

The Impact of Regional and Global Dynamics on Pakistan-Iran Relations

Abstract: The research explores the geopolitical significance of the "Goldsmith Line," a border between Iran and Pakistan. Serving as a strategic link between the Middle East and South Asia, the Goldsmith Line connects the Balochistan provinces on both sides, inhabited by the Baloch people. The study delves into historical shifts in Iran-Pakistan relations, highlighting the impact of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the potential for enhanced collaboration. Challenges, including security tensions, sectarian elements, and regional dynamics, are discussed. Furthermore, it emphasizes the shared cultural, ethnic, and economic ties between Baloch people on both sides, proposing measures for economic development and border security improvement. It also explores the evolving dynamics of Russia-Pakistan relations, addressing historical contexts and recent developments. The research concludes by examining obstacles and opportunities in current Iran-Pakistan ties, emphasizing the need for cautious navigation amid geopolitical complexities.

Key Words: Balochistan, JCPOA, Goldsmith Line, Geopolitical Complexities

Introduction

Pakistan and Iran are situated in adjacent but distinct geographical regions, specifically South Asia and the Middle East. Hence, the two states are not part of a regional security complex (Buzan & Weaver, 2003). Therefore, these states have little incentive or obligation to engage in competition in the security industry due to their proximity. In contrast to this, the India-Pakistan ties plainly exhibit a security complex. The importance of the bilateral relationship between Iran and Pakistan extends beyond simple acts of neighbourly goodwill. Alam (2004) states that these relationships are determined by geopolitical reasoning to safeguard national security. Iran has consistently promised to provide assistance in the past when Pakistan's relations deteriorated with its main adversary, India. Pakistan did not align with attempts to oppose Iranian interests, even at the height of the Iran-Iraq War, despite the sway of Saudi Arabia and the U.S. (Jan 1993). Mazari (2000) explains that the reason is straightforward and is backed by the logic of survival. Iran did not want the loss of the Pakistani buffer as it would place them in direct competition with India, the dominant regional force in South Asia. Pakistan views the area beyond its western borders, encompassing Afghanistan and Iran, as strategically important in relation to India (Tehsin M, 2017).

In the 1970s, Pakistan embraced a foreign policy stance of bilateralism. This was intended to maintain equilibrium in its relationships with both the Eastern and Western factions during the Cold War era (Burke & Ziring, 1990). Pakistan's established policy of bilateralism serves as the current framework for enhancing relations with Iran, regardless of its relationships with other nations. Even states with amicable relations acknowledge that competition is inherent in the international system. The realism principle advocates for self-interest. Any state's security strategy focuses on identifying and addressing potential threats to its territorial integrity, people, and government, which are essential components of a nation-state. Realism favours a security-centric perspective that emphasizes the state's central role in global affairs.

This study acknowledges the security issue as a factor influencing state conduct from the realist perspective. Border management is proposed as a viable method for addressing ongoing security challenges. A state's security is always changing.

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State security comprises numerous components. Border security is a crucial aspect of a state's security concerns. It pertains to the enduring territorial presence of a state, a fundamental aspect of sovereignty. For a state to have secure geographical limits, its physical frontiers must be safe (Andreas, 2003).

Globalization has led to current international tendencies that have heightened state insecurity over borders. The world is commonly perceived internationally as a global village. Efforts are expanding towards economic and cultural globalization, as well as the information revolution. Under these circumstances, the state is both moving towards and distancing itself from other states. As the conceptual boundaries with other nations diminish, states are focusing more on strengthening their physical borders to enhance their stability and sovereignty. Iran and Pakistan are facing issues such as illicit travel, smuggling, and trafficking of drugs and weaponry due to the rise in cross-border migration. Moreover, this issue is heightened in an area that faces the risk of extremism and terrorism. Lastly, weak states face a significant challenge with border security (Adamson, 2006). Their fragile governmental systems frequently face internal divisions and external attempts at dominance. The presence of porous borders, such as those between Iran and Pakistan, is a direct result of these circumstances. This study combines two distinct yet interconnected topics: Iran's nuclear agreement and its effects on nonproliferation and regional security in the Middle East and Iran's interactions with Pakistan, which extends the study's focus to the South Asian region. The primary factor uniting the regions of South Asia and the Middle East is violent extremism. Enhancing border management could lead to improved regional security by addressing violent extremism. The Iranian nuclear agreement's success could help in collaborative regional efforts to prevent violent extremism.

Hypothesis

The research hypothesizes that the Goldsmith Line, serving as a soft border between Iran and Pakistan, holds strategic importance in connecting the Middle East and South Asia. The hypothesis suggests that despite historical geopolitical shifts and intermittent tensions, the Goldsmith Line has the potential to be a catalyst for improved Iran-Pakistan relations. The research postulates that economic integration and joint border management measures could address long-standing security concerns and foster collaboration between the two nations.

Additionally, the hypothesis explores the evolving dynamics of Russia-Pakistan relations and their impact on the broader geopolitical landscape in the region. The study anticipates that, despite challenges such as security issues, sectarian elements, and historical tensions, there exists an opportunity for enhanced cooperation, especially in the context of shared cultural ties and economic interests, as well as the potential for collaboration in addressing regional challenges.

Methodology

Both primary and secondary sources have been used in order to accomplish the goals that have been set for this research. The primary aim of this study is to investigate the influence that regional and global dynamics have on the relationship between Pakistan and Iran. Throughout the course of the research, this relationship is investigated in great detail.

In order to get a better understanding of the data that was gathered, the technique includes both descriptive and analytical analysis. In addition, comparison procedures and methodologies are utilized in order to further enhance the depth of the findings obtained from the research findings.

Goldsmith Line: A Soft Border

The boundary between the two states is known as the "Goldsmith Line," and it stretches for 564 kilometres between them. Beginning with the trijunction of the Koh-i-Malik Siah River in Iran and running up to the seashore of Gawadar in Afghanistan, this route connects the three countries. The Goldsmith Line serves as a connecting point between two strategically vital Asian areas. It serves as a connection between the Middle East and South Asia. In terms of demographic makeup, the Iran- Pakistan

border area is based on the fact that it is a part of the Balochistan province on the Pakistani side and the Sistan-Balochistan province on the Iranian side (Imtiaz, 2019). The Baloch people live on both sides of the border. It is at the intersection of the security and economic realms that border management is practised. As a source of connection and economic integration, the border also has the potential to serve as a forum for security competition. Both Iran and Pakistan have previously been implicated in intermittent security tensions that have had a negative impact on regional and border security. The causes of this engagement have been identified as follows:

- a. regional collaborations,
- b. Relations with the United States, as well as
- c. The presence of a sectarian element

Iran and Pakistan should exercise caution when it comes to border security in the future. Because the border is where inter-state war and peace games are played, measures aimed at improving border management might help resolve long-standing security issues. Both nations should be cautious when it comes to border security.

Iran and Pakistan's bilateral relations have shifted dramatically over the years, from strategic cooperation in the 1970s to difficulties over divergences between their international partners in the 1980s and 1990s and everything in between. In the context of a momentous milestone for Iran, namely the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the national interests of Iran and Pakistan are presently intersecting in the security of their common border and the pursuit of shared economic prosperity. Prior to the signing of the Iranian nuclear accord, Iran and Pakistan had disagreements on a number of topics, including border security, energy cooperation, and strategic connections. The JCPOA would have an influence on these concerns, and as a result, the future trajectory of bilateral relations would be determined by the agreement. Both countries should recognize that their bilateral ties should be guided by geopolitical imperatives of strategic collaboration rather than the illogic of sectarianism, rather than the other way around. An essential CBM in this context would be to jointly protect the shared border regions, which would be a major accomplishment.

Prospects of Pak-Iran Ties

In our discussion, we learned that Iran and Pakistan have substantial differences; nevertheless, the two countries also have areas of agreement, which allows the two countries to collaborate efficiently. This section is concerned with the future of Iran-Pakistan relations. While differences exist between the two nations, there are certain areas of convergence that might lead to future trajectories that are detailed in the following:

Baloch people live on both sides of the border, where they share cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and even familial links. Baloch ethnic groups can be found on both sides of the border between Balochistan and Sistan-Baluchistan. First and foremost, the fact that the two countries are neighbours makes this area the most important component of their convergence.

The Goldsmith Line, which separates the two countries, is 590 miles long (909 kilometres). The tribes who live on each side of this divide have a lengthy history of social and racial affinity that dates back thousands of years. Taking advantage of this chance might be beneficial to the ties between Iran and Pakistan. This is the least turbulent of all the shared borders that Iran and Pakistan share with other countries. In spite of this, there are a number of significant security and economic challenges that might jeopardize the relationship between the United States and Mexico. The important thing to remember is that both sides must consider how to make the most of this point of convergence to their mutual advantage.

The Baloch people have a range of grievances against the administrations on both sides of the border. Some concerns with socioeconomic development, on the other hand, are expected to impact both Iran and Pakistan in the near future.

Although both provinces are strategically important to their respective countries and have a plethora of natural resources, they remain undeveloped.

Minorities in Iran and Pakistan, especially in the Balochistan area, must be incorporated into the economy and given more opportunities for engagement in politics in both countries. It is necessary to address the issue of border markets in order for people on both sides of the border in the Balochistan provinces to be able to participate in their local economic growth. Border crossings that are illegal, as well as the facilitation of authorized border crossings, must be maintained under strict supervision by immigration officials. Pilgrims from Pakistan would also benefit from this since it would enable them to go securely to Iran's holy places without fear of being attacked. Iranian and Pakistani police working together to build a unified anti-narcotics squad may put an end to drug smuggling. Iran-Pakistan Relations: Improving Russian-Pakistani Relations Is Their Hope for Improvement? (Waeber, 2003).

However harsh and unpredictable relations between Russia and Pakistan have historically been, relations- between the two countries have lately improved and blossomed into a blossoming friendship. It has become more evident that the relationship between Russia and Pakistan has strengthened after the signing of the CPEC agreement in the post-CPEC period (Ahmad, 2003)

As a result of Iran's close connections with the United States throughout the Shah's reign, the Soviet Union was considered a foe. However, after the Iranian revolution, the two sides have lately reached a consensus on a number of regional and global political issues, including nuclear proliferation. They also rejected the United States strategy for militarization and regime change in Syria, instead backing President Bashar al-government Assad in the hope that a peaceful political solution may be found there. In reality, Russia, Iran, and Turkey have engaged in several rounds of discussions with both pro-government soldiers and rebel factions headed by the United States in trying to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict. President Trump has given Iran, Russia, and Turkey a greater influence in the Syrian conflict by pulling troops and other physical aid from the Syrian Defense Forces (SDF).

Challenges and Inconsistencies in the Relationship between Iran and Pakistan

Geopolitical and internal developments in the region have had a significant impact on Iran's attitude toward Pakistan over a period of time. The Islamic Republic of Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan's independent sovereignty after the country's establishment in 1947.

As part of the Cold War alliance, the Anglo-American alliance made it possible for Iran and Pakistan to achieve a convergence of strategic objectives. Over time, however, differences in the geopolitical situations and internal dynamics of both countries resulted in divergences in their bilateral interactions. When Iran and Pakistan formed the Baghdad Pact in the 1950s to keep the region free of Soviet incursions, they were bringing themselves closer to one another than they had been before. Because of Iran's ties to the Soviet Union at the height of World War II, as well as Pakistan's suspicion of India and Afghanistan, both countries decided to join the Western bloc. Both Iran and Pakistan joined the Western alliance in order to save their own survival (Kux, 2001).

Throughout the 1971 India-Pakistan crisis, Iran provided support to Pakistan, demonstrating the country's close links with Iran during the 1970s. Iran and Pakistan's bilateral trade volume increased dramatically after Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan's authority, mostly as a result of Pakistan's loss of East Pakistan's markets at that time. Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey have significantly improved their economic relations as a result of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) conferences in recent years. Despite the fact that it was unable to provide a viable platform for expanding economic prospects among RCD member countries, the organization was finally dismantled in 1979 (Andreas, 2017).

The Iranian revolution in 1979 and the later war with Iraq were both major factors in the organization's downfall, which occurred as a consequence of these developments. Iran's foreign policy stance was further altered by the anti-American militancy of the country's revolution, which occurred in 1979. While Iran and Pakistan cooperated to help Afghan mujahideen troops in the face of the Soviet threat, Pakistan's strong links to Sunni regimes and Western powers placed some strain on relations between the two nations.

During the Soviet-Afghan struggle, the Pashtun insurgents received the majority of their funding and assistance from Pakistan, while the Shia Tajik and Hazara insurgents received the majority of their funding and support from Iran. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Afghan mujahideen splintered into a number of different factions. Pakistan supported the Taliban in Afghanistan, whilst Iran was a counter-terrorist force in the country.

As the Taliban took Mazar-c-Sharif and the hostage crisis erupted, during which Iran held Taliban forces responsible for the murders of Iranian diplomats, tensions between Pakistan and Iran rose, and so did Shia terrorists' active participation in Pakistan, which Pakistan was worried about. Several reports have said that Iran and the Taliban have forged a tactical partnership in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks (Shaikh, 2001).

Saudi Arabia's connection with the Taliban has been strained as a result of US pressure on the country and Saudi Arabia's problems with Qatar, which is home to the Taliban's highest-ranking leaders and political headquarters. Qatar's collaboration with Tehran has, in some ways, made Iran's cooperation with the Taliban easier to accomplish. According to reports, the Haqqani Network, which has always maintained close ties with Pakistan, is now actively involved in Iran's domestic affairs. Iran is interested in sustaining a stable power dynamic in Afghanistan, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The construction of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline may be one of the most important milestones in the history of ties between Pakistan and Iran. The Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project has been placed on hold again, this time owing to opposition from the United States and economic difficulties in Pakistan, which have slowed the project's development.

In 2010, Iran and Pakistan completed a multibillion-dollar project that elevated the status of the nuclear accord in the international community. Because of the 7.5-billion-dollar project, Iran was able to provide Pakistan with up to 750 million cubic feet of natural gas each day. The 2004 Iran-Pakistan Preferential Commerce Agreement is yet another significant step forward in efforts to increase commerce between the two countries. A number of important objectives of the agreement included increasing trade volume, supporting sustainable growth between the two parties, permitting product variety, and reducing trade barriers between the two parties, among other objectives.

Following the United Nations' World Food Programme, Pakistan is the eighth-largest commercial partner of Iran, with significant exports to Iran, including cereals, meats, fruits, textiles and paper, among other things. Aside from oil, minerals, steel, organic chemicals, and plastics, Pakistan is the world's biggest importer of Iranian goods (Ahmed, 2011).

The United Nations, the United States, and the European Union implemented sanctions on Iran in response to the country's purported nuclear programme, which has resulted in a decrease in bilateral trade between the two countries, according to the Iranian government. Despite several attempts by Iran and Pakistan to stabilize their economic relations, the latter's efforts have been repeatedly hindered by sanctions imposed on the Iranian regime. Recently, there has been a great deal more conflict than agreement between Iran and Pakistan. Increasing trade between the two countries has been a goal for both governments, who see it as a crucial component of their broader plan for cooperation.

According to both countries' administrations, armed terrorists are hiding across the border in both countries. Iran has also sent a warning to Pakistan, expressing concern over the country's reluctance to take action against state-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan. In part because of their close relations with Saudi 'Arabia, Iran and Pakistan have few options and opportunities to collaborate effectively. However, there have been recent indications of a renewed determination to engage toward improving bilateral trade, notably in agriculture.

Furthermore, Tehran has shown interest in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which intends to enhance trade by improving rail and road connections between the two countries.

During a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the fringes of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly in New York, then-Iranian President Hassan Rouhani expressed his desire to participate in the CPEC. The pressure exerted on Pakistan by Washington and Riyadh may hinder Iran from fully engaging in the CPEC despite Iran's willingness to engage in order to gain a larger level of participation.

In the past, both countries have made significant efforts to prioritize economic connection above other concerns. Despite the immense potential for economic engagement between Iran and Pakistan, it is vital to underline that the two countries' bilateral trade is being impeded primarily by US pressure on Pakistan. The United States' departure from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the execution of General Qassem Suleimani both contributed to the escalation of hostility between Pakistan and Iran.

Pakistan finds itself in a difficult position since it cannot assist either the United States or Iran, both of which would have major consequences for the country's security and economic development. Pakistan must strike a balance between the interests of Saudi Arabia and Iran in order to collaborate with Iran. This offers considerable challenges for the nation in terms of cooperation with Iran.

Because of the security situation in Balochistan and Pakistan's military support for Saudi Arabia during the Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy battles in the region, it is difficult for Pakistan and Iran to increase or deepen their connection. Pakistan is in a vulnerable position at the moment since it is still dependent on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to keep its economy afloat. As a result, any engagement with Iran must be handled with caution (Cornell, 2003).

Distinguished Characteristics of the Goldsmith Line

In relation to this boundary. There is currently no pending territorial dispute. The 'Border Accord' between Iran and Pakistan was signed on August 31, 1960, marking the 50th anniversary of the signing of the treaty. The agreement was widely seen as 11 watershed moments in bilateral ties. The placement of the boundary does not seem to be a subject of contention. The problem at hand is the security conditions in border areas, which affect the two most important concerns, which are the unlawful movement of persons and the smuggling of products. Iranian authorities are particularly concerned with drug and narcotics smuggling. Separatist movements' emergence is one of the most recent elements contributing to border friction, which has transformed the border into a source of conflict between the two countries. Illegal operations are particularly vulnerable along the Iran-Pakistan border, which can lead to miscommunication between the two nations in a number of instances. Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the Afghan Taliban's commander, was killed in a US drone strike near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border on May 21, 2016, according to Iranian media.⁴⁰ Mansour was believed to have entered Pakistan via Iran. In light of the above-mentioned cross-border incidents, efforts to improve border security between Iran and Pakistan may prove to be the most effective CBM for expanding the scope of bilateral ties. This is one of Iran's eight international boundaries with other countries, according to the Iranian side. It is one of the most tranquil countries in the world when compared to other borders like Iraq, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

The Goldsmith Line is a porous border that makes it difficult to maintain security throughout the whole frontier. The problems associated with controlling this border are significant. Both nations are lacking in the highly technical monitoring systems that are essential for border security. Iran's parliament reported that Pakistan and Iran signed a border security management agreement in Tehran on February 9.

Human smuggling, illegal immigration, the joint fight against terrorism, improved security cooperation on the border, and collaboration in the effort to combat kidnapping and human trafficking.

The two sides also agreed to work together to enhance border markets and expedite the extradition of detainees. Iran began construction of the Taftan-Mand border wall in 2007 after an unclaimed explosion in the province capital of Zahedan that killed 13 people, including nine members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. This concrete boundary wall, which stretches 434 kilometres from Taftan to Mand, serves as a natural border. This wall is a component of a bigger project that involves the construction of trenches, deep ditches, barbed wire fences, and watchtowers, among other things. Iran's right to reinforce its border with Pakistan has been upheld by Pakistan (Corenell, 2003).

Conclusion

In the intricate web of international ties that encompasses South Asia and the Middle East, the Goldsmith Line, which serves as a demarcation for the soft border that separates Iran and Pakistan, emerges as a crucial component. This research highlights the multidimensional nature of this geopolitical boundary, which stretches for a total of 564 kilometres from the trijunction of the Koh-i-Malik Siah River to the beach of Gawadar. The Goldsmith Line, which serves as a connecting point between two strategically crucial regions, intertwines the fates of Iran and Pakistan, proving to be a source of both problems and opportunity. The dynamics between the two countries have been impacted by historical swings in bilateral ties, which have ranged from strategic collaboration to divergences over international partners between the two countries. An important step has been taken with the signature of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which represents a crossroads where national interests, such as the protection of their common border and the pursuit of economic success, converge. The study uncovers areas of convergence, particularly in the common cultural, ethnic, and economic ties of the Baloch people on both sides of the border. This observation is made in spite of the fact that there have been tensions in the past.

In this study, the prospects of Iran-Pakistan relations are investigated, with a particular focus on the significance of identifying geopolitical imperatives for strategic partnership rather than sectarian issues. It is through the investigation of prospective measures that can be taken to stimulate economic development and enhance security that the idea that economic integration and joint border control can help alleviate security concerns is strengthened. An additional layer of complexity is added to the overall dynamics of the region when the assessment of relations between Russia and Pakistan is taken into consideration. There are new aspects added to the geopolitical scene as a result of the growing friendship between both countries, notably following the signing of the agreement for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

To put it briefly, the Goldsmith Line acts as a link between geopolitical, economic, and cultural linkages, in addition to delineating a physical border between the two countries. Iran and Pakistan should emphasize collaboration over historical conflicts, sectarian divides, and foreign pressures, according to the report, which calls for cautious optimism and urges them to prioritize collaboration. The Goldsmith Line presents chances for encouraging regional peace, economic progress, and improved collaboration in the face of contemporary geopolitical concerns. It is within the shared interests of both nations to take advantage of these prospects.

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