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# TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY SHIFTS TOWARDS SYRIA

M. Thowhidul Islam

## **Abstract**

*Being located at the crossroads of Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting Middle East, Balkan and Caucasus alongwith its historical legacy of Ottoman Empire, Turkey plays an important role in the regional and global politics as well as determines its foreign policy accordingly. Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by Erdogan with Islamic ideological background entering to Turkish politics in 2001, got victory in the elections of 2002, since then hitherto ruling the country. AKP government's foreign policy followed 'zero problem' and 'strategic depth' principles with Turkish vicinity. Turkish-Syrian interactions had begun in the 8th century under Umayyad caliphate. The Turks gradually occupied higher ranks in Umayyad state and settled down at the territories today called Syria. During Seljuk time, Turks captured Syria which replaced with Mamluks. The Ottomans regained sovereignty in Syria at the 16<sup>th</sup> century which continued till the end of First World War. Then, Turkish-Syrian relations developed as mandate shaped by France. Since then, some conflicting issues affecting Turkish-Syrian relations such as the Hatay (Sanjak) issue, water sharing issues. During Syria's independence in 1936, Turkey demanded Hatay's independence too, which was denied by France. On the eve of Second World War in 1939, Hatay was ceded to Turkey. Since then, it became an issue of conflict. The water sharing has also been another issue of debate. Concerning security issues, both countries situated at opposite sites. Syria supported PKK, which Ankara regarded as terrorist group operating against Turkey. This hostile attitude gradually changed under AKP's soft foreign policy towards Syria. Potential Kurdish state risk after Iraq war, common security perceptions after 9/11, compelled both the countries to adopt collective security measures. This article is exclusively aimed at discovering the factors which prompted Turkey to shift its policy towards Syria during the crises caused by Arab Spring. It will also include the nature and historical developments of Turkish-Syrian relations with a view to understanding the driving factors behind shifting policy.*

## **Keywords**

Turkish-Syrian Relations, Foreign Policy, AKP, Arab Spring, Policy Shifts, Hatay, Strategic Depth, Bilateral Relations.

## **Introduction**

Being located at the crossroads of Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting trouble zones of Balkan, Middle East and Caucasus, with a predominant Muslim

population and as a bridge between the West and Islam (Bagci & Kardas, 2003), Turkey occupies an important geopolitical and geostrategic position in global politics, which plays a vital role in determining its foreign policy. As the inheritor of Ottoman empire, Turkey plays a dominant role in the regional politics. Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi-AKP) was formed in 2001 with Islamic ideological background under the leadership of *Recep Tayyip Erdogan* which swept victory in the general elections of 2002, while major political parties that ruled the country for decades failed to secure 10% vote (Carkoglu, 2002). Since then, the AKP hitherto rules the country with an increasing vote percentage. Turkey's AKP government has initiated diversified foreign policy prioritizing its Ottoman legacy and geostrategic importance, which contradicts traditional *Kemalist*<sup>1</sup> policy. Proposing 'zero problem'<sup>2</sup> principle with Turkish vicinity, it developed close ties with neighboring countries including the Middle East, Eurasia, Balkans and Caucasus regions contrary to the secluded structure of *Kemalist* foreign policy tendency (Aras, 2009). It called for an activist engagement with all of the regions in Turkey's neighborhood, specifically with Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and the Gulf states (Davutoglu, 2001). The policy emphasized on the importance of economic interdependency and need to build strong economic linkages with all regional states and to eliminate all the problems from her neighbor's relationships.

Turkish-Syrian interactions had begun in the 8<sup>th</sup> century under the *Umayyad* caliphate. The Turks gradually occupied higher ranks in the *Umayyad* state and settled down at the territories today called-Syria. During *Seljuk* time, Turks captured Syria which replaced with *Mamluks*. The Ottomans regained sovereignty in Syria in the 16<sup>th</sup> century which continued till the end of 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Then, Turkish-Syrian relations developed as mandate shaped by France. Since then, some conflicting issues have been affecting Turkish-Syrian relations such as the *Hatay* province of Turkey (Former *Sanjak* of Alexandretta, Syria) issue, water sharing and security issues etc. During the recognition of Syria's independence by France in 1936, Turkey demanded *Hatay*'s independence, which denied by France. But on the eve of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in 1939, *Hatay* was ceded to Turkey. Since then, it became an issue of conflict between Turkey and Syria. The water sharing has also been another issue of debate. Concerning security issues, both the countries situated at opposite sites. Syria provided support to PKK, which Turkey regarded as terrorist group operating against it. This hostile attitude gradually changed under AKP's soft policy towards Syria. After Iraq war, potential Kurdish state risk, post 9/11 security perceptions created common threats which compelled to adopt collective security measures. *Assad*'s visit to Turkey and *Erdogan*'s visit to Syria in 2004 was a milestone for the prospect of Turkish-Syrian relations. Syria cancelled supports to PKK and recognized *Hatay* as an integral part of Turkey. The economic relations also bloomed. Regional

Cooperation Program was created and military cooperation agreement was signed. Bilateral relations entered into a new phase with the removal of the visa requirements between the countries in 2009.

All these positive developments were challenged due to the mass upsurge against *Assad* regime with the emergence of Arab Spring. Ankara, from the beginning warned *Assad* to undertake democratic reforms and consistently called upon to stop violence. Turkey tried to negotiate between *Assad* government and the opposition, but Damascus ignored all the steps, rather expressed her determination to continue harsh crackdown. Realizing the perspectives, Turkey started to shift her policy criticizing Syria publicly. Finally, Turkey gave her full support to the opposition and demanded for regime change in Syria. Indeed, several geo-political-strategic-economic and regional-international perspectives and perceptions have driven Turkey to shift its policy towards Syria. This article is exclusively aimed at discovering the factors which prompted Turkey to shift its policy towards Syria during Arab Spring. It also includes the nature and historical developments of Turkish-Syrian relations with a view to understanding the driving factors behind shifting policy.

### **Geopolitical and Strategic Importance of Turkey**

Turkey possesses a highly important geostrategic location in the global geography. It is located at the crossroads of three major continents Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting Balkans, Middle East and Caucasus regions. Turkey's territories rest on Asia and Europe, while it borders with the Middle East and post-Soviet states. It is surrounded on three sides by the Black Sea, Aegean Sea and Mediterranean Sea that makes it a natural passage between Europe and Asia. Having predominant Muslim population, it has culturally been considered as a connecting bone between West and Islam. Threat perceptions from the complex structures of Middle East, Caucasus and Balkans pushed Turkey seeking allies to balance geopolitical disadvantage. Another geostrategic importance of Turkey is her Straits,<sup>3</sup> which constitute a highly important place in terms of defense regarding air and sea attacks (Aydin, 2003, p. 315). Thus, it certainly be said that Turkey occupied a highly significant geopolitical and geostrategic position in world politics, which has been playing an influential role in terms of shaping its foreign policy.

### **Historical Legacies of Turkish Foreign Policy**

Turkey developed its foreign policy concept based on her identity and ideology that inherited from internal dynamics and historical legacies. Ottoman heritage and empire,<sup>4</sup> which ruled the land for centuries left immense influences on its foreign policy principles. As one of the most powerful empires of the world, Ottoman's applied an imperial and influential foreign policy on a vast territory. The World War 1<sup>st</sup> ended the Ottoman Empire giving birth to the various nation

states. *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*,<sup>5</sup> the founder of modern Turkey, adopted west-oriented foreign policy to cede it from Ottoman's tradition. It represented a break with the past aiming at renunciation of three strains which had been important during Ottoman times: the imperial Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, and Pan-Turanism (Aydin, 2003, p. 318). Unlike Ottoman's imperialistic policy, Atatürk followed strict nationalization process within Turkey. Although experiences of the Ottoman past, together with its geostrategic importance influenced the subsequent foreign relations of Turkey, Atatürk's theory and practice has been the most important factor in shaping Turkey's foreign policy (Aydin, 2004, p. 30). With westernization, Turkey initialized positive relations with its neighbors and signed a non-aggression treaty called *Sadabad* pact in Tehran in 1937 with Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq (Zurcher, 2004). Turkey viewed the Arab regimes with suspicion mainly because of Arab support for dismembering the Ottoman Empire during the World War 1<sup>st</sup> (Lapidus, 2002) and of Turkey's revolutionary secular ideas. Instead of drawing benefits from their shared culture, history, and religion, *Kemalist* Turkey chose a different path. During the World War 2<sup>nd</sup>, initially Turkey followed an 'active neutral' policy (Deringil, 2004), but towards the end of war, approaching post war conjecture, it declared war against Berlin and Tokyo (Aslan & Selcuk, 2014, p. 139). After 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, international system developed through bipolar structure clustering around the USA and USSR, with which Cold War begun. During Cold War, Turkey developed close ties with the West, particularly with the USA and became a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952 (Aslan & Selcuk, 2014, p. 149). The dissolution of USSR in 1991 set an end to Cold War and the global political system developed through unipolar structure centering the US. In the unipolar structure, Turkey developed close ties with the US (Muftuler-Bac, 1997). It developed strict ties with the newly independent states of Central Asia providing long term credits, military reconstruction supports, scholarships for the students, and investments in many other spheres in order to enforce its existence in the region and brought alternative dimensions to its foreign policy outlook (Fuller, 1992). On the other hand, Turkey faced serious challenges with its neighborhood because of increasing 'Kurdistan Workers' Party' (PKK)<sup>6</sup> terror activities. Thus, Turkey had experienced dramatic shifts and transformations in its foreign policy and structure.

### **Turkey's AKP Government and its Foreign Policy Principles**

With the dissolution of Caliphate in 1924, *Atatürk* implemented strict secularization process in Turkey with harsh crackdown and banning the activities of Islamists. In spite of this shock therapy (Gellner, 1995), the Islamists continued their struggle advocating for an Islamic state. As a result, 'National Vision Movement' (Milli Gorus Hareketi) was initialized by *Necmettin Erbakan*, which founded 'National Order Party' (Milli

Nizam Partisi) in 1970 as the first Islamist political party in Turkey (Baran, 2010, p. 33). The party was immediately banned and *Erbakan* established another political party- National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi) in 1972 (Baran, 2010, p. 34). Following the 1980 military coup, all political parties of Turkey were banned. After restoration of political parties in 1983, *Erbakan* established Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) (Baran, 2010, p. 35), with which Political Islam got a real rise in Turkey. It won Istanbul and Ankara metropolitan municipalities in 1994 and getting majority in the national elections of 1995 as the first Islamist political party in Turkish history (Baran, 2010, p. 41), formed coalition government with True Path Party (Dogru Yol Partisi). Because of some symbolic initiatives by Prime Minister *Erbakan*, Turkish Military forced the government to resign and Welfare Party was banned. A new-Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) was formed, but destined similar and dissolved (Baran, 2010, p. 44). Due to continuous hostility between political Islam and secular elites, 'an intense internal debate and rethinking within the Islamic movement about the movement's future political strategy and agenda, and a growing philosophical and political rift emerged within the movement between two different groups' (Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008). The Traditionalists centering *Erbakan* opposed any serious changes, while the reformists argued that the party needed to rethink its approach led by *Recep Tayyip Erdogan*.<sup>7</sup> This rift finally resulted in the formation of a new political party- Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2001 (Baran, 2010, p. 44). AKP participated in 2002 general elections and achieved a dramatic victory in the National Parliament securing 34.3% of general polls (Baran, 2010, p. 50). It formed the government led by *Abdullah Gul* as *Erdogan* was banned from politics due to 1998 conviction. With the removal of his political ban in 2002, new government was formed headed by *Erdogan* in 2003. Vote percentage of AKP gradually increased in 2007 46.6% which increased almost 50% in 2011 elections (Carkoglu, 2011, p. 48). AKP recorded in the history of Europe as a political party being elected three times consecutively with an increasing vote percentage (Carkoglu, 2011, p. 44). Since then, hitherto the AKP government has been ruling the country.

Turkey's AKP government developed multi-dimensional concepts in its foreign policy principle. The concepts of 'strategic depth' and 'zero problem' principles theorized by *Ahmet Davutoglu*<sup>8</sup> constituted the spine of AKP's foreign policy. Stressing on the historical legacy and geopolitical importance of Turkey, Strategic Depth theory proposes that as a secular and democratic nation-state with Muslim majority, Turkey is capable of playing crucial role in Europe, Middle East, Caucasus, Balkans and Central Asia applying a versatile, multiregional foreign policy which may turn Turkey to be regional and gradually to be a global power (Walker, 2010). Turkey needs to create multi-dimensional and multi-directional proactive foreign policy in order to strengthen its position as a regional and global power. Strategic Depth

emphasizes Turkey's potential role within the Muslim world, given that Istanbul was the last seat of the Caliphate (Walker, 2010). The 'zero problem' principle proposes a peaceful relationship with its neighborhood intending to develop possible maximum economic relations with Turkish periphery (Davutoglu, 2010). The theory is based on three methodological and five operational principles. The methodological principles are: 'visionary' approach to the issues instead of the 'crisis-oriented' attitudes, to base on a 'consistent and systematic' framework around the world, and the adoption of a new discourse and diplomatic style. Five operational principles are: the equilibrium between security and democracy, zero problems towards neighbors, proactive and pre-emptive peace diplomacy, adherence to a multi-dimensional foreign policy and rhythmic diplomacy (Davutoglu, 2010). AKP advocated the continuation of Turkey's strategic relations with the West, the US and developing constructive relations with the Middle East, Russia, Caucasus, Central Asia, Balkans and with the emerging global powers (AKP, n.d.).

### **Historical Developments of Turkish-Syrian Relationships**

Turkish-Syrian interactions had begun shortly after the spread of Islam under the *Umayyad*<sup>9</sup> caliphate at the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> century, when Damascus became its capital and Turks were brought there as slaves (Burns, 2005). The Turks gradually occupied higher ranks in the *Umayyad* state and settled down at the territories today called-Syria. With the fall of *Umayyad*'s in 750, the glory of Syria resumed as Baghdad became the new capital of *Abbasid*'s. But the Turkish influence continued in the *Abbasid*'s administration, even sometimes 'this (Turks) corps became too powerful for the caliph and at times held him in abject submission to its will' (Hitti, 1959, p. 160). During *Seljuk* time, Turks captured Syria. 'Turkish generals penetrated as far as the Hellespont.... For the first time, Turks gained a foothold in that land a foothold that was never lost' (Hitti, 1959, pp. 174-175). Aftermaths, Turkish sovereignty in Syria replaced with the *Mamluks*.<sup>10</sup> The Ottomans regained sovereignty in Syria in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Hitti, 1959, p. 221). 'Beginning modestly about 1300 as a petty Turkish state in western Asia Minor, the Ottomans had gradually taken over all Anatolia from the other heirs of the *Seljuks*' (Hitti, 1959, p. 213). This Ottoman rule continued till the 1<sup>st</sup> World War with some political confusion. With the end of war, Turkish-Syrian relations developed as mandate shaped by France, but the relation was never warm. *Ataturk*'s Modern Turkey developed strong relations with the west rather than its former Ottoman territories, while Syria projected the Ottomans as its historical enemy. Arab nationalism also fueled the anti-Turkish sentiment throughout Syria. 'The late 1930's were marked with even greater resentment because France, in violation of the terms of the mandate..., granted Turkey privileges in the *Sanjaq* (Hatay) of Alexandretta and finally ceded it in June 1939 to become incorporated in the Turkish Republic' (Hitti, 1959, p. 244). The *Hatay* (Sanjaq) issue since then



has been affecting Turkey-Syria relations until present day. *Hatay* was a part of Syria under French Mandate, which refused by Turkey claiming it as 'a Turkish homeland for 40 centuries' (History of Hatay, n.d.). During the recognition of Syria's independence in 1936, Turkey demanded *Hatay's* independence, but France denied it stating that it would jeopardize Syria's unity. Turkey raised the issue at the League of Nations, which approved new status for *Hatay* in 1937 declaring it 'distinct but not separated from Syria on the diplomatic level, sovereign in internal affairs, linked to both France and Turkey for defence matters' (League of Nations, 1938). On the eve of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in 1939, France ceded *Hatay* to Turkey. Since then, *Hatay* became an issue of conflict between Turkey and Syria. The loss of *Hatay* prompted Syrian calls for a 'Ba'ath' or resurrection of Arab nationalism, which eventually led to the formation of 'Ba'ath' party that has been ruling Syria since 1963. Since then, the regime maintained its grievances with Turkey.

Apart from *Hatay* issue, the water sharing has been another conflicting issue in Turkey-Syria relation. An agreement was signed to share water between two states in 1921. But when Turkey initialized constructing dams on the Tigris and Euphrates, controlling water flow to Syria for the development of eastern Turkey, Syria complained it would cripple her agriculture.<sup>11</sup> Regarding security issues, both the countries situated at opposite sites. Syria sided with the Eastern bloc, while Turkey allied with the US. Turkey became a member of NATO while Syria received the most Russian military aid in the Middle East. Syria backed Lebanese *Hezbollah* against Israel, while Turkey maintained ties with Israel. Syria provided support to PKK, which Turkey considered a terrorist group. Syria opened her territories for many terrorist groups like ASALA,<sup>12</sup> which committed many attacks against Turkish diplomats. Terror bargains brought both the states to a war level in 1998 (Aykan, 1999). The tension was calmed down with signing 'Adana Accords' due to diplomatic efforts of Iran and Egypt. Syria cancelled all aids to PKK, closed its camps within Syria and even conducted several military operations against PKK (Milliyet, 2003, July 4). These positive developments marked the beginning of an unexpected new chapter in the previously antagonistic relations between the two neighbours.

### **AKP's Foreign Policy Towards Syria and Turkey-Syria Relations Before Arab Spring**

Rising to power in 2002, at a critical juncture of international politics-the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks, the AKP initiated to redesign the policy based on *Davutoglu's* 'strategic depth' and 'zero problems' principles. It developed closer ties with neighboring countries specially the former Ottoman territories. The AKP envisioned a leading role for Turkey particularly within the greater Middle East context adopting the soft power instruments such as finance, trade, culture, ethnic and religious kinship, and diplomatic activities

(Aras, 2012, p. 44), which has been dubbed as 'neo-Ottomanism' (McDonald, 2012). This approach resulted in the dramatic progress of Turkish-Syrian relations. The post 9/11 developments, increasing regional instability after Iraq war and potential Kurdish state risk created common security perceptions for both the countries. The US policy of isolation towards Syria induced it to develop relations with Turkey, while Turkey needed Syrian support to protect security threats of Kurdish nationalists. Changing different regional and international circumstances also prompted Turkey to have closer ties with Syria as a gate opening towards Middle East. Thus there was an eagerness at both sides to develop relations.

The relations started to be improved with Adana Accord in 1998 and got a new dimension with AKP's rising to power. Turkey congratulated *Bashar al-Assad's* presidency and *Assad* made his historic trip to Ankara in 2004 as the first Syrian president since the end of Ottoman Empire, which worked as a milestone for the prospect of Turkish-Syrian relations (BBC News, 2004). In July 2004, Turkish Prime Minister *Erdogan* met Syrian Prime Minister *Naji Otri* refusing to meet Israeli Prime Minister *Ehud Olmert* who visited Ankara on the same day (Hurriyet, 2004). *Erdogan's* visit to Damascus in 2004 introduced consultations over the water-sharing issue and led to the signing of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Syria and Turkey (Turkish Weekly, 2004). During the height of Lebanese *Hariri* assassination crisis in 2005, Turkish president *Sezar* visited Damascus defying US opposition (Moubayed, 2005). *Assad* signed on documents recognizing Turkey's borders, with which Syria officially affirmed *Hatay* as an integral part of Turkey (Milliyet, 2004, January, 6). Turkey-US relations sometimes got tensed on Syrian issue as Turkey argued the US should support reforms in Syria rather isolation, while the US criticized Turkey calling its policy 'unacceptable' for harming international efforts to force Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon (Milliyet, 2005, June, 9). Turkey played important role in breaking Syria's international isolation and mediated in Syria-Israel indirect peace talks in 2007-8 (Phillips, 2011, p. 37). *Erdogan* accompanied *Assad* in August 2008 to meet French president *Sarkozy* and Qatar's *Amir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani* in Damascus to discuss about the peace process (Moubayed, 2008). After the series bombing in the Green Zone of Baghdad in August 2009, Syria was blamed by Iraq and Turkey mediated to resolve the crisis. These Turkish efforts helped soften Syria's international image. The EU ended the diplomatic boycott of Syria in 2008, which helped the *Obama* administration to end the boycott, though some Bush-era sanctions remained (Phillips, 2011, p. 37). Turkey also benefited from its ties with Syria. It opened the gateway of Arab world for Turkey and anti-Ottoman sentiment among Arabians gradually soften, which helped Turkey to boost its regional influence and economic ties with the region.

The relationship was also progressed in the economic field. Turkey

considered Syria as an entrance into wider Arab markets, while Syria considered Turkey as a source of investments. Joint Economic Committee was formed that sponsored trade agreements and events such as the industrial exhibition in Damascus in January 2004 where 300 Turkish companies received \$250 million worth of Syrian contracts (Tur, 2010, pp. 164-171). 'Turkish-Syrian Regional Cooperation Program' was created to develop technical, economic, cultural and scientific cooperation (Tur, 2010, pp. 167-168). With FTA, both the countries agreed to reduce customs taxes until gradually they would disappear (Ministry of Economy, Turkey, 2011). Syria's exports to Turkey rose from \$187m in 2006 to \$630m in 2010. Turkish exports rose from \$608m in 2006 to \$1.64bn in 2010 with a trade volume of \$1.84 billion (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey, 2011). In 2011 alone, Turkish companies invested a total of \$223m in different Syrian industries. The number of Syrian tourists visiting Turkey considerably increased from 154,000 in 2003 to 500,000 in 2010 (Today's Zaman, October 03, 2011). Both the countries signed a historic agreement for lifting visa restrictions on October 13, 2009. *Davutoglu* addressed Syrian people 'Turkey is your second country and Turkish people are waiting for you with open arms without a visa' (Today's Zaman, September 17, 2009). It was also decided that the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Energy, Trade, Public Works, Defense, Interior Affairs and Transportation will meet at least twice every year to make a common action plan that will be executed under the leadership of two Prime Ministers (Tur, 2010, p. 168). These steps introduced a new phase in the bilateral relations.

Turkish-Syrian military cooperation was also developed. Three day long joint military exercise was held in April 2009 (Tur, 2010, p. 174). Two countries signed a technical military cooperation agreement to deepen collaboration between their defense industries, ignoring Israeli concern (Tur, 2010, p. 166). The water issue was commenced to be viewed as a technical detail between the parts (Tur, 2010, pp. 164-171). During *Erdogan's* visit, Syrian Prime Minister *Otri* stated 'Turkey and Syria were leaving the traditional water problem back' in the press conference, *Erdogan* responded, 'We are aiming development and cooperation, other issues are forgotten' (Tur, 2010, p. 169). Cultural cooperation was also remarkably developed. Turkish music, movies, and other television series have won popularity in Arab societies. Many Turkish soap operas have been broadcast in the Arab world and the finale of the Turkish TV series *Noor* was watched by approximately eighty-five million Arabians in 2008 and *Sanawat-al-Dayaa* was watched by sixty-eight million Arabian viewers (Balli & Cebeci, 2013). Syrian production companies have dubbed the Turkish dramas into Arabic for export to Arab satellite channels, which worked as the gateway for Turkish culture into the wider Arab cultural sphere.

Thus, Turkey-Syria relations have remarkably developed from enmity to close friendship with AKP's policy. Islamic ideological origins of AKP, realistic

approach of Turkey, 'zero problems' and 'strategic depth' principles, Turkey's regional influence and boosting economy are the principal factors behind this development. For Syria, the friendship helped to face US-led international isolation and to avoid any conflict with Israel. For Turkey, it opened a gateway into the Arab world diplomatically, economically and culturally. *Davutoglu* remarked, 'We are lifting the borders which were artificially put and becoming the people of one hinterland. We are turning the economic cooperation to an economic unity' (Tur, 2010, p. 173). *Erdogan* openly addressed Syrians as brothers and sisters, (Tur, 2010, p. 164) while *Assad* described Turkey as Syria's best friend (Phillips, 2011, p. 34). The relations seemed extremely rosy until the outbreak of the Arab spring in 2011.

### **AKP's Foreign Policy Towards Syria During and after Arab Spring**

The positive developments of Turkey-Syria relationships were seriously challenged with the social unrests against *Assad* upon the emergence of 'Arab Spring'. This widespread uprising against totalitarian regimes turned into one of the most important transformational forces in the Arab World, which created new dilemmas for Turkey's foreign policy-whether it back up authoritarian regimes or hear the demands of the society for change. From the very beginning of 'Arab Spring' commenced in Tunisia in 2011, Turkey warned *Assad* to undertake democratic reforms to prevent similar incidents in Syria (Ilgit & Davis, 2013). Because of her strong friendship with Syria, Turkey initially believed that it would be able to exert a positive impact on Syria's behavior. Though international community severely criticized *Assad* for harsh crackdown against civilians, Turkey expressed cautious and restrained concerns and urged Syria to take reform initiatives. Turkey had hoped to maintain its ties with Syria, while promoting reform and dialogue between the opposition and *Assad* regime that might help to resolve the crisis. Turkey tried to influence Syrian government positively to stop harsh crackdown against civilians. *Erdogan* several times called on *Assad* to stop brutality and *Davutoglu* met him in August 2011 to convey Turkey's final message warning him to end military operations and enact democratic reforms (Aljazeera, August 20, 2011). In August 2011, *Erdogan* warned that 'we reached at the end of our patience' (World Bulletin, August 07, 2011) and even threatened for military intervention if the regime continues its brutal crackdown (Ilgit & Davis, 2013). *Assad* didn't response to the Turkish calls and all the Turkish initiatives were failed to stop *Assad*'s brutality. Turkey realized that the Syrian government was unwilling to resolve the problems through reforms and would continue to use force against civilians. With this realization, Turkey's AKP government gradually followed a shifting policy towards Syria and decade-long good relationship between Turkey and Syria has come to an end. Ankara started to criticize Syrian government publicly. President *Abdullah Gul* proclaimed that 'our trust for the Syrian government

has vanished' (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, August 28, 2011). *Erdogan* declared his endorsement for the Syrian oppositions in November 2011 (The New York Times, November 22, 2011), with which Turkey openly sided with the oppositions. Thousands of refugees were leaving Syria for Turkey including hundreds of military defectors (Al Arabiya News, July 03, 2012), who called themselves the 'Free Syrian Army'. The AKP government simultaneously hospitalized the refugees and pressured Syria to stop violence against civilians. Ankara initiated to impose sanctions against Damascus, which might include a buffer zone on Syrian territory (The Tripoli Post, November 30, 2011). A part of the Syrian National Council (SNC) was formed in Istanbul in August 2011.<sup>13</sup> The Syrian oppositions seem to have found a welcoming haven in Turkey. In early 2012, Turkey tried to forge an international "Friends of Syria" coalition to secure regime change. However, it failed to gain the agreement of key players to any form of intervention, including the no-fly zone idea. The summit recognized the SNC as the 'legitimate representative' of all Syrians (Aljazeera, December 12, 2012). The relationship turned into complete enmity, when a Turkish F-4 jet was shot down by Syria in June 2012 (The Daily Telegraph, June 22, 2012). In reaction, Turkey called for an emergency NATO meeting, during which Ankara intended to invoke Article IV of the alliance's charter and seek western backing for its response (The Daily Telegraph, June 24, 2012). Turkish army prepared emergency action plans to create a military buffer zone and no-fly zone over Syria (Hurriyet, June 28, 2012). Turkey deployed anti-aircraft guns and trucks carrying multiple rocket launchers on the Syrian borders (The Daily Telegraph, June 28, 2012). Turkey openly demanded the removal of *Assad*. *Erdogan* said "Syria's president must step down over the country's crackdown on dissent" (The World Post, January 22, 2012). Turkey-Syria relation has clearly ended up. Thus, Turkey clearly shifted her policy of friendship towards Syria to grievance on the emergence of 'Arab Spring'.

### **Major Reasons Behind AKP's Shifting Policy Towards Syria**

No doubt, several geo-political-strategic-economic and regional-international factors and perceptions persuaded Turkey to follow the shifting policy towards Syria on the emergence of 'Arab Spring'. Turkey's Shifting policy has also been driven by domestic political needs merging with the values of the AKP and Turkish national interests. The principal factors and perceptions are described below:

#### ***Sense of Prestige and National Dignity***

From the inception of 'Arab Spring' in Tunisia, Turkey, as a good friend, requested Syria to be aware of the fact and to take reform initiatives to avoid the possible similar unrest in Syria. Turkey strongly desired a peaceful end of Syrian crisis without harming improved bilateral relations. With this belief,

Turkish government repeatedly called on *Assad* to initiate comprehensive political reforms accommodating the demands of the opposition. Despite strong international criticism of Syria for civilian crackdown, Ankara expressed her concern cautiously prioritizing reforms and regional stability. Turkey tried to negotiate between *Assad* and opposition with several initiatives. But, *Assad* adamantly ignored all the requests and warnings of Turkish government, and continued to use violence instead of reforms. *Assad's* unresponsiveness to *Erdogan's* calls made Ankara angry. Moreover, Turkey views, by any means politically-diplomatically or economically, Syria needs Turkey far more than Turkey needs Syria. So, the Syrian attitude was considered to the Turkish leadership as a dishonor to long-nourished friendship and Turkish national-international dignity. This led to a dramatic shift in Ankara's soft attitude and *Erdogan* declared that Turkey cannot continue to support Syria (Cornell, 2012). As *Assad* has refused to take steps towards liberalization, Ankara has not only become harsher in its tune but also initiated a regime change in Syria to dethrone *Assad*. Thus, the sense of national dignity and self-respect prompted Turkey to shift her policy towards Syria evolving from sole pressure, negotiating between *Assad* and the opposition, promoting international sanctions against Syria and finally changing regime.

### ***Massacre to the Civilians***

The AKP government with its all kinds of views and principles could either not support massacre to the civilians or remain silent wherever it happens in the world. From the beginning of Syrian uprising, Turkey tried to resolve the crisis convincing *Assad* to undertake reforms and stop brutality. But, *Assad* refused the possibility of reforms rather expressed his determination to continue fighting against the opposition. The use of chemicals against civilians at the *Halabaja* massacre (CNN, September 17, 2013) indicated the determination of *Assad* in using massive force against opposition. As it became clear that *Assad* determined to resolve the conflict through harsh security crackdown instead of negotiation, Turkey decided to shift her policy towards Syria following her rational principle of peace. The 'Virtuous Power' policy introduced by *Abdullah Gul* (Today's Zaman, May 03, 2012), has become one of the Turkish foreign policy doctrines, which focuses on Virtue is being respected around the world. Thus, Turkey, from her ideological viewpoint of opposing massacre, stood against *Assad* administration.

### ***To Secure Turkey from Security Threats***

Turkey shares 877 km. land border with Syria. Kurdish people mainly reside in Syria-Turkey border region. PKK, a Kurdish rebellion group in Turkey, for many years has been committing terror attacks inside Turkey. Until *Adana* accord in 1998, Syria was PKK's heaven. *Abdullah Ocalan* -the founder of PKK received asylum in Syria. The unrest in Syria again brought the PKK

challenge in front of Turkey. It has been becoming very difficult for Turkey to prevent PKK militants from entering Turkey along with hundreds of Syrian refugees. Turkey fears it may convert the region again into a backdoor for PKK. Syria's reported support to PKK as retaliation to Ankara's sheltering the Free Syrian Army made the challenge more crucial for Turkey. In October 2011, the Syrian government warned that it would consider supporting PKK if it perceived that Turkey was supporting the Syrian opposition. *Assad* stated that 'Turkey could fall into a state similar to ours if it opposed Damascus' (Today's Zaman, March 21, 2012). Besides Kurdish threat, Turkey fears the sectarian conflict may cross the boundary if it continues for long time. Syria's attacking two Turkish military planes persuades Turkey to consider Syria itself as a threat. Turkey also fears the unrest would gradually lead to a proxy war between Russia-Iran axis and the US. The regional countries would also get into conflict on sectarian basis. In sum, Turkey, as a frontier country, currently seems to be fallen into serious security threats. With increasing radicalization on its border, Turkey does not want to have difficulties in the Syrian crisis similar to those that were experienced in Iraqi borders for years. The failure of the oppositions in Syria to found a united front has also increased the possibility of spreading unrest into Turkey. Thus, the Syrian crisis has presented challenging security threats for Turkey. To avoid these threats, Turkey openly sided with the opponents and followed cautious steps keeping all the options such as a 'safe-zone, buffer-zone, no-fly-zone, no-drive-zone, or humanitarian corridor' open rather than the militarization of the crisis.

### ***Assad's Reported Relationship with the Kurds and PKK***

There is news that the Syrian government has rebuilt its relationship with the Kurds granting some citizenship (Los Angeles Times, April 10, 2011), permitting to open Kurdish schools, and allowing their entrance to Syria from Iraq, in return for their support. There are also claims that Syria has been trying to contact PKK as a way to find new ally inside Syria and as retaliation against Turkey. There have also been rumors that Syrian support caused the PKK's recent attacks costing 24 Turkish soldiers (Today's Zaman, August 06, 2012). Although no direct evidence was found against Syria, *Davutoglu* warned that 'Recalling the past, Syria should not even think of playing the PKK card' (Today's Zaman, August 30, 2011). Syria's ceding control of key towns in northern Syria, such as *Afrin*, *Kobani*, and *Rasulayn* to the PKK-aligned Democratic Union Party (PYD) emerged the long-term security threat for Turkey (Yilmaz, 2013). It may create a territorial base for PKK. Thus, the Syrian rekindled relationship with PKK would pose serious threats to Turkish national security, simultaneously when the Kurdish people are inspired by the successful model of Kurdish autonomy in the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq (Guardian Weekly, 2012). The KRG provided training to Syrian Kurdish forces defying the strong opposition of Turkey (Today's Zaman, July

30, 2012). The efforts for unification of Iraqi-Syrian Kurdish regions may lead to the secession of Turkish Kurdish regions from Turkey and the formation of a sovereign Kurdistan consisting of all Kurdish territories. By supporting the Syrian opposition forces, Turkey wants to secure the unitary of Turkish state.

### ***Turkey's Political Intention in Syria***

Though Turkey has been developing relationship with *Assad* politically and economically, but ideologically Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (SMB), which has been banned in Syria, is closer to AKP than the secular *Ba'ath* party of *Assad*. Because of shared ideology and politics, Turkey desires to see the SMB come to power, or at least share power with *Assad* regime. *Davutoglu*, during his meeting with *Assad* in August 2011, proposed Turkey would support *Assad* if the SMB, as an outgrowth of Syria's majority *Sunni* community, was given four ministries with approving their return to Syria, after decades of exile. The idea was rejected by *Assad* on the ground that the SMB, as an Islamist party, was incompatible with Syria's secular character (Aras, 2012, p. 48). The SMB held a conference in April 2011 in Istanbul, where it denounced the *Assad* regime. In June, the SMB members and other opposition groups signed a declaration in Turkey, which called for 'freedom of belief, expression, and practice of religion under a civil state' (Zalewski, 2011). Four Muslim Brotherhood members and six independent Islamists were selected among the nineteen members of the General Secretariat whose names were published by the Syrian revolutionary committee (Spyer, 2011). Even, SMB leader *Muhammad Riad al-Shaqfa* declared that Syrians would accept Turkish military intervention rather than the West for protection from *Assad's* security forces (Reuters, November 17, 2011). Thus, Arab Spring brought a golden opportunity for Turkey to establish an ideological ally and more friendly government in Syria led by SMB. From this perception, Turkey supported SMB-led oppositions against *Assad*.

### ***Respect Towards Democracy***

AKP's Turkey has been developing very powerful democratic norms and values in the country. It has set an example in the democratic history of Europe being elected for three times consecutively with an increasing vote percentage. Turkey, where military elite had a very powerful political role, now has turned into a fully democratic country under AKP. As a democracy-prone country, Turkey always respects democratic sentiments wherever and whenever it is. On the contrary, Syria has developed as an authoritarian regime suppressing democratic values. Though Turkey developed economic and regional ties with Syria, but has been cultivating the intention to develop democracy compatible with the Turkish foreign policy views of promoting democracy. The Arab Spring provides Turkey the unique opportunity to promote democratic regimes in Syria and thereby other Arab countries (Paul & Seyrek, 2011).



Though it suffered considerable economic loss in Syria, Turkey views it as a long overdue correction in the region to secure her ideological position with the democracy and thereby with majority people of the land. Turkey judged the Arab Spring was inevitable, and therefore gave her support to those who demanding democratization despite short-run economic costs.

### ***To Establish Turkey as a 'Role Model' for Islamization of Democracy***

Turkey under AKP has been developing a 'role model' image for successfully combining political Islam with modern democracy. Following the success of AKP, the political Islamist movements across the world started to view Turkey as a 'role model'. Even prior to the Arab Spring Islamists in Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia viewed the Turkish AKP as a model for Islamization (Taspinar, 2012). Many Islamist movements of the world started to adopt their policy following AKP such as Tunisia's *An-nahda* party adopted the policies following AKP's thinking (Torelli, 2012). AKP also wants the Muslim world particularly the Arab world to follow Turkey's 'role model' democratic system. Taking the credit of 'Arab Spring', *Erdogan* claimed that the inspiration for popular uprisings in the Arab world was Turkey and its "advanced democracy" (Today's Zaman, May 18, 2011). During the protests in Egypt, *Erdogan* was among the first who called on *Hosni Mubarak* to resign (Today's Zaman, February 2, 2011). *An-nahda's* leader *Rashid Ghannusi*, stated that he was interested in 'Turkish model', which allowed for an Islamic government to operate in a secular society (Democracy Digest, 2014). He stressed that the best model coinciding to Tunisia is Turkey and AKP as a sample coinciding democracy within an Islam majority population (Cagaptay & Pollock, 2013). The electoral victory of Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated parties, such as *An-nahda* in Tunisia and the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt, provided Turkey with an opportunity of creating a belt of moderate Islamist regimes in the region following 'Turkish model'. This 'role model' image of Turkey has also been fuelled by her growing economic power and international prestige. In the courses of Arab Spring, Turkey tried to influence the newly established Arab regimes to follow 'Turkish model' as a Muslim predominant country that combines Islam with democracy, even keeping good relationship with the west particularly the US. In Syrian case, though Turkey at the beginning was in a dilemma, but finally supported the movement against *Assad's* autocracy as the promoter of democracy and as a 'role model' of Islamization of democracy.

### ***Learning from Libyan Case***

The AKP government also learned from Libyan case. Like Syria, Turkey had very strong economic-strategic ties with *Gaddafi's* Libya. It was a lucrative market for Turkey, while Turkish companies invested multi-million dollars in Libya. Until 2011 Turkish firms held and are holding 525 projects in Libya

with a total value of \$26.3 billion (Ministry of Economy, Turkey, 2013). The trade volume between the two countries was \$2.36 billion in 2010 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey, 2010). *Erdogan* was awarded *Gaddafi* International Prize for Human Rights in November 2010 (Today's Zaman, December 1, 2010). When the uprising hit Libya, Turkey supported *Gaddafi* considering its economic interests and insisted on solving the crisis through negotiations. Turkey opposed international intervention and encouraged *Gaddafi* to initiate reforms. While several states closed their diplomatic representations in *Tripoli* and *Benghazi*, Turkey continued to run its diplomatic missions. Only when NATO involved in the crisis in March 2011, *Erdogan* declared that Turkey "wishes to see Libya's leader step down immediately" (Cook, 2011). *Davutoglu* visited Libya and declared opposition's National Transitional Council (NTC) as 'the legitimate representative of Libyan people' (Today's Zaman, July 4, 2011). Realizing the situation that *Gaddafi* regime would fall, Turkey decided to withdraw support from *Gaddafi* and began supporting the NTC. In this case, Turkey's policy has undergone several dilemmas and it took long-time for final decision. Unlike the Libyan case, in Syria Turkey appears to be anticipating the fall of Assad immediately with a view to secure its maximum interests and to establish a positive government in Syrian upon which it can expand its influence.

### ***To Reduce Influence of Iran in the Middle East***

Though Turkey and Iran have some common grounds for cooperation in the Middle East, They also have opposing interests there. In Iraq, they compete to establish their influential control after geopolitical vacuum created by the gulf war. Iran supports Shiite groups, while Turkey supports the secular movements (Duman, 2012). Iran and Turkey compete for regional hegemony and leadership in the Muslim world. Iran, as the leader of Shiite community, has successfully been increasing its influence on the *Shi'a*-dominated governments in the Middle East and Syria has been the most influential ally of Iran there. The Iranian and Syrian governments have shared anti-western and anti-Israeli positions, and both have been under international sanctions. But Syria is ruled by a *Shi'a* leader, while its majority (59-60%) population is *Sunni* and only 13% is *Shi'a*. It also neighbors Lebanon and Iran's long-time enemy Israel. It is therefore a crucial ally for Iran. A *Sunni* resurgence in Syria could inhibit Iran's ideological and political expansion in the Middle East. On the other hand, SMB's coming to power in Syria could be a political gain for Turkey against its regional rival Iran. During the uprising in Syria, Iran has continued to back *Assad* regime, while Turkey provided supports to Syria's opposition groups. The signs of strained Turkish-Iranian relations were already manifested in September 2011 when Turkey agreed to install NATO radar systems (Kabalan, 2012) which criticized by Iran. The SMB's willingness to adopt Turkish model in governance system also dissatisfied Iran.

Thus, Turkey-Iran competition demonstrated through the ongoing uprising in Syria over regional leadership.

### ***Shi'a-Sunni Conflict in the Middle East and the Stand of Turkey***

Middle Eastern countries are almost divided into *Sunni-Shi'a* belt. Iran, *Shi'a*-led Iraq, Syria, Lebanese *Hezbollah* together formed *Shi'a* alliance, while Saudi Arabia, Gulf States, Turkey, Egypt and parts of North Africa are the *Sunni*-dominated states. *Sunni*-dominated states are almost maintaining friendly ties with the west, while *Shi'a*-dominated states having almost enmity with them. In Iraq, *Saddam's Sunni* regime was ousted by the US, a *Shi'a* regime was installed and Iran is now believed to influence much of the Iraqi events. In Syria, *Assad* family has been ruling the country since 1970's favoring *Shi'a* minority and repressing the *Sunni* majority, which created a widespread dissatisfaction among the *Sunni* majority. Encouraged by the Arab Spring, Syrian *Sunni* majority people revolted against *Assad*, which was reacted with harsh crackdown by the regime. The conflict gradually turned into armed struggle between the *Shi'a* dictator *Assad* and growing *Sunni*-led insurgence which was eventually characterized as *Shi'a-Sunni* conflict. Many foreigners also joined the conflict, *Sunni* people to fight against *Assad* and *Shi'a* people in support of *Assad*. The *Shi'a*-led countries like Iran backed *Assad*, while *Sunni*-led countries like Saudi Arabia reportedly supplied the opposition with arms. *Sunni* Islamists blamed Iran for supporting *Assad's* brutal crackdown on *Sunni* population, while, Iran and Syria felt betrayed by *Sunni* groups such as *Hamas*, which they had aided for many years. In that conflict, Turkey, as a moderate Islamic state with *Sunni* majority, was forced to choose either its long-days *Shi'a* ally *Assad* or her fellow *Sunni* Islamists in Syria. After a period of indecision, Turkey and all of the regional *Sunni* actors turned against *Assad* regime to reduce the rise of *Shi'a* influence in the region. The *Sunni* states consider Iraq as lost to the *Shi'a* belt and turning Syria to a *Sunni* one would be the best alternative to balance the loss. Thus, the Syrian case brought the *Shi'a-Sunni* conflict in front and Turkey as a *Sunni* majority country expressed its support for *Sunni* fellows in Syria thinking that the downfall of *Assad's Shia* regime could help to create a Turkish-influenced *Sunni* belt of states in the region.

### ***To Secure Turkish National Interests and Establish Regional Leading Role***

Securing national interests has always been given priority in the foreign policy of every country, so no exception for Turkey. The 'zero problem' and Strategic Depth' principles are also highly motivated by securing Turkish economic, strategic, national interests with its vicinity. Since AKP came to power, Turkish foreign policy aimed at establishing Turkey as a regional leader and gradually securing a leading role in the global politics. Having Ottoman legacy, Turkey hoped to revive the regional leading role. Turkey's policies towards

Arab Spring also goaled to secure its maximum economic-strategic-national interests together with establishing its leading role. In Tunisian case it applied wait and see policy (Kujawa, 2011), while in Egypt it followed more decisive stand calling *Hosni Mubarek* to step down. As for Libya, initially Turkey preferred to stay neutral. But under the changed circumstances, it changed its position supporting the opposition against *Gaddafi*. In the Syrian case, Turkey stepped more cautiously, prioritizing stability in Syria, where Turkish economic-strategic interests were substantial. The driving motive behind these cautious steps was to secure Turkish interest. But when Turkey realized that *Assad* would not take any reform initiatives and would fall within short, while the international community stood against *Assad*, only then Turkey changed its position to secure its regional leading role at the minimum trading cost. It didn't want to be isolated in this case, which may hamper its national interest and regional leading role. So, for the future security of Turkish investments in Syria and to establish its emerging regional leadership role, Turkey shifted her policy.

### ***Development of International Image***

*Assad's* harsh crackdown to the civilian severely hampered Syria's international image, while it has increasingly been isolated by the international society. Damaged democracy, violations of human rights and poor governance in Syria also fueled the dissatisfaction of international community. It became evident when UN General Assembly voted condemning Syria's repression to the civilians (122 in favor, 13 against, 41 abstentions, including China and Russia in 2011, and 137 in favor, 12 against, 17 Abstentions in 2012) (UN press release, 2012). Many countries either deported Syria's ambassadors or declared as unwanted person such as Australia, France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Spain, Canada and the US. Under these circumstances, Turkey wanted to be with the international community cutting off its relationship with *Assad* regime to develop its international image as a nation honoring democratic sentiment and disfavoring human rights violation. Turkey also hosted thousands of Syrian refugees as a humanitarian responsibility, which was also appreciated by the international community. Though the crisis disturbed Turkey's relations with Iran and Russia- Turkey's largest suppliers of oil and natural gas, it tried to minimize the cost balancing its ties with Iran and Russia. Russian President *Putin's* visit to Turkey on December 3, 2012 indicated that Russia valued its economic ties with Turkey. Turkey's relations with the Gulf States have improved as a result of its distancing from *Assad*. It has also contributed to strengthen Turkey's ties with the post-revolution governments in Libya, Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt, as well as with civil society activists pressing for democratic changes in Arab countries. Though Turkey and Saudi Arabia differ over which Syrian opposition should be supported, but both are commonly united to oppose *Assad*. The NATO deployment of Patriot missile batteries in

Turkey underscores the improvement of Turkish position in the west. Thus, Turkey's policy shifting towards Syria manifested its institutionalized and improved relations with the international society very well.

## **Conclusion**

Having located in an important geopolitical-strategic position, Turkey has been playing a vital role in regional politics. After the foundation of modern Turkey in 1924, *Kemalist* paradigm has become the official doctrine of Turkey's foreign policy. Coming to power in 2002, AKP adopted new foreign policy concepts sharply different from the *Kemalism* based on 'zero problem' and 'strategic depth' theories of *Davutoglu*. Turkey developed good relationship with the neighboring countries, while it became natural ally of the West as a NATO member. As the inheritor of Ottoman Empire, AKP tried to expand its influence in the Middle East, Caucasus, Balkan and Central Asia. As a result of good neighborhood foreign policy of AKP, Turkish-Syrian relations improved remarkably. While two countries were at the edge of war in 1998, a decade later they turned into close friends. Different regional and global developments such as the Iraq war, sectarian dynamics, post 9/11 perspectives contributed to the warming of mutual relations. Syria's recognition of *Hatay* as a sovereign part of Turkey, cancelling support to PKK, increasing trade volume, lifting visa requirements are the remarkable achievements of friendly relationships. Cooperation also developed in cultural, economic, diplomatic and military affairs. Turkey became the first NATO member to have joint military exercises with Syria. All these positive developments lost its momentum on the emergence of Arab Spring. From its inception in Tunisia, Turkey warned *Assad* to initiate democratic reforms to avoid the similar unrest in Syria. When it ultimately hit Syria in 2011, Turkey repeatedly called on taking reform initiatives and stop violence against civilians. Turkey's negotiation initiatives between *Assad* and the opposition also failed. It applied all methods against Syria to resolve the crisis keeping its friendly ties. But Syria responded negatively and continued harsh treatment to the opposition. Rather Syria blamed Turkey to intervene internal affairs of Syria. Realizing the perspectives, Turkey turned its support from *Assad* to the opposition groups. With this shifting policy, the golden era of Turkish-Syrian mutual relations ended up.

Indeed, there are several factors, perspectives and perceptions behind Turkey's shifting policy towards Syria. Turkish requests for reforms and negotiation were repeatedly ignored by Syria, which Turkey's leadership didn't take positively. It has been perceived as disrespect to Turkish dignity. AKP with an Islamic religious background and humanitarian stand can't support harsh crackdown to the civilian or can't remain silent to see the massacre, which *Assad* is doing in Syria. Turkey shares longest land border with Syria, while PKK- the biggest security threat for Turkey, is also based in this border region. Mass influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey increased

the possibility of entering PKK militants together, which will pose serious security threat for Turkey. The news of *Assad's* rekindled relationship with PKK fueled the Turkish threat perceptions. AKP always supports the political Islamic movements across the world. Though Turkey has been developing relationship with *Assad's* *Ba'athist* Syria, but ideologically SMB was closer to AKP, which has been banned by *Assad* regime. Turkey desires SMB to come to power. The *Shi'a-Sunni* rivalry also worked as a driving factor behind Turkey's shifting policy. The Middle Eastern countries are almost divided into *Shi'a-Sunni* groups. Turkey is a *Sunni*-dominated country, while Syria is ruled by a *Shi'a* authority with its *Sunni* majority population. The opposition groups in Syria are mainly of *Sunni*. So the social unrest created an opportunity for Turkey to establish a friendly *Sunni* government in Syria. Turkey has been characterized as a 'role model' for Islamized democracy. It recorded for successive victory in the elections with increasing vote percentage. So the democratic values have always been honored by the AKP government. During Arab Spring, all the movements are mainly motivated by democratic spirit against authoritarian regimes. Turkey, from its rational point of view sided with the democratic demands of the Uprisings rather than autocratic rulers despite short-run economic costs. Turkey, as Ottoman inherent, always tries to establish an influential role in the region, where Iran has emerged as a rival keeping Syria as it's most important ally in the Middle East. The fall of *Assad* would be a great loss for Iran, and thus Iran's influence in the region will reduce and that of Turkey will increase naturally. Turkey believed that *Assad* government would fall within short. The future security of Turkish interests and investments in Syria would be not in the hand of *Assad* but in the hand of following government. So it has openly sided with the SNC to reap the future material and ideological benefits. Following the Libyan case, Turkey doesn't want to walk on the wrong side of history again. Turkey also understood the limits of only using soft power or to simply act as mediator rather hard-power elements alongside soft power to be a regional leader. It now wants to be a center of influence using hard and soft-power together. Turkey with its fastest-growing economy, desires to play more significant role in dealing with regional issues. All major global communities strongly condemned Syria's actions. So the standing beside *Assad* would reduce Turkish international image, while its support for oppositions in favor of democracy and against human rights violation would increase its international image. Turkey hopes to see an inclusive democratic Syria emerge from the Arab Spring, which would be its natural ally. Turkey wants to speed up its role as an economic and political actor in the emerging new Middle East through Arab Spring. All these factors, perceptions and perspectives prompted Turkey to shift its policy towards Syria on the emergence of Arab Spring.

## References & Notes

1. Kemalist refers to follow the Kemalism adopted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkey. It was characterized by sweeping political-social-cultural-religious reforms to disassociate Turkey from its Ottoman heritage and embrace westernized lifestyle. The six fundamentals of Kemalism are Republicanism, Populism, Secularism, Nationalism, Reformism and Statism. 'Peace at Home, Peace in the World' was the motto of Kemalist foreign policy. Retrieved from [http://www.allaboutturkey.com/ata\\_prensip.htm](http://www.allaboutturkey.com/ata_prensip.htm).
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# CONNECT CENTRAL ASIA POLICY AND INDIAN OUTFOXING

Bawasingh

## **Abstract**

*With the breakup of Soviet Union in December 1991, the landscape of the Eurasian heartland has been changed and Central Asia rediscovered itself in the comity of nations with the dawn of the twenty first century. But after the breakup, Central Asia did not remain in the priority of the Russian foreign policy as Central Asia being considered as its natural backyard. This vacuum gave birth to the 'New Great Game', thus, the major powers-US, China, Russia and European Union (EU) involved in Central Asian geopolitics was further substantiated by Zbigniew Brzezinski. Following the geopolitical thinkers-Huntington and Mackinder, Zbigniew Brzezinski in his book entitled "The Grand Chessboard: American Primary and its Geostrategic Imperatives" (1997), renamed the Eurasian Heartland as a Chessboard. According to him, five countries- France, Germany, Russia, China, and India are as "pivots" to control the Eurasian landmass. For the given rich mineral resources and its geostrategic location, the 'pivots' have been making efforts to control Central Asia for their vested interests. Though, India and Central Asia had been sharing historical and civilizational relations, even after its independence, the fact is that Central Asia did not find pivotal place in Indian foreign policy. Some perceptible scholars are of the opinion that during the last decade, India has been outfoxed from Central Asia because of the geopolitics of the region. In the very beginning of the 21st century, India realized this diplomatic mistake and redesigned its foreign policy under various frameworks vis-à-vis Central Asia. Connect Central Asia Policy is one of them. Against this background, the main focus of this paper is to find out how geopolitical and geostrategic interests of India are being effected in Central Asia; how India is being outfoxed from Central Asia; how and to what extent Connect Central Asia Policy be helpful in engaging India more positively and constructively with Central Asia to check its outfoxing?*

## **Keywords**

Geographical Proximity, Post-cold War, Pivots, Geo-politics, New Great Game, Paradigm Shift, Outfox, Regional Organization, Connect Central Asia Policy, Indian Foreign Policy, Soft Power, Asian Century, Security Issues, Central Asian Republics.

## **Introduction**

India and Central Asia had been enjoying civilizational and historical relations since millennia. India has remained dormant to extend cordial and bilateral

relations with Central Asian republics after the breakup of the USSR. But the endowed natural resources made it very crucial for India from geopolitical and geo-economic perspective. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, three of the five Central Asian countries are sharing borders with Afghanistan which further attaches strategic significance to the region for the Indian foreign policy. Despite India's geostrategic and geopolitical interests in this region, unfortunately, the bilateral cooperation did not realize to the full potential. In the 1990s, some important events took place in the international relations. Withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan, the end of the Cold War, breakup of USSR— all left indelible ramifications for Indian security in the changing geostrategic environment. Although, India had shared very deep relations in the remote past with Central Asia but it failed to concretize its relations with the regions in the post-Cold War era because of its internal political and economic dynamics. With the onset of the New Great Game and some drastic changes in the international politics such as withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan in 1989 and end of the Cold War brought India closer to Central Asia. Geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Central Asia for India has been enhanced by these internal and external dynamics. The geopolitical and geostrategic salience of the region for the Indian foreign policy has been highlighted in the Indian's Ministry of Defence's Annual Report (2009-10) on account of its geographical proximity, historical and cultural links etc. The Indian Prime Minister's address to the Combined Commanders Conference in October 2010 highlighted the importance of Central Asia in these words:

*".... The discovery of large reserves of hydrocarbons and other resources needed for sustaining economic growth makes the Central Asian region immensely attractive for forging a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship."*<sup>1</sup>

### **India's Geostrategic Interests in Central Asia**

Central Asia holds a paramount strategic significance for India. It is lying between the two nuclear powers of Russia and China. Afghanistan is falling in the 'Arc of Turbulence' and Central Asia has been sharing long border with Afghanistan. As pointed out by the some strategic commentators, Afghanistan is known for its religious extremism in both the regions South and Central Asia. From Kashmir point of view, it is a major cause of concern for India. Similarly, many terrorist outfits from Afghanistan share ethnic and religious proximity with the Central Asian terrorist groups. Thus, both the regions have vital interests in each other's political and strategic stability. Seeing Kashmir problem, India cannot afford to be isolated itself from the geostrategic and geopolitical dynamics of the regions. Central Asian experts have pointed out that uncontrolled religious extremism in the CARs could invigorate the same in Kashmir.<sup>2</sup> Sharing geographical proximity, it is considered that India's strategic concerns are closely tied up with the regions bordering its north and

northwest parts. Under such circumstances, India cannot afford to remain segregated from this region.<sup>3</sup> Peace, stability and security are considered important elements for the development of the economy of any region. Afghanistan is sharing geographical proximity with both India and Central Asian countries. Instability in Afghanistan has adversely influenced peace and security and is the potential threat to destabilize the whole region.<sup>4</sup> India's major concern is that Taliban's re-emergence in Afghanistan and support from Pakistan would amplify the pressure on Kashmir and facilitate Pakistan's strategic outreach to South Asia.<sup>5</sup> If both the regions do not cooperate with each other, the security environment of both the regions which is already under severe stresses, is likely to become more explosive.<sup>6</sup> In order to control this explosive strategic environment and protection of long-term strategic interests, bilateral cooperation becomes paramount significant. After the end of the Cold War and break up of USSR, the New Great Game has set in the Central Asia. Some of the major powers and regional players are competing with each other to spread their influence in Central Asia. The US is making efforts to weaken the Russian and Iranian gains on the one hand whereas on the other hand, China has extended magnificent economic aid for the development of oil fields in Central Asia for its future demands. Exploiting the Afghan political and strategic instability, EU has been extending its influence through NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) programme.

Drug trafficking is another problem, being faced by India and Central Asia. Drug trafficking has become a money-making trade and posing a serious security and social challenge for both the regions. Central Asia is also highly vulnerable for smuggling of fissile material for Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), as the custom checkpoints are lacking detection equipment for intercepting such material. Though Kazakhstan has closed nuclear test range after its independence and committed to be non-nuclear state under the international regime, but still it has potential for nuclear power as it is richly endowed with uranium.<sup>7</sup> With the onset of economic reforms, Indian economy has been metamorphosed to good growth rate but India lacks sources of energy by which it can maintain this growth rate. Most of its energy requirements are coming from the Middle East Asia but with the intervention of external powers for their vested interests in this region, the strategic environment has been very explosive. On account of this, India has to diversify its energy sources to Central Asia that is rich in hydrocarbon resources.<sup>8</sup>

### **Central Asia in Indian Foreign Policy: Paradigmatic Shift**

Soon after independence of CARs, both India and the CARs renewed their contacts. The Presidents of CARs visited India in quick succession seeking high order bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In the pursuance of the comprehensive relationship, many MoUs and policy frameworks have been put in place by both the sides. Both regions have been committed to

open democratic and secular polities. Both regions committed to heighten cooperation to root out religious extremism and terrorism. Sharing many commonalities of interests, Central Asia is being considered as a part of Indian Extended Neighbourhood. Many official frameworks i.e. Immediate and Strategic Neighbourhood and Look North Policy have been launched to further heighten the cooperation with Central Asia.<sup>9</sup> Having congruence of geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic interests, unfortunately Central Asia did not find pivotal position in Indian foreign policy. Most of the scholars of the Indian foreign policy holding views that Indian foreign policy have always been reactive rather than pro-active policy vis-à-vis Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> India has failed to capitalize the amount of goodwill, enjoying in Central Asia on account of its historical engagement and during the Cold War era. Whereas on the other hand, Indian foreign policy had been largely remained obsessed with Western world and primarily pre-occupied with Pakistan and China. Other areas of the world such as Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia did not figured prominently in Indian foreign policy. India's concerns have been rooted in Pakistan. Pakistan's strategy is to spread the religious agenda not only in South Asia but in Central Asia in order to form an Islamic State from the arc of Islamic countries starting from Iraq to Pakistan was viewed with tremendous circumspection and concern by Indian policy-makers and strategists alongwith the Central Asian scholars.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the Cold War, India and erstwhile USSR had been sharing very strong relations. With the breakup of USSR, India lost a strong ally that has always been supporting India in the international fora. The breakup changed the Eurasian geopolitical landscape. About 16 countries emerged on the Eurasian political map. However, after getting independence from Soviet Union, this region still remained under the Russian influence and known as backyard of Russia.<sup>12</sup> Although India established diplomatic relations with these countries in the very beginning but substance and constructive cooperation were absent between both the regions. With the launch of the New Great Game in the Central Asia, it has become chessboard of external powers. Meanwhile, Indian economy was on higher trajectory and it has converted to higher growth rate and in order to maintain this growth rate, it required a lot of energy as itself is deficient in energy source whereas Central Asia is very rich in the same. Against this background, Central Asia is a region where India has geopolitical and geo-economic interests. Thus, India started giving prime importance to Central Asia in its foreign policy.

The dawn of the twenty first century saw major changes in India's strategic thinking. With the end of the Cold War coinciding with lot of geopolitical and geostrategic changes in the international politics, paradigmatic shift has been witnessed in Indian foreign policy. Now it is not only loosening its obsession with Pakistan and China, rather it is opening up to many other parts of the world. India was willing to play a significant role in Asia alongwith the global

aspirations. Against this background, India reoriented and energized its foreign policy by fortifying it with frameworks, such as, “Look East”, “Look Central Asia” etc. In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, India has been following two pronged strategy- multilateral and bilateral engagements with Central Asia. India has become observer of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and also pursuing its goal to elevate its engagement as a full member. Except Turkmenistan, all other Central Asia republics are members of this regional organization. India is engaging with Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for its security interests. Central Asia countries have been strongly advocating elevation of Indian observer status to full membership for checking one country’s hegemony. India has also become the member of the Kazakh initiative Conference on Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). There will be possibility of terrorism’s shifting bases from Afghanistan to Central Asian republics and this will have drastic impact on the stability of the both the regions.<sup>13</sup> In view of this, both the regions have lot of scope in furthering strategic cooperation.

Alongwith multilateralism, India is also concretizing bilateral relations with the Central Asian republics. Bilateral relations between both the regions are based on open, pluralism, and progressive societies. Both are committed to secularism and democracy. Bilateral relations have been fortified because of homogeneity in commitment to root out terrorism, drug smuggling, small arms trafficking and other non-conventional security threats. Central Asian republics have responded to Indian concerns very positively and brought India out of claustrophobic confines of South Asia.<sup>14</sup> Look North Policy, Strategic Partnership and Central Asia Connect Policy frame-works have been devised to make Indian foreign policy *vis-a-vis* this region more proactive in the region. But the fact is that India is being outfoxed from Central Asian geo-economic and geostrategic dynamics. In addition to this, bilateral trade is at very low ebb, FDI being very negligible. Because of these enervated bilateral relations, India strategically and economically, has not become able to make any indelible impressions in the region.

### **Outfoxing of India from Central Asia: Wake Up Call**

Notwithstanding, strong historical and civilizational engagements alongwith constructive policy frameworks, in the recent years, India is being outfoxed from Central Asia. After the announcement of its ‘Connect Central Asia Policy’, India has been taken up seriously by the Central Asian countries. This policy was directed to enhance its cooperation in many potential sectors. Concerns and connection on part of both sides provided vital strength and urgency to the bilateral relations. Despite this urgency India, has been failed to keep pace with external players, in general, and with China and Russia, in particular.<sup>15</sup> Economically, Central Asian countries are not in a good position but their cooperation with India is holding paramount importance

in the evolving geostrategic and geo-economic environment for the mutual economic development. These countries required a lot of economic assistance for sorting out their socio-economic problems. India was not in a position to bail out these countries from such crisis whereas, on the other hand, other external players, particularly, China and Russia have been investing in the Central Asian region to build road, railways, pipelines etc. Despite many foreign policy initiative, Indian profile is declining in Central Asia on account of the New Great Game. However, it was not completely out of race in game.

Energy security is a major concern of India whereas Central Asia is very rich in energy. Thus, India and Central Asia are complementary to each other. But the fact is that the major initiatives on part of India in Central Asia to ensure energy security have been in limbo. Though roots of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipe line project was laid in the 1990s but yet has not taken off. Turkmenistan and Pakistan signed MoU in 1995. Later on, India also joined this project. Afghanistan, India and Pakistan signed a framework agreement in June 2008 to import gas from Turkmenistan.<sup>16</sup> Contention regarding transit fees between India-Afghanistan and Pakistan-India made the prospects of the realizing this project very dismal. Geopolitics of the region further derailed the project. Following the visit of Chinese President, Xi's visit to Turkmenistan in September 2013, there is a speculation that the TAPI project may be limited up to Pakistan only.

However, in a significant step towards achieving energy security, India signed agreement with hydrocarbon-rich Kazakhstan in April, 2011, for acquisition of 25 per cent stake in its Satpayev exploration block in the Caspian Sea. But very shortly, the Kazakhstani state-owned energy firm KazMunaiGas bought some stakes in the Kashagan field. The same stake about 8.33 percent was sold to China's CNPC for the same sum of US\$ 5 billion. As reported, India lost 8.4 percent stake in Kazakhstan's Kashagan oil field to the CNPC.<sup>17</sup> Half of the cost of financing of the second phase of Kashagan's development will be given by CNPC and because of this smart diplomacy, India met with outfoxing in this project. China has shown smart energy and trade diplomacy related to energy projects. It has become successful in making Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gas field, the world's second-largest gas field operational. It is a major accomplishment for China because this project was developed by a CNPC-led consortium without any external participation from major Western energy companies. Now, there is an indication on part of Turkmenistan that the successful accomplishment of Galkynysh field, China will have more control over the future of TAPI pipeline project.<sup>18</sup>

Lack of connectivity between India and Eurasia is also resulting in many problems for both the regions. In order to enhance connectivity between both the regions, India, Russia and Iran mooted an idea of a very important and ambitious project known as International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) in 2000. In this regard, nothing much has happened practically

but has become more complicated with the rapidly changing geopolitical dynamics of the region. The ongoing problems of Afghanistan and geopolitics over the involvement of Iran have been affecting the prospects of the project. On the other hand, China and Russia are also creating the network of energy and security relations in Central Asia through the SCO. According to one perceptible scholar, Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra, this network would have serious implications for INSTC. Michael Tanchum is also holding the same opinion. According to him, concerns are growing in India that INSTC probably may step into the shoes of SCO-managed trade and transport corridor stretching from the Pacific to the Baltic. India's poor maneuvering of proposed projects will have serious implications for its next engagements in regional cooperation in Central Asia. India may be sidelined by Chinese and Russian assertiveness in energy-rich Central Asian republics.<sup>19</sup>

China has an edge over India in Central Asia. China has extended economic aid to these countries at two levels – bilateral and through the mechanism of the SCO by providing substantial loans to the five states. In addition to energy, China is also expanding its footprints in many other sectors, such as, tungsten and uranium mining sector. Meena Singh Roy, an expert on India-Central Asian issues says that, “While India is accepted by all five Central Asian Republics, India's delivery mechanism is very slow. Indian private companies do not take enough interest in this region, and China with its economic might is, obviously, able to penetrate into the region faster than India. While India invests in millions, Beijing invests in billions in Central Asia.”<sup>20</sup> Indian trade and investment in Central Asia is very insignificant.

Strategically, India and Central Asia shared same kind of threat perceptions. However, strategically, the bilateral or regional engagements between India and Central Asia are very weaker ones. Both the regions shared geographical proximity with the highly terrorism infested country and the centre of drug smuggling. Thus, strategic cooperation is holding paramount importance for both the regions. Whatever the standing strategic cooperation is there between both the regions are being outmaneuvered by Russia. India has renovated Ayni Air Base in Tajikistan which was serving as a major military base for the Soviet Union since its intervention in Afghanistan. But when Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, this Air Base lost its geostrategic importance for Russia. Its infrastructure had been deteriorated seriously. India offered to renovate it as Tajikistan per se is not interested in maintaining and repairing it. Joshua Kocera, an eminent scholar on Eurasia argued in one of his papers quoting some perceptible analysts that India's strategic foray into base politics was motivated by a desire to play the role of great power.<sup>21</sup> India renovated this Air Base by spending US\$70 million during the 2002 and 2010. Though, India and Central Asia have been looking toward Russia as a sole guarantor of security in the Central Asian region but expanding strategic influence of India in the region is disliked by Russia. Blocking of obtaining a military base in

Kyrgyzstan and renewing the lease of lease on Ayni Air Base in Tajikistan can be seen in this direction.

The below table depicts the true picture of India and Central Asian economic cooperation. In comparison with other powers, India is standing at the lowest ebb. China, Russia and USA are the important trading partner of Central Asia. In 2000, bilateral trade between USA and Central Asia stood at US\$ 8472.75 million followed by Russia, China and India with US\$ 6472.75 million, US\$ 1819.36 million, US\$ 89.67 million respectively. By 2013, China has emerged as the major trading partner of Central Asia, valuing at US\$ 50 billion, followed by US, Russia and India at US\$ 33 billion, US\$ 31 billion and US\$ 1.2 billion respectively. This comparison shows that economically India is almost an insignificant player in Central Asia as compared to USA, China and Russia.

**Trade Trends of Central Asia with Big Powers**  
(Value in Millions \$)

<b>Years</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>India</b>
2000	1819.36	6472.75	8472.75	89.67
2005	8726.76	24358.57	26363.57	246.33
2006	11183.41	16765.97	18771.97	311.34
2007	12523.47	21718.69	23725.69	303.66
2008	30822.71	26752.72	28760.72	518.59
2009	23546.45	18488.95	20497.95	481.64
2010	24989.65	21437.18	23447.18	495.82
2011	39605.90	28342.41	30353.41	687.66
2012	45943.59	31988.00	34000.00	746.31
2013	50274.12	31415.03	33428.03	1241.44
<b>Total Trade</b>	<b>263250.93</b>	<b>266794.25</b>	<b>294885.25</b>	<b>5692.9</b>

*Source: UN Comtrade Database (2013)*

Central Asia is undergoing the influence of the New Great Game and the US, China, Russia and NATO are the important players of this game. US's main interests are involving around checking China and Russia's expanding influence and vice versa. Out of this game, Indian interests are seriously being affected. India has been out of many mutual beneficial economic and strategic projects on account of these players intervention. Now, a question comes up, how these interests can be protected and can India's latest policy framework Connect Central Asia Policy cope up with these challenges.

### **Connect Central Asia Policy and India's Outfoxing**

Though India and Central Asia had been enjoying relations since the recorded history, but presently despite historical and civilizational bounds, these lacked substance. Despite having lot of scope in economic relations, bilateral trade



did not take off. It still stood at US\$ 1 billion which speaks the low volume of multilateral and bilateral relations. Investment is also not encouraging one. Both the regions having congruence of interests related to security but failed to enhance their strategic partnership. Connectivity is one of the major blocks for heightening the regional engagements. Central Asia is very rich in mineral and energy whereas India is deficient in the same. Moreover, with the onset of the New Great Game, India is being outfoxed from Central Asia in mutual beneficial projects. Against this background, India started dialogue with Central Asia in June, 2012, in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). The objective of this dialogue was to start a regular annual discussion among the academics, scholars, government officials and business representatives from both the sides to provide inputs to respective governments in order to heighten comprehensive engagements. During the conference, Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. E. Ahmad, launched India's new 'Connect Central Asia' Policy.<sup>22</sup> E. Ahmad stating that India is now looking closely at the region through the framework of its 'Connect Central Asia' Policy, which is based on pro-active political, economic and people-to-people engagement with Central Asian Countries, both individually and collectively.<sup>23</sup> This policy got further impetus giving emphasis on the four 'Cs,' namely 'Commerce, Connectivity and Community.' While during the External Affairs Minister, S. M. Krishna's two-day visit to Tajikistan in the same year.

In order to speed up the bilateral cooperation, Connect Central Asia Policy (CCAP), prioritized many areas for enhancing bilateral and multilateral engagement which included strategic and security cooperation, military training, joint research, counter-terrorism coordination, long term partner in energy & natural resources, multilateral engagement, setting up civil hospitals/clinics, IT, management, philosophy and languages, setting up a Central Asian e-network, tele-education and tele-medicine connectivity and developing banking infrastructure in the region.<sup>24</sup> But in view of this comprehensive policy many unwanted geopolitical incidents took place which speaks about Indian profile and failures in the region. India has shown its interests in heightening multilateral cooperation with the region. Its major concern is extending cooperation with Central Asia as a long term partner in energy and natural resources. Economically and strategically, India cannot compete with Russia and China in the Central Asia region. Diplomatic maneuvers can help out India. Through this policy, India has been stepping up its diplomatic engagements with Central Asia and multilateral fora in the Eurasian regions. India is already on SCO board as an observer. India is focusing to elevate its engagement with SCO. This has been interpreted by some scholars as India's ability to check its outfoxing from Central Asia. China is blocking its elevation whereas Russia is supporting this move in order to balancing factor for Chinese and US's influence. Salman Khurshid, Indian External Affairs Minister visited Kyrgyzstan in September 2013 to attend the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO). He expressed Indian interest

to heighten security co-operation with the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Russia has negative perception of China and US. Exploiting this, India using Connect Central Asia Policy, can check the influence of many external powers. India is fortifying its bound with Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) and the Custom Union and it is also moving in this direction by proposing a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement to integrate its markets with the unifying Eurasian space.<sup>26</sup>

In comparison to external powers, the economic cooperation between both the regions comparatively is still dormant. Trade and investment are at very low ebb. In 2013, bilateral trade stood at US\$ 1.2 billion. In reciprocation, SCO is proposing Free Trade Area which will be in place by 2020. It will integrate economically all the members of the SCO. Scholars are of the opinion that it will be more attractive to join SCO and FTA than the developed countries' offer to include India in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.<sup>27</sup> Both the regions have geo-economic complementarities. Connect Central Asia has focused upon in enhancing cooperation in terms of natural resources; human resources and markets. Alongwith these sectors, there are huge opportunities existing for expanding cooperation in banking, insurance, agriculture, IT and pharmaceuticals. Private sectors of India are doing well over there in the steel and construction sector. Hydropower potential has lot of scope and India is exploring the construction of small and medium sized hydroelectric plants mainly in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.<sup>28</sup>

Under this policy, India has also been focusing to enhance its soft power in Central Asia. Apart from India plans to set up Indian-Central Asia University in Kyrgyzstan and military hospital in Tajikistan. IT centres of excellence are working in Tashkent, Ashgabat, Dushanbe, Bishkek, Fruit Processing Plant in Dushanbe and a Potato Processing Plant in Talas (Kyrgyzstan), are worth mentioning. Computerization of post offices in Uzbekistan; an Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Tashkent and a Tool Room in Dushanbe were also some of the important projects undertaken by India in Central Asia. About 645 slots under its ITEC programme were allotted to Eurasia in 2012–13. Out of these slots, 435 were sanctioned to Central Asia.<sup>29</sup> By these soft power projects, India has developed lot of goodwill fund by which it can check its outfoxing from Central Asia. High level visits between both the countries can contribute in strengthening the cooperation in many sectors. As these diplomatic engagements become ideal forums for discussing geopolitical issues and provided space for decision making regarding heightening of bilateral cooperation. Joint research programs related to energy and trade can fortify India's engagements with the Central Asian countries. Connect Central Asia Policy also emphasized on the people to people contact alongwith humanitarian concerns, such as, opening hospitals and education systems through which they can know about each other and win the political favour.<sup>30</sup> These diplomatic engagements ultimately will prove helpful in checking Indian outfoxing from Central Asia.

## **Conclusion**

India and Central Asia had been enjoying geo-cultural and civilizational relations since the recoded history. These relations have become enervated owing to the colonization of both the regions. After USSR breakup, Central Asia emerged on the Eurasian map. Though, geopolitical and geostrategic interests have been intertwined between India and Central Asia, even then Indian foreign policy overlooked this region. This region also did not figure prominently in Russian foreign policy. This lukewarm approach on part of its colonial master Russia, gave a space for the power play for external powers, known as the New Great Game. Against this background, India is expanding its footprints in Central Asia to achieve its geo-economic and geopolitical interests. Energy and security are the major interests. India has tried to get energy projects in Central Asia. It is also trying to expand its strategic infrastructure in the forms of air bases such as Ayni and Farkhor Air bases. But because of external power great game, India is being outfoxed from these energy and strategic projects. India launched Connect Central Asia Policy in 2012 to expand its engagements in various sectors such as energy, security, land, air and sea connectivity, health, education and in many other sectors. This policy will, hopefully, prove panacea to check the Indian outfoxing only if proposed projects are translated into reality. The present Indian political leadership should strive hard for improving its foreign relations with extended neighbourhood i.e. Central Asian States, owing the fact that both the regions are independent upon each other for manufacturing and market. In order to supplement the market-manufacture dilemma and to realize the dream for making 21<sup>st</sup> century as Asian Century, not only India and CAS but all the major regional powers have to share a common platform for this purpose. In this developmental game India's Connect Central Asia Policy which also can play a significant role, has to be translated into a reality.

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# REVISITING AL-FARABI'S LEGACY

## ENGAGING WITH THE CULTURE OF POLITICAL ISLAM

M. Maroof Shah

### Abstract

*Political Islam as a reaction to onslaught of colonization and aggressive secularization sought to fight a political battle in the name of Islam. How far is this project intellectually sustainable and integrally orthodox or rooted in the Islamic tradition? Its rather depressing record so far at either political or other cultural fronts in achieving the objective of establishing the Ideal or Islamic State with all its cultural vibrancy and widespread apprehensions within the Islamic intellectual elite or Muslim communities as such calls for questioning both the construction of the project of political Islam and its reading of Islamic tradition. One way of clarifying the issue is considering how great thinkers of medieval Islam conceived the political project of Ideal State in Islam and how they encountered the philosophical and theological other in this connection. As it is certain dismissive reading of Modernity or contradictory attitudes towards its key notions like technology and democracy and an advocacy of what has been seen as essentialist monolithic fossilized view of religion implicating a strong rejection of both religious and political other (liberal democracy) in the ideologues of political Islam, we need to see if we can get some insights into the genesis and evolution and ideological stakes in the phenomenon by revisiting parallel process of engaging with the intellectual and political challenge during Middle Ages. Al-Farabi is here read as an exemplary Muslim thinker of Medieval Islam who engaged with the question of the political and religious and philosophical other that seemed to pose a challenge to the identity of the religious tradition he inherited. Further narrowing the focus to one key dimension of Al-Farabi's response viz. philosophy, I propose to explore the question of possibility of revisiting Al-Farabi in the backdrop of modern Muslim culture's (especially in the ideologues of political Islam) amnesia of Muslim philosophers or opposition to philosophy as such and argue why he is of seminal importance and needs serious consideration from the Muslim world suffering from twin tensions of fundamentalism and aggressive desacralizing secularism.*

### Keywords

Al-Farabi, Prophetology, Islamic State, Political Islam, Muslim Philosophy, Islamic Traditions, Medieval Islam, Western Philosophy, Islamic Doctrines.

Al-Farabi, one of the greatest medieval philosophers, has been made famous in modern political theory by Leo Strauss, an important modern political

philosopher who appropriated him but upheld certain views that traditional religious consciousness of Muslims finds deeply disturbing. Through Ibn Sina and Jewish philosopher Maimonides, who form vital links in Al-Farabi's reception by the West, Al-Farabi has been a significant thinker in the development of medieval philosophy. His deep affinities if not influence on some important Western philosophers have recently been noticed or emphasized. However, it is strange that in the modern Muslim history, he has not received much attention or its major thinkers have largely ignored him. His political philosophy hardly generated the debate or significantly influenced modern political thought in Islam. Even the perennialists in the Islamic world haven't extensively written of him, at least till few years ago. The question of appropriating or revisiting his legacy by modern Islam remains only tangentially touched so far despite a flurry of books and scholars now focusing on Al-Farabi. What he did for the world of Islam is still hardly recognized despite some good work of Al-Farabi scholars. What he meant to Maimonides, the greatest Jewish philosopher, he hasn't meant to Muslim thinkers and what he means to Leo Strauss in the twentieth century he has not meant to most political philosophers and arguably has been gloriously misunderstood as an elitist who wrote in codes and needs to be read too esoterically. We need to approach and rediscover Al-Farabi for the modern world or both political Islam and secular democracy are going to destroy it. Paren's point that "Although the Islamic world was incapable for whatever reasons of assimilating Al-Farabi's profound rationalism in the medieval period, it may stand to benefit from his instruction now" (Parens, 2006: 4) is what this paper would attempt to substantiate by clarifying certain notions that have been informing modernist and modern Muslim sensibility to facilitate better reception of his work. We begin by exploring the concept and role of philosophy that was central to ancients and medieval – and in Al-Farabi – forgetfulness of which seems to be crucially responsible for problematique of what goes by the name of political Islam today. We then proceed to approach the question of relation between faith and philosophy or Athens and Jerusalem /Medina and ask how to articulate prophetic viewpoint to an audience wedded to rationalist or empiricist epistemology. The twin challenges of fundamentalist and desacralizing secularism vying for space in politics would then be addressed by engaging with what could be delineated as Al-Farabi's critique of the idea of what goes by the name of political Islam.

### **What is Philosophy for Al-Farabi?**

Accustomed to modern notions regarding philosophy as conceptual or linguistic analysis or problem solving enterprise or that raises questions and synthesizes knowledge of other domains it looks extremely anachronistic to assert little noticed functional definition of philosophy as preparation for death that Al-Farabi upholds with his master, Plato's Socrates. I wish to understand this claim in its proper setting in ancient traditional cultures to make sense of

Socratic claim and ground his arguments in cross disciplinary fashion.

Philosophy for ancients and Plato whom Al-Farabi takes as a model of a philosopher or more precisely a sage as the former term evokes in modern times is not a mere theoretical rational inquiry but a realization, intellection or noetic vision that transcends subject-object duality and demands something like ethical discipline. For perennialists and other advocates of traditional philosophy (that encompasses Indian, Chinese, Far Eastern, Islamic, Judeo-Christian and wisdom traditions of primitives) philosophy in the primordial sense of the term prepares one for death and assimilation to God as Plato said and is not a rational logical abstract discipline only and is allied to gnosis, a way of life or realization of the good. It is not a prerogative of ratio or mental faculty of reason but of nous, the supraindividual universal faculty of intellect. Philosophy, as Uzdavinys notes in his introduction to *The Golden Chain* (2005), in the traditional Orphic-Pythagorean sense is wisdom and love combined in a moral and intellectual purification in order to reach the “likeness to god.” It involves contemplation of Beauty and Good. In fact all contemplation is a form of death of self/mind. All meditation and contemplation, especially on the void called death, leads to death of the will, the will of the Other or non-self or what may be in theological terms called God is a sort of the death of the willing self. Virtue becomes possible only after this death of the soul, the soul as conative faculty. The Greek word nous covers, as Uzdavinys notes, both spirit and intellect (intellectus, ‘aql) of Medieval Christian and Islamic lexicon. Platonic philosophy should be understood as a spiritual and contemplative way of life leading to illumination or enlightenment; an intellectual discipline based on intellection culminating in union (henosis) with ideal Forms. This concurs both with “Orphic”-Indian conception of philosopher as one who seeks release from the wheel of cyclical term as with the view of perennialists who represent all traditional philosophies against modern rationalistic one. It is one of the key blunders of modern discipline called philosophy, according to traditionalist critics, that it has been largely forgetful of the Pythagorean-Platonic notion of philosophy as a pathway of communion with God. Indeed post-Aristotelian philosophy in general and modern philosophy in particular has been forgetful of the notion of what Heidegger calls thinking and Plato would perhaps call attention to death, pure receptivity to Being that reveals itself not to conceptual intellect but to intellection. Plato would dismiss much of modern philosophy as occupation with trivialities as Heidegger dismisses it from somewhat different though convergent angle. Receptivity to being achieved by fana in Sufism or consent to become nothing after transcending egocentric view in other traditions including Indian ones, is what is preparation for death. This alone gives the view of the world as full of wonder and beauty. Traditional aesthetics assumes that the joy of art arises from transcendence of ego by contemplating art forms. Modern philosophy has vetoed mystery and wonder and thus lost that great virtue of being humble and receptive

towards unrepresentable truth in phenomena. Plato's or Al-Farabi's insistence on preparation for death is not invitation for speculating on our posthumous states but achieving, with mystics across traditions, death in life, death to memory so that one achieves primal innocence that Adam has lost after the Fall that involves seeing objects as separate from subject or what amounts to the same thing as seeing things egoistically, dualistically or outside God. Sufis are supposed to die every moment so that they fully enjoy freshness of revelations of Being. God consciousness is identified in different traditions (especially in Zen and Sufism) with present moment or Eternal Now, achieved by dying to both past memories and future anxieties. Simone Weil's definition of God as "attention without distraction" expresses this notion of philosophy as cleansing and sharpening of perception. Philosophy in traditional sense gives us eyes to see, to perceive without distraction or colouring from egocentric desires and passions and ultimately to dissolve into objects so that only seeing is there without a seer and that dissolves all epistemological problems, so to speak. Philosophy has often or largely been reduced to epistemology after Kant and this has taken it to an abyss from which nothing is rescuing it today. It has been reduced to ontology after Aristotle and this too has proved problematic. It is easy for the likes of Heidegger and Derrida to make serious negative judgment of the history of philosophy and we see in the postmodern world many obituaries to the "dead" discipline. We again need philosophy as transformative practice that through rigorous ethical discipline (something absent in modern armchair discipline of philosophy as if it is learning new information or solving logical puzzles) results into a state of supreme clarity of understanding and joy and peace that passeth understanding. Philosophy as a practice of the self, as esoteric discipline allied to mysticism and needing proper initiation and not a profane discipline, logic chopping or linguistic analysis or calculus of abstractions or speculative exercises is what Plato stood for and no wonder we find the notion of preparation of death so anachronistic as we have forgotten what philosophy stood for in ancient times. Tolumin has also observed in his *Philosophers: East and West* that only sage can be a philosopher in oriental civilizations and in modern Western philosophy this is not a required qualification and even ideally it is a hindrance. Schuon suggests to reserve the name of philosophers for sages and to describe rationalists as profane thinkers. Philosophy, our perennialist notes, is according to the best of the Greeks, 'to express by means of reason certainties "seen" or "lived" by the immanent Intellect. I am tempted to quote from perennialists, much ignored critics of modern philosophy but great advocate of Plato and traditional philosophy. Perennialists, bringing in the witness of countless traditional sages throughout the world regard ancient philosophy as

essentially a way of life: not only inseparable from "spiritual exercises," but also in accord with cosmological myths and sacred rites. In the broader traditional sense, philosophy consists not simply



of a conceptual edifice (be it of the order of reason or myth); but of a lived concrete existence conducted by initiates, or by the whole theocentric community, treated as a properly organized and well guided political and “theurgical body” attended to the principle of maat -- “truth” and “justice” in the ancient Egyptian sense of the word (Uzdaviny, 2005: xi).

Ancient philosophers tried to awaken the divine light through the noetic vision (noesis) and to touch the divine Intellect. Perennialists reject the belief that philosophy is an abstract philosophical discourse based on rationalistic scientific method and its methodically obtained “truths.” Moksha centrism of traditional philosophies, as Harsh Narain explains, serves to:

giver purpose and direction to philosophy and proved to be a bulwark against battling in the clouds, which Sri Aurobindo calls the ‘besetting sin of metaphysics,’ and which is the bane of unbridled, directionless thinking for thinking’s sake. Praxiological commitment makes all the differences. Modern Western philosophy lacks such a serious purpose, direction and orientation. Nobody knows what it is out to do. Ancient philosophy aimed at enlightenment and felicity with or without salvation at the great denouement, whereas current philosophy aims at dry clarity and mechanical precision on their own account (Narain, 1996: 94).

Perennialist perspective on philosophy foregrounds moksha-centrism of different philosophies including premodern Western philosophy. Values are not written off in any traditional philosophy. That explains close association of religion and philosophy in traditional cultures. This explains ultimate religious-mystical aim of philosophy as preparation for death in Plato, in Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi.

Modern rationalist secularist orientation of philosophy finds it hard to understand how come Al-Farabi lives a life of a Sufi which appears quite ascetic from modern standards a philosopher normally enjoys or seeks. Corbin’s description of Al-Farabi’s life style is worth recalling here: “This great philosopher was profoundly religious in spirit, and a mystic. He lived extremely simply, and he even wore the garb of the Sufis. By nature he was essentially contemplative, and held himself apart from worldly things. On the other hand, he liked taking part in musical gatherings” (Corbin, 1962: 158). A philosopher in Islamic tradition is more akin to a mystic who lives the higher truths or virtues; he is ideally a sage, a seer. Many great mystics in Islamic history have been indistinguishable from philosophers; Sufi metaphysicians have been intellectual giants. A philosopher is understood with reference to key virtue of love of wisdom, a choice for certain life style, certain way of life that we ordinarily would classify as both moral and contemplative. He is allied to a poet than to a doubting ratiocinating, arguing “thinker” or scientist. He is capable of thinking that Heidegger defines and to which

philosophy as ordinarily understood proves to be an obstacle. A philosopher is not a dialectician, a disputant, an ideologue. His is not for unbridled use of reason but uncompromising ability to be open to pursuit or experience of truth. How a philosopher in the Islamic tradition engages with the central issues of ethics and religion may be gleaned from a quick look at two most important and influential philosophers Wittgenstein and Heidegger. This will help us understand Muslim philosophers like Al-Farabi's interest in ethics and religion that one may easily miss if we grant usual emphasis on the point that religion is only an imitation of philosophy and truths of religion are reducible to certain political or moral postulates that are more opportune than true as if deep existential aspect in the truth religion traditionally claims can be dispensed with. Philosophy's task is as an ally of religion and not a replacement of it. Though one can grant that saints or Buddhas would not need religion as Schuon has remarked but intellectual elite not knowing sublime ethics can't claim exemption and it is to be noted that saints and seers or Buddhas have never belittled religion or refused to participate in its universe.

### **Wittgenstein's view of Philosophy**

Regarding Wittgenstein one may note his clear statements:

I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.

My thoughts are one hundred percent Hebraic

And Kerr's statement about his work:

Wittgenstein's philosophical reflections are in large part, however indirectly, readings between the lines of the story of the soul in the Western metaphysical tradition.

Fergusson Kerr in *Theology after Wittgenstein* p.166

The mystics solve – for themselves at least – all important problems – intellectual and existential. In fact experiencing God dissolves all problems. For logical positivists what mattered most was what is in *Tractatus* but for Wittgenstein himself what mattered most was what was not in there, the unsaid part. That was not in the *Tractatus* because language could not handle that. That something is neither linguistic nor representable in any other way. However that shows itself and thus need not be spoken of or represented. Wittgenstein's most decisive move was thus away from linguistic representations and the most important job for the philosopher was to delimit what can be represented and thus related to what only shows itself. Ethics and aesthetics and the mystical all belong to this second category. Man does not live by bread of facts (science, instrumental rationality) alone but needs supernatural manna embodied in ethical/aesthetical/mystical. It is ironic that what mattered most to him has not been given due attention by his successors. All his endeavor

was to save the intelligence from the bewitchment of language. He was all for transcendence so that man becomes himself and lives truly, joyfully. In his search for happy life, life lived sub species aeternitatis he paid great attention to working of language, how language fails to represent reality and leads us astray by creating problems that are not there. It is how men lived that interested him rather than their speculative exercises. This alone solves the riddles of life. Language has no answers and answers can only be found when we step outside language.

As Wittgenstein was more interested in what cannot be linguistically represented his conclusions are radical. The most important things can't be talked about. Ethics, religion and aesthetics are transcendental. The very fact that things exist is mystical or linguistically and conceptually unrepresentable. We can only gaze at it and get lost in wonder. We can dissolve into this primordial mystery, love and celebrate it. Wittgenstein lived almost like a saint. He is the most mystical of the greatest philosophers of the modern Western history. He tried to show exit to philosophy. He found no problems once we let intelligence operate naturally and it shatters linguistic cobwebs. He fought against pervasive bewitchment of intelligence by language.

If we understand that God is what is and is missed when we attempt to think or imagine or make images of Him or attempt to comprehend the Mystery we can understand Wittgenstein. According to mysticism God is the case. The only thing is we don't see. We verbalize and babble and create theologies and metaphysics. Wittgenstein is a metaphysician in the same way Buddha is or Krishnamurti is. God is above speech. The Absolute has never been defiled by speech. But by metaphysics is here meant living or breathing the noumenal world, dissolving into it and not speculating about it with conceptual schemes. Metaphysics as the knowledge of the supraphenomenal reality is the soul of all traditional cultures or "epistemologies." Man is made for the Absolute, to die in It and thus to eternally live. Certainty is the requirement of intelligence and man is not absurdity. If man fails to access the most certain, the indubitable, the absolutely safe in Wittgenstein's terms, he has failed as a man. God is the greatest certainty – the greatest and most palpable of the present facts in Whitehead's words –and a philosophy or epistemology that doesn't account for this does not deserve to be called a philosophy. It is failure and betrayal of philosophy and of man and his intelligence if the real is not knowable though of course not conceptually knowable. Modern philosophy that is largely ignorant of God can't qualify as a genuine philosophy, as Indians or great traditional philosophers from other traditions understood philosophy as darsana, as seeing or vision.

The real question for traditional philosophies is how we become Godlike (theosis) or prepare for death in life (which is the same thing or means for it) or live and move and have our being in God. All else is vanity. Wittgenstein stood for this primordial heritage of man and that is why was misunderstood

by most of his friends and foes like. Needless to remark that he didn't consider Western civilization that refused to fully countenance the reality of the sacred as something of a monstrosity and like Gandhi a laughable "interesting" idea. He complained of Russell, the paragon of modern rationality or philosophy – to have fatally misunderstood him. In fact what he considered most important has been dismissed by many a modern thinker as folly. God (understood mystically or more precisely metaphysically) is the meaning of life for all religions including transtheistic one as for Wittgenstein. I wish to argue the point that Wittgenstein is to be read alongside great traditional philosophers that saw the Good above everything, had little use for fashionable pursuits of today, considered ethics as first philosophy and metaphysical discoveries as fruits or realizations of real ethical life, were centred on God rather than man and saw quintessentially human in living up to the divine image in him, in transcending himself. There is nothing new or original in Wittgenstein's mysticism as in fact there can't be anything new in matters transcendental. One can refer to many mystics while explicating central statements of him. So far we have read – with few exceptions– Wittgenstein as a philosopher or failed to appreciate how mysticism informs/grounds his philosophy.

Wittgenstein is not only a philosopher of mysticism but a mystic, a practical mystic of great standing. All his work was dedicated to the "glory of God" as he once said to his friend Dury (Rhees, 1984: 168) – an expression quite unexpected from modern profane philosophers. He didn't like philosophizing as a speculative/analytical exercise, as an academic pursuit as is the case now in modern academies or universities but something that Plato would appreciate or other ancient traditional philosophers would prescribe as a way of life and nothing short of preparation of death. That he wanted his legacy to be of changed attitude towards ethics is hardly surprising. "I am by no means sure that I should prefer a continuation of my work by others to a change in the way people live which would make all those questions superfluous"(Wittgenstein, 1994: 61). Philosophy, as pursued by his contemporaries or today, is a disease of modern form of life that needs cure. And that cure is ultimately provided by seeing the futility of the game called philosophy. For ancients it was ethics and a vision and had little to do with language or concepts. It was, most probably, his deep conviction borne from experience regarding sacrality of the world and thus the truth of the supernatural/eternal that made him loath modern civilization that had banished the sacred. It is in light of mysticism that we can understand his unconventional attitude towards secular carriers or vocations, his renunciation of his property, his austerity in life and manners, his casual attitude towards dress, his independence in thought and action, his nostalgia for peasant life in Russia, his alienation from his times that he characterized as dark ages and many puzzles in his biography. His view of philosophy's aim, his attempt at transcending it for getting the vision of the things as they really are, his rejection of the claims of conceptual analysis or linguistic analysis

as explaining reality, his rejection of classical dualisms that have bedeviled Cartesian and post-Cartesian thought, his plea for convergence of the ethical and the aesthetic, his view that ethics is transcendental, his rejection of doing science and mathematics as the ideals of philosophizing endeavor, his critique of psychologism and rationalistic attempts at building a metaphysics and our addiction to use metaphysical notions in ordinary discourse at rational plane are all threads in the fabric of mystical tapestry that has so subtly woven. He rejected theological representations as many others before have done but he never rejected the symbolizandum.

### **Heidegger's View of Philosophy**

“There is a thinking more rigorous than the conceptual” Martin Heidegger  
For Heidegger philosophy meant something that reminds us more of Arab philosophers than modern Western post-Cartesian philosophers as he himself once said. It appears that the view of aims and definition of philosophy he approves of is more a kind of mysticism than philosophy as generally taken by the moderns. It is Being, Mystery, Death, Poetry, innocence of becoming or openness to experience or more precisely revelations of Being – the themes that have traditionally characterized mystics and mystical philosophers that occupied Heidegger. His central quest for Being is mystical project and the ways to it – thinking (tafakkur), poetry. His key complaint against philosophy is it has forgotten the true nature of being, the question of Being and this task has to be carried out by the poet. Heidegger calls for a kind of thinking that echoes what ancient Greeks and Muslim philosophers would call intellection. Instead of calculative thinking, he calls for a meditative thinking that “contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is” (Heidegger, 1966: 46) and that can consist simply in “dwell[ing] on what lies close to us and meditate[ing] on what is closest...” (Heidegger, 1966: 47). He proposes for accessing the Truth of Being something like “learned ignorance” of the mystics, attention to something that is too close to require “building complicated concepts.” Instead “it is concealed in the step back that lets thinking enter into a questioning that experiences...” (Heidegger, 1977: 255). The problem occurs only for representational thought to tackle such a primordial, prereflective encounter with fundamentally simple Being. Heidegger requires a kind of will-less waiting, or as he says, a kind of “releasement,” for this experiencing of Being (Heidegger, 1966: 62, 66) His call is for opening up the human spirit, standing naked before the Mystery, perfecting the faculty of attention, forgetting the manipulating, willing, technological self that modern man has been reduced to, to lose the self in doing, in work, and “letting the world light up, clear up, join itself into one in manifold self-appropriations, letting us find in it a real dwelling place instead of the cold, sterile, hostility which we find ourselves” (Hafstadter, 1971: xvii). Recalling the old mystical emphasis on being or realizing the truth rather than just knowing it second hand, conceptually

or as if from a distance because truth was an ontological issue rather than epistemological one. The Being Heidegger invites us to “is not conceived of as a thing, but as that which ‘transcends’ things thinking and talking about it in traditional terms becomes impossible.” Such a goal is strikingly similar to the goals of many of the world’s most prominent mystical traditions, as Jeff Guilford argues (Guilford, 2011). The metaphysics which Heidegger labels as nihilism is concerned with representing Being instead of “thinking” it as Being isn’t a being or a thing. As Marmysz paraphrases Heidegger’s point:

We are guilty of nihilistic thinking any time that we fail to recognize the fact that language, and the rational and logical tools it utilizes, necessarily chops up what “is” into fragments, and so falsifies and “covers over” Being -itself. ..Heideggerian thought implores us to accept everything that “is,” and simply to allow Being to speak to us through its beings. Instead of actively rejecting and overturning the way that things are, it asks us to open ourselves to the possibilities of what might be. It requests that we listen to Being and come to understand its full potential (Marmysz 2003: 77).

### **Al- Farabi as *Hakeem***

Al-Farabi’s central task of perfecting the virtues to remove veils that obstruct intellection or vision that results in happiness. Al-Farabi’s description of intellect is of immense value to help us approach Heidegger’s view on understanding and thinking although it is not new in the NePlatonic framework. Subdividing the human intellect into the theoretical or contemplative intellect, and the practical intellect, Al-Farabi talks about, in Corbin’s paraphrase, “the human intellect in a higher state, a state in which it is able to receive, through intuition and illumination, the Forms which are irradiated into it by the active Intelligence without passing through the intermediary of the senses. This is what happens in the case of the philosopher, because this union is the source of all philosophical knowledge. The union can also be effected by the imagination, in which case it is the source of revelation, inspiration and prophetic dreams.” What has traditionally been the prerogative of mystical and prophetic consciousness, Al-Farabi connects to philosophical consciousness and one can say poetic consciousness. This is what makes possible thinking as Heidegger conceives and what gives light to the poets to guide lesser mortals in destitute times. If it is not conceptual or discursive reason that undergrids Heideggerian understanding he proposes for unconcealment, what is it? Heidegger chose a remote space for living where virgin nature could be better accessed as a revelation of Being. His appropriation of Holderlin’s romanticism can be better explained with reference to the notion of the faculty of the heart as used in Muslim philosophical and Sufi literature. The theory of Imagination implicit in Al-Farabi but developed in great detail in Sufi authors such as Ibn Arabi offers a powerful approach to critique empiricist and rationalist

epistemologies on the one hand and engagement with theology on the other. The use of symbolism in Sufism and its appropriation in Muslim philosophers like Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina offers a possible exit from the morass of shallow criticisms of prophetic or revelation centric religious tradition that we find in abundance in modernity and to the dangers of which Leo Strauss has also drawn attention in his defense of Maimonides and Al-Farabi. However Leo Strauss's own view of philosophy and his reading of esotericism in political terms are formidable problems in reception of Al-Farabi in a secularized political landscape of the modern world. Corbin's "apolitical" interpretation of Al-Farabi though quite briefly argued needs consideration as a corrective to Leo Strauss's interpretation. Corbin's notion of prophetic philosophy is better able to explain explicit allegiance of Al-Farabi to Islam and his attempted Islamization of Plato.

The idea of esoteric or philosophical elite that can dispense with prophetic dispensation or scripture is mostly vacuous as illustrated in the history of serious engagement, both for personal or existential and socio-political reasons, with scripture in case of Muslim philosophers. Al-Farabi rather than rejecting or demythologizing religion secures for it a grounding in his theory of imagination. In fact his view of philosophy is an argument for prophet centric or prophetic philosophy. It rejects rationalist opposition of prophet and philosopher. It situates both

in traditional understanding of intellect and imagination. He didn't count himself as a member of any elite group that can supplant or defy prophetic authority. There is no such thing as authority imposed from without by any genuine claimant of prophecy. The authority belongs to the Universal Intellect that grounds the prophetic revelation. And the philosopher works hard on both moral and intellectual planes to participate in the revelations of the Intellect. If the highest degree of human happiness consists in union with active Intelligence and that union is in fact the source of all prophetic revelation and all inspiration, in Al-Farabi's view, how come we can establish any opposition between the prophet and the philosopher. In fact Al-Farabi's philosopher is more or less identifiable with Sufi sage. And Sufism we know has been seen by both its great figures and great modern scholars as dimension of Islam, of Revelation rather than fundamentally new or independent or autonomous discipline with a different or divergent epistemology. Sufi tradition identifies prophet's dimension of willayat or friendship of God that identifies mystics in Islam as more primordial one that even is required before he would qualify as a prophet. This implies that philosopher who sees higher truths or contemplates God who grounds all happiness necessarily "follows" the Prophet. Al-Farabi's prophetology subsumes philosophers in the larger or underlying background of prophet centric spiritual and intellectual tradition rather than the converse although it has often been thus misconstrued. It has mostly been philosopher centricism that Al-Farabi's approach has been seen without adequately

realizing the crucial significance of prophet to the whole enterprise of philosopher who would require a political system in which masses cooperate for general happiness of all or to use more familiar theological expression, collective salvation. The prophet broadcasts more effectively and to larger audience the truths philosopher sees only himself or with a narrow peer group of philosophical elite. For Al-Farabi acquired intellect is “the human intellect in a higher state, a state in which it is able to receive, through intuition and illumination, the Forms which are irradiated into it by the active Intelligence without passing through the intermediary of the senses” (Corbin, 1962: 162). One might ask isn't objective of the prophet, the saint, the philosopher (in the traditional – Farabian – sense defended here) the vision of Forms and isn't it agreed by all the three that senses are somehow to be transcended for achieving this vision? Corbin's following remarks about Al-Farabi illuminate the issue:

For al-Farabi, the Sage is “united with the active Intelligence through speculative meditation; the prophet is united with it through the Imagination, and it is the source of prophetism and of prophetic revelation. This conception is only possible because the Muhammadan archangel – Gabriel, the Holy Spirit – is identified with the active Intelligence. As we have already observed here, this is in no way rationalization of the Holy Spirit – rather, the contrary is the case. The identification of the Angel of Knowledge with the Angel of Revelation is actually demanded by a prophetic philosophy: this is the orientation of all al-Farabi's doctrine. For this reason it would be inadequate to say that he provided Revelation with a philosophical basis, as it would be inaccurate to say that he placed the philosopher above the prophet. Such a manner of speaking denotes ignorance of the nature of prophetic philosophy. Philosopher and prophet are united with the same Intelligence-Holy Spirit (Corbin, 1962: 164).

Al-Farabi's explication of the doctrine of recollection in Plato is on empiricist lines that empiricist epistemology would find hard to disagree with. He grants Aristotelian critique of Plato on this point that is on empiricist lines though he tries to defend Plato at the same time as well by noting that the process of formation of ideas from sensory experiences is so fast as to give to the soul an impression that it “it has had them all the time, so that thinking of them would seem to the soul like recollecting or remembering them. According to Al-Farabi, Plato held the same opinion when he said that to think is to recollect, for the person who thinks tries to get at what experience has written on his mind, and once he finds the object of his thought, then it looks to him as if he had recollected (Hammond, 1947: xiv). Like Iqbal in modern times, Al-Farabi's explication of revelation is on what may be characterized as rational or “naturalist” lines as he invokes intellect that is not so alien a notion to philosophers including some modern philosophers. Al-Farabi's prophet



is a philosopher who is also gifted in addition with what we may call a poetic symbolic faculty that couches philosophical truths in a language that better appeals to the generality of people. Epistemologically philosopher and prophet have no fundamental difference both make intellect the organ of perception of the supraphenomenal.

The question of superiority or inferiority of religion vis-à-vis philosophy is a product of modernist attitude that has been deeply suspicious of the religious. Historically the two have been closely wedded in Indian, Greek, Chinese and some other cultures. In the case of Islam we find religion and philosophy so interwoven that many great Sufis can be described as philosophers and vice versa. We need to note that it is prophets who have established, or inspired establishment of, great cultures and civilizations. Al-Farabi would reply that prophets speak to the multitude. Philosophers to the elite. This fact only shows superiority of prophet over philosopher. Historically it appears that philosophers and prophets have been, in some cases, one and the same personalities. Buddha, Confucius, LaoTzu, one can, probably, readily identify with prophetic and philosophical figures. There has been a debate within some Muslim circles regarding prophetic credentials of Socrates. No less a man than Ibn Arabi called Plato, divine Plato. All this shows that the attempt to oppose philosopher and prophet or philosophy and prophecy that is fashionable in modern rationalism is unsustainable.

The true character of Greek wisdom championed by Al-Farabi, once investigated, becomes almost identifiable with prophetic-mystical enterprise. Schuon, a modern Sufi metaphysician, thus clarifies the point often missed by those who oppose philosophy (especially ancient Greek philosophy) and religion in each other's name.

Fundamentally we have nothing against the word "philosophy", for the ancients understood by it all manner of wisdom; in fact, however, rationalism, which has absolutely nothing to do with true spiritual contemplation, has given the word "philosophy" a limitative coloring so that with this word one can never know what is really being referred to. If Kant is a "philosopher", then Plotinus is not, and vice versa.

With Sophia perennis, it is a question of the following: there are truths innate in the human Spirit, which nevertheless in a sense lie buried in the depth of the "Heart"- in the pure Intellect—and are accessible only to the one who is spiritually contemplative; and these are the fundamental metaphysical

truths. Access to them is possessed by the "gnostic", "pneumatic", or "theosopher"- in the original and not the sectarian meaning of these terms - and access to them was also possessed by the "philosophers" in the real and still innocent sense of the word: for example, Pythagoras, Plato, and to a large extent also Aristotle.

The very expression *philosophia perennis*, and the fact that those who have used it were mostly Thomists, and so Aristotelians, raises the question as to what, in this context, is the value of Greek wisdom, all the more so since it is generally presented as a merely human system of thought. In the first place, by Greek wisdom we mean, not just any philosophy of Classical Antiquity, but essentially Platonism with its Pythagorean root and its Plotinian prolongation; on this basis, one can even accept Aristotelianism, but on the express condition that it is combined - as in the spirit of the Muslim philosophers - with Platonism in the widest sense, of which it is then like a particular and more or less secondary dimension. Then one must take account of the following, which is essential: Greek wisdom presupposes, on the one hand, initiation into the Mysteries and on the other hand the practice of the virtues; basically it pertains to gnosis—to the *jñāna* of the Hindus - even when it deals with things that have no connection with knowledge; admittedly, Aristotelianism is not a *jñāna*, but it nevertheless derives from a perspective which specifically pertains to this order. Aristotelianism is a metaphysics which made the mistake of opening itself towards the world, towards the sciences, towards experience, but which is no less logically valid for all that, whereas Platonism contemplates Heaven, the archetypes, the eternal values. If on the one hand the Greek spirit - through Aristotelianism but also and above all through the sophists and the skeptics - gave rise to the aberration of profane and rationalistic philosophy, it also provided - especially through Platonism - elements that were highly useful not only for the various theologies of Semitic origin, but also for the esoteric speculations that accompany them and are superimposed upon them; we should not forget that for certain Sufis, Plato enjoys the prestige of a kind of prophet, and Meister Eckhart calls him “that great priest” who “found the way ere ever Christ was born” (Schuon, 2007: 246-247).

A few remarks about the traditional understanding of the Prophet as a teacher of *hikmah* that without necessarily contradicting Al-Farabi's view of prophet as a teacher of philosophical truths for the masses by means of imaginative symbolism, complements it as it creates warrant or room for philosophers proper. I think Guenon's distinction between theology and metaphysics largely corresponds to and illuminates Al-Farabian explication of distinction between religion and philosophy although the former clarifies terms like religion and philosophy as well but what he means by metaphysic is closer to what Al-Farabi means by philosophy.

For Al-Farabi modern rationalistic philosophy pursued in secular contexts and for mundane pursuits is not the philosophy proper of which prophets are the teachers. The Prophet teaches *hikmah* among other things according to the Quran (65:2). He, like traditional philosopher-sages, expressed by means

of reason certainties “seen” or “lived” by the immanent Intellect, as did the best of Greeks. Regarding the Quranic foundations for seeing philosophy as essentially Islamic discipline it is sufficient to note that the function of the Prophet includes teaching hikmah. The Prophet’s prayer “O God! Show me the things as they are in reality” is understood by the greatest modern Muslim philosopher-mystic Iqbal as search for rational foundations in Islam or what may be called an aspect of philosophy. From Hazrat Ali who can be called the greatest metaphysician amongst the Companions to Iqbal and Guenon we find great tradition of Islamic philosophers or philosopher-sages. Important names generally held to be Mujaddids have been philosophers or used the idiom of philosophy to carry out their mandate. Philosophers have been writing their own exegeses and there is a lot of similarity between more influential and prolific Sufistic exegeses of the Quran and philosophical exegeses. No one can dispute that the Quran can’t be philosophically understood or philosophical exegesis is illegitimate.

Philosophy is opposed on the ground that it is rationalistic and this is seen to contradict emphasis on faith and intuition of the vision of the heart that is emphasized in Islam. Now this objection is what philosophers like Al-Farabi have been successfully refuting by their explication of the doctrine of intellect that appropriates this vision of heart. Despite the persistence of Ghazallian view of great Muslim philosophers as rationalistic thinkers who are to be sharply distinguished from the Sufis, the people of unveiling following the school of realization, the fact of deep convergence between Muslim philosophical and Sufistic approaches remains and it has not gone unnoticed even in the case of Al-Ghazzali himself whose essentially NeoPlatonic epistemology and whose essentially philosophical (understood in the sense of ancient or Pythagorean-Platonic sense of the term philosophy) exegesis of Islamic doctrines are too evident to need elaboration. Al-Farabian project of showing philosophy as the supreme science that grounds religion in a way or that is given imaginative and symbolic colouring by the prophets stands essentially unquestioned if we take care to clearly distinguish the precise meaning of reason, intellect, heart, prophecy and symbolism of scriptural and theological language into consideration. Philosophy that the Quran implicates, that great Muslim philosophers have practised is not rationalistic but intellectualistic and there is a hell of difference between reason that post-Cartesian Western philosophy upheld and Intellect (that is intuitive intelligence, contemplative vision) that Platonic-Muslim philosophical tradition has upheld. Even so-called rationalist Ibn Rushd is not to be understood in terms of Western rationalism. And in fact, even in the history of Western philosophy, we find very few crass rationalists who deny God or transcendence altogether. So why oppose philosophy? Why oppose philosophy if it is nothing but preparation for death? Why oppose philosophy if it is clarification of intellectual content of religion? I reproduce a few more quotes from Corbin to state my point.

In fact, were Islam nothing but the pure legalistic religion of the shari'ah, the philosophers would have no role to play and would be irrelevant. This is something they have not failed to recognize over the centuries in the difficulties with the doctors of the Law. If, on the other hand, Islam in the full sense is not merely the legalistic, exoteric religion, but the unveiling, the penetration and the realization of a hidden, esoteric reality (batin), then the position of philosophy and of the philosopher acquires an altogether different meaning (Corbin, 1962: 21).

Further developing the same line of argument Corbin is able to present the case for philosophy in convincing terms that no exoteric or legalistic authority can ignore or question on its own terms.

Is Islamic religion limited to its legalistic and juridical interpretation, to the religion of the law, to the exoteric aspect (zahir)? If the answer is in the affirmative, it is pointless even to speak of philosophy. Alternatively, does not this zahir or exoteric aspect, which, it is claimed, is sufficient for the regulation of one's behaviour in everyday life, envelop something which is the batin, the inner, esoteric aspect? If the answer is yes, the entire meaning of one's everyday behaviour undergoes a modification, because the letter of positive religion, the shari'ah, will then possess a meaning only within the haqiqah, the spiritual reality, which is the esoteric meaning of the divine Revelations. This esoteric meaning is not something one can construct with the support of Logic or a battery of syllogisms. Neither is it a defensive dialectic such as that found in the kalam, for one does not refute symbols and philosophical meditation were called upon to 'substantiate' each other (Corbin, 1962: 25).

The significance and continuance of philosophical meditation in Islam can be truly grasped only so long as we do not attempt to see it, at any price, as the exact equivalent of what we in the West have for our part called 'philosophy' over the last few centuries. Even the terms falsafah and faylasuf, which derive from the transcription of the Greek terms and go back to the Peripatetics and neo-Platonists of the first centuries of Islam, are not the exact equivalents of our own concepts of 'philosophy' and 'philosopher'. The clear-cut distinction which exists in the West between 'philosophy' and 'theology' goes back to medieval scholasticism, and it presupposes a process of 'secularization' the idea of which could not exist in Islam, primarily because Islam has never experienced the phenomenon of the Church, with all its implications and consequences. (Corbin, 1962: xiv).

Philosophical enquiry (tahqiq) in Islam was most 'at home' where the object of meditation was the fundamental fact of prophecy and of the prophetic Revelation, with the hermeneutical problems

and situation that this fact implies (Corbin, 1962: xiv).

Referring to the formulation that states “philosophy is the tomb in which theology must perish in order to rise again as a theosophia, divine wisdom (hikmat ilahyah) or gnosis (‘irfan)” that Corbin quotes and builds upon (Corbin, 1962: 21) one may state the thesis on relationship between philosophy and religion in these words: Philosophy deepens our understanding of religion. It may even purify it. Philosophy helps identify and fight subtle forms of idolatry.

Al-Farabi devoted great deal of attention to logic and this calls for a clarification in view of usually perceived fierce antilogicalism of mystics. Osman Bakr’s work on Al-Farabi takes due note of this emphasis on logic from a traditionalist viewpoint that Schuon sums up in these words:

It is not for nothing that “logic” (logikos) comes from “Logos,” which derivation indicates, in a symbolical fashion at least, that logic – the mental reflection of ontology – cannot, in its substance, be bound up with human arbitrariness; that, on the contrary, it is a quasi-pneumatological phenomenon in the sense that it results from the Divine Nature itself, in a manner analogous – if not to the same degree – to that of intellectual intuition. Let us admit that human logic is at times inoperative; however, it is not inoperative because it is logical, but because it is human; because, being human, it is subject to psychological and material contingencies which prevent it from being what it is by itself, and what it is by its origin and in its source, wherein it coincides with the being of things (Schuon, 2013: 26-27).

While noting that “logic can either operate in accordance with an intellection or on the contrary put itself at the disposal of an error, so that philosophy can become the vehicle of just about anything” Schuon explains why it is erroneous to take as “the point of departure, not a direct cognition, but logic pure and simple and ; when man has no “visionary” – as opposed to discursive – knowledge of Being, and when he thinks only with his brain instead of “seeing” with the “heart,” all his logic will be useless to him, since he starts from an initial blindness.” (Schuon, 1959: 8). One can argue with Corbin, Nasr, Baqr and others that Al-Farabi’s position on logic (that logic inheres in Truth) and need of vision converges with the traditionalist position upheld by Schuon. Al-Farabi isn’t a mere “thinker” who “gropes alone through the darkness” (Descartes) but a visionary. Platonism is fundamentally about vision and Aristotelianism an elaboration of that vision in logic rational terms. Al-Farabi does make use of arguments like any philosophy but, as Schuon would note, “an argumentation a man uses to describe to his fellow men what he knows is one thing, and an argumentation a man uses on himself because he knows nothing is quite another” (Schuon, 1959: 9).

Al-Farabi's perfect philosopher or sage is the Prophet. Plato and Aristotle are no doubt philosophers or sages for Al-Farabi but the qualities he requires from a perfect ruler are fulfilled by prophet and not them. It appears quite vain to privilege philosopher over the prophet or philosophy over religion that prophet calls for if we keep in mind such explicit statements as the following: or founder of religion.

This man holds the most perfect rank of humanity and has reached the highest degree of felicity. His soul is united as it were with the Active Intellect, in the way stated by us. He is the man who knows every action by which felicity can be reached. This is the first condition for being a ruler.

He should be able to lead people well along the right path to felicity and to the actions by which felicity is reached (Al-Farabi, 247).

In these (post) modern times, philosophy is not wisdom as the Greeks understood it. Ethics has hardly any role in approaching or appropriating truth. Philosophers need not be sages and ideally should not be. Philosophy has nothing to do with truth. Neither certainty nor truth is its aim. Philosophy can't be an aid in enlightenment. For many postmodernist thinkers philosophy is rhetoric, mere opinion from which Plato vainly tried to distinguish real knowledge. It is just a power complicit discourse or power game. In view of such a disturbing scenario and extremely constricted estimate of philosophy's scope, how are we going to argue for philosophy and centrality of the philosopher-king in Al-Farabi? A shift to prophetic view of philosophy that Corbin foregrounds and whose essential point is affirmed by traditionalist scholarship in its own way. It is what Heidegger's critique of philosophy as representational thinking doesn't question. In fact he dimly invokes it and it is the object of what he calls thinking. It is not what a Derrida could deconstruct. It is more an invitation to openness to the Question, to the Call of the Transcendent than what any propositional creedal formula or Gnostic possession. It is not what ordinarily falls under religion but what traditionalists call metaphysics, the science of the supraphenomenal, *scientia sacra*. Two clarifications regarding it follow.

Emphasizing, from the perennialist (more precisely the Guenonian reading of it) point of view, the difference between religion and metaphysics, Guenon points out the metaphysical point of view is purely intellectual while as in the religious or theological point of view the presence of a sentimental element affects the doctrine itself, which doesn't allow of it complete objectivity. The emotional element nowhere plays a bigger part than in the "mystical" form of religious thought. Contrary to the prevalent opinion he declares that mysticism, from the very fact that it is inconceivable apart from the religious point of view, is quite unknown in the East (Guenon, 2000: 124). The influence of sentimental element obviously impairs the intellectual purity of the doctrine. This falling away from the standpoint of metaphysical thought occurred generally and extensively in the Western world because there feeling was stronger than intelligence and this has reached its climax in modern times.

(Guenon, 2000: 125). Modern theistic appropriations of mystical experience by choosing to remain at the level of theology and not cognizing the metaphysical point of view cannot claim total truth as theology itself cannot do so. And it is not always possible to fully translate metaphysical doctrines in terms of theological dogmas.

A metaphysical reading of religion as applied by perennialists dissolves the major criticisms against religious thought or against religious basis of philosophy in the East. From a metaphysico-mystical viewpoint religion is not a narrative, a story, an explanation of things, belief in a set of propositions, so postmodern inspired critique of it is unwarranted though of course it may have certain relevance in critiquing exoteric literalist theology. Fundamentalism that reduces religion to an ideology and presents it as if it is a metanarrative could be critiqued on postmodern grounds but mysticism and even metaphysics if properly understood in perennialist terms, escapes postmodern critique because, ultimately in the vision of Nondual Reality, there is no privileging and marginalization of any term whatsoever, no binaries, no categorical conceptual linguistic vocabulary at all, no propositions with which the logician or rationalist dabbles. In the perennialist perspective metaphysics constitutes an intuitive, or in other words immediate knowledge, as opposed to the discursive or mediate knowledge which belongs to the rational order. Explaining the difference between rational and metaphysical knowledge, Shahzad Qaisar writes:

Metaphysical knowledge is attained by intellect alone. Intellect has a direct knowledge of the principles for it belongs to the universal order. Strictly speaking, intellect is not an individual faculty otherwise metaphysics would not have been possible. How is it possible for an individual to go beyond himself. The attainment of effective individual consciousness of supraindividual states - the objective of metaphysics is only possible through a non individual faculty. The metaphysical truth is not external to intellect but lies in its very substance. Knowledge is identified with the object itself resulting in the identity of knowing and being. A reciprocity is thus developed between thought and reality. The process of reaching the heart of Reality is by virtue of intellectual intuition for it is not obstructed by the yawning chasm of subject-object duality. Intellectual intuition is supraindividual as compared to intuition of certain contemporary philosophers which is infra-rational. The former is above reason imparting knowledge of the eternal and immutable principles whereas the latter is below reason tied to the world of change and becoming. Intellectual intuition is contemplation whereas the rational capacity is logical. The infallibility of intellect is derived from its own nature with absolute metaphysical certainty. Religion is existential formulation of metaphysical thought. From metaphysical point of view it binds man to a superior principle. Religion comprises

a dogma, a moral law, and a form of worship. Dogma belongs to the intellectual order and it does not divest itself from its essential metaphysical character. Feeling has a cognitive content and deepens intelligence and establishes a unique form of certitude. Moral law is dependent on the religious doctrine and has both metaphysical and social character. The form of worship is symbolic expression of the doctrine (Qasir: 33-34).

This makes it amply clear that oftenly highlighted contrast between religion and philosophy and privileging of the latter more distorts than illuminates the issue in Muslim philosophy. /If by rationalism is meant an attempt to build a closed system embracing the whole of reality and based upon human reason alone, then this begins, as Nasr points out, not with Aristotle (in whose philosophy there are metaphysical intuitions which cannot be reduced to simple products of the human reason) but with Descartes, since for him the ultimate criterion of reality itself is the human ego and not the Divine Intellect or Pure Being. This is rightly critiqued by both perennialists and postmodernists. If philosophy is defined as rational inquiry, staying within the limits of reason and not accepting any other faculty beyond reason (called intellect up to the 17th century) then certain developments in modern philosophy and postmodern turn has indeed discredited it. Metaphysics as Kant correctly perceived is riddled with antimonies as long as we approach it by means of reason. Traditional metaphysics is not the rational metaphysics. It is vision, illumination. That explains how Al-Farabi's prophethood presents itself and is not a rationalization of angelology. The active intelligence not concerned with the phenomenal world or even Being but invisibles or Unmanifest.

The most important task for philosophy, according to Ananda Coomaraswamy, is understanding comparative religion (Coomaraswamy, 1989). I think that Al-Farabi's approach to prophecy anticipates current discussion in a key area in comparative religion. Perennialists reread entire philosophical/metaphysical tradition, especially the Western tradition which they accuse of unforgivable sin of oblivion of true metaphysics and thus philosophy proper. Their rereading is challenging, provocative and seems to throw light on certain otherwise irresolvable debates in Western thought. They claim transcendent unity of religions (apparently divergent traditions of Buddhism and Islam are ingeniously interpreted to demonstrate this transcendent unity) and thus unity of all orthodox traditional philosophies. The concept of universal orthodoxy propounded by Schuon integrates and juxtaposes otherwise quite diverse and divergent trends in philosophical traditions of the world. Coomaraswamy has forcefully argued for the essential unity between Platonism and Vedanta. Taoism and Sufism are admirably integrated in a common paradigm by Izutsu. Semitic and nonSemitic traditions in religion are reconciled with great conviction by such masters



of Sophia perennis as Schuon. Although Al-Farabi does none of these things and he possessed, because of his times, little knowledge of different religious traditions but he does give us key insights that help us to see him anticipating this perennialist reading. His three points in this connection may be worth noting – “that religions differ only on their surface...discerning few could appreciate in higher form,” religion is an imitation of philosophy and philosophy is one because essence is one, but religions are necessarily many because there is no one, true image. And as Sweeney puts it: “The natural inability of the vast majority of human beings to know essences forces the philosopher not only to tolerate the existence of religions but to rule the multitude through religion. Tolerance of religion follows upon the almost universal limitation of human beings to imaginative knowledge (Sweeney 2011). And “The particularity, mutability, and contingency of images can only produce an approximation of the unity rooted in the universality, immutability, and necessity of essence” (Sweeney, 2011). Al-Farabi’s explicit condition regarding need for common religion in his virtuous cities as stated at the end of his *The Book of Religion* can’t be met except on the premise of a development of a hermeneutic like that of traditionalists who can demonstrate transcendent unity of religion.

It is clear, in addition, that all of this is impossible unless there is a common religion in the cities that brings together their opinions, beliefs, and actions; that renders their divisions harmonious, linked together, and well ordered; and at that point they will support one another in their actions and assist one another to reach the purpose that is sought after, namely, ultimate happiness. (Al-Farabi, 2001)

Religions will necessarily vary amongst people as they are symbolic representations only, not truth pure and simple. When he maintains complete, universal and unconditional reality or truth of philosophy he maintains something similar like Guenon or Schuon who distinguish limiting and partial formal universes of religions from what they call metaphysics though it remains to be shown if there are significant differences between the tools and objectives and cognitive claims of the traditionalists and philosophers like Al-Farabi. However the characterization of the First Principle, nous centric, transformative or realizational endeavour involving focus on actualizing access to the supraphenomenal and eschatological through knowledge and virtue in both will make *prima facie* case of similarity between them quite a strong one. In our times, it is traditionalists who have so strongly upheld the rights of “philosophy” or metaphysics – of the Absolute, of Intelligence, of objectivity – against all kinds of detractors from existentialists to postmodernists and dependence of religious or theological discourse on metaphysical intuition of the prophet-sage. Schuon calls himself a sage, takes heavily on Ghazzali for inveighing against Muslim philosophers and doesn’t lose sight of relativity of forms and even suggests distortion caused by human receptacle of the prophetic figure. Religions as symbolic representations is currently the most

widely accepted view amongst philosophers of religion, mystical thinkers and theologians and we can almost fully agree with Al-Farabi on the need of metaphysics or philosophy in grounding and clarifying true meaning of religion. Religion is directed, so argues Schuon in his various works including the magnum opus *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*, not to narrating truths of higher order but saving people and it invokes various upayas including elliptical language of scripture and graphic evocative symbolism for this end. This distinction between religion directed to salvation of masses and philosophy or metaphysics for appealing to the intellectual elite has been cogently defended by almost all the Muslim philosophers and perhaps most eloquently Ibn Rushd to be revived with great force and battery of arguments by the traditionalists.

As religions can't but be many as Al-Farabi knew too well, the Quran itself also concedes because forms are contingent upon diversity of cultures, geographies, histories we encounter, we can only assert that common philosophical or metaphysical core of religions can be shown to be the case. Al-Farabi says at the beginning of his *Book of Religion*, "religion is opinions and actions, determined and restricted with stipulations and prescribed for a community by their first ruler, who seeks to obtain through their practicing it a specific purpose with respect to them or by means of them" (Al-Farabi, 2001: 93). This clearly shows how different is his conception of religion from his predecessor Al-Kindi who argued for a more intellectual view of religion or seeing it one with philosophical metaphysics and standard view of theologians who emphasized more cognitive view of religion or philosophical theology.

Even if Al-Farabi believed that philosophy was superior over religion or "purer" than religion in its claim to access to pristine truth, it needn't follow that he is somehow playing the card of philosophy against religion or rejecting any claim that religion has made for itself with regard to access to the depths and heights of the Real. His contribution was to distinguish between the two, identify their separate though somehow overlapping domains, reconcile their cognitive claims, recognize the role of both in respective spheres. Religion was not dispensable, even for the philosophical elite living in a community. Religion makes philosophical concepts understandable to the masses through the science of symbols. Noting that "each culture employed its own symbols to interpret the same philosophical truths" he opens up the space for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. His prophet is a philosopher and a poet of extraordinary imagination who is able to give his philosophical understanding an imaginative colouring. Al-Farabi's synthetic genius with which he is able to harmonize Plato and Aristotle helps reconcile two divergent orientations as he is able to present the common essence of wisdom linked to perfection of virtues and unfolding of intellect or the correspondence between the intellectual and the moral or the affective and the cognitive. Tendency to emphasize disagreement between Plato and Aristotle has been the business of historians of philosophy despite the great names from medieval period to

Whitehead and Voegelin in the twentieth century. Al-Farabi belongs to this tradition of creative appropriation and assimilation. In fact Al-Farabi, as Corbin argues, conceives his mission to revive ancient wisdom that has been lit from the lamp of prophecy and that preceded Greeks. He believed this wisdom had begun with the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia; that from there it had passed to Egypt, then to Greece, where it had entered history through being written down;" (Corbin, 1962: 157)

Modern thought began as a rebellion against traditional thought of the world and gave rise to hitherto unknown problems. Woeful limitations of rationalism and empiricism and attempt to construct a rational metaphysics and failure of such attempts and more recent cynicism with respect to the whole philosophical enterprise show how problematic has been the modern Western project. Sentimentalism, moralism, irrationalism, subjectivism and a host of other one sided ideologies that have flourished during the modern period are a sad comment on modern man's attempt to philosophize in the absence of intellection and intelligence capable of objectivity and certitude. It is difficult to see genuine basis for unity among philosophies in the framework of modern presuppositions and prejudices. In such a context perennialist discomfort with modern project and search for alternative foundations for philosophy is better appreciated. In the absence of moral purification there can be no pursuit of wisdom, no true knowledge according to traditional philosophers from different civilizations. The tragic divorce of fact and value, of phenomena and noumena, of samsara and nirvana, of knowing and being we find in modern philosophies necessitate search for such alternative perspectives such as the one provided by perennialists and decipherable in Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Isharaqi thinkers and others in the Islamic tradition.

Al-Farabi's argument that "Since essence is one, philosophers must be in agreement with each other; since images can only be like but never be the essence, there is no one, true image, and the necessary plurality of images means that nonphilosophers can never reach the consensus of philosophers" (Sweeney, 2011) clarifies the charge of mutually exclusive schools and consequent failure of unreliability in philosophy against philosophical enterprise. Sages are in agreement as Al-Farabi showed in the case of two great sages Plato and Aristotle. Philosophy wedded to ethics or philosophy as a way of life that has goal as a preparation for death, that involves something more than ratiocination or logic chopping by achieving vision or clarity of perception clouded by desires or passions and erroneous opinions or chain of reasoning based on merely sensory or rational means that ignore primary data from intellectual intuition. Mere thinkers who don't know the third eye, the eye of the heart, do disagree and would end up in either killing God or man and despair of life and philosophy. Love of wisdom that constitutes the essence of traditional philosophies is not dependent on this or that epistemological or linguistic or political debate that have become current in modern times. Philosophy is not epistemology pursued for its own sake or representational

thinking or what can serve as handmaiden of science or politics. Philosophy is seeking happiness, a preparation for death, a therapy against linguistic and other ideological cobwebs that cloud the vision. It is a quest for the most important "things," the most enduring, the most beautiful, the most enjoyable "things." Its goal largely converges with art, religion and mysticism. There has not been a question regarding object of art or religion or mysticism. They have been central to culture and civilization. And so has been philosophy in traditional cultures. Evolution of an autonomous discipline emasculated from twin sources of intellection and revelation, pursuing or serving something lesser than the Absolute, not getting hold of what intelligence demands by its very nature – objectivity and certitude, is a modern heresy in the history of thought. Al-Farabi considered the Platonic view of philosophy the true view and that view, contrary to impression given by many histories of philosophy, has not been refuted but set aside. As traditionalists have pointed out, Western philosophy having severed its ties with the pursuit of wisdom and substituted thought for intellection has been reduced to linguistic analysis and analysis of concepts and handmaiden of science and in fact is claimed to be dead by many postmoderns.

The dichotomy between religion and philosophy and Al-Farabi's plea for the significance of philosophy and his attempt to explain religion as a copy of or translation of its truths in imaginative and symbolic terms has been often understood by modern critics to downplay essentially religious and mystical inspiration of what Corbin called Al-Farabi's prophetic philosophy. Al-Farabi can't be claimed as their own by rationalists who "use reason to destroy religion or explain it away. He expressed his vision in rational philosophical terms, no doubt but was at heart a Neoplatonist and Sufi who practiced philosophy as an art of preparation for death, a way of life in which virtue is central and towards essentially a religious end of eudomonia. (Refuting the contrary interpretation that presents him as shrewd political thinker who uses religion as a means for political ends ignores his life style which is more ascetic than political or ambitious, his categorical references to the eschatological, his emphasis on immaterial and therefore immortal intellect, knowledge and virtue and never reducing the idea of eudemonia or sa'adah to merely worldly happiness and emphasizing its distance from hedonistic idea of pleasure.) Even the arch critic of philosopher, Al-Ghazzali, titled his great work *Alchemy of Felicity* thus essentially acknowledging philosophical formulation of the goal of life, both individual and social, as pursuit of happiness. In fact it has been argued that Ghazali has modeled his great *Ihya* on the Aristotelian model of practical and theoretical knowledge and it is not difficult to see essential convergence in aims of preparation for felicity in hereafter or science of knowledge of God in Al-Ghazzali and that of philosophy a pursued along essentially NeoPlatonic lines by Al-Farabi.

Nothing can be farther from truth than pitting philosophy against religion in Al-Farabi. On the contrary, philosophy is the inner truth of religion

using mythological and symbolic language. Philosophy thus provides an interpretation of religion. To claim that for Al-Farabi religion was only half truth or philosophy was purer than religion is to forget that his primary aim is to provide for a model state that is based on cooperation in virtues by all and sundry and ideally he would extend his ideal state to the whole world under one ruler. Achieving this end would require understanding religion rather than wishing it or explaining it away. Symbolic expression of truth is universal and primordial mode of cultural life. Not only art or poetry but even certain traditional sciences like, astrology, use it. In fact culture is mostly symbolic use of language. Ritual is central to only religion but some other cultural formations as well. Philosophers haven't been so significant in history as prophets. It is a Buddha or a Christ or a Muhammad who are central to their respective cultures. Philosophy is an aspect of religion if we understand the later in Iqbalian terms as involving the whole man. Man is affective and aesthetic creature and if religion preeminently caters for those aspects without denying the cognitive that in fact is inseparable from integral religion. "Put reason into life and life is gone" as Tolstoy observed in his epilogue to the War and Peace. Although ideally philosophy does take into consideration heart's reasons, passions, relationships and even art and religion but then it is idle to propose religion-philosophy binary. Philosophy as understood in the sense Al-Farabi proposes in distinction from religion would eschew use of symbolism and talk about truth pure and simple without any disguise in mythology or symbolism.

Is it possible, for the Muslim world at least, to return to Plato or to the best of Greeks or to the original formulations of wisdom in ancient cultures without any apprehension of loss of authenticity, of the heritage and legacy centred on Revelation it has bequeathed to humanity in what has been called Secular Age? Is it possible to philosophize with all the freedom, courage and boldness of spirit, in the best sense of philosophizing, in a world living under the threat of fundamentalisms? How are Muslims to take modernity in the postmodern age? Given the twin challenges of secularization and fundamentalism, how might a Muslim thinker respond with urgency? I think an affirmative or simple answer to all these questions is possible by revisiting Al-Farabi. (His importance in fighting fundamentalism has been underscored by many Muslim intellectuals.) It is strange that he has been so far overshadowed by other philosophers like Ibn Sina (whom he influenced decisively) and Ibn Rushd (who was appropriated by Latin Averroism) and Ghazzali's polemic in the public imagination and philosophical world although he did impact on Shiite philosophy.

### **Dawah Work**

Al-Farabi's legacy may be invoked in engaging with the phenomenon of missionary spirit of Islam that has two aspects: Dawah work and Jihad. Dawah

work is aimed at preaching the Word and Jihad at removing the obstacles that prevent human response to the Divine Call and thus thwart full realization of potential for happiness or knowledge/gnosis. As Dawah work requires bearing witness to the Truth today in an age singularly known for confusion of tongues or proliferation of ideologies and conflicting narratives and relativism, it becomes rather tricky to present the truth of the Absolute to a vast disbelieving modernity. As the world considers itself post-theological and philosophers have increasingly abandoned their claim to membership of elite “people of demonstration” group who are capable of certain knowledge or access to the Absolute, as Al-Farabi and Ibn Rushd present their claim against dialectical class of theologians and other opinionated people, how does Al-Farabi speak to us today?

Despite widespread skepticism the calls for wisdom are heard respectfully by the postmodern man. The need for wisdom as distinguished from what Eliot called knowledge and information has never been so desperate as today. Philosophy understood as thinking in Heideggarian sense, as ethics in Levinasean sense, as critique of the establishment or ideology in left inspired philosophies, can't be dispensable. Al-Farabi's sublime view of philosopher and philosophy would never be more relevant than today if we could convince ourselves that such an entity does exist. How significant is the place of philosophy in Islam and in explicating its much debated, much misunderstood, doctrine of jihad as understood by Muslim philosophers like Al-Farabi needs to be underscored.

In Islam one is converted by proper use of intelligence. Proper use of aql leads to tawhid and salvation is linked to right use of intelligence. So every thinking person is converted by using philosophical acumen in the broad sense of the term. Only those established in knowledge or Ulama fear God, the Quran declares. Who are Ulama? What is knowledge in Islam? Isn't it inclusive of what goes by the name of intellectual or what I call philosophical disciplines as well? How can we ignore or reject Al-Farabi's claim, elaborated and more eloquently argued by Ibn Rushd, that philosophers, as the people of demonstration, have the primary claim to the class of true knowers or truly knowledgeable on whom the title of aalim applies? Who is best capable of interpreting the Prophet's word? Philosophers, according to both Al-Farabi and Ibn Rushd. Are not the greatest names in Muslim history largely classifiable as philosophers or philosophical theologians? Sufis have been preeminently claiming the qualification as urafa, as knowers. We know that the notion of hikmah has both prophetic and philosophical connotations. The Prophet is described as teacher of hikmah and given the position adopted by Muslim philosophers as enunciators of hikmah, we can safely assert that philosophy and prophecy are allies. Corbin's explication of the term is strongly arguing the case of the Prophet as a teacher of philosophy understood in the sense defended here. To quote him:

the term hikmah is the equivalent of the Greek sophia, and the term hikmat ilahyah is the literal equivalent of the Greek theosophia. Metaphysics is generally defined as being concerned with the ilahiyat, the Divinalia. The term 'ilm ilahi (scientia divina) cannot and should not be translated by the word theodicy. Muslim historians, from al-Shahrastani in the twelfth century to Qutb-al-Din Ashkivari in the seventeenth, take the view that the wisdom of the 'Greek sages' was itself also derived from the 'Cave of the lights of prophecy' (Corbin, 1962: xiv).

If we can claim for philosophers as sages a pre-eminent place that has been reserved to scholars (theologian-jurist) and saints in Muslim imagination we can take a great leap forward for facing multiple challenges that Muslim community has been facing. If theologians adopting dialectics or jurists have such an influential place in the Muslim community and problems facing faith in its encounter with modernity are far from being effectively tackled through theological method as the audience is committed to more philosophical than theological orientation in approaching issues, isn't it expedient to turn again to philosophers than to theologians who helped appropriate the Greek challenge in early Islam and put it to great use in development of Islamic intellectual and spiritual culture? If modern man has privileged philosophical idiom as the mode of expressing its deepest thought currents in a host of disciplines, isn't it time to explore the power of this idiom for better introduction to Islam? Is the huge project on preaching Islam to the world that is preoccupying thousands of Muslim scholars and activists viable in absence of serious engagement with (post)modern philosophical or critical discourse? If a sizeable number of educated youth and ex-Muslims are expressing their reservations about theological cum juristic corpus for its supposed failure to convince on rational grounds, how can dawah workers avoid appropriating Muslim philosophers who have used an idiom that communicates much better to modern secular audience? To just give one example: Al-Farabi talks about seeking happiness at individual level and cooperating for the same at social level as the problem of man and proceeds to explain time tested contemplative and ethical teaching handed from ancients through Plato and what Suharwardi calls "the light of the cave of prophecy."

One can sum up the reasons for study of philosophy in Islam, especially today: Because "all creatures desire to know" as rational creatures, because the Quran links salvation to right use of intelligence, because we have to live today in the world that is shaped by philosophy and science, because the Prophet of Islam (SAW) as a teacher of Hikmah called for learning or gaining knowledge and called for love of wisdom, for perfection of virtues, for preparation for death. Even seminaries or madrassahs need to teach philosophy as a subject. Today dawah work needs philosophical approach, at least in certain parts of the world or certain sections of addressees. If one doubts this it means one is living in medieval age and has not heard of Nietzsche or Heidegger or Freud or Derrida.

If philosophy or love of wisdom or preparation for death or perfection of virtues are important for salvation (these are synonymous for traditionalist historians of philosophy and for those who have cared to read ancient philosophers of any tradition with any seriousness), then how come one can deny it as part of Islam? If Islam endorses Hikmah and even if we grant it a moral-spiritual aspect only but not the intellectual one as usually understood in terms of philosophy, one opens the room for philosophy.

Why thinking or tafakkur is needed to understand scripture is lucidly answered by Mulla Sadra thus: "The Quranic revelation is the light which enables one to see. It is like the sun which casts light lavishly. Philosophical intelligence is the eye that sees this light and without this light one cannot see anything. If one closes one's eyes, that is, if one pretends to pass by philosophical intelligence, this light itself will not be seen because there will not be any eyes to see it" (Qtd in Nasr, 2006).

One needs to note an important qualification while seeking to appropriate Al-Farabi for dawah work. Al-Farabi would not be interested in conversions but inviting people through various means to work for virtuous state or at least their perfection or happiness, both this worldly and eschatological. His call for justice and ethic centric life would remind one of a Derrida or Levinas rather than any modern missionary of Islam. His commitment to Islam would be somewhat like that of Schuon who was more interested in Sophia perennis he thought expressing the esoteric/metaphysical core of Islam as of other traditions and addressing the world as a sage rather than a sectarian preacher or in the name of piety or some political ideology.

## **Political Islam: Al-Farabi's Critique**

### ***Political Islam is premised on certain assumptions***

- That sovereignty belongs to a transcendent God whose will has been received through the last revelation that overrides previous revelations.
- That prophets are the best legislators and we have been vouchsafed by not only general principles underlying laws but also many concrete exemplifications or models that need to be emulated in letter and spirit.
- That there is a world of Islam and a world of Jahilliya. Much of what is central to modern outlook is rejected as complicit with the latter.
- That religious other is to be subjugated politically and it represents a degeneration rather than a possibly valid mode of responding to the Divine Call.
- That States need to be Islamized either by democratic or violent means.
- That it is the Laws of Islam rather than the principles underlying them that need to be implemented because it is the divine commandment.

Now before a few critical remarks on political Islam from Al-Farabian point of view, it needs to be clearly noted that against secular and democratic



prejudice that is premised on sovereignty of people, Al-Farabi's Platonic model is theocracy. In fact the traditional theory of politics is theocratic. Modernist Muslim thinkers have, in some cases, been led to opt for such extreme strategies as to declare corpus of Medinan verses as retrograde step. Orthodoxy of Muslim philosophers is seen in the case of Al-Farabi who has appropriated the model of Medinan State in light of Plato or vice versa.

Al-Farabi, despite his theocentrism and theocentric Platonic State and sharing the key assumption that God is the be all and end all of every endeavour and Divine Writ holds absolutely because it corresponds to our deepest or theomorphic constitution, would be poles apart from the project of political Islam for the following reasons or qualifications and criticisms he would suggest to the above mentioned points characterizing political Islam.

Sovereignty belongs to God but the notion of sovereignty need not be necessarily or primarily understood in politico-legal terms as implying recourse to any arbitrary or capricious will of a Despot Lawgiver who takes humans as subjects to be disciplined and punished for reasons that enlightened rational minds can't comprehend. It is not to be reduced to hakim-mahkoom relationship but other modes of relationship between God and man like Roab-marboob, (Sustainer-sustained) Beloved-lover, Merciful-mercy seeking creatures, co-partners in creatorship that are also there. The whole notion of divine sovereignty as constructed in political Islam primarily rests on an interpolation or manipulation of a verse taken out of context and subject to philological trampling as cogently argued by many scholars including Meddeb in *The Malady of Islam*. Al-Farabi's primary condition for virtuous city is knowledge of God in the subjects. Now the very idea of God presupposed in ideologues of political Islam would be far from the idea of the same in the Muslim intellectual and spiritual tradition by Muslim philosophers and Sufis and most of the well known theologians. The idea of God as Being upheld by Al-Farabi makes all the difference in the world to the idea of God upheld in voluntarist theology of Asharites and cosmic policeman of fundamentalists. For Al-Farabi, as for Guenon, the immediate metaphysical truth "Being exists" gives rise to another proposition when expressed in the religious or theological mode "God exists." But as Guenon says the two statements would not be strictly equivalent except on the double condition of conceiving God as Universal Being, which is far from always being the case in fact (Tillich comes close to holding this view of God), and of identifying existence with pure Being or what the Sufis call *Zat* or *Essence* which is metaphysically inexact. The endless controversies connected with the famous ontological argument are a product of misunderstanding of the implications of the two formulae just cited. It is the inadequate or faulty metaphysical background that contributes a lot to controversies on either side of the debate on religious experience in modern discourses of philosophy of religion.

For Al-Farabi Plato's philosophy was the standard or true philosophy. He accommodates both Aristotelean and NeoPlatonic current. This point changes the contours of his theocratic or "Islamic" state. I think we need to distinguish islam from Islam to better understand what Al-Farabi would plead for in his virtuous city. Lumbard has succinctly formulated the distinction between the two that is often glossed over.

Today, as for the past 1200 years or more, the word "Islam" is taken to indicate a particular set of beliefs and practices adhered to by a certain segment of humanity. But when the Quran was first revealed what did the word mean? As Toshiko Izatsu has demonstrated in his masterful books *God and Man in the Quran* and *Ethicio-Religious Concepts of the Quran*, the original meaning of this word in pre-Islamic poetry is not only to "to submit," but moreover to give over something that is particularly precious to oneself and which is painful to abandon, to somebody who demands it. So when the Prophet Muhammad first presented a "message" that claimed to be "islam", the words would have been understood far differently than what we understand today.

Moreover, the way this word is used in the Quran actually provides the raw material for a very eloquent understanding of religious pluralism, one wherein all revelations are seen as different ways of giving to God which is most difficult to give – our very selves (Lumbard, 2005: 101).

Many Quranic verses present Islam every previous revelation as a way of submitting, a way of life rather than a particular creedal system. Noah, Abraham and others declared themselves to be Muslims. But once "islam becomes Islam, an institutional definition or conception is formed and such verses become more problematic"( Lumbard, 2005: 102).

From a metaphysical or philosophical conception as formulated in Al-Farabi, Sufi metaphysical translation of Islamic Shahadah is 'There is no truth but truth,' 'There is no reality but Reality.' Islam invites everyone neither to a creed that it dogmatically asserts, nor to a proposition that could be doubted or approached in terms of truth / falsehood binary, nor to a belief that rational cum empirical inquiry could invalidate. Islam is not a totalistic or totalizing ideology or thought construct. To put in simple terms Islam is an invitation to take life seriously, to decipher its truth, to realize God or the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty, to be concerned with the ground of life, to enjoy life at the highest level or ananda – all these could be related to the notion of eudemonia or happiness Al-Farabi upholds. Philosophy for Al-Farabi and Sufi path for Sufis asks one to leave everything that obstructs our cognizance or perception of truth – the world of ego and slavery to passions that obfuscate heart's eye that perceives the essences, the whatness of things. Islam asks to discover truth, the truth of life, of being and becoming and this truth can't be

attained as long as man is not willing to sacrifice everything including his soul for its sake. It demands transcendence of everything that stands in the way of truth – ego, desires and passions. Islam is not an ideology, a metanarrative, a system of creedal propositions but existential response to the mystery of being, a vision of things as they are in their essences, “attention without distraction.”

Islam stands for Justice and seeks to preserve the earthly reflection of Divine Justice. It may necessitate taking arms against those who wish to perpetrate fasad, who disturb peace, who terrorize people, who enslave men, who take sovereignty in their own hands, who believe that the other, whether it be nature or other men are an object to be manipulated at will, who pollute environment, who create obstacles in realizing or perusal of such values as truth and goodness – in short all forces that alienate men from themselves and from others.

The distorted sense of jihad as war against other religious communities pursued primarily to establish supremacy of certain religion formulations or a certain community follows from the ideology that is antitraditional, anti-intellectual, nonspiritual, literalist and exclusivist and must not be confounded with the universal and primordial religion of Islam. For Al-Farabi's the popular theological version of Islam pitted against other religions is subsumed under the wider philosophical truth that is itself amenable to varying formulations and the plurality of religions is demanded by the very structure of prophetic consciousness or imagination as deployed in prophecy.

Al-Farabi holds God as the center of the universe. For him the goal of man is to return to God. Thus far we see his theocentrism clearly emerging. However immediately the differences from theocratic system based on theocentrism as understood in the ideologues of political Islam as we note how this return or ascent to God is to be accomplished. For him this is to be accomplished by virtue and philosophical discrimination. He requires acquaintance with the natural sciences before study of philosophy and grants to mathematics a very significant place for training the mind of the young philosopher. Mathematics, we are made to note, familiarizes his mind with exact demonstrations and helps the student to pass easily from the sensible to the intelligible. Logic, being an instrument for distinguishing the true from the false, is also required for later undertaking study of philosophy (Hammond, 1947: xiv). Now comes the training of character through cultivation of virtues to help transcend the attachment to senses and passions that cloud the mind so that higher philosophical truths could be apprehended or received (Hammond, 1947 xiii-xv). If we closely attend to the following key passage from Al-Farabi's Political Regime we find that elite vs. masses distinction breaks down and philosophy's privilege appears hardly of significant value in comparison with religion as the task before man is felicity or salvation and it is virtues that help on this way and all people are alike in need of felicity and punishment can't be averted.

The end of human actions is happiness. Happiness is something all men desire. The voluntary actions by which man attains the end of his existence are called good, and from them proceed the habits of doing good, known as virtues; while the voluntary actions which prevent man from attaining his end are called evil, and from them flow the habits of doing evil, known as vices. Good actions deserve reward, whereas bad actions deserve punishment. (Hammond, 1947: 66-67).

Another point to be noted is calling Aristotle and Plato sages which constitutes honorific intellectual-spiritual title that is privileged over the title saint that is primarily restricted to spiritual qualification. One recalls Schuon's verses that makes this distinction while also substantiating Al-Farabi's treatment of philosopher-prophet binary.

*The saint is rooted in will and love;  
The sage, in knowledge and intelligence.  
Certainly, the saint also can have wisdom -  
There are many paths in the Spirit's land.*

(Schuon, 2007a)

*The prophet brings a form of faith - a religion;  
The saint lives it; the sage opens  
A luminous realm of Pure Spirit  
Beyond form. Prophets are also wise men,  
Yet about the highest Truth they speak softly;  
To the sage, holiness bestows light.  
God and our heart are united in eternity.*

(Schuon, 2007b)

As Febri Renaud puts it:

The personality of a saintly man is dominated by the will and the emotional element. Reason operates only a posteriori to canalize the celestial influx. On the contrary, in the case of the sage, the - driving force of mystical inspiration is replaced by reason if he is only an - earthly sage like Aristotle or by intellectual intuition if he is a - true sage like Plato. This intuition, leading to transcendent knowledge, springs from an inward and more or less independent source, from that immanent divine spark that is the Intellect (Renaud, 2007).

Al-Farabi's linking of philosopher and prophet/imam implies overturning of the conventional religious privileging of the prophet over the philosopher. If the modern West has valued its philosopher-sages Al-Farabi would be happy. He would not dismiss great names in Western thought as pagan thinkers, arrogant rationalists. We do have many examples of approximating if not quite achieving the lofty standards of ethics required by Al-Farabi for a philosopher. If Plato and Aristotle qualify as sages, so would Aquinas and one can say, with some confidence, a number of great modern minds who shared a spiritual

orientation and largely the same view of objectives of philosophy. Two philosophers who shared some important things with him were Wittgenstein and Heidegger whom the West has taken seriously though their mystical ethics is largely underexplored but their almost mystical view of philosophy and key importance of death and contemplation in their philosophies would allow us to take their appropriation of the “light from the cave of prophecy” seriously.

Al-Farabi's Plato is somewhat of a mystical figure, as is Voegelin's, Coomaraswamy's and Weil's. This move helps to appropriate mystical philosophy as such into a tradition that has well recognized mystical aspect. If Sufis are authentically Muslim, so is Plato, the mystic of somewhat comparable character assimilable in the Sufi framework and that explains invoking the name of him and his teacher Socrates in initiation ceremony in some Sufis. He has no difficulty in squaring Plato's philosopher-king with an Imam whose “understanding of truth is intuitive, who knows not only theoretical virtues but also the practical ones.” If his musical compositions are sung among some Sufi orders in Turkey and the Indo-Pakistani continent it means how deep is the connection between Sufism and traditional artistic expressions like music and how different a character of the Islamic state modeled on the Platonic-Farabian vision as distinguished from certain models that political Islam threw where there is hardly any scope for the great culture for philosophy, arts like music, natural sciences, mathematics that Al-Farabi requires and no room for such daring adventures as juxtaposing prophet and imam/philosopher, making room for the religious other and abandoning monopoly over salvation for a particular religion and talking in terms of existential categories (like happiness) instead of theological ones (like some creedal proposition) for approaching basic issues.

A few remarks about Al-Farabi's thesis of compulsion to virtue in his ideal City are in order. Given the point that “Political rule and religion are inseparable because the many cannot grasp the good as noble apart from religious authority; virtue must be enforced through religion” and explicit engagement in both Plato and Al-Farabi with the question of coercion for ensuring establishment of virtuous city in which people cooperate for virtue thanks to his theocratic state, Al-Farabi would like to have compulsion to virtue – not conformity to law. His key terms are virtue, happiness, intellection rather than terms from juristic lore. It is perhaps not accidental that he has not written any book on juristic science. Despite the centrality of Prophet or Imam in his “system” he isn't keen to impose a religious order. He focuses on transforming people from within and it is only in such a transformed elite that one can find a ruler he demands.

Al-Farabi has a conception of virtuous city not Muslim or Islamic city; he divides the world into virtuous and nonvirtuous cities rather than dar-al-islam and dar-al-harb. The compulsion to virtue thesis would hardly have anything resembling the fundamentalist State that are wedded to the necessity

of Shariah imposition identified with historical legal construction rather than a transhistorical quest for fundamental values of Ad-Din that evolving Shariah formulations seek to approximate and this quest can never fully succeed or must fail in some sense as Justice can never be done and evil never fully wished away. Plato's Laws or Muslim Law both are attempts to capture the Ideal and can never be absolutized in themselves. Modern philosophical attempts by Muslims to formulate increasingly sophisticated theories of justice in the face of so many totalitarian and other perversions that have marred modern social and political institutions are, generally speaking, all attempts to theorize Shariah for contemporary times.

Plato argued for orienting man and his communal institutions toward God and need for true constitution we can call divine or revealed constitution and dangers of those constitutions in which one part dominates against others and society is no longer an integrated whole governed by Justice that is God, although one can always see its ideal character in the sense that it will only be approximated and as Derrida would note justice is yet to come and justice can never be done. The question is why has the academic world has not duly appreciated this Platonic echo in any argument for Islamic State? Isn't it the case that so far ideologues of Islamic State have adopted a theological language that seems alienating or intimidating to many? In fact the dogma of separation of Church and State that has been enshrined in secular political theory has prevented appreciation of the argument put forth across traditional cultures and echoed in Plato, Evola and Voegelin in modern times in case of the Western world and among others Al-Farabi in case of the Muslim world. Voegelin's following passages succinctly sum up the essence of the argument for a theocratic State.

The Republic is written under the assumption that the ruling stratum of the polis will consist of persons in whose souls the order of the idea can become reality so fully that they, by their very existence, will be the permanent source of order in the polis; the Laws is written under the assumption that the free citizenry will consist of persons who can be habituated to the life of Arete under proper guidance, but who are unable to develop the source of order existentially in themselves and, therefore, need the constant persuasion of the prooemia as well as the sanctions of the law, in order to keep them on the narrow path (Voegelin, 2000: 275)

The political form is designed to serve the actualization of the spirit in the life of the community. The spirit lives in the laws. Hence the highest magistracy is devised as the board of the Guardians of the Law (Voegelin, 2000: 307).

Only when the divine spirit of the nous lives in the nomoi will obedience to the laws result in the eudaimonia of man and the community. Office in the polis of the nomoi thus becomes a "service

to the gods” (ton theon hyperesia), and the high magistrates are servants of the gods insofar as they are servants of the laws (hyperetai tois nomois (Voegelin, 2000: 307).

Plato’s standing challenge to secular history and politics is calling attention to the point that the order of the community can’t be achieved unless there is harmony with the divine Measure. Political Islam has a point and that is restating this thesis. However it is thinkers like Al-Farabi and not ideologues of political Islam who are able to translate this insight in the language that modern man would better understand. What constitutes the Divine Measure has been almost forgotten by Modernity. And this contributes, among other things, to tremendous ugliness of the modern city, its art and architecture. What it does in the political and social sphere is known to everyone who has cared to read the history of twentieth century totalitarianism, holocaust, countless ethnic, communal and other sectarian conflicts and wars, genocides, broken families and fragmented relationships, enormous growth in the number of all kinds of social and psychological pathologies. Alienation that is everywhere and so poignantly described in twentieth century literature is to a great extent traceable to this loss of Divine Measure. All those who call for Islam today or return to Tradition or to philosophy in the traditional sense of the terms are responding this mess occurring from the loss of Divine Measure. What needs to be debated is whether one is called to a merely human interpretation or ideology in the name of return to the Divine Measure.

If we can agree – and I think neither great figures in religion nor in philosophy, East and West will object – that “We can achieve happiness only then when we have a beauty; and we have a beauty thanks to philosophy. The truth is that only because of philosophy we can achieve happiness. A man becomes a person thanks to the intellect” the essence of Al-Farabi’s philosophy may be stated to be a version of perennial philosophy that proposes the objective of human life to be happiness or felicity in all the worlds that may be there (in Buddhist terms one can put it as deliverance from suffering and thus felicity of nirvana, even secular humanist and other modernist thinkers who would not countenance transcendence as understood in classical or traditional religio-philosophical paradigm, one can phrase it as search for abundant living, deeper living, more meaningful living or less alienated life that is more joyful or happier). True happiness is the final goal of human life and it is unqualified good.

For achieving this objective its method is the old one, received from ancients – sages and prophets – the practice of virtue. Leo Strauss, one of the influential political philosophers who pioneered resurgence of Al-Farabi in political theory, argued for too esotericist a reading of him to allow for a serious consideration of him today. Strauss himself sided ultimately with Athens against Israel to be of much help in revisiting or appropriating Al-Farabi legacy in the world of Islam that can’t relinquish Medina in favour

of modern New York or ancient Athens. Al-Farabi's genius was to reconcile Athens and Medina as he identified the philosopher and the prophet in a manner that is wrought with great significance even today when we are struggling to engage with a Modernity that appears Faustian and Promethean bent upon desacralizing the world in the name of what can be called (post) modern secular missophic cults or ideologies of progress, development and other ideological thought currents. We can oppose the mess let loose today in academic thinking of modern sophists in the name of Socrates and the Prophets who upheld the rights of the Absolute or Truth above everything. We can question, with Voegelin, Strauss's view of revelation pitted against philosophy in the name of Al-Farabi's prophetology or more mystical understanding of revelation. In Straussian view the universalist claim of Revelation – Ad-Din-ul-Qayyim – continuing from Adam to Muhammad that traditionalist writers are able to link to Sophia Perennis, gets reduced to the thesis of “one particular divine code is accepted as truly divine; that one particular code of one particular tribe is the divine code. But the divine character of all other allegedly divine codes is simply denied, and this implies a radical rejection of mythology” he sees Judaic tradition as upholding. According to him Socrates maintains openness to the experience and eschews readymade answers that he sees revelation or faith forcing on us. Voegelin contests this reading and points out that revelation is best understood as approaching in all humility and seriousness the Quest/Question or “as man's loving and open-ended reply to an experience of transcendence.” Al-Farabi's upholds mystical view of religion when he defends it in philosophical terms while Strauss didn't recognize esoteric view of religion while recognized mystical view of philosophy. This makes it possible to embrace both Athens and Medina for him while Strauss is compelled to say goodbye to Israel for the sake of Athens. Al-Farabi by embracing the Medina and the Prophet who is described as “Mercy for the Worlds” ensures dignity of every individual and his or her participation in revelatory/mystical experience available through inculcating the love of the prophet and saints and in fact the whole institutional structure that transmits the sacred or grace. He is true to the Semitic insight that preserves dignity of every individual and what Voegelin sees as Christian insight that informs also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is really Judeo-Christian-Islamic insight. Elitism is a heresy that Prophet centric tradition can't countenance. Muslim philosophers and Sufis have especially guarded against this tendency by refusing to belittle the Law and fully participating in public religious life. Sufis have been intimate with the masses and guarded against elitism by emphasizing humility as key virtue. Ibn Arabi famously said that sharia is haqiqa and any esotericism that rejects literal sense of scripture is heresy. Esotericism transcends rather than rejects literalist exoteric understanding. Masses have not been ridiculed but their limited and more or less literalist or mythological understanding respected. This explains how Sufis became



popular in public imagination and philosophers were warning against public debate on deeper philosophical or esoteric sciences. It is true that masses can't entertain pure truth that esotericism discovers or philosophers preach but that doesn't imply they are denied entry into heaven for that matter. Even the most literalist of believers in ensured a share in beatitude. Faith alone is enough for salvation. Schuon clarifies the question of revelation versus "philosophy"/mysticism/metaphysics binary in these words in an interview. "The religious, dogmatic or theological perspective is based on revelation; its main purpose is, not to explain the nature of things or the universal principles, but to save man from sin and damnation, and also, to establish a realistic social equilibrium." Although religion is enough for saving people, "metaphysics satisfies the needs of intellectually gifted men." In connection with Voegelin's critique of elitism implicated by Strauss, a critic has well remarked: "If insight into truth is only possible for a select few, on the other hand, and the traditional beliefs of the many and of the world's religious traditions stand as the radical opposite of that philosophical quest for insight into the truth, then political philosophy does not concern itself with the dignity of all human beings except as an instrumental, inner-political."

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# CASPIA

## GENESIS OF ENERGY POLITICS

R. G. Gidadhubli

### **Abstract**

*The Central Asian region has become a scene of Great Game Rivalry after the breakup of the former Soviet Union. Looking into contemporary history of Central Asia, the Caspian Sea which is richly endowed with hydrocarbon energy resources –has played an important role in the regional development. In this context several questions arise – What are the causes for the rivalry?, What is the status of Caspian with regard to sea / ocean delimma?, Who are the major players involved? How are the Central Asian States of the former Soviet Union responding to these rivalries? An effort has been made in this paper to examine these and related issues concerning the Caspian region.*

### **Keywords**

Caspian Sea, Legal Status, Hydrocarbon Energy Resources, Great Game, Resource Rivalry, Pipeline Politics, Global Energy Market, Energy Cooperation, Energy Balance, Geo-politics.

### **Caspian Energy Resources**

During the Soviet era energy resources of the Caspian Sea Region were known but were not fully explored nor exploited. At that time resources of Siberia, Ural, Volga regions in Russia and resources in Azerbaijan were considered to be more significant than those in Central Asia. Moreover, inadequate investment capital, lack of modern technology, deteriorating infrastructure facilities were major causes for insufficient development of energy sector of the Soviet Union as a whole including that of the Caspian region. Hence credit has to be given to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan to have taken greater initiatives in bringing the Caspian region in the forefront of the global energy market.

The Caspian Sea Region is richly endowed with hydrocarbon resources. The US Energy Administration reported in July 2001 that the Caspian Region possessed about 34 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and 235 billion barrels of possible oil reserves. Estimates of proven oil reserves, however, have changed over the years as explorations are still in progress. For instance, in 2006 the British Petroleum experts estimated that oil reserves could be about 47.1 billion barrels. Proven oil estimates have been estimated to be about one-fourth of that of the Middle East and much larger than 22 billion barrels of estimated reserves of the USA. Apart from oil, the Caspian Region

also has substantial quantity of natural gas reserves estimated at about 243-248 billion cubic feet as compared to about 300 billion cubic feet of natural gas in North America.

Two Central Asian States, namely, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan share the inland Caspian Sea along with Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran. The main oil and gas fields of Kazakhstan are Tengiz, Karachagansk, Kurmangazy, Kashgan etc. The Kasgan oil field is said to be 5<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. After gaining independence Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have made intensive efforts to undertake exploration activities to determine their energy resources. In November 2006 Turkmenistan reported that one of the fields in its region has natural gas reserves are larger than that in Russia's Shtokman gas field in the North Sea, which has created great news in the world energy market.

After the Soviet break-up, the Central Asian countries were in dire need of hard currency resources for their economic survival and oil and gas were commodities that could find easy market abroad. Equally important is the fact that several international oil companies including Chevron, Exxon, British Petroleum etc. were keen to enter the Central Asian energy sector. They were attracted to Central Asia partly because of the hype initially created by energy experts about huge reserves in the region. Some experts opined that Turkmenistan would be the 'Kuwait of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. While initial hype was rather exaggerated, sober estimates made subsequently did confirm that Central Asian States did possess large energy reserves, which were an additional source for meeting the energy needs of the Western countries. Kazakhstan has been able to attract more foreign investment than Turkmenistan since it is endowed with more oil resources than the latter. This is mainly because Kazakhstan has pursued policies more actively than Turkmenistan to make progress in its economic reforms.

### **Legal Status of Caspian**

In the aftermath of the Soviet break-up, the Caspian Sea region has witnessed conflicting situations due to various factors. Firstly, while there were only two countries namely the Soviet Union and Iran sharing the Caspian Sea in the past, now there are five countries-Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran – independent and sovereign, which are sharing the Sea. This has added a new dimension to the situation. Secondly, energy resources are unevenly distributed among the littoral states. By 2005, the combined share of Russia and Iran in the Caspian region was estimated to be less than 20 percent while the other three states namely, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have about 80 percent of energy resources of the Caspian Sea. Thirdly, presumably arising out of this situation, Russia and Iran initially contended that the Russo-Iranian Treaty of 1921 and Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1940 be adhered to for sharing the Caspian without dividing the sea into the national sectors. Iran even suggested that the sea be divided into five equal zones.

This was not acceptable to new members since they would be the losers. Subsequently, different proposals were made over the years—Russia proposed ‘Condominium Principle’, Azerbaijan advocated ‘Lake Variant’ and so on. There was also a proposal to divide the Sea on the ‘Middle Line Principle’.

In 1998 Russia and Iran proposed the principle of ‘Modified Middle Line Principle’ to divide the bottom of the Sea. In 2001 Azerbaijan president and the Russian deputy foreign Minister met and suggested that five littoral states should reach an agreement to divide the Sea into ‘National Sectors’. While bilateral talks and agreements have been worked out from time to time, there was no acceptable multilateral consensus of the five member states on the issue even over one and half decades after the Soviet break-up.

In view of this there was no final consensus on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, differences cropped up from time to time on the issue of ownership of oil deposits, which are particularly lying on the border zones. For instance, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have disputes over 3 oil fields. Turkmenistan made claim over what are called Osmen, Lhager and Altyn Asyn, which Azerbaijan called Chirag, Azeri and Sharg. In 2001 Azerbaijan even went ahead with giving contracts to an international consortium led by the British Petroleum (BP) for \$ 8-9 billion to develop Azeri-Chirag oil field. Turkmenistan called it ‘illegal’ and even wanted to take the issue to international court for arbitration. Similarly, Turkmen deputy prime minister stated that Azerbaijan’s SOCAR oil company had no right to develop Turkmenistan’s Serdar oil field which Azerbaijan called Kyapaz.

As assertion and disputes over the ownership of oil fields continued there were a few instances of threat of military conflict among contending states. In July 2001 an Iranian military boat threatened to stop exploration work being carried out by Azerbaijan at Chirag oil field. Thus oil fields have great economic significance for each Caspian state and lack of consensus among member states occasionally led to potential military conflicts giving international dimension. In 2001 there was an important development when the US leaders even said that they would render political support to Baku in case conflict arise. Russia was against any outside intervention and was against military involvement of the USA in such conflicts. The Russian leadership appealed to both Azerbaijan and Iran not to use force in solving the problem. In fact Russia and Kazakhstan also have disputes with regard to Kurmangazy oil field and Khvalynskow Oil field. But both the countries have avoided any serious confrontation and have even proposed to jointly develop some oil fields.

Thus even after one and half decades after the CAS gained independence, there was no solution in sight on the sharing of the Caspian Sea. Ongoing talks over one and half decade among the five Caspian littoral states could not produce a comprehensive agreement on delimitation of the Caspian Sea. Efforts were made by the members at bilateral levels to work out some piecemeal agreements. For instance, in the statement on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2006,

Turkmenistan's Foreign Ministry proposed high-level talks at the level of the presidents of the two countries with Azerbaijan over the division of the Caspian seabed, but only in the context of existing agreements of 1991.

### **Politics of Pipeline**

The CAS being landlocked countries face major hurdles in exporting oil and natural gas to foreign countries. During the Soviet era this was not a problem for them since oil and natural gas produced in these former Soviet republics were transported through pipelines built by the Central planners and linked to the national pipeline network. Decisions regarding the laying of the pipeline-network were taken by the Soviet leaders in Moscow. To retain control over the energy sector, main pipeline for exporting oil and natural gas was laid through the Russian Federation. Oil and natural gas pipeline from the Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan were linked to the pipeline passing through Russia known as the 'Northern Route' and there was also a pipeline route via Trans-Caucasia known as the 'Southern Route'.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union even as the CAS became independent and sovereign, they became dependent on the Russian pipelines for exporting oil and natural gas to world markets. This situation gave rise to a new situation of politics of pipelines. For instance, in the early 1990's there were speculations and even reports that Russia would give preference to Rosneft and Lukoil for exporting oil and gas produced in Russia to protect its domestic producers. This would put the CAS and Azerbaijan at a disadvantage as they found it difficult to export oil and natural gas. Occasionally conflicting situations emerged as each independent state tried to safeguard its own national interest. Some analysts also argued that there were also objective factors since there was capacity constraint on the pipeline network when demand for export increased over the years. In the early 1990's a pipeline was constructed linking Baku with Novorussisk port of Russia. This enabled Azerbaijan to export oil through Russia to world markets. But there was a need felt for additional pipelines so far the CAS and Azerbaijan were concerned giving rise to politics of 'Multiple Pipeline Policy'.

Since the 1990's the western countries and particularly the USA took advantage of the situation to push forward the 'Multiple Pipeline Policy'. The economic consideration was at least partly to capture the energy resources of the Caspian and the Central Asian region to meet their own growing demand. Equally important was the Western geo-political interest to bypass Russia. Hence during the one and a half decade several project proposals were initiated by the western countries and the international oil companies.

One of the earliest projects was the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) linking the Tengiz oil field in Kazakhstan with Novorussisk port on the Black Sea of Russia stretching over 1,580 kms. The USA supported the CPC pipeline project to enable Kazakhstan to export oil to the West. Several private firms

including some foreign companies such as Chevron, EXXON had share in this project. Russia has 24 percent share in the CPC project, while Chevron has 15 percent, Mobil 7.5 percent. Under the then prevailing conditions of low prices for oil in the international market in the 1990's, some analysts opined that this project was considered to be not very profitable.

There were also delays in the completion of this project even as it was crucial for Kazakhstan's economy. For instance, the Kazakh prime minister Q. Tokayev stated in May 2001 that Russia was taking a 'negative attitude' which caused this delay. It appears that Russia and Kazakhstan had to sort out some differences on matters relating to customs duty to be paid to Russia, on the quantum of oil transported through the pipeline and so on. But with rising demand for oil in the world market since 2002 and consequent rise in price for oil from below \$ 48 per barrel to over \$ 90 per barrel by 2006, the CPC pipeline became profitable. This pipeline had initial capacity of transporting 28 million tons of oil, which could be enhanced to 67 million tons per year. This pipeline became operative in 2001 and about one-third of exports of Kazakh oil were handled by this pipeline. It is important to know that in March 2006 the Russian president Vladimir Putin as a part of political diplomacy offered the Kazakh president that Russia will increase the quota of oil to 67 million tons to be exported by the CPC.

Even as this offer made the Kazakh president immensely happy, Kazakhstan faced some problems. This pipeline passing through North Caucasus had been affected by volatile Chechen militant activities. Moreover, the Black Sea was facing heavy traffic problems as tankers had to pass through the congested Bosphorus Strait. The CPC pipeline also catered to the Kashgan oil field of Kazakhstan. As opined by Starr and Levante, Kashgan oil field would produce about 450,000 barrels of oil per day by 2010, which could eventually increase up to 1.2 million barrels per day. Hence even as CPC has assumed great importance, Kazakhstan required an additional pipeline. In the opinion of western energy experts Kazakhstan could even consider a parallel pipeline to CPC.

In 2003 the former president of Turkmenistan Saparmurad Niyazov entered into an agreement with Russia under which he committed to export through Russian pipelines significant quantity of its natural gas over the next 25 years. This became known as the 'Deal of the Century'. Similarly, Russia's Gazprom company was able to enter into agreement with Uzbekistan to export natural gas through Russia's pipelines. These agreements enhanced Russia's position in the global energy market. This was particularly important for Russia since there was some decline in the production of oil and gas in its own fields. Russia was increasing its co-operation with Uzbekistan in energy sector. Over the years Russia had increased its imports of gas from 7.114 billion cubic meters of Uzbek gas in 2004 to 8.15 billion in 2005, and was expected to import 10 billion in 2006. Moreover during the meeting of Gazprom chief Alexei Millar

with Islam Karimov in December 2006 it was noted that Gazprom would also participate in the modernization of Uzbekistan's gas-transport system, with Gazprom's total planned investment in the Uzbek economy set to exceed \$1.5 billion.

There was a joint agreement to construct the pipeline signed on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007 between the Russian president Dmitry Medvedev with the leaders of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The pipeline from the Caspian coast of Kazakhstan was expected to transport an estimated 30 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan and up to 10 billion cubic meters from Kazakhstan for further transportation to Europe.

Notwithstanding these developments for sustaining and expanding cooperation with Russia, the leaders of the Central Asian countries pursued their own national interest in promoting alternative pipelines for exporting oil and natural gas to world markets. Thus Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline of 1,800 Kms. was initiated, which connected Baku in Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea passing through Georgia linking the Turkish port of Ceyhan. Initially some critics considered that this BTC pipeline project was not viable on various grounds. Firstly, as this project would cost about \$ 4 billion, it was considered to be economically not sound at the prevailing low prices for oil in the international markets. Secondly, the pipeline passed through several mountainous regions and hence technically hazardous. Thirdly, the pipeline which passed through autonomous regions inhabited by ethnic groups which were politically sensitive -Meshketia, Javkati etc. in Georgia and the region was facing ethnic violence and conflicts and hence unsafe. Despite such criticism the contentions of which were not fully convincing to the initiators of the project, it was implemented. The BTC pipeline was not only bypassing Russia, but that it would link the Caspian Sea with the Mediterranean Sea and hence providing direct access to world energy markets. The BTC pipeline was inaugurated in May 2005 and Kazakhstan foreign minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev evinced considerable interest in transporting oil through this pipeline initially through tankers up to Baku, which later to be exported to world markets. This proposal was supported by the president of Kazakhstan Nazarbaev in June 2006, which enhanced the importance of the BTC pipeline. He even supported the proposal of constructing underwater pipeline linking Kazakhstan's port of Atyrau and Baku.

Besides the BTC pipeline, there was a proposal to construct Trans-Caspian pipeline under the Caspian Sea. While the western countries had been supportive of this project, Russia objected to it on issues relating to environment claiming that the region being prone to seismic activity.

### **Energy Co-operation Between Central Asia and China**

Since the Soviet break-up co-operation in the energy sector had been playing an important role in the economic relations between the CAS and China. The



extent of increase in energy import demand of China was evident from the fact that while in the year 2000 China was hardly importing oil, in 2006 it emerged as the second largest importer of oil in the world after the USA. To meet its rapidly growing demand, apart from sustaining its interest in traditional sources of supply in the Middle East and some African countries, China started paying particular attention to the neighboring countries of Central Asia. The active policy of the state in the energy sector of Central Asia had been further reinforced by some oil companies of China that have made investment in the energy sector of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Chinese leaders even at the highest levels visited the Central Asian countries under mutual exchange arrangements, which strengthened political and economic ties between China and Kazakhstan and other CAS. For instance, during the visit of the former Turkmen president late Niyazov in April 2006 to China, an agreement was signed with the then Chinese president Hu Jintao under which China would receive 30 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually. To achieve this objective China seriously started working out pipeline proposals linking Central Asian energy centers with Chinese industrial centers. Equally important was that China extended economic support to the CAS under the CAREC program. Moreover, China jointly with Russia had been extending co-operation to the Central Asian countries through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Thus China has succeeded in laying a pipeline from Kazakhstan to western region of China. Oil from this new Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline was delivered to China since May 2006, tripling the amount of Kazakh oil China imports. Beijing hoped to further increase the amount of petroleum the Kazakhstan-China pipeline from approximately 95,000 bpd in 2005 to 160,000 bpd by the end of 2007. In June 2006, a subsidiary of CNPC announced plans to spend \$ 210 million to look for oil and gas in Uzbekistan over the next five years. In October 2006, China National Petroleum Corp. (CNPC) concluded a \$4.18 billion takeover of PetroKazakhstan Inc. It is important to note that China also entered into an agreement with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for construction of a pipeline for taking natural gas from Turkmenistan. This pipeline was 'priority' for China and was to be completed in 2009. As stated by the ambassador of China to Uzbekistan Yu Hongjun on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006 only on some issues compromises were to be worked out on the pipeline project.

### **Political and Economic Issues**

For Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan energy resources are primarily a source of revenue and hence their interest is to maximize economic gain. Equally important was the fact that they got an opportunity to assert their independence to interact with the Western powers for geo-political and geo-economic interests. For the USA and western countries, the break-up of the Soviet Union

gave a historic opportunity to enter Central Asia. Even as the initial hype about the huge energy resources of the Caspian Sea was short-lived, there has been a realization that the Central Asian region did provide an additional source of energy for the West. Spurt in the world market price for oil since 2002 enhanced the economic importance of the CAS. But more than economic interest, political and geo-political significance of the CAS is dominant for the West and that was a part of Great Game in Central Asia. Moreover according to the US experts, revenues generated by energy resources have helped some political stability in the CAS. But the main objective of the West has been that the CAS should undertake political reforms to bring about western type of democracy. Because the western leaders and analysts are critical of the authoritarian regimes of the Central Asian states, human right violations, lack of transparency, lack of freedom of press etc. in these countries. Hence expectation of the West could be far from reality in the near future.

At the same time the Western powers have pursued aggressively 'Multiple Pipeline Policy' in Central Asia to contain the hold and influence of Russia in Central Asia. Thus a new Great Game is being played by both the West and Russia in the Central Asian Region. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have positively responded to the initiatives of the western countries and oil giants, which have offered large opportunities for selling their energy resources to world markets. This is important to Caspian Sea states. Moreover, Uzbekistan, which has abundant natural gas reserves, has also come closer to Russia during the last few years. The interest of the CAS is also partly political since western countries help them in reducing their dependence on Russia. Even more important is that the Western countries have been offering modern technology for the development of energy sector and other related branches of economy of the CAS. The leaders of the CAS rightly decided to continue their close relations with Russia, which was also important for their oil and natural gas exports. Hence the CAS have also sought co-operation with Russian companies such as Gazprom, Lukoil etc which have made huge investment in exploration, exploitation and transportation of oil and gas in their countries.

Thus, after initial neglect Russia revived its interest and involvement in Central Asia since 1995-1996 giving a boost to 'Near Abroad' policy. Because there was a perception that growing western influence in the Central Asian region will affect Russia's own interest and security. The Russian policy makers were convinced that energy resource potentials of Central Asian countries will add to Russia's political objective to emerge as a global energy power. Hence apart from enhancing its control over Central Asia's pipeline net work, Russia's energy firms made huge investment in the energy sector of the CAS. Russia also considered that it was in Russia's own geo-political interest to contain the influence of the Western powers in Central Asia by establishing close strategic co-operation with China and by strengthening the role of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization in the Central Asian region.

Hence, it can be safely concluded that Caspian energy sector has indeed been the genesis of geo-politics and geo-economics leading to Great Game being played by major powers in Central Asia .

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# SCOPE AND FEASIBILITY OF ISLAMIC BANKING AND FINANCE MODEL KAZAKHSTAN & INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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## **Abstract**

*More than five decades ago, banking and finance based on the principles of Islamic Commercial Law (fiqh al-mu'amalat) was just a wishful thinking. However, since its commencement in early 1960s, Islamic finance industry remained at constant momentum in and outside the Muslim world. Making space among the leading financial service providers like Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC, London), Deutsche Bank (DB, Germany), Bank National Paris (BNP, France), Citi Group (U.S), Union Bank of Switzerland (USB, Switzerland), Merrill Lynch and Barclay's (UK), etc., the 'nascent' industry has now become a practical reality. As such, the developing Asian economies like India and Kazakhstan -(countries under study)- being home to large Muslim populations, are expected to offer a promising growth market to Islamic finance industry. The overview of socio-economic factors like demography, religious participation, behavioral finance and demand for a robust financial structure after experiencing the worst consequences of global financial crisis, have led experts to expect a 'perception shift' in customer choice in general and Muslim customers in particular. Regardless of India being home to 177 million Muslims, and Kazakhstan, a Muslim majority state (70.2%), much has not been done to materialize the concept of Islamic banking and finance on practical grounds. The major impediment in the development of shari'ah compliant banking in both the countries is generally and genuinely ascribed to their respective secular constitutions. Although, felt heavy with customer interest, the government of Kazakhstan reformed the banking constitution in 2009, just to become the first country to facilitate the development of Islamic finance in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Currently, Kazakhstan has one full-fledged Islamic bank- Al Hilal Bank (established 2010), which offers both corporate and retail services. By now she has also the (Islamic) legal framework for sukuk (securities), takaful (insurance), and ijarah (leasing). Being the largest democracy of the world, the government of India is yet to introduce such type of constitutional change. However, one of her states in the South - Kerala State was the first to allow the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) to offer shari'ah compliant financial services to the Muslim community. It is with this background that the present paper will attempt to examine the feasibility and challenges of Islamic finance industry from Indian and Kazakhstan perspective by*

*applying SWOT analysis method.*

**Keywords**

Islamic Banking, India, Kazakhstan, Feasibility, Emergence, Development, Islamic Commercial Law, Islamic Finance Industry, Legal Models, Potential Investors.

**Introduction**

Asia is home to 62% Muslims of the world, and therefore, the demand for *shari'ah* compliant financial products has always been felt across the region with a greater supportive strength.<sup>1</sup> Kazakhstan and India, being part of that Continent, lag behind as compared to other neighbouring economies like Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Iran. The development of Islamic finance industry is negligible in case of India and relatively weak in case of Kazakhstan. The main reason behind this stalled growth in these countries is generally ascribed to the secular structure of the constitution. Being secular in socio-political disposition and much reluctant to religious developments, they have no state religion except that Muslims in India have 'Muslim Personal Law' to govern (certain) family matters, while Kazakhstan has a state sponsored apolitical religious board called the 'Muftiate' for the said purpose.<sup>2</sup> The inclusion of fundamentals of any religion in state formation is contextualized as a potential threat to the prevailing secular democracy and nation building. As for the Islamic financial institutions, the *shari'ah* compliance is a primary requirement which in turn persistently demands the incorporation of Islamic standards of doing business. Since most of the *shari'ah* based financial operations like *musharakah*, *mudarabah*, *murabaha*, *istisna*, *salam*, *ijarah* and *wadiyah*, objectively different from the conventional structures, don't fall under prevailing banking and finance regulations in Kazakhstan and India. Therefore, there are some general and, certainly, some regional challenges for the industry to operate and expand its services. Despite being a secular state, Kazakhstan, so far, has introduced gradual amendments in its constitution (2009, 2011, and 2015) to facilitate Islamic financial services in order to attract both local customers as well as capital rich foreign Muslim investors in the country.<sup>3</sup> However, India, with a large Muslim population, has not introduced any such constitutional change except allowing Al-Barakah Financial Services Ltd., a non-banking finance company (NBFC), to operate in Kerala in August 2013.<sup>4</sup>

**Foundations of Islamic Banking and Finance**

Needless to say that Islam has a set of goals and values encompassing all aspects of human life including social, political and economic. Since all the aspects of life are interdependent and Islamic way of life being a consistent whole, its goals and values in one field determine the goals and values in the other fields as well. Consequently, the said interdependency

is to be put into consideration when it comes to economic participation and financial engagements.<sup>5</sup>Therefore, responding to the need, scholars of *shari'ah* developed an alternate system of banking and finance under the guiding principles of *fiqh al-ma'amalat* (Commercial Jurisprudence) which, considerably, differs from the Western or conventional system. The former is strictly engrossed in the *shari'ah* and latter is purely a human workout.<sup>6</sup> As such, Muslims are expected to engage with banks and financial institutions that offer products which are in line with Islamic principles. The Islamic finance industry is based on four major principles, explicitly referred to in the *Qur'an*, *hadith* and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). These principles are: *La-Riba* (no-interest), *La-Gharar* (no-uncertainty), *La-Maisir* (no-speculation), and *La-Haram* (no-unlawful).<sup>7</sup>

It would not be out of place to mention that in the economic philosophy of Islam money (paper currency) in actuality has no value and it becomes 'actual capital' only when it is invested in a productive activity. Thus, in contrast to conventional theory of money, selling of money for money, for example, US\$100 for US\$110 is not same as selling a bag of rice (commodity) costing US\$100 for US\$110. Islam adopts characteristic differences between money and commodity and considers money as 'potential capital'.<sup>8</sup> It must be noted that increment in the price of a commodity in any sale contract to be paid at a future date is not prohibited in *shari'ah*. According to the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*), the rate of increment implies that incorporation of time value of money is a necessary component for the growth and development of a (particular) business. It also ascertains that essentially *shari'ah* only prohibits making money's time value as a justification of interest claimed as a predetermined value.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Legal Modes of Banking and Financing in Islam***

- Profit sharing (*mudarabah*): It is a financial method in which one partner (*rabb al-mal*) finances the project, while the other party (*mudarib*) manages it. Under *mudarabah* principle Islamic banks offer savings and time deposits in the form of investment accounts. The profit made through this business venture is shared as per pre-agreed ratio and in case of genuine failure the financier has to bear the loss.<sup>10</sup>
- Non-interest bearing demand deposits: (*wadi'ah al-dhamaanah*): It is basically a contract ('*aqad*') between the owner of goods (depositor) and the custodian of the goods (Islamic bank). Islamic bank takes the responsibility to safeguard the goods or money from being damaged, destroyed, stolen, etc.<sup>11</sup>
- Joint Venture (*musharakah*): It is a partnership agreement entered by at least two parties (Islamic bank and depositor) for a particular business venture. Here the bank not only participates in the supply of capital to the venture, but also in its management --thus playing the role of an

entrepreneur as well as that of a financier. Profit is shared as per the agreement between parties while the loss is shared in proportion to their shares of capital in the enterprise.<sup>12</sup>

- Cost Plus (***murabaha***): It is defined as a cost-plus sale, where the seller (Islamic bank) expressly mentions the cost he has incurred on the commodities to be sold and sells it to another person (customer) by adding some profit or mark-up thereon which is known to the buyer.<sup>13</sup>
- Leasing (***ijarah***): An agreement whereby the Islamic bank (lessor) purchases or constructs an asset for lease (customer) according to his/her request (lessee), based on his/her promise to lease the asset for a specific period and against certain rent installments. ***Ijarah*** could end by transferring the ownership of the asset to the lessee known as ***ijarah wa Iqtina***.<sup>14</sup>
- Securities and Bonds (***sukuk***): It is a financial certificate and an (Islamic) equivalent of conventional bond. These are securities that comply with the Islamic law (***shari'ah***) and its investment principles, which prohibit the charging or paying of interest. Financial assets that comply with the Islamic law can be classified in accordance with their tradability and non-tradability in the secondary markets.<sup>15</sup>

### **Global Outlook of Islamic Finance Industry**

Islamic finance industry has received global acceptance. Today, more than 500 ***shari'ah*** compliant financial institutions are operational in 75 countries of the world.<sup>16</sup> The impressive performance of this industry has greatly benefited many economies, irrespective of religion or race, by fostering significant growth and increased employment opportunities. Many developed non-Muslim countries like Germany, UK, USA, Russia, France, and China are embracing Islamic finance industry as an alternative to satisfy the growing customer demand. The geographic expansion of Islamic finance industry accelerated after the worst consequences of global financial crisis which exposed the instability of centuries old conventional banking system. By the end of 2014, the total assets of the Islamic finance industry surpassed US \$ 2.1 trillion milestone and the figure is expected to hit US \$ 3.4 trillion by the end of 2018.<sup>17</sup> In terms of market penetration, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is the centre of Islamic finance market contributing 74% share in global assets followed by East Asia with 17% and rest of the world with 9%. In terms of services, the share of banking assets is estimated about 80% followed by equity funds 5% and the rest are others in the global volume of assets under Islamic finance.<sup>18</sup>

### **Relative Development of Islamic Finance Industry in Kazakhstan and India**

Although, the emergence and development of Islamic finance industry is an



outcome of a long tradition but its introduction in both countries under study viz. Kazakhstan and India is a very recent trend. Consequently, the official approval of *shari'ah* compliant tools of financial intermediation has even a very short but relatively a different history.

### ***Kazakhstan***

Until the dissolution of Communist Russia (1991), Kazakhstan<sup>19</sup> was deeply secular in outlook, but soon after getting independence,<sup>20</sup> the whole Central Asian region witnessed a dramatic rise in Muslim identity, a call “back to Islam” which did not go unheeded in Kazakhstan.<sup>21</sup> From the regional perspective, Kazakhstan emerged as a pioneer in terms of introducing Islamic finance into practice.<sup>22</sup> Initiating the process, in January 1992, Albaraka (Kazakhstan) was established by the Decree No. 5 of the President of the Republic. The founder of Albaraka, Sheikh Saleh Kamel, became the first foreigner Muslim investor to invest US \$100 million into the Kazakh economy.<sup>23</sup> In November 1995, Kazakhstan became a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the largest financial entity of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and in 1998 IDB opened its Regional Office in Almaty. At present, this Regional Office covers Central Asia and the Caucasian region. Since the operations of IDB began, it has spent around US\$700 million in Kazakhstan, which puts the republic ahead of its neighbours in terms of ‘received funding’.<sup>24</sup>

Today, there are more than a dozen Islamic financial institutions operating in Kazakhstan. These included: an Islamic Bank, an Investment Fund, a Takaful Company, the Hajj Fund, and Brokerage and Consulting Companies.<sup>25</sup> In 2003, Kazakhstan’s largest bank, Bank Turan Alem (BTA), became the first Central Asian financial institution to draw on an Islamic-backed line of credit when it borrowed US\$250 million from Arab, UK and Malaysian Muslim lenders (Sadiq, 2013).<sup>26</sup> In a historic move, Kazakhstan became (2009) the first Central Asian country to adopt laws on Islamic banking and finance after President Nursultan Nazarbayev ordered a bill on Islamic financing. The 2009 amendment to the Kazakhstan Banking Law allowed Islamic banking activities, established a separate license for these banks and stipulated the (Islamic) financing products.<sup>27</sup>

Kazakhstan’s first full-fledged Islamic bank al-Hilal was established in 2010 only after an agreement between the governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>28</sup> In July 2011, the Kazakh President signed into law the amendment “**On alteration and addition to some legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the organization of Islamic finance,**” paving the way for issuance of *sukuk* (Islamic Bond), an equal of conventional bonds and certificates. In November 2011, the National Bank of Kazakhstan was admitted as an Associate Member of the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB), based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.<sup>29</sup> In the follow up of amendments in Kazakh banking laws, the first company based

on principles of Islamic lease (*ijarah*) was **Kazakhstan Ijarah Company** established April 2013. Acting in concordance with principles of Shari'ah it offers financing from 2014 for companies in the SME and corporate sector. In May 2013, the Islamic Corporation for Development (ICD) announced its initiative to convert Zaman Bank into Islamic Bank with an investment of up to 35% of capital. The local Bank will be the second Islamic Bank in the country.<sup>30</sup>

In order to enhance the development of Islamic finance industry, the Government of Kazakhstan approved (29<sup>th</sup> March, 2012) 41 point **“Road Map for Development of Islamic Finance by 2020.”** This programme determines the directions and procedures to be taken by governmental bodies and businesses to achieve the mutual objectives, by creating conditions for the stable development of the Islamic finance industry, promoting the establishment of new Islamic banks, Islamic securities issuers, investors, and market participants.<sup>31</sup> In order to make the country “financial center of the new Silk Road” by facilitating the conversion of conventional banks into *shari'ah* compliant ones, the government of Kazakhstan under the leadership of Nursultan Nazarbayev, introduced another set of amendments (November 2015) to the recently approved law in April 2015. With adopting the amendments, Islamic finance industry is expected to grow progressively in the next few years as competition is likely to increase when more sophisticated products and customer friendly services are introduced in the market. These developments are driven by Presidential and governmental reforms to create an enabling environment for Islamic finance, which will make the country's financial markets more competitive and attractive to *shari'ah*-compliant investment capital from major Islamic financial markets. The National Bank of Kazakhstan (NBK) is also engaged with different projects to spur development in Islamic banking sector. It mainly works on three areas; firstly, to improve local expertise on Islamic finance through education, seminars, conferences and lectures across the country; secondly, to improve the legislation framework; and lastly, to attract Islamic finance players, both institution and investors, from the Middle East and Southeast Asia.<sup>32</sup>

### **India**

Historically, the concept of Islamic financial institutions (IFIs) is not new to India or her Muslim population in particular. Records reveal that IFIs in the shape of *bait-ul-maal* (treasury house) came into existence in India after the advent of Islam and establishment of the Muslim rule. The functions of the *bait-ul-maal* included collection and distribution of wealth through *zakah* (poor due), *sadaqah* (charity) and *qard-e-hassan* (benevolent loans). However, IFIs as economic units were first created during the first half of the 20th century with the establishment of Patni Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. (1938) followed by the creation of first Muslim Fund in 1941 at Tada Bavli in

UP. The fund was created to mobilize the savings of poor farmers on daily and weekly basis on *wadiyah* or *amanah* deposits and extend interest free loans against the security of gold ornaments. In 1961, the Muslim Fund Deoband (MFD) was established and is still working. In 1971, another institution named Muslim Fund Najibabad (MFN) was created on the model of MFD. In 1990, MFN floated a subsidiary, Al-Najib Milli Mutual Benefits Ltd.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of strong historical links with the institutional framework of Islamic economy, the growth of contemporary Islamic finance industry in India is at halt. In June 2005, Government of India asked Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to examine Islamic banking instruments from an investment and money generating avenue. Finally, a Committee was constituted which was headed by Mr. Anand Sinha, then Deputy Director of RBI, with senior bankers and experts from State Bank of India (SBI) and Oman International Bank, as its members. In 2006, the committee submitted its report and made two major observations: first, appropriate modification should be made in banking regulation act 1949 along with separate rules and regulations; second, taxation proposition have to be examined. But unfortunately, the idea of Islamic banking was rejected by RBI saying that it is not feasible for Indian banks to undertake it or to allow their branches to carry out Islamic banking operations abroad without amendments in current related banking and other laws.<sup>34</sup>

In August, 2007, the idea of an interest free mechanism in India again became a hot debate when the government under the Planning Commission constituted a high-level Committee on Financial Sector Reforms (CFSR). The Committee's Chairman Dr. Raghuram Rajan (former Chief Economist at IMF) and other eleven members were asked to look into the feasibility and practical adoption of Islamic banking under the prevailing banking and financial laws. In September, 2008, the Committee submitted its report to the Prime Minister with specific recommendations of interest-free banking in the country.<sup>35</sup> In 2010, Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC), a fully owned Kerala state government company, signed an agreement with Al-Barakah group to offer *shari'ah* compliant financial services to the local Muslim community. In the proposed Islamic financial institution, KSIDC holds 11% stake. However, the government order was challenged by Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Subramanian Swami in the Kerala High Court arguing that association of government agencies in setting up Islamic investment company goes against secular principles preserved in Indian constitution and was stayed on grounds of violation of Article 14, 25, and 27. In February 2011, Kerala High court dismissed the petition filed by Subramanian Swamy and maintained setting up of an Islamic investment company.<sup>36</sup> In 2012, the arguments for Islamic banking received a boost when the National Minorities' Commission under Chairman Wajahat Habibullah, made a case for it with the Finance Ministry. In 2013, another non-banking company named Al-Barakah Financial Services Ltd. received a "green" signal which came from the Reserve

Bank of India (RBI) itself.<sup>37</sup> India has some well-established Islamic finance centers like Indian Centre for Islamic Finance (ICIF) and Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance (IIBF). The IIBF is incorporated with the Government of Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad) under Public Societies Registration Act 1995. It is the country's major institute that strives to institutionalize education at all levels in the field of Islamic economics, banking and finance. Apart from these centers, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and Malappuram based Ma'din Academy also started a number of courses (bachelors, masters, diploma, etc.) in Islamic banking and finance.<sup>38</sup> Despite all these academic developments till date there isn't any full-fledged Islamic bank in India.

### **Islamic Banking in Kazakhstan and India-SWOT Analysis**

Kazakhstan and India are two growing banking economies of Asia. The banking and finance sector significantly adds to their GDP percentage. But compared to the developed nations, the level of their development in the concerned sector is still weak in terms of access and expansion. Apart from problem of expansion, there is another specific one related to the 'behavioral finance' as both the countries have a large Muslim population. With the colonial era gone once for all, the consciousness regarding approved (*halal*) and disapproved (*haram*) has stopped millions of Muslims to get involved in interest based banking practices. Apart from religiosity, the benefits of Islamic banking in a growing economy like India and Kazakhstan cannot be overemphasized. It will significantly contribute to the overall development of the country by developing micro-credit schemes aimed at improving the job prospects for the poor and the downtrodden. Therefore, both countries need large investments in order to boost the overall process of economic development; Islamic banking can be used as vital tool to attract petro-dollar economies to invest their capital in Kazakhstan and India. With the help of SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) scale analysis the position of Islamic finance industry in Kazakhstan and India is examined hereunder:

#### ***Strengths***

- The products and services offered by Islamic finance industry are becoming increasingly popular, not only in the Gulf countries and far eastern Muslim countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Iran but also in other developed markets such as the United Kingdom, Germany, USA, France, Hong Kong and Singapore.
- Islamic banking adheres to strict credit rating system and prohibits indebted economic agents to avail more debt finance which in turn could save financial and economic enterprises from bankruptcy.
- Under Islamic banking, equity finance needs cost yield and pre-rating analysis of projects. Thus it considerably subdues the mindless competition in financial sector to get more credit shares and tends to provide stability

in the financial market.

- Islamic banks, though not untouched, were least affected by the subprime mortgage crisis. In fact, many non-Muslim countries are turning up to Islamic banking as they are immune against such crisis due to inherent business ethics within Islamic banking.
- Islamic banking helps the weaker and hapless section of the society through various financial products like micro financing, joint ventures, partnerships and leasing. This helps even the indigent and vulnerable to get finance at a no risk and cost basis, but definitely requires other credits like strong business proposal, rational planning, skilled hands and specialized art to attract the financier.
- Better business proposals succeed in fetching funds as opposed to the projects with comparatively poor propositions. Such inclusive growth will boost the Kazakh and Indian economy.
- A bank in Kazakhstan and India cannot raise deposits without promising a specified rate of return to depositors, but under *shari'ah*, returns can only be determined post-facto depending on profit. Also, banks have to maintain a Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), which involves locking up a substantial portion of funds either as cash, gold or in government securities. Such cash will not get any return, keeping it in gold is risky as it could depreciate and government securities come with interest. Moreover, Islamic banking can eliminate unaccountable economic activities, as every economic activity has to be financed through legal contract and physical verification of real assets under contract. There is no room for diversion of funds. Therefore, investment in consonance with Islamic banking principles will surely boost the engine of economic growth in the country.

### ***Weaknesses***

- The prevailing banking laws in Kazakhstan and India do not explicitly support Islamic banking and finance instruments. For example, Banks in India are governed through Banking Regulation Act 1949, Reserve Bank of India Act 1934, Negotiable Instruments Act 1881, and Co-operative Societies Act 1961. Section 5 (b) and 5 (c) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 – prohibiting the banks to invest on Profit Loss Sharing basis -the very basis of Islamic banking.
- Islamic finance industry needs to introduce corporate governance with transparent accounting standards. It needs to perform a detailed evaluation before embarking Profit Loss Sharing Scheme. It demands a pool of highly trained professionals which of course is very costly.
- It is observed that inability to evaluate a project's profitability has tended to act against investment financing. Some borrowers frustrate the banks appraisal efforts as they are reluctant to provide full disclosures of their

business. Moreover, the borrowers do not observe business ethics which make it difficult to establish close bank-client relationship - a prerequisite for success.

- The other impediment from the borrower's point of view is the need to disclose his/her accounts to the bank, if he/she were to borrow on the Profit Loss Sharing basis. Similarly, even most of large conglomerates do not like to disclose their real accounts to anybody. This widespread lack of business ethics among business community is another major hurdle in the path of Islamic banking in India and Kazakhstan.
- The practices in use by the Islamic banks have evoked questions of morality. Some critics view *sukuk* (Islamic bond) as non-Islamic in nature. Others criticize that financing through the purchase of client's property with a buy-back agreement and sale of goods to clients on a markup, involved the least risk and are closest to the old interest-based operations.
- The usage of Arabic terminology makes it more religious activity than business.
- Lack of professional finance experts and well qualified *shari'ah* experts is another weakness of Islamic finance industry in Kazakh and Indian context.

### ***Opportunities***

- Kazakhstan with 70.2% and India with a 15% Muslim population promise a potential market to Islamic finance industry.
- Islamic banking is an effective mechanism to subjugate the liquidity and inflation problems along with allowing inclusive growth. For real inclusive growth, both Kazakhstan and India have to ensure increase in income and employment status of workers in all segments.
- If Islamic banking is introduced, the inadequate labor capital ratio, for informal sector workers associated with agriculture and manufacturing industries could be resolved through equity finance, which might be a revolution in Kazakh and Indian agriculture and unorganized sector. Thus Islamic Banking may financially empower majority of Kazakh and Indian workers.
- Islamic banking may induce the Kazakh and Indian political leaders to substitute grants and subsidies with equity finance schemes through specialized financial institutions because equity finance allows access to credit without debts of borrowers.
- By introducing Islamic banking, the governments of Kazakhstan and India will certainly gain diplomatic advantages to make financial dealings with Muslim nations to attract millions and trillions of dollars of equity finance. This is more important because the fall of the banking giants like Lehman Brothers, reflects the economic downturn in the west and the need

- of alternative sources of FDI for both the economies under discussion.
- Another opportunity that Kazakhstan and India could materialize is the concept of mutual fund which is based on 100% equity. These funds could be invested indifferent sectors like IT, automobile telecommunication, and cement. In fact, Tata Mutual Fund made a pioneering attempt when, at the instance of the Barakat and some other Islamic financial group, it launched Tata Core Sector Equity Fund in 1996. This scheme was specially tailored keeping in view the Muslims' inhibition of dealing with interest bearing and *haram* investments.
  - Moreover, a large number of Muslims considered unworthy of credit by commercial banks would welcome Islamic banking. Some Islamic societies in India accept deposits and lend money, but can't make a business out of it because of the *sharia*'s prohibition of interest. And they are not able to convert themselves into banks because the government will not permit any form of banking without interest.

### ***Threats***

- Introduction of Islamic banking would tantamount to politicization of religion and certain parties might abhor the use of the word "Islamic" and could term it an up-shoot of Islamization project.
- Some scholars argue that the very concept of *shari'ah* compliant banking would go against the secular fabric of the country. For example, India is already facing problems pertaining to Muslim Personnel Law and is trying to implement Uniform Civil Code. Therefore, some scholars suggest that at this juncture, introduction of Islamic banking in India will create more problems than solving the issue.
- It may bring financial segregation in the economy. The compartmentalization of *shari'ah* compliant and non-*shari'ah* compliant banking might be used by certain vested interest to communalize the finance sector.

### **Conclusion**

The potential of Islamic finance industry is higher in Kazakhstan as compared to India. The geo-political position of Kazakhstan's Islamic finance industry has all prerequisites to develop as the main centre of attraction for foreign capital in the CIS. Despite Kazakhstan being a Muslim majority country, its Constitution declares it a secular republic. The religious policy of Kazakh President Nazarbayev has been to build good relations with all religious affiliations. Unlike his other CIS neighbours, he has been the driving force behind all efforts to make Astana International Financial Center (AIFC) as a regional hub of Islamic finance activities. He organized a number of international and national conferences, workshops and forums dedicated to promote Islamic banking and finance industry. For example, the conferences like **Seventh World Islamic Economic Forum** held in June 2011, **Second**

**Islamic Finance Forum** held in September 2011, **Kazakhstan International Halal Expo** in 2012, **Third Kazakhstan Islamic Finance Conference** held in October 2012, the signing of Memorandum of the Long-Term Cooperation between the National Bank of Kazakhstan and the Association for Development of Islamic Finance in February 2015 and very recently the 12<sup>th</sup> Summit of Islamic Financial Service Board (IFSB) in May 2015 underline Kazakhstan's declared goal to develop the country and make it the regional center for Islamic finance. Today, Kazakhstan indisputably shares its own experience in the field of Islamic financial services industry and experts are hopeful that by the end of year 2020 its 5% banking will turn Islamic. It worth to note, that Islamic finance model in Kazakhstan has some structural similarities with the UK model. The key principle adopted by the British government towards the formation of its Islamic finance industry is "no obstacles, no special favours." It is worth noting that Kazakhstan's Law does not include any Arabic terminology of Islamic finance such as *riba*, *musharakah*, *ijarah*, *takaful*, *shari'ah*, etc. Only the term "Islamic" together with the descriptions of Islamic financial products are used to identify Islamic modes of financing. This is a unique approach among secular states which keeps connections with the nature and principles of Islamic finance, and at the same time this approach places emphasis on the substance of the products through their definitions.

In contrast to Kazakhstan, India is relatively well exposed to economic terminology of Islam like *riba*, *waqaf*, *zakat*, and *bait-ul-maal*. However, it is still very far from considerable practical developments. In order to develop favourable ecosystem for introducing Islamic banking in India, RBI formed different committees under supervision of reputed economists and banking experts. The recent reports submitted by **Committee on Financial Sector Reforms** headed by Dr Raghuram Rajan (2008) and **Medium term Path for Financial Inclusion** headed by Mr. Deepak Mohanty (2015), are obviously some positive signs as for as inclusion of Islamic banking in India is concerned. Although, RBI, within its capacity, is inclined towards experiencing this alternate system of banking but changing political landscape of the country doesn't allow it to make any practical effort in this regard. It is perhaps the same political pressure that even State bank of India Mutual Fund (SBIMF) felt forced to stop the launch of its *shari'ah* compliant mutual fund at the last moment. Unlike Kazakhstan, the government of India is proving ultra-suspicious towards opening up a pilot project based on Islamic principles, which according many economists is not a genuine strategy.

### **Recommendations**

The present study has the following recommendations for both potential investors and authorities:

1. In both countries, the newly opening Islamic banks (Joint Stock companies) or non-banking financial companies should initially focus on small and



medium enterprises (SME) and agricultural sector. The application of instruments like *Murabaha*, *Salam* and *Istisna* in agriculture sector of both Kazakhstan and India could attract a large customer base. Moreover, the selective utilization of Islamic micro-finance and micro-takaful could also prove as fast deriving agents.

2. Human capital and awareness remains a serious challenge to be tackled. To increase public awareness and expertise about Islamic finance industry; its tools and techniques and its products and services, local Islamic institutions operating in Kazakhstan and India should conduct comprehensive marketing and educational programmes. Technical and professional assistance, in this regard, could be sought from leading Islamic financial players and institutions like Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI), Islamic Finance Service Board (IFSB), Accounting and Auditing Organization of Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), International Islamic Financial Market (IIFM), and International Islamic Rating Agency (IIRA).
3. Both countries can attract large investments from capital rich Muslim countries, provided there are local *shari'ah*-compliant financial institutions. Thus, further enhancement of the legislation relating to the different areas of Islamic finance including the opening up of "Islamic Windows" is needed.
3. The stock market development in Kazakhstan and India should be a priority for the 'regulators'. Effectively operating capital market with long-term, higher-return and higher-risk equity instruments can be supportive for Islamic banking industry, providing liquidity and promoting risk-sharing culture.
4. The Government of India should take efforts (in consultation with Kazakhstan) to know how Islamic banking laws can be adopted without hurting the secular fabric of the country.
5. India must take advantage of Islamic financial services by giving Muslims, the largest minority, access to banking industry which doesn't violate their religious beliefs. This in turn, would surely add to India's overall economic development.

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# HUMAN RIGHTS AT JEOPARDY THE CENTRAL ASIAN CONTEXT

Govind Kumar Inakhiya

## **Abstract**

*Problems related to violation of human rights are common in the present world. The efforts of the state governments in the direction of protection of human rights vary from state to state. The factors playing key role in safeguarding and protecting human rights are: constitutional provisions, acts and statutes. Endeavors of world organizations such as UNO, Amnesty International, UNHRC, US Aid etc. are mightier than those of states. States seem to cut a sorry figure in providing some essential mechanism, and at the same time, due to proper implementation of the provisions and lack of protection of human rights, citizens suffer in the region. The Central Asian countries, more often than not fail to provide the space to citizens for their rights. Since 1991, the citizens of this region seem to have developed an apprehension for their rights. Authorities are reluctant to provide safeguard to the rights of the citizens. The region seems to be infested with problems of freedom of expressions, censorship on media and on formation of the political parties and associations, ethnic conflicts, rights for the workers, cotton picking by the students during vacation, are common phenomena in the region. The objective of this article is to focus on the problems faced by the republics in the path of the protection and effective implementation of human rights. At the same time, it would try to throw some light on the solutions available to promote and protect Human Rights in the region. Structurally, the research paper in three parts argues that the state of affairs in the Central Asian counties is not commendable as far as the protection of human rights is concerned. The first part pertains to the understanding of concepts of Right and Human rights, the second part is about the depiction of historical development and current state of affair of human rights in Central Asian countries, the third part dwells upon national and international efforts directed towards the protection of the human rights.*

## **Keywords**

Human Rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Central Asia, Constitution, Constitutionalism, Civil Society, World Organization, Freedom of Expression, Natural Rights.

## **Introduction**

To begin with, human rights besides being a national issue does possess an immensely pertinent relevance in the debates across the length and breadth of the world. It could justifiably be argued that the development of human

rights as the next step of natural rights is the byproduct of the twentieth century vocabulary. The rights of an individual provided by the state are the conditions and circumstances for a thorough development of a nation and its populace. The concept of rights, it can be safely assumed, emanated from various sources such as Magna Carta of 1215 A.D, The Bill of Rights of 1687, the American Revolution of 1776, French Revolution of 1789, provisions of various constitutions in different nations that strove towards implementation of rights and human rights. In 1948, United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" also made a special effort which is included in the Preamble of the Declaration as well as in all the thirty articles of the same.<sup>1</sup> Today, various international agencies and civil society institutions have contributed largely in the protection of the human rights.

Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are the countries which came into existence as independent nations after disintegration of Soviet Union. Prior to 1991, these nations were ruled by Socialist – Communist System for seventy years. The Central Asian states, rampant in violation of human rights also pose a serious threat in the protection and promotion of human rights. These states are going through the phase of transition after having been ruled by single party dominance and human rights based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. Despite multi-party system (except single party system in Turkmenistan) and westernized Liberal (open market economy) - Democratic Government models, they have not been able to solve the problems in these states for human rights almost for the past twenty five years.

Regarding the conceptual aspects of human rights, Ernest Barker rightly pointed out that rights are the byproducts of just system which is based on that state and its laws. Rights of the individual in the state are meant to determine the dignity of a person and ensure its recognition. A state that does not accept the dignity of the person, the individual in that state is deprived of rights. However, in some states individuals and some classes are deprived of these rights. For example, in the ancient Greek city-states only 'free men' had civil rights, while the slaves, women and other aliens were denied the same. There is no doubt that these structures were not based on a sense of justice and order.

The persons who are not subjected to any restrictions on their activities by the state, are often placed under the category of negative rights. A positive approach towards the implementation of rights acts as a strong booster for the development of an individual whereby the state supports and takes care of his Right to Health, Right to Education, Right to Employment, Legal Rights etc. Negative rights are seen at work in a liberal democratic set up, whereas positive rights are the parts of mainstream Socialist state. One can trace the history of Human Rights to a distant past. Intellectual notions started getting divided into the following two discourses with regard to the requirement and implementation of Human Rights, and the appropriateness of the same.<sup>2</sup>

Emmanuel Kant, a German philosopher founded trigonometric structure to understand human rights: Citizens rights, International rights, and homogeneous rights. According to Kant, people have rights because they live together on earth. It clearly reflects Kant's idea of integration of the human race.<sup>3</sup> While defining the term "Rights", Harold J. Laski (1940) said that "Rights are those conditions of social life without which no man can seek, in general, to be himself at his best<sup>4</sup>." There are three below principles explaining the different types of rights, namely, Liberal individualist principle; Laski's principle and The Marxist theory.

The first principle could be elaborated in terms of the theories propounded by three major scholars in this area - 1. Locke's natural rights theory, 2. Hobs-Austin's legal theory and 3. Greene's moral theory.

Laski's theory is a combination of historical, social-welfare and democratic-socialist views. The interpretations on the Marxist theory of Rights are based on dialectical, historical- materialistic, revolutionary and homogenous entity. Marx believes that Rights have gradually evolved through the class-struggle. These rights were limited to the elite, slave-owners and only to select people in places like Greek city-states, Roman empire, medieval European states etc. Thereafter, the sixteenth century witnessed the rise of merchants and industrial bourgeoisie in the European society. Gradually, after the Civil War of England and the French-American Republican revolution, bourgeoisie class attained its economic domination along with an attainment of social and political hegemony. As the masses contributed in a remarkable manner to the bourgeois revolution, especially with the help of peasants and urbanites, it hammered the voice of "Human Rights" to its peak.

Kautilya, an Indian thinker, too, talks in detail about the economic rights as well as the legal and civil rights of humans. Kautilya emphasises that a king should provide economic assistance to orphans, impoverished people and old people and that it should also support helpless mothers and their children for their survival. This is a part of duties of the state and king for some philosophers, but one could see a glimpse of human rights enveloped in the form of duties.

The conceptual aspect of human rights is only a reflection of forging the ground for citizens to enjoy their rights but its practical aspect is completely dependent on the nations as to how they implement it effectively.

### **Present State of Affairs of Human Rights in the Central Asian Republics**

Central Asian States were members of the Soviet Union in different phases starting from 1917 to 1991. The history of these nations clearly shows how these nations were governed by the socialist and communist ideas. It was focused on Social rights, worker class welfare, against the capitalist and profit making class and concentrated on the interests of the proletariat. Through the various constitutions of 1918, 1924 and 1936, Rights were declared for these

nations. However, Joseph J. Stalin, the ruler of USSR denied these rights to the citizens all through his reign from 1932 to 1952. Civil liberties and human rights were subjected to major threats from the ruling system. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev of the communist party became the general secretary of the Soviet Union and he implemented the policies of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* in an effort to reconstruct liberal order and increased openness and views.<sup>5</sup> This effort initiated the multi-candidate system which gradually developed into multi-party system. Later, it paved the way for political and economic rights which were in tune with the struggle of independence of the member nations which resulted in the formation of 15 new states including five Central Asian states. These nations made their constitutions and started striding towards the strengthening of human rights.

Kazakhstan adopted its Constitution on September 5, 1995. Chapter 2 of this Constitution provides with provision for individual rights and freedom as enshrined in a fairly good number of Articles (Articles 10 to 39) of the constitution.<sup>6</sup> Kazakhstan has very less human rights problems vis-a-vis Central Asian countries. The strike in may 2011, by oil workers repressed by the government machinery is not only related to their livelihood but also a gross violation of human rights.<sup>7</sup> These workers wanted to have negotiations on minimum wages with the oil company management. But government registered a case of criminal conspiracy against the agitating workers and imprisoned them for 6 years. It is convenient to allude to Natalia Shokoliva and a union advocate who were imprisoned, but later on they were released. The group of 2000 workers expelled by the oil company was against the rules and policies of international labour organization.<sup>8</sup> The story does not end here. However, what seem more threatening and hazardous is Kazakhstan government's action against opposition leaders. Valadmir Kozlon was thrown behind the bar which is against the individual freedom of expression. However, Kazakhstan moved towards progressive paths in respect of restoration and preservation of human rights by agreeing in 2008 to establish an annual human rights dialogue with the European Union.<sup>9</sup>

Kyrgyzstan enacted its Constitution on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1993. In part 2 of the constitution article 16 to 20 provides for Human Rights and freedom. Articles 21 to 49 of the constitution deal with full elaboration of Human Rights.<sup>10</sup> Kyrgyzstan, an important Central Asian country, is known for its proclivity towards protection of Human Rights compared to other nations of the region. The first President of Kyrgyzstan named Asker Akayev is popular as "An Island of Democracy" but Tulip Revolution took place during his reign which shows the reality of conserving democratic values and protection of Human Rights after change of regime in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. A close observation reveals that the report on the much debated ethnic conflict that surfaced at Osh and Jalalabad and presented by Bnund Taphij Zabi, around 300 people were people of Kyrgyzstan origin and Kyrgyz police over ran the



Uzbek Republic.<sup>11</sup> However, the Uzbek ethnic groups presented a list of 19 demands from businessman, students and local administration in April-May 2010. The struggle from 10 to 14 June 2010, is a reactionary movement.<sup>12</sup> Many national and international human rights organizations believe that such incidences have happened in the past 20 years. Freedom of expression has been a problem for many years.<sup>13</sup> Umida Andamdava, who is documentary photographer was arrested in June 2010 and imprisoned. Her crime was that she covered the issue of inequality, labor unrest and poverty in her photography. Freedom to profess and propagate the religion is also restricted. For example in 2010, 114 people were imprisoned for 6 to 12 years.

The Constitution of Tajikistan was enacted on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1994 and it contains 10 sections and 98 articles. Chapter two of the Constitution from Article 14 to 47 deals with fundamental duties and fundamental rights of the citizens<sup>14</sup>. There is no denying the fact that Tajikistan is a home to gross human rights violation as evidenced by various reports, records and documents. Post independence Tajikistan witnessed the killing/ missing of dozens of journalists. The Government of Tajikistan during the 2005 parliamentary elections closed down independent and opposition newspapers and encouraged attacks on journalists. Even use of Internet and YouTube was brought under government censorship in 2003 and 2014 respectively. Religious activities were subjected to restriction and registration with the government. For instance, Committee on Religious Affairs, Islamic pilgrimages were restricted, and proselytizing groups such as the Jehovah's Witness suffered occasional persecution. On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012, the courts of Tajikistan passed a judgment to prohibit the human rights organizations in Khuzak Vadar, in which an estimated 40 activists were working. They were spreading awareness regarding human rights among youths. But government considered that this organization was abating anti-national sentiments. According to Global Voices Online (June 2014) the practice of systematic violence against military conscripts (referred to as *dovshina*) increased following a recent increase in incidences of manslaughter and suicides. Akmal Davlatova was beaten to death by his lance sergeant, Farrukh Davlatov. Incidences of Kidnapping were also rampant in Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan adopted its Constitution on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1992. It enshrines 8 chapters and 116 articles. Chapter 2 of this Constitution and precisely Articles 16 to 44 deal with various rights.<sup>15</sup> Turkmenistan, known for single party rule<sup>16</sup> is also experiencing human rights problems. Only single party is ruling and other opposition parties are not allowed to rise which has an implication on the fact that citizens are denied political rights. Ethnic minorities face discrimination in Turkmenistan. Abrogation of dual-citizenship agreement with Russia in 2003 led to the fleeing of many citizens from the country. Foreign travels were restricted, As the Soviet era diplomas were set aside by the government, the job opportunities got drastically curtailed, even

the ethnic Russians were disallowed university admissions. It deserves mention that with the passage of time and in an effort to fall in line with countries promoting human rights, Turkmenistan is also trying to espouse positivity about the rights of its citizens. The U.S. Department of State's 2005 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom (released November 8, 2005) states "significant improvements in the promotion of religious freedom." But Chris Smith opposes the report and states that there has not been much improvement in the state of affairs in the country with respect to human rights. Journalism and media does not enjoy the required freedom. Journalist Sona Chuli Kuli was interrogated and compelled to sign a statement agreeing not to collaborate with the international media.<sup>17</sup> The Government stands supreme and it cannot be opposed in any form. Quite a good number of Opposition Leaders such as Batyr Berdiyev, Ýazgeldi, Gündogdyev, and Boris Şyhmyradow had to end up as political prisoners. More than 1600 students are waiting for further studies in the neighboring countries. But the government is not giving them permission to leave the country. Some of media people and political leaders are put in jail without any reason or allegation. For instance, a reporter of Radio Free Europe is in jail for five years.

The constitution of Uzbekistan was enacted on the 8th of December 1992. There are 22 chapters and 128 articles in the Constitution where Article 24 to article 42 of Chapters Seven to Nine are about the various rights. Chapter ten, which deals with the rights and freedoms guaranteed to its citizens find their manifestation in Articles 43, 44, 45 and 46.<sup>18</sup> Andijjan massacre of 13th May 2005 perpetrated by the government machinery resulted in the casualty of 1500 protesters. This is vociferous of the serious violation of human rights in the country. This heinous act of brutal killing of people amounts to strangling of human rights in the history of Uzbekistan. In 2008, one of the activists of the Protection of Human Rights in Uzbekistan, Mr. Turugnov was arrested from his own house by the local police. Later, he was tortured and harassed by throwing boiling water. There were many other instances of leaders and intellectuals being detained on false charges. For example Abdualev Ishaq, Ajmat Ajimov, Mohammed Bakjanov, Bkrtyarbak Iskixav, Maluba Krimova, Rustam Usmanauv and many other people are still behind the bar. Moreover, the Uzbek government have imprisoned thousands of boys who believe in religion on the ground that they are spreading religious fanatics and encouraging illegal religious texts. In 2011, the Uzbek government commanded Bnund Taphij Zabi to close the office in Tashkent and put stay on the registration of independent human rights groups.

Every year on 8<sup>th</sup> December i.e. the Constitution Day, some old people who are above 60 years, some women and small children with lower criminal charges, are released. However, on December 8, 2012, while re-replicating such a program, the Uzbek government tried to get praise from the Western media. In July 2012, two human rights activists were arrested by the Uzbek

government and announced seven year jail term. Yuldasna, who is just 26 years is accused of human trafficking which is completely wrong. Uzbekistan's notoriety as a nation indulging in practices of child labour and forced adult labour attracted international attention. For instance, Cotton Campaign, a coalition of NGOs and human rights activists in Uzbekistan, as many as 11 people died during cotton picking season in 2013. They were between the age group of 6 years to 63 years. Mansur Mirovalev and Andrew E. Kramer reported that, the government established its monopoly on the industry, paying remarkably low wages to the labourers, but reaping extraordinary profits from cotton which helped them balance the budget.<sup>19</sup>

However, there seem to be a faint improvement in the debacle of human rights as registered by Carey L. Biron on the use of school children in harvesting crops. Biron maintains that even minors of seven years of age were forced to work in the cotton fields during the annual sowing, weeding and harvest cycles. This was done primarily to fulfill the harvest quotas fixed by the government enforced on farmers and local administrators. In the year 2013, coinciding with an observation mission from the United Nations, the number of children in the fields was drastically reduced. That progress now appears to have extended to this fall.

The Central Asian countries are on the throes of poverty, shockingly low per capita income and unemployment problem (except Kazakhstan) which point to the region's deplorable state of affairs. The tables 1 to 3 indicate details of unemployment, poverty and per capita income. In the report of United Nation on Human Development Index 2014, Uzbekistan stands at 114<sup>th</sup> position among 169 nations. Kazakhstan is on 56<sup>th</sup>, Turkmenistan is on 109<sup>th</sup>, Kyrgyzstan on 120<sup>th</sup> and Tajikistan is on 129<sup>th</sup> place.<sup>20</sup> Except Kazakhstan, all other Central-Asian countries are placed on medium level which is not a good indicator reflecting promotion of human rights. The judiciary is not independent, remains dominated by the executive branch and is vulnerable to political pressure.<sup>21</sup> This negatively affects on all parts of society, including the fairness of election and the business environment.

**Table-1**  
**Unemployment in Central Asian Countries**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Name of Country</b>	<b>Total Unemployment</b>
1	Kazakhstan	5.17%
2	Kyrgyzstan	8.07%
3	Tajikistan	10.71%
4	Turkmenistan	10.59%
5	Uzbekistan	10.67%
<b>World</b>		<b>5.8%</b>

*Source: Global Employment Trends 2014: the Risk of Jobless Recovery <http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/lang--en/index.htm>*

This alarming problem of unemployment stems from paucity of job opportunities, restriction on foreign investment and discouraging attitude towards receiving liberal education abroad etc.

**Table- 2**  
**Poverty in Central Asian Countries (2013)**

S. No.	Name of Country	Total Poor people	Source
1	Kazakhstan	2.9%	UNDP
2	Kyrgyzstan	37.0%	UNDP
3	Tajikistan	38.3%	UNDP
4	Turkmenistan	24.8%	ADB
5	Uzbekistan	16 %	UNDP

Transition from socialist system to open market economy, brought in problems such as inadequate market for the products, want of skilled professionals, gradual depletion of industries , minimal foreign aid, lack of resources, improper utilization of available resources, economic crisis, nepotism, and above all rampant corruption contribute to existing poverty in the region.

Some of the most momentous factors responsible for drastically low per capita income in the region (barring Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan ) are: Unemployment, low production, export – import imbalances, minimums foreign investment, declining trend of skill generating institutes. Overall economic depression, corruption, negligible attention to raise the region's, climatic condition making it conducive to fertility and productivity.

**Table- 3**  
**Per Capita Income in Central Asian Countries (2014)**

S. No.	Name of Country	Income Per Capita (\$)
1	Kazakhstan	24228
2	Kyrgyzstan	3262
3	Tajikistan	2698
4	Turkmenistan	14217
5	Uzbekistan	5630

*Source: International Monetary Fund, 2015.*

The factors stated above for the alarming unemployment, poverty, low per capita income, poor HDI index in the region point to lacuna in policy formations and administrative inefficiency which in turn leave an impact on human rights. All central Asian Countries are violating human rights in the case of health care facilities, free trail, less number of hospitals and per capita beds. Treatment of small diseases are too expensive, therefore the Central Asian patients are looking towards India for their treatment. Violation of human rights, as it becomes evident can be seen on almost all fronts including

child labor,<sup>22</sup> old age labour, low wages, restriction on religious activities, curtailed freedom of media, status of women, ethnic and minorities issues, governmental brutality, restriction imposed upon opposition leaders and so on and so forth. Besides these issues the Central Asian countries are infested with varied socio-political stumbling blocks-corruption, continuation of old practices, lack of infrastructure, fundamentalism, unwarranted political interventions, biased bureaucracy, authoritarian regimes, want of awareness, economic exploitation, lack of international exposure etc.

On the basis of above analysis it can be concluded that the Central Asian countries are going through a phase of transition. Absence of democratic culture and dearth of respect for human rights paralyses the region. No nation can follow the idea of absolute liberal democracy and Declaration of Human Rights by United Nation whether it is USA, Russia, Great Britain or China. Therefore, it can be said that Central-Asian countries have to achieve political stability, economic development, public awareness, education etc. At the same time they have to implement the constitutional provisions in letter and spirit which will promote protection of human rights. The international agencies like Amnesty International Human rights watch, US Aid, UNDP and other civil society institutions and NGO's should be allowed to work to protect and safeguard the human rights. This is a gradual process. Nearly 25 years of existence of the Central Asian countries after independence calls for a constant effort to strive towards the realization of the aims of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. It is indeed quite premature to assert that the region is likely to continue in the same vein, because international pressure and the region's own observation of changes taking place in the world with regard to human rights would certainly leave an impact on the states.

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# NEW MARITIME SILK ROUTE

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIA

Imtiyaz A. Mailk  
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### Abstract

*Although the New Maritime Silk Route (MSR) proposal is an innovative idea which aims to create opportunities and bring peace and stability in Asia-Pacific Region, it is designed to improve China's geostrategic position in the world. In order to consolidate its economic and political posture in the region, extricate itself from the Malacca dilemma and secure its Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) the MSR project is viewed by China as an important strategic tool. For India, the entire proposal has to be seen in the context of its national interest. As India's relation with China has never been hunky-dory, the entry of China in Indian Ocean Region (IOR) will prove detrimental. Despite the China's claim of using Maritime Silk Route as a diplomatic artery between China and its neighbours for strengthening regional connectivity, the unstated and underlying strategic objectives of this project raise questions about Chinese intentions. No doubt that 'Make in India' and 'Start up India' like initiatives launched by present NDA Government will get boost if India joins the MSR project, but at the same time it will have strategic compulsions that India will never wish to compromise with. The fact that China is promoting two corridors (continental and MSR) as part of its evolving regional geostrategy and that 'India lies on both the Maritime Silk Route and the Southern Silk Route' poses both opportunities as well as challenges for India. The present paper discusses these opportunities that the proposed Maritime Silk Route will offer and the challenges, it will pose to India.*

### Keywords

Marine Strategy, Indian Ocean Region, Soft Power, Strategic Balance, Asian Security Plan, Ocean Littorals, Look East Policy, South China Sea Dispute, Stand Up-Start Up Initiatives.

### Introduction

The Silk Road represents a historical lesson of political, economic and cultural integration due to inter-regional trade and cultural communications. It not only carried people, goods, innovations and ideas among different civilizations and cultures, as Rome, Levant, Persia, Central Asia, India, and China, but was also a key factor in the development of these civilizations by providing political, economic and cultural interactions among them. The Maritime Silk Route, officially the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Route Economic Belt is a Chinese

strategic initiative to increase investments and foster collaboration across the historic Silk Road. It covers countries and regions with a total population of 4.4 billion (63 percent of world's total) and total economic volume 21 trillion U.S. dollars (29 percent of world's total). The Maritime Silk Road initiative was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping during a speech to the Indonesian Parliament in October, 2013. Consequently in November 2014, he announced plans to create a 40 billion USD development fund which would help finance China's plans to develop the New Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road. Xi's thrust was on building a stronger China-ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) community, based on a strong political foundation and economic cooperation between the two sides. In making this proposal, Xi highlighted two aspects: *first*, the geographic proximity between China and ASEAN members, and how cooperation and development should bring them closer; and *second*, the economic potential of both China and ASEAN as emerging markets in Asia, which are important not only for their bilateral relations but also for regional economic growth and integration. The Silk Road concept has a hoary ancestry in Chinese foreign policy planning. Beijing has employed this concept traditionally to expand its overseas business, and commercial deals and linkages. But Beijing's orderly employment of this notion in the maritime sector reflects fresh thinking in China's foreign policy in terms of overseas commercial as well as maritime interests.<sup>1</sup> So far the layout of MSR is concerned it will begin in Fujian province, and will pass by Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hainan before heading south to the Malacca Strait. From Kuala Lumpur, the route heads to Kolkata then crosses the rest of the Indian Ocean to Nairobi. From Nairobi, it goes north around the Horn of Africa and moves through the Red Sea into the Mediterranean, with a stop in Athens before meeting the land-based Silk Road in Venice.

The official statement of Chinese government reads that "China proposed to build the Maritime Silk Route of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the aim of realizing harmonious co-existence, mutual benefit and common development with 13 relevant countries by carrying out practical cooperation in various fields, such as, maritime connectivity, marine economy, technically-advanced environmental protection, disaster prevention and reduction as well as social and cultural exchanges in the spirit of peace, friendship, cooperation and development". However an analysis of the Chinese motive behind this 'grand strategic initiative' reveals many possible explanations. Bargaining its Locational Benefit and having vast coastline, China wants to directly connect its 12 inland regions with almost 14 neighbouring countries which can serve as new export markets for its industries in these regions. Since 2011, because of South China Sea dispute, China's relations became bitter with- Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, and Japan. New Maritime Silk Route policy seems to be aimed at defusing tensions- via soft power and economic offer. This will also help China in countering the influence of USA and Russia and emerge as



a marine super power in the region. Malacca strait in Indian ocean connects Indian and pacific ocean and worlds 25 percent of trade passes through this strait and China is completely dependent on this strait for delivery of more than 4 million barrel of crude oil per day.<sup>2</sup> China fears that any hostile country can choke its supplies at Strait of Malacca. The bottleneck feature of the strait allows easy blockade. Therefore, China needs to secure this lane. Besides all these motives the new MSR initiative will help China in gaining easy access to Bay of Bengal and other Indian Ocean littorals.

### **Land and Maritime Silk Route**



*Source: wikimapia.com*

### **Indian Perspective**

If implemented, the initiative would bind countries in the Bay of Bengal and the northern Indian Ocean much closer to the Chinese economy. Several states in the region, including the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have indicated an in-principle agreement to participate in the MSR and are keen to encourage Chinese investment in port and transport infrastructure and manufacturing facilities. India has been much more circumspect about the proposal, and the visit of President Xi Jinping to Delhi in September 2014 failed to elicit an endorsement of the project from Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. Although China has long claimed that its interests in the Indian Ocean region are purely economic, it's increasingly clear that the MSR could have a major impact on the strategic balance in the Bay. For some years there have been concerns in Delhi and Washington about the security cooperation between China and various Bay states and the strategic significance of Chinese control over port infrastructure in the region. We do see considerable maneuvering

among China, India, the United States and even Russia in building defense relationships in the region.

Formal proposal to induct India into the MSR was made during the 17<sup>th</sup> round of talks between special representatives in New Delhi.<sup>3</sup> So far India has been somewhat reticent in its response primarily owing to lack of clarity about the Chinese grandiose economic and trade designs, as also infrastructural linkages and, above all, the larger strategic motivations. From Indian perspective the entire proposal has to be seen in the context of broader geo-strategic implications for Indian maritime politics in the region. The strategic objectives of MSR raise questions of Chinese real intentions. The Maritime Silk Road is an attempt to tie with India and other regional countries at the regional level, especially, in Southeast Asia and IOR while steadily raising the Chinese economic and maritime posture. As Beijing becomes more involved in building infrastructure in the Indian Ocean, it will play a larger part in the security and governance of the IOR, which could pose a challenge to India's stature as a 'security provider' in the region and also adversely affecting New Delhi's strategic purchase in its primary area of interest.<sup>4</sup>

## **Challenges**

The challenges of MSR to India can be studied under three sub-headings:

### ***a) Route Geopolitics***

China and India continue to vie for maritime influence, as the influence over the IOR remains both commercially and strategically advantageous.<sup>5</sup> Both the countries are competing for a similar strategic space in the IOR and the South China Sea and are employing new methods to upgrade their reach in these two strategically adjacent regions.<sup>6</sup> Given Beijing's increased access to ports, airfields and gas pipelines, its modernised and ever-expanding navy, and its investments in infrastructure development in the countries of this region. India is concerned about the increasing Chinese foothold in the IOR. Although China has been claiming that its interests in the Indian Ocean region are purely economic, it is increasingly clear that the MSR could have a major impact on the strategic balance in the bay. Many possible explanations exist for China's increased economic activity in South Asia. Normal profit-seeking behaviour by Chinese firms and the Chinese state may explain the increase. Geopolitical explanations are equally plausible, especially given the close proximity of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka to India. Border disputes between China and India dating to the 1960s continue, and the two countries are natural competitors for influence and resources in the region. The maritime strategies of the Asian powers are designed primarily to defend their homelands and associated vital national security interests on the oceans and seas.<sup>7</sup> A desire to project power in the region could motivate China's strengthening of economic ties with these countries surrounding India. For

some years there have been concerns in Delhi about the security cooperation between China and various bay states and the strategic significance of Chinese control over port infrastructure in the region.

The port facilities China is obtaining or building in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Pakistan, while justifiable from the Chinese point of view to buttress its huge external trade flowing in large part through the Indian Ocean, raise concerns about China encircling India physically and politically, changing the bilateral equation further, thereby, making it still more difficult for India to resolve its problems with China equitably. The core of this strategy is based in the ruling Chinese elite's belief to dominate the peripheral and regional discourse through economic, cultural and political influence. China is attempting to create trade and economic relationships with ASEAN countries through trade, port and continental land bridges to countervail US influence and draw ASEAN and littoral Indian Ocean within its sphere of influence.

### ***b) Strings of Pearl***

China will inevitably follow up with its commercial footholds in the Indian Ocean with naval ones. The purpose of China's naval expansion is precisely to create strategic space for itself in western Pacific and then move into the Indian Ocean gradually, in preparation for which China is learning to operate far from its shores for quite some time. China has steadily expanded its influence in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea by building ports in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and helping build Sandia Deep Sea port in Bangladesh, apart from other Indian Ocean littoral engagements through a strategy generally referred to as 'String of Pearls'. China has never accepted or validated the so-called 'String of Pearls' theory projected by Western scholars. However, a view is emerging in China that the Maritime Silk Road policy could be a response to this postulation. The "String of Pearls" coinage has adduced the view that China aims to militarily encircle India through robust maritime contacts and cooperation with the other South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. The Maritime Silk Road policy enables Beijing not only to counter the String of Pearls theory but also to steadily and legitimately push forward its maritime presence in the ASEAN region and the IOR. China has long been the principal supplier of equipment and training to the Bangladeshi armed forces and Dhaka's plans to acquire two Chinese submarines has already been a cause of considerable heartburn for the Indian Navy. The military partnership between China and Pakistan, an arch rival of India, is well known. Under these circumstances, the development and control of Gwadar port in Pakistan by China will make India vulnerable in the Arabian ocean and will pose problem if India tried to take step against Pakistan like it did in 1971 and 1999 to block Karachi port. Not only Pakistan and Bangladesh, it looks now that Sri Lanka may be becoming China's closest 'strategic partner' in the Bay of Bengal. In October 2014, apparently as part of the MSR initiative,

it was revealed that China has been invited to take over management of a new and enlarged Phase II development of Hambantota port, which will include berths dedicated for Chinese use. Port at Sri Lanka will prove handy in reconnaissance of Indian navy while the port at Myanmar will cut down China's distance by 3000km from Bay of Bengal which is controlled by India. Moreover it will make Strait of Malacca in easy reach of China. An airstrip in Myanmar will provide effective air cover for its supplies and also in event of blockade. Scenario is exacerbated by Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka pledging support to President Xi Jinping's MSR initiative as part of the overall Asian Security Plan. Given the emerging scenario, concerns in New Delhi are that countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka could be further drawn into the Chinese orbit. One of the reasons for the regional outreach of the Modi government should be to prevent such a potentially disturbing development by restabilising Indian credibility with its neighbours.

### ***c) Economy***

Beijing's Maritime Silk Route may be an illustration of cooperative maritime politics; but this also creates conditions for China's rise as an economic maritime power, and also creates a challenge for India's authority and supremacy in the IOR, which has been impressive so far. Chinese economic engagement in South Asia has grown quickly in recent years as trade expanded from approximately \$40 billion to \$85 billion from 2006 to 2011, bilateral investment grew even more quickly, rising from \$500 million in 2005 to \$2.8 billion in 2010. China is ASEAN's largest trading partner while ASEAN is China's third largest trading partner. Bilateral trade has grown from USD 55 billion in 2002 to USD 400 billion in 2012 with a quantum jump of 600 per cent.<sup>8</sup> These developments create opportunities for growth and development as a wider variety of exports flow from China into the region. China's trade volume with South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka grew roughly six-fold between 2003 and 2011, not to talk of Pakistan with which its trade has increased manifold. As for China's geopolitical motives, the importance of trade flows for these South Asian economies is even more pertinent to consider. Although the outward direct investment of India in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka is still higher than that of China, and Pakistan is the only country in South Asia in which trade with China, in terms of both exports and imports, has been more than trade with India, but if China follows its trend line, it will surpass India by the next decade in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. The Maritime Silk Road initiative will further boost China's commercial engagement with both ASEAN and other Indian Ocean littorals. This will have a huge impact in South Asia, where Beijing is emerging as a vital power. India's standing in South Asia is being tested by China's increasing influence in South Asia in recent years.

## **Opportunities**

The New Maritime Silk Route offers a number of opportunities for India which suffers from technological gaps in its maritime infrastructure. It can harness Chinese capability to construct high quality ships, build world class ports, core technologies for marine bio-pharmaceuticals, seawater treatment & utilization, offshore wind, sea water and tidal energy, capture and aquaculture fisheries production and offshore equipment manufacturing.<sup>9</sup> This will also help India-ASEAN maritime connectivity initiative which is languishing due to lack of infrastructure. China's strategy of onshore and marine development in parallel will not necessarily lead to maritime confrontation between China and India. There is tremendous potential for collaboration for these two nations in terms of marine economic development, marine resource exploration, sea lane security, etc.<sup>10</sup> The MSR could be a symbol of unity among nations and a commitment to cooperation. Furthermore, this initiative could contribute to greater connectivity and complementarities for the entire Asia. Cooperative mechanisms and innovative approach through this scheme could help to develop and improve supply chain, industrial chain, and value chain, and would, thus, strengthen regional cooperation. This initiative is aimed to boost infrastructure development and structural innovation, to improve business environment of the region, to facilitate an orderly and unimpeded flow of production factors and their efficient distribution, to accelerate development of landlocked countries and the remote areas, to lower costs and barriers of trade and investment, and to drive greater reform and opening-up by regional countries. Conceptually, the upgrading of maritime connectivity between Indo-Pacific and extending it further to East Africa and on to Mediterranean are in tune with India's own broader maritime economic vision. India's relations with the countries in South East Asia and Pacific regions have witnessed a significant transformation in recent years. The expansion and deepening of Look East Policy by Modi government, the steady trend of economic growth and stability in the region and the continuing geopolitical shift towards Asia, have imparted new momentum to its engagement, both bilaterally with individual countries as well as regionally. Therefore, it would be in India's interest to respond positively to the Chinese invitation to join the MSR. Moreover, India can also harness Chinese capabilities to improve its maritime infrastructure, including the construction of high-quality ships and world class ports. More importantly, it will also help India-ASEAN maritime connectivity that has been languishing due to the lack of infrastructure. MSR is an inevitable choice for both the countries to build a platform for win-win cooperation, as it provides an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and coordination in a bid to maximize common interests.<sup>11</sup>

## **Epilogue**

Beijing has been careful to project the MSR as an exclusively commercial venture, trying hard to dispel any impressions of it being a cover for maritime military bases. Surprisingly, however, China has released no details about the project, and this makes many countries doubt Beijing's strategic intentions. The lack of specifics not only make it hard to decipher the MSR's real purpose but it also gives credence to suspicions of geopolitical game play by China. Indeed, for a project being touted as a critical enabler of regional sea-connectivity, Chinese planners would have spent much time and effort developing the fine-print. The lack of firm plans, proposals and timelines then does lead to a suspicion that there may be something about the MSR that Beijing is hesitant to share and reveal. Beijing's economic and maritime posture continues to emerge as a challenge for India. In fact, underlying China's Maritime Silk Road strategy is an orderly diplomatic, economic, and maritime quest for power that India must take note of. Given the foregoing analysis, India will need to take a hard look at the pros and cons of supporting such a proposal. The dilemma for India is that a number of SAARC countries have already approved the Chinese proposal. Since it has already shown its approval for China's Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) development plan, chances are New Delhi will be favorably inclined to consider the MSR. It is, however, certain to go over the details carefully before agreeing to the development of Chinese infrastructure in Indian waters. Even though it will be keen to start-off with Beijing on a positive note, the present NDA government in New Delhi should not display undue haste in giving the MSR its full approval. There should be no blanket support for the project, and it should be only supported wherever the synergies of the two countries meet. Consequently, India should also develop other alternatives to secure its own space in the Indian Ocean Region, the recent development on Chabahar Port in Iran between India, Iran and Afghanistan being an able example for that type of 'alternatives'. India's appreciation of the MSR must be based on an objective appraisal of these new realities. Even assuming the project delivers on its economic promise, it could well turn out to be detrimental to India's geopolitical interests in the Indian Ocean Region .

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# INDO - KAZAKHSTAN NUCLEAR PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

*Harmeet Singh*

## **Abstract**

*The signing of Indo - Kazakhstan Nuclear Co-operation Agreement is one of the historic agreements among India and Central Asian Republics. The State visit of Kazakh President Nazarbayev as the chief guest of India on Republic day parade from 23<sup>rd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> January 2009 in Delhi, adopted the declaration of Strategic Partnership Agreement. In this declaration both sides had taken pledge for comprehensive cooperation in the spheres of political, economic, technological, human resource development and counter-terrorism. During Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh's visit to Astana on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011 a deal was struck between Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh and Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, for supplying of uranium to India and a comprehensive co-operation in civil nuclear energy programme. This agreement is one of the most important agreements which encourage the bilateral trade and transactions between the two countries.*

## **Keywords**

Nuclear Co-operation, Strategic Location, Bilateral Agreement, Uranium Reserves, Nuclear Partnership, Technical Co-operation, Diplomatic Ties.

## **Historical Background**

Among the Central Asian Republics, Kazakhstan occupies an important position lying in the heart of Eurasia. Being the largest of five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest country of the world in terms of its territory. Within a short span of 24 years Kazakhstan emerged as a most significant political and economic actor in the Central Asian region. The geostrategic location of Kazakhstan lying in the centre of Eurasian heartland makes it a centre of gravity.<sup>1</sup> Kazakhstan serves as the land bridge between Europe and Asia providing a vital linkage between the civilizations that have prospered and flourished in these two continents. The ethnic composition of Kazakhstan consists of Kazakhs - 58%, Russians - 30%, Ukrainians - 2.9%, Uzbeks - 2.8%, Uyghur - 1.5% , Germans - 1% , Tatar - 0.9% and other groups- 2.5%.<sup>2</sup>

India and Central Asia both are partaking deep historical ties, having common cultural and political values as well as facing the similar terrorism and drug trafficking problems. After the Soviet collapse in 1991, Kazakhstan emerged as the largest and the richest country in the region. India recognized

the independence of Kazakhstan and established diplomatic relations. Both India and Kazakhstan are sharing similar views on long-term economic and political partnership, promotion and development of prosperity in both the regions.<sup>3</sup>

Kazakhstan is significant for Indian foreign policy due to three main reasons and the first and foremost is the geostrategic location of Kazakhstan is as such, it lies in the “Heart of Eurasia” thereby, increases the importance of this region tremendously. Secondly, the vast energy and mineral resources of Kazakhstan, which remains a centre of attraction for the great powers and India, is imperative for the energy hungry country like India to engage there. Thirdly, the secular and composite identity and social structure of Kazakhstan which brings India close to Kazakhstan. India recognized Kazakhstan as an independent nation following after its independence and established Indian embassy in Kazakhstan. The Kazakh embassy in India was also inaugurated in the year 1993. All these developments led to the formation of new beginning and new relationships. In the year 1992 president Nazarbayev visited India, his first such official trip after assuming office, is one of the most important visit in terms of foundation of bilateral ties.<sup>4</sup> His visit to India signifies the importance of India for Kazakhstan. In this visit both sides made declarations on bilateral cooperation. The co-operation agreements in various fields of trade and economic relations, science and technology, culture, arts, education and mass media were also signed. For strengthening economic co-operation and avoidance of double taxation, the India-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental commission established in 1992.<sup>5</sup>

India reciprocated with visit by Indian Prime Minister Narsimha Rao in May 1993. During his visit, both sides signed agreements on technical co-operation in the fields of science and technology. For the further development of trade cells, both sides also signed agreements on the establishment of a joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Commerce and Science. There is establishment of credit agreement and India offered a credit line of \$20million to Kazakhstan. In this way both India and Kazakhstan stand towards the more dynamic and vibrant phase. Then in the following years, several issues were discussed pertaining to the defense co-operation and joint ventures in business and one of the important agreements signed in the year 1994 was, the agreement to start a regular flights between Almaty and Delhi.<sup>6</sup>

During the visit of President Nazarbayev again in the year 1996 both sides agreed on signing of energy related trade pacts, as there was an oil boom in Kazakhstan. Both sides penned agreements related to oil and gas, bio-informatics, defense cooperation and pharmaceuticals etc. In the year 2002, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Kazakhstan for a first CICA summit and bilateral talks were held for diverse engagement. Later on, the agenda of bilateral co-operation in the fields of joint working group on hydrocarbons and joint working group on terrorism was materialized. Now,

both sides realized the importance of trade and regional co-operation and by taking this into consideration a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in IT sector, according to this MoU India was to provide IT services to Kazakhstan.<sup>7</sup>

### **Strategic Partnership Agreement**

The India-Kazakhstan strategic partnership agreement was signed on January 2009. It was during the state visit of president Nazarbayev as the chief guest on the India's republic day. This shows the importance of Kazakhstan for India, a joint declaration on strategic partnership was signed which puts emphasis on a comprehensive co-operation. Kazakhstan has a twofold motive on the development of economic relations with India. Firstly, this region provides a sizeable consumer market for the Kazakh goods. Secondly, there are reserves of gold, silver and chromium which caters the domestic needs of the Kazakhstan. Besides this, Kazakhstan is looking towards India as a leading software player that will provide technical help and services to Kazakhstan.

India Kazakhstan relations got impetus with signing of this "Strategic Partnership Agreement" between Kazmunaigaz and ONGC Videsh limited, for exploration of oil in the Satpayev oil block. The India Kazakhstan strategic co-operation agreement is also dealing with providing assistance and technical co-operation. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the National Space Agency of Kazakhstan both have been working on joint programmes. Kazakhstan hosts the famous Baikonur Cosmodrome space research expecting technology transfers from India.

### **India-Kazakhstan Nuclear Cooperation Agreement**

The Indo-Kazakhstan nuclear co-operation agreement needs to be viewed in the context of India's growing energy needs. In the 12<sup>th</sup> Five year plan there is a mention that the growing energy needs can be tamed through nuclear energy as an alternative, for that India needs to bring additional nuclear plants. According to Planning Commission's estimate India needs an additional 100,000 megawatt power during the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan (2012-2017).<sup>8</sup>

The strategic partnership agreement of 2009 provided an MoU signed during the visit of president Nazarbayev on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009. One such clause of this MoU deals with the supply of uranium to India. During the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Kazakhstan on 15th-16th April 2011, 'India-Kazakhstan Nuclear Co-operation Agreement' was signed in the Kazakh capital Astana.<sup>9</sup> According to this agreement Kazakhstan will supply uranium to India. This agreement covers the supply of uranium and a comprehensive co-operation in civil nuclear energy programme. Nuclear energy pact concerning collaborative exploration and research of uranium through joint construction and operation of power plants and a commitment by Kazakhstan to supply India with over 2,100 tons of uranium by 2014.<sup>10</sup>

Kazakhstan had to supply uranium to India for civilian energy purposes under the proposed agreement between the NPCIL and Kazatomprom. This agreement was significant owing to the fact that Kazakhstan possesses the second largest deposits of Uranium around 1.5 million tons. Recently Kazakhstan holds number one position in the world in uranium production. In 2012 the country produced 21,317 tons of uranium (Tengri News, 2013).<sup>11</sup> The future planning of Astana is to increase the uranium production up to 30,000 MTU (Metric tons of Uranium) by the end of 2018. The main uranium producing sites of Kazakh are shown in the map.



Source: <http://www.world-nuclear.org/>

The Indo-Kazakhstan nuclear cooperation agreement provides a legal structure for the mutually beneficial uses of nuclear energy, which includes the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes including the use of nuclear energy in fuel supply, nuclear medicine, and use of nuclear radiations for health care, exploration and joint mining of uranium, design, construction and operation of joint nuclear power plants. The most important aspect of this deal was the exchange of scientific and research information. This nuclear agreement was most important owing to the fact that this agreement opened up avenues for India in Kazakhstan and there is a quantum jump in Indo-Kazakhstan trade.<sup>12</sup> Kazakhstan is a fifth such country which supplies nuclear fuel to India. U.S.A, France, Mongolia, and Russia are the other countries which are supplying uranium to India for civilian energy purposes. In the year 2010 NPCIL imported 868 tons of Uranium of which 300 tons of uranium was from Kazakhstan.<sup>13</sup> This will fulfill India's energy deficits to a large extent. The depreciation of Indian rupee could be largely attributed to the huge demands of energy resources. If these demands can be fulfilled with the supply of nuclear energy, there would be stability in our economic growth.

At present India is having 20 operating nuclear units and six under construction which have an installed capacity of 4780 Mega Watt. India is planning to expand its nuclear energy generating capacity totaling 63,000

MW by the year 2032.<sup>14</sup> Kazakhstan is having 15% of the world's uranium reserves and one of the leading uranium producing country. Article 1 of the Indo-Kazakhstan Nuclear co-operation agreement states the main objective of this agreement is to establish mutual beneficial cooperation between the two countries in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The areas of cooperation between the two countries are mentioned under Article 3 of the Indo-Kazakhstan nuclear cooperation agreement which are as under:

- The supply of nuclear material and equipment for use in civil nuclear power through long term contracts.
- With regard to nuclear fuel cycle, exchange of scientific and technical cooperation with mutual agreement.
- The joint exploration and mining of uranium and other useful natural resources which are relevant to the exploitation of nuclear energy.
- The implementation of joint projects on the uses of nuclear energy in the fields related to industry, agriculture, medicine and nuclear power.
- The joint marketing research of the uranium market and fuel for the nuclear power reactors and the exchange of marketing research also.
- Special attention on nuclear and radiation protection and environmental monitoring.
- Training and exchange of experts from both sides.
- Implementation of projects based on mutual interests with joint technical support and research.
- Regular organization of joint scientific conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops.
- The maintenance, construction, designs and decommissioning of nuclear power plants with proper systematic channels and supply of fuel. The parties shall effect cooperation here under solely for the peaceful purposes and not for manufacturing explosive devices.<sup>15</sup>

This agreement puts special emphasis on the “enrichment and reprocessing,” with the result, uranium produced and transferred shall not be enriched more than 20% in U-235 unless there is a written consent given by the supplying party. The use of nuclear material and equipment transferred under this agreement comes under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.<sup>16</sup>

In March, 2013, India and Kazakhstan agreed to carry forward one more agreement, which supports the view that the nuclear cooperation agreement will go beyond the year 2014, as a result, the uranium rich nation assured India

to meet its “uranium demands”. In this meeting the Indian external affairs minister Salman Khurshid and his Kazakh counterpart Erlan Idrissoev held comprehensive talks on various issues related to international and regional security. They revived the status of the bilateral ties in key areas related to defense, civil nuclear energy and hydrocarbons.

### **Revival of Indo-Kazakhstan Nuclear Co-operation Agreement**

India and Kazakhstan revived nuclear co-operation agreement on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 during the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi’s visit to Kazakhstan. In an agreement signed between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev for the continuous supply of Uranium with 5000 tons of uranium to India during 2015-19. After signing this deal Kazakhstan will emerge as the biggest source of uranium for India besides Canada and Australia. Kazakhstan’s uranium supplying company KazaAtomProm supplied 600 metric tons of uranium in the year 2010-11, 350 metric tons in 2011-12, 402.5 metric tons in 2012-13 and 460 Metric tons in 2013-14. The five year contract of uranium expired last year.

The Prime Minister, Modi in his joint statement with Kazakh President indicated that nuclear cooperation is a key pillar of partnership with Kazakhstan and mentioned that, “Kazakhstan was one the first countries with which we launched civil nuclear cooperation through a uranium purchase contract. We are pleased to have much a larger second contract now”. The MoU also signed which further deepen the scope of bilateral defense cooperation between the two countries including ; regular exchange of visits, joint exercises, training of military personnel, special forces exchanges and co-operation including military technical co-operation. A join statement “Tej Kadam” was also released after a talk which deals with the rising challenge posed by terrorism in their neighborhood.<sup>17</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The domestic uranium reserves of India are very meager and the country is dependent on uranium imports to fuel its nuclear plants. India has signed nuclear energy cooperation agreements with several countries including; France, United States, United Kingdom, South Korea, Mongolia, Argentina, Australia, Namibia, Canada and Russia. The Indo- Kazakhstan stronger ties on nuclear cooperation and other areas are because of the common interests and mutual desire of both the countries to expand their partnership. In a changing geopolitical environment Kazakhstan considers India as a bridging power that will bring regional peace and stability. On 22 February 2012 Kazakhstan and India celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic ties between the two countries. Kazakh Ambassador Doulat Kuanyshev during his visit to India, while celebrating 20th anniversary of the relations mentioned that Kazakhstan, India partnership is developing dynamically in

all spheres of life which includes political, cultural and economic spheres. There are some of the major impediments in the India Kazakhstan relations like the non-availability of hard currency and lack of conversion facilities in India as well as in Kazakhstan. Additionally, the language barrier is also creating hurdles for Indians who went there in Kazakhstan as they are not able to talk because most of Kazakhstani peoples know only Russian and Kazakh language. There is no proper marketing through main newspapers by the respective governments that also restricts the development of tourism and business between the two major giants. Therefore, we must formulate suitable strategies and policies to tackle these important issues for strengthening the ties between these two countries for achieving targeted growth rates and harvesting mutual benefits.

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# AFGHANISTAN

## DEMOCRACY AND ETHNIC PARADOX

Tareak A. Rather  
Nurgiss Nazir

### **Abstract**

*Throughout the ages Afghanistan remained, “a country without state”. The toppling of one regime, dominated by one ethnic group by the other remains the perennial problem of Afghanistan. This ethnic conflict also leads to inter-alia to an epoch in the post-Soviet era where Taliban quickly gained public support in the vast majority of the country, who sought to stabilize the country through a policy of ferocious repression. The old socio-political fault lines, enmeshed with divergent interests of various internal and external forces involved, however, continue to grow. And this confrontation between ethnic groups and different state apparatus, external and internal, became a vicious cycle. Even after the collapse of Taliban and deployment of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and introduction of democratic elections, things are not looking good. This paper tries to highlight the deep-rooted ethnic identity and its impact upon the emerging democratic state of Afghanistan.*

### **Keywords**

Ethnic Groups, Democracy, Northern Alliance, Taliban, Warlords, Ethnic Conflict, Fault Lines, Afghanistan, Post-Soviet Era, External Forces.

### **Introduction**

Most societies are split along one or more lines. Often these splits, or cleavages, become the society's fault lines along which political views form. Important social cleavages, in addition to ethnicity, are: social class, religion, rural-urban, and geographic region. Almost any social cleavage or category can become politically relevant. In Afghanistan Ethnicity appears to be an especially salient cleavage.<sup>1</sup> Therefore ethnic conflicts are considered crucial challenges to national politics and are often accompanied by a gradual collapse of state authority. Furthermore, these conflicts appear to undermine identities are generally defined by the belief in a common origin and are expressed by a common language, historical consciousness, religion, etc. however, labeling violent conflicts as ethnic involves the risk of oversimplifying complex issues.<sup>2</sup> At the dawn of modern times, the territory of what is now Afghanistan was inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups which apart from the Muslim faith, had

little in common.<sup>3</sup> The Afghan society is the land of much ethnic diversity with Pashtun 40 percent, Tajik 33 percent, Hazara 11 percent, Uzbek 9 percent, Aimak 1 percent, Turkmen 2 percent, Baloch 1 percent and others 3 percent.<sup>4</sup>

The 1964 constitution of Afghanistan ended ethnic preference by awarding all the ethnic groups equal treatment but just after one and a half decade or so soviet's occupied it, which led to the decline in the domination of Pashtun's and resulted in the alliance of non-Pashtun resistance and military commanders. The communists encouraged other languages like Uzbeki, Balochi, Turkmani and Nuristani by giving them the official status.<sup>5</sup> In rural areas the movement against the Communist regime was spearheaded by the *ulema* and the Islamists, where as political parties and groups dominated the urban space.<sup>6</sup> Historically there were no dominant elements that would distinguish the Islamists from the communists. The political parties and factions within them exhibited communal divisions based on tribal loyalties, religion and regional loyalties that have fragmented the Afghan politics.<sup>7</sup>

Once the Communist regime was toppled, the various political factions could no longer justify mobilization on the basis of jihad and thus looked for alternative recruiting tools. The largely Uzbek-based Junbeshi-milli (political party), although initially conceived as a group encompassing all of northern Afghanistan, became more and more Uzbek while alienating and losing its Pashtun and Tajik commanders. Jamiat-i-Islami, in turn, was becoming increasingly the Tajik in composition. Hizb-e-Wahdat defined itself as the official representative of ethnic Hazaras, with little controversy or opposition.<sup>8</sup>

Political leaders often used group identity in their pursuit of power and resources by reinterpreting history around symbols of ethnic or religious differences, especially during civil wars. The homogeneity of the Taliban and Ahmad Shah Massoud's forces, as well the historically rooted anti-Pashtun sentiments among Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Tajiks, were all useful to various political factions during times of civil war. Likewise, Pashtun aversion to acceptance of a Tajik dominated central government proved convenient to the Taliban's quest for power.<sup>9</sup> A couple of historical events can be quoted when a non-Pashtun assumed power but was challenged by the Pashtun leadership and ousted eventually. Habibullah ('Bachai-Saqao' Tajik), who overthrew Amir Amanullah Khan in (1929) and ruled for nine months, was overthrown by the combined might of the Pashtuns and thus Pashtun rule was restored.<sup>10</sup> Burhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik, according to the provisions of the Peshawar Accord (1990) assumed leadership of the central government in 1992, igniting the bloody civil war in which Pashtuns under the leadership of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar fought pitched battles against a non-Pashtun president and his military commander, Ahmed Shah Masoud.<sup>11</sup>

The Taliban regime further strengthened the ethnic divide through its policy of excluding from power political forces other than Pashtuns and, in some cases, followed a policy of elimination of minorities. There was a fear

that the Taliban might convert Afghanistan into an ethnic state at the cost of diverse ethnic minorities in the country.<sup>12</sup> The rise of the Taliban constituted yet another serious step towards ethnicizing conflict in the country. The movement rose from Kandahar, the conservative heart of Pashtun lands, and remained completely dominated by Pashtuns. It's initial, amazingly rapid spread - explained by its missionary zeal, but slowed significantly as it reached non-Pashtun areas. And Taliban's take-over of Kabul in 1996 'clearly changed the conflict into an ethnic power struggle of Pashtuns against non-Pashtuns'.<sup>13</sup>

Historically rulers of Kabul have adopted a strategy of patronage which has been extended to all tribes in return for loyalty to the ruler. It became more evident and visible after the Soviet withdrawal. The roots of the chronic instability lie mainly in the nature of the Soviet strategy, which encouraged minority ethnic politics to supersede national politics. The years of Soviet occupation (1979-89) were characterized not simply by an assault on the Afghan state, but more importantly an attack on Afghan identity. With the realization that Communist ideology was no match for the solid front of Islamic resistance in Afghanistan, the Soviets redefined Afghanistan as a country of diverse and distinct ethnicities, rather than as a unitary state with a single religious belief system. Their goal was to weaken potentially the most resistant of the ethnic groups, the Pashtun majority - the traditionally dominant group in the Afghan armed forces, a majority among the Afghan resistance groups, and the cultural core of Afghanistan's "national" identity.<sup>14</sup> The post-soviet withdrawal phase only confirmed the existing fragmentation of political classes along the lines of ethnicity, tribal affinity and the ideological underpinnings of their movements.<sup>15</sup>

Afghanistan has undergone several phases of failed transition and conflict cycles. By 1992, the Northern Coalition (later renamed Alliance) was formed, in which the prominent ethnic minorities in the north were united against the Pashtuns. Thus on the eve of the centennial of the Durand Line that had divided Afghanistan in 1893, a deep chasm was created in the ethno-linguistic mosaic of Afghanistan. The Northern Alliance's first mission was to bring down the Communist government in Kabul.<sup>16</sup> The national minorities of northern Afghanistan close their ranks to resist domination by the Pashtuns. The Uzbeks being a major ethnic group, together with other small national groups of the north fought unitedly against the Central Pashtun authority. However, their revolts were ruthlessly suppressed by Kabul.<sup>17</sup>

Brutalities against Pashtuns in the North and targeting of Hazaras in the south posed great challenges for both the Afghan Government and the International security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Hazarajat region had seen a series of reprisal killings over the years. In 1997 alone, the Taliban killed over 6,000 Hazara Muslims in retaliation for the execution of thousands of Taliban prisoners in Northern Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> The relatively weaker socio-economic status of the non-Pashtun ethnic groups was the direct result of the

government's practice of Pashtun favoritism, the concentration of economic development projects in Pashtun areas and the appointment of Pashtuns to help administrative posts in non-Pashtun areas which antagonized the minorities, particularly the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen in the north and the Hazaras in the central parts of the country.<sup>19</sup>

### **Ethnicity and Political Elite**

The Afghan war led to major changes in the way space was perceived. On the one hand the national territory progressively lost significance as a frame of reference for the activities of political and military actors this was above all because the state and its functions were eroded in the course of the war.<sup>20</sup> One consequence of this collapse of the state was that power became de-territorialized, particularly in 1990s, Afghanistan collapsed into hundreds of petty empires that could scarcely be fixed in spatial terms and which were ruled by a myriad of warlords and local rulers whose power was based on client networks and personal loyalties.<sup>21</sup> Militia leaders attempted to carve out what Schetter, borrowing from Appadurai, calls *Ethnoscapes*, imagined political territories that are mythically connected to the genesis of specific ethnicities.<sup>22</sup>

The power of warlords and their private military network, including private security firms, presented the biggest challenge to the country's rehabilitation as a functioning state. War criminals were trying to maintain their criminal militias and keep the state weak. The warlords have also cultivated political patronage and are connected to the higher officials in the government. In the process some of them have developed a sense of impunity for violations of human rights and are engaged in retribution of their opponents. Government functionaries have patronized them to secure themselves from extortion and attacks by criminal elements and the Taliban. Security and stability being keywords for western countries that wanted to exit from Afghanistan; these militias have emerged as new associates in enforcing security, gathering intelligence and also helping NATO convoys to pass dangerous terrain. Due to this role there is an increasing criminalization and a nexus between drug dealers, militias and arms smugglers.<sup>23</sup>

When president Karzai (2001) took office, he had considerable support over the south and west. Karzai has had difficulty in limiting the power of the *Shura-I nazar* in the national government and in successfully challenging local warlords elsewhere in the country. The President's popularity among Pashtuns rose in October 2002 when he announced the dismissal of 30 middle-level commanders throughout the country. However, compliance with the order was unseen.<sup>24</sup> Serious clashes with warlords have since taken place in the north and west. Karzai continued the policy of appeasement with warlords.<sup>25</sup> Nazif Shahrani, a foremost expert on Afghanistan, relates the country's communal tensions to the type of government in effect since Abdur Rahman (1880-1901).

Shahrani argues that transformation of tribal structures and ethnic differences into groups, fragmented along ethnic, linguistic, and sectarian cleavage, was the direct consequence of the policies of centralizing government. State structure and policies have been the problem in breeding communal violence and conflicts in multiethnic societies.<sup>26</sup>

### **Democracy: Prospects and Challenges**

The post-Taliban political situation was quite disappointing for the Pashtuns. On the one hand the Taliban were ousted, and on the other, the new dispensation was dominated by their rivals from the Northern Alliance. They were expecting that the *Loya Jirga* (tribal councils) would redress the concerns of the Pashtuns. The reinstatement of the existing cabinet for a two-year transitional period added to the disillusionment of the Pashtuns.<sup>27</sup> However, formulation of a centralized constitution as a result of deliberations during the constitutional grand assembly restored some of the lost hopes of the Pashtuns. The Pashtun majority struggled hard for a centralized constitution and the minorities forcefully argued for the federal one but the majority's view won the day. Stalwarts of the ethnic minorities are still struggling to substantially modify the constitution according to their desire.<sup>28</sup>

Afghanistan went to elections without political parties. Most of the presidential candidates lacked a well-defined agenda or vision for the future of Afghanistan. They were either offshoots of some factional group or had the support of one of them. Though political parties were restrained from fighting elections, they were, however, allowed to register themselves. It is noteworthy that 'article 35' of the new constitution clearly states that the citizens of Afghanistan have the right to form political parties provided the "organizational structure and financial sources of the party are made public," "the party does not have military or paramilitary aims and structures," and that the "party is not affiliated to foreign political parties or sources." It further states, "Formation and functioning of a party based on ethnicity, language, Islamic school of thought (*mazhab-e-fiqhi*) and region shall not be permissible."<sup>29</sup> Now, if any of these clauses were applied, then most of the political formations in Afghanistan would not have qualified to be registered as political parties.

The post-Taliban political process was fragile and the position of Hamid Karzai was delicate, the west was keen on holding the first presidential election as early as possible. Because different factions of the Northern Alliance were fielding their own candidates, which made it increasingly difficult for Karzai to consolidate his support among the minority ethnic groups. Who together formed a substantial chunk of the Afghan population. His limited authority, absence of local support base, and dependency on the west, stood in stark contrast to those of factional commanders and leaders, particularly from the former Northern Alliance, in the fray.<sup>30</sup> Before the presidential election,

some crucial measures of the incumbent president, Hamid Karzai, against the warlords such as the dismissal of thirty, mostly Pashtun, warlords and removal of defence minister Qasim Fahim from his position, upheld Karzai's position in the public, particularly among the Pashtuns and so he won the overwhelming support of his co-ethnics all over the country.<sup>31</sup>

With the new constitution ratified by the Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ) in January 2004, attention turned towards Afghanistan's first democratic elections. Afghanistan's emergence as a democracy was one of the key achievements of the Bonn process that conclude with the successful completion of the first round of presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004-05.<sup>32</sup> However, keeping in view the parliamentary and local elections of September 2005, Karzai didn't completely marginalize the Northern Alliance leadership especially the Panjshiri faction. He appointed Uzbek leader Dostum as chief-of-staff to the commander-in-chief of the Afghan armed forces,<sup>33</sup> and granted a life time special privilege to the leader of the Tajik militia, Mohammad Qasim Fahim, allowing him to retain his military rank of a Marshall throughout his life.<sup>34</sup> It was clear from the presidential election that the parliamentary elections too would also be fought along ethnic lines, with several alliances, combinations and permutations emerging.<sup>35</sup>

In 2009 the Obama administration and NATO allies have scaled back expectations for a democratic form of government in Afghanistan, at least for the time period in which the international presence might be sustained at its current level.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, despite renewed emphasis on security and a downplaying of Afghanistan's prospects for democracy in 2009, intense preparations for the 2015 presidential elections demonstrate that the international community had not discarded its intent to leave behind at least the seeds of participatory government.<sup>37</sup> However, according to the Kabul-based Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, an independent research organization, in the eyes of most Afghans, "elections are being used to legitimize or 'rubber stamp' the control of the powerful", and "elections are compounding a distrust of institutions."<sup>38</sup>

Preliminary election results released by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in October, 2010 revealed that, despite the fact that Pashtuns are the majority ethnic group in Ghazni Province, not a single Pashtun was elected; all of the Wolesi Jirga seats went to Hazara candidates. This is due at least in part to the fact that most of the polling stations that remained closed on election day were in communities in which Pashtuns were the majority. Many of the people Democracy International (DI) interviewed say also that intimidation by the Taliban kept them away from the polling stations that remained open.<sup>39</sup> President Karzai called for a re-vote in the province, but the IEC resisted this measure.<sup>40</sup> The Hazara candidates selected in the initial tally claimed that a re-vote was tantamount to ethnic discrimination and stated that any change in results not only would be illegal, but also would be met

with serious resistance.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, candidates from Ghazni who had not won seats staged protests in Kabul, decrying the elections as illegitimate and fraudulent.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, the IEC excluded Ghazni Province when it announced the final election results due to the controversy.<sup>43</sup> The ongoing conflict became a symbol of many of the social and ethnic tensions facing the country.

Ghani and Abdullah signed an agreement on 21 September (2014), promising a “genuine and meaningful partnership” that would allow them to govern together.<sup>44</sup> Later the same day, the IEC announced Ghani as the winner, although it declined to officially publish results.<sup>45</sup> The only information the IEC formally released was inscribed on an engraved wooden plaque given to Ghani, congratulating him for receiving 55.27 per cent of the 7.12 million valid votes.<sup>46</sup> The conflicts and compromises of Afghan political and tribal heads are obvious and the recent post-presidential election is a case in point. The Abdullah team protested the IEC’s decision to inscribe the tally on the wooden plaque, among other complaints, and threatened to boycott the inauguration ceremony.<sup>47</sup> The inauguration proceeded smoothly, however, with Ghani sworn in as president and immediately appointing Abdullah, a Tajik, as chief executive officer.<sup>48</sup> Reaction among ordinary Afghans was mixed, with some expressing relief that the process had finally reached a conclusion and others worrying about the durability of the new government.<sup>49</sup>

Violence between the presidential camps remained comparatively rare throughout 2013-2014, although armed clashes increased during the second round; however, as ethnic and tribal groups supporting different camps became visible, Abdullah’s slate was dominated by Tajik figures and support from Mohaqeq’s powerful Hazara faction, the Ghani camp emerged as heavily Pashtun and Uzbek in character, along with some Hazara support.<sup>50</sup> Afghans were apprehensive that this election may lead to full blown ethnic conflict. But once the deal was struck with Abdullah things started looking normal.

Ethnic conflicts which we are witnessing in Afghan society are considered crucial challenges to national politics and are often accompanied by a gradual collapse of state authority. Regardless of ethnicity, many Afghan politicians and policymakers from across the country favor a strong central state in order to curb powerful local figures, as well as to reduce the danger of criminal influence over the structures of local government. Research has also consistently shown that many Afghan citizens favor a strong central government as a means to undermine the power of local commanders at whose hands they suffered for so many years.<sup>51</sup> Although there is now growing disillusionment with the corruption and criminalization of central government, current structures reflect the understanding that a strong central state can act as a countervailing force to local power holders. One of the ironies of the situation in Afghanistan is that, despite the strong power influences exercised at the local level, the country is not only politically centralised, but also, in theory, fiscally and administratively one of the most centralised countries in

the world. All budgetary and most staffing decisions are made in Kabul, and provincial departments of line ministries, as well as the governor's office, have virtually no discretionary spending power and limited input into planning.<sup>52</sup>

A country which had been at war for three decades, with hardly any functional state institution in place and ethnically highly diverse country cannot be transformed into a stable thriving democracy in a short span of time. Progress on all fronts, social, economic and political is bound to be gradual, fragmented, restricted and strained by severe challenges from within and without. The strength of nascent democracy in Afghanistan is being clearly put to test. How indispensable or dispensable is the current political system and the constitution for various stakeholders in the Afghan politics, would largely determine the future of democracy in the country.

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# FOOD SHORTAGES IN KASHMIR

## RESPONSE OF SOCIETY

Danish Mehran

### Abstract

*This paper aims at explaining the food crisis that ravaged the life and conditions of the people of Kashmir during pre-modern times. It focuses on a variety of causes behind food shortages with a view to broaden our understanding about the present and to provide a guideline for the future. Besides analysing the philosophy of food shortages, it also dwells upon how the various sections of the society from the 'landlords' through galladars (grain merchants) and waddars (money-lenders) to peasants and workers responded to the situation and the web of consequences that followed from it impacting polity, economy, mentality and culture of the society.*

### Keywords

Famine, Food Stock, Survival, Crises, Surplus, Peasant, Migration, Vagabondage, Landlords, Money Lenders.

### Introduction

The valley of Kashmir situated in the bosom of the western Himalayas at an average elevation of 6000ft<sup>1</sup>, encircled by an unbroken chain of heaven high mountains and presenting an interesting morphology, witnessed tremendous devastation on account of food shortages of various natures. In fact, like other agrarian societies of the world, food crisis had also been the pre-dominant feature of the Kashmir society caused by a wide range of factors both natural and artificial. However, it is pertinent to highlight that there prevailed in the valley two-types of shortages, *apikaal* or subsistence crisis and *drag* or famine.

### *Apikaal* (Subsistence Crisis)

*Apikaal* is a local name of the recurrent almost annual, food shortage faced by the masses effected not less than 90% of the population of the valley and having no parallels in the annals of the history of the Indian subcontinent. This type of food shortage was faced by the people during the spring and early months of summer as the food available at their command could suffice their needs only for five to six months. For the remaining part of the year the peasant had to battle for survival. Though *apikaal* was not responsible for death en masse but it certainly made the people vulnerable to death as they had to forcibly depend on sub-standard foods or those foods which were not good

for health making them vulnerable to diseases.

### **Oral Evidence**

As per the unanimous version of the octogenarian people, the produce left with the peasant by the state machinery could suffice his needs only for four to five months of the year. The rest of the year they survived on rice gruel, vegetables (both green and dried) and different seasonal fruits, among which the first one was mulberry fruit, others that followed were apricot, apples, pears, etc. to help the people to survive upon. Wild produce (both vegetables and fruits) was another substitute for the people. Besides the peasant's sustenance on these eatables for the major part of the year, he sometimes sold his property in lieu of paltry quantity of food.<sup>2</sup>

Muhammad Naji Munawar (resident of Kapran Shopyian) says:

*The period from spring to autumn used to be the toughest period of the year in terms of food availability. During these months we used to feed mostly on wild fruits like mulberry, chanch, strawberry, etc. Fruit trees of soar apples (cheuk choent) and a variety of pears locally called as 'Bata Tang' (consumed in place of rice), were planted to support life during the period of food shortages.*

Quoting Abdul Gani Baba (resident of Tral Pulwama):

*During the cultivating season (June to August) when the peasant sweat his brow his staple food was already exhausted. The only food available to him at that time used to be raw fruits, bottle guards (aleh), beans (Rajmah-hembah), knoll-kohl (hakh), and some other vegetables.*

Ghulam Ahmad Khanday (resident of Parganah Phak) says:

*Rice was not cultivated in the pargana Phak for the lack of irrigation facilities till 1950s. It was only from the time when Shalteng Canal, popular as Bakshi Kuhl, was constructed that this area was able to produce rice and the people tasted the staple food to the satisfaction. Till then maize was the staple food. The scarcity of food almost for half-a-year forced the people to survive on coarse food-grains [buck wheat - trombeh; kangni - shol; chena - pingeh; barley - vishkeh; beans (mung and peas); boiled maize - whaat and half grinded maize (satu) with tea]. Once a lady (named Tajeh) in our neighbourhood felt unconscious during day time and we all ran to their house. After enquiring about the cause it was found that she had not taken food for the past nine days. At times the raw and unhygienic food on which the people survived was the cause of many diseases.*

Abdul Karim Wagay (resident of Padgampur, Awantipur, Pulwama)  
*while recollecting his father's (who had died at the age of 102 in 2010) experiences, with whom he had shared a major period of his life, Wagay narrated that the other options available to the people for survival after the depletion of their stocks, usually after six months, were satu (roasted and grinded maize) and wat (a preparation made of half grinded and boiled maize) as maize was the only food crop grown in the area till 1950s.*

Haji Abdul Rahman Mir (resident of Shadipora Pattan Baramulla says:  
*Till the construction of Sumbal Canal (Official name) popular as Shiekh Kuhlās it was constructed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the Sumbal-Sonawari area of district Baramulla the people cultivated only maize. During the scarcities people survived up on berries of mulberry (tul) during spring season, on fish during summer and barley (wishkeh) during autumn.*

Quoting Haji Aziz Parray (resident of Chodus Awantipora Pulwama):  
*The winters used to be long and harsh but the people were acclimatized with such conditions. We used to feed on dry vegetables like dried guards (al-hatchi), dried brinjal (wangan Hatchi), dried knoll-khol (hukh hakh), handh, etc.*

Hamid-ullah Bhat (resident of Arrah Kulgam) says:  
*During winters, people mostly used to go to Punjab in search of manual job or physical work (mazuer) to eke out living. I myself had gone to Punjab twenty five times to earn livelihood. Those people who stayed in the valley took to spinning and weaving and survived upon dried vegetables, kachniel handh, hakeh kandh, posh-handh and wild produce mainly different varieties of knoll-khol (pambeh hakh, dij dij hakh, shranzal hakh, yendurtul hakh) and van pran (wild spring onion or shallot).*

The distressing economic condition faced by the valley people gave birth to the following proverbs:

*'Doh Kadun Go Koh Kadun'*

In the period of scarcity and starvation, passing a day without food and meals was equivalent to passing a year.

*'Wathiv Kuthav Khayew Shikaar Maaz  
Wathiv Nai Teh Khayev Panun Maaz'*

In strife and struggle a person was compelled to live on the hunting of wild animals and birds, otherwise, he had the only option to die in starvation.

*'Bujeh Lob Kujeh Tul Cheont  
Doh Dish Gai Teh Haptan khay'*

In the time of starvation; the people used to go to jungles in search of wild grown fruits and vegetables. In the strife; an old woman found a fruit (an apple) under a tree and continued to visit the spot to collect the fruits for some days for her survival. Finally she fell victim to a wild bear as one day she encountered with the animal in this strife; the food was basically the food of that animal.

*‘Bata Thoda Toh Bismillah Bechara Kya Karay’*

Muslims believe that to begin the eating of meals they shall begin it with the name of Allah which spiritually suffices their bodily need. Since the people had too scanty food, the proverb took its origin that when food is too less; how Bismillah (the name of Allah) will suffice the need.

*‘Batah Dadeh Chai Wateh Wil Gachan’*

For want of meals (Rice) the people would lose their way, country and relations as the search for the same would take them to distant lands unheard and unknown to them.

### **Recorded Evidence**

The written evidence mentions only acute food crisis due to crop failures leaving out the food shortages the poor sections, who constituted the largest segment of the society, faced invariably for most of the year. However, we have produced whatever little evidence the written sources provided to support that food shortages existed even during normal times in the valley.

The peasants lived for the most part of the year on sub-standard diet like, rice gruel, vegetables, wild fruits tea, and grass or without food for days.<sup>3</sup> In fact according to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century observers the condition of Kashmiri peasantry was worse than that of the peasants living in elsewhere in India.<sup>4</sup> This is also substantiated by the fact that even in normal times the peasant could not dream of having a food-stock which could suffice his basic necessities till he could harvest his crops.<sup>5</sup> This was due to the fact that in Kashmir the state demand from the peasant was far in excess of his surplus produce (i.e., the produce over and above that required for his subsistence). It is, therefore, no wonder to come across a decline in the number of Kashmiri peasants<sup>6</sup> and to see them roving from place to place.<sup>7</sup> Moorcraft noted the heart rending condition of the people:<sup>8</sup>

The number of Kashmirians.....and their appearance, half naked and miserably emaciated, presented a ghastly picture of poverty and starvation.

G.T. Vigne, who visited Kashmir in 1835, found exactly the same situation:<sup>9</sup>

...not a day passed when traveling in the valley, that I didn't see the bleached remains of some unfortunate wretch who had fallen a victim either to sickness or starvation; and principally, as I had afterwards reason to believe, to the consequences of the dreadful scarcity with which Kashmir was afflicted...

During the six months when the food was deficient the common masses in the absence of any relief from the state were forced to sell whatever little property in terms of trees, cattle or blankets they had produced during the year or exchanging the land for a few seers (seer is less than one kilogram) of rice to appease their hunger. Vagabondage or itinerant begging was largely the outcome of food shortages. Either they were migrating from rural homes to urban centres where they hoped to beg for their food or they wandered out from towns and cities into the open country-side in a last ditch attempt to find anything to eat. As per Joseph Wolff:<sup>10</sup>

The country is so completely subjugated, that the natives except a few traders in shawls, are nothing better than so many beggars. B.C. Hugel narrates his encounter with a Brahmin, who stopped his horse, seized the bridle and demanded alms. Hugel remarks:<sup>11</sup>

The manner in which charity to sometimes is asked here shows the degree of misery and despair.

To quote Bazaz:<sup>12</sup>

...a Muslim peasant presents the appearance of a starving beggar.

The people during winters survived on pulses, dried vegetables (obtained from kitchen gardens, forests and grazing fields) and dried fruits for their survival.<sup>13</sup> In the absence of any substantial means to earn livelihood the inhabitants starving at home were driven in great numbers to the plains of Hindustan during winters in search of labour, save some of their wages and to return in early spring.<sup>14</sup> However, the condition of the people who visited the plains during winters for earning livelihood was not better than the beggars as is revealed by Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah:<sup>15</sup>

...I saw Kashmiri Muslims in big bands leaving their beautiful land for the hard plains of Punjab in search of livelihood....Many a time I found some Kashmiris begging for meals. I felt ashamed and asked one of them, "Why are you begging? Don't you get any work?" the labourer replied, "Yes Sir! We definitely get it. We earn about 12 to 16 annas a day but we have to collect and save this amount because on our return we have to pay land revenue to the state, buy clothes for our children and carry some food items for our families. If we spend this money on our meals, we can't make both ends meet.

The graveness of the scarcity can be imagined by the fact that in 1643 the valley people engulfed with scarcity took to violence and set ablaze the dwelling of Pandit Mahadev<sup>16</sup> (the then *peshkar*) for the reason that the official had turned to be a hoarder.<sup>17</sup> Similar incident of popular uprising which led to the killing of *mir 'adl* and *daroga-i-adalat* and setting ablaze the houses of the grain dealers, is detectable during the deputy governorship of Ihtiram Khan (1731-32).<sup>18</sup> In 1931 there were serious riots in the State as a result of which the Muslim Conference was formed. In particular the clamour was for agrarian reform.<sup>19</sup>

Next to the peasantry, the most discontented segment of the population of Kashmir was the shawl-weavers and workers of other cottage industries. These workers mostly hailed from urban areas especially Srinagar and exclusively belonged to the Muslim community. Like peasantry the shawl-weavers also lived in chronic poverty because of their exploitation by the state as well as its officials. The officials of the Dagshawl were sucking the life-blood of this class by exacting the usual *nazrana*. The shawl-baf and his family were often reduced to a state of semi-starvation.<sup>20</sup> Madusuden Ganju has also highlighted the pitiable condition of the shawl weavers.<sup>21</sup>

the standard of living of workers engaged in the woollen industry, as a whole, is very low. Their food is poor..... Their staple food in Kashmir province is rice which they eat with an ordinary kind of cooked vegetable leaves called *hak* (knoll-kohl). Some of them cannot afford even that much.

The people dwelling around the lakes especially Wular survived upon *Sinharas* (water-nuts) for nearly 2/5part of the year showing the scarcity people were facing. As per Moorcraft:<sup>22</sup>

Another principal article of the food of the common people, the *Sinhara* or water-nut, grows abundantly in the different lakes in the vicinity of the capital and especially in the Wular Lake...it constituted the almost only food of at least 30,000 persons for five months in the year.

The heavy taxation policy of the state as well as the official oppression had forced the shawl-bafs of Srinagar to revolt against the government earlier in 1865.<sup>23</sup> But the agitation lacked the organized character that accounted for its failure. Again in 1924, the labourers of the silk factory, Srinagar, had launched an agitation against the corruption and atrocities of the Pandit officialdom and the payment of the extremely low wages.<sup>24</sup> The government took swift measures to suppress this uprising, which was portrayed in official records as the Muslim community's attempt at pressurizing the darbar to grant them political concessions.<sup>25</sup>

### **Famines (*qahat* or *drag*)**

Besides the permanent shortage of food, there occurred occasionally severe food crisis called *qahat* or *drag* in local parlance. This severe crisis was the result of crop failures owing to untimely floods, early snowfall and other such reasons. Till 1950s Kashmir history witnessed a number of famines causing a crescendo of death, misery, forcible flights and impoverishment of the peasantry and other poor sections of the society. The famines that occurred in the history of Kashmir are as:

### **Famine of 1831**

During the governorship of *Sher Singh*, a serious famine occurred in the valley, which was given the name of governor itself.<sup>26</sup> The terrible famine namely *Sher Singh* was caused by the early autumn snow of 1831 which



destroyed the paddy crop on a large scale.<sup>27</sup> The famine had devastating effects and it has been calculated that the population of Kashmir was reduced from eight lakh to two lakh.<sup>28</sup> The famine was followed by a flood which destroyed many important irrigation works and permanently submerged large areas of valuable cultivation.<sup>29</sup> The problems of the people were increased by the revenue collectors as they embezzled much public money and hoarded grain.<sup>30</sup> *Jamadaar Khushal Singh* was sent by *Ranajit Singh* from Lahore to Kashmir to watch events.<sup>31</sup> Before giving the hungry masses the food *Khushal Singh* took more interest in harassing and torturing the revenue collectors, which ultimately gave rise to a mass protest by marching down to Lahore and Amritsar in batches in order to excite the sympathy of the Maharaja.<sup>32</sup> In this way due to his unwise methods, *Khushal Singh* deepened the famine resulting in the migration of a number of Kashmiris to Punjab.<sup>33</sup> The total picture was a devastating famine. An eyewitness account of the general devastation caused by the severity of cold, extortions by *Khushal Singh* and the great famine which followed, is contained in one of the most touching *musnavis* written by *Khazir Shah*, resident of *Bijbehara*, *nom de plume*, "*Muqbil*". He says:<sup>34</sup>

Owing to the famine cereals became scarce having been secreted by the 'godless' hoarders. The prices of eatables went up 10-15 times their normal prices...all were bundled in one shroud of hunger. To survive, therefore, they started hunger-marches to the Punjab, many having died on the way, unwept, unburied and unsung.

Another eyewitness, *Khalil Mirjanpuri*, Adds,<sup>35</sup>

Whatever has been stated above (by *Muqbil*) actually many times worse was the condition. Parents even sold their children for food.

### **Famine of 1877-79**

The disaster of 1877 was caused by continuous rains which fell from October 1877 till January 1878.<sup>36</sup> According to an eyewitness, the sky had been overcast for full five months.<sup>37</sup> In this famine there was an enormous loss of life. The loss in terms of crops would have been much lesser had the people been allowed to cut their crops on time.<sup>38</sup> The reaping operations had been delayed due to procedural difficulties.<sup>39</sup> As per the existing system of revenue collection the cultivators were allowed to cut their crops only after the revenue assessment had been made by Govt. officials. This system had always stood in the way of timely harvest. Thus the un-harvested crop was damaged by the rain.<sup>40</sup> After rice and maize were destroyed by the rains, an order was issued to sell the state stocks of Barley at Rs. 1.4.0 per *Kharwar* to the city people. However the self seeking middlemen took the advantage of the situation and bought up barley and wheat at once at this rate and afterwards retailed it at Rs. 19 per *Kharwar*.<sup>41</sup> In the spring of 1878, the new Rabi crops (wheat and Barley) and the fruits were also damaged by the heavy rains. This demoralized the people. Most of the people starved to death. Corpses were scattered

everywhere. Wells and holes were choked with dead bodies and prowling dogs played on human carcasses.<sup>42</sup> The *Gujjars* of the mountains were the heaviest sufferers. Many orphan girls were sold to the city '*Amjis*'.<sup>43</sup> The people who survived were terror-stricken and never shared their scanty stock of food with anybody. When the vegetables were finished, the hungry people took to oil-cakes and rice-chaff and this diet soon hastened the work of death.<sup>44</sup> After much devastation, some half hearted and feeble attempts were made to organize famine relief. A few almshouses were established and grain was imported from Punjab.<sup>45</sup> The imported grain was adulterated with dirt and the agency for its distribution was often corrupt. There by retailing the adulterated grain to the wealthy people at Rs. 25 per *kharwar*.<sup>46</sup> During the famine, the state added the troubles of the cultivators by issuing an order to search their houses for seed grain, there by totally demoralizing the cultivators as they knew that the state policy was to save the city at all costs from the horrors of famine.<sup>47</sup> Thus they preferred to hide their scanty grain in the damp earth or in water.<sup>48</sup> Even in the next season the starving cultivators were given only a small share of the produce as the heavy rains had once again damaged the harvest.<sup>49</sup> Thus the cultivators were not able to overcome famine in the second year also. During the famine many people tried to escape to the Punjab but were prevented by the troops to do so. However, some succeeded to migrate by bribing the troops at the passes while leaving their wives and children to starve in Kashmir.<sup>50</sup> The mortality was greatest among villagers, while shawl weavers were the chief victims of famine in the city.<sup>51</sup> According to Muslims,<sup>52</sup> Hindus being a privileged class used their official power to seize all available grain and thus there was little mortality among them from starvation. However, Lawrence states that in reality the Hindus of Kashmir consume less food than the Muslims and were used to fasts and this helped them to survive during the famine.<sup>53</sup> One authority has stated that the population of Srinagar was reduced from 127,400 to 60,000 and others say that of the total population of the valley only 2/5<sup>th</sup> survived<sup>54</sup> as the famine took away 67,400 persons from the city and 1,74,220 from the villages.<sup>55</sup>

### **Famine of 1893**

During *Pratap Singh's* reign,<sup>56</sup> in the year 1893, a great calamity struck the state in the form of two consecutive floods. As the floods approached Srinagar, the country to the south of Srinagar was converted into a vast lake.<sup>57</sup> In the month of July 1893,<sup>58</sup> the spring crops of wheat, Barley and rape-seed had been harvested but were still lying on the threshing floor. The expectations were that the autumn harvest would be that of a bumper one. But to their dismay a great flood occurred and destroyed both, harvested spring crops and standing autumn crops simultaneously. The *Jehlum* River flooded with water broke through the gate which protects the *Dal Lake* from floods and submerged the vegetable gardens in the lake,<sup>59</sup> thus destroying the vegetable

marrows, cucumbers, tomatoes, and melons which formed an Important of the citizen's diet in the month of July.<sup>60</sup> The area of *radhs* (floating gardens) thus destroyed was estimated at forty acres.<sup>61</sup> In the *Wular* area, rice and maize crops laid rotting in the flood waters.<sup>62</sup> The area of cultivable land submerged under water was estimated at 25,426 acres.<sup>63</sup> Houses along with the spring crops were carried off by the flood and the country presented a pitiable sight. In these floods 2,225 houses were wrecked and 329 cattle were killed.<sup>64</sup> It cost the state Rs. 64,804 in land revenue under crops.<sup>65</sup> The flood caused a great loss to both grain as well as the fodder.<sup>66</sup> The State started the construction of the road from *Baramula* to Srinagar as a famine relief measure after 1892. Ample work was provided to the people in the neighbourhood of Srinagar who had lost their crops in the 1892 flood. The *Mir Bahri* cultivators were exempted from beggar (forced labour) for one month to enable them to raise a fresh crop of vegetables and *Mr. Nethersole*, In-charge, Water Works Department, was instructed to offer them employment.<sup>67</sup> The *tehsildars* were issued orders to repair the irrigated channels so as to save the remaining rice crop which was almost in ears.<sup>68</sup> The state provided work for the common masses in the form of repairs of embankments and construction of water works. In every way the state acted with greatest liberality and consideration.<sup>69</sup>

### **Famine of 1901**

During the first years of 20<sup>th</sup> century (1901), the insensitiveness and carelessness of the state and the realization of entry tax (*Chongi*) octroi fee on every edible commodity entering the city had its adverse impact, the effects of the famine surfaced, every kind of corn/grain especially rice went into extinction from the market. People of the city were drenched into extreme difficulty and calamity. The grain dealers became totally inhuman and the prices of rice went from one rupee to one rupee four anna and fluctuated to Rs. four a *kharwar*. The administration did not pay any attention. The continuous rains for one week led to the flood which added to the miseries. Flood unleashed a worst spell across river *Jhelum*, *Dal*, *Wular*, etc. and thereby the people living around. The situation led to great famine. The flood consumed a heavy toll of cattle. One seer of rice was not available for the rate of one rupee. The grain dealers and hoarders were selling one or two seer of paddy behind the curtain even on higher price twice or four times than the actual price. People were sustaining themselves on tea, grass, *sag* (knol-kohl) or without food for day. The situation reached to the extent that they began to sell their properties, houses, jewellery on throw away prices for their survival. The careless government was not moved at all. They only imposed restriction on export of grain and just issued an advisory to the wealthy grain dealers to arrange grain from villages and peripheries and to distribute the same among the needy on reasonable prices. However, the water logged lands was exempted from revenue. These steps hardly mitigated the sufferings and thus were forced by the situation

to opt for begging. People resorted to the intake of ripe and raw fruits. On the recommendations of Manager Carpet Weaving, *Mr. Michel*, rationing of paddy was fixed for nine months and maize four *trak* was facilitated to per individual at one rupee. The unconcerned corrupt government officials with their cunningness took the rationing in their own hands and acted as per their sweet will of favouritism against considerations. Poor people had to suffer despite the all concessions and efforts of the government. People under the leadership of *Molvi Hussain Zerak Shah* raised their voice of protest near *Shergadi* on the banks of river Jhelum. The establishment did not like the move, termed it as a rebellion and took preventive measures and action. The army and police resorted to senseless arrests. About one thousand protestors were arrested and about three hundred people including *Molvi Hussain Zerak Shah* were sent for judicial trail and they were convicted after a summary trail and sent to jail. Only after a few days revenue minister *Gh. Ahmed Khan Munshi* passed away and *Zerak Shah* wrote a *marsia* (mourning song) and send it to his home which is translated as under,<sup>70</sup> The suppression raised its voice that the suppressor and killer of Kashmiris has reached to his destination.

### **Famine of 1929**

On 29<sup>th</sup> August 1929, the villages situated near the river banks and the whole area below Srinagar around *Sonawari* was submerged under water because of continuous rains. Whatever crops like paddy, maize, pulses, etc., stand devastated. On 4<sup>th</sup> September, a public meeting was held at *Hazooribagh*. The sincere efforts, performance and sympathy of Maharaja Bahadur in difficult times was appreciated. Thanks giving resolutions were passed for the role of Maharaja to rescue the people hit by the calamity and for taking flood preventive measures.<sup>71</sup>

To make it clear we have attempted to separately highlight the causes of *apikaal* (subsistence crisis) and *drag* (famine). Nevertheless, it would not be out of place to mention that while as due respect has been shown towards the different theoretical perspectives on the causation of food crisis especially famines, as mentioned above; and insights have been drawn from them, however, we have not let ourselves to be over swayed by any of them. Indeed our attempt has been to rationally and objectively analyse the causes of the food crisis on the basis of available evidence.

### **Societal Response**

The perpetual problem of food shortages and the occasional but inevitable crop failures, which the valley faced for centuries, produced expected response from the people to survive the challenges of extinction though the response had the limitations of the time underlined by poor technology and poverty. The social responses of common folk that undoubtedly suffered the most

from famine or *batta sakhti* (scarcity of rice meal) including thievery, flight, vagabondage, religious prayers and processions and above all consumption of alternative food stuff.

Certainly, every Kashmiris first priority was to have rice meal but when it became scarce, the people would leave no stone unturned to obtain it even if it meant selling their land or they would work in some rich peasant family in lieu of two times meals. Thus the term '*batta mohnu*' i.e., the one who sold his labour in lieu of meals. However, when obtaining rice would become absolutely impossible the people had to unwillingly raise and survive on substitute cereals or purchase them in exchange of goods. The rearing of cattle, sheep, planting of walnut, poplar and willow trees collectively called *maal* (wealth) was considered *muhimuk yar* (friend in need or problem). It is only to be expected that when faced with desperate circumstances, to either steal or starve, humans will opt for the choice that preserves their lives. There are some indications that crime was on the uprising during the famines. During the famines or scarcity of food, people used to indulge in crimes mostly related to theft of rice from the store houses (*kucheh*).<sup>72</sup>

Vagabondage or itinerant begging was largely the outcome of food shortages. People took to the road during famines under two main circumstances; either they were migrating from rural homes to urban centres where they hoped to beg for their food or they wandered out from towns and cities into the open country-side in a last ditch attempt to find anything to eat. As per Joseph Wolff:<sup>73</sup>

The country is so completely subjugated, that the natives except a few traders in shawls, are nothing better than so many beggars.

B.C. Hugel's narrates his encounter with a Brahmin, who stopped his horse, seized the bridle and demanded alms. Hugel remarks:<sup>74</sup>

The manner in which charity to sometimes is asked here shows the degree of misery and despair.

During the scarcity of 1901, the government issued an advisory to the wealthy grain dealers to arrange grain from villages and peripheries and to distribute the same among the needy on reasonable prices. However, the water logged lands was exempted from revenue. These steps hardly mitigated the sufferings and thus were forced by the situation to opt for begging<sup>75</sup>. For a Kashmiri peasant his life was a battle for survival, i.e., how to manage two times ordinary meals for himself and his family. For the cause of survival large-scale migrations to Indian Plains<sup>76</sup> used to take place. The sufferers flocked in thousands to Punjab and to Hindustan, numerous "*dying on the road, the others selling their children for a morsel of bread.*"<sup>77</sup> Lawrence gives a heart rending condition of the people of valley, who tried to escape the 1878 famine conditions. He writes:<sup>78</sup>

many attempted to escape to the Punjab...and harrowing tales are told of the fathers of families getting past the barrier by bribing the

guardians of the passes, while the wives and children were left to die in Kashmir.

Communities led by the *Ulama* organized prayers and processions to entreat God for better weather. Supernatural explanations for atmospheric disturbances of course go back to very beginning of human civilization, as did the notion that appeasing or supplicating the God in question gave humans some means of indirect control over the elements. In Kashmir, the causation and remedy of famine, plague, etc, considered by the folk exactly the same as we find in Europe. A London chronicler wrote that in 1315, the city's Churchmen to avert the famine, processed in bare feet every Friday and carried on display the host and other relics. In Paris and elsewhere in northern France similar processions occurred in which the participants were not only barefoot but completely nude, likewise carrying holy relics. Prayers and parading of relics also occurred in the region of Xanten on Germany's western border with France. Prayer unions to spiritually intercede with God on behalf of the community were established during the famine.<sup>79</sup> The peasants of Kashmir, too, were deeply steeped in conservatism and tradition. Indeed, remedy for the prevalent deficiency of irrigation was sought by the peasants in the 'Supernatural' powers of the Sayyids and Saints<sup>80</sup>. They attributed all natural and manmade calamities to the curse of God. The droughts, earthquakes, cholera, famines and the cruelty of rulers were all attributed to God. In order to get relief from these calamities, though temporarily, the peasants were made to part with their cattle wealth and the surplus amount of produce, in the shape of offerings by these Sayyids and Saints<sup>81</sup>.

How the people fought the food crisis, we have pieced together the information from oral and written sources which is reproduced below:

*During famines people used to survive upon inferior food items like the coarse food grains (pingeh, shoel). The crops could be cultivated in a short span of time for personal use. At some rare places the peasants would also cultivate Bajra and Jawar. The wild produce was also consumed like, wild Brinjal (van vangan), hapat-bazin, trumboh, kaneyat, fruit berries, nuts, etc.<sup>82</sup>*

*During the famine of 1877-79, when the vegetables were finished, the hungry people took to oil-cakes and rice-chaff<sup>83</sup> and saffron bulbs.<sup>84</sup>*

*During famines people used to flee their villages and would migrate to other areas with their cattle. The people would survive on barley (vishkeh), Ganhar, Shoel, milk, fish, berries of Mulberry, apricots and almonds during such harsh conditions. Also the domestic animals used to be the alternative source of food for survival.<sup>85</sup>*

However, after the establishment of Sikh rule, the slaughter of cow was forbidden and people found guilty of this practice were put to death.<sup>86</sup>

*Wild fruits would be the only food to feed upon during famines.<sup>87</sup>*

*I have heard from my mother that once in a famine a person brought five kilograms of rice in exchange of sheep.<sup>88</sup>*

*During my childhood, there was a period when people had nothing to eat for a year and survived on tubers of a wild grass locally known as 'Maagmuesh'.<sup>89</sup>*

*During the cultivating season (June to August) when the peasant sweat his brow his staple food was already exhausted. The only food available to him at that time used to be raw fruits, bottle guards (aleh), beans (Rajmah-hembeh), knoll-khol (hakh), and some other vegetables.<sup>90</sup>*

As per the unanimous version of the octogenarian people whom I interviewed during the field study, the produce left with the peasant by the state machinery could suffice his needs only for four to five months of the year. The rest of the year they survived on different seasonal fruits, among which the first one was mulberry fruit<sup>91</sup>. To substantiate it, there goes a proverb:

*Tula aaw teh draag drav*

[With the appearance of mulberry, famine petered out]

Other fruits that followed the mulberry were apricot, apples, pears, etc. to help the people to survive upon. Kitchen garden was another substitute for the people<sup>92</sup>.

*The Shadipora Canal was constructed during the Prime Minister-ship of Mr. G.M. Bakshi for irrigation purposes. From that period onwards rice began to be cultivated in the area. Till then only maize was cultivated and that too occasionally because of recurrent floods. So during the scarcities people survived up on berries of mulberry (tul) during spring season, on fish during summer and barley (wishkeh) during autumn.<sup>93</sup>*

*While recollecting his father's (who had died at the age of 103 in 2005) experiences, with whom he had shared a major period of his life, Wagay narrated that the area used to face recurrent floods. Then the people used to consume milk, roasted and grinded maize (Satu) as well as Wat (a preparation made of half grinded and boiled maize) as maize was the only food crop grown in the area.<sup>94</sup>*

Although milk was abundantly available to the peasant but he consumed very small part of it. The poor peasant used to make ghee out of the major share of milk and handed it over to the money-lender so as to come out of the vicious circle of indebtedness.<sup>95</sup>

*The period from spring to autumn used to be the toughest period of the year in terms of food availability. During these months we used to feed mostly on wild fruits like mulberry, Chanch, strawberry, etc. Fruit trees of soar apples (cheuk choent) and a variety of pears locally called as 'Bata Tang' (consumed in place of rice), were planted to support life during the period of food shortages.<sup>96</sup>*

The people dwelling around the lakes especially Wular survived upon Sigharas (water-nuts) for nearly 2/5 part of the year showing the scarcity people were facing. As per Moorcraft:<sup>97</sup>

Another principal article of the food of the common people, the Sinhara or water-nut, grows abundantly in the different lakes in the vicinity of the capital and especially in the Wular Lake... it constituted the almost only food of at least 30,000 persons for five months in the year.

Somehow, the people living in and around Dal Lake would manage to get fish from the waters as ban had been imposed on fishing.<sup>98</sup> As per the version of elderly people living near forests around the Dal Lake:

*they used to pluck the raw tubers of a herb locally known as 'Assud' from the forests in spring for consumption during scarcity of food. However, it could not be consumed during autumn as it released toxins on ripening*

*Apart from food grains received by the people living in Dal from state, fish and water chest-nuts (Guer Gul-harvested mostly from Wular Lake in autumn season when the water level would be very low), was transported by the boatmen of Srinagar and supplied the same to Srinagar people.<sup>99</sup>*

The stem of the Nymphaea Lotus (*Nadru* in local dialect) was an important source of food derived from the lakes. It supported 5000 persons in the city for nearly eight months<sup>100</sup>. The floating gardens also provided a rich source of survival to the people of city.

Besides the peasant's sustenance on rice gruel, vegetables, wild fruits and other sub-standard kind of diet for the major part of the year, he sometimes sold his property in lieu of paltry quantity of food<sup>101</sup>.

The winters used to be long and severe. There used to be heavy snowfalls and it was too hard to go out. No production was possible as the land used to remain under cover by snow up to four to five feet. So the only food to survive up on during winters for a peasant was whatever he had stored during summers. The food during the winters mainly constituted of pulses, dried vegetables (obtained from kitchen gardens, forests and grazing fields) and dried fruits<sup>102</sup>.

*The winters used to be long and harsh but the people were acclimatized with such conditions. We used to feed on dry vegetables like dried guards (al-hatchi), dried brinjal (wangan Hatchi), dried knoll-khol (hukh hakh), handh, etc.<sup>103</sup>*

*During winters, people mostly used to go to Punjab in search of manual job or physical work (mazuer) to eke out living. I myself had gone to Punjab twenty five times to earn livelihood. Those people who stayed in the valley took to spinning and weaving and survived upon dried vegetables, kachniel handh, hakeh kandh, posh handh and wild produce mainly different varieties of knoll-khol (pambeh*



*hakh, dij dij hakh, shranzal hakh, yendurtul hakh) and Van Pran (wild spring onion or shallot).<sup>104</sup>*

No less important means adopted by the people to survive the food crisis was to migrate to plains. Drew records his personal observation in this regard;<sup>105</sup>

When a bad year comes they (people of the valley) are put to great straits and will perhaps leave the country in number for the isolation of the place such that it is exceedingly difficult for any great importation of corn to be made to redress the failure of the harvest.

Lawrence also says that the agricultural wage labourers were engaged in agricultural pursuit only for a specific period of five months a year. Therefore, they migrated to the plains during winter months to earn their sustenance<sup>106</sup>. Girdlestone also states that very few supplemented their income by taking to weaving of woollen blankets and baskets while staying at home<sup>107</sup>. However, the condition of the peasants, labourers, or others, who visited to plains during winters for earning livelihood, was not better than the beggars as is revealed by Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah:<sup>108</sup>

My stay at Lahore, for other reasons, awakened me from the slumber and made me familiar with new spirits. I saw Kashmiri Muslims in big bands leaving their beautiful land for the hard plains of Punjab in search of livelihood. These labourers had to cross on foot the snowy mountains of Mari and Banihall and had to face thousands of odds in their way. Sometimes, while crossing the mountains, these people were perishing as a result of difficult passes, snowstorms, etc. these unfortunate people were dying unwept and unsung. It was not easy once reaching the plains; there they had to face numerous odds and worries. During the day they wandered through the streets in search of work. Some worked as wood cutters, some as helpers to the shopkeepers, some carried heavy loads on their backs while some of them did grinding. After doing hard work during the day, they earned very little money of which maximum was spent on their meals. They passed their nights either in any inn or mosque, where they were harassed like dumb driven cattle. Many a time I found some Kashmiris begging for meals. I felt ashamed and asked one of them, "Why are you begging? Don't you get any work?" the labourer replied, "Yes Sir! We definitely get it. We earn about 12 to 16 annas a day but we have to collect and save this amount because on our return we have to pay land revenue to the state, buy clothes for our children and carry some food items for our families. If we spend this money on our meals, we can't make both ends meet.

The nineteenth century sources are replete with references that the sufferers flocked in thousands to Punjab and to Hindustan, numerous:<sup>109</sup> dying on the road, the others selling their children for a morsel of bread.

Though for crossing the passes ‘*rahdari*’ (pass) was required<sup>110</sup>, yet the oppressed peasantry managed to escape through by-passes or by bribing the troops stationed at passes<sup>111</sup>. And when any famine occurred the state observed leniency and let the people to leave the land for eking out their existence elsewhere in plains<sup>112</sup>. The non-availability of food and the forced migrations during the famine of 1831 is contained in one of the most touching *musnavis* written by Khazir Shah, resident of Bijbehara, *nom de plume*, “Muqbil”:<sup>113</sup>

Owing to the famine cereals became scarce having been secreted by the ‘godless’ hoarders. The prices of eatables went up 10-15 times their normal prices...all were bundled in one shroud of hunger. To survive, therefore, they started hunger-marches to the Punjab, many having died on the way, unwept, unburied and unsung.

Another eyewitness, Khalil Mirjanpuri, Adds:<sup>114</sup>

Whatever has been stated above (by Muqbil) actually many times worse was the condition. Parents even sold their children for food.

The great famine of 1877-79 had compelled the state to abolish the *rahdari* system,<sup>115</sup> though temporarily as we find strict orders being issued by the state government even as late in 1926-27, prohibiting the migration and those who disobeyed were fined and even their private property, if any, was auctioned.<sup>116</sup> As the system was abolished peasants flocked towards the plains, which is borne by these words:

The lifting of the ban witnessed a stampede, it appeared as if a bund had suddenly collapsed, for a sea of humanity, drawn from every town and village, was moving towards the snow clad passes, on their way to the land of hope – the British India<sup>117</sup>”, and therefore, “the migration was so extensive that according to the 1891 census Report of Punjab, 1,11,775 Muslims born in Kashmir were counted as having settled in the Punjab<sup>118</sup>.” The number would have been much more had the information regarding other parts been available.

In Kashmir the sale of children had been purely an economic problem. The horrors of starvation consequent on famines had in the past compelled parents to sell their beloved children in order to save them from imminent death<sup>119</sup>. Moore’s poem had given the impression that Kashmir was a land of smouldering dark-eyed beauties. Jacquemont explained this that the lack of pretty women in Kashmir was undoubtedly because all little girls who promised to turn out pretty were<sup>120</sup> sold at eight years of age and conveyed into the Punjab and to India. Their parents sell them at from twenty to three hundred francs, most commonly fifty to sixty. The orphan girls were sold to the city *Amjis*<sup>121</sup> during the famine of 1877-79.

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# CENTRAL ASIAN WATER RESOURCES CRISES AND MANAGEMENT

Hamid Rasool

## **Abstract**

*Water has long been a major cause of conflict in Central Asian States. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have a surplus while the other three states strive for their share from the region's great rivers i.e. Syr Darya and Amu Darya, which slice across it from the Tien Shan, Pamir Mountains, and the Hindu Kush to the Aral Sea. The population in the region has increased by almost ten million since 2000, and limited arable land is being depleted by over-use and outdated farming methods. Extensive corruption and failing infrastructure take further toll, while climate change is likely to have long-term negative consequences. As economies become weaker and states more fragile, heightened nationalism, border disputes, and regional tensions complicate the search for a mutually acceptable solution to the region's water needs. A new approach that addresses water and related issues through an interlocking set of individually more modest bilateral agreements instead of the chimera of a single comprehensive one, is urgently needed. The root of the problem is the disintegration of the resource-sharing system, the Soviet Union imposed on the region until its collapse in 1991. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan provided water to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in summer and received Kazakh, Turkmen and Uzbek coal, gas and electricity in winter. The system had broken down by the late 1990s, and a plethora of bilateral and regional agreements and resolutions concluded in that decade, failed to fix it. The inadequate infrastructure, poor water management and outdated irrigation methods remain unaddressed, while the security of environment is bleaker. The unresolved water disputes accumulating day by day, if not addressed properly and promptly, can lead to almost a virtual water war in the region having its far reaching consequences. This imbalanced regional water resource endowment which make states highly interdependent, and being a cause of conflict, can be converted into a conflict resolution measure as well, if stakeholders adopt a positive approach with similar thinking frequency.*

## **Keywords**

Water Disputes, Conflict Resolution Measures, Infrastructure Projects, Water Crises, Central Asian States, Irrigation Season, Hydro-carbon Resources, Water Management, Water Energy Cooperation, River Basins, Poverty and Pollution, International Players, Cooperative Formula, Upstream-downstream Dilemma, International Trans-boarder Water Law.

## **Historical Background**

In Central Asia, water, so far, has been more a source of tension than cooperation. While there have been joint efforts to save the Aral Sea, as well as a flood of internationally introduced technical projects, states in the region have spent most of the past two decades squabbling over the use of water. The region is muddling on with outdated allocation quotas from Soviet times, and the creation of new infrastructure projects like the Rogun Dam in Tajikistan has led to diplomatic saber rattling. During the Soviet period, central planning created a “cotton belt” in the lowlands of what is now Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, irrigated through a complex system of dams, pumps, and channels using water coming from mountains in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. However, the breakup of the Soviet Union left the emerging republics of Central Asia without a regional water management strategy.

The two major regional rivers of Amu Darya and the Syr Darya discharge into the Aral Sea. During the Soviet Union era, a large part (73 percent) of the Amu Darya run-off was formed in the territory of one country, with the remaining part of the run-off coming from the territories of Afghanistan and Iran.<sup>1</sup> The Syr Darya basin was completely located within the Soviet Union. Therefore, the rivers were managed as national rivers, as the administrative borders between the Central Asian Soviet republics (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek) were considered to be provincial. Large dams and associated reservoirs were constructed in the mountainous upper reaches of the Kyrgyz and Tajik Soviet Republics to accumulate the flow of those rivers during the non-irrigation season. At the same time, irrigation systems were developed on millions of hectares of land in the lower reaches, i.e. in the Uzbek, Kazakh and Turkmen Soviet Republics. The primary goal of regulating the flow of the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya was to provide a reliable water supply for agriculture during the irrigation season (April - September). In total, 60 reservoirs with a total storage volume of 64.5 km<sup>3</sup> are found in the Aral Sea basin. The Syr Darya runoff is almost completely regulated and the flow of Amu Darya is regulated to about 80 percent. The generation of electricity at the hydropower stations of the main dams upstream (the Toktogul Dam on the Naryn, the major tributary of the Syr Darya in the Kyrgyz Soviet Republic, and the Nurek Dam on the Vaksh, one of the two major tributaries of the Amu Darya, in the Tajik Soviet Republic) played a secondary role. The electricity was generated mostly during the irrigation season, when large volumes of water were released. The bulk of the generated electricity was supplied to an electricity grid connecting Central Asia and other regions of the Soviet Union. The Amu Darya is not as regulated as the Syr Darya, but the construction of the Rogun Dam on the Vaksh, designed in the 1960s to be the highest in the world and with a large water reservoir, would allow providing a multi-year runoff regulation of this river. However, the construction of the Rogun project was not completed during Soviet times.



Water resources of the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya were allocated between many irrigation projects, some of which extended over the administrative territories of several Soviet republics, according to the quotas established by the USSR Ministry of Water Management and Land Reclamation (USSR Minvodkhoz) and the USSR State Planning Committee (USSR Gosplan) in consultation with the five republics. In 1986, basin water management organizations (BVOs) were set up for the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya basins. The BVOs were in charge of allocation of water resources in accordance with the water release schedules agreed by the republics and approved by USSR Minvodkhoz. The allocation schedules were adjusted twice a year to reflect the projected availability of water in both river basins over the next six months. At the same time, the provision of energy supplies (electricity, coal, gas, oil) arranged for by the central government to the Kyrgyz and Tajik Soviet Republics made it possible to accumulate river flow in the reservoirs during autumn and winter and not use it for hydropower generation. Water allocation arrangements in Central Asia were, thus, based on two complementary components:

- i) Water allocation quotas for each republic and every irrigation project established and strictly controlled by the USSR Government, and
- ii) Planned deliveries of energy to the Kyrgyz and Tajik Soviet Republics for use in winter.

The geopolitical situation in Central Asia changed in 1991 when the USSR collapsed and former Soviet republics proclaimed their sovereignty. As a result, the basins of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya were divided between the respective co-basin countries, and previously national rivers became trans-boundary – changing a domestic matter into an international issue. A few months after declaring their sovereignty, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan entered into their first regional agreement termed “Agreement on Cooperation in Joint Management, Use and Protection of Interstate Sources of Water Resources” signed in February 1992. This agreement confirmed the status quo of the Soviet water allocation arrangements between the countries until new modalities for water cooperation could be agreed upon. The Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) was established to implement the Agreement and has since been a stabilizing factor and focal point in the water allocation discussions on the Amu Darya and Syr Darya. However, this agreement, did not stipulate the provision of the energy supplies to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for their use over the winter, when the energy needs there in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are highest. Therefore those countries could not afford to accumulate the winter flow in the dam reservoirs, which later became the principal source of the current water problems in Central Asia. As Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have lost the previously delivered winter supplies of energy, they started to rely on their

only readily available source of energy (hydropower). In order to generate electricity at their hydropower stations, they are releasing large amounts of the water from their reservoirs during the winter. The water released in the winter cannot be used productively by the downstream countries and may cause negative effects. Winter flooding is a regular threat in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya in Kazakhstan. Flooding is also common in the Arnasai lowland in Uzbekistan as the result of spillover from the Chardarya Reservoir, located on the border between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The water stored in the Arnasai depression becomes saline and cannot be used further for any purpose.

As a result of winter water releases, much less water is available for the irrigation season, thus, jeopardizing water supply to the population and irrigated agriculture. The shortage of water in the spring-summer season has led to reduced acreages of irrigated land in the downstream countries, and a negative impact on their economy. In this situation the 1992 Agreement becomes less relevant. The water situation in Central Asia is unique, determined in particular by the fact that the main river basins were previously used and developed as national within a single state (USSR) but are presently trans boundary and shared by independent nations. In this situation, it is not easy to provide a straightforward answer as regards the determination and interpretation of the rights and obligations of upstream and downstream countries. "Helsinki Rules" the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, in force since 1996, and the global United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, not in force. International water law does provide a general legal framework for transboundary water cooperation, based on the two principal but somewhat conflicting norms: equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary water resources and the obligation of one State not to cause significant harm to another State through its use of shared water resources. It also requires that cooperation between watercourse States, with a view of attaining optimal and sustainable utilization of the shared resources, should involve consultations between the countries concerned. But if consultations do not result in an agreement, a State can in exceptional cases undertake an action without the explicit consent of its co-basin States. Should significant harm arise, various means of peaceful dispute settlement and possible compensation should be considered.

### **Relief and Rivers**

The physical geography of Central Asian states dictate its water quantity. The overall topography of the region resembles a bowl consisting of elevated grasslands surrounded by high mountain ranges that act as climatic barriers which help to create an arid climate. In the north, modern day Kazakhstan gives way to Siberia, Turkmenistan in the Southwest gives way to the deserts

of Persia, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan bound the mountains of China and Afghanistan to the East and South. The Pamir Mountains in the Southeast are some of the highest and most formidable mountains in the world. Limited precipitation in the plains, combined with high temperatures and low humidity create a “high degree of evaporation and transpiration” which draws away most of the rain that falls in the plains.<sup>2</sup> Because the bulk of the precipitation occurs in the mountains, the main water source for the entire region is runoff from melting snow and glaciers in the mountains. The Amu Darya is the longer, over 1,500 miles long, and takes in four tributaries. The river encompasses a catchment area of almost 120,000 square miles. Because melting snow provides most of its flow, the heaviest runs occur in the summer. The river’s rapid descent from the heights of the Hindu Kush produces a quick flow rate which causes erosion, delivering loads of fertile sediment all along its path. These deposited silt beds support fruitful fields along the Amu Darya’s banks which invigorate farming and irrigation. The Syr Darya, although not much smaller than the Amu Darya, catches much less water. Just over 1,400 miles long, the Syr Darya’s catchment area includes 57,950 square miles; less than half of the catchment of the Amu Darya. As with the Amu Darya, the Syr Darya originates in the mountains and flows to the plains and eventually into the Aral Sea.

The problems of increasing demand and declining supplies have been compounded by the failure of the region’s nations to work together. Under the Soviet Union, water and energy resources were exchanged freely across what were only administrative borders, and Moscow provided the funds and management to build and maintain infrastructure. Rising nationalism and competition among the five Central Asian states, has meant they have failed to come up with a viable regional approach to replace the Soviet system of management. Indeed, linked water and energy issues have been second only to extremism as a source of tension in recent years. Competition for water is increasing in Central Asia at an alarming rate, adding tension to what is already an uneasy region. Agriculture is the mainstay of the region’s economy, and thirsty crops such as cotton and rice require intensive irrigation. Water use has increased rapidly since the Central Asian states became independent in 1991 and is now at an unsustainable level. Irrigation systems have decayed so severely that half of all water never reaches crops, and several years of drought have cut available water by a fifth even as demand continues to soar. The Amu Darya and its tributaries form part of the border between the Central Asian states and Afghanistan and Afghanistan stakes a claim over water sharing.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Water management has suffered from the Soviet legacy of top-down control and general rivalries between the states. The Interstate Coordinating Water Commission (ICWC) that was set up in 1992 has failed to take into account

changing political and economic relations. It is an intergovernmental body with little transparency that focuses almost exclusively on the division of water. There is no representation from agricultural or industrial consumers, non-governmental organizations or other stake holders. Management is dominated by officials from Uzbekistan, leading to suspicions that it favours that country's national interests. This has contributed to a lack of political commitment by other countries to the commission, resulting in a serious shortage of funds. In the meantime, the individual countries have done little to contribute to the maintenance of water systems that benefit the region. Shortly after independence, the five countries agreed to maintain the Soviet-era quota system, but this has become unworkable. The civil war in Tajikistan and the decay of Kyrgyzstan's economy has meant that water-monitoring facilities have fallen into disrepair. Control and enforcement mechanisms no longer function and the various countries now often accuse each other of exceeding quotas. Turkmenistan is using too much water to the detriment of Uzbekistan, which in turn has been accused by Kazakhstan of taking more than its share. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan say that the three downstream countries are all exceeding quotas. Even within Uzbekistan, provinces have accused one another of using too much water.

Some of the most serious tensions have centered around barter agreements and payments. The upstream countries trade water to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan for energy in the form of gas, coal or power. Since energy deliveries have been unreliable, Kyrgyzstan has responded by releasing more water through its hydropower dam in winter, which results in downstream flooding and less water for summer irrigation. Attempts by Kyrgyzstan to demand payment for water have been resisted by the downstream countries. As each country has started to view the problem as a zero-sum game, it has taken steps to increase control over water, often to the detriment of the others. There is increasing uncertainty in Central Asia over plans to build new reservoirs and dams or to expand irrigation. There has been little consultation over most of these projects, leading to intensified suspicions between states. Since the fall of the Taliban in November 2001, there has been concern about the implications of efforts to rebuild agriculture in Afghanistan. Currently that country uses very little of the water from the Amu Darya but reconstruction of irrigation systems will put additional pressure on the river. Tensions over water and energy have contributed to a generally uneasy political climate in Central Asia. Not only do they tend to provoke hostile rhetoric, but they have also prompted suggestions that the countries are willing to defend their interests by force if necessary. Uzbekistan has carried out exercises that look suspiciously like practice runs at capturing the Toktogul Reservoir. The gas shortages and winter flooding that Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have inflicted on each other have a direct and widespread impact on the peoples of those countries and have the potential to inflame ethnic tensions in the Ferghana

Valley. Competition for water can only increase, and tensions will rise unless better mechanisms are put in place to manage the problems.

***i) Hydropower VS Agriculture***

Upstream-downstream antagonisms are likely to sharpen to the extent that Tajikistan and Afghanistan succeed in boosting their hydropower capacity which could be a major source of income for these poverty stricken countries. With ample hydropower potential, Tajikistan could produce almost 20 times much electricity as it currently does. The government wants to complete unfinished Soviet-era hydropower projects at Rogun and Sangtuda on the Vakhsh River, with Russian and Iranian investment. Uzbekistan worries about these developments, not only because of the potential direct impact on summer irrigation water flows (it has objected to the planned height of the Rogun dam), but also because it stands to lose income (and leverage) from selling natural gas to Tajikistan. In addition, Tajikistan's reduced dependence on imported energy could make it even less interested in coordinating water flows.

***ii) Poverty and Pollution***

Central Asia is home to a significant amount of natural resources like natural gas, oil, minerals etc. but also to great poverty. The five countries house over 53 million people, of whom at least 50% earn less than PPP\$2.15 per day. Particularly, concentrated in both population and poverty is the Ferghana Valley the small, fertile nexus of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, which experiences poverty levels between 60 to 80%. Agriculture employs 67% of Tajikistan's, 53% of Kyrgyzstan's, and 45% of Uzbekistan's labor force nationally, and much of the agriculture occurs in heavily and unsustainably irrigated land. Because the region's economy is so reliant on agricultural production, it means that the coming water troubles are all the more important to economic security. Even within the Ferghana Valley, there are significant differences in productivity by country. Much of this has to do with differences in government policies in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. In Uzbekistan, there are also government-mandated production targets for cotton and wheat that farmers even some of those not on government owned farmland are forced to grow and sell to the government. Refusal to grow the mandated crops can lead local mayors to cut off water supply to the farmers or farmers' land being taken away. Further, the Uzbek government pays such a low price for the cotton, that it sometimes does not even cover farmers' costs to grow it, and some farmers in the Ferghana Valley have taken to attempting to smuggle the cotton into Kyrgyzstan, just to earn a "living wage," causing escalation in regional tensions. Lack of economic opportunities and crackdowns on democratic freedoms that have occurred in the region encourage not only unrest. But lead to the development of fundamentalist terrorist groups. Over

the past decade Central Asian leaders and security experts worldwide have become worried about the rise of militant groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the latter of which is particularly active in the Ferghana Valley. As a result, the Government of Uzbekistan has cracked down fairly hard on perceived Islamic extremism in the Valley and there is a heavy police presence in all parts. Thus, despite the stresses on the population listed above, there is also an inhibiting force in the fact that Uzbekistan is a police state and the population is subject to strong controls on its behavior.

### ***iii) Climate Change***

Climate change will dramatically raise the water challenges in Central and South Asia through rising temperatures and drought, more variable rainfall and glacier melt, sea-level rise, as well as changes to the monsoon cycle. As per an estimate, the middle of the century, increasing temperatures and growing water stress may lead to a 30% reduction in crop yields in the region. In Central Asia, climate impact will be felt in terms of reduced rainfall and runoff, leading to increased heat stress, drought and desertification, thus, amplifying the region's existing problems. A 2009 Asian Development Bank Report bleakly concludes: "It is difficult to see anything other than an increase in migration in the region as climate change adds to economic, social, and political pressures." Yet no mitigation and adaptation strategies are in place which can tackle the weather variability and its drastic consequences. The melting of the Hindu Kush-Karakorum-Himalaya glaciers will have serious consequences for hundreds of millions of people. The warming trend in these mountain ranges has been much greater than the global average. As a result of rising temperatures, more precipitation falls as rain instead of snow, will lead to shrinking of glaciers. Two-thirds of the Himalayan glaciers are reported to be receding. Glaciers in Tajikistan have shrunk by a third in the second half of the 20th century. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) a regional knowledge development and learning centre warns: "It is not unlikely that this will appear as a positive, comforting sign, deterring and delaying required emergency initiatives." However, receding and eventually disappearing high-altitude reservoirs of snow and ice will over time reduce downstream runoff, and increase its variability. As the water flow declines, it compromises hydropower generation. In the agricultural sector, the result is falling production of foodstuffs and commodities like cotton, which in turn may lead to growing poverty and social disparities, escalating rural-urban migration, and rising food prices in cities. There is also potential for conflict between up and downstream states.

Climate change is also expected to cause significant changes to monsoon patterns and increase unpredictability. While much of South, East, and South-East Asia may see increased intensity of these storms and greater rainfall by century's end, for most parts of Pakistan and southeastern Afghanistan a

reduction in precipitation of up to 20% is projected.

***iv) Water Energy and International Players***

Central Asia's hydropower resources are the object of ongoing great power rivalries among Russia, the United States, China, and India. The United States has sought to turn Central Asia into a supplier of electricity in South Asia, limiting Russian influence; India is keen to secure energy supplies from Central Asia. Within the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) that dominates, Russia, attempted to create a Central Asian hydropower consortium to govern the region's inter-connected water and energy problems. However, Uzbekistan's withdrawal from the EAEC in 2008 undermined these plans. Because it groups together Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia and China (with India and Pakistan as observers and Afghanistan as an invited guest). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), in principle, could play an important role in addressing the water and energy challenges of Central and South Asia. At the October 2008 SCO summit the issue was overshadowed, however, by efforts to address the impacts of the world financial crisis. In relations between Pakistan and India, the bilateral Indus Water Treaty represents a valuable core mechanism for consultation and conflict resolution. When the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was established in the 1980s, contentious topics like water were excluded from its mandate. But the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) does address water issues in the context of transborder environmental problems in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas region (including, among others, Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan).

***v) Facilitation of Water-energy Cooperation***

Most of Central Asian sub-region is embedded in the Aral Sea basin, stretching from what is left of the Aral Sea in the west to the melting glacial "water towers" in the east. The two main rivers of the region, which flow from east to west, are the Syr Darya to the north and the Amu Darya to the south. The former runs from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through Uzbekistan to the northern Aral Sea in Kazakhstan; the latter flows from Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan, along the latter's border with Afghanistan, through Turkmenistan and finally into the southern Aral Sea in Uzbekistan. These two rivers provide the main source for drinking water, irrigation, and hydropower in the region. A major legacy of the Soviet era in Central Asia was the creation of an electricity-water nexus, whereby the generation of electricity from hydropower in upstream countries was linked to the water needs of those downstream. This system operated in the context of a common management system and shared energy arrangements through regional energy grids and networks. However, this system ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the overnight emergence of international borders. Water was increasingly seen as a national

asset rather than a common resource, and the transition to commercial prices for the supply of hydrocarbons to upstream countries (formerly delivered freely as compensation for irrigation water) presented major difficulties for their economies.

There are several organizations involved in the development of water cooperation in the region. The International Fund for the Saving of the Aral Sea (IFAS) founded by the regional Presidents, is the only cooperative structure that includes all five countries. It is a well established structure with branches in each member country, and enjoys the political support at the highest level as the President of each member country serves in turn as Chairman of the body. IFAS provides all its officials with diplomatic privileges and its funding comes from the national budgets of the participating countries. The member countries have pledged to allocate a proportion of their respective GDP to IFAS. In facilitation of Water-energy Cooperation there are several organizations involved in the development of water cooperation in the region.

## **Conclusion**

Central Asian states play a key role in Eurasian geopolitics, because the region is located between East and West, Islam and Christianity, so any small conflict in the region has the potential to spread into more widespread conflict. Resource distribution and allocation exists as a potential catalyst to a conflict; one that could explode into much larger war. The United States policy to prevent regional conflict and state failure applies directly to this situation; however, the possibility of conflict surrounding access to water has not received the attention it deserves. By detailing the Tsarist water policies followed by Soviet and now independent Central Asian policies the unfilled gaps in proposed arrangement have led to a series water disputes. The international community particularly the United Nations, the OSCE, and the European Union has sought to mediate the dispute and find ways to balance the power and water needs of the region. Potential solutions have involved rebuilding cooperative management arrangements, increasing efficiency initiatives in water use, water pricing, and the development of alternative means to generate electricity through a series of much smaller dams. But most of these efforts have shown few results. While de-escalation is needed in the short term, a new comprehensive and fair agreement for sharing water resources that includes Afghanistan also is badly needed. Public participation in the formulation of agreements, as well as new, more inclusive forms of governance PDF, could lead to a long-term settlement. But in the end, it will depend on the political will and readiness of Central Asia's leaders to find a common solution. The Aral Sea cannot be revived, but a more sustainable use of water for drinking and irrigation, to generate energy as well as to better support water ecosystems can be achieved by improving water management even in a perspective of a possibly decreasing access to water due to climate



change. To achieve this, improved cooperation and trust between the countries of the region is essential. The water and energy conflicts in the region cannot be resolved without a willingness from all sides to review their respective positions. Water and energy issues are tightly interconnected in Central Asia. The shortage of alternative energy supplies over the winter in the upstream countries leads to excessive use of water for hydropower. As a result there is a shortage of water over the irrigation period in the downstream countries. Only when the upstream countries have enough energy supplies to at least partly substitute their hydropower generation over the winter season, this vicious circle is likely to be broken. The hydrocarbon resources downstream are, at least in theory, a positive factor, as there are some resources available for investment to improve efficiency of water use and to diversify the economy, as well as to use for exports on favorable terms to upstream countries. Given political view, the imbalanced water resource structure endowed by CAS often leading to inter-state as well as intra-state conflict, can be converted into effective conflict resolution measure which will be in the interest of all stake holders. The basic principle involved in this cooperative formula sounds a genuine humanitarian approach.

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# ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

## AN ANALYSIS OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES

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### Abstract

*Energy is critical, directly or indirectly, in the entire process of evolution, growth and survival of all living beings and plays a vital role in the socio-economic development and human welfare of a country. It is seen as a 'strategic commodity' and any uncertainty about its adequate availability can threaten normal functioning of an economy, predominantly those which are developing. Realizing the energy security in its strategic sense, is of fundamental importance not only to economic growth but also for the human development objectives that aims at the alleviation of poverty, unemployment and meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus, energy is thought 'the lifeblood of modern economies' as there exists a strong link between the energy consumption and economic growth. Central Asian countries comprising Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are among those countries which are blessed with significant energy resources. In view of their existing potential, the harnessing of energy wealth in these Central Asian countries will not only fulfill their domestic demand but also leave a large share for export. In order to sustain the long run growth, the Central Asian Countries known for inefficient energy consumption pattern have to bring efficiency and spend judiciously the earnings realized through surplus energy exports. For maintaining and enhancing energy exports, they should also invest in areas of renewable energy like solar and wind. Importantly, in view the vital and crucial role of energy in the process of economic growth, and the link between energy consumption and real output for five Central Asian countries suggests that inefficient energy consumption pattern, if continues, may negatively effects their economic growth which eventually would results a fall in income and employment. Thus, according to the results, Central Asian countries would be in large profit by adopting energy conservation policy to avoid any kind of energy shortages. In this backdrop, the present study has been undertaken to study the energy consumption pattern of Central Asian countries and suggest for the pattern, which is efficient and sustainable. However, the study is delimited to hydrocarbon and hydropower of five Central Asian States.*

### Keywords

Energy Conversation, Energy Consumption, Energy Supply and Demand, Economic Growth, Labour, Capital, Land, Strategic Commodity, Central Asian States, Hydrocarbon, Hydropower.

## **Introduction**

Energy is the engine of economic growth, as all production and consumption activities involve energy as basic input<sup>1</sup>. On the production side, conventionally, economists since Adam Smith have talked about land, labor, and capital as major inputs for economic activity. These inputs were significant ingredients of agrarian economies of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, in 20<sup>th</sup> century, the growth of industrial nations has observed a fourth major input i.e., energy. On consumption side, in the John Maynard Keynesian framework where consumption and income are significantly correlated, similarly energy consumption in all forms drives economic productivity. It leads to economic growth and prosperity which ensures expansion of the economy in terms of higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and GDP per capita. Economic growth and prosperity, however, does not simply depend upon the availability of energy input, but how energy be utilized. In the current global competitive atmosphere, it is the judicious use of resource which matters and same is true of energy input.

Conspicuously energy consumption and economic growth are interrelated in two respects as energy is consumed for two purposes. One, it is a production input and the other, is one of the important means of human comforts. As a production input it is a causeway to development process. An increase in its consumption means a higher level of economic activity and greater production of goods and services and vice versa. As a means of providing comforts it is necessary fallout/outcome of development<sup>2</sup> process. Such a relationship between energy use and economic growth are often exposed in terms of the relations between energy consumption to gross domestic product or E/GDP ratio or energy intensity. However, the main aim of this study is to testify whether energy consumption (EC) leads to economic growth or economic growth causes the energy consumption.

Importantly the growing pattern of global economic development has influenced the whole world so much so that energy security has emerged as one of the major developmental goals of any nation whether it is in the economic *Take off Stage*<sup>3</sup> or has reached the Stage of *High Mass Consumption* (Walt Whitman Rostow).<sup>4</sup> Without having sufficient energy resources “nations can neither initiate the process of economic growth and development nor sustain it for long”.<sup>5</sup> It is because of this realization of the importance of energy security that nations all over the world are now developing sophisticated and appropriate *technology* to harness both the renewable and non-renewable *sources of energy*. While doing so these nations are not only involved domestically but also externally through bilateral and multilateral ties in their immediate and extended neighborhoods as well as in the far off regions and continents. However, nearer the source of energy to a country, the greater is comparative advantage in actualizing that resource potential.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years, as the list of countries among the emerging economies

category are increasingly characterized by high rates of economic growth, which has also led to difficulties in achieving a sound balance between demand and supply of energy resources necessary to maintain their national economic growth and development. Although, they are trying hard to arrive at an appropriate energy mix, increase in their energy efficiency and diversify their sources of supply and the question of maintaining a stable supply of fossil fuels continue to pose several security challenges. One is to boost one's own production, another to diversify one's sources of import, and a third to secure the transportation of hydrocarbons (oil and natural gas) on vulnerable sea routes or overland through pipelines that depend on long-term strategic relationships with the producing countries. This may result in the formation of such a system of mutual relations in the world that in totality of its volume and scope may most effectively serve the interests of both the manufacturers of energy resources as well as their consumers.<sup>7</sup> However, Central Asia,<sup>8</sup> a land locked region, bestowed with vast energy resources especially hydrocarbon reserves. It also possesses a significant and diversified resource base for its power industry although resources are unevenly spread throughout the region. Apart from vast volumes of proven recoverable resources of hydrocarbon raw materials, the region has huge hydropower capacity, large deposits of uranium and favorable conditions for the development of nonconventional renewable energy. A large part of proven recoverable oil reserves are found in Kazakhstan, natural gas in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is the hub of hydropower resources. The energy sector holds an important place in the economies of this region as it provides required fuel to the respective economies and surplus energy for export.<sup>9</sup>

Notably energy plays an important role both on the demand and the supply sides of the economy. On the demand side, energy is one of the products which a consumer decides to buy to maximize his utility. On the supply side, energy is the critical factor of production in addition to labour, capital and other raw materials. Energy is considered to be the crucial element in the socio-economic development of a country as it helps to improve the living standards of the society through the increase in economic growth. This implies that there is a causal link running from energy consumption to economic growth. However, the 1970s energy crisis attracted the analysts to investigate the relationship between the energy consumption and economic growth, as it was argued that energy consumption directly causes GDP growth. Since, the end of 1970s, many studies<sup>10, 11, 12</sup> have been conducted to support the arguments which suggest that energy use was positively correlated with GDP growth. But empirical evidence is varying and conflicting about direction of causality, whether economic growth leads to energy consumption or energy use boosts up the GDP growth.

Predominantly, if causality runs from energy consumption (EC) to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) then it implies that an economy is energy

dependent and hence energy is a stimulus to economic growth.<sup>13</sup> Shortage of energy may negatively affect the economic growth or may cause poor economic performance leading to a reduction of income and employment. On the other hand, if causality runs from Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to energy consumption (EC), this implies that economy is not energy dependent, and hence energy conservation policies may be implemented without adverse effects on economic growth and employment.<sup>14</sup> Bidirectional causality indicates that both energy consumption and high level of economic activity mutually persuade each other. If there is no causality between energy consumption and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), implies that energy conservation policies may pursue without affecting the economy.<sup>15</sup> The existence of relationship between real output, energy consumption, capital and labour, has now been implementing autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model to examine the long-run and short-run relationship between the real output, energy consumption, capital and labour of all the Central Asian countries.

### **Database and Methodology**

The present work is primarily based on secondary sources of data; therefore, the data has been collected from publications of the prestigious international organizations such as, International Energy Agency (IEA), Energy Information Administration (EIA), British Petroleum Statistical Review of World Energy (BP), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (IBRD). Also the information has been used from various reliable journals, international reports and published books. The data thus, collected has been analyzed and interpreted and inferences have been drawn with the help of following statistical tool of analysis know as Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) Model. This model has been applied to examine the long-run and short-run relationship between the real output, energy consumption, capital and labour by the given equation of the model for all the Central Asian countries:

$$Y_t = \phi_0 + \sum_{i=1}^k \phi_1 y_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \phi_2 enr_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \phi_3 k_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \phi_4 l_{t-i} + \eta_t$$

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***Kazakhstan***

The results (table-1) reported in the case of Kazakhstan suggest that energy, capital and labour exerted positive impact on real output. However, the relative impact of labour and capital is more on the output. The magnitude of energy is equal to (0.19) which is low as compared to the magnitude of labour (0.37), but higher than the magnitude of capital (0.05) in the long-run. The short-run impact of energy growth is significant and more in terms of size as compared to capital, while the short-run impact of energy is less

than that of labour. This implies that in the short-run labour and energy are the key factors playing a dominant role in enhancing economic growth in Kazakhstan. The error-correction coefficient is -0.79 which is highly significant suggesting the existence of long-run causality running from energy to economic growth. Furthermore, in the short-run the coefficient of energy is positive and significant, indicating that the presence of causality running from energy to economic growth. This result has important policy implications that Kazakhstan's economy is energy dependent and the shortage of energy would adversely affect its economic growth and employment. Presently, Kazakhstan faces the wastage of energy given their technologic knowhow. In June 2015 its demand for primary energy was equal to 58.1(BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2015, p. 41) million tons of oil equivalent(mtoe) while supply has been equal to 157.8(BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2015, pp. 3-32) mtoe and the surplus stood the republics at 99.7 mtoe respectively. This surplus could give more push to the sustainable growth process if the wastage could be controlled through the energy efficiency.

**Table-1**  
**Long – run and Short – run Estimates of Energy Consumption**  
**and Real GDP of Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan	Long-run estimates				
	$y_t = 0.19enrg_t + 0.05k_t + 0.37l_t + 0.07trend.$				
	(5.05)*	(1.56)	(8.43)*	(11.33)*	
	Short-run estimates				
	$\Delta y_t = 0.09enrg_t + 0.05\Delta k_t + 0.37\Delta l_t + 0.03\Delta trend - 0.79Ecm_{t-1}$				
	(4.31)*	(1.53)	(4.69)*	(5.29)*	(-6.01)*
	$\overline{R}^2 = 0.89$		$F - Statistic = 13.17$		
$S.E. = 0.07Dorbin - Watson = 5.37$					

*Note: \* indicate significant at 5% level of significance*

### ***Turkmenistan***

In the case of Turkmenistan both energy and capital has been positively related to real output in the long-run(table-2). However, capital remained the dominant factor in determining the output in the long-run as indicated by the size of the coefficients of the energy (0.39) and capital (0.75). However, in the short-run energy (0.89) has positive and strong impact on growth and the relative impact of energy consumption has more than the real capital stock. The key ingredient of economic growth in Turkmenistan has been the energy and capital stock (0.57). But, labour plays a minor role in the economic growth process in Turkmenistan. The error-correction (-0.79) term was negative and significant supporting the evidence of long-run causality between economic growth and the energy. The coefficient of energy is positive and significant in the short-run also support the presence of short-run causality between energy and growth. This result suggests that Turkmen economy is heavily energy dependent. In fact, the gap between energy consumption and energy production has been consistently increasing.

**Table-2**  
**Long – run and Short – run Estimates of Energy Consumption and Real GDP of Turkmenistan**

Turkmenistan	Long – run estimates			
	$y_t = 0.39enrg_t + 0.001l_t + 0.75k_t + 0.07trend$			
	$(5.53)^* \quad (2.62)^{**} \quad (1.31)$			
	Short-run estimates			
	$\Delta y_t = 0.89\Delta enrg_t + 0.57\Delta k_t + 0.002l_t + 0.007\Delta trend - 0.79Ecm_{t-1}$			
	$(4.33)^* \quad (3.83)^* \quad (0.97) \quad (-3.04)$			
	$R^2 = 0.77$		$F - Statistic = 6.13$	
	$S.E. = 0.09Dorbin - Watson = 7.23$			

*Note: \*, \*\* Indicate significant at 5% level of significance*

### **Uzbekistan**

The results (table-3) suggest that both energy consumption and capital exerted positive impact on real output and the impact of energy is relatively higher. This result suggests that real GDP and energy consumption has been significantly interrelated and the shortage of energy may retard economic growth process. Surprisingly labour effect on real output was negative in the long-run. This could be due to the large proportion of old and underage population not able to work. Although, labour plays a significant role in Uzbekistan's economic development, but the large share of children and old people offset the positive impact of labour.

**Table-3**  
**Long – run and Short – run Estimates of Energy Consumption and Real GDP of Uzbekistan**

<b>Uzbekistan</b>	<b>Long-run estimates</b>				
	$y_t = 3.89inpt + 0.69enrg_t + 0.32k_t - 0.17l_t + 0.05trend$				
	(2.20)*	(4.84)**	(3.84)*	(-2.81)**	(7.77)*
	<b>Short-run estimates</b>				
	$\Delta y_t = 1.01\Delta inpt + 0.37\Delta enrg_t + 0.33\Delta k_t + 3.15\Delta l_t + 0.11\Delta trend - 0.71Ecm_{t-1}$				
	(2.03)**	(2.81)**	(6.58)**	(3.41)*	(3.88)*
	$R^2 = 0.89$		$F - Statistic = 19.71$		
	$S.E. = 0.17$		$Durbin - Watson Test = 3.34$		

*Note: \*, \*\* Indicate significant at 5% level of significance*

In the short-run energy, capital and labour play a positive role in boosting the real output. The coefficient of energy(0.37) has been relatively low as compared to the coefficient of labour (3.15) and capital stock(0.33), implying that labour play dominant role in the process of development in the short-run. This result has very important implications for Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan reconsiders its employment policy and concentrates not only on the development of energy sector but also takes necessary measures to improve the quality of labour force. The error-correction coefficient(-0.71) is found negative and significant supporting the evidence for the existence of long-run causality between real output, energy consumption and other factors entering in the model the causality has been running from energy to real output. The



significance of the coefficient of energy consumption in the error-correction equation implies the existence of causality running from energy consumption to real output in the short-run. Thus, in order to enhance economic growth, the authorities need to further develop the energy sector and improve the quality of labour force.

### Tajikistan

In case of Tajikistan, it has been found that there has been positive evidence with respect to the relationship between real output and energy consumption, capital and labour (table-4). The impact of labour is higher than the impact of energy and capital on real output in the long-run. In short-run, energy and labour growth play a significant role in the promotion of domestic productivity. The significance of the error-correction term and the energy consumption coefficient in the error-correction equation supports the evidence of long-run as well as short-run causality between economic growth and energy consumption. Development of the energy sector is seen very vital for the enhancement of economic growth in Tajikistan.

**Table-4**  
**Long – run and Short – run Estimates of Energy Consumption and Real GDP of Tajikistan**

Tajikistan	<b>Long-run estimates</b>			
	$y_t = 0.79enrg_t + 0.81k_t + 5.16l_t + 0.51trend$			
	(3.07)*	(6.52)*	(10.03)*	(2.39)**
	<b>Short-run estimates</b>			
	$\Delta y_t = 0.73\Delta enrg_t + 0.17\Delta k_t + 2.78l_t + 0.11\Delta trend - 0.69Ecm_{t-1}$			
	(2.84)*	(0.91)	(3.98)*	(2.15)*
	F – Statistic = 7.59			
	Dorbin – Watson test = 3.67			
	$\bar{R}^2 = 0.79$			
	S.E. = 0.07			

Note: \*, \*\* Indicate significant at 5% level of significance

### Kyrgyzstan

In case of Kyrgyzstan (table-5), it has been found that there has been positive evidence with respect to the relationship between real output and energy consumption, capital and labour. The impact of labour is seen higher than the impact of energy and capital on real output in the long-run. In short-run, energy and labour growth play a significant role in the promotion of domestic productivity. The significance of the error-correction term and the energy consumption coefficient in the error-correction equation supports the evidence of long-run as well as short-run causality between economic growth and energy consumption. Development of the energy sector seems very vital for the enhancement of economic growth in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

**Table-5**  
**Long – run and Short – run Estimates of Energy Consumption**  
**and Real GDP of Kyrgyzstan**

<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Long-run estimates</b>				
	$y_t = 0.53enrg_t + 0.27k_t + \mathbf{3.12}l_t + 0.15trend$				
	(2.04)*	(5.34)*	(8.07)*	(1.27)**	
	<b>Short – run estimates</b>				
	$\Delta y_t = 0.71\Delta enrg_t + 0.32k_t + \mathbf{1.69}l_t + 0.03\Delta trend - 0.59cm_{t-1}$				
	(2.13)*	(0.19)	(3.79)*	(2.75)*	(-3.32)*
	$R^2 = 0.61$ $F - Statistic = 5.59$				
	$S.E. = 0.39$ <i>Dorbin – Watson</i> = 5.31				

*Note: \*, \*\* Indicate significant at 5% level of significance*

## Conclusion

Energy, no doubt, has attained the status of a ‘strategic commodity’ and any uncertainty about its supply can threaten the functioning of the entire world economy, including economies like Central Asian countries. Central Asia’s substantial and sustained economic growth is, however, placing enormous demand on its energy resources. The demand and supply imbalance in energy sources is pervasive requiring serious efforts by government of these countries to augment energy supplies as Central Asia may face possible severe energy supply constraints given their consumption pattern. Energy requirements in this region has been increasing at a very rapid rate. Achieving energy security in this strategic sense is of fundamental importance not only to their economic growth but also for their human development objectives that aim at alleviation of poverty, unemployment and meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In view of the vital and critical role of energy in the process of economic growth, it was revealed proved that there is strong link between energy consumption and real output for five Central Asian countries including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The overall results suggest that the economy of each country is energy dependent and the apprehensions of energy shortage may negatively effect the economic growth which eventually results a fall in income and employment. Thus, according to the results, Central Asian countries would be largely benefited to adopt energy conservation policy to avoid the energy shortage. Shortfall in energy would otherwise seriously endanger the growth and development of these economies in the long run. Thus, it is quite important that along with high energy consumption, the energy production raises to that extent to ensure sustained economic growth.

From the above analyses and discussion, it could be safely concluded that in order to achieve rapid and stable economic growth, Central Asian countries should devise and adopt a sound policy of energy sector development. Besides, they should also look at other strengths of their economies. For instance,

Uzbekistan having large young population should take care of labour force upgradation. In Turkmenistan labour plays a little role in the development process. Hence, Turkmenistan being rich in hydrocarbons, should take necessary measures to utilize cheap and surplus labour in most efficient way in the process of economic development, besides the development of energy sector. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan should accelerate their rate of capital accumulation. All these initiatives and policies should be pursued in a systematic manner so as to bring economic growth and development in all these Central Asian countries on sustainable basis.

## **References & Notes**

1. Energy is an important production factor and, therefore, should be managed in parallel with land, labour and capital. Here, energy refers two types, i.e. hydrocarbons and hydropower of Central Asian countries, namely, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It is known as bedrock of modern development. The successful deployment of energy carriers in the services of humanity since the last part of the 18th century has greatly altered the way. There is hardly any aspect of modern life that does not have the imprint of energy input, be it entertainment, recreation, agriculture, commerce, industry, transport, education, communication, health, architecture etc. As the very basis of development, energy use is closely related to the level of productivity in the industry, commerce, agriculture and even in office activities. Energy consumption per capita is one of the indicators or benchmarks for measuring the standard of living. The unprecedented use of energy which began with the industrial revolution certainly brought about massive increase in productivity and change in lifestyle.
2. Development implies that the standard of living is rising and people live in greater comfort (if not happiness) than before. Unless more energy is allowed to be consumed, the objective of providing a comfortable living cannot be fulfilled.
3. This is the crucial stage which covers a relatively brief period of two to three decades in which the economy transforms itself in such a way that economic growth subsequently takes place more or less automatically. "The take-off" is defined as "the interval during which the rate of investment increases in such a way that real output per capita rises and this initial increase carries with it radical changes in the techniques of production and the disposition of income flows which perpetuate the new scale of investment and perpetuate thereby the rising trend in per capita output." Thus, the term "take-off" implies three things: first the proportion of investment to national income must rise from 5% to 10% and more so as to outstrip the likely population growth; secondly, the period must be relatively short so that it should show the characteristics of an economic revolution; and thirdly, it must culminate in self-sustaining and self-generating economic growth. Thus, during the take-off stage, the desire to achieve economic growth to raise the living standards dominates the society. Revolutionary changes occur in both agriculture and industry and productivity levels sharply increase. There is greater urbanization and urban labour force increases. In a relatively short period of a decade or two, both the basic structure of the economy and social and political structure is changed so that a self-sustaining growth rate can be maintained. It is worth noting that in the opinion of W. W. Rostow, the rise of

- new elite (i.e. new entrepreneurial class) and establishment of a nation state are crucial for economic development.
4. In this stage of development per capita income of country rises to such a high level that consumption basket of the people increases beyond food, clothing and shelters to articles of comforts and luxuries on a mass scale. Further, with progressive industrialization and urbanization of the economy values of people change in favour of more consumption of luxuries and high styles of living. New types of industries producing durable consumer goods come into existence which satisfies the wants for more consumption. These new industries producing durable consumer goods become the new leading sectors of economic growth.
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  8. Refers here the republics of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.
  9. Energy is one of the Central Asia's crucial resources and the region intends to harness this potential as an integral part of its economic development. The development of energy sector is expected to usher in huge economic benefits in the form of infrastructure development, industrialization and huge revenue. With the increase in hydrocarbons and generation of hydropower and improvement in energy efficiency in Central Asia, the republics of the region aims not only to provide domestic energy at affordable cost; but also turn into a net energy exporter in near future. These energy rich republics of the Central Asia have a large scope to transform their economies with the proper development and use of then energy sector.
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# PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

## NEED AND EVOLUTION

S . Showkat Dar

### **Abstract**

*Peace is needed to perform pacific deeds for blooming truth, love, harmony, happiness, and cooperation among humans across the ethnic, racial, religious, and national borders to work with each other. While as war is needed to feed the greed of political gods and to serve their emotional utopia by pouring human blood in conflicts and wars. In this response, the evolution of peace and conflict studies (PACS) as an academic discipline isto explore knowledge associated with the causes of war, conflict and sustainability of peace. The foundational objectives of the subject is to search for peaceful, profitable and dignified approaches through pedagogy, research and practice, by using appropriate methods and diverse stance in preventing, transforming, managing and resolving conflicts among citizens and states. In this general line of analysis, the article outlines the disciplinary evolution of peace and conflict studies in the broader context. In particular, it explores the need as well as situations and scenarios through which the discipline has emerged and has developed its scholarship through various phases.*

### **Keywords**

Conflict Analysis, Conflict Resolution, War, Violence, Pacifisms, International Relations, Peace Research, Misuse of Scientific Knowledge, Peaceful Co-existence, Non-violence.

The gravity of sufferings and painful life experienced by living generations after war, is evident in the war effected areas. Wars drain huge regional budgets towards defence at the cost of social security. some of the shadows of pain as a result of war is visualised as:

*Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber equates a modern brick school in more than 30 cities (Dwight, D. Eisenhower, 1963).*

It is our responsibility to stand for projection of peace, train our minds, and encourage civilized and dignified approaches of peace and conflict based on the description of reality rather than the convenience of our hearts. For centuries, democracy achieved something and has replaced the dictatorship,

but has failed in bringing peaceful international relations. Social and political thinkers have explored a catalogue of theories and concepts to understand the conflict, its causes, consequences, and contexts during pre-war situations but still none have worked effectively in the abolition of wars. Peace is in transition, and has not replaced the wars and those who are engaged to develop scholarship in the universe of peace are actually working against conflicts and wars. However, wars are still on the top priorities of states; investment in strategizing wars through scientific knowledge for killing of life and destruction of its survival is still recognized as an admired profession. There are more people engaged in the development of the weapons of mass destruction rather than peace construction at institutional and organizational level. The war followers put efforts and build nuclear weapons for destruction which has rendered peace in the poor construction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is high time to employ the knowledge for propagation of peace and conflict studies to divorce the conflicts and wars by investing in peace fair and development rather than warfare and destruction, particularly, keeping in view the imminent risk of a nuclear war.

Since the creation of the nation state system in 1648, there have been hundreds of wars in human history with immense loss happening in the form of millions of human deaths and damage of property worth billions. We have survived two World Wars - 1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945, and have lost more than 60 to 70 million people. The massive killings and destruction of these wars was expressed in the growth of peace and anti-war sentiments which appealed to the intellect of many scholars across the disciplines to initiate peaceful international relations. Their main drive was to spread the culture of peace through research and develop new perspectives on peace and conflict and explore the causes and consequences of various forms of conflict. In addition, they devised the means for constructively addressing conflict with nonviolent approaches. This has brought out a new academic discipline, known by various names as peace research, conflict analysis, conflict resolution, but commonly called peace and conflict studies PACS. In this context, the term peace is used as a basic or minimum condition for cooperation and conflict as the primary level of causes of war and violence.

Peace and conflict studies is one of the fast emerging interdisciplinary subjects in the academic universe of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The subject is the outcome of sagacity that it is not necessary that human decisions and resources should be invested in mutual destruction by engaging millions of humans in fighting wars and killing one another. The decisions and resources should be devoted for mass construction by peaceful means of dialogues, negotiations and reconciliations. This approach is effective and productive in converting hostility into a peaceful society in national and international relations. It is a challenging issue before the world community that how to encourage states to use the decisions for peace in warlike situations. It is not a new concern

as peace and war are born twins in human relations and one is as old as the other. But war is a greater threat to the human life and has swallowed millions of lives throughout the course of human history. This discourse has directed the intellectuals to develop scholarship on the issues of peace and conflict in national and international relations. This approach has led to the emergence of peace and conflict studies as a subject of the essence in the Western world. The main intention of developing this cross-disciplinary subject is to promote understanding of the disastrous consequences of war and violence by evaluating and measuring the sufferings of war. In this context, it is essential to put the discipline in a conceptual framework to figure out the phases of evolution of the subject in an organized structure.

### **Origin and Evolution of Peace and Conflict Studies**

There are various narratives about the evolution of peace and conflict studies as how it emerged as an academic discipline across the globe. All narratives are integrated in developing the scholarship of the discipline of peace and conflict studies. The primary considerations of the discipline are rooted in religious texts, diverse ideas of “pacific philosophy” and other catastrophic wars of the twentieth century. Together all these factors have created a cognizance to construct a body of knowledge for making peace superior than the wars in pursuit of a dignified life at societal and global level. In this debate, wisdom dictates that peace being the total wellness and conflict as illness of life should be communicated loudly to discharge violence through institutionalization. It is evident that peace is good and one of the most cherished human values, which although difficult to attain, but yet important for biological and cultural survival. Consequently, this leads to the emergence of peace and conflict studies.

In this understanding, peace is viewed as a perception towards the surroundings, primarily focusing on happiness, harmony, safety, and goodness as well as tension free state of affairs in every facet of life. On the contrary, active conflict replaces peace, and produces deaths and destruction of life. Therefore, work for peace and development exclusively indicates ‘work against conflict’ and destruction<sup>1</sup>. In this context, peace and conflict studies, as an academic discipline, is more inclined towards the philosophy of pacifism with the belief that wars are bad and destructive, and the affirmation that peace is good which is not difficult to attain. Peace and conflict are two different and opposite state of affairs with different physical, material and cultural outcomes. Their existence is like light and shadow, day and night. I would prefer to relate peace and conflict with two opposite conditions and situations as wellness and illness.<sup>2</sup> Peace is societal wellness and conflict is societal illness with one eliminating the other. The key argument arises here that peace and conflict are two different and opposite situations but then why should we study them together? This intellectual query can be responded with

the fact that peace as societal wellness and conflict as societal illness, are inseparable in understanding its causes, effects and subsequent consequences thereafter. Therefore, the study of peace without understanding the causes and consequences of conflict is a disorganized and unproductive approach. Similarly, a study of conflict without aspirations for peace is thoughtless.

Hypothetically, the two situations are integrated and mutually dependent on theoretical and empirical methods of assumptions, observations and experiments. In times of peace (wellness), society needs to build knowledge for its sustainability and prevent the causes of conflict (illness) or if conflict (illness) occurs, the peaceful methods of conflict prevention, transformation, management and resolution should be available before it will turn to war and produce violence. The fact is that understanding of conflict will deter the disputants from breaking the peace and making wars or what British strategic thinker Basil Liddell Hart once wrote that ‘if you want peace, understand war’.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the two situations cannot be thought-out separately which make it important for diagnostic reasons to study them together in one discipline. The discipline of peace and conflict studies is known by various names including conflict analysis and resolution, peace and human rights etc. Keeping in view this analytical context, the emergence of the subject and its academic evolution is divided into four phases related to the international developments:

1. Evolutionary Phase (1648-1914).
2. Post-evolutionary Phase (1914-1945).
3. Institutional Developments (1945-1990).
4. Contemporary Phase (Post 1990).

### **Evolutionary Phase**

The evolutionary phase of peace and conflict studies refers to the period from the creation of the nation state system upto the First World War (1648-1914). During this period, many wars took place in Europe and in other parts of the world, including religious wars between Protestants and Catholics that plunged Europe into a destructive war situation which lasted for thirty years (1618-1648). It was one of the most destructive and the longest conflicts in the history of Europe which forever changed the way nation-states interact with each other. At the end of this longstanding conflict, a novel sense prevailed among the longest standing conflicting parties in the form of Westphalian treaties of peace in 1648.<sup>4</sup> One of the major outcomes of these treaties was to retain peace and devise social and political mechanism for abolishing war. Therefore, the end of thirty years war is recognized as a pre-developmental phase of peace and conflict studies, in a sense, that thinking about peace and conflict begins by means and methods of peace treaties and approaches.

Europe followed by North America, were the centers of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century wars, which resulted in an overwhelming debate and documentation



among the Europeans on the writings pertaining to the significance of peace and conflict. The philosophical and political writings could be traced from the times of Thomas Hobbes' work *Leviathan* (1651) which explores the causes of war and the conditions of peace. Before Hobbes, Plato and Thucydides wrote of war among city-states in the context of peace and justice.<sup>5</sup> Even, John Locke has philosophized the theme of peace through tolerance. He published a series of works from 1689-1692 – "A Letter Concerning Toleration, I, II, and III". Toleration and peace are central to his political philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Then after fifty years, the Spanish war of succession occurred (1701-1714) in the land of Europe among several states. It was a large scale European war since thirty years war, which was fought from 1618 to 1648. During this period, the most influential work was carried out by Abbe De St. Pierre in 1712, titled as "Project for Perpetual Peace". He stated "my design is to propose means for settling an everlasting peace among all the Christian states". His project for perpetual peace went through several modifications and revised editions.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, this project is considered as a landmark for peace and conflict studies.

After the efforts of Abbe De St. Pierre, the new wave of conflicts occurred in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, mainly during the American Revolution (1775-1783) and French Revolution (1789-1799) which sparked a series of wars called Napoleonic Wars in Europe (1799-1814), Congress of Vienna (1814 1815), the Vienna System (1815-48), Crimean War (1853-56), War of Italian Unification waged by Cavour and Garibaldi (1859-61), the Wars of German unification (1864-71), the Bismarckian System in Operation, (1871-90), Imperial Wars (1890-1907) and all these disasters culminated in the First World War. These wars were highly destructive in nature that resulted in the emergence of a new scholarship on the study of peace and conflict in various disciplines. The main objective was to construct a theoretical and conceptual framework intended to reshape the behaviour of conflicting parties by means and methods of peaceful dialogue.

This process was analysed by various scholars and philosophers including Voltaire (1694-1778), a French historian and philosopher, who talked of peace through tolerance. He projected perpetual peace and wrote "perceptual peace can only be established and achieved through tolerance".<sup>8</sup> Rousseau (1712-1778), a political Philosopher, opposes war and tyrannies. His analysis of violence is very different as he emphasizes on the roots or causes of conflicts than its manifestations in pursuit of peace.<sup>9</sup> Adam Smith (1723-1790), a pioneer of political economy, talks of peace and war through the principles of war economies, deaths and debts, and peace by means of economic wellbeing and trade among nations.<sup>10</sup> Thomas Jefferson, a sincere pacifist and politician, described "peace as a natural state of humanity and war as an artificial institution".<sup>11</sup> All of them have focused on ethical and practical issues concerning with various kinds of conflicts by developing a calculated

reasoning. The classical reference is of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). He spells out 'perpetual peace' in 1795 which is a comprehensive model of peace for future of the world in which more favourable conditions had emerged since last 200 years.<sup>12</sup> John Stuart Mill wrote about peace through liberty of free discussions of ideas. According to him, liberty means "liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological".<sup>13</sup> These basics of liberty can survive only in peaceful conditions.

These scholarly efforts did not absolutely stop or abolish the occurrence of conflicts, suppressions and wars. Since the time of these thinkers, new issues of conflict have taken birth and devastated the peace, and consequently, many explanations have been put forward to address the societal illness. In this response, the influential works of Karl Marx (1818-1883) which emphasized on the issues of class conflict and capitalist manifestation are significant. Later on, the same theme was followed by Vladimir Lenin (1870-1934); by elaborating Marxism, he put capitalism and imperialism as the main cause of conflicts and wars for radical societal transformation. But the path of progress was so clear that wars and violence still occurred and finally, religious thoughts and practice were also incorporated in maintaining peace and resolving the conflicts. There are strong evidences to relate these arguments as the peaceful teachings and obligations had long existed in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and other religions. All religions encourage peace and lay emphasis on pulling out from the worldly conflicts. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, several engagements became evident in North America, Britain and other parts of Europe. The anti-war religious organizations and peace societies began to put efforts to end the conflicts. All religions have almost same approaches against the violence and pacifists believe that any form of violence and war is against the wish of God and hence a sinful act.<sup>14</sup> Keeping in view these facts, the evolution of peace and conflict studies have roots in philosophy and theology and then other modalities of social sciences.

### **Post Evolutionary Phase**

The first half of the twentieth century was one of the most turbulent periods in the world history. The foundational period of peace and conflict studies refers to the developments from the First World War 1914 until the Second World War 1945. During these three decades, world has survived two major global wars, First World War (1914-1918) and Second World War (1939- 1945). The consequences of the Second World War are briefly discussed in the next section of this paper. In this section, we will only focus on the period ranging from the beginning of the First World War to the end of the Second World War. The First World War or once called the 'Great War' involved most of the major European powers. At the end, it destroyed millions of lives and property worth billions. Almost every region of the world was directly and indirectly

involved in this war. According to one estimate, the total deaths in all nations who fought in this war are estimated to have been 8.5 million deaths with 21 million being wounded.<sup>15</sup> These mass killings with huge economic loss resulted in an innovative growth of pacific appearance among various social, political and economic organizations to initiate peace movement organizations. The objective of these movements was to generate an anti-war expression and encourage the peaceful conduct of national and international relations. According to Ishiyama and Breuning "the calamity of World War I and the horrifying human toll it brought about led to the new efforts to understand, prevent and ultimately eliminate war".<sup>16</sup> In the years of post-World War I, the most important development in the peace and conflict was the organizational approach to outcrop peace and put efforts to construct institutions to reduce the causes of war.<sup>17</sup> The First World War concluded with a series of talks called Treaties of Paris, (1919-1920) to ensure the world peace. A number of treaties were signed at the end of World War I. These treaties include Treaty of Versailles (June 28, 1919), Treaty of Saint-Germain (Sept.10, 1919), Treaty of Neuilly (Nov. 27, 1919), Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920), and Treaty of Sevres (Aug. 10, 1920).<sup>18</sup> These treaties inspired many governments for the institutional creation of the League of Nations in 1920 which was the first international effort to maintain world peace and prevent the occurrence of future wars.

The alarming consequences of World War I have also alerted the other societal organizations of Europe to stick together for peace and project anti-war culture. These organizations include the formation of Dada Art Movement as an anti-war movement in Europe and New York from 1915 to 1923. The religious non-governmental organizations and groups have also mobilized to stop wars. In 1914, the inter-faith Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) was organized at a gathering in Cambridge, England to spread the message of peace and anti-war culture. The progress led to the foundation of American FOR in 1915 and finally, the International Faith Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) was established in 1919.<sup>19</sup> The main motive of IFOR was to promote methods of non-violence, reconciliation, and educate and empower the youth for projection of peace making. The union of these organizations with European and North American societies worked as force to foster the respective governments in 1928 for Kellogg-Brand pact to outlaw wars. According to the Article I of this pact, "the Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin, they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means".<sup>20</sup>

The institutional or academic efforts to explore new methods of peace and conflict studies include the issues of arms race, revolutions, wars and peace making. The scholarly research was conducted by a Russian sociologist, Pritim Sorokin, who wrote a classical book "The Sociology of Revolution",

1925. After years, a group of American psychologists, John Dollard, Leonard William Doob and others, contributed to peace and conflict research by writing a book on “Frustration and Aggression”, 1939. Both the books had given an in-depth sociological and psychological analysis of conflicts, that wars and violence are harming the human efforts in pursuit of peaceful existence and survival at individual and social level. Then, Quincy Wright published first edition of a monumental book “A Study of War”, 1942, the product of his 15 years of inter-disciplinary research project. In this project, Quincy Wright investigated the history and causes of war from pre-emptive conflict onwards and in a subsequent edition in 1965, the project went on to look over the evolution of nuclear weapons.<sup>21</sup> This book is marked as the foundation of what we call at the present times ‘Peace Research’<sup>22</sup> or peace and conflict research study. This is a strong evidence that peace and conflict studies is an interdisciplinary field of study, and its evolution can be traced before the World War Second.

### **Institutional and Academic Phase**

The era from 1946 to 1990 is the most important phase in the academic history of peace and conflict studies. The majority of the scholars are of the same opinion that peace and conflict studies, as a distinct field of study, has its proper and institutional evolution in the post-World War Second or the years of 1950’s.<sup>23</sup> The massive killings and disastrous consequences of World War Second have invited the attention of the world community to develop war free international relations. The historical lesson learnt from the suicidal use of scientific knowledge against Japan at the final stage of World War Second, has rationalized the thinking about life and its survival. The massive killings of World War Second in which 1 in 22 Soviet citizens were killed, 1 in 25 Germans, 1 in 46 Japanese, 1 in 150 Britain’s, and 1 in 500 Americans have lost their lives,<sup>24</sup> rekindled the pro-peace thoughts and anti-war sentiments on academic fronts. The discourse begins with the idea that research should be conducted distinctively on issues of peace and conflict independent of each other. This led to the developments at institutional level in Europe and America with global acceptance.

After World War Second, many governmental and non-governmental schedules were initiated to prevent the future wars by building international institutions and organizations to promote the culture of peace by means of reconciliation between adversaries. In this regard, the first global development was the cooperation for peace among nations which led to the formation of United Nations in 1945 to prevent the future generations from scourge of war. In 1946, in Caux, Switzerland, a series of conferences was held under the patronage of an international conference for the reconciliation of European states and people who had been in the midst of an intense conflict. They held many workshops and brought together people at many levels of government

and society to develop mutual understanding and sense of amnesty. This philosophy of peace through reconciliation was encouraged and carried out by a non-governmental movement, an interfaith peace organization known as Moral Re-Armament.<sup>25</sup> These establishments and developments were the primary contribution to the peace and conflict research in Europe and North America.

The other important related developments in the peace and conflict studies were the various conflicts and crises associated with global conflict called Cold War. Those conflicts were dangerous because of the nuclear threat, but were managed without shooting a single fire and violating international law. The classical reference is of the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962, which had the potential of causing a nuclear war but was managed through effective negotiation without any military action. In this process, non-official high level meetings of the Pugwash and the Dartmouth conferences (1957, 1960) provided a kind of aid in US-USSR negotiations on issues of arms control. Many scholars endure the years of 1950s and 1960s as the academic foundation of peace and conflict studies, mainly in the United States. The research and theories were very much focused to devise the methodology, if not to completely eliminations of wars, but to prevent and demoralize wars because of nuclear consequences.

The years from 1946 to 1960 yielded a small amount of research and writings on issues of peace and conflict. In 1951, a group of scholars from various fields established an organization to promote research on the issues of peace and war. In 1952, they began publishing the Bulletin of the Research Exchange and Prevention of War. Within years, the Research Exchange and Prevention of War organized group discussions at the academic convention which included Quincy Wright and Pittirim Sorokin. In 1954-55, a group of scholars established the Center for Advanced and Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford, to conduct research on various social conflicts. They include Kenneth Boulding, an economist, Anatol Rapoport, a mathematical biologist, and Stephen Richardson, a sociologist. Richardson brought two unpublished books of his father, Lewis Richardson, "Statistics of Deadly Quarrels" and "Arms and Insecurity", which became important for mathematical models in the study of issues of war and peace. The CASBS founders led the decision to start a cross-disciplinary journal that would replace the Bulletin of the Research Exchange. This new publication was named as the "Journal of Conflict Resolution: A Quarterly for Research Related to War and Peace" at the University of Michigan. The journal began publication in 1957 as the first journal in the newly emerging field of peace and conflict and was guided by an interdisciplinary board headed by Kenneth Boulding. Then in 1959, the group established Center for Research on Conflict Resolution at the same University. The "Journal of Conflict Resolution and Center for Research on Conflict Resolution" jointly focused on issues of peace and conflict which

gave rise to national and international peace associations in various parts of the world.

In 1960, “Journal of Peace Research” was purposely established to develop scholarship of peace research and the Council on Peace Research in History (CPRH) in United States was established in 1963. The Japan Peace Research Group (JPRG) and Canadian Peace Research and Education Research (CPREA) were formed in 1963 and 1964 respectively. In 1964, “The Journal of Peace Research” came up with typologies of peace in scientific context. In this founding edition, the founder of peace thinking, Johan Galtung, proposed two situations of peace i.e. Positive and Negative peace. He conceived “negative peace as the absence of violence, absence of war while positive peace as the integration of human society”.<sup>26</sup> Then, Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway, which initially began as part of the Institute of Social Research, became independent in 1966. The main focus of these Institutes and the Journals was predominately theorizing and broadening the concepts of peace and conflict articulated by Johan Galtung, particularly, on ‘positive’ and negative peace. The other institute established around this time was the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPARI, 1966) which remains concerned with the core issues of peace and conflict studies and prevention of biological weapons and disarmament.

During the 1970s and 1980s, peace and conflict studies got impetus from two different international developments. One was the independence of Indian subcontinent in 1947 from British by practicing Gandhian philosophy of non-violence. In 1970s, the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence (*Ahimsa*) and truth (*Satyagraha*) got a space in teachings of peace and conflict studies. Another was the anti-Vietnam War movements which gave rise to the right to protest against wars and other associated social evils in the practice and pedagogy of peace and conflict studies. Resultantly, these movements aided new ideas that resistance conflicts could be conducted constructively without producing much violence and developing confidence building measures among conflicting states. In summing, up these developments, the growth of peace and conflict studies at national and international stage is explored comprehensively.

### **Contemporary Phase**

In 1990s, two related developments took place with global impacts, one was the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, and another was the breakup of Soviet Union in December 1991. These developments led to the emergence of an era called post-cold war world order. In this era, the discipline of peace and conflict studies was also under shadows of various divided discourses among thinkers in the West and other parts of the world. The end of cold war conflict was projected as an end of the conflict and the questions about the significance of peace and conflict studies were in decline. The arguments

were raised through different contexts, as post-cold war era is unipolar and issues of conflict related to the study of peace and conflict like arms race, disarmament, arms control, and nuclear confrontation/proliferation will be of least importance in need of study or research. Therefore, the reverence of peace and conflict studies in post-cold war era was under the optimistic influence in which conflict belonged to the history.

It was evident that a new world order was emerging with peace and harmony. This whole euphoria was described by Francis Fukuyama in 1989 within "The End of History". In his view, the ideological components would mostly disappear and there would be an end of ideological conflicts and wars.<sup>27</sup> In the same vein, President George W Bush announced a "New World Order" in September, 1990, which purposefully meant that in post-cold war world order, war is obsolete.<sup>28</sup> However, this post-cold war optimism was short lived and shattered when conflicts and wars proliferated in various regions of the world with global consequences. At the beginning of the post-cold war era, UN witnessed a revival in addressing the issues of disputes and conflicts at the national and international level, but after the Gulf War of 1990, the situation turned into pessimism. And the UN was no longer in a position to sustain international peace and security, but rather to represent the desire of the major powers and consequently, it lost its significance.<sup>29</sup> The weakness of the international collective approach shattered the optimism with new changing scenarios and situations of conflicts and wars of the "third kind." These included the use of asymmetric methods of terror without a specific front, campaigns and even strategies. The main objective of these conflicts and wars is high casualties (especially civilian casualties) and a little distinction between armed forces and the civilian population. This perspective was popularized by Samuel Huntington who projected a different theory called *Clash of Civilizations*, which is contrary to the Fukuyama's "End of History". Huntington's central argument in his seminal book "The Clash of Civilizations" is that the ideological conflicts of the cold war would be replaced by the post-cold war conflicts of ethnicity, religion and nationalism, and these would be the dominating factors in the post-cold war international relations.<sup>30</sup>

The conceptual and theoretical construction of post-cold war optimism was yet in its infancy when the situation turned into absolute chaos in August 1990 when 34 nations led by the United States attacked Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait, thus, shattering the post-cold war optimism. Since the fall of Berlin wall (1989 to 1992), 82 armed conflicts and 79 civil conflicts took place across the globe. In 1993, 42 countries in the world were beset with 52 major conflicts, with another 37 countries facing political violence. Of these 79 countries, 65 were in the developing world. There have been conflicts in all regions, including Europe - Bosnia, Georgia, Turkey and the United Kingdom, in West Asia - Iraq, Israel and Lebanon, in Latin America - Colombia and Guatemala, in Asia - Bangladesh, India-

Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan, in Africa - Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Morocco, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Zaire and Zimbabwe. These conflicts and wars have had different causes, ranging from ethnic, religious, socio-political and other identity-based causes. As 'global chaos' and 'ethnic cleansing' and renewed meaning of 'genocide' found a place in the lexicon of the 1990s in which people were killed for what they were, less than who they were. This was evident in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Iraqi Kurds, Sri-Lankan Tamils, Indian Kashmiris and other parts of the world. In total, the 20<sup>th</sup> century is described as the "Bloodiest" with an estimate of 187 million deaths due to the occurrence of various conflicts and wars around the world.<sup>31</sup>

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, eighty years out of hundred years were dominated by prolonged wars, including two world wars, hot-cold wars and other conflicts. According to SIPRI year book, in the first decade of post-war era (1990-2001), there were 57 major armed conflicts in 47 countries, and according to the conflict database of International Institute for Strategic Studies London, six million people were killed in armed conflicts during 1990s.<sup>32</sup> This implies that the end of the cold war does not mean the end of conflict or the end of the history, but in reverse, conflicts and wars are at our doorsteps.

In the beginning of the twenty-first century, new thoughts became necessitated in order to understand the occurrence of asymmetrical and violent attacks on American military and trade Icons (Pentagon and World Trade Centre) on September 11, 2001 and other series of attacks across the globe. These attacks, including Indonesia (Bali, 2002), Spain (Madrid, 2004), UK (London, 2005) and other number of violent attacks in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and other parts of the world. The drivers of these violent activities are often multi-faceted and multi-dimensional with various narratives. The substantial causes of these conflicts were generalized as socio-economic disparity that causes social hostilities between different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. Presence of state-sponsored violence, such as extra judicial killings, gross human rights violations and other forms of violence, including deaths and disappearance in various conflict zones across the globe, has troubled the peace and security scenario of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The asymmetrical and volatile attacks have induced a new generation of ideas in all the five continents to think of peace and conflict studies in an inclusive perspective. These perceptions, include issues of emerging geopolitics, geo-economics, environmental conflicts, and their conversion from warfare to welfare or peace-fare, and societal illness to its wellness. Within this framework, the pedagogy and research in peace and conflict studies emerged as inclusive and open ended multidisciplinary subject in post-cold war era. It covers the whole range of causes of conflict and methods of sustainability of peace. It is open-ended in a sense that from space to earth



and sea, there are various issues of conflicts, and if ignored, they may lead to war and violence. Peace and conflict studies explores and invents the doors of new opportunity for prevention, transformation, resolution, mitigation, and management of these conflicts in an acceptable way. It binds the professionals across the disciplines to work against the enemies of peace. In this process, peace and conflict studies emerges as a major domain of all disciplines. It includes, moral, mental, and social sciences, legal studies, and even natural, material and medical sciences. In brief, themes and theories of peace and conflict studies includes every facet of human intervention that can cause conflict and would have an adverse influence on peace and security.

### **Paradigm Shift**

A chronology of publications right from 1940 till date, infer a positive side of the picture which clearly indicates a fast changing mood of scholars and writers in favour of peace. In view of this growing trend of opinions based on sound methodologies perpetuating non-violent policy with “live and let live” approach, the foreign relation, defence, strategic and conflict resolution measures etc., are being adopted in tune with peaceful co-existence. The global political and economic, giants instead of confronting with each other, have started to co-operate, compete and compliment each other. Hopefully, this positive development in discipline of PACS will continue to replace warfare by welfare. This paradigm shift towards soft politics is possibly due to the lesson learnt by the people after waging wars and observing that peace can be more powerful than war. Consequently, the scope, objectives, direction and related institutional developments of PACS as a growing discipline, changes in tune with the requirements.

The subject of PACS has extended its area of study beyond the limitations of its traditional engagements on arms races, arms control and nuclear confrontation. It is a transformative interdisciplinary academic field; analytical in nature, nonviolent in actions, theoretical and a-theoretical in methodological approaches, and global in scope. It provides a range of nonviolent actions to address the complex issues of conflicts faced by current and future generations. The main motive of the discipline is whether conflict is at the micro, meso, macro, or mega levels of analysis. It is almost dedicated to create positive change and establish just peace. It has widened its areas to include issues of gender, race and ethnicity, issues of non-proliferation, risks of nuclear conflicts, geopolitical conflicts, environmental conflicts, energy and resource conflicts, and conflicts caused by health and poverty on earth. Besides this, peace and conflict studies also includes maritime, space and cyber conflicts. The fundamental to the objectives of the discipline is an organised study of the conflicts, their causes and consequences in exploring the conditions of peace.<sup>33</sup> To maintain the wide-ranging pedagogy and demands of interdisciplinary scholarship methods of education, it primarily addresses the

issues of conflicts rather than simply countering them. In the broader context, it strives to produce a new generation of ideas to transform the warfare into welfare. The methodological orientation is more about incentives of being in a war and disincentives of being in conflict by exploring the cost benefit analysis of life and property. The main area of focus is to emphasize more on nonviolent approaches of prevention, management and resolution of conflicts rather than coercive approach. It also addresses various concerns to reform and transform the existing structures in order to sustain peace and suspend violence.

So far the academic developments of PACS are concerned, it has developed its teachings on “transformation of violence into peace and harmony through spirituality” in the classrooms of Manchester College, Indiana in 1948.<sup>34</sup> The major developments in the teachings of PACS in classrooms of colleges and universities took place only after the Vietnam War of 1955-75. The teachings at undergraduate and postgraduate level in 1970s and 1980 in the US and then in European countries were a thoughtful reaction against the Vietnam War. The programmes were titled as “Problems of War and Peace” and “Peace Research” under the Church of Brethren Institute.<sup>35</sup> The liberal programme was started at Uppsala University by establishing the Department of Peace and Conflict Research in 1971.<sup>36</sup> In Britain, the first Peace Studies department was established in 1973 at the University of Bradford.<sup>37</sup> The department sets its main aim as to study peace as a condition of social and political systems, in conjunction with attendant concepts such as justice, war, dignity and so on. In this process, the two organizations-- the World Policy Institute (formerly Institute for World Order) and COPRED played very significant role in developing new programs and curriculum of PACS in the North and South Atlantic.

In the post-Cold War set-up, PACS is more applicable for Global South than Global North, where most of the countries are struggling for social injustice, economic disparities that not only aggravate unemployment and poverty, but indeed instigate and drive social problems and proto-type conflicts. In this regard, one of the most important development took place in the recent past as a number of peace and conflict centres, departments and institutions have been established in Global South states, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and Latina America. Besides, South Asian region has also introduced the subject of peace conflict studies in different Universities and Colleges. In June 1999, Bangladesh introduced peace and conflict studies at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The department commenced with only Masters’ Program and conclusively fixed the purpose of advancing interdisciplinary study and research into the conditions of peace and the causes of war and other forms of violence.<sup>38</sup> The key issues of the department are to make a contribution to the advancement of peace and conflict studies alongwith non-violent conflict management processes.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, University of Jammu founded the Gandhian Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (GCPCS) in 2004, with an aim to bring conflicting relationships down through to the non-violent teachings of the Gandhian philosophy.<sup>39</sup> However, as a research institute, the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), a premier think tank that has a mission of developing an alternative and independent framework for peace and conflict issues in South Asia, was founded in New Delhi, India in 1996.<sup>40</sup> The Nelson Mandela Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (NMPCR), the first Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution among the Indian universities, was established in 2004 at the Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. Since 2007 the NMPCR centre has started Masters course and Doctoral Degree in Conflict Analysis and Peace Building (CAPB), and Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) sequentially.<sup>41</sup>

In 2007, Nepal initiated a two-year multi-disciplinary Masters programme in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies (CPADS) at the University of Tribhuvan.<sup>42</sup> In 2012, the subject of PACS was introduced in National Defence University (NDU) of Pakistan.<sup>43</sup> In Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), Mirpur, have introduced a Masters programme in Peace and Human Rights Development Studies (PAHRDS). The programme was started with an aim to not only benefit both Bangladeshi armed forces but civilians to develop a vibrant civil-military relationship that would effectively contribute to the development of the country.<sup>44</sup> In the present context, peace and conflict studies is a full-fledged subject being taught under different titles such as Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), Peace Studies and Research (PSR), Conflict Resolution (CR), and Peace and Human Rights Studies (PHRS). The subject is a newcomer, but is a fast growing one which is corroborated by the fact that it is now taught in more than 50 countries of the world. In the United States alone, there are 450 academic programs functioning at various levels.<sup>45</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In light of the above analysis of facts and figures, it could be inferred that the most common character of humans is to cherish for peace and alleviation from war. It is evident that peace is popular for building welfare, and war is famous for destruction of biological and cultural survival of life. Therefore, peace and conflict studies, as an interdisciplinary academic subject, sets about to explore knowledge associated with sustainability of peace and the causes of war and conflict. There are various narratives about the evolution of peace and conflict studies as an academic discipline. But, most of the scholars are of opinion that the emergence of the subject has roots in Post-World War Second era of 1950s and 1960s. However, in this study, the subject is contextualised from its evolution in different disciplines to its place as an independent domain, and also to the contemporary phase of its practicality in the universe of global academics as a full-fledged subject. The main agenda of peace and conflict

studies has been and would be to understand the dimensions of human conflict, and to explore peaceful solutions through pedagogy, research and practice, by using appropriate methods and diverse stances. The primary considerations of the discipline are rooted in religious texts, diverse ideas of “pacific philosophy” and other catastrophic wars of the twentieth century. The key issues of the subject are to prevent, transform, manage, and resolve conflicts by peaceful means and methods. In the contemporary world milieu, peace and conflict studies have a greater role to play in tackling the new threats and challenges of the twenty first century. The study of peace and conflict studies is dedicated to secure the present and future generation from the scourge of conventional and nuclear wars through power of knowledge. The research, pedagogy and practice of peace and conflict studies is a main instrument of transformation from violence to peace, destruction to construction and warfare to welfare across the globe.

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# ROLE OF LABOUR MIGRATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS AND RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Sergey V. Ryazantsev

## **Abstract**

*This research paper presents an analysis and interpretation vis-à-vis the contribution of labour migration in the development of Russian Federation and former Soviet Union republics. Altogether, it is demonstrated that labour migration fills an important niche in economic and political integration of the region, however, this alliance could be even stronger, if the undocumented and illegal migration is prevented and a common consensus is made among partner countries to view labour migration as a strategic resource.*

## **Keywords**

Labour Migration, Russian Federation, Central Asian Countries, Former Soviet Union Republics, Immigration Policy, CIS, Illegal Migrants, Vocational Structure, Pull-Push Factor, Remittance, Host Country, Allowing Documents, Migratory Research Centre.

## **Introduction**

The Russian Federation accepts a significant amount of temporary migrant workers, particularly, from neighbouring Central Asia countries. Here departure of a significant number of able-bodied population is stimulated by the typical “pushing-out” factors: output gap, low level of salary, high level of unemployment, lack of workplaces, poverty, surplus of workforce etc. Given these factors, and the Russia’s need of workers for many industries, there is a large migratory subsystem, which centres the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Kazakhstan attracting labour migrants from the countries of Central Asia, Transcaucasia, China, Vietnam, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and some countries of Eastern Europe. On May 29, 2014, the agreement on the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) was signed, which became effective on January 1, 2015. Five countries comprising Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation are a part of EEU. Indeed, the president of Tajikistan, E. Rahmon, in 2014 also declared need of studying economic basis and legal documents of EEU for the purpose of possible entry into this integrated consolidation.

EEU is created for the purpose of comprehensive modernization, cooperation and creating conditions for stable development and increasing

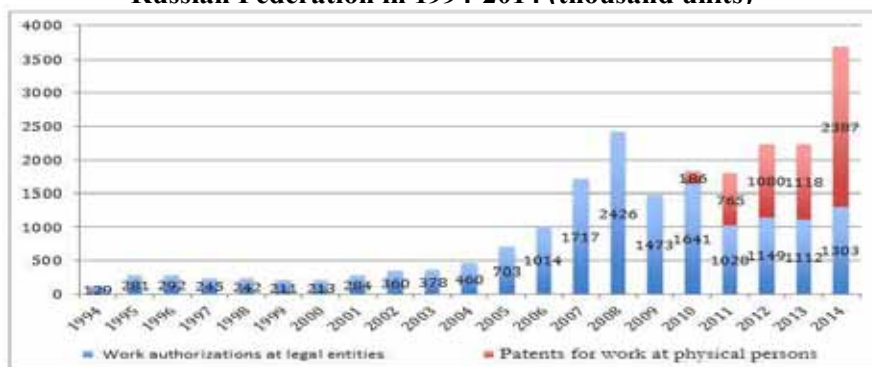
living standards of people in member states. With free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour power, EEU also provides visa-free movement for the citizens of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. In fact, the visa-free entry into the Russian Federation also stands for citizens of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Moldova, while the working visa and the work authorization in Russia is necessary for citizens from the countries including Georgia, Turkmenistan, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Central Asian countries, however, provide large flows of migrant workers into Russia and in near future, will remain probable donors of migrant workers for Russia and Kazakhstan. Many of these migrants have become permanent residents of Russia as between 2001-2011 more than 1.6 million people from the countries of Central Asia became owners of the Russian nationality. But this includes also other categories of migrants like students etc. About 40% of the Central Asian migrants who have obtained citizenship of the Russian Federation in 2001-2011, come from Kazakhstan, with majority of them being the ethnic Russians. Nevertheless, in recent years Uzbeks (25%), Kyrgyz (23%), Tajik (9%) and Turkmen (3%) having obtained Russian citizenship, shows an increasing trend. Such a trend among Central Asian migrants in Russia could be considered as one of the signs of their aspirations to integrate into the Russian society. However, on account of a number of socio-political issues, amendments to the Russian legislation on citizenship rights in 2002 and 2010, considerably toughened requirements for this right, which significantly reduced the number of permanent labour migrants from Central Asian republics.

### **Official Number of Migrant Workers in Russian Federation**

The official number of migrant workers in the Russian Federation is based on the allowing documents issued by the Federal Migration Service (FMS).

**Fig.-I**

**Number of the allowing documents issued to migrant workers in the Russian Federation in 1994-2014 (thousand units)**





In 2014, 3690 thousand allowing documents, including 2387 thousand patents and 1303 thousand work authorizations were issued. While from January to July 2015, 1406 thousand allowing documents were issued to migrant workers, including 1265 thousand patents and 141 thousand work authorizations.

The system of allowing documents for migrant workers in the Russian Federation, amended almost annually, and as of September 1, 2015, includes three types of procedures for obtaining these documents, depending on nationality of migrant workers (Table-1).

**Table-1**  
**Types of procedures of receipt of allowing documents of migrant workers in the Russian Federation depending on their nationality (as of September 1, 2015)**

<b>Nationality of migrant workers</b>	<b>Documents for entry into Russia</b>	<b>Type of allowing documents for work in Russia</b>	<b>Key procedures</b>
EAEC countries (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan)	Foreign Passport, migration card	Not necessary	1) Registration of the migrant worker on residence (within 5 working days after entry into Russia); 2) The notification of the employer about the conclusion (termination) of the contract with the migrant worker (within 3 working days from the moment of the end of the contract)
The countries of the former USSR with a visa-free regime (Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan)	Foreign passport, migration card	Patent	1) Registration of the migrant worker on residence (within 5 working days after entry into Russia) 2) Receipt of the patent by the migrant worker (within 30 days from the moment of entry into Russia) 3) The notification of FMS employer about the conclusion (termination) of the contract with the migrant worker (within 3 working days from the moment of the end of the contract)

The Countries of the former USSR with a visa regime (Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Turkmenistan, Estonia) and other States	Foreign passport, visa, migration card	Work authorization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Registration of the migrant worker on residence (within 5 business days after entry into Russia)</li> <li>2) Obtaining permission the employer on involvement of the foreign worker to Russia</li> <li>3) Receipt of the work authorization by the migrant worker (within 30 days from the moment of entry into Russia)</li> <li>4) The notification of FMS employer about the conclusion (termination) of the contract with the migrant worker (within 3 working days from the moment of the end of the contract).</li> </ol>
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In 2014, the majority of work authorizations were issued to the migrant workers from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, China and Kyrgyzstan, whereas in 2014-15 majority of work authorizations in Russia were issued to the citizens of Kazakhstan (362 hundred thousands) and Belarus (19 hundred thousands) while Armenian received 46 hundred thousand work authorizations. Taking into account the vocational structure of these migrant workers, data provided by FMS in 2012 reveals that, a half (51%) are consisted as skilled workers. Approximately, the third part (31%) of them was unskilled workers. Nearly 8 percent comprised specialists of average qualification and only 5 percent were qualified professionals.

By and large labour migration into Russia comprises unskilled workers. From 2010 to 2012, only 257 thousand work authorizations were issued to highly skilled specialists. Nevertheless, majority of these specialists were working under the intra-corporate contracts i.e., with multinational corporations operating in the territory of Russia. Nearly 28.1 percent of these highly skilled specialists were engaged with real estate transactions, 21.5 percent with wholesale and retail trade, 13.7 percent with the processing productions, 9.8 percent with construction, 8.6 percent with financial activities and 7.6 percent were with mineral extraction. It is noteworthy here that in 2010-2012, majority of highly qualified specialist worker migrants in Russia were from China, Turkey, France, Germany and Great Britain, while in 2014 China, Vietnam, Philippines, Turkey, Serbia were the top sending countries. Strengthening of political and economic interaction of Russia with the East and Southeast Asian countries is considered the possible backup for this trend.

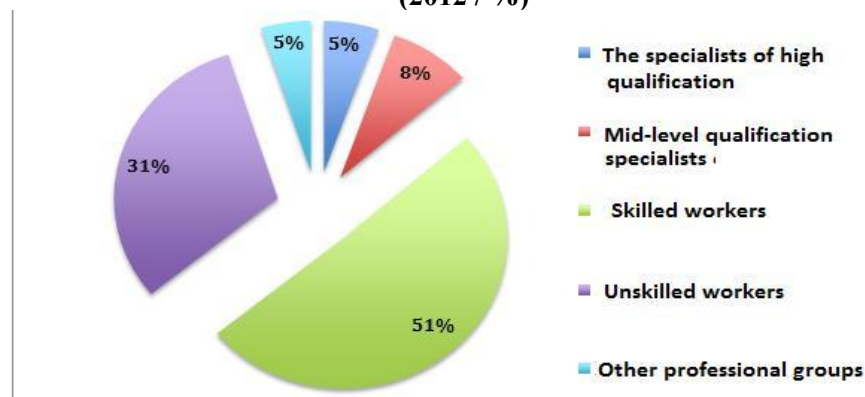
### **Undocumented Migrant Workers in Russia**

The issue of undocumented migrant workers in Russian Federation has been widely debated and discussed both at political and academic levels. In 2006, the Director of FMS, K. O. Romodanovsky stated in an address, “we conducted research, thought up a formula that is based on the ‘illegality coefficient’, increased by a number of legally working citizens, giving a figure of 10.2 million illegal migrants in Russia.”<sup>1</sup> At times, the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) determines the number of ‘illegal migrants’ at 10 million, while some politicians put it at 15 million. However, these figures raise serious doubts, as they are not based on results of scientific researches. And may be, these figures could be much higher, because majority of the influx of migrant workers into Russia is from visa-free CIS countries, which don’t need a registration or allowing documents for work in Russia. At times Russian government framed certain procedures to possibly reduce the number of illegal migrant workers as the availability and simplification of registration procedures and methods to issue work authorizations were brought in. In this respect two campaigns were started to allow undocumented migrant workers to legalize their stay in Russia. First campaign started in 2007, allowing simplification of registration to foreign citizens through postal departments. Second campaign of 2010 introduced issuing patents for work permissions to migrant workers. In 2010-2013 about 3 million migrant workers from CIS countries received patents in Russia.<sup>2</sup>

However, despite these efforts by government institutions, there are still a huge number of undocumented labour migrants in Russia. By 2015 there were nearly 3 million undocumented labour migrants in Russian labour market.<sup>3</sup> Reasons for this phenomenon are many, but the dominant factors pertain to corrupt government officials and irresponsibility on the part of employers, who exploit unregistered migrant workers by paying them less than the fixed wages. Indeed, report of the US State Department on human trafficking for 2012 included Russia in the category of the countries where ‘the absolute number of the victims of malicious forms of human trafficking is very great or significantly increasing.’ While the Centre for Migratory Research, estimates that 1 - 1.5 million labour migrants in Russia work in slaves like conditions,<sup>4</sup> assessments by non-governmental organizations in Russia put it at 4 million.<sup>5</sup> The recent research findings for the year 2013 testify that the number of labour migrants, who are in a situation of labour operation in the Russian Federation can make 500 thousand to 1 million.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the figures may be, such cases are mostly reported with labour migrants from the countries of Central Asia, who work in deteriorated conditions. Given such issues, Russian authorities toughened the approach with 13 new laws framed to counteract illegal migration. In 2014 around 600 thousand labour migrants were not allowed to enter into Russia<sup>7</sup> and by the mid 2015 this figure increased to 1.3 million. Obviously, this approach solved a problem of undocumented

migration to some extent. So far the percentage share of specialists, unskilled and other professionals are concerned, it is clear from Fig.-II that about 82% is dominated by only 2 vocational structure parameters.

**Fig.-II**  
**Vocational structure of migrant workers in the Russian Federation**  
**(2012 / %)**



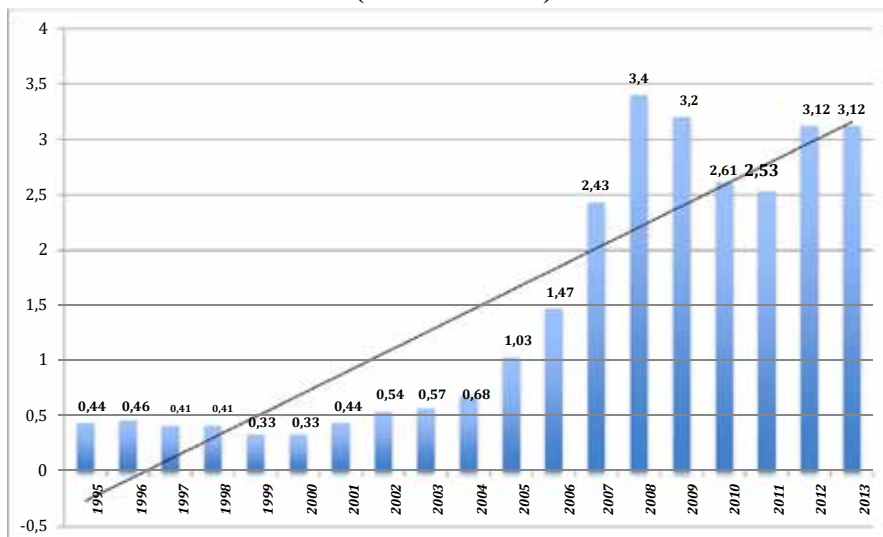
### **Economic Effects of Labour Migration (Employment and GDP)**

The influx of labour migrants has myriad and has made substantial effects on Russian economy, especially by providing the required manpower for the sustenance and development of industries, such as construction, housing and comm. services, services industry, agricultural industry, transport etc. In fact, in 2008, the Director, FMS, Russia, K. O. Romodanovsky, noted that migrant workers played a significant role in increasing Russia's GDP from 6 percent to 8 percent.<sup>8</sup> Though Romodanovsky's statement circulated widely in the Russian media and political discourses, but was exaggerated and didn't escape the criticism. To measure the role of migrant workers in Russian economy, however, the technique offered by the American Scientist, F. Martin (2007) was used.<sup>9</sup> The calculations show that in 2013 the contribution of migrant workers in the GDP of Russian Federation was around 1.4 trillion Rubles. While in 2008 it comprised 3.12 percent of GDP, it slashed down in 2011 reaching a minimum of 2.53 percent, but again recovered in 2013 and increased to 3.12 percent.

Based on the available official statistics, the calculations were made to show the impact of labour migration on the economy of Russian Federation and was established that documented and undocumented migrant workers contribute about 7 percent to the total Russian economy with maximum contributions in construction industry (nearly 30 percent). According to V. A. Iontseva and I. V. Ivakhnyuk though migrant workers actually carry the subsidiary low-skilled works like cleaning residential accommodation and repairing, subsidiary works in the trade and construction etc., which Russian

citizens reject as heavy, dirty or not prestigious works;<sup>10</sup> but their contributions are all the more important for Russian economy.

**Fig.-III**  
**Share of labour migrants in employment in the Russian Federation**  
**(1995-2013 / %)**



In 2010, migrant workers contributed near about three trillion Rubles to Russia's GDP with 9,467 million Rubles (33 %) in construction industry; 4,329 million (15%) in trade and consumer services; 3,041 (10%) in-house economy and 1,483 in the agricultural industry. These figures apply to documented labour migration only, and if the financial transitions out of undocumented labour migration are positively channelized, which the Director, FMS, Russia, K. O. Romodanovsky, reports that from more than 8 billion dollars a year, the overall contributions of labour migration in Russian economy could swell much higher.<sup>11</sup> So the prevalence of illegal and undocumented labour migration results into considerable financial losses to Russian Federation as 4 to 5 million illegal migrant workers whose total earnings are around 150-200 billion rubles a year, don't pay any taxes. While as of 2011, one and a half million foreign workers who were officially working in Russia in 2011 paid nearly 70 billion rubles as income tax.<sup>12</sup>

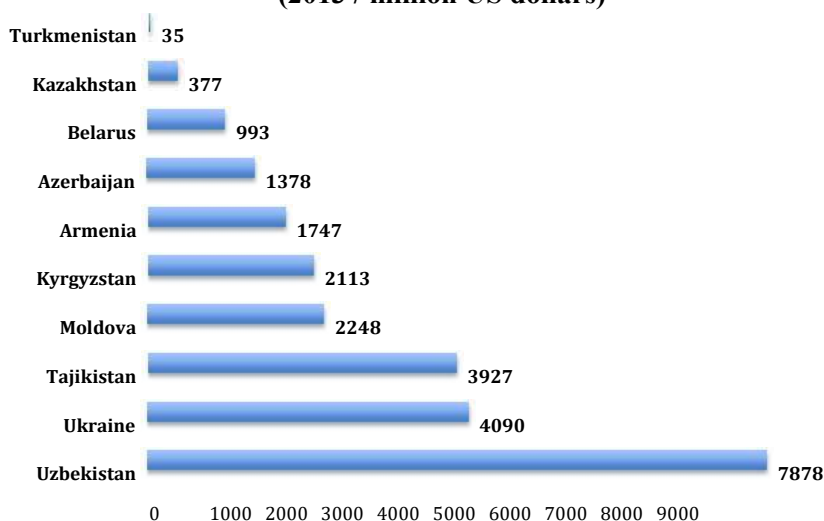
### **Impact of Labour Migration Through Consumption**

Labour migrants are not only producers, but also comprise a class of consumers for the host country. So a good chunk of the money that migrant workers in Russia earn, is spent to meet out their everyday needs while in Russia. Indeed, experts demonstrate that the cost of the goods and services produced by labour migrants in Russia exceeds the amount they receive in

wages and the amount of remittances they sent back home.<sup>13</sup> Even as of 2010, the Director, FMS, Russia, K. O. Romodanovsky, reported that every dollar earned by guest workers in Russia brings back about six dollars to the Russian budget.<sup>14</sup> Equally for sending countries, every dollar remitted back by migrant workers increases the purchasing power among the respective families and, thus, helps economic empowerment at household level. Data on cross-border personal and private money transfers made through official channels i.e. banks, postal departments, money transfer systems, and by transfer of cash and material values, shows that major flow of remittances from Russia go to CIS countries as in 2013, the volume of remittance by labour migrants in Russia to Uzbekistan was around 7.9 billion USD, 4.1 billion USD to Ukraine and 3.9 billion USD to Tajikistan.

The personal transfers include net compensation and private transfers. Net compensation represents part of earnings of family members abroad, which they remit back to household in native country. It is equal to a difference between wages received by migrant workers from temporary employment abroad, and their expenses incurred in a host country. Polls of migrant workers in Russia show that they usually prefer to save on everyday required stuff and buy cheapest products (like bread, milk, rice, etc.), hardly ever buy meat, fruit and vegetables, and mostly share rooms with fellow workers for accommodation.<sup>15</sup> Personal transfers include non-paid transfers from household abroad for the benefit of the household in the native country and vice-versa. In 2013, the volume of individual transfers of labour migrants in the Russia amounted to 19.8 billion USD.

**Fig.-IV**  
**Remittances from the Russian Federation to the CIS countries**  
**(2013 / million US dollars)**



The official data of Central Bank of Russia pertaining to the year 2013, reveals that money transfers through various systems<sup>16</sup> comprised 40 percent of the total volume of transfers from Russia to abroad, standing at 27.6 billion USD. And out of this amount, about 20.8 billion USD were transferred to the CIS countries alone i.e. 88 percent of the total volume of outgoing money transfers from Russia.<sup>17</sup> Country-wise distribution of money transfers show that as of 2013, nearly 74 percent of the total volume sent from Russia is received by five major countries: Uzbekistan (28%), Tajikistan (18%), Ukraine (13%), Kyrgyzstan (9%) and Armenia (7%). These growing transfers of remittances between Russia and CIS countries reflect a number of tendencies i.e. close ties between migrant workers and their households in the native countries, increase in wages in Russia and wider use of official channels for money transfers etc.

On an average, the amount of money transfer from Russia to abroad dwindled from 502 USD in 2012 to 487 USD in 2013. Nevertheless, for CIS countries it increased from 458 to 929 USD. Some of the factors responsible for this trend include, a high competition among operators of money transfer systems in Russia, which results into a tendency of charging less fees for the transaction. As per reports of the Bank of Russia, in 2013 an average size of the fee charged from the client for money transfer abroad was 1.7 percent of the total transferred amount, which is record minimum among the countries of 'Group 20'.<sup>18</sup>

The research findings conducted in 2008 by Institute of Socio-political Surveys of the Russian Academy of Sciences about the use of money transfers in the city of Khojend, reveals that nearly 65 percent of households in Tajikistan receive money transfer from abroad, particularly, from Russia once a month. However, despite comprehensive developments and availability of money transfer systems, still every tenth migrant worker transfers money back home through acquaintances. Moreover, the study demonstrated that majority of families in Tajikistan and other countries of Central Asia are highly dependent on labour migration remittances especially from Russia. Many research surveys show that money remitted back by migrant workers are mostly spent for the everyday consumption like food grains and construction / repairs of houses, which stimulates considerable growth in some industries in sending countries. The research findings demonstrate that while 74 percent of households in Khojend spend the money remitted back by their migrant workers for purchasing food grains, about 34 percent bought clothes, and 31 percent spend it for medical services and drugs. Likewise 26 percent of households invest in construction or repair of houses and about 45 percent invest in education of their children.

The remittances transferred back home in Central Asian countries are generally spent to meet-out everyday needs like purchasing food-grains, cloths, education of children, acquisition and repairing of houses, weddings

and funeral etc. In very rare instances, the remitted money is invested in the development of small scale businesses, entrepreneurship or in production of goods and services. But need of the hour is that back home families of migrant workers must think of either saving the remitted money or invest in business and small scale production of goods and services, because owing to the increasing involvement of migrant workers in “gray” and “black” economy in Russia, labour migratory movements from Central Asian countries to Russia will be more regulated and secured.

**Table-2**

**The remittances of migrant workers from Russia to the CIS countries made through money transfer systems in 2006-2013, millions of dollars**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013
<b>CIS countries</b>	<b>4674</b>	<b>8575</b>	<b>12609</b>	<b>8919</b>	<b>11080</b>	<b>15143</b>	<b>23589</b>
Uzbekistan	866	1666	2978	2052	2845	4262	6633
Tajikistan	835	1632	2516	1725	2216	3015	4155
Ukraine	800	1377	1690	1339	1809	2360	3078
Kyrgyzstan	384	715	1157	894	1106	1547	2080
Armenia	531	943	1249	848	1018	1284	1597
Moldova	457	806	1114	746	845	1076	1261
Azerbaijan	378	653	887	661	794	1049	1232
Georgia	300	558	683	517	566	669	789
Belarus	37	71	100	96	165	151	...
Kazakhstan	73	124	187	159	247	363	...

### **Findings and Recommendations**

Russian Federation is the centre of the Eurasian migratory subsystem, with wider scales of economy and labour market. However, for its diverse economic institutions to function properly, Russia is equally dependent on neighbouring CIS countries for providing labour power. Concomitantly, Russia shows lot of interests in strengthening ties with former Soviet Union republics with a priority to the migration policy. However, emergence of the new centres of gravity (e.g. Republic of Kazakhstan) for labour migrants testify that in the near future the direction of migratory flows in the former Soviet Union could be diversified, and Russia will have to face cuts in labour power. In this context, development of strategically verified migration policy at the national level, development of the regional integration processes and inter-state mechanisms of migratory cooperation with CIS countries is the vital task for Russia. In this context the first task is to bring some reforms in the system of quoting and issuance of work authorizations. Specifically, the system needs some transparency and a proper regulation in assigning quotas to employers.



Secondly, there is a need to conduct an objective assessment of the need of foreign labour power in Russian Federation and it must be made explicit in the concept note of the Russia's migration policy that Russia needs foreign labour power and the system of its attraction needs improvement with logically taking into account the population policy of the state. Thirdly, for a viable and strategic economic integration with Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Russian Federation needs to fully prevent the system of illegal migration. Indeed, labour migration is a real form of social and economic interaction between the countries of the former Soviet Union and promotes consolidation (integration) of the states. However, for the protection of the rights of their citizens abroad, there also needs a consolidation vis-à-vis the migration policy among member states as well rather regulating it in personalized interests. Such accentuation would lessen the chances of corruption, undocumented migration and politicizing the issues of immigration.

Another area of concern pertains to the regulation of labour migration and employment of the good number of people in goods and services sector which has to be connected with commerce and investment cooperation, that can help Russian Federation and the republic of Kazakhstan to overcome illegal migration and generate employment. Since, majority of the Central Asian illegal labour migrants in Russia are operational in agricultural industry and for agricultural imports Russia is highly dependent on European Union, Turkey, Israel etc., this twin issue could simply be resolved if Russia increases and effectively makes investments in the agro-industrial fields of the main donor countries of labour migrants in Central Asia and Transcaucasia, which is a traditional sphere of employment for majority of inhabitants in these regions, but diminished after the collapse of the Soviet Union. So possibly this could reduce the inflow of illegal migrants into the territory of Russia and Kazakhstan as well. Finally, it is necessary to define local opportunities including possibility of absorption of unemployed and studying youth, re-employment of pensioners, internal migration of manpower etc. and then to designate priorities of migration policy with the partner countries in the broader context of political and economic integration for the organized delivery of labour power.

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# INDIA'S AFGHAN POLICY

## PAKISTAN PERSPECTIVE AND CHINA FACTOR

Tabasum Firdous  
Tajalley Nazir  
Ashfaq M. Ali

### Abstract

*India has adopted a pro-active Afghan policy since the fall of Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The country has extended her financial assistance covering economic, social, political and even cultural development of this war-torn nation. US-decision of ISAF-withdrawal has necessitated the resolve to strengthen Afghan security forces. India has extended her support to train and equip the ANSF to deal with Taliban resurgence and other security related aspects. However, there are some interpretations, especially constructed by Pakistan think tanks regarding the suspicious role of India in Afghanistan. These interpretations manifest India's presence in Afghanistan as a strategic design to encircle and destabilize Pakistan. Since the US-NATO exit strategy, China too has become pro-active in relation to Afghan issue. Besides her economic considerations, the country has mainly the security concerns with increasing violence and instability of Afghanistan. There is also ambiguity regarding China's dual stand regarding terrorism and Taliban. It is in light of these issues that the paper focuses India's Afghan policy in changing circumstances. Besides analyzing Pak perspective and counter-responses regarding India's Afghan policy, an attempt has been made to underscore China as a factor for India in Afghanistan. The paper also highlights the common concerns of India and China in Afghanistan with the potential to push these nations for a joint workable strategy to deal post-ISAF situation.*

### Keywords

Afghanistan, China, Extremism, India, ISAF, Pakistan, Exit Strategy, Taliban, Terrorism, US, Think Tank, Cold War, Diplomatic Engagements.

Post-World War II era witnessed the ideological conflict between two power blocs that was termed by Bernard Baruch as 'Cold War'. This confrontation inseminated the seeds of conflict at certain places in a way that, even after twenty-five years of post-Cold war, achieving peace and stability has become a complex task. Afghan conflict also represents the same legacy of Cold war that has not only dismantled the country, but has emerged out as a most serious threat to the regional and global peace. Thus, it is obvious for the world-nations to dwell in for seeking a viable solution to assure peace. With the

NATO (Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization)-drawdown from Afghanistan and designs to withdraw International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) completely in near future, the regional actors including Pakistan, Iran, India, China, Central Asian Republics (CARs) and even Russia have to share the burden for assuring stability and prosperity of the region. The main issues of concern for these regional countries in relation to Afghanistan include terrorism, religious extremism and drug trafficking. Besides it, there are better prospects for enhancing inter-regional trade via Afghanistan as the country has the geo-strategic advantage of connecting South, West, Central and East Asia. The vital energy resources of the Central Asian region further adds to the significance of regional economic ties with Afghanistan as a connecting bridge. However, the ambiguities in the foreign policies of these regional actors regarding their relative gains has enhanced the complexities for designing any such regional cooperation.

India, being vulnerable to security threats and an energy-deficit nation, also aspires for same in relation to Afghanistan. Thus, the country has invoked a pro-active Afghan policy since the fall of Taliban regime. However, there are certain disturbances regarding her interests and concerns that are preventing the country to move smoothly for addressing her needs. The fundamental challenge is the perspective constructed by Pakistan in relation to India's presence in Afghanistan. This has been accompanied by the pro-active diplomacy of China in Afghanistan since 2012 and her support for Pakistan regarding certain issues that does not augur well for the interests of India. In this regard, it is significant to analyze India's Afghan policy from Pakistan perspective and subsequent stand of China.

India's foreign policy aspirations are at securing a stable, secure and prosperous neighbourhood and Afghanistan constitutes a road for such design. Thus, India's Afghan policy aims at promoting development, peace, security and stability of the Afghan nation. Besides promoting commercial relations, her investments in Afghanistan have been largely developmental. The country is seeking to explore new opportunities in Afghanistan to address her foreign policy aspirations. The country is helping this war-torn nation to promote democracy, strengthen political institutions and ensure security. Taking into consideration the changing circumstances at international scene, India has some considerable interests in Afghanistan. The country has a strong security interest in ensuring that Afghanistan remains a sovereign, stable, united and free from external influences. There are certain economic interests as well to explore the mutual benefits while connecting Afghanistan through wider road networks within the region. Afghanistan too provides a space for Indian companies currently engaged in the reconstruction process, and has repeatedly expressed her will to enhance Indian business while developing the manufacturing hubs in different sectors as cement, oil, gas, electricity, banking, communications etc.<sup>1</sup> India's efforts are to gain strong foothold in the South,

West and Central Asia by strengthening trade ties with Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> The country is also one of the fastest growing economies of the world and requires external energy resources to sustain her economic growth. This demand for energy has been growing at a rapid rate as expected to increase from 122 million tonnes in 2001-02 to 364 million tonnes in 2024-25.<sup>3</sup> Importing energy has thus become one of the important components of her foreign policy. All this suggests a comprehensive relationship with CARs considered as energy hub region of the contemporary times. Afghanistan can act as a transit route for energy supply from the Central Asian region to the India territory. India aspires to develop stronger economic relations and cooperation between south and central Asia and acknowledges the need to promote inter-regional economic integration. With the geo-strategic position of Afghanistan, India's major policy framework is to rebuild this country as a land bridge between these regions. This requires a peaceful, stable and modernized Afghanistan that essentially constitutes the basis for India's Afghan policy.

Bearing the geographic barrier to access to the Central Asian region and Afghanistan, Pakistan provides first-best option for India to reach therein. However, Pakistan's refusal to grant transit rights to India and the dynamism of Indo-Pak bilateral relations act as a big obstacle for India's 'Afghan Policy' and 'Connect Central Asia Policy'.<sup>4</sup> This pushes India to think of second-best option. Thus, the assistance to build Chah Bahar Port on the Makran coast in Iran and Zarang-Delaram highway in Afghanistan provides India an alternative route for connecting the resource rich region of Central Asia. Such developments and constructions assist the country to reach the CARs while cutting off Pakistan.

As per her security aspect, India has an abiding interest in containing and reversing the tide of religious fundamentalism and terrorism. Spread of Islamic extremism being the major threat to her security,<sup>5</sup> one of the objectives of India's Afghan Policy is to prevent the resurgence of radical Taliban. From realistic perspective, nexus between the terrorist groups operating in Af-Pak region would be hostile to her interests. Thus, rooting out terrorism and weakening its sponsoring agencies constitutes significant aspect of India's foreign policy.<sup>6</sup> It is under these security apprehensions that the country has designed her Afghan policy to combat terrorism and contain religious extremism. Illegal trade of drugs and opium production in Afghanistan are again a matter of concern for India as it constitutes a major source for the terrorist groups to generate money.<sup>7</sup> Thus, fighting drug trafficking and Narco-terrorism also forms a significant part of her Afghan Policy.

Thus, India's interests and policy initiatives in Afghanistan constitutes of the economic, political, social, cultural and strategic aspects. The country has spent nearly \$US 2.5 billion in some vital areas including infrastructure development, health facilities, education and so on with the aim to promote her interests in Afghanistan. However, there is suspicion regarding her

activities in this war-torn nation created by some international actors. This necessitates a scrutiny to analyse India's Afghan policy to check the validity of this suspicion. Thus, Pakistan perspective regarding India's Afghan policy is significant in this respect to evaluate the validity of this apprehension.

### **Pakistan Perspective regarding India's Presence in Afghanistan**

India and Pakistan are two primary rivals in South Asia. Both the countries have differences regarding their role in Afghanistan. The strategic triangle of 'India-Pakistan-Afghanistan' is evident with the observation that "*Central aim for Pakistan's military tsars is to make sure that the future political make-up in Afghanistan does not allow India to expand (her) security or even develop footprint*".<sup>8</sup> India's pro-active role and presence in Afghanistan since the fall of Taliban regime has created apprehensions within Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> The conflict between the two nations has moved beyond the traditional issues like Kashmir and has become more complex in terms of economic competition, international and regional status, regional alliances with divergent interests, access to the unexplored natural resources within the regions adjacent and so on.<sup>10</sup> Thus, resource rich Central Asia has also become a matter of concern among the two.<sup>11</sup> Pakistan perceives that India's presence in Afghanistan has the aim to marginalize the position of Pakistan in becoming a strong partner of Central Asian resources.<sup>12</sup> Thus, reducing India's influence in Afghanistan is vital for her strategic designs to prevent the country to reach Central Asia.<sup>13</sup> The country also has the apprehension regarding alleged designs of India to encircle her while maintaining foothold on Afghan soil,<sup>14</sup> with the aim to encourage conflict in Baluchistan and other provinces.<sup>15</sup> Various think tanks and observers in Pakistan have interpreted India's policy designs in Afghanistan with the aim of destabilizing Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> Referring to the building of hydropower projects on the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers, Pakistan claims that India has restricted the flow of waters to this country. Now, the initiatives to build hydropower projects on the Kabul River are certainly going to have severe consequences for Pakistan.<sup>17</sup> All this is being perceived as a strategic policy to undermine Pakistan's political stability, territorial integrity and economic viability.<sup>18</sup> Regarding the Indo-Afghan Strategic Agreement, Pakistan has raised concerns about her long-term interests in the region.<sup>19</sup> The country also construes India's Afghan policy as a design to counter-balance Pakistan's support to the insurgency movement of Kashmir.<sup>20</sup> Thus, India is Pakistan's primary target to blame for increasing violence and terrorist attacks on Pak soil and suspects her support for insurgencies in Baluchistan and Waziristan.<sup>21</sup> Even, there is a perception that India's construction of Zaranj-Delaram highway on one side and dams on the Kabul River on the other side aim at creating rift between Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, Pakistan has always seen Afghanistan as her backyard. The country was among the only three countries that recognized Taliban

government in Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup> There was a policy framework under the designs of Strategic Depth whereby Pakistan used Afghan territory against the interests of India.<sup>24</sup> The country has again emerged out with strong resolve to engage Taliban and Haqqani Network in peace talks with Kabul. Thus, there is suspicion regarding Pak designs for reengaging strategic depth to limit India's role and presence in post-US Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup> The country announced the end of support to the Taliban immediately after the event of 9/11. Now, when the US has announced to withdraw troops, and the new NATO-led mission "Resolute Support" commenced her new task solely to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Forces since 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2015. Pakistan has the designs to map out the future arrangements in Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> This may prove harmful for India's regional interests. Thus, the long-standing objective of India has been to support and strengthen a friendly democratic government in Afghanistan with no external influence.<sup>27</sup> Intruding militant organizations in power sharing at Kabul will help Pakistan reassure her influence in Afghanistan. Thus, the country is trying hard to bring Haqqani Network into the negotiating table with Kabul.<sup>28</sup> Assessing that US is not capable of handling the Afghan war properly; the Pak Army shows the interest for the workable exit strategy to set the deal with Taliban.<sup>29</sup>

Resurgence of Taliban has been attributed to the operation grounds mainly across the southern Afghanistan in the tribal areas of Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> US officials and intelligence reports also expressed the same concern that Taliban resurgence intensifies because of the safe havens in Af-Pak region.<sup>31</sup> India, being the victim of state sponsored terrorism at domestic level since 1990s, is now facing the same in abroad. This is evident with the attacks killing Indians workers and targeting her official establishments in Afghanistan. Thus, India is not at ease with direct involvement of Pakistan, backed by China, in the process of reintegration and reconciliation of Taliban. Containing Pakistan from playing such proxies is thus a crucial challenge for India's Afghan Policy.

### **China Factor in Afghanistan**

China has an interest in Afghanistan's long-term stability. The deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan with the drawdown of ISAF has pushed the country for a pro-active role in seeking alternative designs. Her main objective is to ensure that instability doesn't spread to the disturbed Xinjiang province. Thus, the country abandoned her policy to remain totally passive about post-NATO Afghanistan. Relying on her traditional strength of economic engagement, the country is stepping up with a newly proactive diplomacy in the region. Thus, it is imperative to understand China's Afghan policy vis-à-vis the changing circumstances.

China and Afghanistan are neighbours sharing 76-km border, though it lacks the infrastructure required to connect the two countries. After the formation of the People's Republic of China, exchanges between the two sides

were low for a long time. However, due to the Soviet expansionist threat, it was during 1970s when China started extending support to resistance groups, the *Mujahideen*, even before Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.<sup>32</sup> After the Soviet withdrawal and its subsequent disintegration, there was again no formal relation or involvement of China in Afghan conundrum. During Taliban era, Pakistan proved crucial for China in facilitating the diplomatic meet between Chinese representatives and Mullah Omar, the then Taliban leader.<sup>33</sup> As an outcome of this meeting, Mullah Omar assured the Chinese government that Afghan territory will never be allowed for militant organizations which were fighting for an independent Uighur province of Xinjiang. Following the event of 9/11, Beijing was stuck in the middle to see the fall of Taliban on one side and the US presence in Central Asia and Afghanistan on the other. In post-9/11 era, the country again remained less active in Afghan affairs with minimal economic assistance up to US\$ 250 million.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, China has a policy resolve that economic development will ultimately led to address the issues of terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan. This is evident with the opinion of Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his Kabul visit in February 2014 that: *"We hope to see the development of Afghanistan. Development is fundamental and only with economic growth can the poverty problem be solved and the foundations of terrorism and extremism be eliminated."*<sup>35</sup> It was in 2007, that China won the tender for investment in the Aynak copper mine.<sup>36</sup> If the country will continue and enhance such economic initiatives, this will provide her an easy access to the resources therein, taken into account the technical and local expertise of Chinese firms. However, with the strong resurgence of Taliban and violent activities of extremists since the ISAF-drawdown, protecting economic assets and personnel in Afghanistan has become a difficult task for all investors. For instance, the above referred Chinese investment in Aynak copper mine was attacked more than 20 times over the subsequent years, leading to the departure of 40 Chinese engineers because of security issues.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the basic concern of China is to shape post-ISAF Afghanistan's strategic environment for her own interests.

Internally, China is facing certain problems that made the country vulnerable for religious extremism and terrorism. Ethnic unrest, terrorism and Islamic extremism in Xinjiang province have been an ongoing concern for Chinese authorities for decades. Tensions have been particularly heightened since 2009, when nearly 200 people died in ethnic violence in the provincial capital of Urumqi.<sup>38</sup> More than 100 people died in violent incidents in June 2014, including 59 'terrorists' gunned down by police.<sup>39</sup> Restrictions on religious expression has also become a matter of concern in relation to China and this has direct link with the Islamic extremism within the region. For example, 'Project Beauty', launched in 2013, is a program aimed at encouraging Uyghur women to dress less conservatively.<sup>40</sup> More recently, the city of Karamay introduced rules to ban temporarily the people who are



sporting beards or wearing hijabs from catching the bus.<sup>41</sup> Also, there have been reports of Uyghur students or government officials being forced to break their fast during Ramadan (Holy Month of fasting for Muslims).<sup>42</sup> Thus, all this is providing a ground for extremist organizations operating within the region to influence the ongoing scission movement in Xinjiang province.

Threat of terrorism can not be ruled out in China with the existing terrorist organizations in the region targetting the country. The Sunni Uyghur militant groups based near the Af-Pak border have claimed responsibility for a small number of attacks in China. Among them, the most prominent group, Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), claimed responsibility for several bus bombings in 2008<sup>43</sup> and also for an attack in Kashgar in July 2011 that killed three dozen people.<sup>44</sup> In 2012, Abdullah Mansour emerged as the TIP's leader, and since then the group has issued frequent and more sophisticated videos with the media wing of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) praising attacks in Xinjiang.<sup>45</sup> In 2013, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri endorsed the right of militants to fight Chinese in Xinjiang.<sup>46</sup> In July 2014, Islamic State (ISIS) leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi said in a speech to rally global support that "*Muslim rights are forcibly seized in China, India, Palestine*",<sup>47</sup> raising concerns among Chinese authorities. Thus, there is an expert opinion regarding the unrest in Xinjiang to be adopted as a cause by extremist groups operating within the region.

Beijing view all these security risks and the impact of consequences of post-ISAF Afghan instability on the country's security with utmost concern. Thus, the policy-makers have designs to contribute to the stabilization of Afghanistan. Hu Shisheng of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) states, "*Now with the US strategic focus shifting, neighbouring countries cannot just let Afghanistan descend into chaos.*"<sup>48</sup> Li Wei, also from CICIR, indicates that: "*Although the US will leave behind a level of military force, the pressure on terrorist forces in Central and South Asia will inevitably be eased...in this upcoming period pressure from terrorism in Xinjiang will be quite large.*"<sup>49</sup> Some Chinese analysts argue that the drawdown of ISAF will provide Uyghur militant groups with an opportunity to co-opt other terrorist groups to their cause. There is also the fright regarding Afghan territory being utilized by Uighur militants as a operational grounds. For example, Hu Shisheng of CICIR argues that: "*The Pakistan and the Afghanistan Taliban are sympathetic towards the Uyghurs. So we absolutely have to pay attention to this, in a way that perhaps we did not before.*"<sup>50</sup> However, taking into consideration China's foreign policy stance of non-aggression and non-intervention, the experts suggest diplomatic and economic engagements of China with Afghanistan, besides strengthening her own immunity.

China's diplomatic engagement with Afghan issue has strengthened significantly since 2011. The country has deepened her bilateral relations with Afghanistan while signing a new partnership agreement and sending the first

politburo-level visitor to the country in decades. Beijing has been reportedly rebuilding the direct links it had with the Taliban prior to the US invasion in 2001.<sup>51</sup> This may continue and perhaps strengthen after the ISAF withdrawal. Re-engaging Taliban after its strong resurgence is in the interest of China as the country wants to prevent Afghan territory from being used against her interests. Thus, China is now-a-days active in facilitating peace talks between the government of Afghanistan and Taliban. Besides US and Pakistan, China was behind the peace talks initiated between Taliban and Afghan government in the town of Murree on the outskirts of Pakistani capital Islamabad in July 2015.<sup>52</sup>

Beijing has been overwhelmingly proactive in Afghan affairs since last few years. With the commitment to increase her economic footprint in Afghanistan, both the countries declared a “strategic and cooperative partnership” in June 2012. While appointing Sun Yuxi as the country’s special envoy to Afghanistan in July 2014, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that, Sun was appointed “*to step up the communication with Afghanistan and all parties concerned and safeguard lasting peace, stability and development of Afghanistan and the region.*”<sup>53</sup> Realizing that the US was not planning to maintain ISAF presence in Afghanistan for a long-term, the country engaged regional actors including Pakistan, Russia and India into bilateral and multi-lateral dialogues to discuss what next? In addition, China and Russia hosted a 6+1 (China, Russia, Afghanistan, India, Iran, Pakistan + United States) Dialogue on the Afghanistan issue in Geneva in March 2014.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, China is committed to the stability of Afghanistan and has initiated economic engagements and regional cooperation in this regard. Being unlikely to make any meaningful security commitment to Afghanistan, Beijing will continue to enhance its diplomatic and economic engagement with the country. However, the security concerns of the country are much deeper than the economic considerations. As per the Chinese concerns in Afghanistan, it is indicative that the country has much more to share with India’s Afghan policy. Both the countries are committed to establish peace and stability in this war-torn nation. Both are seeking a pro-active role to deal with Afghan conflict. The countries are also economically engaged with Afghanistan in terms of trade, infrastructural development, investments and exploration of natural resources. They have a common interest to enhance inter-regional trade links via Afghan territory. Religious extremism and terrorism also concerns both the nations as they are, in one way or other, the victims of terrorism and have security threats within their territorial domains. The emergence of ISIS (Islamic State) at the international scene and the reports regarding the presence of this group in Afghanistan has intensified these security concerns within the region. Besides it, both the nations are also concerned about the issue of drug trafficking within the region. There are some differences on certain issues including Taliban talks. However, both the nations have initiated bilateral and multilateral means

to deal with the Afghan issue. India's permanent membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will strengthen the relations between the two countries that can further enhance the cooperation to discuss Afghan issue vis-à-vis the changing circumstances.

In terms of military engagements, both China and India have agreed to support and train Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to deal with post-ISAF situation. India is providing training to the Afghan forces under the Strategic Agreement signed in 2011. China too has agreed in 2012 to train around 300 Afghan police officers in China over four years.<sup>55</sup> One of the options discussed and debated among the analysts is that providing training and equipment for ANSF would be a more direct way to shape the security and stability of Afghanistan. Along with co-authors Raffaello Pantucci of the Royal United Services Institute in London and Ravi Sawhney of New Delhi's Vivekananda International Foundation, Hu Shisheng proposed that China and India could jointly train a "mineral-assets protection force" in Afghanistan.<sup>56</sup> This joint mechanism can be further enhanced to assure a stable Afghanistan.

Finally, China trusted Pakistan during 1990s for engaging militant organizations in a dialogue to assure her own national security. However, the new generation of terrorist organizations in Af-Pak region are explicitly out of control and are instead targetting Pakistan establishments. This indicates that relying on Pakistan to deal with this new generation of terrorism is suicidal. Thus, China has to engage India passionately with respect to the regional terrorism and extremism. As discussed above, both the countries are vulnerable for terrorist threats and the post-ISAF situation may demand Indo-China joint mechanism to deal with the regional security scenario. Thus, there should be no fundamental reliance on the good and bad boy theory of terrorism. China has to follow the Indian and Russian stand regarding terrorism that all terrorists are same requiring same treatment to be eliminated.

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