pakistan. A memorandum of understanding was also signed on developing cooperation between Tajik National University Dushanbe and National University of Contemporary Languages in Islamabad (President of Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe 2014).

During the official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan to Tajikistan in June 2015, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon held bilateral talks with him regarding regional cooperation

integration. Although to build up and extend their friendly relations and cooperation both countries have already been discussed in the format of 'one on one' but now they have shifted their focus to multilateral objectives benefiting mutual interests. President of Tajikistan stated at this meeting that "the expansion of multilateral cooperation and the strengthening of mutual cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is considered one of the directions of foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan, and we consider important trade and economic opportunities in Pakistan, its geo-strategic position, authority in South Asia and Islamic world". It was also highlighted that the contractual and legal framework for the development of cooperation between the two nations comprised of around forty inter-state acts in different fields. Both parties also expressed their keenness in the swift signing of trilateral trade and transit agreement between Republic of Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. They agreed to hold an exhibition of industrial goods of Pakistan in Dushanbe in October 2015 and in Islamabad next meeting of IGC on trade and economic cooperation between the two countries was held (President of Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe June 2015).

In November 2015, Tajik President visited Pakistan in which both countries signed multiple documents of cooperation in the field of trade security, cultural and infrastructural development and this meeting is considered to be a hallmark in their bilateral relations. In this meeting, heads of both countries stressed on increasing people to people contact and a regular exchange of delegations between them for better progress of ongoing projects. Issues related to the security sector were discussed in detail and both countries showed their concern on increasing regional instability, extremism, and drug-trafficking and agreed to increase their cooperation in these spheres. It was the sixth visit of Tajik president to Pakistan. At this time both countries understood the importance of the bilateral visit as a way forward in developing their relations and furthermore it opened new dimension for Pakistan to augment its relations with rest of the CARs. Therefore, regular exchanges of official visits between the two governments have built the trust and cordial ties between them. In the June 2014 and 2015 visits of Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawab Sharif to Tajikistan and a range of bilateral decisions during his meeting with Tajik President have been taken. Both countries agreed to adopt measures for better execution of economic opportunities by optimum usage of the existing institutional

mechanism especially through the joint ministerial commission. Development of assistance in science and technology between them was also expected to grow under the aegis of Joint Business Councils (JBCs) (Ijaz 2015:3).

“The board (*Shuro*) of Tajikistan’s lower chamber (*Majlisi Namoyandagon*) of parliament discussed the issue of ratification of a government to government agreement between Tajikistan and Pakistan on setting up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on the issues of combating international terrorism at a January 26, 2015 meeting, presided over by the Majlisi Namoyandagon Speaker, Shukurjon Uhurov” (Yuldoshev 2015:1-2). A spokesman of the lower chamber of the parliament of Tajikistan, M. Sultonov said that the *Shuro* also discussed amendments related to the laws on licensing separate types of activities, pensions and cessation on examination of production activities as well as the penal code of Tajikistan. It also to ratified Tajikistan-Pakistan joint working group of on the issue of combating international terrorism, a government to government agreement on extradition and exchange of criminals between Tajikistan and China along with managing a convention on privileges and immunities of the UN specialized agencies have been set to the agenda of the next sitting of the Sixth session of the lower chamber of Tajik parliament’s Fourth Convocation, stated Sultonov. “The Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies was adopted by UN General Assembly on November 21, 1947 to extend similar privileges to the specialized agencies of the United Nations. This convention has been ratified by 126 states” (Yuldoshev 2015:1-2).

External Powers Determining Tajikistan-Pakistan Relations:

USA:

Considering the historical and cultural connections with CARs, Pakistani people started believing that Central Asia is the heartland of Islam. As a Muslim nation it helps Pakistan to grow relation with CARs. Down turn relation with the U.S led Pakistan to come closer to the CARs when U.S put pressure on Pakistan on nuclear issue. The U.S blamed Pakistan for helping terrorists to run their activities in Indian Kashmir. As a sign of discontentment, U.S President George H.W. Bush in October, 1990 stopped the aid of \$564 million amending ‘Pressler Amendment’ which provided to Pakistan as economic and military Package. U.S stopped the delivery of F-16 fighter aircrafts to Pakistan. U.S

also blamed China of providing medium range M 11 missile launchers to Pakistan and for that reason U.S imposed sanctions on both China and Pakistan. Along with America's negative attitude on Pakistan, India's opposition to Pakistan's nuclear programme developed stress in Pakistan's diplomacy. To overcome these situations, Pakistan decided to grow strategic relations with newly independent CARs. For Pakistan, CARs remained as good option to prevent the geo-strategic obstacles in her path. In this regard, "on January 24, 1991 Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Mirza Aslam Beg called for a strategic consensus with the newly independent CARs to counterbalance the Indian threat and US unilateralism. Before his retirement on August 17, 1991 General Beg established a cell to closely watch the developments in Central Asia" (Bhatty 2008:75).

Supporting General Beg's ideas on Central Asia, media experts also fostered their vision of closer relationship between Pakistan and Central Asia. Scholars have put forward their ideas of developing a common wealth consisting Central Asian Republics Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Moreover it has also been suggested to draw a concept of the 'United States of Hilal' which includes Muslim countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan.

The Central Asian countries (under the umbrella of USSR), during the cold war, had no significant role in the tense relationship between USSR and USA. In addition to this, they were also nonchalant on the relation of USSR's with other countries like Turkey, China and Iran. The discovery of oil energy resources in the Caspian Sea which aroused interest of major oil thirsty international countries and their companies into this region, America being one among them. Consequently, the region of Caspian Basin turned into a matter of national interest between both major powers USA-USSR, which led to 'tension' between these powers. Affecting the Central Asian socio-economic configuration of Ferghana Valley became the cauldron of conflict. The Caspian Sea became a 'battle field' between and among different groups and powers during this period. Civil war in Tajikistan coincided with the war in Afghanistan giving more opportunities and strategic interest to the global powers to get engaged in this region in the name of international security concerns. Dwindling political and economic reforms entangled with rising social

problems paved the way for the emergence of radical groups with the support of foreign Islamic networks and generated military organization like *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (IMU) and *Hizb-ut-Tehrir*. The prime agenda of the IMU was to overthrow the secular government of Uzbekistan which later with a greater ambition transformed into a terrorist organization wanting to establish a pan Islamic Caliphate across Central Asia for which it joined forces with the Taliban. After the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, these radical extremist forces in Afghanistan and Central Asia came to the forefront of worldwide attention (Hill 2002).

China

Security, trade and cooperation in the energy sector are of prime objectives of both China and Pakistan. China's role in the development of multi-billion dollars Gwadar Port in the Arabian Sea in Baluchistan province of Pakistan is intended to channelize trade and commerce between Central Asia and Pakistan through its north-western province of Xinjiang. Development of Karakorum Highway is considered to be a major breakthrough. In spite of this both countries follow independent policies towards Central Asia. Uyghur separatist movement in Xinjiang has created trouble for China for a long time and due to this it viewed Pakistan with suspicion as Pakistan supported Taliban. For this reason, it apprehended that Uyghur militants can get support from the Taliban and find a safe haven in Afghanistan. China extended its support to Pakistan for 'war on terror' along with Pakistan's position on renouncing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. China also considered US military presence in Afghanistan in Central Asia as a strategic threat to its security and attempt to encircle China (Asif 2011:5-6).

Construction of Gwadar Port with the help of Chinese technical and financial aid has become a focal point in Pakistan-China relation. This Port is located at the mouth of the Persian Gulf that is a major source of hydrocarbon resources thus making Gwadar peculiar for Chinese interest in the region as it will not only help it to get energy supplies from the Persian Gulf but also to demonstrate its power in the Indian ocean. China is the largest consumer of oil resource after US. Therefore, Gwadar becomes significant for Chinese economic endeavors. This project will also bring substantial benefits to Pakistan as according to an estimate, it will be getting around 60 billion dollars of revenues every

year playing the role of a transit trade in the coming 20 years. In the last decade, financial and commercial cooperation between China and Pakistan has accelerated significantly. In the period of 2000-2010, bilateral trade between these two countries grew profusely. They planned to increase their bilateral trade to 10 million dollars within 5 years since 2010. Currently a number of Chinese companies are working in Pakistan on more than 200 projects. Some of them are mega projects being jointly under taken by China and Pakistan like the ‘Thar Coal Project’, ‘Bhasha Dam’, upgradation of Karakoram Highway, in addition to development of Gwadar Port and the ‘Saindak Gold and Copper Project’. As rightly put by scholars,

“The development of Gwadar Port in Pakistan can also bring about new opportunities in Pakistan’s relationship with the Central Asian countries which could utilize the port to promote their trade globally. Currently Afghanistan’s 85 per cent exports are sent through Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan fulfils 15 per cent of Afghanistan’s import needs. The strong bilateral trade will be strengthening when there is peace in Afghanistan, which will also encourage greater Pakistani investments in Afghanistan” (Khan and Islam 2013:127-128).

The 19th century ‘Great Game’ between British India and Russian Empire in which Afghanistan was used as a buffer state between these imperialist powers brought Wakhan Corridor into limelight as it divided British India from the Soviet Central Asia. Accordingly, since then, no territories under the then British rule have touched Central Asia directly. However ‘One Belt One Road’ (OBOR) initiative of China along with China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have facilitated Pakistan’s chances of getting access to Tajikistan through from Gilgit-Baltistan through Xinjiang (China) by using the Karakoram Highway. Moreover it will help Pakistan to bypass Afghanistan to access Tajikistan. So Tajikistan is considered to be Pakistan’s gateway to Central Asia as being the closest Central Asian neighbour to Pakistan. Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan also garnered significant importance in ensuring Pakistan’s linkages with China-Central Asia for the greater geo-economic prospect of Pakistan (Mishra 2017).

Russia

Russia's relationship with Pakistan went through serious ups and downs since a long time. During the cold war period, Pakistan's inclination towards USA made Russia wary of Pakistan's strategic intentions. After mid 1960s, it was the Soviet Union which disapproved the US military aid to Pakistan. Soviet Union registered its objection to the government of Pakistan at the time when it was negotiating with United States to procure military aid. In response to the Soviet concerns, Pakistan denied of any negotiation with the United States going on for air bases on its land and assured that it would not take any unfriendly steps towards USSR. However, Pakistan stated that in order to secure its interest and territory it would adopt and take any measure being essential and suitable. During the formation of SEATO and CENTO, Soviet Union strongly objected to Pakistan's participation in these military alliances. According to the then Soviet Prime Minister, SEATO was aimed at preservation of imperialism and suppression of national liberal movements and interfering in the affairs of Asian countries like People's Republic of China (Chaudhary 1956:73-74).

Soviet domination over Central Asian Republics and Pakistan's inclination towards the western bloc in the Cold War period impeded the way of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Central Asia. Pakistan's relations with Soviet Union were not always been cordial. Being the playground of the global power rivalry and changing geo-political sphere of Central Asia obstructed the development of good relations between Russia and Pakistan. Attempts were made to improve relations during the Zia-Ul-Haq regime in Pakistan. But after 9/11, Russia's relation with Pakistan improved which also gave boost to the developing relations between Pakistan and Central Asia. Since Central Asia is considered one of the most strategic and sensitive area from Russian point of view in many regards, therefore, it always maintained serious security check by installing military forces in these region. Witnessing the legacy of India's relations with Soviet Union, Pakistan always termed Soviet policies as pro-India (Asif 2011:5).

In 2003, Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf concluded his visit to Moscow which was the first visit of any Pakistani leader in more than three decades. He described it as

the fresh start in the Russia –Pakistan relations. In a press brief in Moscow, he said that both countries have decided to reenergize their relationship by leaving behind the old negative experiences. Moreover, emphasizing on the importance of Russia as a partner he stated that “Russia is well placed to play a key role in the resolution of disputes and improving relations between India and Pakistan” (BBC 6th February, 2003). Russia has always been fearful of Chechen rebels joining hands with militant outfits in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Therefore, correcting the long term suspicious relation that it shared with these countries could be helpful in reducing Russia’s concerns related to its security challenges.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the countries in the South Asian region whose importance can never be ignored. Its location at the confluence of Central Asia and South Asia has made it vulnerable for being ‘Chessboard’ of geo-political game play. After 9/11 incident, alarmed security situation in and around Afghanistan has negatively affected the regional trade and chances of bilateral cooperation. Afghanistan plays crucial role as the most convenient way for developing trade and works as a bridge connecting Central Asia and different parts of the world. For example, it connects South Asia, Middle East, African countries and South East Asian nations. But the difficulty is that CARs and Afghanistan are landlocked countries which are completely dependent on Pakistan to access the sea route through Gwadar and Karachi Port. Afghanistan faces adverse geo-political situation in trade and transport due to militancy and terrorism which is a major hurdle in accelerating its developmental initiatives. Therefore, progress and prosperity of the whole region is dependent on the collective efforts made by CARs, Afghanistan and Pakistan to make sure to abolish the mounting security situations, worsening law and order and internal turbulences of these countries. Brohi (2015) states that “almost all of these Republics since independence passed through serious challenges due to terrorism, religious extremism, separatism, drug trafficking and organized crimes which were some of the major reasons that seriously hampered the economic progress and development of these countries” (Brohi 2015).

Ongoing instability in Afghanistan haunts the development process of the region and particularly Afghan political, economic and security issues affect Tajikistan and Pakistan. Drug trafficking and spread of religious extremism from Afghanistan to Tajikistan is very critical for the Tajik security due to long and porous border that it shares with Afghanistan. Therefore, Afghanistan posed a serious threat to the security concern of its Tajik neighbour. However, ethnic conflicts within the Central Asian Republics have propelled the prospects of sheltering militant groups in their own territories. Situation changed after the decline of Taliban regime when Tajikistan built much better bilateral relations with its immediate southern neighbour. IMU backed by Taliban was declared as a terrorist group which reduced internal security risks of Tajikistan for some time. Recently, Pakistani Taliban has been providing training and shelter to these terrorist groups. Uncontrolled trafficking of opium and heroin from Afghanistan to Tajikistan and then to Russia and Europe still poses serious challenge to the internal security and development of Tajikistan (GlobalSecurity.org).

It is almost impossible for Pakistan to anticipate development of a smooth connection to Tajikistan through Afghanistan without normalizing its terms with its arch rival India. Because of India's increased presence in Afghanistan and in Central Asia, Pakistan considers it a greater threat encircling it from two sides. From the very beginning India has been struggling to persuade Pakistan to let it connect to Afghanistan through Pakistani land route to develop its relations with Central Asia for energy and trade. But Pakistan has disappointed India's efforts every time because Pakistan does not want India to have access to CARs. On several occasions, India has urged Pakistan to allow transit of Indian goods to Afghanistan but Pakistan negated this effort as it cannot see India and Afghanistan coming together. In top level official visits between India and Afghanistan, the issue of connectivity remained the top most theme. In 2015, in a bilateral meeting held between President Ghani of Afghanistan and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in which PM Modi stated that India is ready to welcome Afghan trucks loaded with Afghani items at the Indian check post at Attari. He further said that India's direct land route access to Afghanistan could turn it into a hub that can connect diverse regions of Asia and beyond. India also expressed its willingness to join the successor agreement to Afghan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement (APTTA), which would revamp the

ancient trade routes of South Asian countries. Development of 'Chabahar Port' in Iran with the help of India would connect India to Afghanistan and then further to Central Asia. Pakistan is keen to reach out to Tajikistan but due to lack of cooperation with Afghanistan it is not coming into reality (Sharma 2015).

India

Pakistan's close relations with America during the cold war period became responsible for strained relations with Soviet Union while it became a positive development for India's relation with Soviet Union. After 1991, independence of Central Asian Republics opened ways of building cooperation for Pakistan. Pakistan envisioned materializing a Muslim security belt from Turkey to its own territory including the Central Asian Republics. This was aimed at securing strategic depth and new reliable partners supporting Pakistan's stand and interest in Afghanistan and on Kashmir. However, this policy of Pakistan did not work whole time with regard to CARs as they did not respond well to the Islamic policies of Pakistan. These Republics have a secular outlook with heavy influence of Sufism and tribal culture keeping aside any tendency of fundamentalism. Pakistan's ambitions in CARs seemed to fail until it realized that aggressive policies to launch bilateral relations could not fructify. India's growing strategic relations with Tajikistan post 9/11 made Pakistan worried and triggered it to develop relations with Tajikistan. India's presence at the Ayni Airbase in Tajikistan raised alarm for Pakistan's security strategists as they feared that it could be used against them. India's growing presence in Afghanistan and Tajikistan has been seen as a threat from Pakistani perspective. Regarding this, Pakistan's President Gen. Pervez Musharraf in a national television telecast warned India to stay away from the region. He again raised the issue of India's military presence in Tajikistan when he met with his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon in 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This issue became so stressful for Pakistan that Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov paid a visit to Pakistan in January 2004 to assure that Indian military presence in Tajikistan did not have any intention to harm Pakistan. It is important to note here that Pakistan's policy did not change much though it emphasized more on trade and cultural relations than it did earlier. In this region Pakistan pursued a dual policy. On one hand it wants to extend cooperation on fighting terrorism while it supports terrorist groups and uses them as a tool of

extending influence in the region. However, after getting permanent membership of SCO in 2017 both India and Pakistan would have a greater role to play in Central Asia by aligning with two great powers-Russia and China. According to Sharma (2014),

“Pakistan is also looking forward to provide the landlocked Central Asian Republics access to sea through its Gwadar Port. This seems to rival Indian attempts to provide Tajikistan access to Iran’s Chabahar port via Afghanistan. The connecting route will be Chabahar-Kabul-Kunduz-Badakhshan. Despite Pakistan’s efforts to have a robust policy in Central Asia, it must be mentioned that the Central Asian countries (especially Tajikistan) remain wary because of its support for radical elements” (Sharma 2014:610).

India’s interest in Central Asia is directly linked with security and political stability of the region. Due to India’s Kashmir problem it cannot separate itself from any political development that takes place in Central Asia. Because any Islamic extremist insurgency activities in this region has the potential of affecting extremist outfits in Kashmir. Pakistan’s antagonism toward India since its independence along with India’s active role in the East Pakistan movement, have propelled Pakistan to sponsor terror activities in Kashmir. Kashmir issue is very critical for India’s foreign policy as it is central to the peace and security of whole Muslim population living across India (Stobdan 2000:96-98).

Therefore, it can be concluded that Central Asia stands geo-strategically very important for India. An unstable Afghanistan is serious issue influencing the peace and security of India. Afghanistan along with Pakistan continues to be the main propagators of stimulating the destabilization in the Central Asian Republics and also in India. The deteriorating security of Kashmir is highly affected by the cross border support to terrorist groups. External powers provided arms, ammunition and financial support to the terrorist organisations in order to fulfill their own strategic objectives by creating instability in Central and South Asia. Therefore, India’s view on Pakistan using Islam as a tool to gain strategic depth in Central Asia and Afghanistan proved to be true because other Muslim nations also are cautious and wary of the same problem (Singh 1995:55).

Iran

Iran used the tool of cultural and linguistic connections to gain influence over the CARs in the post-Soviet period. As a result, Central Asian countries like Tajikistan signed agreement with Iran on March 25, 2008 in Dushanbe to establish the Economic Council of the Persian-Speaking Union where the Foreign Ministers of the respective countries took part. For Iran, Tajikistan provides the most lucrative ground to establish bilateral relations on the basis of Persian culture and history which is rooted in Tajikistan. It helped Iran to project Iranian ideas in Tajikistan's soil. All these factors helped it to grab the market of Tajikistan. Iran comes second after China in terms of investments in Tajikistan. Two important projects between Tajikistan and Iran are the 'Sangtuda-2' hydroelectric power station and 'Istiqlol Tunnel'. It is also preparing the 'Shurabad' hydroelectric power plant project for implementation along with planning to construct several other small power plants. Iran with the cooperation of Russia is financing construction of the Rogun power plant, the largest in the Central Asian region. Iran is helping Tajikistan in developing highways and railways which will connect Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Rogun-Mazar-e-Sharif-Herat-Mashhad power transmission line and other facilities. According to Luzianin (2009),

“The experts and politician of Iran and Tajikistan have discussed the idea of creating Farsi-speaking Union of nations, which would include Afghanistan in addition to Iran and Tajikistan. In particular, this issue was raised during the March 2009 visit to Tehran by Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon during a tripartite meeting of the heads of state of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran. There is no language barrier between us, except the language is called Dari in Afghanistan, Tajik in Tajikistan and Persian in Iran” (Luzianin 2009: 4-5).

Iran was one of the first countries which recognised the independence of Tajikistan and also established an embassy in Dushanbe. In 1992, it provided training to a group of Tajik diplomats from Tajikistan along with building cooperation in other fields. Bilateral cooperation between these two countries has been instrumental in the field of mass media and sports sector. Iran also helped in the construction of several new mosques in Tajikistan. In the 1990s, their bilateral relation was limited to the fields of cultural

developments such as holding of Iranian film festivals, art exhibition etc. in Dushanbe. Iran also used Tajikistan as the place to hold international conference on culture and Tajik language. However, obstacles to such cultural development between two countries came in the form of Arabic alphabet which can be read by only a small portion of Tajik population. However, in spite of ideological differences between the Islamic regime in Iran and the secular communist government in Tajikistan, the then president Nabiyeu actively built neighbourly relations with Iran. In 1992, when Nabiyeu's position was fading, he openly stressed on the cultural and religious ties between the two countries.

Development of Chabahar Port of Iran with the help of India with an intention to build connection through Afghanistan to Tajikistan, have made Pakistan apprehensive of Indian ambitions. However, Iran and Pakistan have majority of Shias and Sunni Muslim population respectively. In Pakistan, killing of Shia Muslims has also affected its ties with Iran recently. India-Iran-Tajikistan trilateral cooperation in the field of trade and transit has also brought strains in Pakistan's foreign policy objectives. Iran's role in the peace and conflict reconciliation in Tajikistan has been constructive when it provided food and shelter to the Tajik refugees of civil war. And also, "after the civil war, relations between Iran and new government in Dushanbe included efforts to develop a 'modus vivendi' as well as periodic recriminations. Iran worked with Russia in attempting to negotiate a peace agreement between the Tajik government and the opposition. In July 1995, Tajikistan opened its embassy in Tehran, one of its few outside the former Soviet Union" (Curtis 1996).

Conclusion

Central Asian countries have always wanted to use their geographical and economic capabilities in order to divest themselves of the Soviet period socio-political and economic dependence. In this regard, Tajikistan has aspired to become the conjoint country between Central and South Asia due to its privileged location. However, this location itself has its consequences. Bordering Afghanistan is the main reason why Tajikistan is wary of indulging itself in the South Asian region. But after the US intervention in Afghanistan, Tajikistan-Pakistan relations witnessed normalization due to

low risks of security threats which had been high due to Pakistan's involvement in creating instability in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Realizing the complementarity of each other in the post 9/11 period, both countries are mending their ties and building cooperation in various fields with the support of regional and international powers.

CHAPTER-3
ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Economic stability of Tajikistan has been fluctuating due to various factors such as political instability, irregular implementation of structural reforms, corruption, technical incompetency, weak governance and heavy international debt. This country has the lowest per capita GDP (Gross Domestic Product) amongst of all independent Central Asian states. The Tajik civil war shattered the economic infrastructure of the country and brought down its industrial and agricultural production. Causing mass unemployment in the working age population of the country, it became necessary for them to go abroad to get employed in order to support their families. More than 2 million Tajiks work abroad, especially in Russia making huge contribution to their families through remittances which also constitutes almost 50 percent of the Tajikistan's GDP. Tajikistan has only 7 percent of cultivable land, which is mostly being used to produce cotton. Therefore, Tajikistan is bound to import around 60% of its food products from other countries mostly through rail. Tajikistan is not very affluent in mineral resources and hydrocarbons. However, abundance of water resources makes it in a well-off position in the hydroelectric production. Mineral resources such as gold, silver, uranium and tungsten are found on moderate scale. Industrial sector mainly comprises of small outdated food processing factories, small scale industries, hydro power plants and a large aluminium plant, all of which are operating below their capacity due to lack of proper mechanism and technical advancements. It has also been estimated by some experts that illegal drug trafficking contributes to approximately 30 to 50 percent of the total GDP of Tajik economy. Hydropower production capacity of Tajikistan is striving to boom with the financial support of Russia and Iran. The government of Tajikistan is pushing hard to develop its hydropower capabilities to reduce its dependence on electricity supply from Uzbekistan by developing Roghun Dam. Although construction at Roghun dam started in the Soviet period but at the time of independence of these Republics, it was shelved. Later with the support of some major investors, Tajik government resumed the construction. Though the World Bank feasibility report of July 2014 estimated that this project will be completed in 8 to 12 months, but it could not be completed in its estimated time period. This dam will not only cater to the energy need of Tajikistan but also suffice to its energy export. However, Uzbekistan has been seriously opposing the construction of this dam by stating that it will obstruct the irrigation facilities of cotton

crops in Uzbekistan. This became the main reason of damaged bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. As a result Uzbekistan took some extreme step to demonstrate its objection, when as it closed one of its railway lines southern Kyrgyzstan in 2011, which fuelled the Commodities prices in Tajikistan jolting its economy (Research and Development Department of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

Inspite of having a slow-moving economy since independence, Tajikistan developed its external trade relations because it is not self-sufficient and a considerable part of its basic consumer products is not being produced in the country. Moreover, its mountainous terrain, physically landlocked and having no vital source of energy resources like oil and gas have made it obligatory to find other ways to develop its economy. Its imports are far higher than its exports. Therefore, it is necessary to develop its export capacity in order to balance its trade. It has potential to access high yielding markets of Russia, CARs, China, Turkey and Middle East countries. Tajik governments' efforts to reduce distance to these prospective markets are the key elements of trade policy of Tajikistan. Tajikistan has the potential of developing the sectors of high value added agricultural products like fruits, vegetables, herbs and honey. "With a foreign trade turnover higher than 120% of GDP, it is the most open economy in the CIS and one of the most open low income economies in the world. For all these reasons, the development of external trade relations is a key priority of economic policy for the government of the republic of Tajikistan" (Rahimzoda 2012).

Pakistan's economic situation has been quite similar to Tajikistan except its source and usage of financial aid. Pakistan's economic motivation is dependent on developing bilateral trade in the areas ranging from raw materials and manufactured goods to development of communications and contracting for regular supplies. Economic development of Pakistan is also based on the fact that Pakistani business people felt that by setting up electricity grids and oil pipelines, it can be hugely benefitted from the transit fees that it will acquire, besides it meeting its energy demands by letting countries of Central and South Asian region use its territory for transit of their goods and services. In addition to this, its industrial growth can be benefitted from obtaining the surplus of

the energy supplies of Central Asian countries of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan (Javed and Naseem 2014:39).

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Pakistani government sent two delegations to the newly independent former Soviet Republics in late 1991 for developing its economic and diplomatic ties. These high-status delegations were headed by Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali and Abdul Razzak Ramani, the then Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Chairman of the Forum of the Restoration of the Pakistan's Economy, respectively. These delegations to the CARs were aimed at setting Pakistan's economic priorities with Central Asia by developing bilateral trade in different areas (Alam 2010:6).

With an intention to win over and appease the Central Asian interests in Pakistan, Sardar Assef Ali visited to Tajikistan at the start of his tour to the CARs. Following his visit to Dushanbe, a bilateral agreement was signed between the two governments as the first step to initiate their bilateral relations. Tajikistan agreed to export its hydroelectricity to Pakistan while in return Pakistan promised to provide it with a cement plant. Tajikistan also wanted Pakistan's help to develop its communication infrastructure so that it could easily connect with the rest of the world. The meeting between the two countries led to signing of a MoU.

1. A number of fields were identified where both countries agreed to work.
2. Tajik government signed a barter agreement with the Tabbani Corporation of Pakistan for the supply of cotton and aluminium in lieu of wheat, rice, tea and meat from Pakistan estimated to be fifty million dollars.
3. It sought to develop international chartered transportation between Dushanbe and Karachi with the joint efforts of Tajikistan and Tabbani Corporation.
4. It was agreed to set up of Tajikistan's telecommunications system by Arfeen International of Pakistan.
5. It was agreed that a Pakistani private company shall set up a five star hotel in Tajik capital city of Dushanbe.

On his return to Pakistan, Assef Ali mentioned that during the discussion of bilateral relations with Tajikistan, issue of Afghanistan came up as Tajikistan shares border with it

and internal political insecurities in Afghanistan have direct impact on Tajikistan (Olcott 2007:26-27).

In July 1992, prime minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif signed an agreement with the then Tajik President of Tajikistan, Rehman Nabiyeu for the improvement and promotion of relations between them. On the same day, a protocol to establish Tajikistan-Pakistan Joint Commission was signed to promote comprehensive and mutually profitable cooperation between the two countries. From 1997 onwards, Tajikistan, being the richest in its hydropower potential, pledged to supply its surplus hydroelectricity through Wakhan in Afghanistan to Pakistan. This electricity is projected to be used for power consumption of the northern region of Pakistan. Pakistan agreed to give a loan of 500 million dollars for this project but due to its own economic circumstances it had not been able to provide this loan. Pakistan also promised to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to provide them access to the Karachi port through Afghanistan and Peshawar. Considering the importance of the Central Asian region, Pakistan did not want to lose any chance of obtaining political and economic leverages from this region. All these prospective developments were designed at strengthening relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan (Reetz 1993:38).

A ten year bilateral agreement between Tajikistan and Pakistan was signed on 31st March 1994 for the facilitation of investment and maintaining regional security. In the same year, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon visited Pakistan, during which Pakistan raised the supplier's credit for Tajikistan from 10 million dollars to 20 million dollars. An offer was also put forward before Tajikistan to join the quadrilateral agreement between Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan for developing cooperation in reviving old 'Silk Route' for better trade prospects between the two regions. Since this time, both countries have been in regular contact regarding the development of connecting both the regions through a proper road link via Afghanistan but it could not be implemented fully till now, as Afghanistan problem is still critical for the region's overall development (Pakistan Horizon 1994:133-74).

Tajikistan Economy

The Gorbachev regime in Soviet Union ushered in economic and cultural reforms under which Central Asian republics got an opportunity to systematize their foreign business

activities. Tajik government at that time under the Presidentship of Nabiyeu was interested in operating foreign businesses but it could only reach four agreements till 1991. Later in 1992, six more agreements were concluded by Tajikistan. In this period, one of the joint-enterprise agreements brought US to invest in Tajikistan in the fur and leather product business. Israel also seemed interested in doing business with Tajikistan when it invested into the irrigation projects in Tajikistan as early as in 1992. Furthermore, Tajikistan had a deal with two Austrian companies for constructing an industrial unit to produce assembled housings and other buildings. This project was financed by the Tajik export funds raised from cotton exports, and it was estimated around 3.5 million dollars. A similar agreement was signed with Czechoslovakia in 1992 in the field of construction. An Italian company also started the construction of a textile factory in Tajikistan in 1995. In this regard, the most important development that took place was a foreign undertaking between Tajikistan and a Canadian firm to work together on ‘Zarafshon Mining Project’ to extract and process gold from 3 very important sites in Panjakent region of north-western Tajikistan. They also agreed to explore an area of around 3,000 kilometres for other deposits of gold. This agreement was concluded in 1994 and production began in January 1996. At the end of the Civil War, Tajik government had stressed upon cultivating foreign relations with a number of Western and Middle-Eastern countries along with South-East Asian nations of China and other former Soviet Republics. “In 1991, an Afghan company opened shops in Dushanbe and the Northern city of Istaravshan to sell clothing, textiles, fruits, nuts that the company shipped into Tajikistan from Afghanistan and other countries. It also planned to export the textiles woven in Tajikistan. In 1992, fourteen people were sent from Tajikistan to Turkey to study Banking procedures” (Curtis 1996). Therefore, all economic developments that have been taking place on the eve of independence in Tajikistan provided opportunities to develop their bilateral relationship outside the former Soviet zone.

In contemporary times, Tajik economy is starting anew, undergoing developments in its unexplored economic sectors. It has also adopted reforms in its agricultural sector and arranged a number of facilities for farmers. In this regard, over half a billion dollars of debt of farmers has been waived (Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2015). Tajikistan’s nominal GDP holds 146th position and its national debt was around 2,909

million dollars as estimated in 2016. Its public debt per-capita is around 350 US dollars which is of 41.82 percent to GDP ratio. The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) which is used to measure the progress of a country, in the context of Tajikistan was 0.627 points in 2015 which placed it at the 129th place in the table of 188 countries list published by UN. In the ranking of prospective place to do business, Tajikistan is placed at 123rd position which provides objective measures of regulating business for local firms (<https://countryeconomy.com/countries/tajikistan>, 2018).

“Tajikistan’s systematic economic problems are part of the reason that government resources are shrinking. Many sectors are suffering: confidence is low in Tajikistan’s currency; remittances from Russian federation decreased in 2016 due to migration regulations, the real estate market is crashing, and half of all bank loans are non-performing” (ICG October 2017:3-4). In 2017, Tajikistan has issued ‘high yield bonds’ to increase the revenues and due to this, government has distanced itself from working with international financial organizations and donor institutions asking for economic reforms in the country. Though Russian economic crisis is blamed for the economic despair in Tajikistan, traditional economic policies and financial negligence have played decisive role in the economic deterioration of the country over the past decade. According to the Tajik diplomats, lack of accountability has impacted upon the international financial support. For example, in 2016, Tajikistan turned down an offer of up to 200 million dollar in the form of loan and grant from the World Bank due to donor organization asking for reforms into its banking sector which was mainly dominated and operated by the family members and associates of ruling President. Consequently, in that year, neither International Monetary Fund (IMF) nor European Union (EU) granted financial support to Tajikistan. So, “Tajikistan’s successful foray into the bond market has weakened the leverage of donors seeking to impose political conditionality on aid and loans” (ICG October 2017:3-4).

The economic substandard of Tajikistan has been distasteful for the Tajik population as it indirectly affects their socio-economic setup. One third of Tajik population is malnourished which is also the prime cause of the 1/3 of child mortality which is the highest in all the Central Asian Republics. Economic crisis also affects the degree of

corruption and patronage network under the President's aegis. As a result, local population and small scale commercial endeavours are unable to pay bribe to law enforcement officers and government officials. Therefore, in return, these officials behave aggressively because they have also produced bribe while getting the job and now they have to take bribe to sustain their financial outstanding. To sum up, harsh realities of economic desolation in Tajik society have placed a strain over the long ruling authority leading to the autocratic environment where everyone is punished questioning government activities (ICG October 2017:3-4).

Pakistan's Economy

Pakistan is a developing mixed economy consisting mainly of agriculture, light industries and service sector. Pakistan government has put emphasis on the liberalization and privatization of the economic structure since 1990. Having the 5th highest population of the world, Pakistan's Gross National Product is increasing at a higher rate than its population. However, GNP per capita is lowest in Asia but it is highest amongst South Asia. Pakistan's economy is primarily agriculture based where it contributes almost one fourth to GDP and 46 percent of the total labour force is engaged in agricultural production. Wheat and sugarcane are the two prominent crops produced in Pakistan. Rice and cotton are two major crops exported from Pakistan. Manufacturing sector of Pakistan is accountable roughly for 1/5 of the GDP and holds for almost 1/8 of the labour force. Cotton textiles are the main area of manufacturing sector and primary product of export. Extraction industry is mainly controlled by the government and accounts for approximately 0.4 percent of the Pakistan's GDP. Coal, iron ore, low scale of petroleum deposits and substantial amount of natural gas are extracted. Some other minerals such as limestone, chromites and gypsum are also extracted in Pakistan (Economic Cooperation Organization, Guide Book, Tehran 1999).

After the independence of Pakistan, it witnessed economic growth higher than the South Asian economic growth rate. However, as the time went by, economic growth of the country got affected by a number of factors such as political instability, excessive foreign debt, high disparity in export and import structure and problematic implementation of economic policies for many years. Pakistan fought two wars with India in 1965 and in

1971 in which East Pakistan separated from Pakistan and brought its economy at a downturn stage. In the 1970s, Pakistan's economy witnessed disintegration of the country, the nationalization of the industrial sector, high rate of inflation, and a sharp hike in the prices of basic amenities such as oil and gas as well as global economic recession. Moreover, the containment of private initiatives and government's control over all the key decisions became a major drawback for the Pakistani economy causing massive insecurity and decline in investors' confidence. But the economy again got revived in 1980s when government and its policy makers adopted a policy of deregulation bringing back the confidence of the business community in the country. However in 1990s, Pakistan's economic growth again stalled with an average GDP growth of 4.4 percent/year and a stagnant Total Factor Productivity (TFP). There are several factors responsible for the fluctuating economic indicators in Pakistan, weak governance, poorly managed macroeconomic policies and adverse external environment. Pakistani government took steps for de-regularization, privatization and liberalization policies introduced in 1991, but "these reforms and policies were pursued haltingly and sporadically. The recent growth acceleration has also been accompanied by a similar increase in the investment ratio from 15.5 percent of GDP in 2001-02 to 20% in 2005-06. The recent growth acceleration has come largely from an increase in TFP. The contribution of TFP to growth in the last few years is similar or even somewhat higher than in the earlier growth periods" (Chughtai 2015:94-106).

Complimentarity of Economy

Tajikistan is an importer of clothing and textiles, so it gives Pakistan a huge opportunity to enhance its trade relation with Tajikistan by exporting quality textile products as it stands 4th in the list of cotton producers of the World. Pakistan can provide Tajikistan with the shortest possible route and trade and transit corridor to increase its export and import with the South Asian countries and in this process, Pakistan can also generate a huge amount of transit fee and revenues. As Tajikistan is a landlocked country and mainly dependent on Russia and other CARs for its economic aspirations. Therefore, access to the world through Gwadar and Karachi ports of Pakistan can really be beneficial for the overall growth of Tajik economy by opening its trade horizon with the

world. In return, Pakistan expects hydropower energy transmission from Tajikistan to meet energy thrust of its northern areas on cheaper prices. In this way both these countries suffice each other's demands to develop their economic infrastructure and configuration (Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pakistan).

On June 15, 2016, Minister for Water and Power of Tajikistan Khawaja Asif visited Pakistan and while addressing an inaugural session of the 5th two-day Joint Commission on trade, economic and scientific technical cooperation of Pakistan and Tajikistan, he stated that "We are particularly looking for export of heavy engineering goods, surgical instruments and consumer goods being produced in Pakistan under licensing arrangements with international market leaders," (Daily Times, June 15 2016).

Trade between Pakistan and Central Asia can increase as Pakistan can export to these Republics skilled manpower and technical assistance. Moreover, Central Asia can also serve as the prospective market for the small and medium scale industries and consumer products. Entrepreneurs of the both regions are ready to undertake joint projects in various fields. Gwadar port is located at the crossroads of China, Middle East, and Central Asia and for this region Pakistan is highly optimistic about the improvement in its trade and transportation with Central Asia and Tajikistan in particular. Landlocked Tajikistan would gain a lot with the trade facilities offered by the Pakistan through its land and sea routes. A number of joint official agreements regarding the development of infrastructure between Tajikistan and Pakistan and development of railway links are under consideration. In the same way, "the construction of roads and motorways particularly from Peshawar to Afghanistan and then to Central Asian states is one of the plans to develop infrastructure to give a boost to economic ties" (Shaheen 2011:221).

Pakistan's prime interest in Tajikistan is to avail its cheap hydropower. For this an agreement between the two nations were signed in 1992 and Pakistan promised to provide financial aid to construct Roghun in Tajikistan which would provide Pakistan 3,600 MW of electricity and the power transmission would take place via Afghanistan. But this project got delayed due to regional issues. Another interesting development took place in the summer of 1992, when Tajik President R. Nabiyeu visited Pakistan and signed an agreement on trade and economic cooperation in addition to a decision to build

a Peshawar-Jalalabad-Kabul-Kunduz-Tajikistan railroad. He also agreed to create a Commission for scrutinizing the probability of building Khorog-Wakhan-Pakistan highway.

For a long time, all the plans and agreements between the two countries seemed to be theoretical, but with the passage of time and strategic developments that took place in the region, progress in the implementation is possible though most of the projects have passed their deadlines. Furthermore all the rendered support by Pakistan to Tajikistan just after the Soviet disintegration got stalled in 1992 when Tajik civil war broke out and it led to the clogging of bilateral relations. For example, “At that time, Tajikistan was granted a commercial credit of 10 million dollars. But in December 1992, due to civil war in Tajikistan, all these undertakings had to be put on hold. Understanding that its access to the region’s markets depends on rapid settlement of the situation, Pakistan welcomed UN’s peaceful initiatives to halt the conflict” (Kazakova and Komissina 2001).

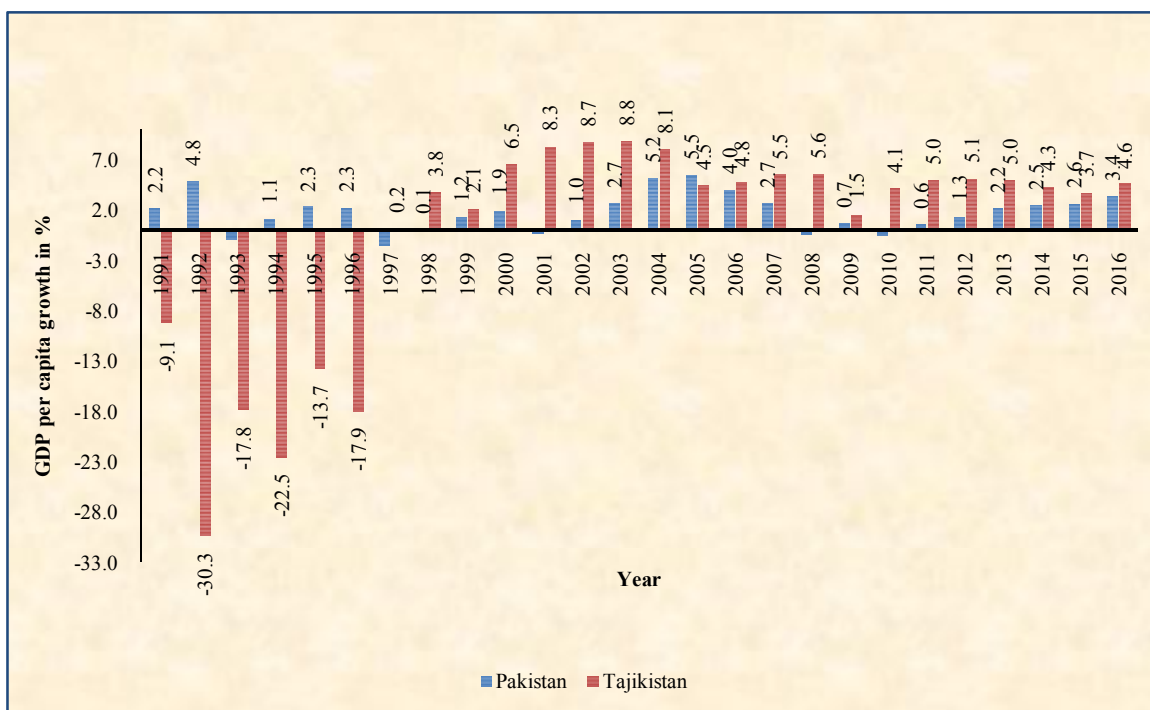
Bilateral Trade

Two countries need to learn and gain from each other experiences in bilateral relations. Bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan have been hindered by a number of factors including Pakistan’s aggressive policies towards Tajikistan during the Soviet period and increasing political and economic instability of Tajikistan from its independence till the end of civil war. The geopolitical and geo-economic convergence of interests binds these countries together and that is why Tajikistan and Pakistan are keen to take their economic and trade relations to higher level by making inroads into each other’s territory. Joint Economic Commission (JEC) between the two and open door policy of Tajikistan have added to the strengthening of bilateral relationship. There are around 50 projects related to agriculture and infrastructure underway between these countries estimated at about 700 million dollars which is considered to be a breakthrough in the mutual beneficial relations. The volume of trade has also enhanced in the last decade due to tremendous efforts made by the governments of Tajikistan and Pakistan (Malik 2015).

GDP per capita growth is given in figure 1. It shows quite fluctuating value from 1991 to 2016. GDP per capita growth was mostly negative for Tajikistan in the last decade of 20th

century with least value of -30.3% in 1992. With start of 21st century it shows slight growth with peak value of 8.8% in 2003. The growth shows a bell shaped curve from 2000 to 2006. From 2010 to 2016 it shows a stable value fluctuating near 4 -5%. Whereas, Pakistan shows throughout positive value from 1991 to 2016 with negative value of -1.7% in 1997, -0.9% in 1993 and -0.4% in 2008 with highest GDP per capita growth of 5.5% in 2005, showing bell shaped curve between 2001 to 2008 and growing phase from 0.6 to 3.4% from 2011 to 2016.

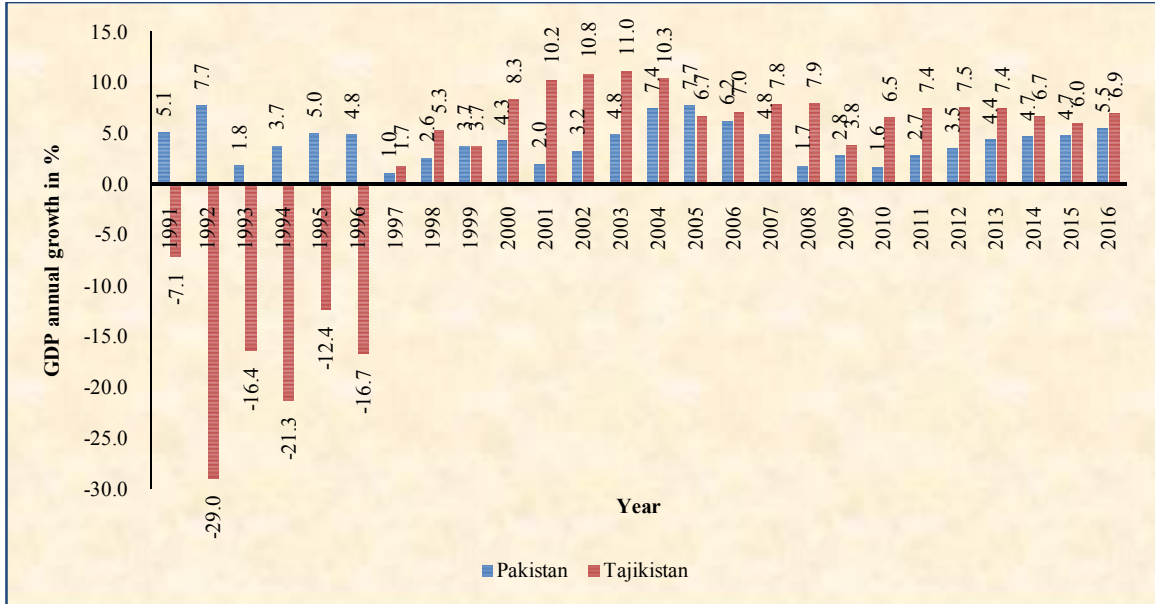
Figure 2: GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)



Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan>

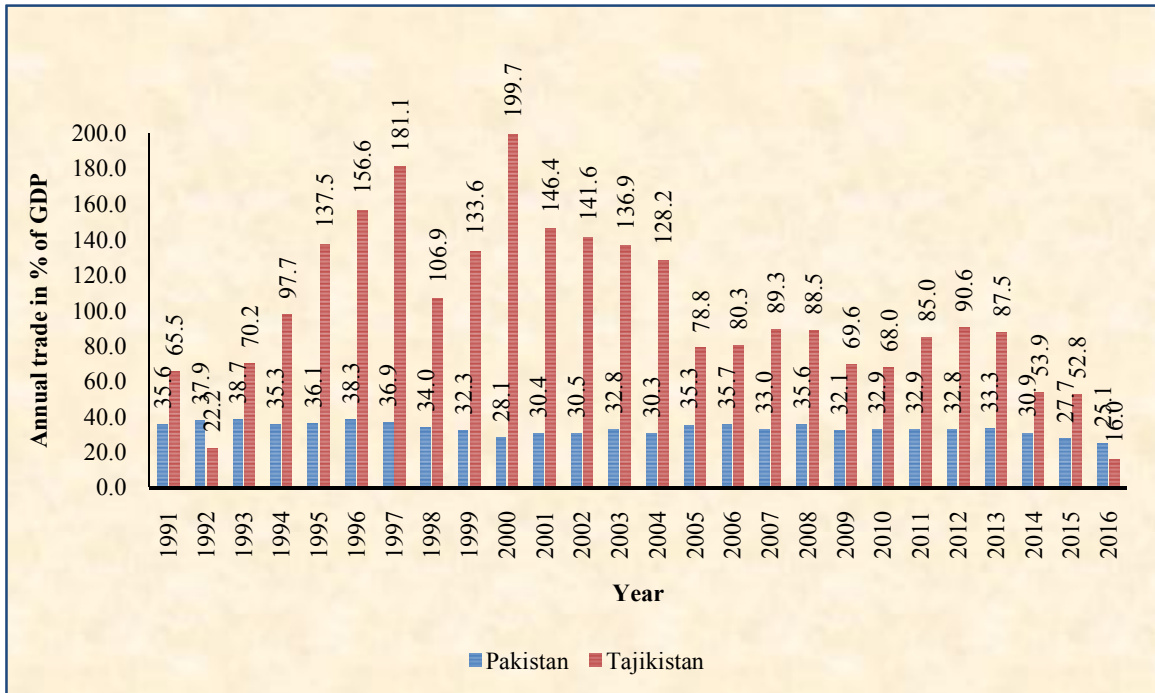
GDP annual growth is shown in figure 2. It follows almost similar pattern as of GDP per capita growth. Tajikistan shows negative growth from 1991 to 1996 with least value of -29.0% in 1992 and bell shaped curve in 2000 to 2005, with peak value of 11% in 2003. From 2010 it shows least fluctuation was value ranges from 6.9 to 7.4%. Pakistan shows throughout positive GDP growth with highest value of 7.7% in 1992. Increasing trend in 1993 to 1996, from 1.8 to 5% and bell shaped curve between 2001 to 2008 with peak value of 7.7% in 2004 and increasing value after 2010 onward from 1.6 to 5.5%.

Figure 2: GDP Growth (Annual %)



Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan>

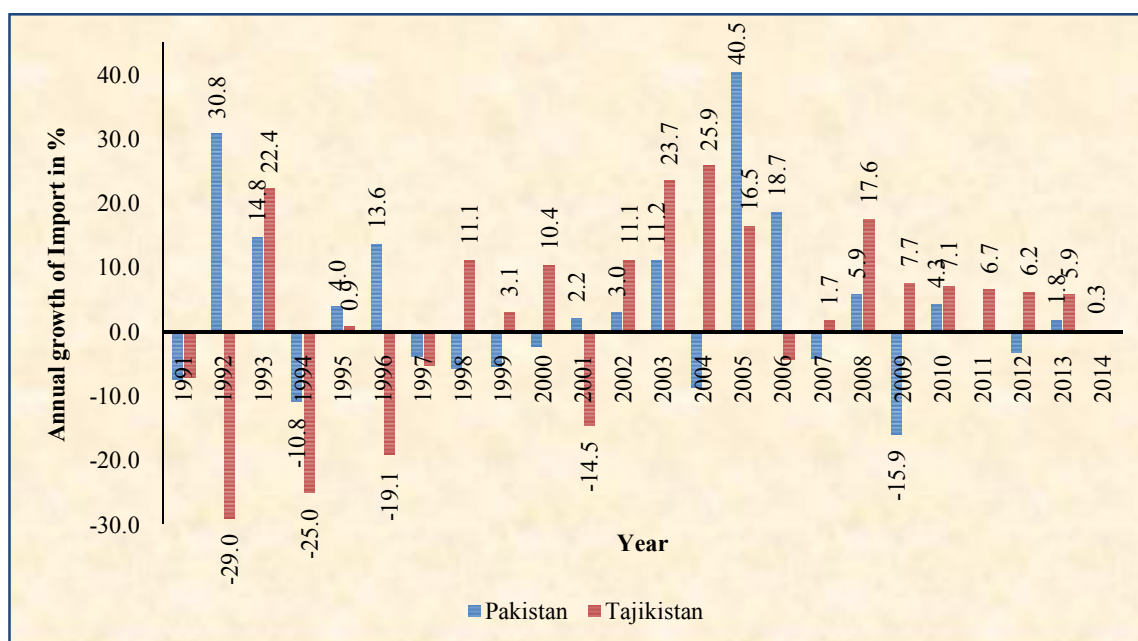
Figure 3: Trade (% of GDP)



Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan>

Trade (% of GDP) is shown in figure 3. It shows stable value for Pakistan mostly near ~30% with least value of 25.1% in 2016 and peak value of 38.7% in 1993. For Tajikistan Trade (% of GDP) shows fluctuating value with least value of 16% in 2016 and peak value of 199.7% in 2000. It shows increased trend from 1992 to 1997 from 22.2% to 181.1% and 106.9 to 199.7% from 1998 to 2000. It shows decline from 2001 (146.4%) to 2005 (78.8%); after that it shows least fluctuation till 2015.

Figure 4: Imports of Goods and Services (Annual % Growth)



(Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan>)

Annual % growth of imports of goods and services is represented in the above figure 4. It mostly shows negative value for Tajikistan with least value of -29.0% in 1992. From 1991 to 2001 it shows mostly negative value with few positive value in year 1993 (22.4%), 1995 (0.9%), 1998 (11.1%) 1999 (3.1%) and 2000 (10.4%). From 2002 to 2004 it shows increasing value from 11.1 to 25.9% and 2009 to 2013 it shows stable value. Pakistan also shows mostly fluctuating value ranging from -15.9 to 40.5% in year 2009 and 2005 respectively. It shows mostly negative value from 1991 to 2000, with few positive value at 1992 (30.8%), 1993 (14.8%), 1995 (4%) and 1996 (13.6%). It shows increasing value from 2001 (2.2%) to 2005 (40.5%) with exception of 2004 (-8.6%).

After 2006 it shows negative overall growth in 2007 (-4.1%), 2009 (-15.9%) and 2012 (-3.1%).

It has also been observed that bilateral trade between these countries has been fluctuating to a certain extent “During fiscal year 2013-14, goods exported by Pakistan to Tajikistan were recorded at 12.96 million dollar against 14.38 million dollars during fiscal year 2012-13. On the other hand, goods imported by Pakistan during fiscal year 2013-14 were recorded at 10.79 million dollars against imports of 24.06 million dollars in fiscal year 2012-13. Although the trade balance has remained in the favour of Tajikistan for long time, in the fiscal year 2013-14, trade balance tilted towards Pakistan by 2.17 million dollars” (Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2015).

Pakistan’s Export to Tajikistan

Pakistan’s export to Tajikistan is represented below through figures from 2003 to 2010 commodity wise.

Table 1: Pakistan’s Export to Tajikistan from 2003 to 2010

Pakistan's export to Tajikistan (US\$ Thousands)								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All Products	235.6	341.22	1518.82	472.23	239.68	273.95	974.7	688.5
Consumer goods	163.38	154	535.42	252.63	239.68	273.92	906.66	608.83
Intermediate goods	72.22	183.93	802.69	198.23			68.03	77.91
Animal	28.95						95.02	
Chemicals	73.19	30.6	276.41		228.44	242.24	389.85	512.68
Hides and Skins	2.25	36.57	55.53	27.03				
Miscellaneous	7.05	0.89	37.11	0.04		0.02	0.01	1.86
Textiles and Clothing	123.19	261.35	764.61	305.87	11.24	16.96	250.09	160.08
Wood	0.97		0.47			5.93	232.2	3.7
Raw materials		3.31	85.24	21.32				
Vegetable		11.81	236.11	139.29		8.8		
Capital goods			95.2					1.72
Food Products			18.14				0.75	10.16

Fuels			50.4					
Mach and Elec			73.93					
Metals			5.21					
Plastic or Rubber			0.91					
Minerals							6.78	

Source: (wits.worldbank.org)

Pakistan's export to Tajikistan is represented below through figures from 2011 to 2016 commodity wise.

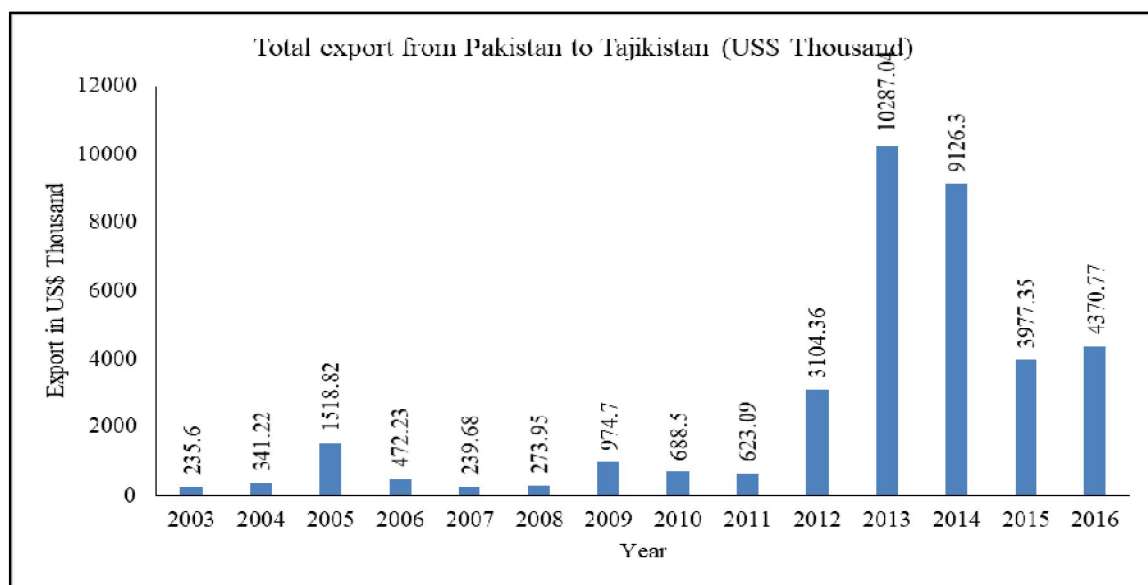
Table 2: Pakistan's Export to Tajikistan from 2011 to 2016

Pakistan's export to Tajikistan (US\$ Thousands)						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
All Products	623.09	3104.36	10287.04	9126.3	3977.35	4370.77
Consumer goods	585.25	2101.14	8686.69	8007.84	3612.74	3889.25
Intermediate goods	37.84	127.17	1040.73	970.56	279.74	63.13
Animal		125.24	1064.04	1717.35	789.21	1041.93
Chemicals	564.54	813.75	912.4	1324.03	1054.96	539.39
Hides and Skins			1.9	0.53		
Miscellaneous		84.49		17.38	13.41	41.63
Textiles and Clothing	45.65	16.12	270.26	211.4	40.62	3.88
Wood	4.08	5.04	4.03	2.65	3.28	1.3
Raw materials		762.4	559.24	133.9	65.13	400.38
Vegetable		948.48	3.85	467.36		215.57
Capital goods		30.81	0.39	14	19.73	18.02
Food Products	8.82	1058.81	7197.08	4373.02	1670.36	2221.83
Fuels						
Mach and Elec.		29.17		10.14		
Metals			21.42	31.25	158.62	289.75
Plastic or Rubber			0.39	24.88	92.48	
Minerals			811.68	945.52	143.14	15.48

Footwear		23.26				
Transportation				0.78	11.28	

Source: (wits.worldbank.org)

Figure 5: Pakistan to Tajikistan Total Export from 2003 to 2016



Source : (wits.worldbank.org)

Pakistan's Import from Tajikistan

Table 3: Pakistan's imports from Tajikistan from 2003 to 2010

Pakistan's Import from Tajikistan (US\$ Thousands)								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All Products	75.64	7585.97	7446.94	3506.67	5787.41	11363.63	3644.08	6184.21
Consumer goods	11.2	2.46	352.8	0.12	8.42	98.25	141.97	97.29
Intermediate goods		291.69	101.4	405.66	53.19	34.23	960.26	699.81
Animal								
Chemicals		12.46		119.45	52.86	81.3	22.62	
Miscellaneous				2.55	3.39		0.07	5.88
Textiles and Clothing	64.44	7241.81	6992.74	3098.34	5725.33	11228.93	2682.13	5477.22
Wood						17.06		
Raw materials	64.44	7255.31	6992.74	3098.34	5720.22	11228.93	2540.67	5386.38

Vegetable	11.2	95.93			0.2			
Capital goods		36.51		2.02	2.45	2.23	1.11	0.73
Food Products				0.12				
Mach and Elec.		36.51			2.2	19.41	1.62	0.73
Metals			454.2	286.21	3.44	16.93	936.53	699.81
Plastic or Rubber		199.26						
Transportation							1.11	

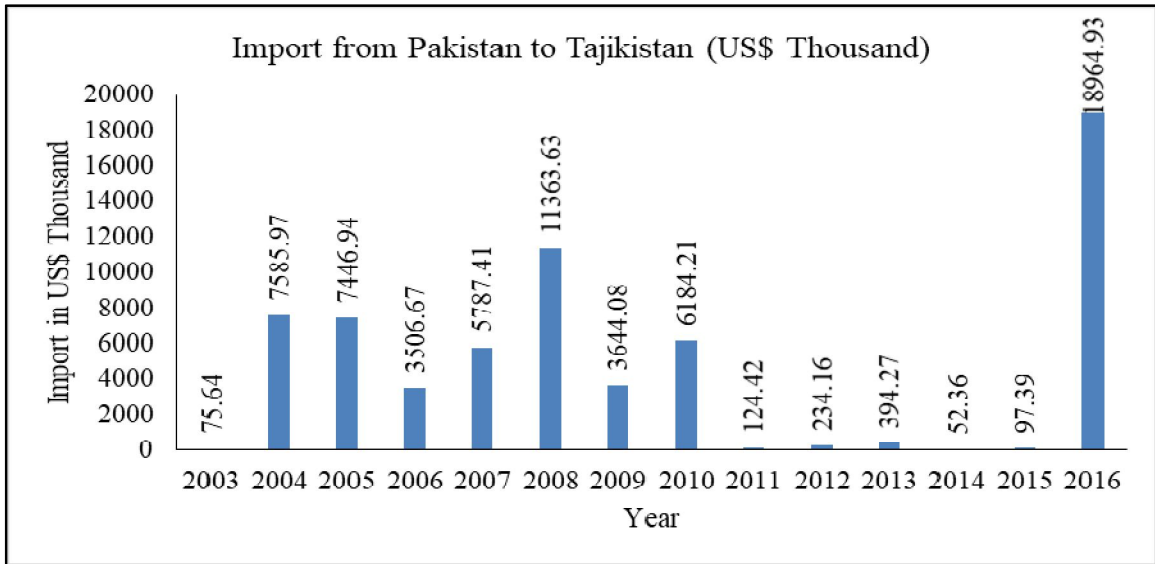
Source :(wits.worldbank.org)

Table 4: Pakistan's Imports from Tajikistan from 2011 to 2016

Pakistan's Import from Tajikistan (US\$ Thousands)						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
All Products	124.42	234.16	394.27	52.36	97.39	18964.93
Consumer goods	112.22	22.68	0.38	4.11	1.87	29.4
Intermediate goods	11.45	194.76		44.78	49.28	7.88
Animal						0.35
Chemicals		53.77		11.67	9.23	8.32
Hides and Skins	2.4					
Miscellaneous	12.06	15.85	1.37	6.17	16.16	0.1
Textiles and Clothing	109.33		364.2	1.29	0.51	18917.03
Wood	0.19			2.91		
Raw materials			364.2	2.91		18917.38
Capital goods	0.44	16.69	29.69	0.43	45.84	10.18
Food Products						
Mach and Elec		15.93	28.14		30.09	10.16
Metals		31.14	0.13	21.3	5.84	5.73
Plastic or Rubber		117.02	0.38	8.59	35.57	
Transportation	0.44	0.46	0.05	0.43		0.02
Stone and Glass						23.23

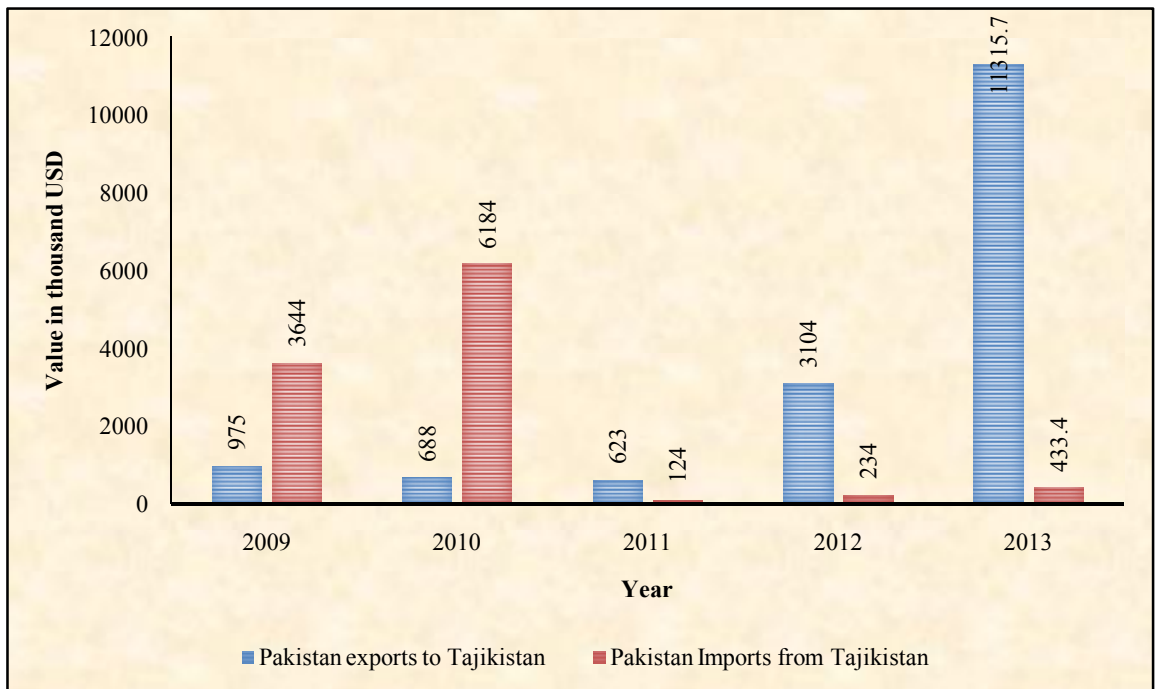
Source :(wits.worldbank.org)

Figure 6: Pakistan's Total Import from Tajikistan from 2003 to 2016



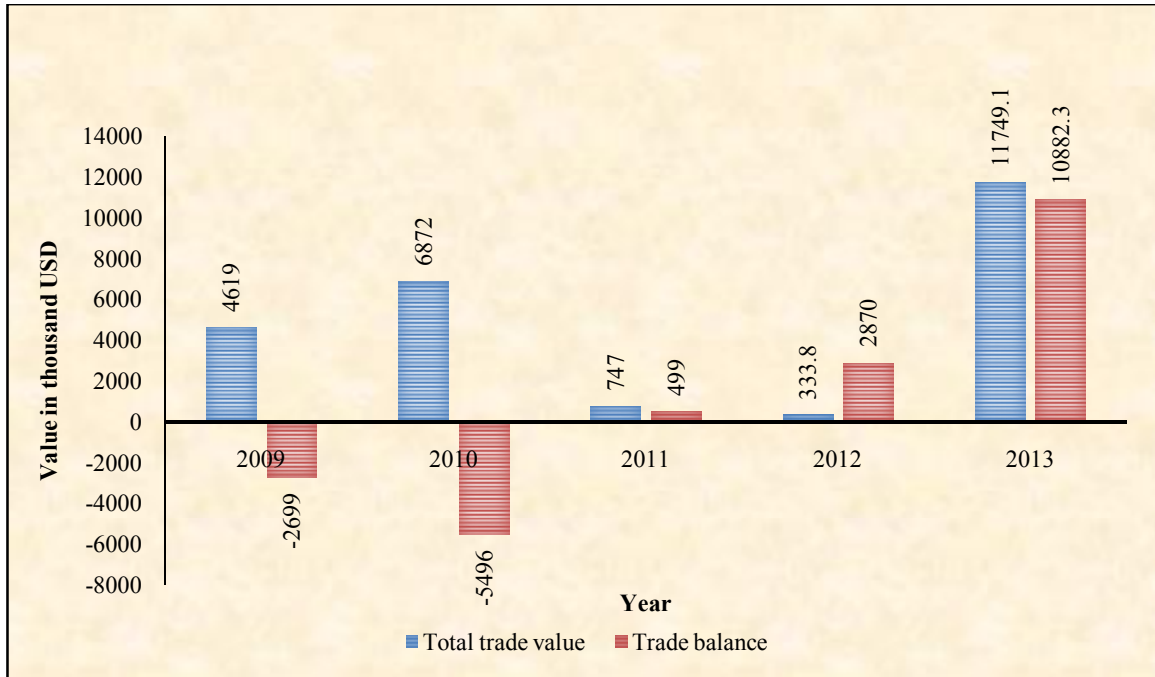
Source : (wits.worldbank.org)

Figure: 7 Pakistan-Tajikistan Trade



Source: (Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pakistan)

Figure: 8 Trade balance between Pakistan and Tajikistan



Source: (Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pakistan)

Pakistan-Tajikistan trade and trade balance is represented below in figure 7 and 8. Pakistan's export to Tajikistan is much lower in 2009 and 2010 in comparison to Pakistan's import from Tajikistan with a trade balance of -2699 and -5496 thousand US dollars in the year 2009 and 2010. Pakistan's export to Tajikistan shows decline from 2009 to 2011 by 36.10% (taking 2009 as base year); whereas Pakistan's import from Tajikistan shows an exponential increase of 70% from 2009 to 2010 (taking 2009 as base year); showing a trade deficit of 104% from -2699 to -5496 thousand US dollars between 2009 and 2010. Trade scenario changes after 2011. Pakistan's export to Tajikistan shows increasing trend from 2011 to 2013 with an increasing value of 1716% from 623 to 11315.7 thousand US dollars. The trade balance shows 22 fold increase with an exponential growth of 2081% change (from 499 to 10882.3 thousand US dollars).

In 2016, Pakistani Ambassador to Tajikistan Tariq Iqbal Soomro in an interview in Dushanbe told that both Tajikistan and Pakistan are working to facilitate bilateral trade with an intention of accelerating its pace from 65 million dollars in 2015 to approximately 500 million dollars. Therefore, both parties discussed to open up the route

from Ishakashim in Tajikistan to Chitral in Pakistan which will help them to carry their goods up to Karachi port along with increasing the exports of Pakistan. He further stated that the Trilateral Transit Agreement between Tajikistan-Pakistan and Afghanistan could not fructify, though could have reduced the non official trade. Therefore, “according to independent estimates, the volume of non-official trade was already ranging around 300-400 million dollars per year, mainly routed through Afghanistan. Tajikistan had already applied for becoming part of the Quadrilateral Agreement on Traffic in Transit (QTTA) for which all four member countries including Pakistan had agreed in principle and it was hoped that Tajikistan would soon join this forum of QTTA (Haidar 2016). The ambassador also briefed about the progress of the CASA-100 Project and anticipated that from June 2018 onwards Pakistan would be getting energy supplies from Tajikistan. However, this project is further delayed. Bringing up the last visit of Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff Gen. Raheel Sharif to Dushanbe, he added that Pakistan had helped Tajikistan in the restoration of the small Arms and Ammunition Factory in 2015 and Military Training institute of the Armed forces of Tajikistan as well. In addition, General Sharif also extended Pakistan’s full support for the capacity building of the Tajik armed forces in order to fight terrorism. Talking about the bilateral trade, Ambassador Soomro stated that the main reason behind the decline of bilateral trade in 2015 between the two countries was the Cement Plant built by China in Tajikistan after which Pakistan’s export of cement to Tajikistan decreased which led to the decline in the gross volume of bilateral trade. However, the bilateral trade declined to the lowest level of 16 million dollars a few years back, but again the trade balance got settled in favor of both countries. Both countries are starving hard to raise the level of bilateral trade and in this regard Joint Ministerial Commissions (JMCs) are working to achieve the projected aim. The period between January to April 2016 witnessed 40 million dollars bilateral trade. It was hoped that in the rest of the year it will cross 65 million dollars mark. Pakistan’s exports to Tajikistan include pharmaceuticals, fruits, vegetables, textile, sugar, rice etc. Keeping in mind a trade exhibition organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) in October 2015, many more exhibitions and trade fairs are expected to be organized in future to boost Pakistan’s exports. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) arranged a month long exhibition in Tajikistan from September to October 2016

in this regard. Joint Ministerial Commission held its meeting in Islamabad in June 2016, where important decisions were taken by both countries in order to increase their bilateral trade and discussed measures to achieve their goals of 500 million dollars of trade between the two sides (Haidar 2016).

Tajikistan and Pakistan need to boost their partnership with China in the development of energy sector. China is also very keen to export electricity to Pakistan because of its heavy investments in Pakistani territory which need heavy power backup. The development of energy networks in order to create a transnational electricity network like North America grid¹ and European grid² will prove to be mutually beneficial. These electricity connections would ensure the sustainable supply of power for future developments and being in partnership with China would ensure lesser international intervention.

Agriculture is the least explored sector of cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan. There are greater hopes of collaboration in agricultural sector as it is the largest sector contributing to the economy of both countries. Tajikistan can get advantage of being a partner of Pakistan in the field of food processing and textiles. Tajikistan is an exporter of cotton and Pakistan is 3rd largest producer of cotton in the world. Pakistan can help Tajikistan by sharing its high yielding technology of cotton production. Absence of a direct air link between these countries has obstructed the cooperation to a certain extent. To resolve this obstacle, Pakistan International Airlines is being convinced to expand its flight from Kabul to Dushanbe, which could boost the trade through air. At present, cargo between Tajikistan and Pakistan takes approximately 8 days based on several aspects. However, this time taking delivery of goods can be solved through enhanced relationship between Afghanistan-Pakistan-Tajikistan. Because the land route is the cheapest mode for the large volume of trade between these countries and greater cooperation between Tajikistan-Pakistan and Afghanistan would open great possibilities of development for all of three nations facing political and economic downturn (Satti 2014).

¹ The electricity network between US and Canada is known as North America Grid

² Electricity connection between the European countries is called European Grid.

Tajikistan and Pakistan, in order to enhance bilateral trade between them have held high level exchanges of delegations and many MoUs, agreements for cooperation have been signed subsequently. Tajik Ambassador to Pakistan, Jononov Sherali has played significant role in bringing the two countries close. His efforts along with the Pakistani authorities in Islamabad have further improved the bilateral relations. In 2014, in a meeting between Pakistani Prime minister and Tajik President, it was decided to set up a Joint Business Council (JBC) with a purpose to increase collaboration between the private sectors of the two countries (Satti 2014).

Rail and Road Projects

Pakistan's strategic location gives it privilege to play an important role in bringing some landlocked and under developed countries of Central Asia to the global markets by connecting them with its ports. Pakistan is a bridge between West, East and Central Asia. Pakistani ports of Pasni, Karachi and Gwadar are approximately 1,600 kilometers away from Tajikistan and it is the possible shortest route for trade between the two countries. Considering its utility, it can boost up trade between them to much more than ever expected. Though there is absence of direct geographical connectivity between Pakistan and Central Asia, transit-trade routes through Afghanistan and China are highly feasible as both these countries share borders with Tajikistan. There are certain options connecting the land routes between Pakistan and Central Asia to reach the ports of Pakistan:

- Land route from Salang Pass-Kabul-Jalalabad-Peshawar to Karachi and Gwadar seaports.
- Another road form Tajikistan-Badakhshan (Afgahnistan)-Peshawar and further to Pakistani ports of Karachi and Gwadar and;
- Connecting Tajikistan and Afghanistan through Karakorum Highway to Kashgar (China)-Gilgit (Pakistan) and further to Gwadar and Karachi ports (Khan and Elahi 2016: 24-25).

Development of CPEC in 2013 is considered to be meeting the requirements of road connectivity. This economic corridor will connect Kashgar with Gwadar port via

Khunjerab passes by covering a 2,700 kilometers of road and rail network. This corridor will not only connect Pakistan with China but also serve the purpose of an energy and trade route for CARs. Gwadar port is strategically located very close to Persian Gulf and is just 75 kms away from Iran and 460 kms away from Karachi port. The 'Strait of Hormuz' is located between Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman and through which almost 13 million barrels of crude oil passes every day is very close to Gwadar port making it more significant for intra- regional transit hub. The CPEC initiative has transformed Pakistan's position into a natural trade and energy corridor for Central Asia. With the development of this port and subsequent rail and roads projects would give a boost to Pakistan's external role as a hub of trade of the whole region. It would bring a lot of trade and economic opportunities for Pakistan. However, at present trade between Tajikistan and Pakistan is not satisfactory. Therefore, development of CPEC and other related projects is expected to provide abundant opportunities to enhance bilateral and multilateral trade between the partnering countries. However, "the trade volume between Pakistan and CARs has declined from a total of 81.19 million dollars in 1997 to just 45.4 million dollars in 2009" (Khan and Elahi 2016: 24-25).

Pakistani Federal Advisor on textiles, Dr Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, held bilateral talks with Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Hamrokhon Zarifi in June 2011 at Dushanbe. During this meeting, he stressed on the need for a road link from 'Chitral' to Tajikistan border which is just 36 kms away to facilitate trade between them. He also put forward his request to Foreign minister of Tajikistan to reduce the landing charges for Pakistani airlines so that Pakistan International Airlines and other airlines get motivated to operate to Dushanbe. Another request made by Dr Baig was to provide one year multiple visa of Tajikistan to Pakistani businessman in order to facilitate the progress of their travel to Tajikistan. He also stressed on the need of signing of FTA (Free Trade Agreements) and PTA (Preferential Trade Agreements) to enhance trade between the two countries (The Nation 7th June 2011).

Furthermore, "on 23rd November 2016, Tajik Ambassador to Pakistan Jalali Jononov met with Railway Minister of Pakistan. In this meeting, Railway Minister said that a railway track between 'Torkham' and Kabul which would be later extended to Tajikistan and

other Central Asian countries would be able to usher in a new era of development for Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to him, railway connectivity through Afghanistan is crucial for developing cooperation with Central Asian region and Pakistan would soon complete the feasibility report on the Peshawar-Jalalabad railway track, he said (Dawn 24th November 2016).

There are other projects linking Pakistan with Afghanistan and further to Central Asia. In this regard, 2 motorways connecting Pakistan with Termez in Uzbekistan were announced by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during his visit to Central Asia in 2016. “The Gwadar-Termez motorway will connect Gwadar port to Central Asia, as Termez lies between Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The route from Termez to Mazar-i-Sharif which will go on to Chaman would also facilitate trade with Afghanistan. Moreover, the motorway from Peshawar to Torkham on to Jalalabad is also under construction and would be completed soon” (Rehman 2015). All these transportation links would encourage trade between the Central and South Asian region. But their realisation is totally dependent on internal security situations of all the participating countries in these mega projects. Stability in Afghanistan is a key to the development of these projects leading to the economic growth of the entire region.

Energy Sector

It was after the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 that bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan improved. Now Pakistan desired to import electricity from Tajikistan. During his visit to Pakistan in 2004, Tajik President Rakhmonov urged it to become a part of international consortium for the construction of the Roghun hydropower plant. He also stressed on Pakistan’s potential significance as a bilateral trade partner of Tajikistan. In addition, Pakistan’s President Gen. Musharraf also stressed on power transmission as the key area of cooperation between the two countries. Pakistan showed its interest in the international consortium for completion of the Roghun Power project in order to get cheap electricity from Tajikistan told by a Tajik spokesperson. Tajikistan also asked for monetary assistance of 1.2 million US dollars from Pakistan to complete this project to which Pakistan being hesitant accepted (Johnson 2006).

A road map has been laid down from recuperating energy cooperation between the two states because coming up of these power projects could eradicate Pakistan's energy crisis and enhance its economic growth. The preliminary agreement to supply 1,000 MW of power to Pakistan via Afghanistan projected to be a landmark for forthcoming linkages between the two regions. Both countries have been optimistic about this development and this was reflected in a ceremony hosted by the then Tajik Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Zubaydullo N. Zubaydov on the occasion of 15th national unity day of republic of Tajikistan along with 20th anniversary of Tajik-Pak diplomatic relations in 2012 (Embassy of Tajikistan, Pakistan 2012).

Terrorism has been causing a negative effect on trade linkages between Tajikistan and Pakistan. Adverse law and order situation in Afghanistan has been the main barrier in the way of anticipated oil and gas pipelines to import gas and oil from Central Asia to Pakistan. Besides, the conflicting interest of many regional and global powers in Afghanistan is also causing serious obstruction in the development of inter-regional linkages. Although a number of agreements have been signed to make progress towards developing communication links between Pakistan and Central Asia, none of them has been completed yet (Khan and Elahi 2016: 28).

Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000)

The Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project also known as CASA-1000 was initiated to smoothen transfer of electricity between hydro power producing countries of Central Asia like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and energy deficient countries of south Asia such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. This project required the establishment of commercial and institutional arrangement and proper infrastructure of transmission. All the participant countries of this project Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan are geo-strategically very important due to their location at the crossroads of Russia, China, India and the Middle East. The highest priorities of this project are to promote institutional development and socio-economic prosperity of the participating countries. It is estimated that through this project inter-regional connectivity between Central and South Asia would be boosted up. The participating countries of CASA-1000 differ in their population, size of their economy, and developmental

processes, but they have similarity in their thrust for development and economic growth especially in the energy sector.

Republics of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are two poorest countries of Central Asia having relatively small population and being geographically landlocked, vulnerable to external geographical and economic changes. They have suffered social and ethnic tensions since their independence from Soviet Union. In spite of having Soviet designed economic and industrial infrastructure, these countries have witnessed significant changes in their living standards since the collapse of Soviet Union as it disrupted trade and other relations amongst Central Asian Republics. On the other hand the South Asian participants of the CASA-1000 project, i.e. Afghanistan and Pakistan are highly populated and are significantly large economies. Having a gross national income GNI per capita of 570 US dollars Afghanistan remains the lowest income country in South Asia besides, sustaining a three decade long conflict in its territory. Unemployment, poverty, weak political and economic structure makes it a fragile state. However, its geographical location is a plus point in the economic development of Central Asia and South Asia. In spite of having a conflicting and insecure environment, Afghanistan has seen massive significant changes in its institutional strengthening and rapid economic growth of around 9 percent per annum in the period of 2000 to 2010 mainly spurred by huge foreign aid. In 2014, after the US forces withdrawal from Afghanistan which directly impacted upon the incoming foreign aid and expanding labour force has given serious concern to Afghan authority to sustain their economy. Engagement in energy-trade mission and trade facilitation projects between Central and South Asia would be advantageous for the revival of Afghan economy. Of all countries participating in CASA-1000, Pakistan is considered to be the most strategic and potentially very significant. Therefore, its participation in this project becomes essential as this project will be of great importance for the development of Pakistan's trade linkages with Central Asian countries especially Tajikistan (World Bank Project Information Document, Report No. 2581, 2014).

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are endowed with the abundance of hydropower resources as water in these countries flows from the high mountain ranges filling its rivers in summer. Both these countries have surplus of electricity in the summer. However, seemingly low

level of technical knowledge has dampened their potential of hydro power production. Launch of CASA-1000 project has projected an exchange of 1,300 megawatts of hydro-electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Joint minister level Inter Governmental Council (IGC) is incharge of this project and its Secretariat was established in 2011 along with proper consultation with the ten members Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program.

Technical and Monetary Assistance

The total cost of this project is estimated to be at 1.17 billion USD. World Bank ensured its financial support of little less than 50 percent of the total cost. Islamic Development Bank (IDB) also agreed to finance CASA-1000 project to the amount left over after the financial assistance of World Bank. Some other financial institutions such as USAID, Australian Agency for International Development, UK Department of International Development and ADB have also nodded to provide support for completion of this project.

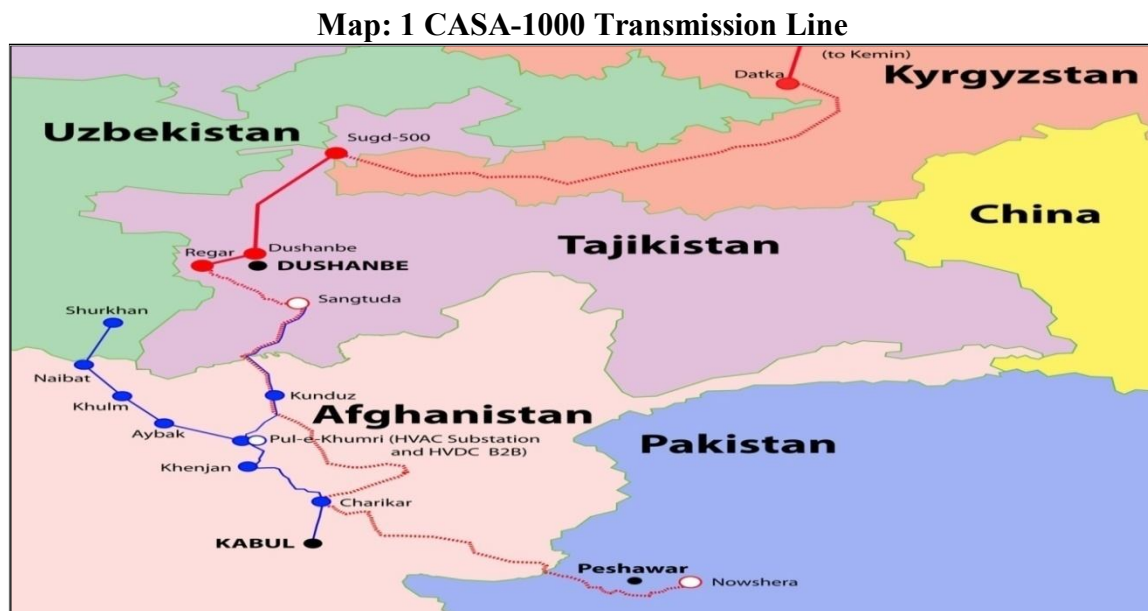
This project consists of construction and operation of energy transmission infrastructure in all the four member countries, besides technical assistance during the implementation of the project. In addition to this, a proper mechanism to share the benefits generated from this project with the communities along this corridor will be required. The outcome of this project is projected to be in the form of revenues and monetary assistance to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan along with eradicating electricity shortages in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this project 750 kilometers long transmission line expected to be completed by 2020 will be constructed, which will allow Pakistan to import electricity via Afghanistan. Pakistan will use about 1,000 megawatt of total of 1300 megawatt of electricity imported from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and the remaining 300 megawatt will be used by Afghanistan. Approximately 75 percent of the transmission will pass through Afghanistan, 16 percent through Tajikistan and remaining 9 percent through Pakistan.

This project will include a 500 KV AC line from Datka in Kyrgyzstan to Khudjand covering around 477 kilometers. A 1300 MW Ac-DC convertor station would be placed at Sangtuda in Tajikistan in addition to a 1,750 kilometers HV- DC line from Sangtuda to

Kabul and then to Peshawar in north western Pakistan. Moreover in Kabul another 300 MW convertor station will be built along with a 1,300 MW DC-AC convertor station placed at Peshawar (Cheema 2016)

Technical and Economic Feasibility of the Project

ADB financed a technical and economic feasibility study of CASA- 1000 project which was done by SNC- Lavalin of Canada³. This study was carried out in two phases in which first phase was completed in December 2007 covered a pre-feasibility assessment of the techno-economic capability of the inter-connecting transmission while the second phase provided the detailed feasibility report of the project in January 2009. However, ADB decided to sideline itself from this project in early 2009 due to which some issues related to the feasibility of the project were unaddressed. After ADB's voluntary suspension from this project, the World Bank was approached in mid-2009 by the member countries of the project in order to avail support to continue the project vis a vis completion of the feasibility study of the phase two. Earlier hired by ADB, CNG- Lavalin was again given the responsibility to complete the phase two feasibility study of the project which got finalized in February 2011 (<http://www.casa-1000.org>).



(Source: www.CASA-1000.org)

³ SNC-Lavalin Group Inc., was founded in 1911 in Montreal Canada and provides EPC and EPCM services in a variety of industry sectors, including mining and metallurgy, oil and gas, environment and water, infrastructure and clean power.

Importance of the Project

This is a flagship project unique in its structure and has the potential to advance inter-regional linkages through a power grid. This project is expected to bring enormous opportunity for economic activities for all the participating countries. It is also anticipated that CASA-1000 would reduce the energy deficiency of South Asia along with enhancing trade and entrepreneurship links and friendly relations among the partner countries. It is also analysed by scholars that this project would work as a bridge connecting Central Asia with South Asia. Many other ongoing projects like CPEC, TAPI and IPI would get boosted up if the CASA-1000 project comes into existence as it is already crossed its projected deadline.

Cost of the Project

The main cause of delay of this project is its cost. In February 2008 in World Bank's Program Information Document (PID) the total cost of CASA-1000 was given 610 million US dollars which increased to 953 million US dollars by 2011 leading the participant countries to equally bear the cost of the facilities in their territories. It was provided that a national funding of 309 million USD from Afghanistan, 196 million US dollars from Kyrgyzstan, 197 million US dollars from Pakistan and 251 million US dollars from Tajikistan would be allocated towards the completion of CASA-1000 project. The consultant who developed the cost analysis also estimated that this project would need almost 58 months to be completed which could be extended by up to a further one year depending on a number of factors like appropriate selection of the technical assistance for each of member countries and arrangement of adequate funds required from all the nations involved. By the year 2014, the estimated cost of CASA-1000 has augmented to 1.17 billion US dollars. In March 2014, World Bank agreed to approve a sum of 526 million US dollars in order to extend its support to engineering design, construction, establishment of converter stations, commissioning of transmissions line etc. of CASA-1000 project. On 27th October 2014, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon met with the President of IDB Ahmed Muhammad Ali in Dushanbe. In this meeting IDB reiterated its willingness to finance the project. In 2016, a sum of 70 US dollars was approved by IDB for CASA-1000 project. Therefore, with available funds and technical assistance, the project construction began. It is expected that, "it will establish

Afghanistan's role as a viable transit country, enhancing its growth prospects; ensure a steady source of export revenues for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, currently the two poorest post-Soviet Central Asian states; alleviate electricity shortages in Pakistan during the peak summer season and set the stage for a much greater degree of energy trade between Central and South Asia" (Dally 2014:5-6). Interestingly the CASA-1000 project is supported by both Russia and United States.

Benefits of the project

Energy deficient countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan come across several problems such as constraints in business operation and expansion and employment creation due to shortage of electricity. This project will help these countries to get rid of their dependency on costly, polluted and oil based power generation. Pakistan and Afghanistan have a steep gap in their power production and consumption. However, this project would not resolve their problem completely but will definitely make the energy shortages a minor problem.

For the Central Asian region, exporting surplus electricity in summer will help them generate substantial foreign exchange revenues which are highly required by these countries to advance their investments, improve infrastructure and services for its citizens. In this regard, both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are setting up a transparent system to elucidate influx and usage of revenues that have been generated by exports. A significant objective of this project is to provide social and community-specific programmes at each of the member countries during the construction of the CASA-1000. These programmes are aimed at improving the living standards of respective communities' living alongside this energy transmission corridor by assisting revenue sharing. It has been estimated that approximately 600 communities living on the corridor of CASA-1000 are going to be benefitted from these support programmes. All four partnering countries have agreed to share their portions of revenues from the energy traded by them to sustain their support to the community-based programmes throughout the project operation. Finally, "CASA-1000, as a transformational project, it will give a much needed boost to energy security, improved connectivity and trade across two regions at a critical time. It demonstrates the power of regional cooperation through four

countries reaching agreement on a project that is win- win for all involved. The projects also helps to revive the Silk Road, the ancient route linking East with West, in a region that used to be separated by hard borders” (Dixon 2016).

Constrains in Project

CASA-1000 project is challenging as all the partner countries across the two regions have had to cooperate with each other in order to move forward this project and all these countries are facing issues of political and conflict vulnerability. However, the economic profits can contribute to the peace and stability of these countries but it might also become the cause of conflict. But the risks attached with this project are worth taking as the benefits from this would be greater for Central Asia and South Asia (Dixon 2016).

The constraints in the project are several and they need to be addressed:

- Though the Nurek hydropower plant in Tajikistan projected to provide electricity to CASA-1000 started operating in 1972, is now in a bad state and in need of repair
- Simultaneously, Kyrgyzstan’s dams have been inundated by multiple turbine failures
- Issues related to the funding of the project
- Security and law and order situation in Afghanistan
- Proposed connectivity through Salang Pass is also problematic due to space limitations inside the Salang tunnel and also in the adjoining areas (Cheema 2016).

The security challenges are the main hurdle blocking the way of the CASA-1000. Bilateral relations between the South Asian countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan have been constant challenges to this project. For example, they have serious blow to resolve the Torkham border crossing between them which get shut down on several occasions showing flaws in their bilateral relation. This has also reflected in the trade between two countries as they have a porous border as bone of contention between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Therefore, it is expected from both the countries to focus on the immense benefits from the CASA-1000 by sidelining their disputes.

World Bank has shown its concern on security challenges pertaining to the progress of the project. There is every possibility that some nuisance groups would try to create obstruction to the implementation of CASA-1000. Therefore, Afghanistan and Pakistan need to resolve any issues regarding the project's implementation through mutual cooperation and by developing trust between them. All the participating countries need to understand that a peaceful and prosperous future for the whole region is only practicable if they work together for greater regional and mutual benefits. The looming security situation in Afghanistan and its larger impact on the South and Central Asian region poses severe threat to the successful energy transmission through CASA-1000 (The Express Tribune May 2016). For strong economic growth with high opportunity of employment, sufficient and modern infrastructure, frequent public services and inclusive growth, a proper electricity supply is required. Therefore, this project is considered to be a step in building a functioning and efficient way of energy transfer across Central and South Asia. And for this, it will require strategic actions and an enduring vision along with public and private sector partnership and international support. Eventually, "the realization of this ambitious project will deliver reliable, affordable electricity to parts of the world that desperately need it in summer and also in winter. It will prompt inter-regional cooperation, investments in social services, and encourage community benefit sharing. Most importantly, it will strengthen the economic and political development of the region" (Cheema 2016).

Role of Regional Organizations

Dushanbe Four

On June 15-16, 2009, during the 9th Summit of SCO held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon proposed a meeting with his Afghan, Russian and Pakistani counterparts in Dushanbe to discuss quadrilateral cooperation in the realm of security, stability, peace building, and enhanced trade-economic and cultural cooperation between these countries. This initiative is referred as 'Dushanbe Four' and since its emergence in 2009, it has been holding multiple high level meetings between its member countries. The main topic of the discussions would have been infrastructural development. However, the scope of this initiative has been low and no concrete outcome has come out

of this organisation (Kassenova 2014:24-25). On August 18, 2010, Russian President, Dimitry Medvedev hosted the second summit of Dushanbe Four in the Russian city of Sochi, during which he emphasized on the importance of economic cooperation between the member countries. Addressing the summit, he said that, having been able to tackle a number of social challenges depending on the scope of multilateral cooperation, currently it is urgent to advance economic cooperation. He further stated that, “we have projects with long development history in our region, as well as projects that were launched during the USSR era. I think that it makes sense to review them in order to try to create greater momentum in our economic progress and resolve a variety of urgent challenges facing our countries, including in energy and social development” (<http://eng.kremlin.ru/trascripts/797>).

All the participant countries at the end of the summit issued joint statement in which they all welcomed Pakistan-Afghanistan trade and transit agreement being significant for all the member countries as well. Moreover, Russia and Pakistan in the margins of this summit also discussed the existing prospects of developing cooperation in the energy and railways transit between them which is expected to open a new route from Russian Federation to Pakistan passing through Afghanistan and Tajikistan. But, “the Joint Statement maintained a coy silence on the recent finds of 1 trillion US dollars worth of mineral deposits in Afghanistan” (Purushottam 2010:3).

In 2011, during the President of Tajikistan’s four day visit to Pakistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan agreed to improve cooperation to fight terrorism and to enhance economic relations. Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani also welcomed Dushanbe Four initiative by describing it as a significant step in achieving regional security and stability. He further established that this is the first initiative in the region which brings issues of trade and security under a broad framework (Mahmood 2009).

On September 2, 2011, the third four nation summit of Dushanbe Four was held in Dushanbe. On this occasion, joint projects related to the energy and transport benefitting all the members was discussed. Though the prime objective of setting up this institution was to bring all the participating countries on a common platform in order to enhance their relations, but the objective seemed elusive as these countries have trust deficit.

Russian president showed his disapproval of the progress of this forum as he stated that, 'it's time to move from words to deeds'. "His concern was that, a whole range of projects that have been on the table for a long time have seen no movement forward. One of these projects, CASA-1000, aims to send power from Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and lay a transnational gas pipeline" (Rama Rao 2011). In this third meeting held in the Tajik city of Dushanbe, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov, Dmitry Medvedev (Russia) and Hamid Karzai (Afghanistan) took part.

Through this initiative, Russia is keen to play a significant role in tackling the security challenges of the region as it has been an area of its influence for a long time. With the US-NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, and worsening relations between America and Pakistan, Russia has been seeking any opportunity of expanding its footprint in the region. It already has secured maximum influence in Tajikistan by getting an extension to its base in the country. The leaders of both countries agreed to extend the presence of Russian military bases in Tajikistan for 49 years by seeing the potential security threats arising from the instability on Pakistan-Afghanistan border which affects the security structure of Tajikistan (Rama Rao 2011).

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

This organization was founded in 1985 with the joint efforts of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey aimed at encouraging cultural, economic and technical cooperation amongst the member countries. ECO succeeded the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), an organization which had been functional from 1964 to 1979 and was based on 'Treaty of Izmir' signed in 1977 which provided legal framework for RCD. However RCD turned unsuccessful and got transformed into the ECO in 1985 with an addition of 7 new members including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in 1992. The origin of ECO was similar to that of ASEAN (Association for South East Asian Nations) because both of these regional organizations originated due to geostrategic considerations with an additional feature of economic cooperation amongst the member nations. However, ECO had very less economic impact before its expansion of 1992 as now the members had a significant potential of providing economic benefits to the entire region. The 'Treaty of Izmir' provided for establishment

of a trade and development bank along with 'ECO Reinsurance Company', which are yet to be implemented. In May 1991, a protocol on PTA (Preferential Tariffs) was signed which was implemented in May 1993. The accession of seven members to ECO in 1992 gave new impetus to it. Now this organization comprises of almost 325 million people spread around across 8 million squares kms. ECO also desires to develop cultural cohesion by incorporating almost every Islamic country of Western and Central Asia. Moreover, it provides a platform to the founding members and newly added members as well to discuss their regional disputes and to have a peaceful cooperation. "The blueprint for regional cooperation is contained in the February 1993 Quetta Plan of Action and July 1993, Istanbul Declaration. The three founding members contributed one lakh USD towards a Special Fund to finance feasibility studies of the projects related to this blueprint. A project-oriented Outline Plan for transport and communications development was adopted at Almaty in October 1993" (Pomfret 1997:658-59).

Since its inception, 'Treaty of Izmir' has been significantly strengthened by successive historical developments. Along with this, many other protocols and agreements have been approved to provide legal base for the inclusive growth of the ECO region and its representative institutions. The 'Quetta Plan of Action' was adopted by member countries in Pakistan in February 1993, and 'Istanbul Declaration' in which 'ECO Long Term Perspective' was adopted in July 1993. A comprehensive document named as Almaty Outline for the Development of the Transport Sector in the ECO countries was carried out by the ECO Transport Ministers in October 1993 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. However, this Plan was approved in the fourth meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in Iran on January, 1994. In March 1995, 3rd ECO Summit was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, where the Ministers signed the ECO Transit Trade Agreement and an Agreement on simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessman of the ECO member countries. During the Fourth Summit of ECO, a MoU was signed on reorganization and restructuring of ECO by the Foreign Ministers of ECO countries in Ashgabat on may 11, 1996. The Council of Ministers also approved the strategy on Economic Cooperation Efficient Methodology. The Extraordinary Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers was held in Izmir, Turkey in September 1996. In this Meeting, "the ECO's basic documents of reorganization including its fundamental charter, 'Treaty of Izmir' were concluded.

The meeting also approved the Implementation Plan on Reorganization and Restructuring of ECO and witnessed the signing of the Treaty of Izmir and the Agreement on the Legal Status of ECO by the Ministers/Authorized Representatives of ECO Member States” (Economic Cooperation Organization, Guide Book, Tehran 1999:4). In the fifth Summit of ECO held in Almaty on May 11, 1998, the Charter of ECO Educational Institute was signed and an MOU on cooperation against Smuggling and Custom Frauds along with transit transport framework agreement were signed by the Foreign Ministers of ECO member countries. In this meeting Council of Ministers also endorsed the ‘Programme of Action for ECO Decade of Transport and Communication (1998-2007)’.

The ECO aimed at realizing the potential of the region by constructing strong regional cooperation. A report published by ECO in 2017, on the occasion of completion of 15 years of cooperation and development from 2000-2015, estimated the total population of the ECO region at 450 million with around 1.8 million US dollars of GDP which accounts for 7.79 per cent of the world’s total GDP. In addition, the foreign direct investment influx in the region increased many times since 2000 and reached 37.7 billion US dollars in 2015. An increase in the economic development of the ECO countries has been observed. Platforms like ECO have encouraged all the participating countries to maximize their cooperation in order to get benefitted by acquiring the resources from each other to be used in their economic activities. ECO member countries have also opened their markets to international financiers and this region has attracted international investment. There are many sectors where cooperation among the ECO countries have been functioning. Transportation is one of the main factors which need to be focused by ECO. Within the framework of joint ventures and collaborations, ECO provides a stage where member countries can further improve the facilitation of ongoing regional infrastructure projects. Moreover, “regional efforts made by the ECO members on improving trade and transportation through implementation of infrastructural project such as the North-South Transport Corridor, the Trans-Caspian Transportation Route, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Chabahar and Gwadar ports complement each other. All these projects have the potential to function better in parallel with the wider and more comprehensive initiatives, namely China’s One Belt One Road (OBOR)” (Ogutcu 2017:2-3).

Considering the geostrategic location of the ECO countries, it is highly expected that the success of the project like Silk Road depends on the willingness of these countries to cooperate and integrate. There are seven out of 10 member countries of ECO which are geographically landlocked. Therefore, it becomes imperative for these countries to develop mutual cooperation in the fields of land connectivity and transportations. Moreover, integration with the international institutions would be helpful in achieving proper mechanism for inter regional and intra regional linkages. It becomes a great responsibility for ECO to work as a binding factor between the member countries and international actors.

Another factor which determines the significance of the ECO mechanism is energy resources and transport corridors of its member nations. ECO members such as Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have abundant natural resources, while other members like Pakistan and Afghanistan have scarcity of electricity. “Since the Ukrainian crisis and instability in the Middle East highlighted the importance of energy security, the European Union member countries have become more interested in seeking ways to diversify their energy resources, to alleviate their high dependency on Russia. Therefore, five energy rich ECO member countries together with oil and natural gas transportation corridors passing through Central Asia, South Caucasus, Europe via Turkey are getting more attention” (Ogutcu 2017:2-3).

Although there are political differences among the ECO countries regarding their policies towards Syrian crisis, they could manage to maintain strong cultural connections and trade diplomacy. Their common cultural and historical linkages and people to people connections within the ECO region have provided a social dimension towards the integration process of the ECO countries. Pakistan’s indirect motive behind the foundation of ECO was directed towards using this platform as a tool of its regional policy which seemed to be failing. This is due to the competitive struggle that exists among the member countries in which countries like Turkey and Iran underpinned Pakistan’s intentions to influence Central Asian countries as they also want more influence in this region. The vague structure of the ECO is being converted into bipolar system in which Turkey and Iran dominate (Kazakova and Komissina 2001).

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a multi-polar Eurasian political, economic and security organisation which was founded on 15th June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the efforts of the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia. However, the SCO charter was signed in 2002 and came into force on 19 September 2003. Its foundation can be traced back to 26th April 1996 when five countries including China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan formed an alliance known as 'Shanghai Five' in Beijing, China. India and Pakistan held observer status till 9th June 2017, when a full membership of SCO was conferred to these countries in a summit held in Astana, Kazakhstan. SCO is the largest regional organization in the world in terms its geographical expansion and population. It is one of the world's most powerful organisations.

Prime ministers of SCO member countries adopted a multilateral economic and trade cooperation program in September 2003 which ensured many general economic objectives. Through this program, these countries extended their cooperation towards the facilitation of mutual trade and investment in addition to the free movement of goods and services, capital and technology targeted to be achieved by 2020. In September 2004, SCO summit was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan where all the Prime Ministers of member states considered over a number of projects related to customs, communication and public health. In the SCO summits of 2005 and 2006, a number of institutions were established by the member states in order to facilitate implementation of the program and cooperative projects. These institutions include The Development Fund, The Business Council and Inter Bank Agreement to encourage investment in regional projects by enhancing cooperation among members, public and private businesses and government agencies working towards international economic linkages. China hosted a Eurasian Economic Forum in November 2005 in collaboration with SCO Secretariat, the UNO (United Nations Organisations) and China Development Bank. In this forum more than thousand political and business leaders from different countries including non-SCO members participated which gave dynamic prospective to this organization. The financial resources that have been used by SCO member countries towards multi-lateral economic activity are limited which has restricted their potential. For instance, the Development

Fund has only a budget of 20 million US dollars for allocation among more than 100 projects sponsored by SCO which considered being very low. Other hindrances to the economic activities of SCO include heavy custom duties, corruption amongst border officials and absence of a free trade zone to facilitate trade and commerce within member countries. All member countries, on several occasions have expressed their dissatisfaction on the slow growth of economic cooperation. A June 2006, Shanghai summit joint communiqué states, “To develop the economic cooperation among member countries they need to coordinate their efforts in the implementation of the Cooperation Program on Multilateral Economic and Trade among SCO member states by executing major projects of regional economic cooperation. They are also required to work together in order to facilitate trade and investment facilities and a gradual realization of the free flow of commodities technologies and services as well” (Weitz 2007: 107-9).

Regional energy issues are expected to occupy a significant place on the agenda of the forthcoming SCO meetings. Because of the inclusion of some energy rich countries like Uzbekistan and Iran it becomes priority for discussions on energy issues at SCO summits. According to an estimate, in 2004 six member countries of this organisation produced approximately 720 million tons of oil of which 452 million tons was consumed. In an interview in January 2006, Executive Secretary of SCO, Zhang Deguang while describing the progress on energy cooperation stated that the SCO is attempting to form a multinational working group to enhance energy cooperation. In the SCO summit of July 2006 in Shanghai, Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed on the urgent need to establish an ‘energy club’ among SCO member countries. Iran’s increasing relations with the SCO members and observers would permit them to bargain many advantageous deals of oil and gas.

However, a number of developments in the energy sector have been taken into consideration yet it is still difficult for the SCO to utilize its full potential in the sphere of energy cooperation among the member countries. Two most influential members of this organization, Russia and China have vital interest in this sector. They both desire an increased energy production in Central Asia. However, being historically allied to this region Russia wishes to maintain its supremacy over these resources along with

maintaining its supremacy in energy transportation infrastructure of this region. Moreover, “Russia’s preeminent position allows it to divert deliveries to privileged buyers or, if world prices are low, to stockpile supplies. However China, being a major energy consumer desires to exert direct control over regional energy structure as it will prove difficult for the SCO to achieve its full potential in the energy realm. The SCO’s two largest observers also differed on this issue, with Iran favoring and India opposing high energy prices (Weitz 2007: 107-9).

Pakistan joined SCO in 2005 as an observer with the support of Uzbekistan and China. Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian country which has supported Pakistan’s membership to SCO. The motive behind Uzbekistan’s support was that it always feared spread of extremism in its territory. Therefore, being allied to Pakistan was considered to be a plus point in this regard. Pakistan’s closeness with China and other Central Asian states mainly after the US intervention in Afghanistan has given it opportunity to promote regional connectivity by working as a bridge between Central Asian states and rest of the world. Therefore, being admitted to SCO as an observer in 2005 to full membership in 2017, Pakistan always projected its interest in this region. Multibillion projects such as CPEC have given it more chances of projecting itself worthy of developing regional cooperation by bringing Central Asian nations into these projects and joining SCO would be convenient for Pakistan to persuade these Republics to join these projects (Syed 2017).

Pakistan being at the cross-roads of Central, South and West Asia monitor the emerging regional alliances and grabs any opportunity to play its role. After the 9/11, Pakistan was ready to play positive role in fighting terrorism and extremism in the region. Pakistan together with SCO has the potential to play a substantial role in bringing peace and instability in the region after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, for this matter, it is necessary to evaluate the role of SCO in dealing with the security issues of the region by keeping aside the self interests of the member countries. Pakistan’s intention to join SCO was also motivated from two aspects; firstly it wanted to enhance its bilateral relations with Central Asian Republics, and secondly to counter Indian efforts of joining SCO. Pakistan has cordial relations with all the SCO countries due to the common geographical, historical and cultural bond. As a Pakistan’s scholar puts it,

“Pakistan has vital stake in the security, stability and well being of the region. It was therefore, natural that Pakistan was amongst the first countries to seek an association with the SCO. Pakistan continued to attach high priority to expanding and strengthening the cooperation with the SCO. It enjoys a unique geo-strategic position with regards to relations with the SCO countries” (Rahman 2014:67-68).

International Organizations

Slow economic growth and poverty are the prime concerns for Central Asian countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as 38 percent of the Kyrgyz population lives below poverty line and it is far higher in Tajikistan as around 46.7 percent Tajik population lives below poverty line. However, these countries have launched economic stabilisation and reform initiatives to promote economic growth with the support of international financial institutions like IMF, World Bank and other International Financial Institutions (IFIs) along with regional partners. The key element in their structural agenda is to improve business environment in their respective countries to attract investment and also to diversify economic production and exports. In this process, many international agencies working in the field of sustainable growth and development proved to be significant as they have supported economic and social reforms in Tajikistan and Pakistan. USAID, UNDP, Islamic Development Bank and Agha Khan Foundation are working towards the enhancing and promoting economic development and regional cooperation between Central and South Asia

World Bank

World Bank has been working in collaboration with Central Asian Republics through its Central Asia Energy Water Development Programme (CAEWDP) to support water and energy security in the region. This programme identifies threats and prospects, strengthens regional institutions along with generating investments and builds a common platform to have dialogues on the issues of common concern. Through this programme, World Bank also provides technical assistance on water and energy issues to all the Central Asian Republics. “The Bank also supports power sector inter-regional cooperation initiatives between Central Asia and South Asia. The proposed CASA-1000 project is one of these initiatives and is the most advanced among others under

CASAREM (Central Asia South Asia Regional Electricity Market)” (Europe and Central Asia Brief World Bank). In March 2014, Board of Directors of the World Bank approved financial grants to support the electricity transmission of the CASA-1000 project. Moreover, “an Intergovernmental Council has been established to supervise the design and implementation of these programmes” (World Bank Press Release 27 March 2014).

The World Bank has assigned the duties of preparing technical, financial, socio-environmental and legal studies to Harvey Salgo, an international consultant for ensuring smooth transmission of electricity from Tajikistan to Pakistan. A two day energy conference on Central Asia-South Asia electricity trade was held in Islamabad in May 2006 which was sponsored by US State Department, United States Energy Association (USEA), World Bank, ADB, IDB and many other international institutions. As a result of this conference, it was suggested that electricity from Kyrgyzstan could also be traded through this line by interconnecting it. But this proposal could be finalised after Tajikistan-Pakistan energy transmission dialogue (Zarrina 2006).

In 2014, the Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of World Bank, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, told that all the participating countries of the CASA-1000 project are showing a strong regional cooperation in order to address their energy security challenges. She also emphasised that this project would be a transformational one giving a much required boom to energy security, improved connectivity and trade and transportation across the two most geographically significant region at a critical time. According to her, “of the total project financing, Afghanistan will receive 316.3 million USD in the form of an IDA (International Development Association) grant; Pakistan will receive 120 million USD in IDA credit; Kyrgyz Republic will receive 45 million USD in IDA grant and credit; and Tajikistan will receive 45 million USD in grant financing” (World Bank Press Release 27th March 2014). World Bank has also been re-organising its association with CAREC (Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation) programme in order to improve cooperation with development associates including ADB, with which it will successfully deliver the results to the member countries of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Central Asian Republics, Mongolia, and Pakistan. World Bank also uses the platform of CAREC

for discussing and systematizing resolutions on regional issues in Central and South Asian region more effectively.

Therefore, role of World Bank has been significant in bridging the gap between Tajikistan and Pakistan not only with its financial assistance but also through its humanitarian approaches. Both countries have been relying heavily on this organization for the development of their economic activities. CASA-1000 and other energy related projects pertaining to the concerns of the regional and international actors have also become vulnerable to regional and security issues. For this, World Bank has publicized its serious concerns of the security issues. Increased cooperation between the participating countries has led to the positive impact about the presence of World Bank in the region.

CAREC (Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation)

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme (CAREC) was established by the Asian Development Bank in 1997 to enhance economic collaboration among the countries of Central Asia and some of their neighbours, with its headquarters in Manila, Philippines. It consists of eleven countries including five Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, China, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mongolia and Pakistan and six multilateral organisation partners such as ADB, EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), IMF (International Monetary Fund), IDB, UNDP and World Bank.

CAREC was established with an aim to help Central Asian countries and their neighbours to recognise their strategic and economic potential by developing regional cooperation in the fields of trade facilitation, transport, energy and trade policy. CAREC programme administered by the ADB binds together all eleven member countries and six multilateral organisations and has procured a regional transport strategy identifying most favourable routes for trade, transport and transit. However, at present cross-border trade between the CAREC member nations is mainly carried out by railways. But there is an increase in road traffic and it has capacity for extra rapid growth. The reasons behind the low traffic in cross-border trade through roads are inefficient border facilities and inadequate border management leading to serious delays in transit. However, it is also anticipated that, if

these hurdles are amended then there are plenty of prospects to expand trade and transportation in the region. It has been projected by the CAREC that aggregate economy of its members (without including whole of China but only its north-western province, Xinjiang) could be raised by 8.1 percent every year till 2018 accomplishing a total of 351 Billion US dollars and its foreign trade could grow by 9.1 percent per annum reaching 222 billion US dollars till 2018. Therefore, CAREC programme and its projected developmental goals can bring huge economic prosperity not only to its member countries but to the whole Eurasian region. Transport strategy adopted by CAREC has identified six most favourable transit corridors in six primary areas, i.e.; traffic volume, opportunities for promoting economic development and potential traffic, efficiency of the transit corridors to increase connectivity between the major populations and economic hubs, prospective ideas to decrease delays. In addition, the economic and financial sustainability of investments in technology, infrastructure, and management sector along with compulsory inclusion of at least two CAREC members' countries are areas to dwell upon by identifying trade corridors. The six transit corridors that have been identified by the CAREC are in the strategy implementation phase. These corridors include;

1. First corridor goes from Russia via Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to the city of Kashgar, Kaytun and Urumqui in the north-western province of Xinjiang, China.
2. Another route from Azerbaijan crossing the Caspian Sea and Central Asian Republics of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and further to Chinese cities of the Turfan, Kashgar and Ulukeqiati.
3. Third corridor commences at Russia crossing all the Central Asian Republics and Afghanistan to the Iranian cities of Sarakhs, Arababad, Bander-Abbas.
4. From Russia via Mongolia to China.
5. Fifth corridor starts at Pakistan crossing Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to China.
6. From Russia via Afghanistan and all the Central Asian Republics excluding Kyrgyzstan extends to Arababad (Iran) and Landi Kotal (Pakistan).

Evidently,

“The quality of transport and transit routes through neighbouring countries is also critical for Central Asia. Hence Russia’s ambitious plans for developing extensive

railway infrastructure in the east are of some significance. Russian authorities recently publicised a plan to invest hundreds of billions of dollars by 2030. While this may not be feasible, even a programme at half that scale would be a significant improvement over the current constrained Russian rail transport sector” (Carnegie Endowment Conference Report 2007).

In this scenario, importance of CAREC programme is significant as all the member countries are eager to develop trade connectivity with each other to gain some strategic lineage and reduce their economic hindrances. To facilitate the efficient working of this organisation its associated multilateral international organisation gave significant support as they also are being involved in the region with other energy and transport related projects. These transit corridors are in progress and it is expected that as soon as they complete, they will cover approximately 3,600 kms of roads and around 2,000 kilometres of rail lines passing through the CAREC countries connecting Europe, East Asia, South Asia and Middle East.

Map: 2 Six Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Corridors



(Source: <https://therearenosunglasses.wordpress.com>)

“The number and value of CAREC projects, including loans and grants have grown from 6 projects worth 247 million US dollars in 2001 to 158 projects worth about 24.6 billion in 2014” (ADB 2012). The priority of the CAREC programme was to procure investments in transport sector which later was expanded to hold wider ranging strategies for undertaking the trade policy, and energy challenges. It further recognized the possibilities to overcome obstacles in the way of cooperation and transmission of resources by promoting regional cooperation in the region to build a shared global future. For ensuring the success of projects undertaken by CAREC programme, it established a CAREC institute in 2006, which works in close association with the formed groups and

committees accountable for guidance and implementation of the programmes in each priority areas. The CAREC institute works as the focal point of building knowledge networks and sharing experiences together with enhancing the strategic and technical consultations provided by the six multilateral organisations in order to ensure the projected investments outcomes. Regional cooperation is the best captivating tool for countries to acquire projects of national interests with the regional benefits attached along. CAREC is working towards achieving this goal, by working harder to persuade the member countries for strengthening inter-regional connections based on their socio-economic and cultural linkages, which is more challenging at the time of rising global economy (ADB 2012). “The CAREC programme has supported growing trade and connectivity in the region since 2002. More than 22 billion US dollars have been invested in recent years to upgrade a 24,000 kilometre road transport corridor system that links the CAREC countries and connects them to external markets. The programme is now setting its focus on development of railways to further improve trade and transport efficiency” (ADB News, September 2017).

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been established in 1966 consisting of 67 members of which 48 are from Asia only. ADB has been playing a constructive role in the development of economic activities and regional cooperation between the Tajikistan and Pakistan in the form of joint projects operated and assisted by ADB. One of these projects is CASA-1000 linking Tajikistan with Pakistan in which ADB plays a significant role by providing economic assistance and technical viability. ADB has been approached to provide technical assistance for a technical and economic assessment for preparing the Central Asia South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM), energy transmission line. In addition to this, World Bank was requested to support the member countries by providing a financial, risk mitigation and legal framework through an institutional approach. In order to examine the feasibility of the regional electricity and trade, the participating countries of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan from Central Asia and Afghanistan, Pakistan from South Asia together with international financial organisations and private sectors held a series of meetings in Islamabad, Istanbul, Manila and Dushanbe in May, June and October 2006 respectively. In this Multi Country Working Groups (MCWG)

meeting, significant progress was made and a number of MoUs on project development were signed. At the MCWG meeting in Manila in October 2006, all the participating countries including Tajikistan and Pakistan guaranteed their interest in cooperating with the project and also agreed to advance processing and implementation so that the electricity trade could be started by 2010. MCWG requested ADB to support the technological and economic feasibility of the project. It was anticipated that as soon as feasibility study gives its inputs to countries, they would be committed to pursue this project (ADB December 2006:1-2).

This energy transmission trade will be utilising existing power infrastructure and also generate new transmission investments. ADB as a prime development partner in the energy sector of Central Asia would continue to facilitate its role as a provider of technological services such as preparation of analytical studies for system stability, grid inter connections along with preparing feasibility study, project assessment and regulatory and legal framework. Moreover, it will help to coordinate project planning and the provision of financial and negotiation among countries to facilitate energy trade. ADB is determined to reduce the poverty in Asia through sustainable and inclusive economic growth and regional integration (ADB 2018).

During a visit of Deputy Director General of ADB, Xianbin Yao to Tajikistan in 2007, he met with Tajik President and discussed the issues related to the advancement of cooperation between ADB and Tajik Government. After the meeting, he told the journalists that Tajikistan held significant place as the partner of ADB and it will further strengthen support to its development projects and regional cooperation initiatives. He added that the CAREC programme meeting that would be held in November 2007 in Dushanbe would of a great importance in this regard. The CAREC programme aimed at reducing poverty and improving living standards through regional cooperation in the Central Asian region and beyond. ADB actively supported the development and reforms of the energy sector in Tajikistan. According to the Deputy Director General, ADB along with the Tajik Government would work on the preparations of the projects construction of the power plants and transmission lines. Moreover, when asked about the cooperation in the field of the agriculture, he stated that, “Tajikistan needs to tackle, the problems

related to debts of cotton farmers to their creditors, irrigation and mitigation of effects of flooding” (International Finance Corporation 2007). ADB and World Bank are expected to continue its support to the low economic countries of Central and South Asia for achieving economic growth and infrastructural development by enhancing their cooperation with each other. However, the security situation in the region has led to rethink by this organization as millions of investment would be at stake. So, regional integration is required for the fast and successful implementation of the development projects.

Impediments in Bilateral Economic Relations

Being a landlocked country with remote mountainous area, Tajikistan faces many problems in its external trade. Poor transport infrastructure and geographical obstacles hindering the way to reach foreign markets necessitate cooperation with South Asia for accessing sea ports and land roads. There is also absence of direct air line between Tajikistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan is considered to be one of the main factors that is obstructing the way of mutual cooperation between them. However, including Afghanistan in the energy and trade projects has given some hope but instability in this country has been constant threat to mutually agreed projects. A series of events, including Afghan war, Taliban regime and US intervention in Afghanistan have been troublesome in developing economic relation amongst the countries of South and Central Asia. From the time of US army withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 till date, there has been surging of Taliban and some other terrorist organisations active in the Middle Eastern region creating security issues.

Rail and road transport connectivity from Tajikistan to Pakistan is negligible. Poor development of infrastructure is also affecting transportation and demands construction of new roads. Communication infrastructure is low and financial and economic options of these countries are at an early stage of development which proves to be a drawback in development of connectivity. During the Soviet period, Tajikistan was specialised in cotton and aluminium production but it heavily relied on electricity import from Uzbekistan through oil and gas pipe line drawn by Soviet system. However, after the

disintegration of Soviet Union, several internal and regional issues jolted the Tajik economy and society and it took so long to revive (Rahimzoda 2012).

Pakistan's internal economic and security conditions have been unstable. Therefore, making inroads to Central Asia for energy resources and strategic depth against India in the region have pushed Pakistan to adopt aggressive measures in building relations with these Republics. Pakistan's support to terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan and Tajikistan has obstructed the way of cooperation for a long time. It is only after until US war on terror when Pakistan reluctantly agreed to support this operation, that some hopes of revitalizing Pakistan's relations with Central Asian countries were revived.

Recommendations

As the time passed by, economic relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan have witnessed growth. Both countries try to enhance their bilateral relations through greater regional integration.

- ❖ Pakistan needs to increase bilateral trade with Tajikistan in the field of sports items because it is an exporter of sports goods internationally.
- ❖ Both countries need to increase their bilateral trade in agricultural projects because Pakistan is primarily an agriculture based economy and Tajikistan's uneven mountainous terrain allows it to import most of its agricultural products, mostly food items.
- ❖ In order to built trust between both countries, Tajikistan and Pakistan need to work together to create trade and energy corridors.
- ❖ Pakistan's energy needs and Tajikistan's surplus of hydroelectricity potential complement each other. They should also make efforts to align other regional powers in the projects of their bilateral interests to lessen the period of the implementation of such projects through regional cooperation.
- ❖ Tajikistan and Pakistan also need to focus on CASA-1000 and Pakistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan Trilateral Trade Transit Agreement (PATTTTA) for the economic development of the region.

- ❖ To increase cooperation, both countries have exchanged numerous bilateral high-level diplomatic and trade delegations, to ensure the increasing progress, which need to be continued in future.
- ❖ Development of direct air link between the two countries is must, which is essential for facilitating trade through air route.
- ❖ Development of Pakistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan land route.
- ❖ Connectivity between Pakistan-Afghanistan and Tajikistan is essential for overall regional development.
- ❖ Both countries should be playing the role of mediator in the settlement of regional issues and also build up integration process with regional organisations like ECO, SCO and Dushanbe Four.
- ❖ Enhancement in tourism sector between these countries can also promote the people to people contact which will be helpful in bilateral relations and economic development.

Conclusion

Economic relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan in the field of energy transmission and trade development have been discussed since long. But concrete steps in this regard have not been taken by the two countries due to lack of finances. Economic cooperation between them could increase if Pakistan allows India way to access to Central Asian region and Afghanistan through its territory. This is the main reason why projects like TAPI are still not functional. Moreover, Tajikistan has also regional issues which impede its energy and transportation projects. In case of Pakistan, excess spending on military and security prevents it from launching inter-regional economic ventures. Development of Gwadar port and its becoming operational, would develop the bilateral relations between the Tajikistan-Pakistan. And also energy transmission projects would lead their bilateral economic ties to another height making greater regional integration.

CHAPTER-4
CULTURAL RELATIONS

The collapse of USSR and emergence of five independent Central Asian countries set in motion a new geo-political environment in the region. These Republics mainly comprised of Muslims populations. Independence of these Muslim nations along with their similar cultural and religious background gave Pakistan hope for reinvigoration of its cultural ties and diplomatic links on a new basis. Furthermore, Pakistan also hoped high to gain the support of these Republics against its eastern neighbour and rival India. Since then, Pakistan has been seeking to build cooperation with the Central Asian Republics on the basis of historical, cultural and religious connection that it shares with them. The historical linkages between Pakistan and Central Asia go back to the Silk Road era when these Republics were centre of trade (Ketaki 2003:176-77). According to Anwar (2011), “Pakistan’s cultural contacts with Central Asia can be traced back to the prehistoric times” (Anwar 2011:104).

There are a number of ethnic groups that live in Central Asia. Mainly Turkic and non-Turkic ethnic groups are widespread in the region, in which Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Turkmen belong to the Turkic origin while Tajiks belong to the non-Turkic ethnic group. So, “Pakistan has a greater cultural affinity with its Afghan and Pakistani neighbours to the south and with its Iranian neighbours to the west than its immediate neighbours in the former Soviet Republics” (Beeman 1999:101).

Ethnic Tajik people carried their identity from the Samanid rulers (819-900 A.D.) of the Abbasid period who were followers of the Sunni sect of Islam and ruled Central Asia from the beginning to the end of the 9th century. This dynasty was founded by Saman Khuda who was a member of a noble family in Balkh (modern day in Afghanistan and Mazar-e-Sharif is its capital) and renounced Zoroastrianism and embraced Islam. Cultural development of the Tajik people reached its pinnacle during the Samanid rule and primarily during the reign of Ismail Ibn Ahmed popularly known as Ismail Samani. This period is considered to be the golden age of Tajik civilization. A number of Ulema (Islamic theologians), scientists, philosophers, writers held high positions in the courts of Samanid rulers. Tajikistan has rich literary heritage with great affinities to the Afghan and Iranian cultural and literary heritage. Tajik language is similar to that of Dari in Afghanistan and Persian of Iran and has contributed to the collective heritage of Persian

language and literature. For example, *Shahnama* of Ferdousi, *Bustan* and *Gulistan* of Shiekh Shiraj Saadi are excellent works of literature providing knowledge to the common people of the respective geographical territory. The spiritual leader of Pakistan ‘Allama Iqbal’ is very much respected in the Republic of Tajikistan because of his wonderful Tajik, Dari and Persian poetry. This has come handy in rejuvenating Tajikistan-Pakistan cultural connections after the collapse of Soviet Union. Uzbek cities of Samarkand and Bukhara were the centers of Tajik culture and tradition before the Soviet Revolution of 1916 and in 1924 when Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic was created under the Soviet Territorial Delimitation, these cities became part of Uzbekistan. There is also similarity in the culinary of the Central and South Asian region mainly between Central Asia and Pakistan and Afghanistan. Tajik cuisines have greater similarities with the Afghan, Iranian and Pakistani delicacies. In Tajikistan, Afghan influence is visible in cuisines as *Kabuli Pulao* is very famous there and also *Samanu* is similar in Tajik, Afghan and Uzbek culture (Anwar 2015).

Convergence of cultural and customary pattern between Pakistan and Central Asia is two folded. Tajikistan has influenced the national dress, languages and religious traditions of Pakistan. In return, these aspects had greater impact on ethnic Tajik culture as well. Historically, the vast region of Asian heartland extending from Central Asia to West and South Asia was capable of maintaining unique and singular cultural standard because there was free movement of people and trade across these geographical territories in spite of incessant conflict and war amongst the people. The modern Pakistani cities of Peshawar, Multan, Thatta and Lahore were directly linked with the Central Asian cities of Samarkand and Bukhara until the 19th century when the imperialist forces of Tsarist Russia and British, which had taken over the Central and South Asian region respectively restricted free movement of people and trade due to great power rivalry in the region. After the independence of Central Asian Republics, Pakistan considered it both as a challenge and opportunity to achieve its objectives in the region by cultivating stronger cultural and religious connections. Pakistan has tried to export its Islamic culture to Central Asia which is Sunni Hanafi Islam which is tremendously followed by the majority of Pakistani population. During his tenure, the military ruler of Pakistan General Zia-ul-Haq tried hard to promote his Islamic agenda in the Central Asian region. Ever

since, Pakistan has been cherishing the revival of historical linkages with these Republics. Zia's focus on strengthening the Islamic culture of Pakistan led to the surfacing of Deobandi-Wahabi militancy which has been carrying the strong anti-Shiites campaign against the Shia population in Pakistan. The Saudi led Wahabi agenda and financial aid to the violent Sunni groups in Pakistan was used to propagate militant activities in Central Asian region as well (Ketaki 2003:176-177).

Historical-cultural relations of the Tajik people as ancient and civilized people of Central Asian region, with the Indo-Pak subcontinent and particularly with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan are now sought to be revived. On 14 August 2014, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon in his congratulatory note to the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Pakistan's Independence Day stated that,

“Independence Day of the country has given me an opportunity to sincerely congratulate Your Excellency and friendly people of Pakistan on behalf of the Government of Tajikistan. Both countries are linked by ancient historical ties and many cultural commonalities. Tajikistan looks with optimism to prospects of friendly relations and cooperation in the spheres of economy, trade, education, culture, security and military. We are confident that with the efforts of both sides, bilateral relations between the two countries will gain new impetus and new level of development in the nearest future” (President of Tajikistan 2014).

Historical Background

In ancient times, the people of Iranian origin along with the population of the indo-Pak sub-continent formed a single 'Aryan' territory comprising singular linguistic, traditional and cultural belief system. However, with the passage of time, this single geographical and cultural entity split into two, one settled permanently in Persia (modern Iran) and second faction moved towards the Indian subcontinent and they developed new cultural and traditional patterns along with preserving their old cultural reminiscences. It is mentioned in Indian Vedas that the people of the Indian sub-continent called themselves 'Arya' which means noble or superior. Iranians played significant role in the introduction and propagation of Islam from 7th to 12th centuries and afterwards in the Indian sub-continent through trade and commercial linkages. Moreover, thinkers, intellectuals and

writers along with some other peoples from Transoxiana (modern day Central Asia), Khorasan (including parts of Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan) and Persia migrated to India and Pakistan and settled in different parts of these countries. They played extensive role in the development of literary heritage of the Indian sub-continent and dispersed Persian language and literature in this region. Though the rulers and invaders of the sub-continent were not of Iranian origin, they were highly impressed with the Iranian civilization. They gave extraordinary consideration to the consolidation and promotion of Persian language and literature along with the spread of elements of Iranian civilization. Along with this, a number of well known figures and literatures from Transoxiana migrated to the then Pakistani territory in the 11th century. These scholars included literary figures of Persian language such as Ali Hujwiri also known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, Abu Abdallah Jeyhani who himself was astound scholar of Persian language. The main reason behind the migration of these literary and scholarly figures was the aggressive rule of Mughals and Genghis Khan in the region which forced people out of Transoxiana and Khurasan to settle down in undivided India so that they could escape rampant onslaught by these nomadic rulers. They found refuge in Punjab and Sindh region of present day Pakistan (Mardanov 2009).

The Ghaznavid Muslim rulers were the first to introduce Persian language and literature when they conquered Indian subcontinent in the first half of the 11th century. They established Lahore as the second capital of Ghaznavis. Consequently, Persian language has been used by all the subsequent ruling authorities of the Indian sub-continent in their state and administrative works as official language. It added to the popularity and influence of the Persian language to a level that a number of excellent works of literature have been produced since then. It also led to the expansion and propagation of the language. The impact of Persian language and literature was also evident on the new languages and related literature of Indian subcontinent, i.e. Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and Sindhi. It is evidence of close and strong connection between the Persian and these new languages. From 13th century onwards these languages of Indo-Pak sub-continent borrowed words from Persian and Arabic languages on a large scale. And even today, a number of words from Persian language are used in India and Pakistan by the majority of population. This mixture of languages is known as the Rekhta, Hindvi and Hindustani

which later got transformed into the Urdu language which became the official language of Pakistan. The British colonialist they tried to restrict the usage of the Persian language, custom and traditions in the Indian subcontinent because it was the medium of propagation of Islam. But it survived this phase as a section of literary groups of Indo-Pak sub-continent composed their works in Persian language along with their mother languages which moderately carried the legacy of Persian. The available sources of 19th and 20th century shows that over a hundred poets lived in the region of Punjab of Pakistan who were involved in the poetry composition in Persian language. Most prominent among them was Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori famously known as Allama Iqbal, who is considered as one of the proponents of Pakistan Movement. He is very popular in Pakistan. He composed most of his excellent works in Persian language in spite of efforts made by colonial regime to sabotage the linguistic popularity of this commonly accepted language of the then Indo-Pak sub-continent. He revived Persian literature in the sub-continent and enriched it to a greater extent. It was his unique and charming personality and poetic endurance that his followers and other literary scholars of India and Pakistan continued writing prose and verse in Persian. During the 13th and 14th century, eminent literary figures who wrote in Persian and Hindavi languages included Amir Khusrow and Rumi. Their successors like Mirza Ghalib wrote exemplary prose and verse. The Persian literary work of this time was highly influenced by the Tajik literature in Transoxiana, Iran and Khurasan until 16th century. However, from 16th century onwards, there was a steep reduction in the influence of Tajik literature in Transoxiana, Iran and Khurasan over Indian and Pakistani literatures. Now language and literature described daily lives of common people in the Indian subcontinent. The main theme of the literary works of this period both in Persian and Hindavi languages was to depict the peaceful coexistence between different religions mainly between Hindus and Muslims. The literature of Persian speakers in India and Pakistan was more in quantity and was also superior in its quality in comparison to other Persian speaking countries mainly in fields of history, biographies, dictionaries and grammatical works. Moreover, Persian literature was produced in Indian subcontinent at that time was used by the literary figures of other Persian speaking countries. For instance, Indian style and structure that got incorporated

in the Persian literature of these Persian speaking countries resulted into a compound style of Persian literary writing.

Mysticism played a significant role in developing cultural linkages between Transoxiana and the Indian subcontinent. Various disciplines of mysticism and their followers established cultural and spiritual linkages with the people of Indian subcontinent in the mediaeval period. It is also evident from the historical sources that many Sufi saints from Central Asian region at that time migrated to northern part of India and East Pakistan and preached their philosophies among the common people. Thus different perspectives and disciplines of mysticism among all classes of people of Indian subcontinent were established and its impact among the masses resulted into the increased number of believers and devotees. One famous Mystic saint and renowned poet Bulleh Shah Badakhshi of the 17th century spent his life in Kashmir. The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, Dara Shikoh and his sister Jahanara Begum were his disciples and devotees. This shows how Sufism widely affected the religious mindset of the people in the Indian subcontinent whether it was the ruling class or common people. Bulleh Shah was considered to be the mentor of Dara Shikoh and his sister and through his teachings he received great respect from the Mughal empire of that time. It is important note that inspite of several difficulties, differences and restriction through the ages of ancient and medieval period, there were good scientific and social relations between the regions of Transoxiana, Khurasan and the Indian sub-continent. This relationship grew stronger with time in the fields of learning, literature, arts, music, painting and religious reciprocity, contributing much towards the development of social and cultural life of both regions. In the 19th century when British colonized the Indian subcontinent, they were insecure due to this continuing process of cultural development between the two regions which could harm their imperialist ambitions in the region. Therefore, they tried to restrict this reciprocal process. At that time, some centers of learning in the subcontinent, such as Lahore and Sindh published some scientific and literary works in Persian, which were circulated in other countries through various ways.

During the Soviet period, when Tajikistan was an integrative Republic of USSR, Tajik people maintained their scientific and cultural relations with the people of Pakistan and

India through the diplomatic channels of USSR. However, it did not go very well for Pakistan, which was reluctant to leave its radical Islamic ideology at that time. The process of cultural assimilation is still going on as there are a number of researchers involved in the study of language and literature of Urdu and Pashto in Tajikistan particularly in the Institute of Oriental Studies and Literary Heritage of Tajikistan and several institutions in Pakistan and India. And their researches are being published in the form of booklets and articles along with various magazines. Many articles focusing on the life and contribution of famous cotemporary poets and writers of Urdu and Pashto are being published in various publications in Tajikistan. These illuminated writers include Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Ahmad Nadim Qasmi whose life and contribution to the literature and language of Pakistan and India earned much popularity among the educationists and scholars and common people in Tajikistan. These publications bring the literary life of Pakistan which is very similar to that of Tajikistan, closer to its Central Asian neighbours and into their art and literary circles. In 1966, a Soviet-Pakistani Friendship Society was formed and its Tajik branch played a significant role in enriching academic and cultural relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and Islamic Republic of Pakistan. A number of visits by intellectuals and writers of both countries have taken place. They also participated in different academic and literary conferences and seminars that have been held in both countries thus bringing the literary and academic circles of these countries closer. A series of academic and cultural events was organized in the Tajikistan and Pakistan between 1950 and 1980. “Head of the faculty of language and literature of Persian in Lahore University, Professor Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, Professor Habibullah and Mukhtar Ahmed along with some other intellectuals took part in this cultural struggle and acquired knowledge about the life of the people in Dushanbe, Khujand and Nurak cities of Tajikistan. The then Minister of Culture of Tajikistan, Professor Mehrban Nazarov along with the Tajik artists, Ahmad Babakulov and A Nazarov participated in the celebration of the cultural decade of Tajikistan in Pakistan” (Mardanov 2009).

These scholars visited various places of Pakistan and held discussions with Pakistani scholars. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cultural relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan witnessed positive turn. Joint efforts by both countries in developing

multifarious relations and promotion of cultural and educational ties strengthened after Tajikistan's independence.

The Pakistani Embassy in Tajikistan since its establishment has been very active in developing and maintaining good relations between the two nations. The Pak embassy in Dushanbe seeks to utilise deep rooted cultural and religious linkages of the two countries to bolster the diplomatic relations. When Tajikistan became independence out of USSR, then Pakistan capitalized upon this situation to forge good relations with Republic of Tajikistan on the basis of similar religious and cultural heritage. Pakistani embassy has been organizing many activities such as exhibitions, fairs etc. to promote cultural relations with Tajikistan. It has also hosted many programmes in the Tajik Republic focusing on the literary, cultural, religious heritage of these countries. In 1999, celebration of 1,100 years of Samanid empire in Tajikistan provided a unique opportunity to the Embassy of Pakistan to strengthen its relations with Tajikistan. A three member delegation from Pakistan was invited to participate in these celebrations. This delegation visited Dushanbe and participated in many events. The members of this delegation included Dr. Javid Iqbal, Mrs. Javid Iqbal and Mr. Muhammad Suheyl Umar, Vice President of Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Judge of Punjab High Court and Director of Iqbal Academy Pakistan respectively. On their return to Pakistan, one of the members of this delegation Mr. Umar stated that, "we intend to present a collage woven out of meetings, lectures, seminars, discussions, interviews, dialogues and observations/impressions gathered during the stay which extended over a period of more than two weeks, recommendations and work plan for Iqbal Studies-Tajik Chapter shall be presented at the end" (Umar 1999).

In 2013, a book 'The Tajik Golden Heritage' was released in Tajik Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. This book was written by the then Tajik Foreign Minister Dr. Hamrokhon Zarifi to explore the flourishing Tajik cultural heritage. Tajik Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Sherali Jononov released the book. In his inaugural speech, Tajik Ambassador stated that the main reason behind the launch of this book was to provide more elaborate information about the key elements of the Tajik culture and a detailed presentation of diversity of arts and crafts of Tajikistan. The earlier editions of this book

were published in Russian, Tajik, Persian, French, Arabic, Chinese and German languages providing insights into the art and culture of Tajikistan. Mr. Jononov further said that the book contained excellent pictorial presentation and clear descriptions. The memories of cultural heritage of the Asian landmass triggered by the poetic verses of Allama Iqbal gave impetus to the increasing thrust of knowledge about Central Asia to the Pakistani population. Trade and commerce between the Central Asian region and Pakistani cities of Peshawar, Lahore etc. continued for centuries. Ambassador Jononov said that the heartland of Central Asia was known as the 'Mawar-ur-nahr' which means the region beyond the river of Amu Darya and Syr Darya. It was the centre of the ancient Sogdian civilization with its capital at Afrasiyab and Panjakent.

During the Samanid period, Persian language inspired culture and tradition made its way into Indian subcontinent. Lahore which became one of the prominent cities was inspired by the Persian culture. Many scholars, poets, painters, artists and architects were also travelling from Central Asia to the subcontinent. Most of the rulers of the Samanid period maintained trade and cultural relations with the neighbouring states. The main reason behind this cultural exchange was the use of Persian as common language in Central Asia, Iran and Indian sub-continent. However in India and Pakistan, Persian was initially the language of the elite. Therefore, the publication of the book in Persian, Arabic and English language would allow people from Pakistan to explore the similarities that Pakistani culture and traditions share with Tajik culture and art. According to Tajik Ambassador, the book on Tajik culture would greatly contribute towards the dialogue of cultures of both countries and also give great impressions to the readers of Pakistan about the great Tajik traditions, crafts and artistic avenues. In his concluding remarks Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan said that, "presentation of book '*The Tajik Golden Heritage*' is a perfect gift dedicated to this important event in the history of the relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan. During the visit of Prof. Ahmad Hasan Dani of Pakistan to Tajikistan he talked about the common features shared both countries". "We consider Pakistan among our important and reliable partners and we are interested in further development of constructive partnership with it in different socio-political and economic spheres. Today we also have our distinguished guests, who had opportunity to familiarize with the book '*The Tajik Golden Heritage*' and we are going to invite them to share with

us their feedbacks and thoughts”, he said (Akhtar 2013). This added to the efforts of taking the bilateral cultural and educational cooperation of both countries to a new level, because these kinds of events in give boost to the intellectual communities to think and work towards developing friendly relations with common peoples of both countries.

Islam and Sufism

During the Soviet period, in Central Asian Republics, political institutions and processes witnessed negligible impact of religion. However, Islam remained a source of identity involved in the cultural practices and daily lives of people. During the 1970s and 80s, people of former Soviet Central Asian Republics made sort of adjustment between the religion and state, which primarily was divided between the state sponsored secular institutions and religion exclusively as an integral part of private life. At the time, followers of communism also considered themselves true followers of Islam as well. In Soviet Central Asian Republics, treatment of Islam was moderated and it was not considered as a security threat because Soviet authorities regulated and closely monitored religious activities. Religious institutions, functioning mosques, religious clergies and recognized religious communities were closely scrutinized and examined. All running mosques and mullahs had to be registered with the republican branch (*qoziyyot*) of the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and also with the Council for Religious Affairs. Registered mullahs were paid by the government and their appointment was also subjected to official authorization (Jukes et al. 1998:247-286).

Popular Islam which was inspired by Sufism (especially Naqshbandi order) and great cultural traditions were not controlled by the state and were free from political interference. This form of religious practice in the Soviet period had the potential to unite the believers under an anti-Soviet agenda. Popular Islam centered on community based ceremonies, rituals most of which dated back to pre-Islamic era. Ceremonies related to birth, marriage and burial are essential for every family and kinship or *Mahalla* (Neighbourhood community). The importance of old traditions carrying ancestral norms and practices became very important and influential. Proper celebration of the rituals of life according to Islamic or local cultural tradition was considered to be vital for any

social group or individual in order to maintain their societal norms. Therefore, in the Soviet period, monitored and regulated religious practices were considered harmless for political or societal upheaval. This factor contributed towards the insignificant influence of the external religious countries such as Iran and Pakistan. So, Pakistan could not leverage its religious commonalities with the former Soviet Central Asian Republics during the Soviet regime (Jukes et al. 1998:247-286). To quote Iqbal (2013),

“Sufism has had a significant role in the spread of Islam as well as evolution of Islamic cultures, especially in Africa and Asia. Persian Sufi poets and philosophers such as Rumi and Attar of Nishapur enhanced the spread of Islamic culture in Anatolia, Central Asia, and South Asia as well. Sufism was also catalytic in resisting European imperialism in North Africa and South Asia. It also produced a flourishing intellectual culture throughout the Islamic world” (Iqbal 2013:101).

Mysticism and orthodox Islam are blended together so well in the society of Tajikistan that majority of the believers can not find the difference. People following Islam practice some rituals of Sufism which they do not even know that they are derived from Sufism. For example, “in prayers and dua the names of ‘Bahauddin Naqshband’ and Abdul-‘Qadir Gilani’ are very frequently invoked and yet some mullahs are unaware of their Sufi origins. They are just considered to be the saints. Also, Jalaluddin Rumi (1273) is perceived as a Tajik poet, but not as a great Sufi Sheikh and the founder of the Mawlawiyya order of Sufism” (Arabov 2004:246-47). During the Soviet period, suppression of religion by the state saved the region from the radical Islam. But after the Collapse of USSR, it affected the religious environment of Central Asia negatively. In Tajikistan, the civil war took place between the communists and Islamist forces. Main contender to the communist regime was IRPT (*Islamic Revivalist Party of Tajikistan*). The Islamist forces of Tajik civil war were overwhelmingly supported by Pakistan and other Islamic nations which made the Central Asian Republics aware of security threats arising from free practice of religion. As a result, the Central Asian Republics put tighter control and surveillance over religion and politics in their territories. Even some Sufi Sheikhs were also involved in the political upheaval of Tajikistan. For example, Sheikh

Ishan Tourajan who belonged to the Qadiri sect of Sufism himself stated in an interview that he took part in talks with the then President Nabiyeu in 1992 regarding the political turbulence that was prevailing in the Republic of Tajikistan. His son Akbar Tourajadzade was amongst the opposition leaders who were fighting against the government forces. While there was another fraction of the Sufi saints who were reluctant to be involved in politics and condemned civil war. Hajji Ismail Pir Muhammadzadah belonging to the Naqshbandi sect and also the Imam of the mosque of the Ghissar region of Tajikistan condemned the civil war and also raised his voice against the saints involved in the political turmoil in the country. Abd al-Wahhab Zadah Qahhari Ismail was also against the civil war in Tajikistan and also against the Sheikhs participating in it (O'Dell 2016:99-126). However, Sufi Sheikhs played very important role in the shaping of the socio-cultural life in Tajikistan. It is evident that Ishans (Sufi leaders or elders are addressed by this title) are respected most by the Tajik population. These *Ishans* play the role of mediators between the government and civil society. They have followers from all segments of the society which make them significant in the religious and social structure of Tajikistan. Their followers are called *murids*. If these *murids* have any issue then they go to their *Ishan* for help. If a disciple has problem with the government and another works for the government then they both can choose their common *Ishan* for arbitration instead of going to the state system. As a result, government showed its interest in using the influence of *Ishans* to counter the rise of radical Islam, because they preach a more moderate form of Islam. The extremists tend to overthrow the secular government and seek to create a pan-Islamic state. These mystic Sheikhs consider radical Islamic ideology as more dangerous than communism. Extremist forces also consider Sufism as an obstacle in the way of achieving their radical agendas and reject Sufism. "At present Sufis do not appear to want to play a political role. So there is mutual desire not to get into conflict. Sufis do not want the government to interfere in their religious activities, while the government wants the brotherhoods to preserve their form of peaceful Islam ad protect the state from extremists" (Arabov 2004:246-47).

Pakistan has played very aggressive role in the civil war of Tajikistan providing training and financial support to the anti-government Islamic forces in Tajikistan during the civil war. At the same time, Pakistan, in order to get into the social and political environment

of Tajikistan, provided shelter to Tajik Hajj pilgrims going to Mecca. Pakistan actively disseminated the Islamic literature such as the translated writings of Abdul'IA'la Mawadudi and Hasan Al Banna printed in the Jama'at printing press of Lahore and Peshawar of Pakistan to fuel the conflict in Tajikistan as it desired to have an Islamic government to get political and economic leverages which was impossible in the presence of a secular government. Islamic literature was brought to Central Asia through Pakistani delegations travelling via Pakistani International Airlines mainly to Uzbekistan from where it further got dispersed to other CARs. It continued till 1992, when Uzbekistan government launched crackdown on the visa procedures. Strict measures against the rising militant activities after independence proved to be disastrous for the Islamic parties such as IRPT, shattering their dream of acquiring political power in Central Asia and to channelize the Islamic militant movements even after getting support from Pakistan. However, it made Tajikistan anxious about building bilateral relations with Pakistan government (Mehrotra 2008:259).

Language and Literature

Persian as a common language did not get popularize in Central Asia until a few centuries after the Arab-Islamic conquest of the region, although it had been known to the region long before that time. In medieval and even in modern period Persian has also been used by the non-native speakers from time to time in Central Asia and some parts of the South Asia, from Anatolia to India particularly as a language of literature, learning and governance. With the use of Persian language in the region, influence of Persian culture and tradition spread to Central and South Asian territories because cultural and traditions find expression with the knowledge of language (Atkin 1995).

Tajik Literature

Tajik literature is considered being around 2,500 years old. However most of the Persian literacy heritage belonging to pre-Islamic period is not available. Sources of Tajik literature come from distant regions beyond Central Asia and Iran because the Tajik/Persian language flourished and survived not only in the Central Asian vicinity but even in far-flung areas. Tajik scholars believed that most of the literary works in Persian

language can be termed as the Tajik literary work inspite of being dispersed and consolidated in different parts of the continent belonging to various author. For instance, “Rumi, one of the Tajik’s best loved poets, wrote in Tajik/Persian but lived in Konya, now in Turkey and then the capital of Seljuks. The Ghaznavids conquered large territories in Central and South Asia and adopted Tajik/Persian as their court language. There is thus Tajik literatures in areas that are now part of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Azerbaijan and of course areas of Central Asia” (Zafar 2009:112).

Therefore, Persian literature and writers belonging to diverse areas are considered significant in Tajikistan. Pakistan seeks to take advantage of its rich cultural and historical heritage. Commonalities in Persian language and literature play considerable role in bridging the gap between the two countries. There are various literary figures that are considered respectable in both countries, such as Allama Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib, Sadriddin Aini, Mirzo Tsurndo, Rumi and many more.

Literary Figures of Pakistan and Tajikistan

Allama Muhammad Iqbal

Muhammad Iqbal was born in 1887 in Sialkot in Punjab and he put his efforts to revive and reform Islamic ideology. He is considered to be the inspiration behind the demand of the separate nation for the Muslim community of India during the British rule. He was a great poet, philosopher, political activist and thinker and he was honoured with the Knighthood by the British Government in 1923. He primarily wrote in Persian language which made him popular not only in Pakistan but also in India, Iran and Central Asian Republics. He was also elected the president of the Muslim League in 1930 at its Allahabad session and again in 1933 at Lahore session. In the 1930 session of Muslim League, in his presidential address, he expressed his thought for a separate Muslim state to be carved out of Muslim majority regions of north-western India, Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan.

In the 19th century, during the British colonization of India, Muslim *Ummah* (community) was facing acute decline in its socio-political and religious sphere. In order to rejuvenate the Islamic religious ideology for the revival of the Muslim *Ummah*, Muhmmad Iqbal popularly known as Allama Iqbal and his philosophy worked in the process of Islamic

revival. He mentioned '*Ijtihad*' (it's an Arabic word which literally means 'to exert one's efforts'. It is also defined as 'the putting forth of every effort in order to determine with a degree of probability the question of Islamic law') in his poetry long before he delivered a lecture on '*Al-Ijtihad fil Islam*' (Masud 1978, Rafiqi 2017). In his view, "economic and political slavery must be abolished for the renaissance of Islamic nations. After that, united institutions of '*Ijtihad*' should be established for the ideological reconstruction of newly liberated states. He forecast the revival of his disciplined ideology in the Islamic world" (Rafiqi 2017).

The distinctiveness and universality of the Allama Iqbal's poetry made it significant and was admired not only in the Indian sub-continent but also in Persian speaking regions of Iran and Central Asia particularly in Tajikistan. Muhammad Iqbal attained recognition in Tajikistan due to his unique style of poetry writing in Persian language. In 1958 Mir Shakar visited Pakistan and brought '*Kuliyat-e-Iqbal*' along with him. Since then, a number of Tajik intellectuals and writers have written several research articles on life and works of Iqbal known as the '*Iqbaliyat*' in Republic of Tajikistan. Abdullah Jan published his works on Iqbal and also presented a critical analysis of Persian literature of the Indian sub-continent in which he included research on the philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal. After the independence of Tajikistan in 1991, popularity of Iqbal's ideology increased as there was a religious and cultural vacuum created in Tajikistan. Iqbal's philosophy became the torchbearer of the Tajik youth searching for their cultural and linguistic identity. His teachings regarding self-recognition (*Khudi*) reinvigorated the religious thoughts of the Tajik youth and it also became significant for their socio-cultural upliftment (Sattar 2017).

Muhammad Iqbal had immense influence over the poetic community of the Republic of Tajikistan. According to Umar (1999), "Iqbal was squarely grounded in the traditional continuity of Islamic literature, drawing the sap of poetry from it and eventually becoming perhaps the finest flower that blossomed in the withering garden of traditional Islamic poetry. He was well versed in all the classics of Persian literature but for our contemporary Tajik poets the source of inspiration is Iqbal and they rediscovered their classics through Iqbal" (Umar 1999). Classical forms of *gazhals* and *rubai* became

famous in Tajikistan due to Iqbal. Tajik literary figures and poets have also excelled in different genres of *gazhal* and *rubai* and comparison between these Tajik poets and Iqbal has always been illuminating (Umar 1999). Pakistan is facing many problems related to the society and politics since its emergence for which, the teachings and philosophy of Iqbal become prominent in describing the main ethos to tackle these challenges by an Islamic nation. The fundamental message of Iqbal's philosophy which is especially mentioned in his poem '*Israr-e-Khudi*' is to recognize one's inner self through self realization and being the representative of truth to the humanity. Some other concepts given by Allama Iqbal included self inhalation and the idea of being a singular nation which is also incorporated in the concept of Muslim *Ummah* (Ayub Sabir 2017).

Bedil Dehlavi in Tajikistan

Abdul Qadir Bedil or Bedil Dehlavi born in 1642 in Azimabad (near Patna) was of a Turkic Central Asian descent and he belonged to the '*Arlas*' tribe of the '*Chaghatay*', who are basically considered to be one of the Tajik people of Uzbekistan. He mainly composed *gazhals* and *rubais* (quartets) in Persian and Tajik languages which was language of the royal court at that time. He had excelled many other languages along with Tajik, Persian, and Urdu since his childhood. He wrote 16 books of poetry containing almost 147,000 verses and various *masnavi* (an extensive poem written in Persian especially by Rumi and it is best known and prominent works of Sufism) in that language. He is considered to be one of the finest poets of the Indian school of poetry writing in Persian language with assimilation of his own style. Mirza Ghalib and Iqbal-e-Lahori were highly influenced by the works of Bedil. He lived in the Indian subcontinent where many religions at that time existed and were assimilated into a diverse cultural uniqueness. It affected the writings of Abdul Qadir Bedil and made him tolerant in comparison to his contemporary writers. He accepted free thought in order to become compliant to the established beliefs of that time. He sided with the local people's understanding rather than religious clergies. As soon as he reached the heights of his poetic writings, he got recognition in the Asian continent especially in Persian speaking region such as Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, taking inspiration from Bedil, a unique school of poetry studies developed which is known as

'*Bidelshenasi*' and people studying his poetry are called '*Bidelshenas*'. Moreover his poetry also played significant role in Indo-Persian classical music of Central Asia (Asia Plus, 13 December 2017).

Abdul Qadir Bedil inspired some of his brilliant successors such as Mirza Ghalib and Muhammad Iqbal. His works include '*Telesm-e Hairat*', '*Toor-e-Ma'rafat*', '*Chahiir Unsur*' and '*Ruqa'it*'. Being an acknowledged poet of his time, Bedil gained popularity in Tajik cultural sphere; consequently, he became more popular in Tajikistan and Afghanistan in comparison to his own country. His works had a great impact on the Tajik and Uzbek literature. Moreover, "in Transoxiana region including Tajikistan a Bedil cult came into being under the name *Bedil Khani*, the poetry, verses and philosophical writings were read and analyzed at weekly meetings. A number of studies on Bedil and his works have been published in the erstwhile Soviet Union, which was the first country to devote serious attention to this poet" (Zafar 2009:160). Tajik writers were the first out of Soviet literary figures who studied Bedil and his writings. Famous Tajik writer Sadriddin Aini wrote a long chapter on Bedil in his collected works. Bedil's works have been quoted by many Tajik writers in their lectures and speeches. Tajik scholar Sadat Olimova expressed his views on Bedil in an interview by saying that no one can become an *Alim* (all-knowing) in Tajikistan without reading Bedil and apart from studying and understanding *Quran* and *Hadith*, one has to read Bedil and Saadi Shirazi for completion of their learning. From 18th century onwards, Bedil's poetry lost popularity among Iranians and it received recognition in Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The development of Tajik literature passed through various phases and with the royal patronage Tajik writers composed some of the brilliant literary classics in Tajik Persian language. Under the courtship of Samanid rule, Tajik literature reached its pinnacle. During their rule, the foundation of Tajik literature and historical heritage was laid down and it continues till today. The present Tajik government is working towards reviving the Tajik cultural and linguistic heritage in order to preserve the Samanid values. In this regard, a number of international and regional historical and cultural events are being organised in Tajikistan to promote the Tajik culture worldwide (Zafar 2009:160).

M. Mir Shakar

He was a famous writer and poet during the Soviet period and he is credited to have made Muhammad Iqbal popular in Tajikistan in the 1950s. He was born in Gorno-Badakhshan region of Tajikistan. He was considered to be the people's poet in Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic. He was the first to contribute towards the Tajikistan's children's literature. He had also become the Chairman of the Tajik SSR and received many awards for his administrative and literary achievements.

Other Notable Figures

Some other Tajik writers such as Sadriiddin Aini, Mirzo Tursunzoda and Mirza Ghalib, Mir Taki Mir, Qayyum from Indian subcontinent are popular in both Central Asia and in Iran, Pakistan and India. These poets have written not only in Persian language but also about the ancient cultural tradition and culture of both regions. Both regions have shared some of the best artistic works of the medieval period where one can see the amalgamation of the cultural traits from both regions.

Educational Cooperation

Rudaki Institute of Language, Literature, Oriental and Written Heritage (Academy of Science, Republic of Tajikistan)

It is one of the oldest research institutes associated with the Academy of Sciences of Republic of Tajikistan. During the Soviet regime, its establishment was affiliated with the Tajik Academy of Sciences of USSR. It was established through the resolution of the Presidium of the USSR on 17th March 1932 in the Tajik SSR. Initially, historical and linguistic sector became functional and in 1940 the Institute for History, Language and Literature was created which became an independent scientific research institution of the Tajik SSR. In 1951, Academy of Sciences of Tajik Soviet Socialist Republics was established and an independent Institute of Language and Literature was formed. This institute consisted of four primary research centers; the language, classical literature, Soviet literature and dictionaries. Since 1995, a new division of the Museum of Tajik writer Sadriiddin Aini was added to this institute. In 1958, on the completion and

celebration of 1100th birth anniversary of the founder of the Persian-Tajik writings, government of Republic of Tajikistan name this institute after him as Abu Abdullo Rudaki Institute.

Rudaki institute has been extensively working to study the cultural and historical linkages between the Central and South Asian region especially with regard to the Persian language and literary heritage across the region. Department of Modern East of the Institute is engaged with research on language, literature of Afghanistan and also Persian literature of 19th and 20th century. It is also doing research on the linkages of Tajik literature with the literature of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and India. Moreover, socio-cultural and political developments and social thoughts of the people of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and India in contemporary times are also being studied in this Institute.

The life and works of Abuabdullo Rudaki, Ibn Sina, Muhammad IqbaL, Mirza Barhurdar, Zulali Khansari, Halilullaha Khalili have been published by the Rudaki Institute. Catalogue of the Oriental Manuscripts has rich collections of the cultural and spiritual traditions of the Tajik people common with its neighbouring countries. Information on the cultural history of the people of this region is contained in the catalogues of Rudaki Institute's Modern East Department. This institute is engaged in conducting research in lexicography, grammar, Tajik language, poetic legacy of Samanid era, Tajik literature of the Soviet period, literary and linguistic heritage of Tajikistan. Along with this the written records in various fields of historical and cultural similarities with Pakistan, Iran, India and Afghanistan are also studied through scientific methods in Rudaki Institute (Academy of Science, Republic of Tajikistan).

Conclusion

Tajikistan has a remarkable historical and cultural legacy due to its location on the crossroads of civilizations. Transition of cultural and traditional traits from Tajikistan to the Indo-Pak sub-continent has been constant and rich. This historical transition between the two regions had led to commonalities in their society which paves the way for bilateral cooperation in contemporary times. Cultural and historical similarities along with religious affinity between Tajikistan and Pakistan can play significant role in the

promotion of their bilateral political and economic linkages. But due to geopolitical and foreign policy implications, these factors remained less effective.

CHAPTER-5
SECURITY CHALLENGES

Collapse of the Soviet Union in the twentieth century had its ramifications over regional power equations. At that time, when not friendly superpower like USSR disappeared, foreign policy makers of Pakistan considered it the best opportunity to create an Islamic security block starting from Turkey to Pakistan including newly independent Central Asian Republics with an intention to attain the required strategic depth envisioning wider economic and cultural prospects. Pakistan perceived that a new security arrangement between the neighbouring Muslim states would set high hopes for economic opportunities and dividends for Pakistan. Pakistan's geopolitical aspirations with Central Asian countries and its craving for strategic depth in Afghanistan were motivated by its internal and ideological principles. However, Pakistan's intentions seem to have failed even after more than two decades of existence of these former Soviet Republics as its prospective multilateral economic, political and strategic arrangement with these countries on the basis of Islamic solidarity have borne little fruits (Alam 2010).

Tajikistan, since its independence has kept geopolitical balance in its foreign policy objectives. First of all, it aspired to forge friendly relations with all Central Asian Republics, and its extended neighbours like Russia, China and Pakistan. Regional security has been the key element in Tajikistan's foreign policy and it considered Pakistan a key player having a significant role in the regional security structure. During a joint Pakistan-Tajikistan media cooperation, Pakistan's former Federal Secretary of Information, Ashfaq Ahmed Gondal stressing on the friendly relations between the two countries stated that, if both the countries have a common past then they must have a common future as well. He also emphasized on the role of media as a medium of promoting bilateral national interests. He said that national news agencies of Tajikistan and Pakistan should sign joint agreements in order to increase cooperation by exchanging information and documentaries to portray the positive images of these countries. In his speech on the completion of the 25 years of Tajikistan-Pakistan diplomatic relations, Tajikistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Representative, Abdurahmonov Marufjon stated that, "in the last 25 years, the relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan have evolved and more than 50 agreements have been signed to institutionalise the relations with Pakistan" (Daily Times 10 April 2018). The fragile internal state of affairs in the Central Asian countries makes them vulnerable to external and cross-border threats and challenges.

Consequently, external offers of protection and outsourcing of security from the regional powers make them depend. For instance, Tajikistan hosted the largest Russian military and Russian border troops, which guarded the Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan until 2005. After the Russian forces withdrew from Tajikistan, United States and European Union shared the responsibility of building the capacity of the Tajik forces by providing training assistance and equipments. However, Russian experts and military advisors stationed on the Tajik-Afghan border still provide their advice and supervision. Tajikistan faces the severe security threats from the proliferation of drug trafficking networks from Pakistan and Afghanistan to Tajikistan. Sharing its border with Afghanistan makes it the most prone to these illegal activities. However, drug trafficking did not lead to violent armed conflicts except from clashes between Russian border troops and drug Traffickers when these troops were deployed to protect the Tajik-Afghan border. However, several bomb explosions in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have alarmed Central Asian countries about the potential of instability. As soon as Central Asian Republics got independence, they were more susceptible to the security issues; however, they have survived the transition from Soviet Union and ensured their viability at large. Tajikistan has also transitioned from a possibility of failed state to a stable one. It experiences a modest economic growth inspite of numerous challenges that it had in its way. Economic security goes together with strategic security. Tajikistan recovered from civil war very well without making any significant impact on the neighbouring states. Tajikistan shares a long porous border with Afghanistan which by and large has been responsible for causing the instability in the country. According to Matveeva et al. (2008), "at present, the major security threat to the region is presented by Afghanistan, where drugs originate and which might return to being a sanctuary for militant Islamist groups that operate in Central Asia and China. Remnants of such movements are scattered in villages of north-eastern Afghanistan, while recently some active elements were reported to be trekking back to Central Asia from Pakistani hideouts. If instability in Afghanistan cannot be contained it could spill over to the north across Central Asian borders" (Matveeva and Guistozzi, 2008:3).

Drugs and terrorism threaten the security structure of Tajikistan and these have been dominating the security discourse of the region. Not only Afghanistan but rest of the

neighbourhood of Tajikistan being restive has a larger impact on its security. Uzbekistan as the focus of the Islamic, extremist and terrorist organisations of Central Asia and Uyghur separatists from China, along with their safe haven in the Tribal areas of Pakistan pose serious threat to region's security. Geographical proximity of Tajikistan with these countries has been of great concern to its internal security measures. For the President of Tajikistan, security of the regime is crucial and securing its territory from external challenges is the prime concern while fulfilling this objective. Furthermore, being the poorest and weak state in Central Asian, Tajikistan's capability of fighting with external threats is limited. "Border security, protection from attacks of militants from abroad and fight against drugs is outsourced to the concerned external powers, which are keen to fight drugs and terrorism. From Dushanbe's point of view, this is rather convenient; as it allows it to concentrate on the challenges it considers important" (Matveeva 2005).

Afghanistan remains a constant and common security challenge for both Tajikistan and Pakistan because these countries have direct border with Afghanistan. In Central Asia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are at the risk of internal ramifications arising from worsening of security situation in Afghanistan. The perceived threat to Tajikistan's security is the possible return of Afghan Taliban to power or any situation where Taliban forces fight with Afghan government to overthrow the current regime. It is also expected that if Taliban forces come into power in Afghanistan and a renewed civil war situation arises between Pashtun Taliban and Afghan Tajiks, it will negatively affect the official relations of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. In that case, Tajik society and its Islamic elements would also be highly affected. The Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) of Tajikistan which was the only legal Islamic opposition party in the country got banned in 2015 can also find inspiration from the neighbouring countries to encourage its Salafist movements. Additionally,

"Narco-traffic is already a major cause of domestic tensions among Tajikistan's elites, and was probably the root cause of the violent clashes in Khorog in July 2012. A potential reduced opium production in Afghanistan could lead to more intense battles between Tajikistani networks for control of transit and revenues. Increased production would serve to reinforce Tajikistan's role in the drug transit

and would further increase corruption of the country's elites" (Laurelle and Peyrouse 2013:9).

Therefore, having seen numerous incidents of violence inspired by radical Islam in its territory and keeping in mind the prospective threats to its socio-economic stability, Tajik government has supported establishment of effective mechanism and consolidated efforts of regional and international partners to adopt adequate measures to meet the new threats and challenges. At the national level, Tajik government has undertaken socio-economic, political and legal measures with an intention to strengthen key elements of its foreign policy to counter threats arising from international terrorism and extremism, drugs-trafficking, illegal arms dealing, Islamic radicalism, and illegal migrations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan 2015, Concept of Foreign Policy of Republic of Tajikistan).

Pakistan's support to Islamic radical groups in and outside of its territory have made CARs cautious of building bilateral relations, while Pakistan's approach towards using radical Islam as a tool to influence other Islamic countries seemed to be unsuccessful. Pakistan supported Mujahideen in Afghanistan and Islamic faction of Tajik civil war which has put it as the supporter of Islamic fanaticism. However, Pakistan has denied of being a supporter of terrorism and extremism. US led war in Afghanistan to demolish terrorist groups and Pakistan's reluctant support to this cause have had some positive impact on the CARs for mending their past relations with Pakistan. At present, Pakistan is striving for strategic depth in Afghanistan and in Central Asia by building cooperation in a number of trade and commercial projects. In order to achieve commercial and cultural cooperation with Afghanistan and Central Asian countries along with successful implementation of the ongoing bilateral energy and trade projects between two regions, Pakistan needs to stop supporting extremists and terrorist groups and it also has to ensure its internal security by denying the terrorists shelters in its north-western province, mainly FATA (Federal Administrated Tribal Areas).

Islam as the Security Concern

In the period of Gen. Zia-ul-Haque in Pakistan notion of 'Jihad' and Islamic Brotherhood came into prominence and consequently became a key element in Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan and Central Asia. Zia-ul-Haque advocated strengthening of Islamic

consolidation and political alliances for spreading Islamic nationalism. With the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, Zia regime of Pakistan supported United States and provided training to *Mujahideen* groups who fought against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. It also inspired some of the radical Islamic groups within Pakistan. As a result, two such organisations namely *Jama'at-i-Islami* and *Jami'at Ulema-e-Islam* came into prominence in Pakistan because they directly participated in Jihad against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. However, Gen. Zia-ul-Haque was criticised for supporting these radical groups in the Afghan war. After the end of the Soviet regime in Afghanistan, tool of Islamic nationalism was again used by Pakistan to project itself as a self assumed forefront state to gain access in Central Asia. Pakistan's intention was strategically aimed at having a compliant regime in Afghanistan in order to gain strategic depth against increasing Indian influence. It provided all supports to Afghan *Mujahideen* keeping in mind that they would be helpful in obtaining Pakistan's objectives in Afghanistan. Its never ending hostility with its neighbour India over Jammu and Kashmir compelled Pakistan to secure its western border as it was difficult for it to tackle problems at two frontiers at the same time. Therefore, having a friendly government in Kabul would have been helpful in fulfilling Pakistan's agenda (Alam 2010:2).

In order to curb their security challenges, Central Asian countries imposed several controls over religious freedom. They prohibited religious political parties and maintained religious oversight bodies, official Muftis and clergies to over radical Islam. Central Asian governments have censored religious literature and Islamic preachers for propagating Salafism. However, it has also been analysed by some scholars that, "the government religious control may leave spiritual gulf that underground radical Islamic groups seek to fill" (Nichole 2010:4).

Having seen a turbulent socio-political background, Tajikistan along with restrictions on free practice of religion and Islamic discourse in the country has concurrently promoted its form of Islam suitable for Tajik society. Tajikistan has successfully employed its religious policies because it witnessed that secular countries are more stable than the countries which allowed practice of political Islam. There are several examples of political Islam causing instability. Western and Russian concerns regarding radical Islam,

wars in Afghanistan and Middle Eastern region (Syria and Iraq) and US led anti-terrorist war in Afghanistan, altered Tajikistan's religious policies. Therefore, Tajikistan's policies towards Islam have been significantly influenced by international security context which forced it to adopt restrictive measures in the practice of religion in the country. In the aftermath of Afghan war, deteriorated law and order situation resulted into emergence of Taliban on the basis of preaching and practicing 'original Islam'. Pakistan supported Taliban in order to gain their support to get access in Central Asia. Moreover,

“Beginning in 1992, Tajik opposition fighters found refuge in northern Afghanistan during the Tajik Civil War, using the region as a base to launch insurgent operations in Tajikistan. Tajikistan and Afghanistan share linguistic and ethnic ties, as well as a long, porous border. Due to these facts, many worry about Afghanistan's potentially destabilizing influence, and therefore consider Tajikistan to be 'the most vulnerable state' in post-Soviet Central Asia” (Landes 2016:27-31).

After the 9/11 incident when U.S. waged a war against Islamic Terrorism in Afghanistan, Tajikistan became crucially importance for the USA from strategic point of view as it shared borders with Afghanistan. And the positioning of USA in Tajikistan provided ample opportunities for President Rahmon to consolidate power and to suppress the radical Islamic opposition. Tajikistan also received financial assistance from America as estimated 76 million US dollars in 2001 which was increased to around 136 million US dollars in 2002. After supporting the US in the war on terror, Tajikistan took strict stand on the religious freedom when it directed the heads of mosques and religious schools to launch state administered proficiency test in Tajik secular law and to pledge their allegiance to the current Tajik regime. Tajik government also closed a number of mosques and religious institutions. These religious policies of Tajikistan give it an opportunity to curb its political opposition. As a result, by 2005 Tajik government had counteracted United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and banned Islamic Revivalist Party as well. Moreover, in 2007, Tajikistan embarked upon preparing the law on 'Freedom of Conscience and Association' with a purpose to implement the severe restrictions on religion because it would require all the religious institutions to re-register and make their

religious literature subjected to government censorship along with other constrictions. US led war in Afghanistan led to larger US support to Tajikistan's government. In its efforts to eradicate religious radicalism from the region, the US did not take note of the authoritarian and repressive attitude of Tajik president Emomali Rakhmon.

In 2014, the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East resulted into the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) giving serious challenges to the West, Central Asia and South Asia. ISIS is a militant terrorist group which has been fighting against the government of Iraq and Syria. Being the followers of Sunni faith of Islam, this terrorist group wanted to establish a new Caliphate in the region with Abu-Bakr-al-Baghdadi as the Caliph. The ideology propagated by ISIS attracted the youth worldwide including some Tajiks. The countries which are socio-economically weak are most vulnerable to the ISIS influence. There is also a large population which supports ISIS because they consider it as legitimate resistance against oppressive regimes. It has been estimated by the Tajik authorities that in 2016, thousands of Tajik citizens joined ISIS terrorist group. It further justified the political crackdown and religious restrictions by Tajik government (Landes 2016:27-31).

Though Tajikistan and Pakistan are Muslim countries, they have different religious policies. Tajikistan follows a policy of moderate religious practices as it fears the spread of radical Islam, whereas Pakistan being an Islamic state has always tried to use Islam as a tool to consolidate its influence in Muslim dominated countries. But Pakistan's ambitions of playing Islamic card to increase its sphere of influence in the region have failed and this has further motivated Pakistan to support radical Islam to fulfill its intentions in the region. As this factor has affected its bilateral relations, Pakistan now seeks to develop bilateral relations by changing its policy of exporting Islamic nationalism.

Tajik Civil War: Role of Pakistan

Pakistan's support to Tajik opposition forces during Tajik Civil war by providing training and goods to the extremists helped in destabilising the country, as it was considered to be Pakistan's grand design in the region (Warikoo 2004:145). In early 1990s, Tajikistan made serious allegation against the fundamentalist group of Pakistan especially *Jamaat-*

e-Islami. This fundamentalist group of Pakistan had propagated Islamic revolution in Central Asia. The connection between the radical groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan posed a real threat not only to Central Asia but also to the Chechnya Republic in Russia, Uyghur Muslim dominated Xinjiang province of China and Kashmir in India. *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Pakistan had been providing ideological support and training to the radical groups in Central Asia. Not only Pakistan but other Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran with their arms and financial support also intervened in Tajikistan at the start of the civil war which threatened the existence of Republic of Tajikistan. Ahmad Rashid, a renowned Pakistani scholar of strategy and security of Central and South Asia also affirms that Islamic fundamentalists had their connection with Tajik civil war. He established linkages on the basis of analyzing the goals of Tajik opposition forces fighting against the Tajik government. A Muslim leader of Tajikistan, Qazi Akbar Toradzon Zoda of the opposition forces, stated that they hope to become an Islamic country, as they don't want communist and Russian troops in their country. IRPT of Tajikistan had also received material and physical support from Pakistan, Afghanistan and other Muslim countries as it also worked for Muslim brotherhood. Moreover, the Ikhwan-based leadership of the IRPT received financial assistance and training from *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Pakistan (Tolambia 2006:47-48).

The intervention of Muslim countries like Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan in the Tajik civil war was motivated by their self interest in the region. In order to establish their influence over Tajikistan they wanted a compliant regime. Potential threats of drug-trafficking and terrorism were considered to be a major concern for nearby states. According to Roy (2006),

“According to Gen Liashkovskii, in the end of January 1993, an attempt was made to intervene in the civil war of Tajikistan. At Peshawar an attempt to provide help to the Tajik brothers was made in the conference of representatives of Muslim countries. It was decided that the armed units would be provided which would be headed by Afghans with combat experience from war against Soviets. While it was the Pakistani government which gave assistance to Tajik refugees numbering around 80,000 in northern Afghanistan; the head of the ISI General

Hamid Gul even issued a statement in favour of the Tajik opposition” (Roy 2006:10-11).

The regional and international organisations have played a significant role in resolving the Tajik conflict. Tajik peace initiative led by the UN brought halt to the civil war by bringing on terms both the Tajik government and opposition forces. Pakistan was also a part of the peace initiative. Pakistan supported peace in Tajikistan because its aim of securing influence in the region seemed to have failed, and it moved on to its soft power diplomacy with Tajikistan after the end of Tajik civil war.

Terrorism and Extremism

Islamic militancy and terrorism have been a serious security challenge. Afghanistan as the focal point of terrorism and extremism played crucial role in diverging the bilateral relation between Pakistan and Tajikistan. However, Pakistan supported terrorist groups in its territory and also in Afghanistan which back fired threatening its internal security structure. Moreover, “Pakistan’s support of militancy and religious fundamentalism in Central Asia began in the 1980s, when funding from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was funnelled through ISI, the Pakistani intelligence organization, to help train *Mujahideen* in Afghanistan as combatants against the Soviet Union. Militants from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, China and various other countries began training alongside Pakistanis and Afghans in Afghan military training camps” (Lal 2006:23).

Collapse of Soviet Union brought extreme violence to the Republic of Tajikistan and led it to a civil war in 1992. However, major fighting subsided by 1994. Large territories in the highland of Tajikistan were controlled by Tajik opposition until the peace agreement of 1997 was signed. In the aftermath of civil war in Tajikistan, remaining adamant fraction of opposition forces merged with the radical groups like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) which was fighting against the secular regime of Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan. They wanted to overthrow his government to establish an Islamic regime in Uzbekistan. There were some incidents of violence in Tajikistan until the government forces demolished the last banditry arrangements in 2001. After that, no single conflict between the government and UTO has been registered (Matveeva and Guistozzi, 2008:2).

The Tajik government is acutely concerned about the dangerous consequences of terrorism and radical Islamic ideology. At the same time, Afghanistan is well known, in the eyes of Dushanbe, as the safe haven for radical Islamic elements which pose direct threats to internal security of Tajikistan. Influence of radical Islam over Tajik population is also considered to be a matter of concern for Tajikistan government. Therefore, Tajikistan has been trying hard to restrict religious activities in its territory which had not been officially sanctioned by state. It also takes control of the oversighting religious affairs through criminalizing of some religious activity. Some foreign officials in Tajikistan observe that, “policies such as the banning of Salafist groups most often serve just to drive banned practices underground. Pervasive poverty and lack of economic opportunity also contribute to radicalization in Tajikistan. As one foreign official said that, the domestic threat of extremism is very real” (Kuchins et al. 2015:3).

At present, there are three types of security challenges that affect the region and with varying degrees of cross-border ramifications. First and probably the most serious threat to Tajikistan’s security is the linkages between the Islamist militant groups in the Ferghana Valley of Central Asia especially in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Several incidents plotted by the terrorist organizations in Central Asia were mainly organized by IMU. In 1999, jihadist militants from Afghanistan crossed the border of Tajikistan and reached to Batken Province of Kyrgyzstan where they took over some Japanese as hostages and clashed with Kyrgyz forces and finally attacked Uzbekistan. Several other terrorist incidents took place in 2002 and 2004 in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan respectively. In 2006 and 2007, terrorists attacked the cross-border areas of Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan in Ferghana Valley. Another security concern of the Tajikistan is related to the domestic socio-political conditions such as restlessness over living standards, authoritarianism, weak governance and irredentism. And lastly, security threat posed by the increasing drug trafficking from Afghanistan and illegal activities is also threatening to the Tajik security structure (Matveeva and Guistozzi, 2008:2-3).

The politics of Central Asian countries often makes payments to regionally based political clans and their interest play a significant role in the policy making of the

country. The CASAREM project is inevitably shaped by the opportunities that these politically influential groups obtain and how this project benefits them. The Central Asian countries face acute corruption and criminal activities even in government institutions. Connections between criminal groups and border troops proved to be disastrous for pursuing coherent policies regarding illegal smuggling of narcotics. Organizations like IMU and its allied forces have the capability to indirectly affect the policies and interests of Central Asian countries with regard to South Asian region. IMU and its offshoots have taken refuge in the tribal region of Pakistan and Afghanistan due to the NATO forces present in the region. However, after the withdrawal of these forces re-emergence of these terrorist groups is possible. Therefore, it could shape the Central Asian government's perception of cross-border security challenges and for this region a strong presence of terrorist organisations in Afghanistan or Pakistan would likely affect the relationship between these two regions, i.e. Central and South Asia as the former would view this relation through the prism of regional and national security. In addition, "a related factor is the relationship between some of Central Asian governments and the ethnic Tajik, Uzbek and Turkmen populations in Northern Afghanistan who, for a time, formed the backbone of the Northern Alliance. If the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorates after 2014, the Central Asian governments particularly of Uzbekistan will likely boost their engagement with these communities and their militants" (Lamb and Mankoff 2014: 2-3).

Central Asian countries have been seriously concerned about the active role of Pakistan as a brooder for extremist groups. Therefore, their relation with Pakistan remained long strained until 2001 US military intervention in Afghanistan. Following this development surviving faction of IMU and its branches took shelter in Pakistan and they still exist there. In 2009, Pakistan army attempted to recapture the control of its tribal region. From there a small number of IMU militants tried to make their way back into Uzbekistan. Tajikistan has also expressed its concern regarding the potential infiltration of militants from Pakistan on several occasions. Recently Pakistan and Tajikistan improved their security cooperation. However, other Central Asian countries still remain cautious of Pakistan's double standards with Islamic radicals and its support to Islamic groups like '*Tablighi Jamat*' which is banned in Central Asia. Another important factor responsible

for poor security cooperation between Central Asia and Pakistan is India's relations with Central Asian countries which have been prime concern for Pakistan's strategists and policy makers. According to them India's influence in Central Asia poses a threat to Pakistan's security. As long as India-Pakistan relations remain strained, it will affect the security structure of the region. The common interest of developing economic cooperation between Pakistan and Central Asian states can only be ensured through having stability in Afghanistan to secure trade and transit possibilities (Lamb and Mankoff 2014:4).

In 2009, government of Tajikistan requested the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari to work together to eradicate the potential instability in Central Asia, during his visit to Dushanbe. Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai was also present in Dushanbe where he met with his Pakistani counterpart on the eve of a regional security summit also to be attended by Russian President Dimitry Medvedev. Multilateral discussions over security challenges took place, in which all the regional powers showed their concern about the intense fighting in Afghanistan. During bilateral talks between Zardari and Tajik President, the latter emphasised on joint efforts to maintain stability in region. Tajik President after his meeting with Pakistani President told that Tajikistan and Pakistan have emphasised principal positions on counter measures to fight against the extremist forces (Kozhevnikov 2009). Moreover, on 30th July, 2009 leaders of Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan discussed the prospects of developing friendly relations and promoting trilateral cooperation in various fields including regional and internal issues. They also considered that militancy, extremism and organised crimes posed serious threat to all regional states and also had the potential to stumble peace and stability in the region. Their joint declaration showed their readiness to cooperate in adopting effective mechanism to tackle the menace of terrorism and organised crimes (Khan 2009).

In 2016, a 'Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism' to combat terrorism was set up by Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and Tajikistan. Moreover, "The chiefs of general staffs of the four armed forces, General Qadan Shah Shahim of Afghan National Army, General Fang Fenghui from China Central Military Commission, General Raheel Sharif from Pakistan and General E. A. Cobidrzoda of Tajikistan met in Urumqi, China

on 3rd August 2016 and announced the formation of the mechanism, which will coordinate efforts on study and judgment of counter terrorism situation, confirmation of clues, intelligence sharing, anti- terrorist capability building, joint anti- terrorist training and personnel training” (Kucera 2016).

In this high level meeting, all the four participating countries agreed that terrorism posed serious threat to region’s stability and they fully recognized the constant efforts made by the militaries of the four countries in curbing menaces of terrorism and extremism. The military Generals of the four countries restated their willingness to make combine efforts to deal with extremist forces in order to maintain peace and stability in the region for smooth transaction of trade and cultural cooperation. The establishment of quadrilateral mechanism by the four countries sought to coordinate with each other to effectively check and balance the terrorist activities and ensuring safety of their citizens. It was also agreed among these countries that this joint collaboration should abide by the ‘principle of the charter of the United Nations’ and also the rules of International Law, especially the laws and principles upholding international peace and security, guaranteeing equity and independence, maintaining mutual respect to territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-aggressive and non-interference policy with regard to their internal affairs. However, “the four parties emphasized that the establishment of the quadrilateral mechanism does not target any other country or international organization” (China Military Online 4th August, 2016).

Illicit Drug Trafficking

In 2012 while addressing the Regional Ministerial Conference on Counter Narcotics in Islamabad, Pakistan, President Asif Ali Zardari stated that his country is not a drug producer but it is only being used as a transit which is more than enough to give serious threat to Pakistan’s internal security. This two days conference on counter narcotics was intended to curb drug trafficking networks and production in the region. In this conference participating countries were all five Central Asian countries, Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and also some members from the United Nations. Pakistani President in his inaugural speech said that the entire drug trafficking business engages huge amount of foreign currency and this is the reason why it looks

lucrative to local population for getting involved in these illicit activities. He also focused on finding a road map to tackle the security situation arising from the narco-trafficking with the help of all other countries being affected by drug trafficking. This illegal drug trade is also linked with the terrorist network in the region and the money produced from this trade is frequently used to finance terrorist activities, said Zardari. According to him the problem of illegal drug trafficking is the result of the choices that have been made during the cold war period when drugs like heroin was created to use it as a war weapon by the world powers to counter their rival ideology in the region. Though these superpowers left the region, the illegal drug trafficking still exists at large. Illicit drug trade is challenging the region by extending their networks and attaining support from the terrorist organisations. It also produces issues like arms smuggling, human trafficking and money laundering. He said that “at policy level, Pakistan has made a new National Anti-Narcotics Policy in 2010, a five year drug abuse control master plan, and has created an Inter-Agency Task Force on Narcotics Control. As a result, the President said, Pakistan became a poppy free country in 2011. Therefore, the peace and well-being of our people and the security and stability of our region depends on our success against drugs” (The Nation 14th November, 2012).

As the Khomeini regime in Iran harshly banned drug trafficking in the country, so the drug mafias of Iran shifted to Helmand Valley of Afghanistan which resulted into increased illegal drug trade in Afghanistan. Soviet invasion of Afghanistan altered the drug trafficking scenario in two ways. First, support of Pakistan and US to the anti-Soviet forces augmented the drug trade handled by *Mujahideen* in order to procure more arms and ammunition with the money earned by the drug trade. And secondly, the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan closed all traditional drug trafficking routes to Europe which resulted into the opening of alternate routes in the South Asian region of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Therefore, arising out of regional instability, the problem of drug trafficking and illegal narco trade has been threatening the regional security structure (Chandran 1998:903-922).

Drugs are mainly trafficked towards the Russian and other European markets where there is a huge demand. Although there is a large amount of drug carried through the Tajik

territory but its internal consumption is negligible. Also drugs are not produced in Tajikistan due to internal measures taken by Tajik government. However, Tajikistan being a poor country is highly susceptible to the growing drug trade in the region as the Tajik citizens get involved in the transit of drugs in order to earn some money to support their families. Also government officials and border troops to a certain extent allow the drug mafias to operate across their territories to earn easy money. These trends are dreadful as over the period of time it is possible that the drugs would be widely consumed in Tajikistan and the drug mafia will be so powerful that it will be difficult for the Tajik government to deal with such situations. In spite of having substantial amount of illegal trade through its territory Tajikistan also faces criticism as its citizens are often considered to be drug traffickers in other countries like Russia. Russia is conscious of the drug challenges coming from Tajikistan and this is the reason why Russia has adopted regulatory measures for the migrants coming from all over Central Asia particularly from Tajikistan. However, the main loser has been Tajikistan's reputation, as Tajik citizens are routinely suspected to be drug-traffickers in other countries. Russia pays increased attention to the drug challenge coming from Tajikistan since it affects domestic supply, and so do gradually other CIS countries which host Tajik labour migrants. This leads to harassment of Tajiks travelling abroad.

The US and UK are known for their role in Tajikistan in the fight against drug trafficking by providing monetary assistance, equipment and expertise in this regard. A Drug Control Agency was established with the assistance of Western donors and its institution building was aided by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The DCA also known as the National Drug Enforcement Agency was formed in 1999 under the Office of the President and is not liable to report to any other ministries. DCA coordinates with the Tajikistan's Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Security, both of them holding their own anti drug departments. The DCA consists of 350 personnel in which 150 belong to Special Forces bearing arms and capable of fighting criminals. Moreover, DCA officers are handpicked through a thorough system of testing and background check, and are paid between 100 US dollars to 400 US dollars, a considerable salary by Tajik standards. It does not have a reputation for corruption. When drug seizures are reported, it is normally the DCA which is involved in the Investigation and arrests. For instance, over the first

nine months in 2004, the DCA Directorate for Kulyab Region of Tajikistan seized 293 kilogram of drugs, including 37 kg of heroin (Matveeva 2005:139-41). According to the United Nations Drug Control Agency, “Afghanistan and other Central Asian nationals have intensified their campaign against opium, poppy growers and drug traffickers. The UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention said that Afghanistan’s interim government along with Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are cooperating on drugs control measures” (BBC News, South Asia 14th June 2002).

In spite of being a strong and independent institution of prevention of drug trafficking in Tajikistan, even DCA is susceptible to political pressure. In January 2004, when Tajik President Emomali Rahmon decided to dismiss the Head of Presidential Guards, Gaffur Mirzoev from his position, the President had to deal with a rebellion of his former comrade-in-arms until a prominent position satisfactory to Mirzoev’s reputation was offered to him. President Rahmon in order to settle this dispute compromised with Mirzoev and offered him a position as the head of the DCA, which utterly disappointed the international donor’s group who had formed this agency. Without considering the consequences that would affect the fight against drugs by this appointment, Tajik President in order to save his authority and regime succumbed to such a situation. DCA has been more relevant and significant to the external powers rather than domestic political regime. As a result, soon after Mirzoev took the position as the head of the DCA, he removed some staff of the Agency to fill those posts with his associates and acquaintances. Moreover, during his tenure as the head of the DCA, drug seizures by the Agency dropped by some 40 percent. On the other hand,

“No lasting damage appears to have been done. The president could not afford to leave commander in power that openly disobeyed his orders and threatened to take up arms, as he may become unruly in future. Moreover, the president suffered a public humiliation, which could not be forgotten. It was only a matter of time before Mirzoev was detained in August 2004. The previous head and members of staff dismissed by Mirzoev were reappointed to their positions and the situation returned to what it was before” (Matveeva 2005:139-41).

Role of Tajikistan and Pakistan in US led War on Terror

Pakistan's relations with the Central Asian countries were strained mainly due to its own imperatives with regard to Afghanistan. And Pakistan's support to a number of extremist forces such as *Mujahideen* and Taliban was certainly directed towards securing its own territory from the potential threats and obtaining strategic depth in Afghanistan against its arch rival India which had resulted into the unpleasant relations between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics. But after the 9/11, this scenario changed when US asked Pakistan's assistance in destroying Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan. Pakistan decided to work with US to combat terrorism against Al Qaeda. This scenario provided an opportunity for Pakistan to improve relations with CARs. However, having seen the aggressive attitudes of Pakistan in order to gain influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia, these republics were hesitant to have close relations with Pakistan even after it had changed its side by supporting NATO forces in Afghanistan. When the US forces attacked Afghanistan, some foreign militant elements of Russian and Central Asian region such as Chechen and IMU members had taken refuge into the tribal areas of Pakistan fleeing Afghanistan which further affected Pakistan's relation with Central Asia. However, "Pakistan claims to have conducted military operations since 2004 to clear the areas of these miscreants. As it is difficult to seal the border to stop future infiltration from Afghanistan, Pakistan has proposed to fence and mine the border to stop illegal crossings" (Rahman 2007: 227-228).

Tajikistan played a crucial role in the US led war on terror in Afghanistan keeping in mind its own interest of securing its southern region which shares direct boundary with Afghanistan. Tajikistan had long been facing the trouble of illegal infiltration of *Mujahideen* from Afghanistan from during the civil war to extend support to the terrorist organisations active in Central Asia. Its location made it significant that US sought its help in war against terrorism. Moreover in this joint venture, Tajikistan benefited by receiving huge financial assistance from the US. Tajikistan offered three air bases in the Kulyab, Khujand and Kurgan-Tyube region. It was the first Central Asian country which provided an inland base for initiating the US air strikes for military operations against Taliban. Moreover, "Tajikistan along with Russia, Iran and India also played a significant

role in helping the Northern Alliance forces against the Taliban regime. It was through Tajikistan that substantial Russian military assistance to the Northern Alliance was transported to launch an offensive military operation on Kabul” (Alam 2010:13).

Therefore, it can be said that Tajikistan played a considerable role in US strategy towards Afghanistan. US embassy in Tajikistan, in a broadcast on 16th February 2010 in memory of late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, admired the constant support of Tajikistan to US Mission in Afghanistan. According to this broadcast, US embassy in Dushanbe extended its gratitude for allowing its troops to fly over Tajik territory along with consistent supply of material support to US forces in Afghanistan through Tajikistan (ICG Asia Report, No. 205, 2011:9-10).

After the February 2008 general elections in Pakistan, People’s Party of Pakistan (PPP) came to power. It was now expected that the security situation will improve especially in FATA but it did not happen. In the pre-election statements, all political parties being discontent with the Musharraf regime for rising militancy in Pakistan, promised to improve the security of the region and also vowed to initiate peace talks with militants operating from the FATA region. Some constituents of the newly elected government had even occurred to sign peace agreement with the militants of the FATA. However, negative outcome was received in this regard. And even, *Tehrik-e-Taliban* of Pakistan operating from the tribal belt of Pakistan had demanded non-interference by Pakistani government in the TTP’s cross border attacks in Afghanistan and also withdrawal of Pakistani troops from Pakistan-Afghanistan border. These militant groups had also taken control of the supply route of the NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). US had registered its dissatisfaction over Pakistan’s role in the War on terror, on which Pakistani President Musharraf had stated that Pakistan had done a great deal to fight against Al-Qaeda and Taliban and United states could not have achieved success if Pakistan had not supported it (Zetterlund 2009:51).

The political stability in Tajikistan after the end of the civil war had been a remarkable accomplishment. However, this stability saw a steady weakening in 2008-09 due to the multiple and interrelated security challenges coming into its way. The worsening security situation in Pakistan had made Central Asian Republics a crucial chain to be used as the

NATO's ISAF supply to Afghanistan. Therefore, in 2009 United States established new transit corridors for the supply to the ISAF to Afghanistan. The new supply chains entered the northern border of Afghanistan from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan from two routes. The first route started from Latvia and crossed Russia before ending in Tajikistan, while the second route went through Georgia and Uzbekistan. There was an urgent need for alternative supply route for delivering coalition and NATO-ISAF troops because of the increased US military presence and its over reliance on the routes from the Karachi port of the Pakistan. These alternative routes were collectively known as Northern Distribution Network (NDN). The route via Tajikistan provided a backup to the Uzbek route which entered Afghanistan at the Termez border crossing. The route through Tajikistan had been rough due to dilapidated condition of the road and that is why it was not used frequently while the Uzbek route due its facilities and infrastructure was more developed. The northern part of Afghanistan was highly controlled by Taliban. Therefore, this part experienced more fighting and escalating threat of instability across the border to the Tajikistan. The IMU offshoots which had its origin in Central Asia fought from the side of Taliban in the Kunduz and Northern provinces of Afghanistan. Therefore, the threat of extending IMU's reach to Tajikistan once again seemed troublesome for Tajik government as these IMU fighters wanted to disrupt the NATO supply lines of Central Asia. Therefore, Tajikistan supported the US military intervention in Afghanistan in order to settle its own security threats arising from the instability in Afghanistan (Matveeva, 2010: 37-38).

Pakistan's role in the global war on terror has been considered dubious by the whole international community and it proved right when Al Qaeda commander Osama Bin Laden was traced and killed in Abbotabad Pakistan in 2011 by Obama administration of US. A US intelligence officer told the *Long War Journal* that during the operation of raiding the safe haven of Laden in Pakistan, US intelligence did not give a clue to the ISI about it because they could not trust ISI with the information after having seen its dual standards. However, being a supposed partner of US in counter-terrorism in the region, US never expected that the Al Qaeda head would be found hidden in Pakistan's premises. During the US search operation of Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan, US forces had failed to find him because Pakistan's security agencies had already informed Osama's

associates whenever US troops approached. Moreover, “According to a US diplomatic dispatch, General Abdullo Sadulloevich Nazarov, a senior Tajik counter-terrorism official, told the Americans that ‘many’ inside Pakistan knew where Bin Laden was. The document stated: In Pakistan, Osama Bin Laden wasn’t an invisible man, and many knew his whereabouts in North Waziristan, but whenever security forces attempted a raid on his hideouts, the enemy received warning of their approach from sources in the security forces” (Wikileaks Document 2011).

Role of SCO

The SCO emerged out of negotiation process that took place between Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in order to demarcate the borders of Central Asia after the disintegration of Soviet Union 1991. It was the time when Sino-Russian relations were recovering from a decline in the late 1960s and the normalisation of the bilateral relations in the 1970 and 80s. Central Asian countries of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan negotiated their borders with China. In order to provide institutional support for its counter-terrorism activities along with implementing the Shanghai Convention on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, the SCO established the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in 2002, while it was already signed in 2001. In 2003 the headquarter of RATS was shifted to Tashkent, Uzbekistan from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan where it had been established in 2001. The main purpose of establishing RATS was to make coordination with the SCO member states to combat terrorism, share important information among law enforcement agencies and to build a data bank network to coordinate operations to deal with terrorist groups and other terrorist funding agencies. The RATS staff comprised of officials from all the member states of SCO. Over the past few years, this body of SCO has expanded its role in ensuring regional security. Moreover, it is working towards harmonizing anti-terrorist laws in member states and is also expected to extend cooperation in coordinating SCO activities in order to fight cyber crimes and cyber terrorism (Koldunova and Kundu 2014:12-15).

Describing the broadening influence of SCO, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Li Hui in the Shanghai Summit of June 2006 stated that there are a number of countries in Asia and other continents which have applied to become a member of the organization and this

will in future make SCO world's biggest organization. In 2017 India and Pakistan were upgraded from the status of an observer state to permanent member of SCO on 9th June 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan (Khan 2017). Iran is also hoping to become a full member as it is now an observer state. With India and Pakistan becoming full member of SCO, it has encompassed more than half of the world population. Also if Iran becomes full member, then the SCO's share of oil and gas resources would also be supplanted. So far, the huge difference in the demography, geographic size, military capabilities, economic opportunities and quantity of resources of the existing members of the SCO have already made it intricate to have multilateral negotiations and take effective cooperation measures amongst the member countries. As both India and Pakistan have become the members of the SCO, it is expected that they would be competing with each other to create their sphere of influence in Central Asia through this organisation. India had no interest in the US military withdrawal from Afghanistan as it knew that it will again give way to the rise of Taliban and also raise the level of the existing militant activities in Kashmir. It was rightly said by Weitz (2007), "Giving India or Pakistan full membership, moreover, might require the SCO to address Kashmir and other divisive South Asian issues. The admission of Iran would risk discrediting the institution's anti-terrorism credentials and would entangle the SCO in a myriad of Middle Eastern disputes. Fulfilling Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's longstanding request to join the SCO would give credence to Western perceptions that the institution has become a dictators' club" (Weitz 2007:113).

Pakistan's location at the crossroads of Central and South Asia bestows it with an opportunity to monitor the potential regional groupings and to play an important role. As Khan (2013) puts it,

"Pakistan values highly its relations with the SCO and fully shares in its objectives for promoting economic cooperation amongst the member states. Pakistan was the first country to apply for an "Observer" status in the SCO. Pakistan's admission was first handicapped by the Central Asian members for their support of the "Northern Alliance" (ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks) against Pashtun-dominated Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan not only supported the

Taliban, who controlled almost 80 per cent of Afghanistan, but also accorded de-facto recognition to their government. Tajikistan strongly opposed Pakistan's membership due to its strong support for Taliban in Afghanistan" (Khan 2103:61).

However, in the aftermath of the 9/11, Pakistan's half hearted support to the US led forces, made its stand indistinguishable on the issue of terrorist and extremism and Pakistan itself experienced steep rise in militant activities during this period. It has been observed that, Pakistan's membership to the SCO could be helpful in bringing peace and stability in the region after the US forces withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, the scenario now is totally different, where after 2014, Taliban forces are yet again on the rise and they are fighting against the Afghan government forces. It is also seen as to how SCO could turn the security situation of the region positive after giving full membership to Pakistan and India. Pakistan can increase its trust with the Central Asian region through SCO. SCO's role in Afghanistan through increased cooperation amongst the member states could lead to better results. As of now, SCO has had no significant achievement on this front as all the members are keen to work for their self interests more than to bring any significant change to regional security. Pakistan has cordial relations with all the SCO countries except for its arch rival India (Rahman 2014:67-68).

Russian Federation has on many occasions hinted that Pakistan needs to first resolve its problems with India, if it wants to have closer involvement in SCO. Russia also asked Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism in India and eliminate the terrorist infrastructure operating from its territory (Matveeva and Guistozzi, 2008:18-19). To develop their bilateral relations with China and Russia, both India and Pakistan were keen to join the SCO. Russia supported India into the SCO as a full member (Zeb 2006:55-60).

India had two dimensional approaches about joining the SCO as a full member. Firstly, it intended to increase economic cooperation and extended strategic neighbourhood rather than increase cooperation in regional security. Secondly, it also believed that economic cooperation can prove to be a winning card while competing with Pakistan for greater influence as India has much greater capabilities for development of economic activities in the region (Lam 2005). In the SCO summit held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in 2007, India

was represented by Murli Deora, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, while Iran was represented by President Ahmadinejad and Foreign Minister of Pakistan represented Islamabad, and for which, this summit considered to be significant. At that time these countries were observer of the SCO. However, Iran's desperation to become full member of the organisation is clearly visible by its high-level participation in the 2007 summit of SCO. Pakistan's interest in joining the SCO was motivated by its improved relations with Uzbekistan in 2002-2003, after which Pakistan seeing a greater opportunity to have friendly relation with Central Asian countries in the field of economic development though becoming a member of SCO (Zeb 2006:59-60). Therefore, Pakistani President Gen. Musharraf enthusiastically promoted the idea of using Pakistan as an energy corridor to the SCO member countries (Zeb 2006:52). Although, Pakistan's motivation to join SCO was initially driven by the security consideration but it faced strong criticism from the Central Asian countries on this ground because all of the CARs considered Pakistan as the germinator of terrorism. The main blockade between Pakistan and Central Asian Countries at this time was the presence of Islamic activists in Pakistan who fled from Uzbekistan which made CARs wary of Pakistan's of combating terrorism. This seems to be the main reason why the Pakistan initially got rejected from being granted an observer status. However, the unresolved issues of Kashmir between India and Pakistan also been deterrent in their full membership to SCO (Matveeva and Guistozzi, 2008:18-19).

Role of International Powers

Russia

Security assistance is considered to be the prime determinant for international donors in Tajikistan. There have been a number of initiatives launched by neighbouring states, Western countries and regional powers to support the Tajik government in its control and management of its border security. Between 1996 and 2003, 17 international treaties and agreements were signed by the government of Tajikistan on the drug related issues. Russia became the main associate of Tajikistan in the field of security after the collapse of the Soviet Union. So, when the civil war broke out in Tajikistan, Russia decided to keep its border troops to secure Tajikistan's border with China and Afghanistan. There

were around 16,000 to 17,000 Russian soldiers who were deployed along the Tajik-Afghan frontier. Moreover, Russia's decision to keep a large contingent of armed force on the Tajik border was mainly driven by broader geopolitical consequences. The rising instability in Tajikistan would have also instigated security issues in other Central Asian countries and also in Russia. Therefore, in the field of security Russia maintained its role as the major partner of Tajikistan throughout 1990s. However, after 9/11 the Central Asian region became an area of key interest for the US and West. Since 2001, the US and its western allies tried to increase their commitment in Central Asia in which illegal drug trade was considered to be a major obstacle and security threat to the region. Therefore, western powers poured huge financial aid for counter-narcotics and border management assistance to Tajikistan (Danieli 2011: 129-145).

Tajik border is located on a favorable route for drug trafficking as it is along the rugged mountains and very difficult to patrol in comparison with other Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan which also share their borders with Afghanistan. The heavy influx of narcotics through Tajik territory is dangerous and lucrative as well for a country like Tajikistan which is not economically sound.

It was until 2005 when Tajik military under the President Emamoli Rahmon regime was ready to maintain border management and control of the border patrol. Russian troops were now asked to vacate the border area. However, Moscow frequently pleaded to return to border. Although, Russia played an important role in the management of the Afghan-Tajik border, it deployed a company of 7,000 military in three different bases because the Afghan-Tajik border was extremely important and a key location in controlling narcotics and cross border militant movements into Central Asia. It became a matter of concern for Russian government when International Security Assistance Force planned to withdraw its forces at the end of 2014 by leaving only a small military contingent behind. Currently, the Russian military advisors are working with the Tajik military at the border. Moscow wanted to be the security incharge with intention to reduce the risks and narcotics trafficking through the Tajik-Afghan border, particularly at the time of withdrawal of International Security Force. The production of opium is also increased because of the reduction in the US and NATO surveillance over the production

of opium. It is also anticipated that, Afghanistan will also be rapidly increasing the flow of drugs supply in a situation when foreign funding will be decreased. Russian financial assistance and security played a crucial role in sustaining the regime of Rakhmon in the presidential election of 2013, where rival *Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan* was also contesting. Despite numerous issues between Russian government and Rahmon, they successfully solved their strategic issues, particularly regarding security. For that reason, they compromised on the border issues to face other upcoming challenges (Stratfore Worldview, 22nd May 2013).

Russia-Tajikistan relations on security issues have been constantly strong while Pakistan has always sour relation with Russia due to its inclination towards the west. However, recently Russia's rapprochement towards Pakistan is expected to change the Eurasian security dimensions making India a little bit concerned about Russia's improving relation with Pakistan. Pakistan have also realised that the two biggest super powers of Asia-Russia and China, have greater influence over Central Asian Republics. So it is inevitable for Pakistani policy makers to take into account Russian interest in the region if Islamabad wants to have friendly relation with CARs. All developmental projects between Pakistan and Central Asia can only be implemented successfully if both Russia and China help in maintaining the regional security imperatives.

China

Through the SCO, China has a legitimate framework for developing bilateral security cooperation with Tajikistan and also with other members of the organization. Tajikistan shares border with the Xinjiang region of China which is the sensitive area mainly due to the Uyghur separatist movement. They share a common border at the high plateau of the Pamir and the bordering region is thinly populated. A border dispute between Tajikistan and Pakistan in this area was resolved by an agreement in 1999, succeeded by other agreements between the two countries in 2002. The negotiations over the borders agreements normalized their bilateral relations leading to construction of a road between Khulma in eastern Gorno-Badakhshan region of Tajikistan and Karsu in the north western Xinjiang region of China in 1999. Johnsons (2006) analysed that,

“Since Soviet times Tajikistan had no direct exit to China, and the new road would open new prospects for bilateral relations. It was completed by 31st August 2001, although its opening was postponed for two and a half years without reasons being stated. In the spring of 2001, a Tajik-Chinese joint economic and trade commission had its first meeting. China gave economic assistance to Tajikistan in 2001, but economic cooperation developed only slowly and trade remained on a fairly low level” (Johnson 2006:85).

The main concern that China had in mind regarding the Tajik-Chinese border was potential threat to its internal security from the Uyghur separatist crossing border and taking shelters in Tajikistan. China also believed that the extremist groups active in Central Asia would definitely augment secessionist activities in Xinjiang. Therefore, it extended strategic and economic cooperation to the Central Asian countries in order to leverage over potential security threats to its north western territory.

China has direct interest in developing cooperation with Tajikistan mainly to secure its border with the restive province of Xinjiang. Tajikistan becomes unstable then it would affect Chinese internal security. The year 2004 was very significant for Tajik-Chinese relations for various reasons. First, the highway from Murghab to Khulma was finally opened in this year, which connected Khorog in Tajikistan to Kashgar in China along with a direct flight between Dushanbe and Urumqui, the capital city of Xinjiang. The opening of border between Tajikistan and China was initially limited to 5 days for every 10 day period from May to October. Moreover, “Stretches of the road from Khorog to Kulyab inside Tajikistan needed repairs, which would not be completed until around 2006. Still, the road opened up important new prospects for Tajikistan to reach out to the world: it connects to the Karakorum highway, running though China and does also open up the prospect of linking Tajikistan to Pakistan and of access to the sea” (Johnson 2006:86). During 2004, security cooperation between Tajikistan and China also developed. The opening of Murgab-Khulma stretch of highway had direct security implications for both countries. Direct access to each other’s territories and free movement of people across the border increased the risk of cross-border criminal activities. Both countries signed a joint agreement in 2004 for setting up of a joint

investigation and exchange of information between security agency of Tajikistan and China in order to fight cross border crime and smuggling activities. This agreement also permitted the Chinese agencies to trace suspected terrorists in Tajik territory and also allowed these agencies to be present during trials in Tajikistan. China had the same kind of agreement with other Central Asian countries as well to fight Uyghur separatism, a major national security concern for People's Republic of China (PRC). Tajikistan's difficulty in protecting its border with Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Russian troops was an issue of direct concern for China. Therefore, in 2004 Tajikistan had discussions with China to bring Chinese expertise to take care of its border protection problems. In quick response, a senior delegation from Chinese army visited Dushanbe in the December 2004 and met with defence minister of Tajikistan, Sherali Khairullaev and members of the Tajik National Guard and Tajik border service. Discussions regarding deepening of bilateral military cooperation and security cooperation through the SCO took place. Clearly the security concern was the main reason for China in building cooperation and direct engagement in the security apparatus of Tajikistan (Johnson 2006:87-88).

Chinese heavy investments in Tajikistan mainly in the road infrastructure and industrial development was aimed at integrating the Republic into China led regional trade and transit corridor which also included Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tajikistan is also subjected to the growing pressure from Afghan government to open up its border so that the Afghan entrepreneurs have direct land route access to the Chinese markets. Therefore, pro-China lobbies have the capabilities to structure the trade of Tajikistan particularly in its eastern Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO). China has largely invested in transportation and construction sector of Tajikistan through Chinese Import-Export Bank or other international organisation such as ADB, IDB etc. As it is rightly put by Peyrouse (2011),

“Beijing's objectives are twofold: 1) to improve the link between Dushanbe and large provincial towns, such as Kulyab, which are viewed as key elements in the country's political stability; and 2) to develop trade relations with bordering countries- Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and China. In particular, China wants to integrate Tajikistan into its already ancient partnership with Pakistan via

the Karakoram Highway as well as into its more recent trade and investment relationship with Afghanistan” (Peyrouse 2011:1-2).

India

The consequences of 9/11, gave India leverage to be critical of the countries which have been acting as haven of terrorist activities in particular, Pakistan. In this dynamics of international politics, India reoriented its foreign policy objectives and initiated according to the concurrent strategic situation. The first step in this regard taken by India was the consolidation of its position in some socio-political issues on a serious note. After the cold war India’s foreign policy became vibrant attracting new dimensions for foreign relations. In this connection India approached Tajikistan to obtain some advantages and also security which would give it an upper hand in comparison to the hostile neighbours like Pakistan, China and Taliban regime in Afghanistan. India’s relations with Tajikistan also proved to be helpful for India to build its linkages with other Central Asian countries. To make stronger ties with Central Asia, India launched its policy of ‘Connect Central Asia’ in June 2012, through which it commenced a variety of projects that would benefit Tajikistan in every manner. India’s approach towards Tajikistan has been constantly positive and this positivity has been reciprocal. Both countries have mutual interest with each other as Tajikistan being the poor economy wanted to develop economic opportunities with India. On the other hand, Indian policy towards Tajikistan is mainly aimed at its security objectives. India’s influence in Tajikistan was also due to the strong and historic Indian-Russia relations. But India’s presence in Tajikistan has been view as a threat by many of Pakistan security strategists (Bandey and Wani 2012:1-2).

As soon as Central Asian Republics became independent, they found themselves involved in Pakistan’s security agenda. Collapse of Soviet Union provided Pakistan an opportunity to increase its presence in the CARs. Pakistan’s approach towards creating influence in these republics inevitably led India to show more interest in this region. Pakistan’s perception and policy regarding Central Asia reflects a combination of Islamic geo-political and economic interests. Pakistan government domestically wanted to develop transportation linkages to generate economic activities for its economically backward provinces. Besides integrating Afghanistan and Central Asia has been long

standing pillar of Pakistan's strategy. Pakistani politicians were divided on two dimensional approaches towards Central Asia and India. A faction of Pakistani strategists emphasised on Islamic unity against India. They want to create of an economic neighbourhood and vast market for Pakistani goods and services through the development of transportation route for using Central Asia as a strategic rear against India. Pakistan's army is anxious to obtain such a strategic rear against India. Pakistan's economic objective cannot be fulfilled as it lacks resources and direct overland route to Central Asia as well. In order to directly access this region, it must link up with Xinjiang or Afghanistan. However, both options are considered to be difficult as China strongly opposes any Islamic policy due to its religiously and politically unstable north western province of Xinjiang. As early as in 1991, Central Asian countries warned Pakistan that its support to the *Mujahideen* in the Afghan war would provoke the Tajiks which could generate violence and refugees (Blank 1995:18-20).

Indian Prime Minister visited Tajikistan in 2003 where both countries signed a bilateral treaty of extradition, agreement to enhance cooperation in defence sector, information technology and many other fields. An agreement on the setting up a joint working group to combat terrorism in the region was also signed. It was during this visit that reports of Indian military base in Tajikistan had drawn the media's attention. In a report of *Indian Express*, Ayni air base near Dushanbe was described as India's first ever military base in a foreign country. However, both countries denied the report of Indian military base at Ayni but they did accept that India was helping Tajikistan to upgrade infrastructure at the dilapidated air base. India's nominal military presence in Tajikistan was almost negligible in comparison to the Russian and American troops. However, Pakistan believed that India was trying to encircle it. So Pakistan government objected to Tajik government about Ayni base, in response to which Tajik President ensured that Indian military presence would not harm Pakistan (Chandran 2003).

Turkey

In early 1990s, emerging prospect of independent Central Asia gave impetus to strategic competition between three emerging regional powers Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Turkey has the advantage of sharing common culture heritage of the Turkic people who inhibited

a large area of former Turkestan (East Turkistan and West Turkestan and Xinjiang respectively). On the other hand, Iran took advantage of common Persian linkage with Tajikistan. Pakistan's cultural and political similarities are not based on any specific feature but are a general Islamic nature. Therefore, Turkey built friendly relations with newly independent Central Asian republics. In May 1992, Prime Minister of Turkey Suleyman Demirel visited Central Asia and committed a credit agreement of 1.2 billion US dollars. Turkey also proposed the establishment of Central Asian Development Bank incorporating all the former Soviet Republics. During the visit of Demirel, a Turkish television channel broadcasting Turkish language programme to these Republics was started. Also in order to develop cooperation, documents for a Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region were signed in the capital city of Turkey, Istanbul on June 25 1992, which grouped together 11 states including Azerbaijan and Turkey (Aydin 2004: 13).

Turkey's approach partially raised doubt about its intentions in the region. The Central Asian leaders once loosely discussed about a Pan-Turkic state embracing most of the Central Asian countries which cost considerable irritation and Turkey's comprehensive nature of policies had been responsible for this. Turkey's president Demirel had stressed on the secular and open nature of their policies. Being in close contact with the America, the Turkish model received positive response from the US which anticipated supporting Turkey in order to keep Islamic nation of Iran and other fundamentalist influence aside. However, when the US Secretary of State James Baker visited Central Asia in 1992, he discussed matters of defence exchange and emphasized on building of relations with CARs which was considered a shift due to increasing Iranian influence in the region. Moreover, USA announced that it would also establish its Embassy in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Baker's visit coincided with the visit of Prime Minister of Turkey to US where bilateral cooperation on activities in Central Asia was discussed between the two countries.

Clearly Turkey was not hesitant to use the issue of revival of a large Turkic state for the first time since the grand Ottoman Empire to add some value to its internal political dynamics. In October 1992, during an official visit of Prime Minister of Turkey Demirel to Islamic Republic of Pakistan, he being asked about Turkey's role in the post-cold war

stated that Turkey was contributing towards establishing lifelong world peace and it will also serve as a binding factor between Europe, Middle East and Central Asia. However, when the leaders of Central Asian Republics went to Ankara on October, 30, 1992 to attend a summit hosted by Turkey's President Turgut Ozal, they agreed to have only existing bilateral relations rather than expanding towards multilateral cooperation. According to Reetz (1993),

“Turkey had proposed a European Community-style measure of Commitment to the free movement of labour, goods, service and capital. Though their joint declaration pledged closer cooperation and they agreed to meet annually in the future, the former Soviet states were unwilling to commit themselves to what would amount to a ‘Turkish version of the Arab League’. Therefore, Kazakhstan was particularly reluctant to jeopardize possible future relations with other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and with the rest of Europe as well” (Reetz 1993:42-43).

Turkey had become really apprehensive about its post-cold war position in the matter of its foreign and security policies after it realized that it could not further pursue its traditional approach based on relative security and stability resulting out of the cold war period. Moreover, it was the time when Turkic states re-emerged beyond its north eastern border (Aydin 2004: 2).

Iran

Fundamentalist Islamic character of Iranian regime presented both opportunity and threat to Central Asia, particularly to Tajikistan. Iran played a significant role in the development of Tajik civil war. In spite of having substantial geographical access and religious similarities with Tajikistan and Tajik dominated parts of Uzbekistan, Iran's influence in Tajikistan had been more complex. Iran follows Shia Islamic faith which does not match Central Asia's dominant Sunni Islamic faith. Moreover, “Iran's low profile in Central Asia follows from her substantial interest in Russia and Russia's interest in limiting the overt fundamentalist activity” (Touslay 1995:72-73).

Iran's ambitions in Central Asia aimed at creating a common cultural bond to develop their trade, economic and security based bilateral relations. In 2014, SCO summit in Dushanbe, the Iranian President on the sidelines of the Summit emphasised that Iran was looking forward towards maintaining peace and stability in Tajikistan because this Central Asian republic is significant for peace and stability of the entire region. President Rouhani along with its Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon, in joint press conference in Dushanbe stated that both countries share similarities in their cultural and historical heritage. This meeting was considered significant in the bilateral relations of Iran and Tajikistan, as common language spoken in both countries could be beneficial for the expansion of the tourism industry and also in increasing efforts by traders, entrepreneurs, businessmen to develop strong economic ties between the two countries (Press TV, 10th September 2014).

Bilateral relations between the two countries sharply declined after Tajikistan's wanted opposition leader Muhiddin Kabiri who belonged to the banned *Islamic party of Tajikistan* and was accused of spreading terrorism in the country, was invited to a conference in Tehran in December 2015. He was warmly received by the supreme leader of Iran Ali Khamenei. Tajikistan instantly issued a note of protest to Islamic Republic of Iran and Foreign Ministry of Tajikistan also summoned Iranian Ambassador to Dushanbe. Tajik government expressed deep concern and anxiety against this act to the Iranian Ambassador in Tajikistan. The Head of Council of Ulema of Tajikistan also condemned Iran's invitation to the wanted Islamic leader of Tajikistan, calling this act as abetting terrorism. Therefore, the consequent years witnessed the low relationship point between the two countries since 1991 (Asia Plus 2016).

USA

In spite of making its military existence in Central Asia to support its military campaign in Afghanistan, the primary US interests in Central Asia is strategic. US presence in Central Asia was not limited to protect its interests against regional powers like Russia, China and Iran. Its primary interest in Central Asia is in the field of security, mainly to prevent 'Afghanization' of Central Asia due to trans-national threats to its stability. Therefore, America's focus in Central Asia was on creating strong security ties with these states,

building military contacts and securing long-term access agreements to their regional and military bases which could be used to respond to the future security threats from Afghanistan. However, “the primary goal for U.S. policy must also be to enhance Central Asia’s development just as its military role. Like Afghanistan, if they are to transform themselves from potential breeding grounds for transnational terrorists into viable, stable states, the Central Asian countries must liberalize economically and democratise politically” (Hill 2002).

The United States interest in Central Asia is mainly to ensure that it does not become a sanctuary for radical Islamic activities. Several terrorist groups of Central Asia have been operating from Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan since 2001. However, as of now they are underground in their safe haven America perceived that they will re-emerge putting a direct terrorist threat to Central Asia in near future. Recently, some of these radical Islamic militants joined the ISIS in Iraq and Syria which is of greater concern for Central Asia and USA as well. Most Central Asian countries have been hostile to the militant groups because of the extensive presence of the respective government security personnel and external military troops. Some remote poorly governed areas of Tajikistan have the potential of such militant activities. At present when Taliban in Afghanistan are again establishing a foothold and its forces are fighting with the government forces, it is highly expected that they can influence the remote areas of Tajikistan with their presence. It would further lead to increased terrorist activities in the region affecting stability and security of these Republics. In this scenario, American counter-terrorism assistance to Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries could help in preventing this threat from being terminal (Sokolsky 2016).

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the USA, the then US administration established military bases in Tajikistan to support its coalition operation in Afghanistan. However, the Obama administration highlighted its interest in the areas of maintaining long-term security and stability of the region. US interest in Central Asia is not only limited to combating terrorism and illegal drug trafficking, but also in providing assistance to the development of oil and other resources, ensuring human rights and free market and trade. It also sought to eradicate the dangers posed to its security by the unscrutinized transfer

of strategic arms and ammunitions including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and technologies to the terrorist groups. It also wanted to ensure that no countries with religious fundamentalism could threaten peace, stability and potential of trade of the Central Asian countries. However, some critics argue that “the United States has historically had few interests in this region, and advocated only limited U.S. contacts undertaken with Turkey and other friends and allies to unsure U.S. goals” (Nichol 2010).

Limitations

However, the important aspect of Pakistan’s foreign policy with regard to Tajikistan has been cooperative economic, strategic, security and cultural relations. But there are still many problems which both countries face in increasing the level of interaction in these aforesaid spheres for utilizing each other’s potential. Various restrictions in improving the base of relationship between them have been contagious for overall regional development and security. The main hurdle between Pakistan and Tajikistan is the crisis situation in Afghanistan and that is why Pakistan is still not directly able to access Tajikistan. Neither Pakistan nor Tajikistan can move forward with their desired ambition in each other’s territory, if peace and stability does not prevail in Afghanistan. This instability has had a negative impact between the two regions. However, Pakistan is to a certain extent, responsible for creating unfavourable conditions in Afghanistan which has started to haunt its ambitions in Central Asia. Afghanistan’s relations with India have also affected Pakistan’s foreign policy imperatives in Afghanistan and in Central Asia as well. Therefore, to counter India’s presence in the region, it took aggressive measures which highly affected its relations with Afghanistan and CARs. Pakistan needs review its policy of supporting extremism in order to achieve national and regional stability by trying hard to establish peace in Afghanistan without which its ambitions in Central Asia would not be fulfilled. Although both countries after the normalization of their bilateral relations in the aftermath of US intervention in Afghanistan, have been working to develop numerous energy and trade related projects but lack of financial resources have been impeding the progress of these projects. However, various other countries and international organisations have been involved to aid of these projects but their own imperative comes in between the interests of Pakistan and Tajikistan. In order to develop friendly relations

between Pakistan and Tajikistan, several regional powers such as Russia, China, India, Iran and even some Central Asian Republics with their individual interests in this country have made Pakistan's access difficult. India and Russia having been historical allies created their Influence in this region. U.S. and Turkey have also been interested in using their influence to get benefitted from this region. Therefore, it has been very tough for Pakistan to bridge its old time gap with these Republics by making economic and cultural cooperation as its role in Central Asia is suspected. And in order to become an active player, Pakistan needs to evolve a strategy to fulfill its objectives. Otherwise these challenges are going to damage the prospects of Pakistan's interests in the region.

Conclusion

Tajikistan and Pakistan have tremendous possibilities to cooperate in bilateral security arena because they both are situated at a place where vulnerability to the security threats is high. Keeping in mind past mistakes, Pakistan should bridge the trust deficit with Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries so that they would invest in converging their interest. Tajikistan and Pakistan should come together with the help of international peace and conflict reconciliatory measures to establish peace in Afghanistan because if Afghanistan remains unstable then, Pakistan's dream of accessing Tajikistan could not be fulfilled. Moreover, if peace in Afghanistan prevails then it would reinvigorate the security structure of the region. Therefore, it is highly expected from Pakistan to resolve its internal security problems and on a larger scale also be responsible for maintaining regions security for its overall economic and security agenda.

CHAPTER-6

TAJIKISTAN- PAKISTAN FACTOR IN CENTRAL ASIA- SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL COOPERATION

Development of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Central Asia has always been seen as an important factor being responsible for overall development of the region. But internal turbulence and external foreign policy mistakes made Pakistan dubious in the eyes of Central Asian Republics. Central Asian Republics have overcome their political and economic transition but still they are facing similar security challenges. Prevailing stability and security in Central Asia decides the direction of integration, dynamics of regional cooperation and establishment of regional and international organisations. Central Asian Republics have all together established many regional organisations such as Central Asian Cooperation Organisations (CACO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in order to promote cooperation in economic and security sectors but these organisations have differences in their methodology and efficiency. Central Asian Republics along with Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and India are involved in the process of organising transportation channels and communication connecting Asia with Europe i.e. East with West. However, there are many problems among regional and international actors in Central Asia and Afghanistan because they have different approaches and understanding of the situation which is a disadvantage to the developmental pattern of Central and South Asian region. The 21st century is full of challenges for Central Asian countries and also for regional and international powers having interest in this region, therefore in a situation of handling these challenges, a broader partnership and cooperation is required. Prospects of multilateral and bilateral regional and international cooperation in central Asia is dependent on convergence of national, regional and global interests. It is essential to have strong and fruitful dialogues within the Central Asian Republics to resolve their regional issues. As the geo-political, economic and security challenges of these Republics are interconnected, so the resolution would also come jointly. Moreover, regional cooperation along with viable international partnership would bring more security, stability, economic reforms and democratisation in the region.

The reinvigoration of Central Asian economies offers new markets for regional and international powers in the future. However, changing nature of competition in Central Asia has paved the way for collaborative efforts to tap the opportunities provided by these Republics. This region has greater opportunities of trade and investments because

all the Central Asian Republics including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan have hydrocarbon, oil and gas and hydropower potential respectively. These resources are needed to be accessed, and converted into the value added products. Moreover, Central Asia is considered potential investment market where joint ventures in the core areas can be extremely beneficial for both investor and investee country. To get benefits of these advantages, South Asian countries adopted long term strategies. To enhance cooperation with Central Asia, South Asian regional powers need to make concerted efforts for increased interaction with the commercial entities in order to identify the areas of bilateral cooperation and investments. This region is endowed with agricultural and food products, except for Tajikistan which imports most of its food products due to its complex geographical features. Therefore, investment in food processing could be a great opportunity for its South Asian neighbours like Pakistan and India. Natural landscape of Central Asia also presents a opportunity of cooperation in the field of tourism. Central Asia's economy is developing and strengthening with the passage of time which has created opportunities for global powers and neighbouring countries to take measures in the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. According to Mavlonov (2006), in the current economic scenario, the bilateral trade between the two regions can be augmented due to the following factors,

liberalisation and growing economies, the streamlining of banking operations, the need to upgrade the industrial sector of Central Asia for foreign investment, and the availability of the funds from international organizations for revitalizing the economy of this region under various schemes. Above all the people of this region are well aware about the Indian and South Asian products and couture. This could prove to be an added advantage in efforts for enhancing trade relations with countries of Central Asian region" (Mavlonov 2006:441-42).

The cooperation between Central Asia and South Asian region is not only limited to trade and investments but also to cultural and educational cooperation. Both regions share common cultural and historical linkages providing base to rejuvenate their historical connections with each other. Moreover, developed ties between the two regions would give impetus to regional and international security apparatus because economic underdevelopment is a prime cause of breeding illegal activities.

South Asian region has 1.6 billion population and is a rapidly growing economy of the world. Therefore, it requires cheap, efficient and reliable energy resources for better development process. In return, Central Asia presents ample opportunities of importing energy resources not only oil and gas but also abundance of hydroelectricity. Transmitting energy resources from Central Asia to South Asia through Afghanistan would be a great deal for both the energy supplying CARs and energy demanding countries of South Asia. So, trade and transit between Central and South Asia would improve the hardware of roads, railway lines, connecting bridges and border crossing facilities. But for this, joint ventures and efforts are required for both the sides by easing national custom systems, bringing states into multilateral trade organizations along with providing suitable conditions for neighbours to bring down the institutional and bureaucratic hurdles in the development of trade (Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, US department of State).

Tajikistan has encountered considerable socio- political and economic changes in the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century. However, it has sustained these changes revived its geopolitical interest and multidimensional international relations. Its strategic location has made it important in the world arena. Energy resources have also attracted other countries to build good relations with Tajikistan. These factors have encouraged regional international players to create their sphere of interest in Central Asia and particularly in Tajikistan in the post-cold war period. In the post-Soviet period Tajikistan became important for various international organisations such as EU, NATO, UN and OSCE. These western organisations have attached increased importance to Central Asia because it is located at the crossroads of Eurasia and Tajikistan in particular is a connecting point between these two regions. According to Rakhimov (2010), “this situation is regarded as the returning of the ‘Great Game’ of 19th century but with new players. It is well known that Central Asia was historically in the centre of interest of different empires, for which this region was more or less in ‘great game’ all the time” (Rakhimov 2010:95-96).

The South and Central Asian region are working well in search of regional integration which will ultimately lead to the economic development of countries like Tajikistan,

Pakistan, and Afghanistan. All these countries could be developed well into an exporter of hydropower, a transit hub and a medium of connecting these two regions correspondingly. As rightly put by Zahid Anwar (2011), “Pakistan offers significant overland routes and connectivity network for mutually advantageous trade and energy transactions, both intra-regionally and inter-regionally” (Anwar 2011). However, Tajikistan is emerging as a gateway between Central and South Asia. It is working with Pakistan towards the development of economic and trade corridors. In 2015, Tajik President visited Pakistan where transit trade between the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and Central Asian region was discussed with Pakistan. He commended the CPEC project stating that this will allow economic and trade links between Tajikistan and Pakistan and also with other Central Asian countries. His Pakistani counterpart Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif offered Tajikistan to use sea ports in its territory for imports and exports of the Tajik commodities as it provides the shortest access to the world market to Tajikistan. Pakistan also supported Tajikistan’s request of joining Quadrilateral Agreement on Transit and Traffic amongst Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan which would further improve regional connectivity between the two regions. Both leaders seemed satisfied with the growth in their bilateral diplomatic and economic relations and they further agreed to grab the possible opportunities in trade, energy, agriculture, defence and transportation field. They have also reviewed the progress on CASA-1000 megawatt power supply project between Central and South Asia, which is expected to be completed by 2018. Moreover, the heads of both countries directed the Joint Commission on Energy Infrastructure to hold its first meeting in order to identify and explore new methods of the export of electricity to Pakistan. In order to intensify the progress of trade and transportation between them and other Central and South Asian countries, they resolved to work with Afghanistan for an early finalisation of a trilateral transit trade agreement. But Afghanistan has demanded the inclusion of India in this trade agreement. Pakistan Prime Minister expressed his concern over the shrinking export from the country and instructed the respective ministries to explore the potential market in Central Asian countries and Tajikistan is the nearest one. Pakistan is also working with Turkmenistan for import of gas and it involves other South Asian countries like Afghanistan and India. However, according to Indian diplomats, Pakistan’s inflexible

attitude towards India's accessing energy resource of Central Asia is the main factor of restricting the progress of this inter-regional energy project. Pakistan's energy projects with Tajikistan are progressing in a satisfactory way as both countries have decided to form a new commission that will work towards the better implementation of this project. In this regard, a number of agreements have been signed between Tajikistan and Pakistan and the joint working commission proceeding towards connecting transmission line from Tajikistan to northern area of Pakistan. CASA 1000 project will help Pakistan to get cheaper and clean energy to meet with energy shortages while it will also build close economic links with Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan (Bhutta 22nd November, 2015).

In Tajikistan, among other sectors of economy, the energy sector has been showing constant growth in the past years. Although, hydroelectric power generation has been developing slow but it is expected that with some delay it will be completed. In Tajikistan there are 20 medium and 40 small hydroelectric power plants with a capacity ranging from 5 kilowatts to 1,500 kilowatts and hydroelectric power generation in Tajikistan accounts for 76 percent of the total amount. China is also interested in energy sector of Central Asian countries in particular Tajikistan. Therefore, it is insisting Tajikistan to join the CPEC project. China and Pakistan while in their search for alternative route signed Quadrilateral Agreement of Traffic in Transit (QATT) including Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, China and Pakistan. Tajikistan is also interested to join this Quadrilateral Agreement. Before signing the 56 billion US dollars CPEC agreements, Pakistan gave control of its Gwadar port to a Chinese company to develop its infrastructure in order to facilitate the trade and transit. Therefore, CPEC would be a win-win situation for Tajikistan because it expects that import of oil from Kuwait through Pakistan would become a reality as soon as it gets access to the Gwadar port. It also expects that,

“Tajikistan may also have the facility to bring goods from Middle Eastern States and other countries. Tajikistan is the only country among Central Asian states which is keen to give road and energy access to Pakistan. This can make Pakistan a trade hub as it will provide access to other Central Asian nations as well. In such a scenario, Baluchistan will have a substantial share in economic development and will be able to stave off negative consequences of the insurgency. Economic prosperity will overcome the threat of terrorism and ensure stability in the entire

Pakistan” (Bhutta 22nd November 2015).

Tajikistan considers Afghanistan and Pakistan and possibly in long term India also as the potential growth markets. The development of economic ties with the South Asian nations, particularly in the field of energy would be the key for development for Tajikistan’s strategy in the long term. Tajikistan eagerly wants to increase its production of hydropower capacity because it envisions itself as the potential exporter of hydropower especially to South Asia. Its ambitions in this regard fit together with a set of similar projects with the support of western donors and international development organizations with an intention to create a regional electricity market spanning from Central to South Asia. CASA-1000 along with another Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) interconnected project give greater prospects to Tajikistan to become a reliable exporter of electricity through the developed transmission infrastructure to South Asia particularly Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, Uzbekistan has been consistently objecting the hydropower plants in Tajikistan especially at Roghun as it obstructs the irrigation water supply to Uzbekistan’s cotton production. Tajikistan considers that the economic benefits that it will acquire through participating in these projects would help it to extend its support towards peace and stability in Afghanistan which ultimately will help to strengthen Tajikistan’s own security. However, there have been speculations about the viability of these projects given the security infrastructure of the region, but the strong presence of China and Russia in both Central and South Asia would ultimately help in smooth facilitation of these projects. Moreover, the development and maintenance of possible infrastructure and reliability in the supply from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in addition to the potential security threats are concerns that are dubious about these projects (Kuchins et al 2015:12). “Pakistan and Tajikistan are set to connect the South and Central Asian region through planned energy and economic corridors and they are expected to make some headway towards forging this strategic partnership during the visit of Tajik head of state to Islamabad as told by officials” (Bhutta 2015).

On 7th December 2015, senior research fellow of Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany, Dietrich Reetz, delivered an interesting lecture on the topic ‘Pakistan between Central

and South Asia – a Bridge or Stumbling Block’ in a Program of Social Science Faculty in Karachi University, Pakistan. In his speech he emphasised how Pakistan can be benefited by developing its relations with Central Asian countries and how its neighbouring countries like India and Afghanistan can play a critical or supportive role to this process as being frontier countries of Pakistan and Central Asia. According to him, in order to discuss this scenario one needs to use conceptual and constructive rationale to see issues from different perspective. While talking about the relation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Reetz stated that if Pakistan stops its intervention in the internal affairs of India by any means then it would not have to suffer the consequences of its ideological conflict with Afghanistan because the main issue that Pakistan has with India and Afghanistan is the contrasting ideological perspectives. While describing why Iran is important for Pakistan, he said that Pakistan has the potential to play a role of mediator in the possible regional cooperation framework. Pakistan can become a key player in the global engagement with Iran, according to Reetz. He has noticed another significant development in the India-Pakistan relations especially when Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India in 2014. To Reetz, the Modi government does not want to take any burden involving with Pakistan in any issue. Even after fulfilling its strategic imperatives in South Asia, the United States has decided to stop financial aid and weapons supply to Pakistan considering it non profitable. Furthermore, growing economic and diplomatic cooperation with China has restricted Pakistan’s re-approach towards United States. China-Pakistan and India are in a parallel triangular relationship which abides them with relatively equal reasons on all fronts. Being an economically poor and socially unstable country, Pakistan has decided to make strong bonding with China to uplift its economic condition and to promote social stability. According to him, “Pakistan and its army can prosper if they adapt to the new environment by redesigning their strategic potential from a liability to an asset. It also needs strategic rethinking on how Pakistan can be an asset to China, India, Afghanistan and Iran” (The Express Tribune 8th December 2015).

Geopolitical Factors

Tajikistan and Pakistan are both located strategically which give them privilege to be conjoint between Central Asia and South Asia. Political and economic stability of these countries are so vital for regional cooperation. If both of them are politically unstable then whole of the Central Asian region becomes exposed to other threats affecting their internal security. Moreover, South Asian region can not alienate itself from these threats as well. Convergence of interests between these two regions is highly susceptible to the potential political and security affecting the whole of Eurasia. Moreover, the potential trade route would become valueless and owing to the insecure and conflicting environment offered by Afghanistan (Javed and Dashti 2016:68).

The Afghanistan Factor

After the NATO forces withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, a set of regional initiatives focused on challenges of how to integrate Afghanistan into a regional integration process to strengthen its economic development process and support and maintain political stability in the country, is required. As Afghanistan is envisioned as a hub or traffic junction for greater Eurasian integration particularly for strengthening the North-South axis (which was proposed to connect South Asia with the rest of Eurasia), new initiatives like 'New Silk Road Strategy', 'Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan' (RECCA) and 'Northern Distribution Network' (NDN) were started. The New Silk Road Strategy (NSRS) offered a strategy to promote regional integration. NSRS sought to integrate the economy of Afghanistan with its neighbouring countries to establish it as a hub for Eurasian economic integration. It also proposed the support from international partners of Afghanistan to develop regional transport and trade corridors. However, international financial aid provided by US and European countries remained substantial in Central Asia as they already had invested huge amount in Afghanistan to keep it secure from extremist threats. So self-sustainability of such organisations in garnering regional cooperation in Central Asia remained dubious due to the lack of proper financial support to revitalize the economic and trade infrastructure of the region. RECCA is considered to be substantially significant in this regard as it represents a series

of conferences involving Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries and international partners to discuss and promote regional cooperation (Linn 2012:106-07).

Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA)

RECCA endeavours to have regional economic integration in Central and South Asia together with assisting Afghanistan. It's a forum of which prime concern is to promote stability in Afghanistan and also to execute efforts to establish Central Asian and South Asian regional economic integration. Regional cooperation is vital to the economic growth, poverty alleviation, and political, economic and regional security. Afghanistan hosted the First RECCA conference in 2005 in Kabul which was attended by eleven countries which was considered a significant achievement for Afghanistan led regional cooperation initiative. In this conference, it was emphasized that all efforts shall be made to assist and escalate the successful implementation of ongoing transmission links connecting South and Central Asia. Joint efforts would be made in order to promote and utilize the power potential of the region. Moreover, in the conference it was noted that a strategy of ensuring development for Afghanistan based on cooperation with regional powers creates significant opportunities in alleviating poverty and achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the whole region. It was recognized mutually that multiple regional organizations and programmes such as ECO, SCO, SAARC, CAREC and CASATTF could make significant contribution to intensify the progress and scope of regional economic integration between the two regions. In this conference, in order to formalize this process, all the participating sides decided that all regional capitals would hold the RECCA conferences separately one after the other. A final document at the end of the conference was signed known as Kabul Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation (RECCA 1, Kabul 2005).

The second RECCA conference was held in New Delhi India in November 2006. In this conference, “overland trade and transit issues between the countries and regions were discussed. The portfolio of projects included quick-impact social sector projects as well as long term infrastructure projects benefitting Afghanistan and the bordering countries in general. New Delhi Declaration was the final document of the Conference” (RECCA 2, New 2006 Delhi).

The Third Regional Economic Cooperation conference on Afghanistan was held in Islamabad, Pakistan on 13-14 May 2009. Uptill now, this initiative has become the valuable forum for discussion and exchange of ideas amongst the political leaders of the partner and regional countries, economic decision makers, experts on development and cooperation and the international partners for development. In this conference, the participants discussed about regional cooperation in a development perspective and technical areas such as extraction industry, energy and infrastructure, labour migration, public health and human resource development between countries and regions. Moreover, “this conference considered specific projects in the fields of Transport, Trade, Energy Cooperation, Agricultural Cooperation, Capacity Building and Education, Border Management, health, anti-narcotics and refugee crisis and reintegration which are the areas with considerable scope for mutually beneficial regional cooperation. The outcome of this conference was adopted as Islamabad Declaration” (RECCA 3, 2009 Islamabad).

In the fourth conference of RECCA held on November 2-3 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey, participating countries recommended to improve, “a) Infrastructure (Regional Roads, Railways, Extractive Mine Industry, public-private partnership and investment to enable commercially viable), b) Trade, Transit and border management (Regional Transit and Trade Agreements, Trade Facilitation, Custom and Transport Infrastructure Harmonization and Upgrade, Enhancement of Border Cooperation), c) Education and vocational training, d) Agriculture, e) Small and medium enterprises and others. Final document of the Conference became the Istanbul Declaration (RECCA 4, 2010 Istanbul).

The fifth RECCA conference was organised in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 26th to 27th March 2012. In this conference all the participants extended mutual agreement on infrastructure, trade and investment along with disaster management and regional fibre optic connectivity. In order to unify their commitments to support projects and initiative and to monitor process of progress from one conference to another, the RECCA process envisions serving as a driver of regional cooperation initiatives. Among the major projects on which agreements and support were improved rail and road links of Afghanistan with its neighbouring countries, transmission of regional electricity projects passing through Afghanistan and the development of regional institutions in Tajikistan

dedicated to occupational training and the establishment of disaster management institution in Kazakhstan (RECCA 5, Dushanbe 2012).

Sixth RECCA conference was organised in Kabul, on 3-4 September 2015 on the theme ‘the Silk Road through Afghanistan’. As the host of the conference, the President of Afghanistan Mohammad Ashraf Ghani stated that, ‘Afghanistan wants to revitalize the Silk Road and turn it into a regional hub for connecting Central Asia with South Asia with the support of our regional international partners’ (RECCA 6, Kabul 2015). The seventh conference was organised by Turkmenistan in 2017 in which development of inter-regional and intra-regional connectivity was discussed.

In order to fulfill its role as one of the overland transit hub along a modern Silk Road investment in trans-border infrastructure projects is crucial for Afghanistan. Afghan National Development Strategy of 2007 identified two very important transport and transit corridors which would be essential in overall economic development of Afghanistan. The first transit corridor, i.e. in North-South Transport Corridor which connects Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Karachi, Qasim and Gwadar ports of Pakistan and further through the Wagah border, it will be stretched to India and beyond. The second corridor connects East to West, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the Chabahar and Bandar Abbas ports of Iran (United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (UNSPECA), 2010).

Map: 3 North-South Transport Corridor



(Source: <https://the diplomat.com/2015/05/an-opportunity-for-india-in-central-asia/>)

Another significant initiative with the support of West involving Afghanistan was the establishment of Northern Distribution Network (NDN) in 2009, which connected Central Asia and South Asia and transported lethal supplies for NATO through Russia and Central Asia from Baltic region. It was an alternative route to the erratic supply lines through the Pakistani territory. The use of this transit route became frequent after the NATO forces presence in Afghanistan intensified in 2010 and it became further prominent when Pakistan closed border for NATO supplies in 2011 and 2012. As NDN already faced many obstacles in managing the costly transport lines, it also demonstrated that the transcontinental transport networks involving rail and roads from West to Central and South Asia are feasible substitutes to the conventional sea routes. As in 2014, with the NATO forces withdrawal from Afghanistan, the NDN would also be served to remove equipments from Afghanistan. Therefore, the concentration on the development of Afghanistan as a transit hub connecting Eurasia and to provide it with economic stability and political development are the main concerns for its extended neighbourhood especially the Central Asia, and Pakistan and India. Moreover, for Central Asian countries a stable and economically affluent Afghanistan is critical not only in reducing re-emergence of terrorist threats from their territory but also to gain access to the vibrant economies of South Asian countries through shortest and cheapest way to connect to the sea ports and further to the worldwide markets. However, the proposed scenario regarding Afghanistan seems to be uncertain. It is not clear if Afghanistan will become stable in near future or will it be playing any constructive role in the integration of Central Asian countries into the world economy. Besides, one is not sure whether Afghanistan will not fall to the re-emergence of Taliban in the future (Linn 2012:106-07).

Energy and Trade

Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum

Sub-regional Economic Cooperation in South and Central Asia (SECSCA) initiative began in 2003 to promote transport linkages and facilitation of movement of goods and people across Central and South Asian region. In this initiative, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are the member countries while Iran holds the observer status. Turkmenistan, being a part of the proposed North South and East West Corridors has

been invited to participate in the ministerial conferences of this organization. Moreover, “The Second Ministerial Conference on Trade and Transport in Central and South Asia held in March 2005 approved the establishment of the Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum (CSATTF) and the formation of its Trade and Customs Working Group. They also endorsed the Corridor Development Plan for Customs for implementation in 2005-2007” (ADB 2017).

Central and South Asian region witnessed a new era as peace returned to Afghanistan after years of conflicts. Huge international support to provide relief and rehabilitation assistance to Afghanistan has been taking place. These developments have presented new opportunities for the whole region to acquire sustainable economic growth and reduction in the poverty levels as most of the South Asian countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India are facing problems of poverty and unemployment. Therefore, the key elements to achieve sustainable goals include development of efficient transport corridor that connects landlocked Central Asia to the Arabian Sea ports and the Persian Gulf through Afghanistan. Asian Development Bank (ADB) hosted the First Ministerial Conference on Transport and Trade in Central Asia-South Asia on 31st July to 1st August 2003 in Manila, Philippines, in which, all the member countries participated and agreed to establish ‘Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum (CSATTF)’ forum in order to facilitate the transport connectivity and the instrumentation of this forum in this sub-region. In this process, “ADB immediately responded by providing regional technical assistance (TA) for Sub-regional Economic Cooperation in South and Central Asia (SECSCA) of 600,000 US dollars approved in December 2003, which focused mainly on CSATTF. The Secretariat was established in the South Asia Department (SARD) and CSATTF member countries are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Iran. The concept paper for SECSCA Phase II was approved by the ADB Management on 31 October 2005” (ADB 2006).

In 2005, China, India, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan joined this forum. Further, preparation for infrastructural improvement transit facilitation, sharing of knowledge and capacity development also became instrumental in the operation of this forum. The CASATTF focused on North- South and East-West corridors, totalling around 2,800 kilometers and

2,900 kilometers respectively. Development of road links along these two corridors has been improved since then. In 2002, around 40 percent of the total length of each of this transport corridor remained in good condition with proper maintenance, while the rest of the remaining 60 percent was in dire need of innovation and upgrading. In 2010, around 49 percent of each corridor has been improved with external support leaving around 20 percent of road link to be upgraded (Visvambharm 2010:166-67). Turkmenistan's government is improving the road link between Atamurat (after 2017 renamed as Kerki) and Imamnazar nearest its southern border with Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has also improved its road ways between Tashkent and Termez which constitutes the border between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan totalling 745 kms. Therefore, both Central Asian countries are working towards developing connectivity with Afghanistan through this forum. International organisations such as World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, EU and governments of India, Japan, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and US being the bilateral partners have provided financial assistance to improve the ring road of Afghanistan and also linking roads to the neighbouring countries along the CASATTF corridors. The World Bank has assisted Afghanistan to reconstruct its Hairatan border, while EU helped it to reconstruct the Torkham border. The governments of Iran, Germany and the United States have also assisted Afghanistan to upgrade the border facilities at Islam Qala, Shir Khan Bandar, Torghundi and Zaranj. In addition to the physical improvement of these transport corridors, CSATTF also embarked upon to have an efficient transit system for smooth traffic of transit goods and services. Moreover, South Asian countries have also been holding individual bilateral discussions with Central Asian Republics regarding improvement in threat and security relationship. India and Pakistan have common interest of procuring gas and energy resources from Central Asia. Therefore,

“Besides TAPI, another viable gas pipeline is Termez-Kabul-Peshawar-India route (TICPI) which would connect the southernmost city in Uzbekistan, Termez to Kabul via Mazar-i-Sharif and then would run from Kabul to Islamabad. Termez is 300 kms from Kabul and Kabul is 200 kms from Peshawar, which in turn is about 205 kms from Islamabad. Amritsar in India is 250 kms from Islamabad via Lahore. The distance of TICPI route is only half of TAPI'S 1,700 kms. It will take

the pipeline through much more populated areas but still reach the same destination in Pakistan and India” (Visvambharm 2010:166-67).

Energy as Catalyst in Cooperation

Intra-regional connectivity for mutual goods and energy trade is an integral part of the envisioned Central Asia-South Asia regional connectivity. Being the most populated region of the world, South Asia is considered being the highest energy consuming region. Therefore, connecting regional energy resources in order to fulfill the energy thrust of these countries is vital for the economic development of the whole of Eurasia. Trade and energy go hand in hand. South Asia having the largest young population can use its geographical possibilities to be benefited in this regard. Central Asian countries are estimated to have a combined 8.2 billion tons of confirmed oil reserve and 8.4 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves. Therefore, connecting South Asian region to these energy rich Central Asian countries is a favorable for both regions along with other regional and international players who also play critical role in the connecting of these two geo-politically significant regions. It can bring economic prosperity and political stability in Central Asia and South Asia along with making this region as the economic hub of the world’s attracting the other developed and developing economies to be a part of this endeavour. Moreover, “The best ways to bring oil and gas to the Indo-Pak subcontinent from Central Asia are the proposed pipelines, some of which have been on the global energy transportation map for more than two decades, with progress made on paper only” (Dhindsa 2013).

CASA-1000, TAPI and TUTAP

CASA-1000 is pilot project aimed at linking Central Asia and South Asia for minimizing load shed by providing cheap energy. It will also provide opportunities to Pakistan to re-emerge itself as a trading hub. However, it due to the security concerns there have been obstacles in the successful implementation and execution of this project mainly due to mounting insecurity in Afghanistan in the recent period. Since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, unwanted radical Islamic forces have once again started to take control of the Afghan territory by combating with government forces. For instance,

Taliban recently killed 6 employees of a private road construction company and also injured and abducted a few in the province of Baghlan, through which the energy transmission line is projected to cross. The Indian company KEC international limited which has been responsible for completing the transmission line in Afghanistan is also interested in the successful implementation of the project because of its prior experience of building a power line in the same area. Moreover, Afghanistan has prepared the country's specific security plan which would be taking care of the protection of the work sites during the construction, by Afghan security forces. In October 2014, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed on a transit fee and signed a master agreement at the Inter-Governmental Council meetings in November/December 2014 and February 2015. Both countries also prepared a power purchase agreement in the same meeting. Those agreements are currently in process. It has also been agreed that Pakistan will obtain electricity at a price of 9.35 US dollars per kilowatt through the CASA-1000 project in its initial 15 years and this price also include a transit fee of 1.25 US dollars per kilowatt to pay by Pakistan to Afghanistan. However, initially, Afghanistan demanded a transit fee of 2.5 USD per kilowatt but viewing this project strategically important to Afghanistan as it will provide an opportunity to improve regional relations and also to defeat the trust deficit among the other participating countries and corporations that would have a positive impact on other projects, it made concessions in transit fee. According to Marty (2015),

“Although the list of participating firms is not public, notable companies like KEC International Limited, Alstom, ABB, Siemens and State Grid Company of China have earlier shown interest. The deadlines for submitting bids for the Afghan transmission line and converter station along the way have been set for March 2 and April 19, respectively. However, it is not yet certain when exactly the actual construction will begin on the ground. According to studies, the effective construction will take at least 40 months. This means that CASA-1000 will in any event not be completed before 2018” (Marty 2015).

In May 2016, leaders of all the participating countries of CASA-1000, jointly launched this electricity project making it win-win and mutually beneficial for all the stake holders states and their population. Pakistan President Nawaz Sharif stated that the South Asian

region will very soon completely integrate with Central Asia as the energy and trade corridor will be increasing economic and social development in both regions. It will also bridge the geographical and political gap that both regions had in their past. He further acknowledged support provided by the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, USAID, The UK Department of International Development and Australian Agency for International Development in implementation of the project (Daily Times, 12th May 2016). According to the World Bank Managing Director and Operating Officer, Mulyani Indrawati, “CASA-1000 transformational project will give a much needed boost to energy security, improved connectivity and trade across the two regions at a critical time” (World Bank, March 2014).

Another significant energy project is connecting Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan- Pakistan (TUTAP). It will allow Afghanistan to play a role of an anchor country. Moreover it will also enable Tajikistan to promote energy independence and economic growth along with contributing stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan and greater regional cooperation in Central and South Asia (Ubaidulloev 2014:120-136).

However, in 2016, when Afghan government decided to reroute the TUTAP project, then it sparked serious tension among Hazaras (a Shia minority in Afghanistan) dominated areas of Afghanistan, as they viewed it undermining the development of Shia populated region. These TUTAP protesters did not want just electricity as promised by the Ashraf Ghani government. They wanted to control power in order to have power. Therefore, this project in Afghanistan is considered ethnically complicated. Consequently, Afghan government stalled the rerouting of the project for six months in order to pacify the protesters. In 2014, ADB’s regional energy specialist stated that,

“The TUTAP is no longer a dream but rather a tangible project. Lacking a national grid is one of the main issues in Afghanistan and, hence, the country has to build back to back converters of different voltages, currents and velocities coming from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Erecting these power plants and power converters will allow the Afghan government to provide electricity to more than 10 million Afghans across the country. The fact that at last one of the importing lines could pass through Bamyan would give huge

geopolitical importance to the province. Such an important project hence needs great care, consideration and support and cannot be jeopardized” (Taye 2016).

Therefore, as long as Afghanistan becomes economically well off, it will further motivate other regional countries to invest their resources in the country and will get access to the Central Asian countries in case Afghanistan sustains the extremist turbulences.

In order to lay a gas pipeline from Daulatabad gas plant of Turkmenistan to Multan in southern Punjab of Pakistan, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Turkmenistan and Pakistan on March 15, 1995. The two foreign oil companies namely Unocal of US and Delta of Saudi Arabia agreed to start the project together. Later, these two companies participated in Cent Gas consortium along with other numbers of international petroleum companies such as Russian Petroleum Company, Gazprom. But the Russian company Gazprom withdrew its share and gave up the project in June 1998. On the other hand, the American Unocal also left in August 1998 after an attack on American Embassies in Nairobi and Darussalam. As a result, the project was left stranded. After the US intervention in Afghanistan, the project was restarted with the help of risk investment provided by Asian Development Bank. The future of people in southern Afghanistan remains miserable until and unless there is stability in the region, as it is the hub of de facto Taliban rule. The infrastructure to lay down the lengthy pipeline through the countries accounts for a huge amount of 7.6 billion US dollars. This pipeline with initial capacity of 27 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year, will deliver 2 billion cubic meters of gas to Afghanistan and 12.5 billion cubic meters each to Pakistan and India (Dhindsa 2013).

In case of TAPI, there several companies were interested to invest as it was economically very viable. However, the main problem was to stabilize Afghanistan and Pakistan and also to solve the problem between India and Pakistan. There are alternatives to stabilize two most turbulent countries of South Asia- Afghanistan and Pakistan, to initiate investment in social project in the hostile regions of these countries. Through the medium of TAPI, a 33 billion cubic meters of annual gas was projected to be carried out which could incredibly lay down a pipeline web in the region and bring friends and enemies together. Central Asia would find potential buyers for their energy resources and

Afghanistan would have a lot of investments at stake for regional partners to ensure the project's security and stability. At the same time, Pakistan and India would be taking care of their energy deficits if this project becomes reality bringing both the arch rivals together. Global powers such as United States would also be benefitted from TAPI because it is highly expected that if this project starts it will give Pakistan second thoughts about leaving IP pipeline project initiative by Iran. In this scenario US-Iran rivalry and Pakistan's down slope from IP would give America an upper hand in its geopolitical imperatives in the region. Therefore, TAPI is a win-win project on many fronts. However flourishing TAPI project would not be indicative for IP project but all three, TAPI, IP and CASA 1000 would altogether, bring the region together and make all the regional partners affluent and stable (Anjum 2013). "US Deputy Secretary of State on South and Central Asian Affairs, while speaking at an energy conference in Turkmenistan in November 2010, described the TAPI route as a stabilising corridor which has the capability to link neighbours together in economic growth and prosperity" (Warikoo 2016:1-15). Despite, high potential and benefits, these energy projects between Central and South Asia also face critical technical, financial and political challenges along with the targets of geopolitical objectives of various players not limited to US and Russia. However, if they realized, they certainly would expand the options in front of the participating nations to promote their development (Muzalevsky 2011).

Tajikistan-Pakistan and CPEC

In September 2017, President of Pakistan, Mamnoon Hussain visited Ashgabat, capital of Republic of Turkmenistan where he met Tajik President Emomali Rahmon during the sidelines of 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games. During this meeting, he invited Tajikistan to join the trade route of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) stating that it would be highly beneficial for Tajikistan's exports and imports through Pakistani Ports. Both leaders also discussed cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and regional connectivity. According to the official statement released by Islamabad, the legal process for Tajikistan's joining the Quadrilateral Trade-in-Transit Agreement (QTTA) signed between China, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan would also allow Tajikistan to access Pakistani Ports through CPEC within a legal framework (Lifang 2017). China is

also in favour of Central Asian countries joining the CPEC as it would meet the economic and geopolitical ambitions of China in Central and South Asian region. As China is already investing 64 billion US dollars in CPEC, it would want to make it great success in order to achieve the needed economic superiority in the region surpassing its rival such as India which has privilege of having historical and very good relations with the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

Security Issues

In 1995, Afghan Taliban who had taken refuge in the rugged terrain of Peshawar Pakistan succeeded in mounting a military campaign for taking political control of Afghanistan. With the support of Pakistan, Taliban forces took control of the southern and eastern Afghanistan and further in 1996 captured Kabul. Taliban's fanaticism and cruelty forced Afghanistan's neighbours Iran, Uzbekistan, Russia and Tajikistan to prevent the impact of Taliban ideology into Central Asia at any cost. For this matter, the 1,206 km. long border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan was considered by the Rahmon Government of Tajikistan as the threat to this border was from arising instability from Afghanistan which is the main challenges that country would be facing in the post-conflict reconstruction scenario. However, "without interruption since the disintegration of the USSR, Russian and Tajik military units policed the Tajikistan border with Afghanistan. The Russians see the border as a porous integument through which terrorism, weapons and drugs penetrate on route to destinations in Eurasia. At the same time, the border is seen as a cultural divide between the values of Western civilization and the lawlessness of Afghanistan" (Gleason 2001:77-89).

Central Asian leaders accepted the development of SCO principles which are totally different from those heavily promoted by super powers like USA. These SCO principles represent the basic structure of this organization's dedication to combat the three evils of Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism. Moreover, "National discretion over the 'three evils' and the absence of any reference in the SCO Charter to democracy as a goal in domestic politics or to the self-determination of peoples encourage a permissive environment for SCO states to act as they wish against general forms of domestic

political opposition and dissent” (Allison 2008:185-202). Therefore, security remains a significant obstacle in any project which includes Afghanistan and Pakistan and repercussions are larger which impact whole of Central Asia and rest of the South Asian countries along with significant impact on the global geo-political scenario. It is very critical to anticipate the future developments in South Asia as long as stability does not prevail in Afghanistan and extremism prevails in Pakistan. The internal dimension among the Central Asian countries itself also poses a crucial security challenge towards regional integration (Sadat 2015).

Organised criminal activities in Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan especially drug trafficking further deteriorates Pakistan’s internal security structure, according to the information provided by the western drug official. On average a quarter of the unrefined and morphine based opium produced in Afghanistan passes through the country and it also acts as a central channel to both Turkey and onwards to the European markets. Overall, the volume of illegal drug trade has steadily increased since 2001 with a record 34 metric tons of heroin seized in 2003. According to Fair and Chalk (2006) “this haul represented just under half (47 per cent) of all the narcotics intercepted in the wider Afghan opiate containment zone that year, an area that takes in Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Russia” (Fair and Chalk 2006:333-355). Therefore, escalating criminal activities in the bordering areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan and Tajikistan and Afghanistan are obstructing the developmental process and regional integration because of the threats attached to it. Tajikistan is strictly affected by illegal drug trade in Central Asian region because it is used as a transit zone for drugs due to its common borders to Afghanistan. The 1,206 kms long Tajik-Afghan border with its rugged mountainous terrain offers ideal entry point for drug traffickers because both countries do not possess the necessary law enforcement capabilities to effectively deter illegal cross border trafficking of opium and heroin. Tajikistan is also suitable choice for the transit of illegal drugs because it has connection with both Afghanistan-the producer and Russia being the destination country of smuggled heroin. Tajikistan shares its linkages with Afghanistan’s large ethnic Tajik population which is mainly situated in its northern part. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has maintained links with Tajikistan as the main

military outpost of Central Asia, particularly on Tajik-Afghan border (Engvall 2006:827-854).

One of the important attempts regarding Central Asian cooperation with Afghanistan goes under the name of ‘62 group of neighbours and friend of Afghanistan’. This regional grouping originated from a proposal by Uzbekistan in August 1997 and initially it included 6 bordering countries of Afghanistan- China, Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan along with global super power the USA and Russian federation. However, several attempts to eradicate the drug trafficking network from Afghanistan have failed due to lack of regional and international cooperation and an absence of regional action plan. But there are interesting confidence building measures and a possible structure to provide assistance in trans-regional conflict prevention and reluctance of Central Asian states cooperate intra regionally and the lack of common security strategy also added to the ineffective mechanism to tackle the drug trafficking in South and Central Asian region (Swanstrom 2004:41-53).

Power Rivalries

Diplomatic tensions between the energy producer and consumer countries of the Central and South Asian region have obstructed the progress of TAPI pipeline and also to lesser extent CASA-1000. Rivalry between India and Pakistan is the biggest diplomatic conundrum that has been impeding the operational mechanism of TAPI pipeline. Moreover, recurrent clashes at the border between these two countries in Kashmir are evidence of a hostile relationship which time and again undermines cross-regional cooperation. Along with this, constant diplomatic problems between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been causing difficulties as the two countries have been exchanging erratic shelling and diplomatic antagonism in recent years. According to some analysts, India and Pakistan have been rigorously using neutral Afghanistan as a battle ground for their own rivalry which is the main factor instigating insecurity in the region. In this scenario, cooperation between India and Pakistan is crucial for the success of TAPI pipeline. As rightly put by Sadat (2015),

“The viability of the India-Pakistan partnership remains one of the main factors that will determine the success or failure of the TAPI project. In addition to TAPI,

Pakistan has also sought a deal on gas imports from Iran. This potential link might be less complicated and thus more advantageous for Pakistan than TAPI, although international sanctions against Iran have slowed progress here, too. Another factor, which favours the implementation of TAPI over the bilateral Iran-Pakistan link, is Saudi influence in Pakistan: Riyadh has been pouring money into Pakistan recently, apparently in an attempt to subvert Tehran's economic and political movements in the country. At this point of time, Riyadh's effort seems to have succeeded" (Sadat 2015).

Russia's interest in Central Asia is also to control vast energy markets in gas rich Turkmenistan and hydro power rich Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Its participation in TAPI project was intended toward diverting Turkmenistan away from the Trans-Caspian energy initiatives which circumvents Russia. Moreover, it also wanted to lay the ground work for the reorientation of its own gas market to the steadily emerging Asian continent. Russia was interested to develop a North-South bloc, "whereby it could also attempt to promote, on its terms, the emergence of 'Novyi Sredniy Vostok' (The New Middle East) a geopolitical space extending from Russia across Central-South Asia to the Middle East, which could compete with similar plans, allegedly spearheaded by the USA to the disadvantage of Russia and China, like the 'Greater Middle East' or the 'Greater Central Asia'" (Muzalevsky 2011).

Challenges

There are several challenges in the way of developing cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan and at a larger scale between Central and South Asia region. Firstly, both countries are striving hard to bridge the gap between the two regions in absence of any direct land routes surpassing Afghanistan which has been constantly causing obstruction to trade and commerce between them. According to Javaid and Rashid (2015), "the presence of US and NATO forces in the region and unrest in Afghanistan has implications for trade" (Javaid and Rashid 2015). However, development of Karakorum Highway is suggested to be plausible way of taking these countries out of this puddle with the help of China. Security concerns arising from the extremist elements in Afghanistan and Pakistan has proved to be major block to regional integration between

Central and South Asia. Besides, some biggest political and economic powers of the world such as USA, Russia, China, India, etc. have time and again kept their political and economic agendas revolving around Afghanistan, causing damage to the regional development.

The lack of an effective transport network with the rest of the world is one of the basic hindrances for regional cooperation and integration of Central Asian countries into the world economies as most of them are physically landlocked countries. Earlier they depended on Soviet Union for global economic exposure and later on the other regional powers such as China and Pakistan. Therefore, development of effective regional transport system is at the core of the region's potential prosperity. It also affords a unique opportunity to develop international transport network and trade relations between Europe and Asia. It will facilitate foreign investment and interest of external powers such as China, Japan, Iran, EU, India and Pakistan will also be escalated. A well established and integrated transport system in the heart of Eurasia is the key element for ensuring stability and security in both Central and South Asia (Bobokulov 2006:75-91).

Another serious challenge to regional cooperation between Central and South Asian region is the prospects of Islamic and radical militant groups which are present in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. They have deterred India's policies towards this region. Tajikistan is marginally separated from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) through a small strip of Afghan territory and is highly susceptible to extremist forces. Instability in Tajikistan can have serious implications for India's security especially in Jammu and Kashmir because of the infiltration by the radical militant groups (Bhatnagar 2014).

At present, the transformation process in Afghanistan, deteriorating internal security in Pakistan and the changes in India's foreign policy by the present Modi regime are likely to affect the prospective Central and South Asia bilateral and regional integration. However, influence of China and Russia in Central Asia and Afghanistan, the dynamics between Pakistan and India are going to be unchanged for some time. Moreover, trade and infrastructure development remains an important objective for the wider region. In

order to establish and improve political linkages among countries in Central and South Asia, there is needed the facilitation of regional initiatives (Gross 2015).

Conclusion

Tajikistan-Pakistan relationship has the potential to promote greater regional cooperation due to their location at the confluence of Central and South Asia respectively. However, there have been prejudices among Central and South Asian countries to reinstate their political and economic interests. This is high time when both these countries need to improve their relations within their region as in Tajikistan with its Central Asian neighbour and Pakistan with its South Asian neighbours to further present viable environment for regional integration. Though there are multiple challenges in this process of regional cooperation and seeking support of regional and international organizations but it is not unachievable.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

Being at the crossroads of Eurasian landmass, Central Asia has been the focus of 'Great Game' by imperial powers which sought to create an influence over this region. The 'Great Game' of the 19th century and the 'New Great Game' of the 20th century have centered on obtaining geopolitical supremacy over this region. However, owing to its geographical proximity to Russia, other major powers have not been able to achieve a desired level of influence in this region. Disintegration of former Soviet Union in 1991 and emergence of new independent Central Asian Republics (CARs), all being the Muslim majority countries, set in motion a new geopolitics in this region.

The geopolitical importance of CARs attracted Pakistan to build cordial relations ever since their emergence as independent countries. Pakistan was born in 1947 out of Islamic ideology based on Muslim *Ummah* (community) and ever it has aspired to use its Islamic identity to forge bilateral relations with other Muslim countries in particular, Central Asia. Pakistan's anti-Soviet policies during the Cold War period adversely impacted upon its relations with Central Asia. However, Soviet occupation of Afghanistan came in handy to Pakistan to push its aggressive religious policies in its support of anti-soviet forces operating in Afghanistan. With the help of USA, Pakistani trained *Mujahideen* to fight against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. As such Soviet Central Asian Republics were wary of Pakistan's support to religious extremism which would spill into their region. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan which share direct border with Afghanistan were highly cautious regarding the developments regarding their internal security as Pakistan was playing active role in Afghanistan and also in Tajikistan.

Collapse of the Soviet Union provided ample opportunities for Pakistan to build upon its existing relationship with newly independent Central Asian Republics. Tajikistan being the nearest Central Asian Republic to Pakistan was significant for Pakistan's geopolitical strategy in the region. Since its independence, Tajikistan aspired to be an economically independent country because it faced social and economic imbalance right after it became independent due to the civil war which lasted up to 1997. Pakistan's active and negative role in the Tajik civil war strained the relations between the two countries. Their bilateral ties continued to be under strain till 2001 when US led NATO forces intervened in

Afghanistan in the aftermath of Al-Qaeda's terrorist attack in the USA. Pakistan, an ally of USA and West ever since Cold War period, was compelled to extend its support to the war on terror in Afghanistan. Consequently, Pakistan tried to regain trust of Tajikistan. A number of diplomatic and high official visits took place between Pakistan and Tajikistan and heads of both countries emphasised upon the need to enhance their partnership.

But the main obstacle in the way of fostering their relations has been Afghanistan which has remained politically unstable for a long time. Pakistan and Afghanistan have had a long pending border issue over Durand Line. Both Tajikistan and Pakistan acknowledge that without ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan, their bilateral relations cannot flourish. Pakistan has always desired to have a pro-Pakistan regime in Kabul to counter Indian presence and also to sabotage the Pashtunistan issue, for which it has been supporting the terrorist and extremist outfits in Afghanistan. Which is why any Pashtun dominated government in Afghanistan has remained hostile to its instant neighbour Pakistan. Owing to the security concerns arising out of Pakistan supported extremist activities in Afghanistan, Tajikistan has been wary of extending a friendly hand towards Pakistan.

However, both countries can avail mutual benefits through enhanced cooperation. Tajikistan possesses abundant natural resources to produce hydropower but its potential is not realised due to technical and economical constrains. Pakistan, on the other hand, faces severe shortage of electricity owing to its huge population. Besides, Tajikistan is a geographically landlocked country and faces challenges in accessing global markets whereas Pakistan offers the shortest possible route to Tajikistan's trade and exports through its Gwadar and Karachi ports. Therefore, reciprocal interests in trade, energy and economy can be the focal points in their bilateral relations.

Tajikistan, along with Kyrgyzstan, has agreed to export 1,300 MW of hydroelectricity to Pakistan and Afghanistan. This project known as CASA-1000 is supported by World Bank, IDB, IMF and also by Iran and Russia. It aims to provide the needed help to produce hydroelectricity in Tajikistan. The project will not only result in enhanced economic advantages for both countries but will be a step towards increased cooperation

between Central Asian and South Asian region. However, progress of the project is fettered by withdrawal of NATO forces and increasing activities of Taliban forces in Afghanistan, which have led to delay of the energy and trade connectivity between Tajikistan and Pakistan. ECO, SCO, CAREC play a significant role for the development of bilateral trade and energy linkages between Tajikistan and Pakistan as these organisations provide a common platform for both countries to come together and discuss economic and security related matters. If both countries help Afghanistan to maintain peace and stability, it would lead to the successful completion of the ongoing projects between the two countries. Although, regional and international organizations need to be more actively engaged in these projects, their roles have been rather limited because individual interests of participating countries supersede the need to achieve multilateral cooperation.

Tajikistan and Pakistan have shared long cultural and historical linkages dominated by Persian language, literature and Sufism. These links are being invoked for enhancing their bilateral cultural relations. Although shared cultural linkages can be a key element in bringing the two countries close, Pakistan's foreign policy has not given due attention to this factor. Indeed, the focus has been on strengthening strategic and economic relations. But in recent years, there have been efforts in the forms of organising seminars, conferences, and exhibitions to demonstrate their cultural and religious similarities. Tajik Embassy in Islamabad and Pakistan Embassy in Dushanbe have been working towards enhanced cultural and education cooperation.

Security issues pertain not only to Afghanistan, but also its spill over in Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries, which are major challenge for both countries. Pakistan's FATA and Baluchistan region have been sheltering many terrorist organizations of Central Asia and Afghanistan with the help of Pakistani Army and ISI. These terrorist activities also give impetus to illegal drug trafficking in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. So, both countries with the help of regional and international organizations can combat terrorism and drug trafficking. Although, Pakistan claims to have launched attacks on these outfits, these attempts have been considered to be double folded and feeble, considering its continued involvement with terrorist organizations. Regional

organizations such as SCO and Dushanbe Four can play a more active role in ensuring security for Central Asia and South Asia. Regional and international actors such as China, Russia, USA, Turkey, India and Iran also seek fulfilment of their individual interests in Tajikistan and Pakistan, which in some way impacts Tajikistan-Pakistan relations.

Development of cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan is crucial from the point of view of regional cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia. Central Asian countries have abundance of resources while South Asian countries have prominent geographical position in possession of routes for trade and transport through land corridors and ports. If both regions collectively increase their geo-economic ties, they can augment their economic prospects while assisting each other. Tajikistan and Pakistan can work towards strengthening their bilateral trade and commercial relations and put forth an example for both regions to embark on a journey to augment political and economic ties by keeping their prejudices aside. Tajikistan's participation in the CPEC project can provide an added dimension to greater Central and South Asian Cooperation.

Having discussed all the advantages and probabilities of cordial bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan, it should also be taken into consideration that they face a number of hurdles in the process of maintaining the progress of bilateral relations. First and foremost is the internal security concerns in Afghanistan which influence both the countries as they have shared borders. Tajikistan is wary of the security problems spilling over from Afghanistan in its territory whereas Pakistan continues to provide safe haven to terrorist organizations which create disturbance in Afghanistan. Both countries have their own obligations based on their political and economic preferences which is a prominent factor determining the course of their relations. Regional actors such as Iran, China, Russia and India have a significant role in determining the intensity of Tajikistan's relation with Pakistan because changing geopolitical and geo-economic environment of Eurasia region directly affects these countries as well. Also, within the South Asian region, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Pakistan and India share very volatile relationships which turn hostile when it comes to border issues. This is especially disadvantageous for the development of multilateral cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia.

Tajikistan and Pakistan have great potential for friendly and beneficial relations but security challenges and lack of direct connectivity remains the primary concern. However, many road linkages are being developed between the two with the support of China to bridge the gap in direct connectivity. Karakorum Highway and development of the Gwadar port are crucial in this regard. Pakistan also needs to take care of its economic dependence on China considering that China has already invested billions of dollars in many ongoing projects in Pakistan. China is also economically very much present in Tajikistan. Re-emergence of Russia-China and Pakistan triangle can be both, apprehensive and beneficial for Tajikistan-Pakistan relations. It would give impetus to trade and economic activities in the region along with maintaining security and peace. However, if they keep their own geopolitical and economic ambitions upfront, these could negatively affect the bilateral relations of Tajikistan and Pakistan.

In order to strengthen bilateral ties, it is of utmost importance that both countries maintain a constant vigil on the progress of ongoing projects. Bilateral projects which move in the direction of easing economic and trade barriers between the two countries must receive special attention. And in order to ensure this, it is quintessential that official high level visits be frequent and fruitful. Pakistan needs to end its support to terrorism and extremism within in its territory and also to their export to neighbouring countries. Only after this, peace and harmony can be ushered in Afghanistan, which would in turn enable Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries to trust Pakistan. Harmonious relations between Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan can bring Central and South Asian region together which would lead to greater economic and political development for both regions. Pakistan's becoming a full member of SCO in 2017, has broader prospects of building connections with Tajikistan and other member countries. But in order to enable this, Pakistan will have to keep aside its insecurities about the increased influence of its rival neighbor India and focus on implementing and completing energy and connectivity projects with Tajikistan which will pave way for better geopolitical and economic opportunities in Central and South Asian region.

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APPENDIX-1

1st ECO Summit Opening Statement of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (16-17 February, 1992, Tehran)

Your Excellency, President Hojjatoleslam Akber Hashemi Rafsanjani,

I deem it a great privilege to represent the Islamic Republic of Pakistan this First Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

It gives me special pleasure to convey to you my dear brother, Hojjatoleslam Akber Hashemi Rafsanjani, the distinguished President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, my warm and sincere felicitations on assuming the chairmanship of this historic Summit.

I am confident that under your inspiring leadership we would achieve our noble objectives. May I assure you Excellency of my delegation's fullest cooperation in the fulfillment of your important responsibilities.

It is our hope that this conference would transform the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) into a dynamic institution which would provide the needed impetus for our entry into the 21st century as modern and progressive nations.

May I convey our deep appreciation and profound gratitude for the affectionate and heart-warming welcome extended to us by our brothers in the legendary norms of Iranian hospitality, in this beautiful city of Tehran which is steeped in history.

Mr. Chairman,

Your inaugural address was remarkable for its clarity of thought and breadth of vision and would be an invaluable source of guidance in our deliberations.

Excellency,

We warmly welcome amongst us the distinguished leaders of Central Asian States of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

These states, with which we all enjoy long-standing ties of shared history, common culture and glorious faith have imparted to our organization a new dimension and special significance.

We hope that our organization would soon include the other Central “Asian States”. We also look forward to an early political settlement and peace in Afghanistan which would have paved the way for its inclusion in the ECO. Such an expansion would further strengthen our organization, making it a natural geographical and vibrant economic and cultural zone.

Mr. Chairman,

The last year has brought into focus a revolution in global affairs, a transformation without precedent in this century. Dangerous tensions that had prevailed in many regions since the second world war have disappeared. East-West cold war has become a chapter in history. Cooperation and understanding is becoming the order of the epoch. Doctrines of confrontation have lost their relevance and new political and economic imperatives have emerged to alter the fundamentals of global relations.

As East-West confrontation ebbs away and the North-South divide widens, the world is moving in a direction in which many regional organizations are emerging as strong entities in the underpinning of the new International Order. There is a pronounced trend towards the strengthening and consolidation of the Major Economic Groupings in various regions of the world. There is also a heightened realization that regional cooperation can play an increasingly important role in the enhancement of the world economy.

I am convinced that the time was never more opportune and conditions never more conducive to infusing greater efficacy and substance to the ECO which offers limitless potential for cooperation among the governments and peoples of our region. We remain confident that this summit would take bold and far-reaching decisions to expand and deepen our collaboration and decide on ways and means of promoting socio-economic growth. Pakistan, for its part, is fully committed towards the realization of this lofty objective.

Mr. Chairman,

The Economic Cooperation Organization must focus on the common vision of our region. It must evolve a forward looking approach. It must develop strategies for meaningful collaboration so that the people of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, as well as the new Central Asian States, can benefit from the emerging opportunities.

The Government of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan have consistently endeavoured to institutionalize political, economic and cultural cooperation among themselves, an objective that is in accord with the wishes of our people. They desire the strengthening of ECO. The addition of new member states would undoubtedly provide greater depth and substance to our cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

We envisage in the ECO the creation of a modern and efficient infrastructure linking not only the member states of the organisation but also providing them access to other areas of the world. The Economic Cooperation Organization would thus be able to forge stronger economic and commercial ties not only amongst the member states but also with the outside world, in a spirit of harmony and mutual benefit.

The ECO must bring about the progressive expansion and diversification of commercial exchanges, the optimum utilization of financial resources, the development of joint infrastructural projects and the promotion of technical cooperation. It must also coordinate, efforts to develop a more efficient and sustained pattern for the acquisition, assimilation, development and transfer of technology between member states. But more than anything else, it must tackle and tackle with urgency, the problems of poverty and underdevelopment. I say this in the firm belief that the success of ECO, Mr. Chairman, will be ultimately judged by the improvement in the quality of life of its people.

Mr. Chairman,

A new era of political enlightenment, democratic freedom and respect for human dignity is emerging in most parts of the world. We welcome the relaxation of international tension, the universal movement towards democracy, the upsurge of economic

liberalization, the serious pursuit of arms control and renewed respect for the exercise of peoples' right to self-determination.

But in our own region, as the tragedy of Afghanistan subsides, a new and daring chapter of human-freedom and democratic struggle is being written in letters of gold, even in the face of unprecedented repression. The people of Indian-held Kashmir have aroused world's attention to their plight with a renewed struggle for self-determination, a right pledged to them by both Pakistan and India, a right enshrined in solemn resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. The fact that they have been denied this fundamental human right by one party, has not nullified Kashmiri's claim to self-determination, nor have long years of repression weakened the Kashmiri's resolve to continue to struggle for their inherent rights.

The new winds of change blowing across the globe today, have rekindled in them, an indomitable fire to forge their destiny. It is a movement entirely home-grown and spontaneous. What is happening in Kashmir has its roots deep in history, in the occupying powers repression and in arrogant violation of international commitments and pledges.

Mr. Chairman,

The recent attempt by the people of Azad Kashmir to cross the line of control in the face of obvious death and destruction, should open the eyes of the world to the determination of the Kashmiri people to regain their freedom. We did our painful duty to prevent the crossing. I must, however, admit that it will be difficult for us to do so again and again. The people of Kashmir cannot be insulted from the winds of change and the spirit of freedom and democracy that are blowing across the globe today. The problem of Kashmir must, therefore, be settled and settled immediately, in accordance with the wishes of people of Kashmir. As new chapters are added to the pain and agony of the Kashmiri people, they look to the free world for support in their just struggle for self-determination. We must not disappoint them. Mr. Chairman,

The valiant Afghan people desire peace in their homeland. The return of peace in Afghanistan is vital to the peace, progress and stability of our entire region. Pakistan has

consistently supported all efforts for an early political settlement in Afghanistan. In order to promote such a settlement Pakistan has extended its full support to the convening of an Afghan Assembly to decide on an interim government, adaptable to the Afghan people. We shall facilitate the convening of such a representative assembly and respect its outcome.

Mr. Chairman,

We in Pakistan value the new opportunities that the world offers today. These are opportunities that are challenging but extremely rewarding. They demand dynamic responses. They call for initiative and innovation. They promote enterprise. They encourage talent. In the fifteen months that we have been in office, we have done everything to promote free enterprise. We have invested in infrastructure in roads and highways, in telecommunications and in power generation.

Our economic reforms have resulted in the creation of a more open and liberal economy, fully responsive to the competitive pressures and challenges of today's world. We would be delighted to share our experiences with the ECO member states as we would like to benefit from their achievements.

Mr. Chairman,

The Economic Cooperation Organization has embarked on the right course by according high priority to the liberalization of trade amongst member states and the reaction of financial institutions to facilitate economic growth in our region. While there has been some progress, much still remains to be done. Expansion of rail, road and telecommunication links in our region demands our immediate consideration. The development of an efficient communications infrastructure is fundamental to the strengthening of our economic and development that would improve the quality of life of people.

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

It is my belief that our region has a great future. We have the resources and the expertise. We have the skill and the manpower. All that we need is the will and the determination to succeed. And succeed we will-Insha-Allah.

Source: Official Website of Economic Cooperation Organization at http://www.eco.int//parameters/eco/modules/cdk/upload/content/general_content/3440/1497169137173ujine1tfo1370frm2v3i7h9pt7.pdf.

APPENDIX-2

Economic Cooperation Organization, First Summit, Tehran, Iran, 1992

Tehran Joint Communiqué

The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Turgut Ozal; Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif; President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ayaz Motlibov; President of the Republic of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Saparmurat Niazov Atayovich; Chairman of the High Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Yuldashov Shokat Mohyedinovich; Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, H.E. Mr. Erkitabeyev; Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Lakim Qayumov attended the First ECO Summit Meeting in Tehran on 16-17 February 1992 (corresponding to 27-28 Bahman 1370) and exchanged their views in an atmosphere full of the spirit of brotherhood and friendship. Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Bayknev also attended the meeting by special invitation.

Heads of Member States and Governments recalling the political and economic developments in the world and especially in the region, which are the result of the collapse of communism, emphasized the realization of ECO economic and infra-structural goals with due regard to the ever-increasing role of the economy in world policy making. They expressed the hope that the ECO member countries could take substantial steps aimed at strengthening of this Organization.

The Heads of ECO Member States and Governments expressed pleasure at the admission of the Governments of the Republics of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan as the new members of ECO.

The leaders welcomed the recommendation of the Council of Deputies to allow the Turkish Muslim Community in Cyprus to participate in the economic, cultural and technical activities of ECO, without prejudice to the respective positions of the Member States and the ongoing efforts for a final settlement of the question of Cyprus in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council's Resolutions.

The modalities of their participation will be worked out by the ECO Secretariat with the help of Experts of the three founding Member States.

The Heads of States/Governments agreed that peace and security in the region is a prerequisite for economic development. Taking note of the deteriorating situation in Jammu and Kashmir, they stressed the need for respect of the human rights of the Kashmiri people and for settling the issue expeditiously in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir, which are yet to be ascertained under long-standing commitments.

They called for the return of peace in Afghanistan and offered full support for the efforts for an early political settlement acceptable to the Afghan people.

They called for an equitable and durable settlement of the Palestine question based on the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The Heads of States and Governments agreed that, following the successful enforcement of the Protocol on Preferential Tariffs, efforts should continue towards the ultimate elimination of all tariff and non-tariff barriers together with all subsidies on exports, at the earliest.

The Heads of Member States and Governments reviewing ECO's previous activities and progress made, gave the assurance that the joint efforts of the member countries will provide new possibilities and open new doors to them. To this end, they underlined the

importance of the development of cooperation in transport and communications, energy, industrial and agricultural areas and recommended that the Council of Ministers should take necessary executive decisions for its materialization.

They envisaged in the ECO the creation of a modern and efficient infrastructure linking not only the Member States of the Organisation but also providing them access to other areas of the world. The ECO would thus be in a position to forge stronger economic and commercial ties not only amongst the Member States but also with the outside world, in a spirit of harmony and mutual benefit.

The participating Heads of States and Governments expressed their gratitude to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani and to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to them during their stay in Tehran.

Source-

http://www.eco.int/parameters/eco/modules/cdk/upload/content/general_content/3440/1497169239721ujine1tfo1370frm2v3i7h9pt7.pdf

APPENDIX-3

Text of the Speech by the Secretary General Foreign Affairs, Akram Zaki, at the Workshop on Central Asian Republics held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad; 5 March 1992.

The emergence of independent states in Central Asia is a veritable watershed. It is the beginning of a new historical phase for the vast region stretching from the Aral Sea to the Arabian Sea. In this historical perspective, this marks the end of isolation and artificial division of the region and segregation of its peoples whose destinies were closely interlinked from the tenth to the seventeenth century. The division imposed by the rivalry of Russian and British imperialism, since the eighteenth century, has finally come to a close in 1991.

With the passing of the interregnum of the great game, the interaction between the peoples of the region, who share common history, culture and faith, will be resumed and intensify rapidly in the modern technological age. For Pakistan, this momentous development carries great significance.

Culturally, we are inheritors of central Asian traditions. Our poets and scholars, architects and builders derive their inspiration from central Asian sources. Our food, our dress and our language show our central Asian roots, geographically, we straddle the divide separating the South Asian sub-continent from central Asia and South West Asia. The resumption of our severed links with central Asia will refurbish the Central Asian character of our identity and revitalise the whole region.

The purpose of this seminar, however, goes beyond the rediscovery of our shared historical and cultural experience with Central Asia. It is to focus on the contemporary scene, the opportunities that have become available and how we must respond to the new situation in terms of broad policy and practical action.

First and foremost, we need to study the present political culture of the Central Asian states. It is quite clear that these states have become independent as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and not as an achievement of indigenous freedom movements. Politically, the societies are in a flux, the Islamic and ethnic sentiments appear to be on the rise. Yet, in all these states, the old leadership has survived, though the leaders have discarded their Communist philosophy and assumed new 'nationalist' but still secular orientation. They are also poised to transform their economies.

Much has been written about their preference for the Turkish mode of development. Nevertheless, the direction of change remains unclear. We need carefully to examine the internal dynamics of these states and to reach conclusions that can set the broad parameters of our approach.

We also need to analyse and assess the external environment of Central Asia. Several issues deserve attention.

Driven by its fears of the so called Islamic fundamentalism and its concerns over the presence of nuclear weapons in some states, the west will be keenly interested in future developments in Central Asia. Turkey appears to assume a special role, given the ethnic Turkic back ground of central Asia, Iran, the Gulf states, China and India will present other major political and economic interests in the region. We need to examine the views of these international players before we can make a realistic assessment of Pakistan's role in the region.

In addition to the perception of other states about Central Asia, it is important to understand the role that the central Asian states desire for themselves in the region and the world.

The expansion of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) is an event of considerable significance. It is important that in addition to the three original members i.e., Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, five newly independent Central Asian states of the former USSR have joined the ECO and Kazakhstan is likely to follow suit. Hopefully, an early political settlement will enable Afghanistan to join the organisation. The ECO has all the natural advantages and great potential to turn into a vibrant economic fraternity.

A stable, peaceful and economically progressive and dynamic ECO region of Central Asian and West Asian states can once again serve as a link between the European Community and growing economies of China, Japan and East Asia.

The primary objective of the seminar/workshop is to discuss the development of Pakistan's political, economic, trade and cultural relations' and multi-dimensional cooperation with central Asia. Pakistan had lost no time in responding to the historic transformation of Central Asia. Pakistan was the second country following Turkey to extend diplomatic recognition to central Asian states. Initial contacts were also established even earlier by sending a delegation comprising eminent scholars, businessmen, journalists and officials led by the Minister of State for Economic Affairs.

Under instruction of the Prime Minister, we have already taken several initiatives to establish and to develop our relations with central Asian states. These include: Prime

Minister's invitation to the Presidents of all six Muslim Republics. President of Kazakhstan has already visited Pakistan from 22 to 25 February. President of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are expected to pay visits soon after Ramadan.

- Opening of missions in Tashkent, Alma Ata, Dushanbe and Ashkabad. - PIA air link with Tashkent which may be extended to other Central Asian capitals.

- An offer of \$ thirty million credit to Uzbekistan and dollar ten million each to other five republics.

- Despatch of life saving drugs and urgently required medicines to all the Central Asian Republics.

- Exchange of delegations in various fields.

Serious and analytical research must provide the raw material for reflection. Of course, aspirations of the people, dreams and visions of the leaders are also essential elements in policy formation. But the realities on the ground and a proper understanding and evaluation of constraints and opportunities must provide the foundation for policy postulates. Facts without vision remain barren and visions divorced from realities turn into smoke.

I am confident that with the benefit of your expert and scholarly inputs we will be able to reach sound conclusions that could help the formulation of our central Asian policy in the short-term, medium term as well as in long-term perspectives.

During President Nazarbayev's visit Pakistan and Kazakhstan signed five agreements.

- Declaration on principles governing bilateral relations.

- Protocol on establishment of Pakistan-Kazakhstan joint commission at government level. - Agreement on scientific and technical cooperation.

-Agreement on culture, sports and tourism cooperation. These are broad umbrella agreements providing framework for cooperation in specific areas.

We will have similar agreements hopefully with other states.

Source: The Pakistan Times, 6 March 1992

APPENDIX-4

Quetta Plan of Action for ECO

- 1. The Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization met in Quetta on February 6-7, 1993. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, the Ministers for Foreign Economic Relations and senior officials of the member countries. The list of leaders of delegations is attached.*
- 2. The Council noted that with the enlargement of the ECO membership, policies for economic cooperation would now cover ten member states, spread over an area of over seven million square kilometers rich in natural and human resources, and date are for the needs of 300 million people.*
- 3. It emphasized the vital importance of mobilizing natural and human resources of the region, based as far as possible, on a market oriented economy and common benefit.*
- 4. The Council stressed the importance of establishing collaboration with international bodies and other regional groupings in accordance with article XXXV of the Treaty of Izmir. Such collaboration should include exploring possibilities of furthering ECO projects through international financing.*
- 5. In reviewing the progress achieved in the development of regional cooperation, the Council commended the Regional Planning Council and the Technical Committees for their important contributions which had resulted in the initiation of significant projects amongst the ECO Member States. The Council also expressed satisfaction on the positive results of the various experts groups, seminars, meetings and training programmes ,held under the auspices of the ECO.*

6. *The Council stressed that ECO projects and programmes for regional cooperation could be put in motion whenever any number of ECO countries were ready to so act together while the remaining ECO countries would be encouraged to join in when they were in a position to do so."*

7. *For a plan of action which would aim to achieve its objectives by the year 2000, the Council adopted the following guidelines:*

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

8. *The Council emphasized that modern communications were a prerequisite for achieving the goals of ECO. To this end, they indicated on behalf of their governments, their determination to allocate national resources and mobilize external resources, separately and collectively.*

9. *Given the vital and technical nature of this sector, they proposed that a meeting of the Transport and Communications Committee be held within the next two months to prepare an outline plan for the development of the transport sector.*

a) This plan should include the following objectives

i) Enable trucks to travel from one end of the region to the other at internationally acceptable standards and in accordance with routes prescribed by member states;

ii) Expand and integrate national railway networks to permit transportation by rail from one end of the region to the other;

iii) Expand air connections so that there is a direct air connection between the capitals/major cities of each of the ECO countries at least once a week;

iv) Expand port facilities to handle the sea-borne trade of the region;

v) *Conclude agreements, within or without the region, that may be necessary to facilitate such transport including access through new border and custom posts that may be established*

b) *This plan should also examine:*

i) *The national transportation networks of the ECO countries and propose such modifications in the current national schemes as would facilitate intra-ECO transportation;*

ii) *The feasibility of a joint multimodal transport venture among the interested public-private sector companies in the member countries which would enable goods to travel within the region expeditiously;*

iii) *The possibility to pool arrangements among the national airlines, setting up of an ECO Airline among the interested public/private sector companies of member countries and incentives to the private sector to initiate air, especially air 'Cargo, services in the region;*

10. *The proposed meeting of the Ministers for Transport for the ECO countries in Alma Ata in October, 1993, is expected to finalize this plan for its*

i. Implementation.

ii. *In the field of telecommunications, the Council of Ministers further directed the Committee to prepare within the same time-frame (i.e. by October 1993) a plan that would:*

(i) *ensure that by 1995, at least 40 telephonetelefax channels exist between each of the ECO country either directly or through another ECO country;*

(ii) *explore the possibility of expanding satellite links between all ECO countries for telecommunications, television and radio*

broadcasts. The feasibility of an ECO satellite may also be explored.

27. effect improvements in the Postal System so that mail from one ECO country is delivered to another ECO country within one week's time.

11. In view of the vast potential for the development of a telecommunications industry in the region, the Council of Ministers directed the Committee to explore, on the basis of comparative advantage, the possibility of cooperation in the field, including the manufacture of different components by regional member countries and harmonizing standards and requirements.

12. In order to keep abreast of the latest developments in the rapidly developing field of telecommunications, to generate innovations and to address the specific telecommunications needs of the ECO region, the Council directed that there should be enhanced cooperation between the existing research centres in the member countries, and that if necessary, new research centres be set up jointly financed by the governments and the public/private sector companies in the telecommunications industry.

TRADE

13. The Council of Ministers agreed that with a view to promoting economic cooperation, the Members shall endeavour to make trade within the region a major component of their total trade. The Council of Ministers directed the Economic and Commercial Committee, in the light of Article 11 and III of the Treaty of Izmir, to work towards the elimination, as far as possible, of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and restrictions within the ECO region and to examine the feasibility of expanding the present preferential tariff system to include the new member countries and to enlarge the -list of items to which preferential tariffs shall apply.

14. With a view to creating a greater awareness among the business community of the member countries of the trade potential of the region, the Committee should also conduct a study of the exports (present and potential) in each of the ECO countries and

determine the extent to which these can meet the import needs (present and potential) of other ECO countries.

15. *The Council directed the Committee to devise a uniform system of customs procedures, utilising current international practice, for goods in transit at all borders in the region with the objective of ensuring that goods in transit are cleared for onward movement expeditiously.*

16. *It also noted that economic activity was increasingly being directed in all the ECO countries towards the private sector and appreciated that lack of awareness of trading opportunities was a major factor inhibiting trade within the region. It directed that the ECO Chamber of Commerce should hold at least twice a year seminars to acquaint businessmen of the ECO countries with the trade potential that existed within the region. It noted that the Chambers of Commerce of member states are being affiliated with the ECO Chamber of Commerce.*

17. *To facilitate growth of trade, the Council further directed that the proposed Trade and Development Bank should, in its trade financing activities, focus on intra-regional trade.*

18. *The Council agreed that necessary measures be taken by national authorities to facilitate the travel of businessmen within ECO region without delay and that visas, where required, are issued expeditiously.*

ENERGY

19. *The Council noted the region's rich energy potential, both hydropl and fossil, and directed the preparation of a well considered plan for a network of pipelines and the inter-connection of power grids to meet the entire region's requirements and to provide outlets, including sea ports, for access to international markets for the member countries. They directed that financing be explored for development of viable projects in this field.*

INDUSTRY

20. *While recognizing the current role of the public sector, the Council noted the substantial role of the private sector in the further development of industry and the need to encourage businessmen, through investment incentives, to establish industrial units to cater to the entire regional market.*

21. *The Council directed the Technical and Industrial Committee to make proposals in this regard and also asked for the examination of the possibility also of offering other special incentives for such units.*

AGRICULTURE

22. *The Council of Ministers recognized the vital role of agriculture and related industries in the economic advancement of ECO member Countries and directed the Agricultural Committee to prepare a comprehensive study for cooperation in the region for the application of improved methods for maximising agricultural production (at least to the point of self-sufficiency in the food-deficit member countries) and where possible explore joint regional projects.*

23. *The Committee should also study means for enhancing cooperation among the existing agricultural training and research institutions in the member states, and where necessary, propose the establishment of new institutions to promote technical knowledge and exchange of experience. The Committee should study the feasibility of establishing an ECO Agricultural Data Bank to disseminate information on production and trade of agricultural products within ECO countries.*

TOURISM

24. *Recognizing the importance of tourism in advancing national economic development and promoting mutual understanding, the Council expressed the hope that expansion of transport and telecommunication network would increase the flow of regional and international tourists. To facilitate such tourism further, it directed the national authorities to examine the possibility of facilitating issue of visas, and of promoting cooperation between the tourism organizations/travel operators within the*

region. The objective should be to increase substantially the ECO region's share in the global tourism trade.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

25. The Council noted that many ECO countries had technical assistance programmes/scholarships to provide training facilities to foreign nationals. They agreed that an appropriate part of all such technical programmes/scholarships be placed at the disposal of ECO countries.

26. They further directed the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Committee to:

a) undertake a study of all vocational training facilities available within the region and to propose such expansion/modification as would help these institutions to serve the needs of the region as a whole keeping in view the requirement as spelled out by each of the member country for vocational training;

b) examine the possibility of the expansion of existing facilities within the region for language training to cater to the enlarged needs of the region; and

c) to examine modalities, on the basis of proposals submitted by Pakistan, of setting up the ECO Science Foundation, visualized in Article XIV of the Treaty of Izmir, with the objective of seeking to ensure its establishment by 1995.

ECO SPECIAL FUND FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES

27. To achieve the objectives of this Plan of Action and to supplement the efforts of the Technical Committees, the Council decided to set up a Special Fund to undertake feasibility studies in various sectors of economic activity within the region. This Fund, which would have an initial contribution of a total of US\$300,000, from the founding members, would be placed at the disposal of the Council of Deputies, which on receiving

proposals from the Regional Planning Council would commission feasibility studies by Consultants of international repute (preferably from within the region). In making proposals for the feasibility studies, the Technical Committee should try to identify private sector companies agencies who would benefit from and contribute to such feasibility studies.

28. This fund could be supplemented, with the approval of the Council of Deputies, by assistance from International Organizations.

List Of Leaders of Delegations of ECO Member States to the Third Session of the Council - Quetta 6-7 February, 1993.

1. *H.E. Dr. Najibullah Laffrai, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Islamic State'of Afghanistan.*
2. *H.E. Mr. Gasimov Tofik, Foreign Minister of Republic of Azerbaijan.*
3. *H.E. Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran.*
4. *H.E. Mr. Karmangozhan S.A., First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Kazakhstan.*
5. *H.E. Mr. Marat Sarlinov, Deputy Foreign Minister, Republic of Kyrgyzstan.*
6. *H.E. Mr. Muhammad Siddique Khan Kanju, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Pakistan.*
7. *H.E. Mr. Izzatullo Khayayev, Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Republic of Tajikistan.*
8. *H.E. Mr. Hikmet Cetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey.*
9. *H.E. Mr. Ovezov Jagmur Ovezovich, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkmenistan.*
10. *H.E. Mr. Fateh Ghulamovich Teschabaev, First Deputy Foreign Minister, Republic of Uzbekistan.*

Source-

http://www.eco.int/parameters/eco/modules/cdk/upload/content/general_content/3440/1497169239721ujine1tfo1370frm2v3i7h9pt7.pdf

APPENDIX-5

Ashgabat Declaration

The Extraordinary Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on 13-14 May, 1997.

The meeting presided over by His Excellency Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan, was attended by:

- *H.E. Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan;*
- *H.E. Mr. Heydar Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan Republic;*
- *H.E. Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran;*
- *H.E. Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of the Republic of Kazakstan;*
- *H.E. Mr. A. Jumagulov, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic;*
- *H.E. Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;*
- *H.E. Mr. Emomali Rakhmanov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan;*
- *H.E. Mr. Suleyman Demirel, President of the Republic of Turkey;*
- *H.E. Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan; and*
- *H.E. Mr. Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.*

The Heads of State/Government held, in a cordial and brotherly atmosphere, exchange of views on issues of common interest in the fields of transport, communication and energy. In this context the Heads of State/Government:

- *Mindful of the provisions of the Treaty of Izmir; the Quetta Plan of Action, Istanbul Declaration, Islamabad Declaration, the Ashgabat Summit Declaration 1996 and the emphasis laid in the Economic Cooperation Strategy for the ECO region on pursuing the stipulated goals in the priority areas of trade, transport, communications and energy focusing, in particular, upon the provision of transit*

facilitation measures for energy, oil and gas pipelines and other energy resources as well as their access to international markets;

- *Reaffirming their resolve to build and strengthen the physical infrastructure linking the ECO member countries to each other and with international markets through viable road, railway, sea and air connections and routes as well as networks of oil and gas pipelines;*
- *Reiterating the concern for accelerating the process of regional cooperation in the priority areas of transport and communications, trade and energy as underlined in the Ashgabat Declaration adopted during the Fourth ECO Summit Meeting;*
- *Expressing satisfaction on the completion of important projects and programmes and conclusion of arrangements envisaging multilateral cooperation in the fields of transport, communications and energy;*
- *Considering the urgency for the expeditious implementation of the remaining projects and programmes for the development of transport and communication sectors within the framework of the Almaty Outline Plan;*
- *Recalling UN General Assembly Resolutions No.48 and 40 underlining the problems arising out of the geographical location of Central Asian States and subsequently the positive affirmation made in the Resolution of UN General Assembly during its fifty-first session incorporating the world body's acknowledgement of ECO's potential and resources as a "permanent body for intra-regional cooperation, consultation and coordination in order to enhance economic, social and cultural development", the concrete steps undertaken so far to provide the land-locked countries of the region further access to other regions and the need for various entities of the United Nations System to join efforts towards the implementation of economic projects and programmes of ECO;*
- *Endorsed the following to reiterate and incorporate their commitment to promote the well-being of the peoples of the ECO region through concerted efforts in the transport, communication and energy sectors:*

- 1. The Programme of Action for ECO Transport and Communication Decade and the construction of oil and gas pipelines in the ECO region be recognized as an urgent need and priority goal.*
- 2. To evolve a mutually agreed tariff policy and seek harmony of technical standards for the railway transport of the ECO region, recommendations may be formulated by the concerned experts of the respective countries to ensure successful development and effective operation of Trans-Asian railway and to facilitate expansion of trade, tourism and economic cooperation among ECO countries.*
- 3. The inauguration of Tejen-Seraks-Mashhad railway line as bridgeheads linking the Central Asian member countries and Azerbaijan to the ports in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea as well as with European countries through road and railway connection to Black Sea and Mediterranean ports via Turkey and the finalization of arrangements for the use of Karakoram highway for facilitating commercial and trade exchanges among Member States are positive developments. Existing expertise and resources in the ECO region be mobilized to complete the inter-connection of road and railway routes including the construction of missing links. In this regard, the concerned authorities in the Member States may undertake necessary measures towards completion of remaining road and railway links within the ECO region as envisaged in the Almaty Outline Plan providing Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan with access to adequate sea port facilities of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey with special priority to the transit roads connecting Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan with the ports of Karachi and Gawadar through Afghanistan, in accordance with their mutual agreements.*

Similarly, priority be given to the completion of railway lines between Kerman and Zahedan; Bafq and Mashhad, Kars-Aktas-Boyuk-KasikBaku, expeditious implementation of feasibility studies, surveys and engineering, construction works and upgrading in the Kushka-HeratKandahar-Chaman and Termez-Khairaton-Mazar Sharif-Herat Kandahar-Chaman, Andijan-Torugart railway lines as well

as EralievTurkmenbashi-Gazanjyk-Bender Torkeman and between Astara (Azerbaijan)-Rasht-Qazvin; and Kuliab-Kalay-Khumb-Khorog-MurgabKarakorum Highway, Almaty-Bishkek-Torugart-Gilgit-Hassanabdal and Andizhan-osh-Irkeshtam, Nizhiniy Pyanj-Sherkan Bander-Kabul and Beneu-Akiigit-Kungrat-Khojeylli roads, Termez-Hairatan-Mazari SharifKabul-Jalalabad-Peshawar-Karachi, Herat-Frah-Kandahar-QuettaKarachi/Gwadar, Roads connecting Ashgabat with the port (s) of Karachi/Gawadar passing through Sinboldok-Kandahar-Herat and the road linking Termez with Herat through Shebergan-Maimana. Chahoahar-Zahedan Railway, Arak-Khosravi Railway, Kerman-RavarDhyhuk roadway, Kerman-Shahdad-Nehbandan-Zabol, Poldasht to Marand-Urumieh, Sanandaj, Khorramabad, Ahvaz, Khorramshahr, Abadan, and Bandar Imam roadway, Miyane-Ardebil-Parsabad (Iran)Imishli (Azerbaijan), Sadarak (Azerbaijan)-Kars (Turkey) Balykchi-OshAndizhan, Baku-Guymyzy Korpu-Hopa-Trabzon Highway, construction of road bridges across Amudarya river in district Farab.

The Ministers of Transport, in their forthcoming meeting scheduled to be held at Ashgabat in December 1997 shall review and finalize the above routes as part of the Programme of Action for Transport and Communication Decade in the ECO region.

4. *Concrete steps be taken to expedite the development and operation of Istanbul-Tehran Mashhad-Seraks-Tejen-Charjev-Tashkent-AlmatyAktogai-Druzbha Trans-Asian Railways which is titled as "Silk Railway Route" and the route Ashgabat-Turkmenistan-Baku of the TRACECA project to promote international trade and socio-cultural interaction among the people of the region.*
5. *In view of the urgent need for the development of ECO region's rolling-stocks, a close cooperation of ECO Member States be promoted for manufacturing and repairing of locomotives, passenger carriages, freight cars containers and other railway equipment, using ECO countries own resources as well as preferential credits of international financial institutions issued under the guarantee of the Governments of ECO Member States and other financial source.*

6. *Possibility of establishing regional consortiums to develop ECO road and railway networks and road infrastructure in conformity with international standards may be examined by the concerned experts in the Member States and submitted for consideration during the next ECO Summit Meeting. The conclusion of an Agreement between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan for the establishment of a consortium under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov, the President of Turkmenistan to construct missing railway link on Eraliev-Bekdash-Turkmenbashi-Bender Torkmen or Ozen-Gyzylgaya-Gazanjyk-Bender Torkeman of the North-South transport corridor is a concrete input in the regional cooperation. Other ECO Member States may also consider their participation in order to extend the scope and positive results of this venture on a multilateral basis.*
7. *The operationalization of ECO Shipping Company signifies the potential that the ECO region possesses in developing and promoting the trade and commercial relations of the member countries with each other as well as with other regions. Those Member States which are not signatory to this project may consider the possibility of their joining it and extending assistance and facilities to ensure efficient and successful operation of the Company.*
8. *In order to facilitate the operationalization of the ECO Air for the movement of passengers and cargo, those Member States which are not signatory to this project may facilitate the proper, efficient and successful operation of ECO Air project.*
9. *Since TAEFOS (Trans-Asian-European Fiber Optic System) linking all the countries of the region is expected to be operational in 1997, ACIS System (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's automated system for customs data) compatible with other systems may be introduced in each ECO Member State with the technical assistance of UNCTAD/UNDP.*
10. *Expedite formulation and finalization of the draft transit transport framework agreement with the technical assistance of the Islamic Development Bank, ESCAP and UNCTAD.*

11. *To promote trade within the ECO region, ECO Member States should finalize the establishment of their Guaranteeing Associations in accordance with the provisions of the Customs Convention on International Transportation of Goods (Carnet TIR 1975).*
12. *With the completion of requisite formalities, the ECO Transit Trade Agreement shall come in force in near future. In this regard, the establishment of the Committee on Transit Trade during 1997 in Ashgabat would facilitate commercial interaction and flow of goods within the ECO region.*
13. *With its rich natural resources in the fields of oil, gas and electricity, trained manpower and infrastructure, ECO region has the potential and resources to become one of the prosperous regions of the world. Regional cooperation in these fields and maximum utilization of the existing resources and potential of ECO Member States will prompt complementarities of their economies, enhance productivity, technical and economic viability, optimal utilization of energy supply and contribute to their improvement of ECO region's socio-economic environment. In pursuance of above, a High Level Experts Task Group be set up to recommend within a specific time frame measures for the expeditious implementation of agreed projects, determine viable future routes within the overall regional perspective and suggest policy courses envisaging oil and gas pipelines providing land-locked oil and gas producing ECO member countries with safe, stable and economically expedient access to international markets within as well as across the ECO region, according to bilateral and multilateral agreements.*
14. *Ensuring a meaningful development of economic cooperation and providing the land-locked oil and gas producing ECO member countries with access to world markets is to be recognized as an urgent need. In this regard, the possibility of the establishment of regional consortiums to construct the following oil and gas pipelines may be considered:*
 - a. *Oil Pipeline:*
 - Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Afghanistan to Pakistan;*
 - Central Asia to Persian Gulf via Iran.*

b. *Gas Pipelines:*

-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey to Europe;

-Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan.

In addition to the above routes, Turkmenistan has proposed a new gas pipeline starting from Turkmenistan to East Asia via UzbekistanKyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan as well as from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan through Caspian Sea and to Turkey which shall also be considered by an Adhoc Committee as soon as possible.

In this regard, ECO member countries may also furnish competitive and economically most profitable projects envisaging oil and gas exploration, development and transportation to ECO Secretariat, which shall arrange and coordinate an Adhoc Committee to examine and prepare a framework document including agreed technical and other policies in the field of oil and gas transportation and submit it to the next ECO Summit.

15. In order to promote safe and effective parallel functioning of power systems of ECO Member States and bearing in mind the decisions contained in the Quetta Plan of Action adopted on 6-7 February, 1993, the parties endorse the establishment of a joint power system of the region.

An ECO Permanent Commission on Transport and Communications be established. Working mechanism of this permanent body which is agreed to be located in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan be worked out and approved by the Council of Ministers.

16. The participating Heads of State/Government expressed their gratitude and profound appreciation to the President of Turkmenistan and the Government and the people of Turkmenistan for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to them during their stay in Turkmenistan and for the excellent arrangement made for the Extraordinary Summit Meeting.

Source:

http://www.eco.int//parameters/eco/modules/cdk/upload/content/general_content/3440/1497169239721ujine1tfo1370frm2v3i7h9pt7.pdf

APPENDIX-6

Joint Communiqué on the Outcome of the Meeting of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, accompanied by a high-level delegation, visited the Republic of Tajikistan on 09-10 June, 2015 at the invitation of the Republic of Tajikistan to participate in the High Level International Conference on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action “Water for life” 2005-2015.

During the visit, His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the President of the Republic of Tajikistan His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon held one-on-one talks followed by delegation-level meeting. The whole range of bilateral relations came under discussion. The leaders also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual concern.

The Prime Minister praised Tajikistan for holding of the High Level International Conference on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action “Water for life”, 2005-2015 in Dushanbe.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the development of bilateral relations and noted that a vast potential existed for expansion of cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, investment, education, science, culture, energy, transport, defense and security.

The two sides expressed satisfaction regarding the status of implementation of the Joint Statement of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the

development of partnerships and the implementation of the provisions and documents signed in Dushanbe on 17 June 2014 during the visit of the Prime Minister to Tajikistan.

They underscored the need for enhancing connectivity by air, road and rail for promoting economic relations, people-to-people contacts and tourism. They mandated the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) to make concrete recommendations in this regard. Pakistan side has proposed holding of the Fifth Session of the JMC on 07-08 October 2015 in Islamabad.

They took note of the exhibition to be held in Dushanbe in October 2015, which will facilitate introduction of Pakistani products in Tajikistan and the region.

The two sides also emphasized the importance of the Joint Commission on Energy & Infrastructure, which was established on the instructions of President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Commission shall hold meetings twice a year to explore possibilities of mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of energy & infrastructure.

The leaders stressed on the need to strengthen the capacity of transit and transportation, including through enhanced cooperation at the regional level. In this context, the two sides noted that early finalization of the trilateral agreement on transit trade among Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan will contribute to economic and trade relations and will give greater impetus to regional cooperation.

The two sides reiterated the need to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan in the fight against international terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking and other threats to regional and global security.

The excellent cooperation between the two countries within the framework of the UN, OIC, ECO, SCO and other relevant international and regional organizations was noted with satisfaction by both sides. Pakistan expressed gratitude for Tajikistan's support to Pakistan's request for membership of SCO. The two sides agreed to work closely on the important issue of reform of the UN Security Council.

The Prime Minister stated that he was looking forward to the state visit of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan that will further strengthen and broaden the traditionally close and cooperative relations between the peoples of the two countries.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan thanked the President of Tajikistan for the very warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to him and the members of his delegation during the visit.

Source: Official Website, President of Republic of Tajikistan (www.president.tj/en/node/9117) Dushanbe, 9 June 2015

APPENDIX-7

Speech by H.E. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Briefing Session on CASA-1000 Power Project (2017)

H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon,

President of the Republic of Tajikistan,

H.E. President Ashraf Ghani,

H.E. Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan,

I thank President Rahmon for his invitation to visit Tajikistan and for arranging this essential briefing session on CASA-1000 Power Project. We are grateful for the generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation and for making excellent arrangements for this very important occasion.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies, CASA-1000 is a flagship project in our region, connecting Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia to Afghanistan and Pakistan in South Asia through an electricity grid.

On its completion, Pakistan and Afghanistan will be able to obtain 1,000 MW and 300 MW, respectively, of electricity in summer time, from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan our two brotherly countries that have abundant water resources enabling them to produce inexpensive and clean hydroelectricity.

This project will help bring a number of economic, social and environmental benefits to member countries and reduce the energy deficit, create jobs, improve trade and reduce carbon dioxide emissions thanks to the supply of clean energy. It will also contribute to regional integration. We must make efforts to ensure that the project is completed well in time.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, This project is an important step toward realization of the planned Central Asia South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM). It will be a good example of promoting cooperation between energy-deficient South Asia and energy-rich Central Asia.

CASA-1000 Power Project will not only bring revenues to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan but will also mitigate electricity shortages in Pakistan and Afghanistan and increase the prospects for growth. It will also be a source of revenue for Afghanistan opening up greater business and investment opportunities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to note that the second meeting of Pak-Tajik JWG on Energy and Infrastructure and Technical Committee was held in Dushanbe on 16 March 2017. It is heartening to know that on 11 May, 2017 five companies have submitted bids for convertor stations including all leading manufacturers like ABB, Seimens, Alstonetc, etc. I have been informed that tenders have been floated for transmission lines from Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan and from Tajikistan to Afghanistan. These tenders are being evaluated. I hope that work on these transmission lines would begin very soon.

Excellencies, On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, I wish to reiterate our commitment to the early implementation of the project. We need energy for socio-economic development in Pakistan and to run our industrial sector to its full potential.

This will help in generating employment and uplift standard of living of the people of Pakistan. Once again, I thank my Brother Emomali Rahmon and his dedicated team for making excellent arrangements for this briefing session and work accomplished since launching of CASA1000 Power Project last year.

Source: Diplomatic Focus, August 2017