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Border Politics in South Asia: A Case Study of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan

Mushtaq A.Kaw*

Introduction

Historically speaking, the Indian sub-continent was directly connected to Central Asia across land mass of Afghanistan in the south and Kashmir in the north. These trans-land connections were maintained across the Himalayas, Pamirs, Hindukush and the Khyber Mountains in the wake of the transcontinental trade across the "Grand Silk Route" of 2rd to 3nd century BC. By and large, these transmission channels were marked for relative peace, prosperity, human security, inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue: thanks to scores of men who treaded great deal of hazards[1] for fame, fortune and missionary pursuits. However, following the "Partition" of the Indian sub-continent, two separate political identities of India and Pakistan emerged on the South Asian map in 1947. With that, "Greater Kashmir," which thitherto had an independent political status, fragmented into what presently constitutes India controlled Jammu and Kashmir State (J&K) and Pakistan controlled Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK). The development was quite unpropitious for it forged an artificial Indo-Pak border line: Line of actual control (LoC) in 1949, which is maintained by huge army personnel and defence expenditure at the cost of the works of public utility and human security in both countries.

Whatever its efficacy, the said infamous act of "Partition," meant general loss to all contending parties, for it sealed off traditional borders, rendered hitherto porous borders rigid for free mobility of men, material, ideas, and cross-cultural and ideological fertilization,[2] divided families of common ethno-cultural descent, led to Indo-Pak wars in the 1960s and the 1970s and forged ill-will, mistrust and heart-burning between India and Pakistan. Instead of devoting their efforts to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, crime and the like social problems, they engaged in building their military capabilities and enhancing their respective defence expenditures: lately India hiked it by 34% worth 1.4173 trillion Indian rupees[3] and Pakistan increased its defence budget by 15% in 2009 despite her insignificant growth rate of 3.3% GDP. The situation of Afghanistan, another border state in South Asia, is no less alarming due to fundamentalism. Her own resources together with that of the U.S. and

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[1] Cornelius Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers 1603-1721* (Hague, 1921) pp. 30-31. Clarmont Perciral Skrine, *Chinese Central Asia* (London, 1926) pp.74-75. File no.771/S.1935-36 (1878-79) His Highness Government, Jammu and Kashmir, Persian/General Records, *Jammu Archives.*

[2] Attaur Rahman, "General Features and Areas of Interaction," A. Rahman (ed.), *India's Interaction with China, Central and West Asia: History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilisation* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press**,** 2002) pp.22-24.

[3] Mohammad Ashraf, "Peace in South Asia," *Greater Kashmir,* 22/02/2009, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India.

NATO powers are pooled together to fight the "menace" in Afghanistan and along the Pak-Afghan border.

Border politics and the closure of the traditional routes following the act of "Partition" also affected the level of the "interdependence" of the contending parties. Indo-Pak, Indo-Afghan and Pak-Afghan trade volume contracted with cumulative effect on their bilateral and trilateral trade with their respective neighbouring countries – a situation that continues to be there as regards to Indo-Central Asian trade in energy, consumer and industrial products, which constitutes just 1% of the region's total trade.[4] In absence of a direct surface link, the whole Indo-Central Asian trade[5] is currently conducted by air lifts from Dubai and Delhi airports and shipments through Bandar Abbas at Chabahar in Iran.[6] The same is true of the Indo-Pak bilateral trade,[7] which was limited to 250.86 million U.S. dollars in 2000-01 and 2.23307 billion U.S. dollars in 2008 with the trade balance in India's favour.[8] Indo-Afghan and Pak-Afghan trade is also a story of predicament when viewed from a regional perspective. More crucial is the negligible share of energy in the region's "Production Consumption Trade Structure": the share of energy in Indo-Central Asian trade is far less than China though India, like China, is a growing economy, and its oil and gas companies have shares worth 3.5 billion U.S. dollars in Kazakh and Uzbek energy exploration projects.[9] India's insignificant share in energy trade was aggravated by her precipitously depleting traditional coal reserves,[10] and limited capacity in nuclear (1.5%) and power production (2%). True she strives to keep balance between energy production and consumption by diversifying her energy partners, Azerbaijan,[11] Bangladesh and Myanmar,[12] and increasing indigenous production.[13] Nevertheless, India confronts a deep energy

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[4] Department of Commerce, *Export Import Data Bank, Country-wise* (Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, New Delhi, 2005).

[5] The trade items include foodstuffs, mineral products, chemicals, hides and skins, precious metals and stones. The share of energy being far less.

[6] "Direction of Trade Statistics," *International Monetary Fund* (Hereafter *IMF*) Year Book, Washington, Yearly Issues. "Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries," *Asian Development Bank*, Yearly Reports. *United Nations* (*UN*), Statistical Yearbook.

[7] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, April 10, 2008, p. 10.

[8] Department of Commerce, Export Import Data Bank, Country-wise, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Government of India: http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecnt.asp (2/7/2009).

[9] Rakesh Raman, "India, Energy and Central Asia," *Daily Excelsior*, February 15, 2007.

[10] Everett Wilson, "Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Pipeline: Centrepiece of Indian Energy Security Efforts," *Asian Affairs* (July 2005) p. 14. Talmiz Ahmad "Geopolitics of Central Asia's Oil and Gas Resources: Implications for India's Energy Security," Paper presented at the International Conference on Central Asia: Introspection at the Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, August 28-31, 2006.

[11] Pratik Pari, "Auctions for Coal-Gas Areas by Year-end," *Mint*, July 16, 2008, p.21. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, *New Vistas for Regional Cooperation in Asian Oil Economy* (New Delhi: Government of India, November 25, 2005) p.94. Talmiz Ahmad, "Geopolitics of Central Asia's Oil and Gas Resources: Implications for India's Energy Security," Paper presented at the International Conference on Central Asia: Introspection at the Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, August 28-31, 2006.

[12] Everett Wilson, "Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Pipeline: Centerpiece of Indian Energy Security Efforts," *Asian Affairs* (July 2005) pp. 13-14.

crisis with periodic power cuts and black outs to the great jeopardy of the masses, entrepreneurs and investors in villages, cities and towns alike. Consequently, she is constrained to bank upon the Persian Gulf states for 70% of her energy imports,[14] and that way, ranks as Asia's third biggest oil consumer.[15] The latest Indo-US, Indo-French, Indo-Kazakh and Indo-Russian nuclear deals, together with India's endeavour to seek a waiver in the 45 nations Energy Suppliers Groups at Vianna (September, 2008) to trade in civil nuclear technology and fuels, should be seen in the backdrop of India's strategy to write off an acute energy crisis. But India is not the sole energy deficient South Asian country. Pakistan and Afghanistan are also beset with an acute energy crisis; hence, recurring power cuts which deter national industrial growth, public inconvenience aside. Pakistan's current energy demand is between 6-7%, more or less the same as that of India. It would still increase in the coming years: her gas deficits from 1.4 billion cubic feet per day in 2015 are expected to increase to 2.7 billion cubic feet per day by 2025, and her current oil requirement is expected to go up from 16 million to 100 million tonnes by 2025.

Besides inflexible borders, the Kashmir conflict forms another principle factor of political uncertainty in South Asia. As argued above, the un-natural division of Kashmir fostered an immense Indo-Pak rivalry in the region. Since both make claims on Kashmir on historical, religious and ideological grounds, they, as such, fought wars in 1965 and 1971, which the latter culminated with the separation of East and West Pakistan, followed by the "Kargil War" between them (May-July, 1999). They also locked horns over the separatist movement of the Kashmiris against India in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan offered logistics to the Kashmiri secessionists which India has been unceasingly contesting in all forums. The issue took a serious turn when the Kashmiris took up arms in the late 1990s against Indian forces. Alarmingly, they found support from the Pakistan-based militant organizations, such as *Laskar-e Taiba* and *Jaish-i Muhmaddi*, said to be splinter groups of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Eventually, therefore, the Kashmiris experienced a wide variety of tribulations over the last two decades: 100,000 lost their lives, thousands were rendered destitute, orphans, homeless, sick and physically handicapped. In view of the allied currents and cross currents, Kashmir has become a flashpoint and a threat to regional peace and security according to Admiral Mike Mullen, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[16] The U.S. Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Philip J. Crowley, also observed the great impact of the Kashmir conflict on South Asian peace and security; hence, he suggested that "…the decades old issue should be resolved between the

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[13] Lately in September, 2008, India's petrochemical giant, *Reliance Industries Ltd.*, mined huge dumps of oil and gas from the Krishna-Godavari basin in the Bay of Bengal, which is estimated to account for India's 40% energy requirement in the coming years: Pratik Pari, "Auctions for Coal-Gas Areas by Year-end," *Mint*, July 16, 2008, p.21.

[14] Ashok K.Behuria, Politics of Pipeline," *Asian Affairs* (July 2005) p. 12.

[15] She imports 95 million tonnes of oil in a total consumption of 129.3 million tonnes during 2004-05 and 75 million cubic metres of gas in the daily consumption of 100-150 million cubic metres during the same period: Ashok K.Behuria, "Politics of Pipeline," *Asian Affairs* (July 2005) p. 13. "Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Project and its Impact," Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran, *Iran- India: A Shared Vision towards Progress* (New Delhi, 2008) p. 20.

[16] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, December 10, 2009, p.1.

two South Asian neighbours with active participation of the Kashmiri people," and without this "there is no peace possible in the region."[17]

Remedies

Therefore, the trajectory of developments suggests that India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir are closely interwoven in a network relationship, which has to be based on peace-keeping their own security, keeping in mind their shared past and mutual economic interests. However, it entails that all contending players keep their options open for dialogue based on a zero-sum principle. By doing so, they would develop confidence to resolve border disputes, which, in turn, would culminate in geographical reunification and restoration of trans-Kashmir ancient trade routes, the offshoots of the "Grand Silk Route" connecting China and Rome across the Middle East, South and Central Asia. One major route crisscrossing Kashmir across the Karakoram in the east connected India with Central Asia (modern Kyrgyzstan) through Srinagar and Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir (India) and the Chinese part of Central Asia called the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Republic. The second route passed through Srinagar and Bandipora in Jammu and Kashmir (India) and reached Gilgit in AJK (Pakistan), where it took three different directions, one again crossed the Karakoram, then moved up towards Xinjiang in the east, another route traversed the Pamirs in the north, entered Murghab and reached modern Tajikistan (Gilgit Route: Map 1), and yet another route crossed over

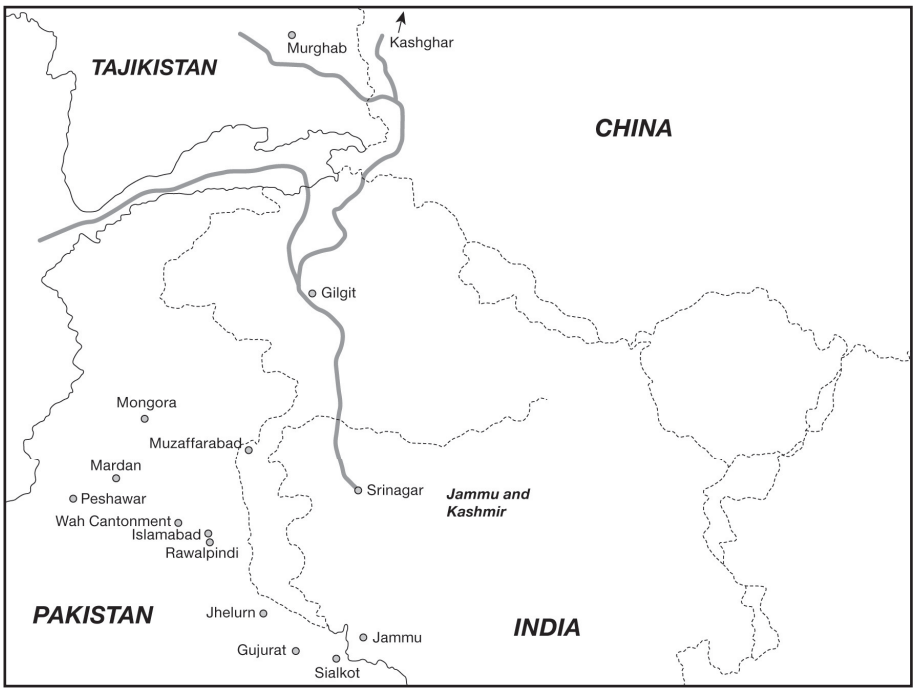

Fig.1 Gilgit Route: Map 1

[17] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, December 12, 2009, p.1.

Fig.2 Wakhan Route : Map 2

the Pamirs to enter Wakhan Corridor in the northwest and terminates in Afghanistan-controlled Badakhshan. On reaching there, it split into two sub-routes, one down west towards Kabul, and another southwest towards the modern Central Asian states of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and Iran along the Afghan cross border-points at Kunduz, Termiz, Mazar-i Sharif, Jalalabad, Sheberghan and Meshad respectively (Wakhan Route: Map 2). The fourth principal route originating from Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir (India), traversed Muzaffarabad and Rawalpindi in AJK (Pakistan), moved ahead towards Peshawar or Gandhara (Pakistan), crossed over the Hindukush and Khyber Mountains, reached Kabul in Afghanistan, and then moved to the Central Asian states and Iran along the aforementioned Afghan cross border-points. (Srinagar-Muzaffarabad or Gandhara Route: Map 3). All these routes were interconnected within the same geographical space by several other micro outlets including Kargil-Iskardoo, Poonch-Rawalakot, etc. To reiterate, these transmission channels were very useful in promoting inter-faith and intercultural dialogue, providing employment to millions of people, and facilitating the sharing of knowledge, expertise and ideas among different social groups.

However, their revival is conditioned by the friendly ties between India, Pakistan and Afghanistan with extraneous support from regional and global powers. They requiring reshaping their policies lest the "vested interests" exploit their unfriendly ties. Hillary Clinton, the U.S. Secretary of State, rightly urged upon India and Pakistan to amicably resolve long-pending issues including Kashmir as the security of both countries is "threatened by extremism and terrorism."[18] Without their

[18] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, December 16, 2009, p.1.

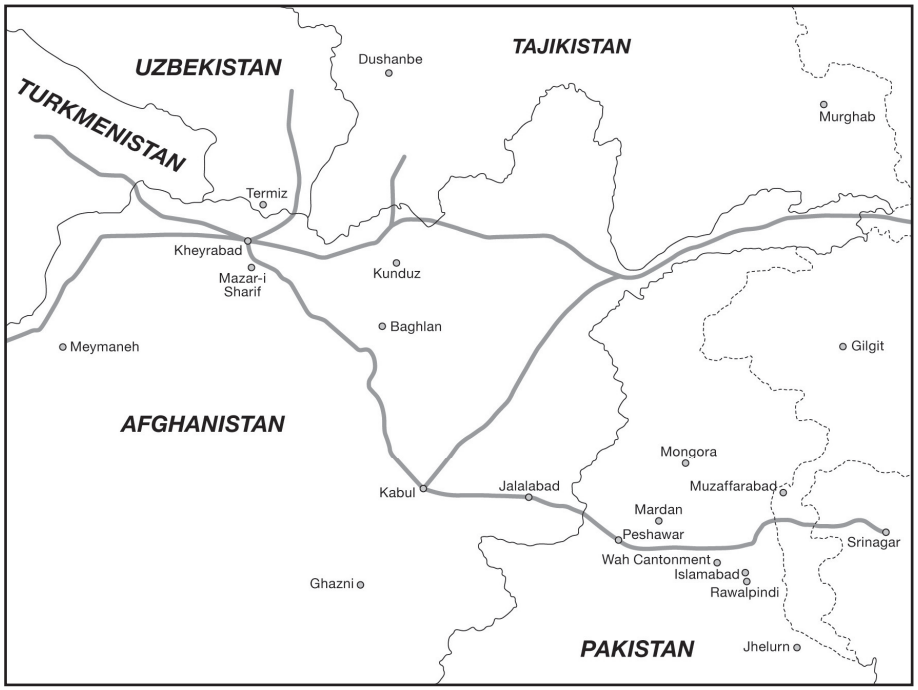

Fig.3 Srinagar-Muzaffarabad or Gandhara Route: Map 3

friendship, it is hard to defeat the Taliban who are dominant in one-third of Afghanistan's thirty-four provinces, "where the insurgency has grown more violent, more pervasive and more sophisticated," said Admiral Mullen in Kabul, Afghanistan on December 15, 2009.[19] But this is possible through what Johan Galtung describes as the "peaceful methodology" of "generational sustainability."[20] It demands the parties in conflict to grapple with the real issues and recognize mutual constraints and compulsions within peaceful constructs.[21] According to Harold Saunders, such a "dialogue methodology" or "composite or sustained dialogue" warrants the contending parties to engage in dialogue, identify problems under dispute, appreciate mutual constraints and limitations, hash out a joint course of action for conflict resolution, and transform otherwise unfriendly relations into optimism.[22]

Such a methodology was successfully tried by India and Pakistan with the reopening of two traditional routes, Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot, on October 21, 2008: matured political leadership in the two countries, growing external pressure, common security threats, and the

[19] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, December 16, 2009, p.11.

[20] *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (California: Thousand Oaks, 1996).

[21] Sanjiv Khagram, Willian Clark and Dana Firas Raad, "From the Environment and Human Security to Sustainable Security and Development," *Journal of Human Development* 4:2 (July 2003) p. 296.

[22] Harold Saunders and James Voorhees, "New Approaches from a Rich Tradition," *Dialogue Sustained: The Multilevel Peace Process and the Dartmouth Conference* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press and Charles Kettering Foundation, 2002) pp.311-12.

unflinching endeavours of diplomats, officials, cultural elite, media groups and social activists for "a peace process" and "a sustained dialogue."[23] However, the sustained pressure of the Kashmiris for the same cannot be underestimated. Though their June agitation in 2008[24] was a reaction to the economic blockade caused by the Jammuites (people of the other division of the Jammu and Kashmir state) to the in-coming supplies from the Indian Punjab through the Banihal road, yet it was the reiteration of their cherished demand for restoring traditional borders towards the northwest. More than half a million Kashmiris took out processions on August 11, 2008, to force their passage through the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Route in Jammu and Kashmir symbolically to explore markets for their agricultural, horticultural, floricultural and craft products in the non-Indian markets in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. All these factors contributed to the reopening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot ancient roads for restricted permit-based truck trade as the "roads do not carry enough traffic," usually essential for regular traffic and trade. The complacency of the given confidence building measure (CBM) was such that both countries readily agreed sharing the list of nuclear installations, exchanging specific information and conducting joint investigations on terrorist incidents.

Unluckily, the Mumbai terrorist attack on November 26, 2008, further stalled the dialogue process. The spillover of the heightened tension virtually brought the two countries to the brink of war, but was averted, where after Pakistani Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Quershi, argued: "We want to…resume dialogue with India because we feel that if we want regional peace, then normal friendly relations between Pakistan and India will play a significant role."[25] The frequent meetings of the foreign secretaries of the two countries at Trieste, Italy (June, 2008), Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (July 13-14)[26] and elsewhere, are indicative of hope amid despair and disappointment. No doubt again, their bilateral relations are going through rough weathers notwithstanding U.S. motivation. But given the growing security threats from non-state forces in the South Asian region, both countries have no option but to resume dialogue for a resolution of all disputes for regional peace and development. The reopening of trans-Kashmir traditional routes, being one option, would go a long way in transforming their otherwise unpleasant relations into optimism. As argued above, both countries have done substantial work prior to the Mumbai attack, which led to the reopening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot for limited trade and movement, which luckily remain

[23] Manjriki Sewak, *Multi-Track Diplomacy between India and Pakistan: A Conceptual framework for Sustainable Security* (New Delhi, 2005) pp. 57-74.

[24] The blockade and the consequential march to Muzaffarabad should be seen in the backdrop of a dispute on the act of the Jammu and Kashmir to transfer 800 acres of forest land in Kashmir to the Hindu Shrine Board. It registered a sharp reaction from Kashmiri Muslims. Under public pressure, the state revoked the transfer order which instantly created a strong reaction among the Hindus in Jammu, another division of Jammu and Kashmir State. The Jammuites launched a strong agitation against it. For the first time in more than 50 years, the Jammuites and the Kashmiris locked horns with each other and took an open stand about Kashmir's accession with India, one for and another against it. For details see the English daily *Greater Kashmir***,** Srinagar, from June -August, 2008.

[25] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, January 8, 2009.

[26] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, June 28, 2009.

functional despite mistrust of the two countries of each other. As a matter of fact, both countries should anticipate more militant attacks in future. But that should not change the course of heading towards peace talks and mutual dialogue leading, *inter alia*, to reviving all traditional trade routes across Kashmir at large.

Overall Benefits

This would include the revival of the Gilgit and Wakhan routes for the mutual benefits of parties otherwise at variance. In fact, such an initiative would reunite the three unfriendly neighbours to counter burgeoning terrorism, marginalize tension, ensure regional and economic integration, console "restive" groups and facilitate their merger with the progressive and peaceful world communities. In addition, it would, re-engage the countries of "Asian Civilization" into a single historic-cultural whole as was felt necessary by Indian Minister of External Affairs, Natwar Singh, in the Astana Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2005. General benefits apart, the proposed initiative would proride benefits to India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. Indo-Central Asian trade level would swell manifold from the estimated 100 million U.S. dollars in 2000-01 and 230 million U.S. dollars in 2005 with Kazakhstan contributing more than 50%.[27] Indo-Pak bilateral trade volume[28] estimated at 2.23307 billion U.S. dollars in 2007-08, would also enhance especially when their cross-border trade in smuggled goods, worth 10 billion U.S. dollars,[29] is formalized. Accordingly, the structure of Indian exports in sugar, dyes, plastic and petroleum products, machinery, tyres, chemicals, tea, cotton etc., and Pakistan's exports in edible oils, spices, dry fruits, nuts, cotton, yarn and fabrics, organic chemicals and pulses, normally targeted at 11 billion U.S. dollars,[30] would correspondingly widen,[31] of course in India's favour:[32] While Indian exports would be 9.2 billion U.S. dollars, that of Pakistan would be 2.2 billion U.S. dollars.[33] Understandably, Pakistan may avoid negotiating such a deal that would be in India's favour. But for globalization and its core objective to obliterate economic disparity between the developed and developing countries,[34] Pakistan shall have to subscribe to becoming a regular Indian trade partner in

[27] Department of Commerce, Export Import Data Bank, Country-wise, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Government of India: http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecnt.asp (2/7/2009).
[28] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, April 10, 2008, p. 10.
[29] Arjimand Husain Talib, "Re-thinking Line of Control Trade," *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, September 14, 2008, p.9.
[30] Department of Commerce, Export Import Data Bank, Country-wise, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Government of India: http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecnt (2/7/2009).
[31] Tajamul Hussain, "Of Self Sufficiency and Cross Border Trade," *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, September 20, 2008, p.7.
[32] Department of Commerce, Export Import Data Bank, Country-wise, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Government of India: http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecnt (2/7/2009).
[33] *Op. cit*., Hussain, as per note 31, p.7.
[34] Jeremy Breacher and Tim Costello (eds.), *Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction from the Bottom Up* (South End Press, 1994) pp. 1-9.

the regional trade structure. She is reported to have since permitted the passage of Afghan goods to India under the terms of the Afghan Transit Trade (ATT). In fact, both Pakistan and Afghanistan would be the beneficiary of the proposed initiative of reopening of the trans-Kashmir trade links along the Gilgit, Wakhan and other geographic zones. They would earn regular transit fee, with which to re-energise their fragile economies.

The restitution of traditional routes would be a sustainable "economic package" to the 6-7 million Kashmiris, and would generate an annual income of 40 U.S. million dollars, enhance their per-capita income to $745 in the next ten years and increase the GDP of the State of Jammu and Kashmir by 9.5%, and, above all, diversify her trade and transportation corridors towards the northwest: her exports in fruits, carpets, rugs, chain stitch, wall hangings, shawls, embroidery, silk and silken cloths, shawls, spices, flowers, saffron, Kashmiri cuisine (*wazwaan*), timber, furniture, aromatic and fruit bearing plants, would easily reach out to non-Indian markets in South and Central Asia. It would simultaneously open new markets, where they can import daily consumer goods, as and when, their original Delhi-bound Banihal road supply is threatened by man-made or God-made forces. To be precise, the sole Banihal road link has been, many a times, if not always, the source of insurmountable inconvenience due to oft-recurring land-slides and blockades following rainfall and snowfall especially during the winter. These are again complicated by ethno-regional and ethno-ideological differences. While the people of the Kashmir division in Jammu and Kashmir, mostly Muslims, agitate for separation from India, the people of the Jammu division in Jammu and Kashmir, largely Hindus, hold otherwise: they feel contented with India. More crucial is that Kashmir is a highly seismic zone, and is vulnerable to high intensity earthquakes, which inevitably mandate a number of outlets for disaster management and human security. A research study carried out at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington D.C., rightly recommended the reopening of five cross-LoC points, the resumption of riverine transportation along the Jehlum River and the construction of railways between Sialkote and Jammu, and Rawalpindi, Muzaffarabd, Abbotabad, Uri and Srinagar for effective disaster management and the promotion of people-to-people contacts.[35] One may recall that these routes were optimized for relief during a massive earthquake in the area in 2005. Thus multiple access points across Jammu and Kashmir (India) and AJK (Pakistan) would be in conjunction with the proposed initiative of reopening all trans-Kashmir ancient roads for free trade and human mobility.

Besides general trade, the reopening would facilitate energy importation from Central Asia to energy-deficient India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Two major trans-Afghanistan and trans-Pakistan gas pipeline projects, Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) [36] and Iran-Pakistan-India

[35] Arjimand Hussain Talib, "Making LoC Trade Possible," English Daily, *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, September 21, 2008, p. 7.

[36] Afghanistan is preferred for her strategic location and economic reasons: she is the "closest, shortest and cheapest route to the sea and…fairly conducive for carrying an energy pipeline to Asian markets.": Taimur Rehman: "The Great Game for Central Asian Oil," April 5, 2003: http://www.chowk.com. It would pipe around 20 billion cubic metres of gas, over 1,400-1,700 kilometres, from the Daulatabad gas fields in Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India via Herat-Kandhar-Quetta-Multan: Everett Wilson, "Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-

(IPI) [37] estimated at 2.8-3.5 billion U.S. dollars[38] and 7 billion U.S. dollars respectively, have no doubt been cleared by the World Bank and the Iranian government to cater to the swelling Asian energy demand. Importantly, the TAPI is supported by the U.S. under its oil diplomacy programme in Eurasia [39] for it would skirt rival Russian and Iranian energy transportation channels, generate jobs, marginalize U.S. dependence on the Gulf[40] and earn Afghanistan transit rentals, with which to compensate her annual expenditure of more than 300 million U.S. dollars on development works in Afghanistan. Contrarily, however, Russia and Iran strive to downplay the U.S. energy diplomacy in their own way. Despite diametrically opposite U.S.-Russia-Iran energy proposed projects, the TAPI and IPI, on maturity, would solidify intra-regional cooperation, reconnect South and Central Asian countries and strengthen their weak economies. On their account, Pakistan would annually earn a royalty of 200 million U.S. dollars and 500 million U.S. dollars respectively.[41] Afghanistan too would benefit by transit rentals proportionate to her given passage to the pipeline structure of TAPI on her soil. More so, the two projects would mitigate the deep energy crisis of the South Asian population, to which India alone contributes more than 72%. However, India's option would be IPI because Iran finances 60% of its costs and supplies, which is not only 20% cheaper than TAPI, saving India around 2 billion U.S. dollars but also more dependable as Iran has a proven 17% gas reserves in the world. Compared to Iran, the Turkmen supply through TAPI would not be that dependable since Turkmenistan has already too many long standing buyers[42] for its gas produce.[43] Lately, China also joined a energy partnership with Turkmenistan.[44] Further, TAPI would take some more time to complete, whereas IPI has since been cleared for execution by Iranian and Pakistani governments. India would join it, sooner or later, while keeping her political differences with Pakistan at bay.

Pakistan Pipeline: Centerpiece of Indian Energy Security Efforts," *Asian Affairs* (July 2005) pp.12-14. Gregory Gleason, "The Idea of Greater Central Asia," *Journal of Central Asian Studies* 17:1 (2009), p.5.

[37] The IPI is proposed from Iranian Salute ports in the Persian Gulf to the Gwadar port in Karachi in Southeastern Pakistan and onwards to Indian borders over 2,775 km, to which Pakistan alone contributes 750 km "Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Project and its Impact," *Iran-India: A Shared Vision towards Progress*, p. 20.

[38] Working Paper, "Bringing the Region Closer Together Through Transport Connections," *Economic Cooperation in the Wider Central Asia Region* (Washington: The World Bank, 2006) pp. 51-66.

[39] Martha Brill Olcott, "US Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)," Testimony prepared for the Committee on International Relations, Hearing on the Middle East and Central Asia, April 26, 2006. http://www.ceip.org

[40] *Energy Information Agency* (EIA) (Washington: Department of Energy, 2003). Naji Abi-Aad, "Will Central Asia Be An Alternative To The Gulf," *MEES* 45:18 (May 6, 2002). http://www.mees.com/archives

[41] "Politics of Pipeline," *Asian Affairs* (July 2005) pp. 12-13. "Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Project and its Impact," *Iran-India: A Shared Vision towards Progress*, pp. 20-21.

[42] Fouskas K. Vassilis, *Zones of Conflict: US Foreign Policy in Central Asia: Structural Reform and Political Change* (London, 2003) p. 22. Bruno Coppieters, "Central Asia Region in a New International Environment," *NATO Review* 44:5 (September 1996) pp. 26-31. Abraham S. Backer, "Russia and Caspian Oil: Moscow Loses Controls," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 16:2 (April-June 2000) pp. 91-92.

[43] "Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Pipeline: Centerpiece of Indian Energy Security Efforts," *Asian Affairs* (July, 2005) p. 14.

[44] Alexander Jackson, *Caucasus Update* 58, Caucasian Review of International Affairs (CRIA), December 21, 2009. http://www.cria-online.org

However, Asia's energy demand is so large that TAPI and IPI cannot alone meet it. Many more projects are necessitated for the transportation of energy from Central Asia to South Asia. These can include few pipeline projects along the above argued Gilgit, Wakhan and Srinagar-Muzaffarabad traditional routes; hence, be a part of few ambitious transportation projects conceived by some regional powers to construct new[45] and reconnect old "Silk Roads" through highly standardized highways, railways, bridges, and telecommunication systems[46]with support from different funding agencies.[47] At no point, would they intercept the above discussed trans-Afghan and trans-Pak TAPI and IPI energy pipeline projects. It is a fact that the proposed trans-Gilgit, trans-Wakhan and trans-Srinagar-Muzaffarabad energy supplies would be no substitute to the Gulf supplies. But these would indisputably diminish India's continued dependence on the Gulf. More so, they would facilitate importation of much-needed uranium supplies from Russia and Kazakhstan to India. On the eve of President Nursultan Nazarbaeve's visit to India on January 23-24, 2009, the Indian and Kazakhstan governments cleared the trilateral agreements between Nuclear Power Cooperation of National Atomic Company Kazatomprom, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Mittal Energy Ltd. and National Company KazMunaiGaz JSC, for nuclear civil energy cooperation and mining and shifting of uranium from Kazakhstan to India.[48] The trans-LoC or trans-Kashmir corridors offer a natural corridor for uranium transportation from Kazakhstan, Russia and other Eurasian Uranium-rich countries to India.[49] Concurrently, India would become a great partner to the South and Central Asian "Energy Production Consumption Trade Structure," and so would Pakistan and Afghanistan on the en-route. Besides the three Asian counterparts, Central Asian states would explore quite virgin corridors for oil, gas, electricity and uranium transportation to South Asia. They would be sensitized to the sale of their hydrocarbons and hydropower at better terms than offered to them by the Russian, Iranian and, of late, European oil and gas companies. It is indeed this feasibility that impressed a retired Indian army officer to propose hydropower imports from Tajikistan and Kygyzstan and oil and gas from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan into India across the Wakhan Corridor,[50] notwithstanding its complex geo-physical frame. Pakistan is reported to have since negotiated a deal to import hydropower from Tajikistan through the Gilgit route within the proposed region-wide electric grid linking Russian and Kazakhstan coal-fired electric and Tajik and Kyrgyz hydropower grids with energy-starved Afghanistan, India, China, Kashmir and Pakistan. To this effect, an electric energy distribution centre, the Energy, was jointly established at Tashkent in 2007 by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to coordinate the production and sale of energy resources

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[45] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, November 5, 2007.

[46] Paul Wolf, "Shanghai Cooperation Organisation," June 14, 2003.
http://www.radical.org/ratville/CAH/ShanghaiCo.html#pl

[47] *Economic Cooperation in the Wider Central Asia Region* (Washington: World Bank, 2006) pp. 51-66.

[48] Joint Declaration Between India and Kazakhstan:
http://flmail.rediff.com/bn/folder.cgi?formname=read_msg&folder=Inbox&file_name=12...1/27/2009

[49] Department of Commerce, Export Import Data Bank, Country-wise, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Government of India: http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecnt.asp (2/7/2009).

[50] Suryakant Nijanand Bal, *Central Asia: A Strategy for India's Look-North Policy* (New Delhi, 2004) p. 361.

among the Eurasian and the Middle East countries. On April 13, 2008, the presidents of Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, resolved at Bucharest to upgrade their cooperation for power and energy transportation over South Asia.[51] Even the SCO Business Council meeting in Siberia on September 11, 2008, resolved to set up an SCO Energy Club for equitable energy sharing between the producers and consumers. The less vulnerable trans-Kashmir corridors would be better than those conceived under the long-distanced TAPI and IPI gas pipeline projects across the most sensitive terrain of Herat, Qandhar, Quetta, Multan and Baluchistan.

The proposed initiative of "border reopening" would inspire all three South Asian powers toward security cooperation. Instead of a coordinated strategy, each country pursues its individual agenda to fight back the *Taliban* and its offsprings. Consequently, the radical forces have become more vibrant than before in the entire belt of Afghanistan and Pakistan with immense human losses and damage to the state systems and structures. Perhaps anticipating their intentions, former President Pervez Musharaf of Pakistan had launched an offensive to eliminate them and their tribal supporters[52] in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), [53] and dissuade youths from joining them in Waziristan.[54] The level of complacency was such that U.S. political analysts like Arthur Hermann in the *Wall Street Journal,* [55] Chief of the American Central Command, Admiral William Fallon, Afghan Defence Minister, Mullah Ab. Rahim, in a press conference at Brussels in June, 2007 and Srinivas Kumar Sinha, the ex- governor of Jammu and Kashmir, during a meeting with the Russian Ambassador in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir (India), candidly acknowledged President Musharaf's post-9/11 serious efforts against non-state forces,[56] *albeit* it cost heavily to Pakistan especially after the "Lal Masjid Episode" in 2007.[57] Violence became rampant on the one hand [58] and public pressure mounted immensely on the other, which together paved the way for the downfall of President Musharaf's military regime by Pakistan Peoples Party headed by Prime Minister Yusuf Ali Geelani and President Asif Ali Zardari. However, the new government carried forward Musharaf's counter-militancy agenda with proactive U.S. support especially under President Barack Obama's new Afghan policy with deployment of additional forces. For the first time, Pakistan's regular army is fighting the militants deep into Waziristan, Baluchistan and NWFP, and taking control of their strongholds.

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[51] *The China and Eurasia Forum: Biweekly Newsletter*, March 17-April 14 (Central Asia–Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Programme, Sweden, 2008).

[52] Ismail Khan, "The Game is Up for Uzbeks," *Dawn* (April 16, 2007). Bahukatumbi Raman, "Anti-Uzbek Anger in South Waziristan," *International Terrorism Monitor-South Asia Analysis Group* Paper No. 215, April 8, 2007 : http//www.saag.org/percentsCpapers22 percent5Cpaper2200.html

[53] *Kashmir Uzma*, Urdu, Srinagar, June 17, 2007.

[54] The SENSIL Council representing the British Development think tank, *Afghanistan Five Years Later: The Return of the Taliban*, Spring/Summer 2006.
http//wwwsenliscouncil.net/modules/publications/014_publication/documents/5y_chapter_01 (May 21 2006).

[55] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, June 16, 2007.

[56] *Kashmir Uzma*, Urdu, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, June 17, 2007.

[57] "Pakistan: Time to Cut a Deal," *The Economist* 383:8529 (2007) p. 14.

[58] "Briefing Pakistan: A General State of Disarray," *The Economist* 383:8529 (2007) pp. 28-30.

Despite successes against the militants, the situation is protean in the region. The militants strike back heavily on Pakistan and NATO forces for they possess a robust network around the region, which is reinforced by their sophisticated weaponry and appeal for *jihad* among those tribal communities, who are largely illiterate, backward and innocent, and who have been always reactive to the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan.[59] Such people are infatuated with the *jihadi* zeal, and can undergo any challenge for its pursuit. They can find a space in Kashmir for being a conflict zone, largely inhabited by the Muslim fraternity. To avoid such a situation in the foreseeable future, it is desirable for India and Pakistan to settle the long-pending Kashmir issue through peaceful methodology.[60] In the past, there have been some efforts to this effect. However, these being half-hearted, require to be solidified by developing mutual trust and staying as good friends lest Kashmir becomes food for the Taliban and Al Qaeda while keeping the aspiration of the restive peoples in mind. To quote Admiral Mullen: "…de-tensioning Indo-Pak border [in Kashmir] is absolutely critical to the long-term stability of the region [South Asia]."[61] On the eve of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Kashmir visit to inaugurate Srinagar-Jammu Railway Line, Umar Abdullah, the chief minister of the Jammu and Kashmir, supported the idea of the solution of Kashmir conflict by arguing that, "We are in favour of Indo-Pak composite dialogue and want the internal situation in Pakistan to settle for the resumption of peace process. We also want the relations between the two neighbours to improve, peaceful borders and movement of people and goods across the LoC to expand further."[62] The statement is significant for it establishes a close relationship between Kashmir, militancy, borders and regional stability. Given this, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan should prefer mutual understanding to internal feuds lest it should embolden the non-state forces to focus their activities in Kashmir, Xinjiang and the areas prone to ethno-national, ethno-geographic and ethno-economic disputes. This is probably the only viable alternative to ensure peace and stability in South Asia for generational sustainability. This would automatically lay grounds for the restoration of traditional transportation corridors across Jammu and Kashmir, AJK and Afghanistan and onwards to Central Asia.

Conclusion

Border politics in South Asia owes its origin to the "Partition" of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, the formation of India and Pakistan on its debris and the sequential division of "Greater Kashmir" into Jammu and Kashmir (India) and AJK (Pakistan). It was supplemented by the lack of a centralized power structure in Afghanistan, which eventually led to its occupation by the Soviets, the emergence of the Taliban, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, unfriendly Indo-Pak ties and a separatist militant movement in Kashmir. The use of force having failed to account for these complex conflicts,

[59] For details see, "Afghanistan through Pages of History," *Journal of Central Asian Studies* 16:1 (August 2006) pp. 95-107.
[60] Manjriki Sewak, *Multi-Track Diplomacy between India and Pakistan: A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Security* (New Delhi, 2005) pp. 57-74.
[61] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, December 10, 2009, p.1.
[62] *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir,December 11, 2009, pp.1 and 10.

peaceful methodology aiming at streamlining border politics, addressing long-pending disputes, identifying a joint mechanism to fight back non-state disruptive forces and intercepting their incursions in Kashmir and elsewhere, is a must for stability in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan in particular and South Asia and the world at large. The contending parties should anticipate many more militant attacks in their respective domains. But it should not derail them from the peace process and composite dialogue. Doing so would open vistas for the reopening of the otherwise sealed India-Pakistan-Afghanistan traditional borders leading to a multitude of benefits for the respective governments and their peoples. Let these routes become “dialogue routes” and a source of defeat to what is threatening the existence of the whole of South Asia. However powerful a country may be, it cannot alone eliminate deeply-entrenched “extremism” and “terrorism” in the region. It is necessary to coordinate with all the regional, sub-regional and global powers for this purpose. Only then the wrongs of the past can be rectified for posterity.