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**GEOPOLITICAL AND GEO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF INDIA AND
PAKISTAN’S INTERESTS IN POST 9/11 AFGHANISTAN**

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Abstract

This paper examines India and Pakistan geopolitical and geo-economic interests in post 9/11 Afghanistan. The state of Afghanistan possesses geo-political and geo-economic opportunities and challenges for both the state. The rivalry and competition between the two South Asian neighbours are shaping in the state of Afghanistan. The Geo-political and geo-economic interests of both states are in divergence with each other. The fault lines of competition between India and Pakistan are transformed to geo-economic influence in Afghanistan and beyond. The state of Afghanistan represents a land bridge and potential energy corridor for India and Pakistan. Therefore, this study highlights the divergent geo-economic interests along with geo-politics in Afghanistan. It is argued that geo-economic has emerged as a new pattern of rivalry between India and Pakistan in Afghanistan. Both states is using geo-economic along with geo-political parameters and interests in a spiral context and reinforcing themselves with the evolving scenarios.

Introduction

The state of Afghanistan is geopolitically and geoeconomically significant for both India and Pakistan. It is argued that neither India nor Pakistan can refute the geo-political and geo-economic significance of Afghanistan because the latter is considered the heart of Asia. Achieving regional geo-economic integration and influences Afghanistan’s geographic location

is detrimental to India and Pakistan’s interests. Speaking in geographical context, the Afghan plateau located on the top of south Asia the regional states are at stone through distance. Afghanistan connects three important regions i.e. South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. The gateway is through Afghanistan and can easily be extended to the previously mentioned regions. Therefore, the geopolitical and security situation and scenario of Afghanistan greatly influence geo-economic aspects (Dorronsoro, 2005: 6-7). This paper analyses the geo-political and geo-economics interests and rivalry between India and Pakistan in post 9/11 Afghanistan. The main research questions i.e. what compels India and Pakistan to adopt geo-economic oriented policies towards Afghanistan? What are their geo-economic interest, stakes, and opportunities in Afghanistan and beyond? Are both states stuck in new rivalry i.e. geo-economic along with geopolitical goals and policies? The research methodology in this paper is based on qualitative and descriptive methods i.e. first discuss, analyse and then reach to the conclusion. The author relied primarily on secondary resources including books, research journals, official documents and policies of both state toward Afghanistan.

According to Kaplan geography is destiny and the same is true in the context of Afghanistan. The state of Afghanistan is a prisoner of its geography and throughout its troubled history, the fate of the latter is subject to the geographical location. The analogy is that Afghanistan served as a gateway of conquests for great powers and an old route for trade and merchant caravans. The changing regional economic parameters and the ongoing mega economic connectivity infrastructure projects are the key developments that will be directly or indirectly link to the security and insecurity of the Afghan state. The geo-economic and geo-political significance of Afghanistan is in the calculation of its neighbour's states. Afghanistan’s geopolitics is directly linked with the geo-economics of its neighbours. All regional states have close cultural, economic, trade, ethnic and political ties with Afghanistan. The ongoing mega economic projects i.e. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), One Belt and One Road (OBOR) and Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (TAPI) gas pipeline is subject to peace and security in Afghanistan (Gill, 2007: 3). This shows the geographical influence over economics and the same is true for Afghanistan. Thus, the geopolitics of energy and geopolitics are interlinked and influence each other in a spiral context.

Johone and Stevens (2015: 19) argued that contemporary geopolitics is based on the struggle for energy and geo-economics between rising and established regional and global powers. This argument can be applied and relevant to India and Pakistan’s geo-politics and geo-economic interests in Afghanistan and beyond. Energy security and insecurity are at the heart of contemporary geopolitics and the same is true in the context of India’s geo-economic approach toward Afghanistan and Central Asian States. In the context of the Caspian Sea and the heart of Eurasia, Afghanistan provides a geo-strategic commanding location. The economic pivot of the previously mentioned region signifies the New Great Game. The Caspian Sea’s natural resources provide and fulfil the needs of the entire region. In the same way, the Central Asian Republics has huge economic and natural resource and potential which is geographically linked with Afghanistan (Dhaka, 2005: 62).

It is clear that despite the geographical significance of Afghanistan both structural and geographical patterns hinder to utilize the natural resources. In these scenarios, the very first obstacle is the perpetual conflicts in Afghanistan and the regional enmity between India and Pakistan. The TAPI project depends on the security situation in Afghanistan. Additionally, the

state of Afghanistan lacks efficient trade, transport and communication links to utilize Central Asian States resources (Dhaka, 2005: 91).

Geo-political and Geo-economics Study and Significance of Afghanistan

For centuries, Afghanistan remained geo-political and geo-strategically significant for the world. Present-day Afghanistan was once served as an integral part of the old Silk Road and remained the centre of gravity in the Great Game between Great Britain and the Czarist empires in the eighteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, both great power i.e. Britain and USSR were in positional competition for the control of the Afghan plateau. This positional rivalry also resulted in the three Anglo-Afghan wars (Collins, 2001: 14-15).

The paradigm change when Afghanistan again remains and subject to Cold War Strategic competition between the US and USSR. The state of Afghanistan is once again an active ground for superpower competition and centre of gravity. After a decade of sporadic violence and continued chaos, the Soviet withdrawal also led to the emergence of the Taliban in 1996 and the wider civil war in the country. The incident of 9/11 and the emergence of Al-Qaida then again subject Afghanistan to the power politics of the great power of the time (Clements, 2003: 14). Thus, it would not be wrong to state that the events and history repeat themselves in Afghanistan and geographical location perturbed the situation even verse.

Afghanistan’s Geopolitical Significance for India and Pakistan

The historic cultural and trade relations between Afghanistan and Indian Subcontinent remain one of the prime significances. Afghanistan occupies geo-political and geo-economic significance for Indian strategic and policy circles. The rise and fall of the Taliban regime also valued the strategic and economic values of India. It is clear that India has increased geo-political and geo-economic interests and stakes in post 9/11 Afghanistan. The approach from New Delhi is proactive and can be termed as revisionist under the US security umbrella in Afghanistan and the beyond in the regional structure. From Indian strategic perspectives and perceptions, Afghanistan occupies a unique and vital geographic location through which it can contain China, Pakistan and can extend its influence across the Eurasian Heartland (Dhaka, 2005: 73). The regional strategic and geo-economic environment reinforced India to act decisively in term of strategic cum geo-economic calculation.

It is also argued that when a regional power rises in a specific region it will extend its foreign policy interactions and engagements. The same is true in the context of India’s proactive foreign policy in the 9/11 era. For India, the geo-economic imperatives towards Afghanistan are the key drivers of their Grand National economic policies. In the framework of the new great game in Eurasia, Afghanistan geographical location is next door to the geo-economics competition and the same is the key policy options for India to advance their geo-economic interests. It is argued that Afghanistan is a failed state but not a failed geo-economic and geo-politics claimed by Dhaka (2005: 13).

Mohan and Fair (2013: 37) noted that Central Asian States hold geo-economic and geo-political significance for Indian gran strategies in Central Asia and Eurasian heartland. Both authors also argued that Afghanistan serves as a land bridge to reach out to the Central Asian States. It is also mentioned that the Central Asian States abounds resources of natural gas and oil, large consumer markets and geo-economic location that extend towards Europe and Russian

landmass. The geo-economic framework of regional and global powers in Central Asia and Afghanistan and the ongoing one built and one road initiative are the key mega economic infrastructures in the region. For Indian policymakers it is possible to utilize and imports Central Asian natural resources and consumer markets (Dhaka, 2005: 78). However, the ongoing security unrest and deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan proved to be stumbling block in the realization of these goals.

For New Delhi, a stable and friendly Afghanistan is in their interest to fulfil the Indian geo-economic and geostrategic design. The growing Indian energy demands and energy security are the important aspects of New Delhi rapprochements toward and Afghanistan. For India, the imports of energy resources through Afghanistan are a viable option in the near future as the security situation continued to deteriorate in the Middle East. This will diversify the Indian energy exports. For New Delhi, a friendly Afghanistan is a prerequisite to full fill its growing energy needs, geo-economic and geo-political influences and interest. In the post 9/11 scenario particularly in Afghanistan, the regional dynamics shifted in favour of India and the latter extended its role and influence under the US security umbrella. In these circumstances, the Indian government extended its geopolitical influences while adopted geo-political measures including economic aid and political support to the newly elected government of Hamid Karzai (Dhaka, 2005: 51).

Afghanistan: Future Corridor for Energy Transportation

It is also important to mention that Afghanistan possesses a huge chunk of untapped natural resources and natural energy transportation corridor. The geographical location of Afghanistan makes it a corridor for future energy transportation and can serve as a transit point for importing Central Asian natural resources via Pakistan and downward to the Indian mainland. The CaspianSea and Central Asian states possess huge natural resources and this can be utilized by India and Pakistan for their growing energy and consumption demands. It is also important to mention that if the proposed Tajikistan, Afghanistan-Pakistan and India (TAPI) gas pipeline are materialized will meet the energy requirements of these states. This pipeline will start from Tajikistan via Afghanistan’s Herat and Kandahar provinces downward to Pakistan’s Multan city and toward Fazlika in the Indian Punjab. Though, the realization of this pipeline largely depends upon the security situation in Afghanistan and is the test case of these states geo-economic and energy diplomacy to fulfil their requirements. It is fact that any geo-economics cooperation between India and Pakistan and in the region will likely to assess through peace and security in Afghanistan and the latter’s security is prerequisites to geo-economic regional integration or rivalry and competition (Foster, 2008: 5).

Luttwak (1993: 72) used the term geo-economic for the first time and argued it as a major driving force of states behaviour in the post-Cold War era. He also explains that the pattern of military conflict is in flux and changing and the new parameter and approach is based on geo-economics. The forthcoming conflicts will be passed to the prism of geo-economic and economic power will be assessed in terms of military and geopolitical power (Luttwak, 1993). Before Luttwak, Fukuyama (1992) in his book “End of History and Last Man” predicted the change in the mode and pattern of conflicts and the rise of geo-economics rivalry among states (Scholvin & Wigell, 2018: 2). Furthermore and proved in the current time, the states use geo-economic as a tool for their geo-political and geo-strategic interests. In the context of India and Pakistan’s geo-

economic rivalry and competition in Afghanistan, it is clear that both states are projecting their geo-economic dimension of the prolonged rivalry.

It was pointed by Kohen and Nye (1977) that the pattern of the new liberal economic era has to change and the state adopting economic and power as their foreign policy goals and objectives with the aim to achieve their geo-economics interest along with geopolitical and geo-strategic. Furthermore, energy security, uninterrupted flow, mutual trade disparity, and the use of geo-economics tools as a strategic option are evident in the new millennium. Scholvin and Wigell (2018: 4) claimed that geo-economics become a decisive factor in states interactions and will be a decisive factor in the coming future. The same is true in the context of India and Pakistan geo-economic interests in Afghanistan as both are interested in promoting their geostrategic interest under the umbrella and pattern of geo-economics.

Geo-economic and power politics between India and Pakistan

In economic and military terms there is a huge disparity between India and Pakistan. India has annual GDP of \$2.97 trillion and is a rising regional and global power. It is the realist’s belief that when a state’s economic power increases it will expand their foreign policy interaction and agendas for their national interests and calculation. The aim is to achieve geo-strategic and geo-political goals. It is evident since 2001 and onward that India is flexing its muscles and wants to mould a strategic environment both regional and global according to its interests. The post 9/11 proactive foreign policy of India is a direction in these efforts particularly towards Afghanistan. The use of the geo-economic trend in Indian foreign policy is evident since massive economic support to Karzai and Ashraf Ghani Governments. As tit for tat approach, the economically unstable Pakistan aligned itself with China in order to advance its interest (Pattanaik, 2019: 174). It seems that the geo-economic rivalry is reinforcing the decision-makers in India and Pakistan to act decisively according to their interests.

The geographical location of Pakistan is proving a stumbling block in India’s geo-economic decision toward Afghanistan. The geo-economic behaviour of Pakistan is totally against India. In continuation of geo-economic rivalry, Islamabad shunned Delhi’s request to give access via its land for trade and transportation with Afghanistan. It seems that stopping India’s rising geo-economics stakes in Afghanistan and in the region is the key consideration for Pakistan. The revival of Chabahar and Gwadar Ports shows the dawn of geo-economic rivalry between the two countries. Pakistan proved to be a major contender of India in Afghanistan and even in Central Asia and the latter is using its geographical proximity and advantage against New Delhi proactive geo-economics ambitions. The calculation is Pakistan is that if India seized opportunities for trade and economic engagements with Afghanistan and the Central Asian states it will be a geo-economic zero-sum game for them (Pattanaik, 2019:170). Therefore, the geo-economics imperatives i.e. Between Afghanistan, India Iran and between China and Pakistan are reinforcing.

Corridors of Trade and Transportation

India’s political and economic influences and power is influencing the South Asian states and the former is extending its power and role. India’s economic influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia in this context is the source of concern for Pakistan. New Delhi geo-economic influences and ambitions are moved beyond its rivalry with Pakistan however, the latter is and will

confronting the growing Indian influence and role. The Sino-Pakistan geo-economic interaction and cooperation while Indo-Iran rapprochements are the empirical examples (Pant and Fair, 2014: 63). From Pakistan's side, it is using its geographical edge over India to Afghanistan and beyond. Pakistan did not grant the most favoured nation (MFN) status to India and also denied trade and transit facilities via its territory to Afghanistan. The operational success of Gwadar port and its link with Afghanistan, China and the Central Asian States are the geo-economic indicators of the Islamabad policy imperatives (Tellis, et al., 2010: 28-29).

As the geo-economic interest of the two-state clashes in respect to Afghanistan, India along with Iran operationalized Chabahar Port which is considered a counterbalance to Pakistan's Gwadar Port. The Indian perception is that the Chabahar Port will enable them to bypass Pakistan's Gwadar and Karachi Ports. India also built 218 Kilometre Delaram-Zaranj roads which link Afghanistan Link Road to western Iran. These efforts of the Indian are geo-economic oriented and based their trade and transit interests in Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia (Hanaur & Chalk, 2012: 30). However, the looming US sanctions on Iran and the operational difficulties of the Chabahar Port give an edge to Gwadar Port. It is important to mention that Afghanistan is keen on trade through Gwadar for its import and exports.

Initially, the Indian perceptions and expectations were clear that the US wouldn't impose sanctions on its investment in Chabahar Port. The US government also exempted Chabahar in 2018 as their aim was to facilitate the reconstruction and regional economic integration of Afghanistan. The US government withdrawal from JCOPA resulted in the imposition of sanctions on Iran as initially it was exempted for six months. However, the US imposed sanctions on the Indian firm which constructed the Chabahar Port. This also created furry in India's relations with Iran. It is clear that the divergent geopolitical interest has knocked the Chabahar Port project, and India's seems to accept the US pressure in this context. India's global port authority failed the purchased hardware from the European company for Chabahar port. In the year 2019 and 2020, India reduced its funds from \$21.5 million to \$6.50 million as noted by Kapoor (2019). Afghanistan and Iran lauded India's initiatives and economic approach for mutual benefits and cooperation. The three states also concluded a tripartite economic agreement of nearly \$500 million for further enhancement of trade and transit facilities towards each other. It is noted that since 2015 and onward India's pro-active economic approach its geo-economic rapprochements with Afghanistan, Iran and the Central Asian States given an edge over Pakistan's traditional dominated trade partners. These efforts of the Indian government were appreciated by the then Iranian President Hassan Rohani and termed them as a historic day in their relations. The same was applauded by President Ashraf Ghani are remarked that India is now an active partner who wants to help reduce the common miseries of the Afghan people and facilitating the regional economic integration of Afghanistan (Dawn, 2016). The Afghan President also criticized Pakistan for denying the direct land route access to India for trade and transits. Thus, the pattern of geo-economic competition reinforced between the three states.

Since the emergence of Central Asian States and with possession of huge natural resources and their geographic link with Afghanistan serve as an attractive ground for both India and Pakistan geo-economic interests and policies. It is argued that Pakistan has a considerable role and influence over Afghanistan and can influence the Central Asian States for mutual economic cooperation. Pakistan considers a friendly and stable government in Kabul and sees it

as an opportunity for geo-economic and geo-political interest and edge over growing Indian stakes (Hanaur & Chalk, 2012: 25).

India’s Connect Central Asia Policy and Afghanistan

Geo-economic imperatives are the key policy drive of India connects Central Asia Policy. India considers the present-day Central Asian States as their extended neighbours with abundant natural resources and consumer markets. India maintained friendly and active political relations with all Central Asian States. India is actively engaged with these states on geo-political and geo-economic realities and changing dynamics (Kuszewska, 2020: 13). The Central Asian region is central to the ongoing New Great Game for natural resources and geo-economic fault lines. This pattern of the New Great Game also has impacts on Indian policymakers, and the latter has eager to play in the region. The perception in New Delhi is that it cannot overlook the significance of its Central Asia policy because of its rising regional stakes and economic power. From a regional level of analysis, India’s connect Central Asia policy should be viewed through its rivalry with losing its immediate neighbour to Chinese influence (Iqbal, 2020).

The Chinese growing influences and its mega infrastructure and developmental projects are the sources of concerns for India and the latter consider itself a contender in this context (Jha, 2016). For this purpose, India’s connects Central Asia Policy is multidimensional including political, economic, and strategic engagements with all the Central Asian States. India’s connect Central Asian policy revolves around reconnecting and establishing historic relations with the region. According to Subramanian the key Indian strategic expert and advocate of connect Central Asia policy “The Central Asian Republics (CARs) posed the most excruciating and complex challenges to Indian diplomacy judged whether by geostrategic compulsions or by India’s energy concerns” (Iqbal 2020).

As mentioned by the Indian Minister of External Affairs Ahmed disclosed that India’s connect Central Asian policy is fostering relations with all Central Asian states including cultural, economic, trade and transit, political, security, strategic, and interactions and engagements. Regional economic connectivity and geo-economic cooperation is the key elements of this policy. In fact, India wants to transfer its political relations with the Central Asian states into a geo-economic domain. The rationale for this policy approach is that the Central Asian states possess vast natural resources and consumer markets, the potential for trade and transit. Geo-economic and geo-politics are the key aspects of India’s Connect Central Asia policy. Therefore, strong strategic and defence relations between India and Central Asian states are imminent in the previously mentioned policy (Pradhan, 2020: 90).

Geographical aspects play important role in Indian foreign policy towards the Central Asian States. Geo-economic and transit connectivity is a policy priority and source of concern in New Delhi. For this purpose to reach out to Central Asia the only short and feasible route is through Pakistan via Afghanistan. Pakistan on many occasions denied the grant of direct routes to India. Therefore, overland trade and transit connectivity with CARs remained problematic and subject to geo-economic rivalry with Pakistan. The Indian investments in Chabahar Port are efforts in this context to reach out to the CARs. Afghanistan represents a land bridge to CARs. The Indian government maintained the official position that stable and peaceful Afghanistan is their policy priority for greater economic cooperation and regional integration. Therefore, New Delhi

considers stable government in Kabul as one of the key priorities for their geo-economic oriented policies, and the proactive interactions and political engagements are efforts in this context.

Post 9/11 Afghanistan, Indo-Pakistan Geo-economics Rivalry

In post 9/11 Afghanistan, the Indian foreign policy revolved around geo-economic and geopolitical factors. India immediately established diplomatic relations with the Hamid Karzai government and extended its diplomatic and economic aid. The aim was to protect its geopolitical and geo-economic interests. This Indian behaviour can be termed as solely realistic with the aim to end Pakistan’s traditional political and geo-economic influence and interest in Afghanistan. India initially provides nearly \$2 billion for strengthening economic and infrastructure of the newly established government and also adopted a proactive diplomatic presence with an immense diplomatic mission in Kabul and six consulates bordering Pakistan. These growing diplomatic presences of India compel Pakistan to contain the rising influence and stakes in Afghanistan. From Pakistan side, it has levelled that India is fuelling terrorism in Balochistan and FATA and involved in intelligence operations from Afghanistan. The Pashtuns majority provinces of Afghanistan bordering with Pakistan were the centre of gravity of Indian diplomatic presence and projects (Sikri, 2009: 53).

India claimed that all the ongoing projects in Afghanistan and diplomatic presence is for the improvement of common Afghans and for regional connectivity and not directed against Pakistan. The Indian government on many occasion clarified that their diplomatic presence and geo-economic projects are not directed against Pakistan and its interest. It is clear from India’s geo-economic initiatives in Afghanistan that it has chosen geo-economic rivalry against Pakistan and Central Asia. It is clear from the Indian geopolitical and geo-economic behaviour in Afghanistan and towards the Central Asian States. For this purpose, India also supported the inclusion of Afghanistan into SAARC by arguing that it will foster regional economic integration (Tellis, et al., 2010: 28).

In the post 9/11 scenario, Afghanistan and Pakistan relations continued to deteriorate, and New Delhi seized the opportunity to foster relations with Kabul. The Afghan government policy was initially based on rapprochement with Pakistan with the aim to cool down the growing insurgency and their links and the continuous spectrum of terrorism. However, the internal security situation continued to deteriorate in Afghanistan. Resultantly, the then Afghan President Hamid Karzai blamed Pakistan for supporting and fuelling insurgency. Hamid Karzai approached regional states to find a solution to the perpetual conflicts and shifted its policy notably toward India and termed Pakistan as “boos of the Taliban” (Dawn, 2006). Afghanistan and Pakistan relations during the Karzai government were marked by trust deficits and blame game. The same troubled relations continued during Ashraf Ghani as President. The two states stuck in a spiral cycle of blame game and reservations toward each other.

In mutual economic and trade initiatives Afghanistan and Pakistan signed a major agreement of APTTA in 2010 for further facilitation and improvement of trade and transit routes and facilities. Afghanistan from their side included India in APTTA but the inclusion of the third country i.e. India was rejected by Pakistan. From the Indian side, they were optimistic and interested in joining the APTTA as Sushma Swaraj argued that under these efforts they have completed trade and transit facilities between the two states for movement of goods (Dawn, 2015). However, Pakistan denied India’s inclusion in APTTA which shows that it used geo-

economic and its geographical edge over India in context to Afghanistan and its trade and transit interests. The Indian government along with Iran constructed the Chabahar Port to bypass Pakistan land and transit routes.

Pakistan denied to India its transit routes and inclusion in APTTA keeping in view various considerations and geo-economic interests. The first consideration and the reason are that if Pakistan allows to include India in APTTA and given access to its land and transit route it will dominate Pakistan’s traditional consumer markets in Afghanistan and in Central Asia. Secondly, India will control and dominate its trade with Afghanistan by subsidising and will end Pakistan monopoly there (Khan, 2014). This decision of Pakistan antagonized President Ashraf Ghani and termed them as Pakistan’s intentional denial to halt the economic prosperity of Afghanistan. During the sixth Heart of Asia conference, President Ghani remarked that “We want dignified relations, not a charity and if we are allowed to live peacefully we can find \$500 million and if there is peace for five years we would be in a position to give others \$500 million” (Sial, 2016: p. 7). After President Ghani remarks Afghanistan also rejected Pakistan’s \$500 million aid citing that if it is allowed to peace and the neighbour (Pakistan) don not interfere in the internal affairs it (Afghanistan) will be able to give \$500 million to others. On the other hand, the Indian government since 2001 provided nearly \$3 billion in the shape of investment and infrastructures and developmental projects. The Afghan government loud these efforts and termed India as *Maseeha* in the troubled time and history.

In order to counter India’s growing geo-economics influence and presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia, Pakistan is using its geographical proximity and advantage. Pakistan with Chinese assistance and agreement is operationalizing CPEC and Gwadar Port for greater geo-economics initiatives and policies. Pakistan also joined the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) to further advance and cooperate in terms of regional connectivity, trade and transit routes and agreements. Pakistan is also interested in the land and transit connectivity of the Central Asian States with its ports of Gwadar and Karachi. Pakistan’s civil and military leaderships consider Afghanistan as a link to their security and economic prosperity. On many occasions, Pakistan levelled that it wants peaceful and stable Afghanistan for the greater interests of the two states as well as for the region. The ongoing projects of CPEC largely depend on peace in the region and Afghanistan. Pakistan is suspicious of India’s role in Afghanistan and there is a belief that India is conspiring against it. In a tit for tat approach, Afghanistan also denied Pakistan request for trade with the Central Asian States via its territory and conditioned it with the transit facilities for India (Pattanaik, 2018: 172). This portrays that the trilateral relations between them are dominated by geo-economic considerations and interest by projecting their geo-economic rivalry.

Conclusion

The pattern of rivalry between India and Pakistan is changing with the advent of the geo-economic dimension and parameter of their foreign policy behaviour. The policies and approaches of both the state in post 9/11 Afghanistan is the continuation of renewed geo-economic competition and divergence of interests. For both states, Afghanistan serves as an active battleground to foster their geo-economic interests along with geopolitical fault lines. The Indian geo-economic ambitions are clear from their expanding economic outreach and power by flexing its muscle for geopolitical and strategic purposes. The structural framework of international politics is encouraging India to expand and used its geo-economic approach for

geopolitical purposes. Afghanistan also represents a land bridge for both states to reach out to the Central Asian States and beyond.

Due to the growing energy demands of India and Pakistan, they also want to utilize the geographical location of Afghanistan for energy import. The constant deteriorated situation in the Middle East and the US sanctions of Iran are the key factors that compel both states to diversify their energy flows. Both states want to dominate the consumer markets of Afghanistan and Central Asian States for their geo-economic interest. The pattern of geo-economic flux both states foreign policy behaviour. India also intends to connect Afghanistan and the Central Asian States for greater geo-economic interest via Iranian Chabahar Port. Pakistan from the other side wants to contain Indian geo-economic influences in Afghanistan and in the region. The pattern of rivalry between the two states is changing and the emergence of geo-economics in continuation is this context.

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