

POLITICS

MAKHDUMI, M. Rafiuddin & BASU, Suraya Amin**Sino-Mongolian Relations: New Scenario and Impending Concerns****Introduction**

Urge for hegemony is commonly regarded as irrational and unprincipled. Political leaders of powerful states, who in private life and in domestic politics may be sane, intelligent, peaceable and morally earnest are seen to use their power abroad in a violent and ruthless manner for reasons which can appear ludicrous to posterity and even to many of their contemporaries. They are also obsessed with improbable dangers. They itch to control the destinies of weak states. They may even commit thousands of their countrymen to shoot stab, blast and burn other human beings and to risk the same fate in their turn. The spectacle fascinates some observers and repels others. It is the current fashion to be repelled. From this point, the celebrated rivalry between the Chinese and the Mongols in the Asian continent from the sixteenth century onwards would seem to be a classic case of futility, mutual misunderstanding and the arrogance of power.

Few hundred years ago most people in China or in Mongolia regarded the other with fear and mistrust. Political rivalry seemed to be in progress and the prize was the political ascendancy over the other; and the losing empire was destined to go into a permanent decline. Therefore, armies fought, deployed and engaged against one another, intimidated those whose interests were directly involved. Thus, the most exciting feature of Sino-Mongolian relations was a zigzag that manoeuvred their intercourse, alliance and adversary. One can easily conclude that adversary between the two was a coordinial feature and both looked for ways and means to take over the other. In fact, Chinese as well as Mongols displayed remarkable capability to enjoy superiority / hegemony over the other. Initially the balance of power tipped in favour of the Mongols but with the passage of time it gradually tilted in favour of China and for a long period it enjoyed domination and ascendancy. With the passage of time, particularly in the present economic world order the sentient cordiality between China and Mongolia can best be epitomized as major and minor power relationship. The aspiration is a distraction from the line towed since ages with extreme animosity on account of China's desire to enjoy hegemony over the Mongols.

Objective

The attempt herein is to explore the outcome of the crucial shift in the distribution of power and influences on the regional power structure after the disintegration of the erstwhile Soviet state system. Again, presently how Mongols respond to the emerging trends of the radical world economic order in presence of inherited preliterate economic strategy in its governance. Is it now opting for market economy similar to that of China or chooses its own specific economic and political model? Besides, the analysis explores the interactions between major and minor power i.e. China and Mongolia in absence of a formidable power like the Soviet Union in the regional power structure that had a capacity to extract

all advantages in the transactions taking place in its neighbourhood. A discussion on US-Mongolian ties sheds light on US efforts to undermine China's position in her vicinity and enhance US role and image in the regional power structure by supporting Mongolia's march towards democracy with the option of open market economy. Further, is Mongolia still aficionado to its traditional mindset against Chinese? The paper is concluded with the concerns and impending scenario that do exist between China and Mongolia in the contemporary era.

Strategy

The strategy followed in the analysis is purely analytical and based on fact findings in the conduct of foreign relations in the present day global order. The basic intention is to verify the postulate that "Specific Mindset, Perceived Threats and Perceived Rewards" change the course of events or behaviour of the actors in the conduct of relations in international phenomena.

A Brief Survey of Sino-Mongolian Relations

Perceptibly three phrases are historically vital in elaborating the urge for ascendancy in the Sino-Mongolian contacts. The impulse played a significant role in shaping the traditional mindset particularly of Mongols. The Mongols once established an empire comprising the largest territories presently under the territorial occupation of Russia and China.¹ The Mongol Empire collapsed at the end of the 14th century and the Ming Dynasty of China attacked Mongolia several times until it converted it into a vassal state in 1691².

From 1691 to 1911, i.e. Chinese suzerainty over Mongolia was mainly a forced colonization particularly over Outer Mongolia (*now called Mongolia and Inner Mongolia and continues to be a part of China*) China's imperial methodologies in Mongolia intensified Mongol resistance against Chinese imperial yoke³. However, the most pernicious effect of Chinese sway in Mongolia was that it exhibited great ability for Han expansionism. A large influx of Chinese merchants and landless peasants was sponsored into Mongolia⁴ and the Hans succeeded in nurturing a fracture in the demographic structure of the area for durable trouble-free stay. The tendency day by day instigated local habitants to organise themselves potently against the foreign domination. Resentment ultimately manifested in a vibrant anti-China movement under *All Mongolian National Liberation Movement*. The resistance in fact was greatly influenced by the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. All Mongolian National Liberation Movement finally attained independence from Chinese yoke and formed *World's First State of Workers and Peasants*⁵ in Mongolia in 1911. The overthrow of Chinese rule proved temporary

¹ Sharad K. Soni, *Mongolia-Russia Relations: Kiakhta to Vladivostok*, Kolkata, 2002, p.171.

² Charles Dawson, *The History of Mongolia*, New York, 1989, p.79.

³ Morris Rossabi, *Modern Mongolia from khans to Commissars to Capitalists*, California, 2004, p.20.

⁴ Alan Sanders, "Early History of Mongolia", *Europa Yearbook*, London, 2002, p.18.

⁵ Academy of Sciences MPR, *Information Mongolia*, Oxford, 1992, p.120.

because the Chinese military regained its control over Mongolia in 1915⁶. However, with the potent help of Lenin and Russian Red Army Chinese rule was again overthrown and the Mongolian People's Republic was founded in 1924⁷.

Sino-Mongolian Relations and Soviet Triumph

The Treaty of Friendship and Alliance concluded between China and USSR in 1945 accorded the independence of Mongolia. China formally recognized the Mongolian People's Republic in 1945 as a separate sovereign State and in 1950 *Ulaanbaatar* established ambassadorial ties with Beijing. The wedlock was intensified on realistic calculations and mutual concurrences. China abundantly offered Labour Loans and Technical Expertise for the construction of projects that Mongolia required. Trade between the two states flourished and the geographical proximity facilitated greater intensification and multiplicity. From 1950 to 1964, the two extended contacts on numerous fields with an inclination to help promote each other. Nonetheless, the ideological variance between China and USSR during the '*Cultural Revolution*' considerably caused a rupture in the Sino-Mongolian wedlock.

A rim state situated between two colossal giants had no other choice but to enter under a protective umbrella and Mongolia opted for USSR in pursuance of its traditional mindset and national interest to liberate itself from Chinese phobia. It promptly exported the Soviet model of *Socialism* and the principles of proletarian dictatorship, Ideology of class struggle together with non-capitalist development of Mongol society was enshrined in the New Constitution of Mongolia⁸. Under Soviet obstinate encouragement Mongolia expelled all Chinese professionals and labours on the pretexts of espionage and other crimes. The intension was to enhance surveillance over Chinese migrants and to rectify the demographic configuration of Mongolia which the Chinese damaged since long. The upshots severed the diplomatic and commercial links with China.⁹ China responded with a proclamation that Mongolia was a '*Soviet satellite*' and consequently for the next twenty years Mongolia-China relations remained hostile.¹⁰ The rupture inevitably resulted in a greater dependence of Mongolia on the USSR during the twentieth century and Sino-Mongolian relations mainly remained of secondary importance or Soviet replicate.¹¹ All in all the deployment of Soviet troops on Mongolian territory was a focal point of antagonism between China, Mongolia, and the Soviet Union.

⁶ Ram Rahul, "Mongolia between China and U.S.S.R", *Asian Survey*, New Delhi, 189, p.40.

⁷ M.T Haggard, *Mongolia, The first Communist State in Asia*, Washington, 1986, p.32.

⁸ Statement made by His Excellency .P.Orchirbat, "Path of Mongolia on the occasion of the 79th anniversary of the foundation of the Mongolian State and the 75th Anniversary of Peoples Revolution", Ulaanbaatar, July 1, 1996, file: \\ A :\ Mongolia.htm

⁹ Morris Rossabi, "Mongolia in the 1990's; from Commissars to Capitalists?" www.eurasisnet.org/resource/mongolia/links/rossabi.html

¹⁰ Morris Rossabi, "Between the Bear and the Dragon: Mongolia's relations with China and Russia" \\ A: Fathom The Source for Online learning.htm.

¹¹ Elizabeth E. Green, "China and Mongolia; Recurring Trends and prospects for change", *Asian survey*, (Berkeley) , Vol.26, no.12, Dec 1986,p.1361.

China's Concerns

Since 1977, i.e. much earlier to *Perestroika* Beijing unremittingly necessitated Moscow to demilitarize Mongolia and embark upon a mutual dialogue for normalization¹². In 1985 President Gorbachev's initiative to withdraw Soviet troops from Mongolia recovered relations between the two. The act exceptionally stimulated Mongolia to establish relations with European nations and in 1987 diplomatic relations with U.S were established¹³. The steps in fact, ward off the seal on Mongolia as being the Soviet replica. The resumption of relations with US helped Mongolia to convey its independent character to the international community and proliferated with a great zeal an autonomous character between China and USSR after a long replication¹⁴. Again, with the Signing of *Consular Treaty* with China encouraged free flow of scholarly delegations, trade union leaders and members of friendship communities who visited each other's country after a long freeze¹⁵. This characterized the beginning of high level interaction and mutual exchange that stabilized the relation between the two. The *Tiananmen* occurrence in 1989 amazingly could not impinge upon Chinese-Mongolia relations. In fact interactions underwent dramatic transformations from adversary to partnership since 1990.

Chinese Propinquity and Mongolia

In the late 1980s Mongolia could not escape from the democratization wave. The disintegration of USSR paved the way and Mongolia switched over to democratic governance and free market economy. Mongolia's democratic reforms were hailed by the Chinese leadership. Throughout the 1990s Beijing made constant efforts to develop relations with Mongolia. The decade brought unprecedented growth in bilateral trade and relations conceded new stages of cooperation and development. Remarkable collaboration and proximity was witnessed in various fields as contacts grew and prospered in political, economic and other areas. High level visits and extensive exchange on bilateral as well as on international issues day by day disseminated close proximity. Gradually China raised its profile in Mongolia in the past sixteen years. Currently China's post-Cold War policy toward Mongolia differs much that of the Mao's era which openly had invalidated Mongolia's sovereignty. In view of internal and external pressures of new economic regime in an era of globalization and consequential growth of information technology, China felt obligated to cancel the traditional policy postures towards Mongolia. President Yang Shangun visited Ulaanbaatar in August 1991 and expressed China's profound respect for the "*Independence and Sovereignty of Mongolia*." This first visit of the Head of Peoples' Republic of China to Mongolia was an important political event contributing future extension of Mongol-Chinese cooperation and friendship. During this period a number of important agreements on transit through the territory of the Peoples' Republic on China (PRC) were signed and an accord was also reached on the opening of

12 P. Stobdan " , *Mongolia in a Strategic Vacuum*", K. Santhanam (Ed) *Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia*, New Delhi, 1992, p.225.

13 Kenneth Jarrett, " Mongolia in 1987: Out From the Cold?", *Asian Survey* (Stobdan, *Mongolia in a Strategic Vacuum*, K. Santhanam (Ed) *ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia*, New Delhi, 1992, p.225.

14 William R. Heaton, *Mongolia in 1986: "New plan , New situation"*, *Asian Survey*(Berkeley), vol.27, no1, January 1988,p.79.

15 Alan Sanders," *Mongolia's Foreign Policy in the 1980- 1990's*", *Asian Survey*, Jan- March 1996, p.57.

new border passes through the frontiers of the two countries¹⁶. On 22 October 1993 the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of China accentuated that China hail and support Mongolia as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-State and compliment its option for it¹⁷.

More specifically Chinese Premier Li Peng's 1994 visit to Mongolia outlined China's five point policy options towards Mongolia which are the following:

1. Adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence;
2. Respect for Mongolia's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and choice for development;
3. Development of trade and economic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit;
4. Support for Mongolia's Nuclear-Weapon-Free Status;
5. Compliance to Mongolian efforts to develop relations with other countries of the world.

The superficial glance at these principles signals substantive import and signifies a major shift in the Chinese policy preferences in the area. China seems to operate on a strategy of non-application of threats or of violent expression of physical force against Mongolia; it now prefers to adhere fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to all bi-lateral issues on equal footings with its neighbours. The guiding mantra seems to be the five principles of peaceful co-existence (*Panchsheel*). It was a whiff of fresh air indeed coming as it did in the midst of the murky going on in the domestic sphere. China intently expressed its compliment to Mongolia's decisions to:

- I. Comprehensive ban on the stationing of foreign troops on Mongolian territory;
- II. Restriction on the transit or movement of foreign troops through its terra firma;
- III. Opposition to the creation or promotion of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Prime Minister Jasrai paid an official visit to China in March 1996 and interacted with Li Peng on bi-lateral and international concerns and reassured Li of Mongolia's commitment to the *One China policy*¹⁸.

Again the visit of Chinese President Jiang Zemin in July 1999 to Mongolia was an important event. The trip was the premier accomplishment of Beijing to the independence and sovereignty of Mongolia. It also demonstrated a determinate proficient neighbourly relation based on peaceful co-existence. The two governments signed agreements on Economic and Technical Cooperation and exchanged the letters assuring Chinese government's free technical assistance. China's share in Mongolian export and import increased steadily and earnestly boosts in through border trade arrangements. China is emerging as the

¹⁶ Kh. Bayasakh, "Mongolia Russia and China on the eve of new Millennium", *Mongolica*, Ulaanbaatar, vol.9, 1999, p.32.

¹⁷ J Enkh Saikhan, "Nuclear weapon Free Status; Concept and practice", *Asian Survey*, March 2000, p.120.

¹⁸ Tom Ginsberg, "Mongolia in 1996 Fighting Fire and Ice", *Asian Survey*, Jan 7, p.60.

largest trading partner and the biggest investor in Mongolian Republic since 1990. Proximity and corresponding economic ventures make the two countries natural partners for increased economic interaction in trade. China requires Mongolian resources like timber, minerals and animal products. At the same time it offers farm produce, light manufacturers and capital goods that fit Mongolia's level of development and spending power. Traditional items of Mongolian export to China consist mostly animal husbandry, copper concentrate raw material that almost account 80-90% of Mongolia's total export. Cross border trade with China is also prospering¹⁹. According to Lincoln Kaye of Far Eastern Economic Review, "*China enjoys advantages in Mongolia that no other potential supplier or inventor can match*"²⁰. Today shipping costs from Chinese heartland are a fraction of any other partners and overseas trade through rail links from China's Tianjin port are five times shorter in contrast to Russian Far Eastern ports. Owing to impending energy demand of China, neutral and stable Mongolia is imperative as it serves as a transit link plus a transportation corridor between resource rich Russian Siberia and resource deprived coastal and central China. Beijing's policy option seems to strengthen its relationship with neighbouring countries and to create a peaceful external environment for its own development; it is only possible when it could build a positive image of being a responsible power adhering to international norms in the present political scenario both at domestic and international level. This approach would definitely signal a trust and help in fostering a lasting Sino-Mongolian wedlock.

China Mongolia : Joint Undertakings

Mongolia's foreign policy continues to be determined by its delicate geopolitical position. The Mongolian multi-pillar open door foreign policy provides a great opportunity to all nations of the world to develop comprehensive cooperation based on mutual existence. During the past several years Mongolian strategy towards China focused remarkable aspiration of setting up a legal basis to her relations with China²¹. In this background Mongolia attempted to settle the entire border issue with China. Its President N. Bagabandi visited China in December 1991 and the major highlight of this visit marked the description of fundamental principles in the operation of future bilateral interaction with all nations of the world in the years yet to come. The joint statement outlined the principles of long term, stable healthy and mutually trustful cooperation as fundamental for bilateral contacts in the next century.

Further, with a desire to meet the impending pressures from the challenges of the change in a modern era Mongolia wishes the substitute the USSR model of preliterate economic dictatorship. It presupposes adherence to national and international plans that satisfy its large-scale domestic and other needs in the changed international scenario. It accumulates effective guidelines to determine the future course of economic programme, as China despite being a communist state has embarked upon a plan of

¹⁹ D, Chulundorj, "New Emphasis in Mongolian Foreign Policy", *Warikoo and Norbu, (Ed) Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia*, New Delhi, 1992, p.223.

²⁰ Tsedendamba Batbayar, "Mongolian Chinese Bilateral Relations" in K.. Santhanam and Srikanth (Ed) *Asian Security and China 2000-2010*, New Delhi, 2003, p. 226

²¹ Severtinghaus Sheldon R, "Mongolia in 1998 and 1999: Past, Present and future at the new millennium", *Asian Survey*, Jan-Feb, 2000.

market economy. It is encouraging huge foreign investors and joint multinational collaborations to counter challenges of the change from the market economy globalization and information technology. During the transition phase Mongolian trade patterns were not oriented towards free markets in Europe, Central Asia or Japan. Prior to 1990, 80% of Mongolia's trade was with the USSR and now China emerged as the second largest trading partner since 1999. With the growing trade ties with China, Mongolia is keen to be a part of groupings like the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*²². Mongolia is trying to seek full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). During the SCO meeting at St. Petersburg in June 2007 China's Vice-Premier Wu Yi specifically spoke on the great magnitude of extending increasing cross border trade with Mongolia²³ and in this direction the first international passenger bus service between Altay, China and Bulgan started since November 1, 2007.

Accomplishments and Concerns

The deep-rooted distrust caused by historical experiences of Chinese expansion still persists among Mongols. In the Sino-Mongolian relationship it is important to take into consideration the factors which are causing concern. In fact, China is a huge country and her policies always had a profounder impact on Mongolia than Mongolia's policies on China. In fact, Mongolia's geo-strategic thinking and outlook was secondary as China being a major actor and whose impact was compulsion as the relations had a major and minor power relationship nature. Since the normalisation of bilateral ties, political issues like "*Pan-Mongolism*", *Dalai Lama*, and *Tibet's political profile* were the immediate concerns of Beijing. In the recent years China has also increasingly become apprehensive about Mongolia-US ties.

a) Mongolian Nationalism

Pan Mongolism, a concept prominently popular since the early twentieth century with strong historical connotations and based on common traditional culture, might adversely affect the relationship between Beijing and Ulaanbaatar despite the close congenial cooperation²⁴. Mongolian compliance to conventionality resumed quickly when Mongolia was making a political swivel during the 1990s. The Mongolian Nationalist Movement championed the cause of integration and unity of the Mongol nation. Presently it vigorously operates in Inner Mongolia and *Buryatiya* under *The Movement for National Unity* and popularly known as "*Negeden*" and the *Buryat Mongols Party*²⁵. However, up to now none of those organisations has gained any significant political influence as it is beset with internal contradictions of revival of sacred cult of *Chinghis Khan* or to revive *Lamaism* or *Shamanism*.²⁶ In 1993 the faction convened a "*Global Mongolian Clansman Plenary Session*" in Ulaanbaatar, which became the guiding hymn for the future doctrines of "*Pan Mongolism*". Among Chinese anxiety already persists on the nature of Mongolian democracy which directly affects the anti-China movements in Inner Mongolian

²² China Mongolia to set up partnership of Good- neighbourliness, Mutual Trust, *The Beijing Times*, June 6, 2000.

²³ www.Mongolia-web.com.

²⁴ Sharad K. Soni, p.60.

²⁵ www.idi.org/russia/johnson, Feb 12 2007.

²⁶ David Johnson, "Russia Mongolia; latent Territorial Issues", *Centre for Defence Information* .Jan 17, 2003.

Autonomous region within China. China repeatedly condemned the so called *splittists* in Inner Mongolia for her efforts to affirm Mongol ethnicity of *Pan Mongolism* sentiment. Again the Chinese are against the spread of *Pan-Mongolism* because China has never permitted Mongolian nationalism to consolidate around its borders. This factor has constrained China to expand economic aid to Mongolia and to strengthen Mongolia's degree of economic dependence on China in the garb of bilateral relations. Beijing under the hassle for combating international terrorism after 9\11 entertained the long term political strategies. In it it found a way to oppose political resistances in *Inner Mongolia, Xinxiang, Tibet* and started suppression of the *Doctrine of National Minority Movements*. China is now focussing more on regional security cooperation and expansion of bi-literalism.

b) Dalai Lama and Tibet

One of the issues creating under-currents between the two was the Tibetan issue. On the eve of normalization of Sino-Mongolian relations in the second part of 1980 the Dalai Lama became one of the contending issues in bilateral ties between China and Mongolia. His repeated visits to Mongolia considerably seized influences for the political liberalization of Tibet in the 1990. The event precipitated Chinese anxiety and rail services between the two countries were disrupted for two days as Beijing has conveyed a reminder of its ability to control Mongolia's main trade route²⁷ In order to reaffirm the Mongolian official stand every agreement signed by the two parties has started with Mongolian affirmation of China's jurisdiction over Taiwan²⁸. Many Mongolian officials have repeatedly acknowledged that Taiwan is part of China.²⁹ Beijing also presses Ulaanbaatar for collective views on global and regional issues in order to limit the growing US presence with increasing involvements in Mongolia. President Bush became the first sitting US President to appear publicly with the Dalai Lama in a lavish American ceremony honouring the spiritual leader of Tibet. President Bush urged China to open talks with the Dalai Lama, a move that has alarmed China³⁰ with far reaching consequences.

America's Impact on Sino-Mongolian Relations

During the Cold War era the US was an ideological adversary of Mongolia. But today, in pursuance of its strategies in the countries within Asian peripheries and of global interests, it is almost becoming the future hope of the Mongols. For the first time in Mongolian history its president visited the US in 1991. Given a decade and a half of progress towards democracy, free market economy and active regional and international role Mongolia sought exceptional recognition reflecting outstanding US interest in Mongolia. The United States, after a long freeze, in the vicinity of China has made an important ally in Northern Asia. Economically the United States is now becoming Mongolia's third largest trading partner

²⁷ China Opposes Dalai Lama's Visit to Mongolia, *Reuters*, Beijing, Nov7, 2000.

²⁸ Mongolia China To Continue Friendly Relations, *The World*, Oct 31, 2000

²⁹ Morris Rossabi, "Beijing's Growing Politico-Economic Leverage Over Ulaanbaatar", *China Brief*, Vol.5, May 5 2005, www.Jamestownorg|publications

³⁰ CNN.com | US, Dalai Lama honour stroke US-Chinese tensions, October 7, 2007

after China and Russia³¹ President Bush and Defence Secretary Rumsfeld visited Mongolia in November and October 2005 respectively which indicates the US devotion to expand its political and economic activities in the remote corners of the globe for its zeal to retain its superiority³². Mongolia actively supported and expressed a desire to actively participate in the American master-minded and sponsored Anti-Terrorism Coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan³³ After the *World Trade Centre* (WTC) event in September 2001 both China and Mongolia assumed vital strategic status for the US in Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. The United States granted most-favoured nation status to Mongolia and the US Congress passed a special resolution in support of Mongolia's democratisation. The US has also extended financial and economic aid to Mongolia³⁴. Mongolia in turn advanced a regional peacekeeping training centre and quick support to US campaign in Afghanistan and Iraq. In view of impending and intricate challenges to Washington's expanding power bogeys in Iraq and elsewhere, Mongolia quietly facilitated its democratic institutions and procedure of governance that affirms US goals in the region. In the given circumstances Mongolia considered its long borders a predisposed destination to ever expanding US financial assistance and strategic interests in Asia.³⁵ Besides, Mongolia's promising place for the United States, an independent democratic Mongolia also occupies a strategic position between Beijing and Moscow. Today US is concerned about China's growing penetration into the Mongolian economy and is vigilant that it should not infiltrate negative military and political implications. The Chinese perceive these actions as part of a new US encirclement strategy for Asia³⁶. Therefore, Beijing cannot afford to overlook the importance of US-Mongolian ties. In fact, it is willing to counter the US encirclement strategy in order to provide safeguards to its interests. Today Mongolia instead of balancing China against Russia is now tasked with upholding relations with the US in a desire to exploit its politico-economic intrusion among the geopolitical competitors of the region in the new global order.

Assessment: Prospects and the Future

Mongolia's relations with China were governed by geo-political, economic and unpredictable strategic environment. Mongolia and China share a long history of relationship and have a strong legacy of rapport with crisscross intervals, hard experiences filled with an aspiration of subjugation or counteractions. Though, in the new impending political atmosphere, re-establishing ties in all fields i.e. technical, economic and political, symbolizes afresh zeal for the re-approachment, appeasement and understanding in the new regional power configuration. All this signifies perceived national interests and an urge to foster its implementation. Thus, consequent upon the perceived strategies in less than a decade Mongolian-Chinese bond in the region of unequal power distribution saw a dramatic

³¹ Byarkhuu. D, Mongolia and its Third neighbors, *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, Jan- March 2001

³² Stephen E. Noerper, "Mongolia at 800: Towards Enhanced U.S and International Support" [www. Nztilus.org\ index.html](http://www.Nztilus.org/index.html)

³³ Migeddorj Batchimeg, " Future Challenges for the PRC and Mongolia: A Mongolian Perspective", *China Brief*, [www.jamestown.org\ \publications](http://www.jamestown.org/publications)

³⁴ D. Chulundorj, p. 202.

³⁵ A Shift in Asia as Mongolia Stirs, *Asia Times* , May 20, 2007.

³⁶ Migeddorj Batchimeg, "Future Challenges for the PRC and Mongolia: A Mongolian Perspective", *China Brief*, 7\3\ 2005.

transformation from adversity to partnership and understanding since 1990. The reason behind this is the realisation that the regional and international strategic environment is replaced with a new world politico-economic order where all the powers on the spot are in search of new strategies to fit themselves in the fixture. Simultaneously China and Mongolia prefer to compose durable relations based on sound political and economic partnership. In fact, relations between the two have passed through three different phases.

Phase I, i.e. 1987-1991, is marked by the bilateral proximity and economic synchronization giving an impression that both were natural partners for increased economic interaction and trade. Over the years there has been a striking continuum in the upgrading of relations, especially in the political spheres which has procured a high degree of affinity, dependence and interdependence between the two. Both shared identical views on many problems on global and regional issues and jointly stood for peace and development. This contributed to the strengthening of bilateral relations by signing the important treaties and agreements in contemporary times in accordance with international conventions. Presently both are busy in articulating trade and mutually beneficial economic cooperation. As Chinese energy demand rises, a stable and neutral Mongolia is important for China as a transit link and a transportation corridor between resource rich Russian Siberia and resource deprived coastal and central China.

Phase II can be counted from 2002 onwards when bilateral relations consolidated further and the Mongolian Prime Minister Enkhbayar requested Chinese economic assistance in the construction of the railway link between the Eastern Province of Mongolia and North Eastern Province of China via Choibalsan Arshant. China and Mongolia jointly vowed to enhance cooperation on international issues extending over UN reform to regional political dialogue and the nuclear issues of the Korean Peninsula. Both sides expressed support for each others efforts to promote political dialogue and mutual trust in the region and welcome each other's initiatives enhancing dialogue and cooperation in Northeast Asia. The Chinese have improved their relations with Mongolia from "*Constructive Cooperative Relation*" to one of "*Strategic Partnership*" which has only been entered into by Chinese with a few countries including Russia, France and Brazil. The growing warmth witnessed rapid development with notable achievements in a number of fields. The views in each capital have dovetailed with those in the other providing many opportunities from *Enhanced Political Cooperation* to most *Preferred Nation*. In the 1990s one clear indication of the increasing close political relations between Mongolia and China were a number of high level visits. Mongolia and China have signed important treaties and agreements which provide a legal framework to promote bilateral relations. Both nations procure acquiescent benefits of peaceful coexistence. The changing climate in the international arena has made them to realize the benefits of sustaining the peaceful atmosphere. The last sixteen years have been productive and eventful; much has been enacted and contributed jointly in terms of political and economic exchange. The cultural interaction has also been intensified. Chinese loans and technical aid to Mongolia have increased throughout the 1990s and the pace of investment has actually accelerated over the past few years.

Phase III is of corresponding enthusiasm for dependent and interdependent activities in the economic sphere as China has voracious appetite for oil and gas from Mongolian deposits and Mongolia is attempting hard to make China more dependent on its energy resources and at the same endeavour to

develop this sector by seeking cooperation from other quarters too³⁷. China's is exploring petroleum through Dongsheng Jinggong in five blocks of Mongol territory. In 2006, it produced about 889,000 thousand barrels of crude and most of it went to China. For Mongolia the challenge is how to gain and sustain China's rapid oil demands for its own national development. Up to now with the Chinese purchases Mongolia anticipates bright future. The ongoing relations between the two generate a much scope for further expansion and concretization of Mongolia-China cooperation in various sectors. Both countries stand together for peace and development and prefer to build a strong relationship based on good political and economic collaboration. The recurring political aspiration to resolve territorial differences by peaceful means augurs well for the future development of their bilateral relationship. Both sides put bilateral ties in an important position in their foreign relations. China and Mongolia respect the others independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, respect the others path of development, properly handle the others concern, and exert joint efforts in reciprocal and common development.³⁸ It is a key factor in assessing how the future of the bilateral relationship will develop. This endeavour of Mongolia to improve and strengthen relations with China is the consequences of a comprehensive foreign policy formulation and on the basis of the transformation which may took or arise out of the impacts of new political and economic reforms in the country. Mongolia's aim is to establish in its immediate surroundings a power equation most attuned to its immediate national interests. Friendly and constructive relations with China constitute the cornerstone of Mongolia's security perceptions and foreign policy perspectives. All these developments have been contributory factors for these two neighbouring countries to strengthen their bilateral relations.

At the end Mongolia will try to benefit from economic linkages with China's booming economy. At the same time, China's rising power will remain a concern both for internal development and historical relations with its neighbours. By way of concluding it can be argued that the prospects for stability and continued collaboration in Sino-Mongolian relationship are indeed bright. Deepening bilateral cooperation in different fields and expanding economic interaction contribute to building a more stable bilateral relationship which will usher a new epoch in the Sino-Mongolian relations, but continued hard work is needed to manage the relationship.



³⁷ "Unlocking Mongolia's Potential", *Foreign Affairs*, New York, May-June 2005, p.3.

³⁸ China Mongolia good Neighbourly relations enter new Phase: Chinese President, *Xinhua* News Agency June 2006.

SHEIKH, Ab. Hamid

Silk Route in Kashmir: Costs of Closure and Opportunities of Revival

Abstract

The paper examines the impact of end of the entry and exit points to Kashmir with the rest of the world with the Partition of 'Greater Kashmir' and opportunities thereof for restoration of these links. With the closure of these links, Kashmir lost its relevance as the hub of socio-economic and cultural activities and caused division of families of common ethno-cultural descent. The Partition gave birth to the Kashmir Conflict, under which Kashmir is groaning since 1947. However, a number of factors facilitated dialogue between India and Pakistan and as a result revival of these links seems to be quite imminent. The restoration of the Silk Road in Kashmir has a great relevance to the changing geo-political and geo-strategic scenario on the Indo-Pak and Sino-Pak borders. The study would be quite significant for building up future relations among these South Asian neighbouring countries on the basis of the rich historical past, in this age of globalization and regional integration.

Key Words: Route, Closure, Cost, Opportunities, Globalization, Confidence Building Measures, Revival.

Introduction

The Partition of the Indian subcontinent into Indian Administered Kashmir called Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) called Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) in 1947 resultantly gave birth to the Line of Control (LoC) between J&K and PAK notwithstanding immense losses to the two states as well as its peoples. Before 1947, Kashmir enjoyed special status in the Indian subcontinent as it offered a direct land access of India to China, Tashkent, Lahore, Amritsar and Rawalpindi, and facilitated the free movement of diverse goods, merchants, explorers, spies and soldiers across different routes criss-crossing Kashmir. However, with the emergence of the LoC, the process of free trade and traffic across hitherto 'Greater Kashmir' or J&K and PAK froze. Thus, emergence of artificial borders and consequent Wars between India and Pakistan in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1990s on J&K caused serious damage to the socio-economic welfare of the people on both sides of the border. The paper is an analytical model on the impact of Partition and consequent end of the Silk Route links connecting Kashmir with Central Asia and the rest of the world and opportunities for revival of these links between India and Pakistan as Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). The revival of these links, besides earning lots of benefits to local peoples, would open new markets for the Valley products in Central Asia and China, re-strengthen Sufi traditions, and restore people-to-people contacts. It has a great deal of scope in view of the significance that the Silk Road has assumed in the Indo-Pak relations over the last few years and that it has been a life-line to the people on the both sides of Indian borders in J&K and AJK.

1). Silk Route

The Silk Road was the oldest and most famous transcontinental trade route antedating several thousand years before present (114 B.C.), stretching over 4,000 miles (6,500 kms) and spanning Europe, China, Central Asia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, etc. The Indian subcontinent was connected to this Grand Highway through a network of sub-routes criss-crossing Kashmir across the Himalayas, Pamirs and the Hindukush Mountains. Through these routes there existed strong cultural, historical and commercial connections between South Asia and Central Asia since ancient times.¹ The most important corridors connecting Kashmir with the outside world in general and Central Asia in particular were the Zojila Pass (11570 ft.) connecting Kashmir with Ladakh and thence with Central Asia, Jhelum Valley route, most convenient axis connecting Srinagar, Muzaffarabad and Rawalpindi², and Gurais-Gilgit route linking Kashmir with Central Asia and Afghanistan.³ All the three had sub-routes including Poonch-Rawalakote and Kargil-Iskardu-Gilgit Road. However, these overland connections fractured with the Partition of the Indian-subcontinent and emergence of India and Pakistan on its debris in 1947 followed by the de-facto fragmentation of "Greater Kashmir" into J&K and AJK and the emergence of the LoC in between them. The closure of these routes led to the decline in Kashmir's share in regional trade structure. Entire transportation and communication networks broke down in the process, and with that, ceased the free mobility of men, material, ideas, and cross-cultural and ideological fertilization, division of families of common ethno-cultural descent became a reality.⁴ As a matter of fact, the aforesaid unhealthy developments led to innumerable costs and constraints for the peoples and the nations of India and Pakistan.

2). Costs of Closure

Thus the Partition of the Indian subcontinent, the division of Kashmir, Indo-Pakistan wars and the surfacing of the LoC as an artificial border-line between J&K and PAK was not devoid of acute humanitarian problems, and one was indisputably related to the division of otherwise joint and large families of common historical background. Borders have not just divided land in Kashmir; they have pierced hearts and minds equally.⁵ Out of 17 million of people,⁶ who suffered due to border displacement, 1.5 million were Kashmiris. An estimated six to seven million Muslims moved from India to Pakistan and nearly eight million Hindus and Sikhs moved from Pakistan to India. The migrant population in India has been leading a miserable life for the past three generations in Jammu, Kathua,

¹ *Trade Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State, Samvat year 1989-90*, The Development Department of his Highness Government, Jammu and Kashmir, 1934, p. 20, (Currently available in Allama Iqbal Library, University of Kashmir).

² Rohit Singh, "Operations in Jammu and Kashmir 1947-48," History Division, Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India, Nataraj Publishers, Reprinted 2005, p. 131.

³ Faheem Aslam, "Dardistan: Kashmir's link to Central Asia, Afghanistan," *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, 11 September 2011.

⁴ Mushtaq A. Kaw, "Border Politics in South Asia: A Case Study of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan," *Eurasia Border Review*, Hokkaido University, Volume 1 No. 1, Spring 2010, p. 49.

⁵ Dr. Sadia Chisti, "Divided Families," *Greater Kashmir*, 10 March 2012.

⁶ C. N. Vakil, *Economic Consequences of Divided India: A Study of the Economy of India and Pakistan*, Bombay: Vora, 1950, 147.

Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur districts of J&K.⁷ Paradoxically, the Indo-Pakistan borders in the Ladakh region were redrawn three times due to the wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971, and this eventually made the repeated divisions of families a harsh reality.⁸ Iskardu and Baltistan have roughly around 19 refugee camps housing about 24,574 displaced persons from J&K. The biggest camp in Gilgit as a whole had 2,227 persons and the smaller ones about 10,000 persons, those living with their kith and kin aside.⁹ This kind of displacement of households and families not only affected the social life but also the age-long constructs of economic relations. Around six to seven thousand families got divided between Kargil and Baltistan, which never met after Partition despite their common history and ethnicity.¹⁰ Hundreds of families of the Turtuk region got distanced from their relatives as a result of India-Pakistan war in 1971. The entire region of Turtuk in Nubra Ladakh was a part of Baltistan till such time. The division took place overnight leaving behind painful tale of divided families and communities of the same ethno-historical background.¹¹ Lamenting on the unfortunate development, Muhammad Shafi, an amiable elderly political activist of Drass, reported that his family was split due to emergence of the LoC. Consequently two of his uncles, traders by occupation, are placed on the other side of LoC in Iskardu. The only time that his father Haji Ghulam Rasool saw his remaining brothers, was during a stopover at Karachi airport whence his father was going for *Haj* pilgrimage in the mid-seventies. These painful stories litter the landscape across Kashmir, Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan, create a sense of *deja vu* and exactly rhyme with the lamentable narratives associated with the freezed Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road.¹² Unfortunately, no systemic data is forthcoming about the number of such divided families in Kargil and Iskardu. In Kashmir, every family has suffered a lot and each person has his own tale of suffering to tell.

The unpropitious development of Partition and consequent surfacing of rigid borders forged the Kashmir conflict with cascading effects on the people of Kashmir for more than six decades now. Both nations of India and Pakistan confronted each other in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s on J&K on ethno-national and ideological grounds. The inestimable cost was visible in the killing of more than 1,00,000 souls.¹³ Hundreds and thousands were displaced and rendered homeless. Equal number was subjected to psychiatric ailments, and around 45,000 such persons, were treated in Srinagar hospitals during 2000-06 alone. A study by Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar, former director of Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) at Soura, Srinagar, reveals that the stress disorders have reduced the reproductive age of Kashmiri women by almost 10 years. Conflict is one of the major factors for increased prevalence of Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) and premature Menopause or premature

⁷ Ajay Kumar, "Impact of Internal Displacement in Jammu and Kashmir: Study of Pakistan occupied Kashmir Refugees", *Indian Streams Research Journal* Vol.2, Issue.III/April; 2012, pp. 1-4.

⁸ Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra, the Silk Route in Kashmir: Preliminary Research Findings, *Central Eurasian Studies Review*, Miami University, Volume 8, Number 1, Spring 2009, p. 15.

⁹ Sushobha Barve, "Beyond Borders," *Kashmir Report 2007*, Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, Delhi, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰ Martin Van Beek, *Ladakh Studies*, International Association for Ladakh Studies, Bristol University Print Services, 20 March, 2006, p. 9.

¹¹ Dr. Smruti S. Pattanaik and Dr. Arpita Anant, "Cross-LoC Confidence Building Measures between India and Pakistan: A Giant Leap or a Small Step towards Peace," *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, New Delhi, pp. 16-17.

¹² Martin Van Beek, *Ladakh Studies*, International Association for Ladakh Studies, Bristol University Print Services, 20 March, 2006, p. 9

¹³ Radha Kumar, (ed.), *Negotiating Peace in Deeply Divided Societies*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009, p. 247.

ovarian failure. PCOS is 2-3 times more prominent in Kashmir than in the rest of the country.¹⁴ The inestimable number of orphanages and destruction of precious infrastructure make yet another case of effects following the Kashmir conflict.

The economic cost of the conflict cannot be confined to a particular sector of industry or investment. It affected the livelihood of local people especially in tourism, horticulture and handicrafts sectors.¹⁵ In sequence, the average annual growth of Net State Domestic Product from 1980-81 to 1999-2000 was 12.45% in J & K whereas the same was as high as 15.01%, 14.28%, 13.83% and 14.3% in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and Kerala respectively. Similarly, the average annual growth of Per Capita Net State Domestic Product during 1980-2000 was estimated at merely 9.63% in J & K as compared to 12.9%, 11.63%, 11.63%, and 12.86% in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and Kerala respectively.¹⁶ The conflict stalled private investment and rendered the economic growth stagnant. Above all, the conflict strained the relations of India, Pakistan and China. It fuelled traditional enmity to an extent where the conflicting parties diverted their precious resources to defence at the cost of works of public utility. However, several factors were encouraging to bring together India and Pakistan for resumption of peace talks.

3). Opportunities of Revival

(I). External Factors

(a). Globalization

The dynamics of geo-politics and geo-economics had a great role in promoting thought for conflict resolution through peace process. The growth of international communications and trade and softening of borders and taxation policies contributed to the creation of an unprecedented global economy, which was galvanized by many countries in South and Central Asia for their respective development. Perhaps the most important secret underlying the resolution of territorial disputes between states lies in the incentives offered by economic integration. Indeed globalization pre-empted porous national boundaries through the construction of highways, roadways, railways and pipelines across the Central Asian region.¹⁷ The Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh also realized that "India's foreign policy aims at Global order, in which India's over-riding goals of rapid, sustained and inclusive socio-economic development and poverty alleviation are attained rapidly without any hindrance."¹⁸ It is partially in this background that India and Pakistan thought of re-inventing their relations through honest management of shared geographical resources.¹⁹ It is again for this reason that the new generation in India with rate of

¹⁴ *Kashmir Life*, Srinagar, 26 February-03 March, 2012.

¹⁵ Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra and Seema Shekhawat, "The Peace Process and Prospects for Economic Reconstruction in Kashmir," *Peace & Conflict Review*, Volume 3, Issue 1, University of Peace, 2008, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶ Planning Commission of India, *Jammu & Kashmir: Development Scenario, Executive Summary*, 2006, p. 1, http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/sdr_jandk/sdr_jkexecutive.pdf (Accessed on 07-05-2008).

¹⁷ Zahid Anwar, "Development of Infrastructural Linkages between Pakistan and Central Asia" *A research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, January-June 2011, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Punjab, Lahore, p. 104.

¹⁸ *The Asian Age*, New Delhi, 2 June 2010.

¹⁹ Bashir Assad, "Resumption of Talks: It is Kashmir through Kabul", *Kashmir Times*, Srinagar, 18 February 2010.

higher literacy, income and access to media seek for peaceful co-existence in South Asia²⁰ through the medium of economic integration, softening of borders, restoration of traditional land routes and people-to-people contacts. The India-Pakistan governments are seriously considering restoration of Kargil-Iskardu-Gilgit route for economic integration of J & K with PAK and Central Asia.

(b). International Community/Organization

The role of international community in the Kashmir dispute has been that India and Pakistan should built trust in each other to resolve the dispute with the help of international support whenever required. It is for this reason that Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary-General, lately asked the leadership of the two countries to peacefully resolve the Kashmir issue. He indicated his willingness to help the troubled neighbours in ironing out the differences over the matter, and called for an immediate end to the violence in Kashmir and appealed for restraint by all parties.²¹ He welcomed the ongoing “constructive” talks between the Indo-Pak Foreign Ministers for peace, development and security of South Asia as a whole. Pertinently, “India and Pakistan are neighbouring countries, important nations in that region - peace and security would have important implications (for them).”²² Like the UN, American strategy mostly aims at reducing the India-Pakistan tension over Kashmir. The successful American facilitation to end the Kargil conflict, ease tensions during the border confrontation, and help initiate an official-level dialogue between the two countries reveals American policy on the Kashmir issue for being a flash point.²³ The Bush administration played an active role in facilitating the dialogue between India and Pakistan in 2003. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage and later on, Secretary Rice, brokered peace process between the Foreign Ministers and leaders of the two countries.²⁴ In fact, the genesis of ongoing peace process goes back to the Armitage mission²⁵ that was carried out at the height of the military standoff between Pakistan and India in 2002, and resumption of talks was linked with a permanent end to “cross-border terrorism” by Pakistan. Two years later, India and Pakistan signed the Islamabad Declaration, which stipulated the Indian commitment to resume talks in exchange for Pakistan’s pledge to end “cross-border terrorism.” Thus, overtly or covertly, the US was instrumental in getting the peace process started.²⁶ Of late, Barack Obama, US President, recognized that “India is an important partner in the regional security... We want to encourage dialogue between India and Pakistan, that is something we continue to support when there are efforts, because the more confidence and trust that can be built between those two nations, the more able everyone else is to focus on really the challenges of extremism and terrorism that are a threat to all.”²⁷ The need was also

²⁰ Malik Javeed Iqbal, “Cross-Line of Control trade: a Step towards Peace Building and Conflict Resolution,” *Jammu and Kashmir Trade across the Line of Control*, Discussion Papers, December 2010, p. 27.

²¹ *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 23 September 2010.

²² *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, 31 July 2011.

²³ Alexander Evans, “Reducing Tension is not Enough,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Spring 2001, pp. 81-193.

²⁴ Khalid Mahmud, “Improving Indo-Pak Relations” *South Asian Journal*, South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), Issue 32, April-June 2011, p. 35.

²⁵ US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage was engaged in normalizing the relations between the South Asian neighbours.

²⁶ Ijaz Hussain, “Obama and Kashmir,” *Daily Times*, Islamabad, 3 December 2008,.

²⁷ *Greater Kashmir*, 14 January 2011.

underscored in view of the economic implications as Hillary Clinton said, "Promoting trade links in violence hit South Asia will bring prosperity and peace not only to India, but also to countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan."²⁸ She further said that "inter-state trade would bring stability to the region. The path to long-term peace in South Asia lies in resolving the Kashmir issue and America held discussions in this regard with leaders in both India and Pakistan, solving Kashmir issue unlock the path for long-term solution."²⁹ This kind of international feeling was a factor that contributed to the sitting of the leaders of two countries on table for resolution of long pending disputes including Kashmir.

The *Organization of Islamic Cooperation* (OIC) also called for peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, OIC general secretary reported in September 2011 in a meeting of OIC nations, "As on the previous occasions, we continue to reaffirm our strong and principled position that the J & K dispute has one inevitable path to ride, which is the path of negotiations towards a peaceful solution of this long-lasting conflict. A peaceful settlement of the dispute would certainly serve the people of both India and Pakistan and the overall interests of South Asia as well. We are therefore hopeful for constructive and successful bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan through which a final solution aiming at respecting the will and rights of the people in J & K could be achieved."³⁰ The OIC expressed full faith in the United Nations policy towards the Kashmir issue and its resolution through just and durable peace. The United Nations General Assembly President, Nassir Abdul-Aziz Al-Nasser of the State of Qatar said, "History has shown that peaceful settlements, including those brokered through mediation efforts, provide the most cost-effective and long-lasting solution for disputes."³¹ Dr. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, during the OIC meeting in 2011, also supported peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the people of J & K.³²

(II). Internal Factors

(a). Civil Society

Civil society had also a certain role in the restoration of peace talks between the two countries. The Indian civil activists recognized Kashmir as an issue and emphasized its solution through dialogue for the larger interests of India.³³ They made it clear that, "if the government of India continues to get carried away by the elections, the day is not far off when you will see another uprising on the streets of Kashmir."³⁴ Thus, they underscored the need of a meaningful, time-bound and result-oriented dialogue,

²⁸ *Greater Kashmir*, 15 July 2011.

²⁹ *Greater Kashmir*, 23 September 2011.

³⁰ *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, 23 September 2011.

³¹ Kashmir issue discussed during the OIC Annual Meeting at the United Nations, OIC Contact Group Meeting on Kashmir, United Nations, New York, 21 September 2011. http://www.kashmir.com/index.php?option=com_acymailing&view=lists&Itemid=3 (Accessed on 11-11-2011).

³² Dr. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Chairman, All Parties Hurriyet Conference, Srinagar, Kashmir, Kashmir issue discussed during the OIC Annual Meeting at the United Nations, OIC Contact Group Meeting on Kashmir, United Nations, New York, 21 September 2011.

³³ *Greater Kashmir*, 14 October 2011.

³⁴ *Kashmir News*, February 16, 2009, <http://www.esinislam.com/> (Accessed on 16-01-2011).

between India and Pakistan so as to usher in a new era of peace, prosperity and stability in the region.³⁵ To quote noted Indian writer, Arundhati Roy, "I think that the people of Kashmir have the right to self-determination, they have the right to choose who they want to be and how they want to be."³⁶ To this effect, the Indian civil society associations organized *dharnas*³⁷ at different place in India and across the globe to voice their opinion about the issue. The members of the *Kashmir Centre for Social and Development Studies* (KCSDS), in 2010, suggested for the resolution of Kashmir issue through peace process.³⁸ Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, stated that talks were, "the best way out to resolve the dispute over Jammu & Kashmir. The Kashmir dispute can be resolved only through talks and understanding."³⁹ The women groups on both sides of the LoC⁴⁰ urged for regional peace, security, and economic stability through amicable solution of the protracted conflict. Pugwash brought people together across the LoC during 2004-09, provided the first peoples forum which united together political leaders of J & K and Pakistan for laying emphasis on resolution of Kashmir dispute through dialogue and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). It is indeed because of it that Chief Minister of J&K, Omar Abdullah, visited Pakistan to reinforce the idea of peaceful resolution through dialogue. During the post Mumbai Attack, when the dialogue process between the two countries was frozen, Pugwash in 2009 endeavoured to build great deal of pressure on the two countries to resume dialogue and shun war path.⁴¹ The media also played a very significant role in building bilateral trust: Pakistan's *Jang* group and India's *Times of India* group started a TV show, *Aman ki Asha* (a hope for peace) in January 2010, to periodically feature programmes essential to facilitate people-to-people contacts and promote peace on both sides of the Radcliff line. The enormous publications of *Jung Group* in Pakistan facilitated the beginning of parliamentary dialogue and the foundation lying of the *South Asian Free Media Association* (SAFMA).⁴² Another leading Indian newspaper, the *Indian Express*, supported the dialogue process by publishing summaries of articles from Pakistani Press.⁴³

³⁵ Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Member of *Jamat-e-Islami* Pakistan & head of *Muthida Majlis-e-Amal* reported the same: *Greater Kashmir*, 19 February 2009.

³⁶ *Greater Kashmir*, 13 November 2011.

³⁷ Civil Society protested on Kashmir killings on 10 July 2010 in New Delhi at Jantar Mantar. Representatives from various civil society groups expressed their solidarity for the people of Kashmir. The two-hour *dharna* was organized by a nongovernmental organization, Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD).

³⁸ Hilal Ahmad Wani, "The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention in Jammu and Kashmir," *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Centre for Promoting Ideas, USA, Vol. 2 No. 4; March 2011, pp. 164-66.

³⁹ *Greater Kashmir*, 17 November 2011.

⁴⁰ The dialogue on 'Women's Roles in Society: Issues of Mutual Concern' held at Gulmarg from the 27th to 29th of September, 2011, organized by Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR), New Delhi, and Women for Peace, Srinagar, in which forty five women from all regions of J&K, as well as PAK and Gilgit-Baltistan participated.

⁴¹ Moeed Yosuf (Part I), Sandra Butcher (Part II) and Paolo Cotta Ramsino, Composite Report of Pugwash Consultations of Pakistan June-October, 2009, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, Islamabad, March 2010, pp. 40-41.

⁴² Radha Kumar, p. 272.

⁴³ Dr. Yasin, "India-Pakistan Trade Relations: Problems and Prospects", *Indian Ocean Digest*, Centre for Indian Ocean Studies, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Issue: 48, Vol. 27, July-December, p. 66.

(b). Political Elite in J&K

The pressure of several elite and social groups within J & K State also made the restoration of dialogue process necessary. Though the political elite has no common conceptual framework regarding J&K state yet it favours resolution of the Kashmir issue through peace process. While the hard core Geelani group of Hurriyat conference strongly favours the right to self-determination of the people of J & K under the auspices of United Nations, the Mirvaiz group supports political stability as a key to economic prosperity of the two countries.⁴⁴ The latter welcomed the initiation of dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad in Bhutan but, at the same time, urged for the inclusion of Kashmiri leadership in the dialogue process for the sake of South Asian peace and security.⁴⁵ However, the mainstream parties of J & K have different concept of the state: the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is in favour of self rule, which provides for economic self-reliance, restoration of power to the state administration and allowing the state to draw benefits of its geo-political location in the sub-continent. It favours that Srinagar should be connected to Yarkand in China (777 miles) and beyond through a 6-way lane constructed by China. It also seeks re-opening of the Srinagar-Iskardu-Gilgit route which connects J & K to Iran and Afghanistan through the Karakorum Highway.⁴⁶ The PDP maintained that the people of J & K look forward to a broad based and structured dialogue between India and Pakistan which could solve the six decade old problem. "The two countries must try to avoid pitfalls and hiccups which had interrupted the dialogue process in the past as had happened in the wake of Mumbai attacks in 2008,"⁴⁷ is the stand of PDP on the J & K issue. Favoursing dialogue with entire leadership of J & K including the Hurriyat, the ruling National Conference demanded restoration of autonomy to the state and re-opening of old trade routes of Kargil-Iskardu, Srinagar-Rawalpindi, Poonch-Balakote and others so that people from both sides of the LoC develop closer contacts and trade.⁴⁸ Even the Governor of J & K State, N. N. Vohra, supported that the stakeholders and people of the State should work towards restoration of lasting peace, communal harmony, amity and brotherhood in J & K and revive and promote the states past glory as an abode of peace and tranquility.⁴⁹

(c). Rising Defence Expenditure

As argued above, due to the unceasing hostility and mistrust and strained relations, both India and Pakistan alarmingly built their defence capacities and earmarked a certain share of their GDP towards defence expenses. A comparative study on the cost of conflict brings out some disturbing facts as large percentage of population in both states remains mired in abject poverty. Pakistan's defence budget since 2000 has been almost 3.9% of its GDP, while India's defence spending has averaged around 2.7% of its GDP. India's social sector development budget has been around 6%, while Pakistan's spending has

⁴⁴ *Greater Kashmir*, 23 December 2011.

⁴⁵ *Greater Kashmir*, 8 February 2011.

⁴⁶ *Greater Kashmir*, 13 February 2011.

⁴⁷ *Rising Kashmir*, 3 March 2010.

⁴⁸ *Greater Kashmir*, 8 June 2010.

⁴⁹ *Greater Kashmir*, 14 October 2011.

barely averaged 4% of its GDP on social sector.⁵⁰ Both countries stand among the 15 major military spenders of the world notwithstanding the fact that over 50 million Pakistanis and 34% of India's population fall below poverty line.⁵¹ The December 2001-October 2002 standoff consumed a total of US\$ 3 billion (1.8 billion for India and 1.2 for Pakistan). While India's spending (cost) amounted to 0.38 percent of its GDP, Pakistan's cost was a whopping 1.79% of its GDP. Military expenditures of both India and Pakistan have continued to increase since then. For the budgetary year 2006/2007, India's defence expenditure increased from 2.7 to 3.1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and that of Pakistan swelled to 5.5% of its GDP, excluding pensions, during the same period.⁵² 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 and Pakistan increased its defence budget by 15% in 2009 despite her insignificant growth rate of 3.3% of GDP.⁵³ For the financial year 2011-12, the Government of Pakistan increased the country's military budget by 12%, including the 15% increase in the salaries of the employees. The total amount of the budget was Rs. 495 billion, compared to Rs 442 billion for the year 2010-11. The Finance Minister while justifying the increase in the defence budget said, "We live in a difficult neighbourhood. We are faced with threats to our security. We remain engaged in a struggle for the safety of our citizens. We are the victims of war on terrorism."⁵⁴ However, while analyzing the defence budget, over the last few years, there has been a decline in the defence budget of Pakistan in practical terms. The fact remains that, during the year 2010-11, in term of GDP share, the defence allocation was 2.6% whereas, despite an increase of 12%, the GDP share of defence allocation for the next year (2011-12) would go down to 2.4%, a decrease of 2%. This decline was due to inflation, which at an average was 14.1% and continues to be so over the years.⁵⁵ The union budget of India, 2011-12, increased the defence allocation to Rs 1, 64,415.49 crore (\$36.03 billion), an increase by 11.59% over the previous year's allocation. But its share in the GDP was decreased from 2.12 in 2010-11 to 1.8% in 2011- 2012 implicitly due to the relatively faster growth of the Indian economy and the resultant increase in total central governmental expenditure.⁵⁶ This declining trend in the share of military budget in GDP reveals positivism as both India and Pakistan resolved to go hammer and tongs after 'trust deficit' which they realized had blocked the progress of developing a genuine relationship.⁵⁷ Thus globalization, internal

⁵⁰ Intiaz Gul "the Cost of India-Pakistan Conflict" *the Friday Times*, Islamabad, 24-30 December 2004.

⁵¹ Ingolf Kiesow and Nicklas Norling, *The Rise of India: Problems and Opportunities*, Central Asian-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, Silk Road paper January 2007, p. 27.

⁵² Ingolf Kiesow and Nicklas Norling, *The Rise of India: Problems and Opportunities*, Central Asian-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, Silk Road paper January 2007, pp. 27-28.

⁵³ Mushtaq A. Kaw, "Border Politics in South Asia: A Case Study of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan," *Eurasia Border Review*, Hokkaido University, Volume 1 No. 1, Spring 2010, p. 49.

⁵⁴ Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan, "Pakistan: Inside the Military Budget", Pakistan Ka Khuda Hafiz (Leading Policy Institute), 8 June 2011, <http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/> (Accessed on 17-05-2011).

⁵⁵ Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan, "Pakistan: Inside the Military Budget", Pakistan Ka Khuda Hafiz (Leading Policy Institute), 8 June 2011, <http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/> (Accessed on 17-05-2011).

⁵⁶ Laxman K. Behera, "India's Defence Budget 2011-2012", Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, 7 March 2011, <http://www.idsa.in/?q>. (Accessed on 12-10-2011)

⁵⁷ *The Asian Age*, New Delhi, 2 June 2010.

and external pressures and the high mounting costs of defence, pushed the two countries to perceive of peace talks⁵⁸ for conflict resolution through several Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) including the restoration of ancient routes.

(d). Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)

The CBMs characterized softening of borders to allow free movement of people, goods and services:⁵⁹ perhaps the only viable alternative to reconcile the divergent India-Pakistan stand on Kashmir.⁶⁰ True during 1980s and 1990s both sides strived for peace talks but that proved rhetoric in absence of mutual trust. However, in 1996 and onwards, much work was done quietly for resumption of the dialogue process.⁶¹ The advent of Nawaz Sharif and I. K. Gujral governments greatly helped this process. Prime Minister Navaz Shrief was candid on the Kashmir issue, "We cannot take Kashmir by force and you cannot give it peacefully we have to find a way to span the distance."⁶² In 1997, the Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers engaged in negotiations on the sidelines of the Male SAARC Summit. This said process of composite dialogue was furthered,⁶³ at the Foreign Secretaries level meeting of the two countries on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly Session in September 1998. This was followed by the first substantive round of talks on the issues of composite dialogue, mutual security and CBMs in October 1998.⁶⁴ Though the process galloped with Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Pakistan in February 1999, yet it was stalled due to the Kargil war, the military coup in Pakistan, terrorist attacks on the J&K Assembly and the Indian Parliament.⁶⁵ However, June 2004 saw real beginning of the dialogue process. The immediate impulse came from the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit in Islamabad in January 2004. Both agreed to resume the dialogue within what was billed as the '2+6'⁶⁶ framework.⁶⁷ The Islamabad stressed on regional cooperation and resolution of all pending issues

⁵⁸ Moeed Yusuf, "Promoting Cross-Loc Trade in Kashmir," United States Institute of Peace, *Special Report 230*, August 2009, p. 2.

⁵⁹ P.R. Chari and Hasan Akbar Rizvi, "Making Borders Irrelevant", *Epilogue*, Vol. II, Issue 9, Jammu, October, 2008, p. 24.

⁶⁰ Siddharth Varadaraja, "Building Trust, One Step at Time", *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 23 June 2010.

⁶¹ Satish Chandra, "The Prospects for Indo-Pak Dialogue," *South Asian Journal*, South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), Issue 32, April-June 2011, p. 41.

⁶² Gull Wani, "Reconciling different dialogue tracks", *Kashmir Times*, Srinagar, January 5, 2011.

⁶³ Asma-ul-Husna Faiz, *India Pakistan Dialogue: Bringing the Society In*, RCSS Policy Studies 39, Colombo: Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, 2007, p. 93.

⁶⁴ Satish Chandra, "The Prospects for Indo-Pak Dialogue," *South Asian Journal*, South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), Issue 32, April-June 2011, p. 42.

⁶⁵ Asma-ul-Husna Faiz, *India Pakistan Dialogue: Bringing the Society In*, RCSS Policy Studies 39, Colombo: Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, 2007, p. 94.

⁶⁶ This meant that two issues were assigned a higher position on the scale of negotiations, while six others were to be dealt with piecemeal. Negotiations on the two major issues of peace and security, including Confidence Building Measures and Kashmir, were to be held at the foreign secretary level. Negotiations on six other issues, Siachen, the Wular Barrage/Tulbul navigation project, Sir Creek, terrorism and drug trafficking, economic and commercial cooperation and promotion of friendly exchanges were to start from July 2004 by the relevant administrative departments.

⁶⁷ Asma-ul-Husna faiz, *India Pakistan Dialogue: Bringing the Society In*, RCSS Policy Studies 39, Colombo: Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, 2007, p. 94.

including Kashmir. At the same time, it reaffirmed not to allow its soil to be used for terrorism.⁶⁸ Between 2004 and 2008, when the two countries were about to resume the fifth round of talks, the 26/11 (2008) Mumbai terror attack occurred, which stalled the above process, as India believed Pak had its hand in it, which the latter out rightly denied. However, for the larger interests and under different compulsions, the two countries again decided to resume talks.⁶⁹ In September 2008, the president of Pakistan and Prime Minister of India met during the 63rd United Nations General Assembly session in New York, resolved to strengthen bilateral relations, open the Wagah-Attari road, Khokrapar-Munnabao rail, and the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot roads for trade and traffic on 21 October 2008.⁷⁰ The inclination of both the countries to resume dialogue⁷¹ brought them together for renewed engagement at Sharm-el-Shaikh in July 2009, and the decision to initiate dialogue at Foreign Ministers level without any precondition was taken at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit at Thimpu, Bhutan. The Pakistani Prime Minister assured that India's 'core concern' of terrorism would be addressed.⁷² Consequently, the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries held talks on the sidelines of the SAARC meeting to hammer out modalities of peace process. The hope for taking this process forward on all issues was expressed by Indian Minister of External Affairs, S. M. Krishna, when he said: "Secretary-level talks on counter-terrorism, (including progress of Mumbai trail); human rights violation, peace, security, resolution of pending issues including J & K and Siachen etc., will be held soon."⁷³ Soon he met his Pakistani counterpart, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, at New Delhi on 27 July 2011, to discuss issues related to "Confidence Building Measures including cross-border trade and visa protocols."⁷⁴ The bilateral dialogue has taken over two and a half years to revive and continues successfully regardless of the impact of Mumbai bomb blasts.⁷⁵ With the spirit to carry forward the dialogue process, Pakistan sent its own team to investigate into the Mumbai Attack⁷⁶ and granted the status of Most Favoured Nations (MNF) to India, expedite and upgrade cross-LoC trade and travel in J&K.⁷⁷ She also removed restrictions on the import of 12 items from India, including raw materials and machinery. In fact, both countries agreed to increase the movement of trucks across-LoC from two to

⁶⁸ Ishtiaq Ahmad and Rabia Akhtar Choudhry "India Pakistan Peace Process 2004-2008: A Case Study of Kashmir," *Research Journal of International Studies*, Institute for Interkulturelle Studien, Issue 13 (March, 2010), p. 94.

⁶⁹ Samarjit Ghosh, "Two Decades of Indo-Pak CBMs A Critique from India," IPCS Issue Brief 132, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, September 2009, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁰ *Epilogue*, Vol. II, Issue 9, Jammu, October, 2008, p. 23.

⁷¹ While talking about resumption of composite dialogue Gilani said, "the suspension of the India-Pakistan composite dialogue in the wake of the 2008 Mumbai attacks allowed non-state actors to succeed in dictating their agenda, Pakistan wants peaceful relations with the neighbouring countries including India, Afghanistan, and Iran. India should sit with us to initiate dialogue to resolve all important issues including Jammu and Kashmir, Water dispute and terrorism:" *Greater Kashmir*, 4 January 2009.

⁷² Dr. Yasin, "India-Pakistan Relations: Problems and Prospects", *Indian Ocean Digest*, Osmania University: Centre for Indian Ocean Studies, Hyderabad, July-December 2010, Issue 48, Vol. 27, p. 64.

⁷³ *Greater Kashmir*, 11 February 2011.

⁷⁴ *Greater Kashmir*, 28 July 2011.

⁷⁵ On 13 July 2011, a series of deadly bomb blasts ripped through India's financial capital, killing 23 people and wounding over 130.

⁷⁶ *Dawn*, Karachi, 17 July 2011.

⁷⁷ *Greater Kashmir*, 11 November 2011.

four days, as part of CBMs aimed at normalizing the bilateral trade relations.⁷⁸ The committee of the interlocutors under Padgankar⁷⁹ is also reported to have recommended free flow of people and trade across the LoC and reopening of more routes without “prolonged bureaucratic hassles.” This would end the isolation of J&K and usher in the welfare of people in adjoining parts of Asia.⁸⁰

The Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) characterized softening of borders to allow free movement of people, goods and services:⁸¹ perhaps the only viable alternative to reconcile the divergent India-Pakistan stand on Kashmir.⁸² The two countries resolved to strengthen bilateral relations, opened the Wagah-Attari road, Khokrapar-Munnabao rail, and the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot roads for trade and traffic. The Kargil-Iskardu road was put in proposal but is yet to be revived. Conditioning sustenance of bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan, the reopening of Kargil-Iskardu-Gilgit road and other links is likely to be as good a reality as that of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakote roads. The benefits of the revival would of course out-weigh the cost associated with the revival.

Conclusion:

The Silk Road was the oldest and most famous transcontinental trade route antedating several thousand years before present (114 B.C.), stretching over 4,000 miles (6,500 kms) and spanning Europe, China, Central Asia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, etc. The Indian subcontinent was connected to this Grand Highway through a network of sub-routes criss-crossing Kashmir across the Himalayas, Pamirs and the Hindukush Mountains. However, the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, emergence of India and Pakistan on its debris and the sequential wars between them in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1990s on J&K led to the emergence of artificial borders and obviously the closure of traditional trans-Gilgit and trans-Kashmir land routes. Kashmir lost its relevance as a centre of trade and massive and intermittent displacement led to migration of many people from J&K to Pakistan or its Northern Areas of Gilgit. Out of 17 million people, affected in the process, 1.5 million were Kashmiris who migrated to the other side of the LoC in PAK as a result of India-Pakistan wars. Above all, these unhealthy developments triggered the Kashmir conflict with immense human loss and damage of precious infrastructure.

Consequently, India-Pakistan relations remained strained and each state carried out massive military build-ups with considerable share of defense expenses in their respective GDP. However, due to globalization and its emphasis on regional and economic integration besides immense internal and external pressure, the two countries tread the path of reshaping their relation through the dialogue. The composite dialogue process started in 2004, as a mutual *detente*, and in 2005, both countries pursued

⁷⁸ *Greater Kashmir*, 13 November 2011.

⁷⁹ Padgaonkar was a member of the Panel of the three member interlocutors on Kashmir, appointed by the centre in 2010 to look after and analyze the main causes of the summer unrest in Kashmir in 2010. The Panel was supposed to make recommendations for establishing long term peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

⁸⁰ *Greater Kashmir*, 24 December 2010.

⁸¹ P.R. Chari and Hasan Akbar Rizvi, “Making Borders Irrelevant”, *Epilogue*, Vol. II, Issue 9, Jammu, October 2008, 24.

⁸² Siddharth Varadaraja, “Building Trust, One Step at Time”, *the Hindu*, New Delhi, 23 June 2010.

people-centric policy which led to the re-opening of cross-LoC trade and travel routes. Notwithstanding few stakes, the restoration of Silk Route links have multifarious benefits to all stakeholders: India, Pakistan, Central Asia and China and their peoples at large. It would bolster regional and local economies, re-animate people-to-people contacts, build India-Pakistan mutual trust for strategic cooperation and thereby facilitate resolution of the sixty two year old Kashmir conflict and eventually facilitate re-union of the families of same ethnic-historical and cultural background and provide great opportunity to revive the ancient history and cultural contacts with China and Central Asia. Most importantly the restoration of these links would provide direct connection with the international Karakorum Highway.

