

Rethinking Peace and Development in South Asia: Policy Guidelines for Pakistan

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Abstract

During the course of history Pakistan is greatly influenced by changing global political conditions as well as romanticism which perpetually influence the fragmented considerations of the region. To understand a political evolution in postcolonial South Asia, it is important to observe its relations within power politics on a profound consideration of political dynamics. Even Political theorists and policy analysts are persuaded to make policy assessments out of ahistorical approaches and falsified deductions. The result is always that the complications prevail endlessly in the region. For that reason, it is important to rethink global political history of South Asia. To be sure, the proper insinuations of contemporary age issues can only be examined when changing dynamics of global power interests is taken as a discourse integral to the enormous flux of international political milieu. Keeping in view the historical undercurrents, this study provides a conceptual framework for preparing Pakistan for the conduct of its foreign policy and planning peace and development strategy in line with futuristic research.

Keywords: South Asia, peace management, global powers, neo-colonialism, decolonised futures

Introduction

All peace projects are distinctive and have their peculiar work setting and arrays of methodological supplies. Therefore, the implementation of these peace projects is subject to numerous limitations that constrain the initiation, development, and consolidation of strategic plans to identify and manage hotspots, potentially influencing other perspectives on peace. This article therefore presents historical analysis for understanding contemporary age peace issues in South Asia and its political landscape in order to reformulating the peace and development in South Asia. This study specifically addresses the following research questions.

- (a) What is the nature of typical conflicts in significant hotspots of the region?

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- (b) How to categories these conflicts for proper identification and strategy development?
- (c) What are the contemporary Roman peace practices and the theoretical models of peace brokering in South Asia?

Furthermore, the research aims to advance a methodological peace management perspective, so here in this study the conflict management system is taken up as the practice of classifying, ordering, demonstrating, and scheduling conflicts. The objective herein is to deliver a wide-ranging historical standpoint as well as official policy formulations and think thanks advisory regarding conflict assessment and develop a work plan for contemporary South Asia.

The outcome is expected to be useful for the peace keeping missions and other stakeholders in evolving multi-dimensional diplomatic strategies and apparatuses for conflict management and futuristic planning.

A preliminary literature review shows that past studies are primarily focused on understanding and modeling a particular type of conflict, such as inter-armed, border disputes, water resource, territorial, and hybrid wars. Limited progress has been made on classifying various conflicts according to their characteristics in a comprehensive manner. In terms of modeling and resolving conflicts, various approaches have been recommended. For example, many RPM-based methods are applied to deal with short term conflicts; The Armed Conflict Database (ACD) produced by the IISS (London) has been identifying nine South Asian internal and international conflicts. A large number of South Asian think-tanks, including those funded by governments as also those affiliated to established universities, are involved in conflict studies, with one of them based in New Delhi, the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), running an annual conference on the study of 'Armed Conflicts in South Asia' for the past six years. The Pak Institute for Peace Studies has also been computing information on conflicts in South Asia on a periodic basis. In this study, it is proposed to identify the conflict types in South Asia and discuss their causes and consequences. What is missing from the past studies is a comprehensive and structured approach in understanding conflicts.¹

By definition, conflicts are typically taken up as pulling the maps out and, simply estimating the intensity and engaging the international relations experts to soak the conflagrations, for instance border disputes

¹ S. D. Muni, 'Conflicts in South Asia: Causes, Consequences, Prospects', (ISAS Working Paper), 2013, 54, also see Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihad, and Modernity* (London and New York: Verso, 2002).

and inter-armed conflicts, which most often thwart any peace plan to bring back normalcy. Positive outcomes and peace management processes in South Asia in particular banks on historical analysis and supervision of conflicts through grand global political analysis and conundrums of power politics.

While the former identifies global players' strategic interests and their special relationship approach with small nations, the latter provides a brief context of dissident dividends and a short history of the impact of Cold War in South Asia. Principally, former aspect should reproduce 'wide horizon: from religion to economics, from geography to politics, from history to myth, from race to genocide', and empowering diplomatic community with one very important intellectual concern of multifaceted situation.² The historical and contextual analysis too is a detailed presentation of the post-colonial and postmodern South Asian politics authored by Sirnath Raghavan.³ This study offers a synopsis of historical political analysis with non-peripheral conception of the region for handling conflicts in futures.

One notable professor in the history department of Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan, came to conclude on the trajectory of United States politics by offering an analysis for the rejection of the epistemological basis of modern liberal democracy by minorities and influential classes of developing nations. He issued a caution to the Biden-Harris administration on the strengthening of 'racist-plutocratic' elements in such words: 'the trouble is that racism and plutocracy are more integral to the American political tradition and culture of power than the socially progressive liberalism that a majority of Americans actually aspires to'.⁴

J.J. Mearsheimer argues that the chaotic configuration of the international system is cardinal to international conflict. His main concern has been that while imposing liberal democracy in the world,

² Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence* (reproduced in PDF by Sani Panhwar in 2013), 1967. It can be found online at: www.bhutto.org.

³ Srinath Raghavan, *The Most Dangerous Place: A History of United States in South Asia*, (India: Penguin Random House, 2018).

⁴ Ilhan Niaz, *Constitutional Plutocracy and Its Discontents: America After Trump*, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, www.ipripak.org. See *The State during the British Raj: Imperial Governance in South Asia, 1700-1947* (Oxford University Press, 2019). Also see his, *New World Empires: Cultures of Power and Governance in the Americas* (London: Oxford University Press, 2023).

America might put away itself.⁵ For him, liberalism was fated to be failed as the experts on international relations and believers in liberal hegemony have ignored the association between liberalism, nationalism, and realism, that realism and nationalism are relatively great signifiers that challenge liberalism. In the lieu of democracy and pluralism, J.J. Mearsheimer differentiated liberalism at home from liberalism abroad saying that liberalism by itself is not a bad idea, yet the West takes metalanguage of liberalism (as a universalist ideology) abroad up to leading the violence by denying Other societies their particular outlook as western sole focus is always on their narcissistic individuality and as Western critical knacks cannot guarantee the universal unanimity on the good life for South Asia or any other region.⁶

J.J. Mearsheimer states that liberals do not have room for harmonizing conduct as they believe in the aggressive application of democracy across the world. For him, the dilemma of global liberal order lies in the trinity of liberal democracy: to guard human rights all across the world, to cause international peace, and to shield liberalism at home. He exposes the excuse made by American foreign policy experts that blaringly claim that non-liberal nations are in a state of aggression against their own masses. Therefore, their liberal logic of democratization in the post-colonial world indeed goes against core American values by turning the United States into a militarized state as he argued the structure of the international system under great powers is discriminatory enough to become only a hegemon. Hence, he refuted the liberal unrestraint ideological presence in post-colonial world and reminded the United States to learn from American war history, especially interference in South Asian Afghanistan.⁷

Douglas Little has comprehensively narrated US presence in the Middle East stating how the South Asian region was pulled for planning

⁵ John. J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

⁶ John. J. Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*, Henry L. Stimson Lectures (Yale University Press: 2019).

⁷ *Ibid.*, John J. Mearsheimer, delivered the Henry L. Stimson Lectures on World Affairs at the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale. In these lectures he takes a sharp break from contemporary liberal international order which run under the emblem of universal human rights and the Responsibility to Protect, see, Henry L. Stimson Lectures: 'The Roots of Liberal Hegemony', 'The False Promise of Liberal Hegemony', 'The Case for Restraint'.

a secret US war in Afghanistan during Cold War.⁸ The onset of power-politics in South Asia brought multiple problems in the region. A new South Asia was the overall requirement for the West that could serve the ideological ends of the Cold war against Soviet Russia and Red China. In 1959, the West cherished its long-cherished dream of supporting Indians against China after the Sino-Indian border dispute. In the Middle East too, the internal divide intensified the political divide in the region. Pro-western nations had to serve the cynical ends of westernization of the globe. After eliminating the menace of Muslim powers from Asia in colonial times, the end of history was temporarily viewed, however Chinese civilization after 1900 strongly resisted against European colonization, therefore after the ascendancy of the United States in the post-colonial world, it had acquired legacy of colonial political history that was to encircle China.

The regional security complex was another product of the modern conception of the modern secular nation-states. Security rings were introduced and mass destruction arms were deployed for the rigid strategy of the Cold War. After that ideological warfare was started in the region and change of strategy in the cold war during the Kennedy period. Displacement in the name of progress is another example of imposed modernity in South Asia. 'Thus, while international regulatory agencies facilitate the expansion of multinational empires in the background, our attention is constantly directed towards pronouncements by political leaders about inflation, unemployment, economic recoveries, proliferating choices and good times ahead'.⁹

Western World not only introduced free-market capitalism in South Asia, but the canons of neocolonialism worked beyond the liberalization. Liberal democracy was exported from the West, and it was embraced by the South Asian nations, but in limited editions. Several martial laws and military dictators hijacked progressive movements as and when desirable by the West.¹⁰ What if a national government made by electoral polls do not be pro-western? It must be derailed. As against its norms and values, the West has usually been supporting (militarily, politically, and financially) authoritarian elements in the region just for the sake of the military industrial system and for the sake of political alliances.

⁸ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism – The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. 2003), 152.

⁹ Ziauddin Sardar, *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture* (London; Chicago, Ill: Pluto Press, 1998), 54.

¹⁰ Tariq Ali, *op.cit.* Also see Srinath Raghavan, *op.cit.*

West has also exercised the authority not only to divide and rule but also to unite and rule the nations and people of the world when and so required. Besides imposed unity, it offered imposed economic benefits and consumed them in military alliances as against the regional interest and local stakeholders.¹¹ Free liberal democratic order would not have been achieved without the support of small countries like Pakistan, for example, to contain the Soviet socialist order. Retaining independence in this global period is much complex than it was in the past. In the conduct of foreign relations with the global powers, Pakistan's preparedness is far behind the full-scale synergy it can actually exhibit to achieve a respectable position among nations of this world. Not only regional confrontations with its relatively powerful neighbor India are the modern challenges but also the neutrality-based bi-lateral relations with global nations it has to be maintained. Growing dependence on foreign loans weakens the strategic aspects of its foreign policy if dimensions of futuristic approach are not consciously incorporated. What are those features that are involved in guiding the foreign policy of the country? The sooner Pakistan realizes the compromises it has to make under monetary compulsions, the easier it will be to catch up the course of self-interest-based national economic plan, political philosophy, and geographic compatibility.

The dilemma that modern international relations have been based on crude committal alliances with foreign powers has diminished the chances for evolving progressive relations with other powerful countries. However, the policy of isolation can no longer be advisable and recommended for any smaller nation like Pakistan. This pliability is further extended even to the extent of absolute dependency and compromising gradually the fundamental principles of sovereignty for foreign demands of doing more. History of diplomacy and foreign policy during colonial and post-colonial South Asia has witnessed that foreign interference has acted as a complex and compounded source of international commitments that systematically bounds weaker nations on an economic level and on security aspects whereas serving them nothing in the real sense of scientific and industrial development. This is the ultimate symbiosis between giant monetary powers and loan-dependent smaller nations in this new global age. In order to obtain the allegiances of local ruling elites, modern economies of even democratic states are tailored with fundamentalist ideologies as a necessity by the proponents of Economic Elite Domination. South Asia has remained the obsession and jealousy among alien powers of the world. Dependency theories

¹¹ See SEATO and CENTO as security alliances during Cold War.

expose this natural disparity and seek to alter the unhealthy connection between weak and powerful nations.¹²

Over the past twenty-two years of this century and fifty-two years of the last one, post-independence South Asian democratic structure has not made any revolutionary industrial developments in the region whereas communist countries in its Far-East neighborhood have passed successfully the global rise of their scientific and technical advancements. South Asia is still far behind the *Hi-tech* super World. Trade monopolies complicate international relations more when regions are dependent on certain global power for technical assistance and economic aids. Already existing international rivalries during the Cold War and New Cold War induce a variety of complex situations that affects the natural course of bi-lateral relations among and between the regional nations of South Asia. There are certainly big players who enjoy a huge status of special relationship with superpowers, however, a small country like Pakistan is historically neglected and it had to suffer both by its hostile neighbor India and most allied ally – the United States of America. Suffering from its neighbor are based on hostility and suffering from later are significant in terms of its being entangled to regional security crises. Pakistan was unheard of and always ignored. It's a historical fact that the West has relied on Pakistan more than Pakistan has ever depended on the West. A number of American demands always have been more than Pakistan's original capacity whereas Pakistan's choices were often over-ruled despite being a few.

Apart from this regional inequality, the point to functionalism and pragmatism of South Asian love for democracy is otherwise a deposited check in favour of the West. Excluding the smart span of neutralist Nehru in India from 1947 to 1959, and seven years' Z.A. Bhutto era in Pakistan, the region as a whole has veered fully into Euro-Atlantic global settings. Ironically, having to perform in tight accordance with global aims of same global partner, the varying degree of regional mutual animosity is interestingly on the systematic rise and complexly developed. This is how a region is accustomed to global political changes and its foreign policy orientation is locked into complex global hegemony. The flux of global power relations impacts so severely that constant mutual antagonism begins to end the bilateral relations among or between South Asian nation-states. A history of constant confrontation in the region is otherwise the long-lasting impression of

¹² S. Hobden, R. Jones, J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relation* (London: Oxford University Press. 2017).

global strategic contestation in the current global world. A scholarly approach is needed to cover the interplay of global foreign powers (tri-polar USA-Russia-China) and the quick trajectory of their contradictory overlapped strategic interests evolving the region alarmingly in permanent turmoil.

Sino-Soviet Split and its subsequent Indo-China dispute resulted in favor of Capitalist block, where Western world borrowed South Asian democratic and military support in its favor, however, the region is never paid off as against its false promises of liberal world order. The cost and consequences during alignment to Western camp are worth studying as the region facing a stark challenge of underdevelopment, poverty, human development and class conflict.

In his handy effort of public history, Pankaj Mishra traces a history of the rise of the Age of Anger from the Enlightenment past to what he remarks as the dangerous global present. How the modern upheavals are shifting into new clashing realities, he argued that colonialism and modernity are giving way to an ostensible global disorder. Mishra's analyzes how we reached the Age of Anger. Intellectuals in subaltern and imperial histories have argued that the absolute superiority of tales of Western liberal advancement have masked the collapsing foundations of the modern global world. During the twentieth century, through a number of arrangements of the non-Western world (particularly South Asia) inside a Eurocentric global order, he makes obvious the rise of mass anger from the Enlightenment. He also maintained that the logical culmination of this liberal modernization is going to be expressed in the global clash of civilizations. Mishra predicts a breakup between powerful elites and the powerless class. And this class is now heading for 'cultural supremacism, populism and rancorous brutality' owing to false promises of modernity. Now the world is on the verge of a 'global civil war'.¹³

Reasons for failure of liberalisation of trade under South Asian Free Trade Area among South Asian states was their eternal mistrust and protectionism.¹⁴ Under what necessity free trade and neo-liberalism introduced denationalization in South Asia certainly involves an essential reassessment of the decline of politics under late capitalism and the emerging imposition of multinational colonialism on developing nations.

¹³ Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017).

¹⁴ Bhumitra Chakma, *South Asian Regionalism: The Limits of Cooperation*. (Bristol University Press, 2020).

After the replacement of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) agreement by World Trade Organization (WTO) and its associated liberalisation of non-western economies, one notable author indicates that ‘foreign investments and technology transfer procedures are decided not by national laws but by an international capitalist procedural framework designed and monitored by WTO itself put unbearable pressure on small, poor countries to reduce their national sovereignty and restructure their economies in a way which facilitates profit-maximisation for the multinationals and the international banks. ‘It acquired centralizing institutional profiling in some interrelated economic domination – the strict monetary policies of the industrialized nations on small countries, and the structuralized and systematized liberal imperialism,¹⁵ which dictated Western hegemony through promoting ‘cultures of poverty’ and rural poverty and actors of global dominance involve even the states in denial of the basic human rights to the Dalits, marginalized and subalterns.¹⁶

Colonial politics was about divide and rule, yet late modernization sought to unite and rule South Asian nations. One of the most influential pronouncements of such normless might making right modern politics as global powers’ domination is Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s *The Myth of Independence*. He explains how South Asia was pulled for new ambitions after the divide and rule policy was inherited by America from the British and was transformed into ‘unite and rule’ to contain China and the Soviet Union during Cold War. His analysis of the connection between colonialism and neo-colonialism in modern South Asia characterizes the leading tendencies in accounts of global power politics and financial and monetary diplomacy. He localizes colonialism in the territory of international relations and the newly independent nations. Neo-colonialism is comprehended with regard to the ‘United States,’ in terms of leading global players exercising their systematic economic hence political ascendancy among poor nations through interference into domestic affairs and bilateral relations of the underdeveloped countries. He argued that inter-state armed conflicts among and between South Asian states must be contextualized with regard to the global institutional domination.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ziauddin Sardar, *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Rajiv Malhotra and Aravindan Neelkandan, *Breaking India: Western Interventions in Dravidian and Dalit Faultlines* (India: Infinity Foundation, 2011).

¹⁷ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *op.cit.*

Power Imbalance in South Asia: Right after independence, Red Cliff Award became bone of contention. Then there was Kashmir issue. Both neighbours faced massive migrations and bloodshed in result of riots and communal violence. From the beginning a security lapse in the region led Pakistan to blame India for swallowing its territories under the Hindu militant ideology of Akhand Bharat. Where India owing to being close to Soviet Union and Sino-Soviet split in 1955 went into Ladakh dispute in 1959 which led to further event of Sino-Indian war in 1962, Indo-Pak War of 1965 and 1971 etc. South Asian regional antagonism is deeply rooted in history, however modern scholarly approaches towards studying such a delicate balance of power in the region don't usually cover underlying global, geopolitical, and economic conditions. What they miss during their intellectual exercise is that how great power politics develops spheres of influence to dominate internal concerns of post-colonial countries as well as how bilateral relations on the regional level are externally controlled. Regardless of what is the evolution of global political conditions in the region and how global powers balanced out colonial enterprises into neo-colonial transformation, the scholar community engaged in studying South Asian conflicts needs to double-check the alarming level of foreign interference and entanglement affecting the balance scale of peace and harmony in the region.¹⁸

South Asian regional antagonism grew deep not simply because of its complex history or legacy of inter-state armed conflicts among and between post-colonial countries, a varying level of geo-politics is integrated where the concentration of superpowers interests' is involved. Small nations are caught in such a geo-political web to address their short-term economic and security interests, however, ignoring their long-term policy of bilateralism or 'neutralism' has a cost. For these, preventive diplomacy has no scope in fact as the objective conditions are so compelling that they permanently affect the long and durable peace process.

During the Cold War, ideological supremacy and economic domination remained the principal factors involved in the modernization of South Asia where the Western world envisioned developing special relationships accordingly with different units of the post-partitioned Sub-continent. The swing of the pendulum between Hindus and Muslims under the formula of divide and rule during colonial rule was transformed into merging the resources of both India and Pakistan to collaborate on broader capitalist order, howsoever was the actual size of

¹⁸ S.D. Muni, *op.cit.*, 2013, 54. Also see Tariq Ali, *op.cit.*, by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and Bhumitra Chakma, *op.cit.*

internal differences between and among the states of South Asia. In the modern mission of 'orientalizing' the region, regional peace and co-existence along with industrial and technological advancements were compromised by adopting neo-colonial requirements.

In addition to assuming that South Asian Inter-state animosity is the product of global powers confrontation and contestation, it can be further argued that such global rivalries generate an atmosphere of additional inter-state armed conflicts, internal political turmoil, hybrid warfare, or even much controversial issues like sectarianism, separatism, fundamentalism, and terrorism. Generating hybridity of conflicts at local levels, global controversies endure South Asian regional antagonism to obscure the tangram conundrum of high-power politics. I argue that South Asian regional conflict dynamics are directly proportional to global controversies like Cold War, New Cold War, and War on Terror. Global power's strategic framework objectives entangle the region in such a way, that inner concerns of the region are largely compromised and implications for smaller countries are greater than these to be imagined in the real life. South Asian actors and factors need to be counted before studying this whole region in turmoil and constant geopolitical dilemma. The concentration of global interests' clashes makes this region more confrontational. Dramatically, there is a constant perpetuation of global players' political, economic, and ideological interaction in the polyglot region. Making this point, a United States President John F Kennedy commented on the predicament of post-colonial complexity of South Asia:

'The fact, of course, is we want to sustain India, which may be attacked this fall by China. So, we do not want India to be helpless as a half billion people.... Of course, if that country becomes fragmented and defeated, of course, that would be a most destructive blow to the balance of power. On the other hand, everything we give to India adversely affects the balance of power with Pakistan, which is a much smaller country. So we are dealing with a very, very complicated problem, because the hostility between them is so deep'.¹⁹

United States, China, and Russia is the global triangle under which South Asia is geographically sliced. The US needs South Asia due to its ideological triumph of capitalist, liberal, and democratic order over either Russian communism or Chinese traditionalism. Global powers problems aside, region's small countries are not only subjected to

¹⁹ President John F Kennedy, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHA/1963/JFKWHA-215/JFKWHA-215> Press Conference, 12 September 1963.

region's big player aggressive ambitions, but also global player's international commitments. And there is no limit to this committal relationship. Yet the region has been through constant regional conflict under realism and neo-realism as a permanent development/peace deadlock. Edward Said's Orientalism identified fundamental flaws in these power-based relationships by which western world is able to manage the Asian former colonial world effectively enough even today.

Therefore, the natural milieu on regional unity like South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is impossible without external powers neutrality so that local partners can adopt the natural course of resolving their disputes without the interference of global powers. Cold War is typically referred to old-aged powers disputes among big powers and their style of local intervention during colonial time and post-colonial periods alike. American ascendancy has been remarkable in inheriting the same old patterns of British knowledge on South Asian administration. The essence of bilateral Indo-Pak relations should be equality instead of multiple monopolies and complex hegemony of relatively big players of the very region. The question is raised on the way how patterns of globalization and consolidation of Western economies aligning within this region address at the same time the future of national and human security concerns. We can also raise the question that how international relations can adopt between anarchy and hierarchy letting the regional issues and problems at hand be resolved within (among and between) the states.

While it is established that India is the highest beneficiary of global power alliances²⁰ and it has caused a genuine blow to the communist cause and helped to impede the creation of the real free world. It hijacked the spirit of the Third World as it decided to dilute its originally proclaimed neutralist stance to double alignment: one with the USA and the other with USSR. On one hand, it contributed to weakening Muslim unity, on the other, it denied geographical proximity and thus inviting neo-colonial continuity of the Western World in South Asia. In contrast to its immediate neighbor India, Pakistan has faced massive losses ranging from its constitution development, electoral politics, provincial autonomy, dismemberment, martial laws and sectarianism, and ethnic divisions to underdevelopment, economic dependency, national development etc. This list is as long as that every aspect of society is plagued with colonial, and Orientalist imaginations. Arguably, it can be proposed that a non-aligned India had a high hand in preserving

²⁰ Thornton. Regional Organizations in Conflict Management, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 1991.

capitalism as compared to Pakistan recognized as a committal and client state.

As an example of forced self-Orientalism, there is a need to historically review and revise Pakistan's role towards global power politics. I believe that policymakers in Pakistan should re-evaluate foreign policy goals with regards to dealing with the 'real others', and ultimately compromise the inner concerns of the country. There is a need to understand the foreign policy and diplomacy of Great power politics with reference to post-colonial South Asia. How has this region responded to the complexity and interconnectedness of the evolved global political situation? The multitude of considerations constructed different phases of special relationships with global nations witnessing a series of animosities and antagonisms between and among countries of South Asia. An endless regional conflagration marked underdevelopment and national crises on various scales. Foreign intervention and cannons of neo-colonialism engaged the region into alien political developments and entangled regional nations to the point of interference. The conflicting self-interests of global nations in South Asia segregated smaller nations through alliances and compelled them to be a party in the Cold War and New Cold War, hence turning them into real estate of the international powers. The bilateral relations, mutual cooperation, or collective bargaining capacity of South Asian states has never been translated into contemporary events. Was this all regional turmoil at the cost of liberal democracy?

Yet democracy too meets the end for 'Westernization and modernization of other cultures. So, democracy comes with its own ideological baggage, which, in the case of other cultures, requires acceptance of Western liberalism, secularism and the notion of nation state'.²¹ While accommodating the society as constituted in liberal categories confines their options by restraining their ability to conceive some other substitute social systems, it does not dispossess them of all organization. Galbraith's theory of 'culture of contentment', for instance, highlights the ways in which capable pretenders can influence the electoral democracy in the capitalist world to their own personal advantage.²² So, the question arises: what is the essence of liberal democracy if we have disbelief that liberal systems settle governmental or power transfer issues? The postmodern answer to this question is that the liberal project does not basically ascend as a response to difficulties

²¹ Ziauddin Sardar, *op.cit.*

²² John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Culture of Discontentment* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992), 10.

originating from society. In its place, electoral democracy often attends purposes that it relates for itself. In his *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault, for analyses of the social efficiency of liberal principles, argued that the foremost consequence of modern political structure is the construction, rather than abolition, of delinquencies.²³ He further argued that the mechanism of the bourgeois led modern state machine has the elementary purpose of hosting and extending inconsistencies among the common people.²⁴

For a theoretical analysis of modern barbaric practices as authenticating a claim to liberal subjectivity as against the communist (Other) one, it was argued by notable modern Western scientists to acquire whatsoever means in an effort to eliminate Red menace from the world.²⁵ Diana Brydon has been the utmost outstanding exemption to the extensive embracing of evil within the field of comparative civilization. Though she is referred to as a keen adversary of modernism, nevertheless, she does not subscribe to the constitutive view of postmodern morality. Instead, she views the postmodern moral confusion as a political necessity and a matter of survival and status quo.²⁶ This is how every action is validated and everything is justified in postmodern democratisation. This is how corporatocracy and postmodernism are intrinsically merged. Thus, postmodernism creates the new correlation between culture and civilization.²⁷ As a strong critic of the postmodern project, Sardar quotes Ajami that he records 'the classical dividing line where civilization ends and the wilderness of the other begins'.²⁸

Francis Fukuyama's theory of American political hegemony following the fall of communism was superseded by Samuel Huntington's thesis concerning cultural conflicts and the collision of civilisations. According to Fukuyama, the US no longer has a strong

²³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Duke University Press, 2007), 56.

²⁴ Michel Foucault, *On Popular Justice: A Discussion with the Maoists, in Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books) 1980, 35.

²⁵ How modern means are justified in modern ends, see, Cold War phrase, 'Better Dead than Red' quoted by Eric Hobsbawm, *Barbarism, 'A user's Guide'*, *New Left reviews*, 206, (July/August 1994), 44-54.

²⁶ Diana Brydon, 'The White Inuit Speaks: Contamination as Literary Strategy,' in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin, eds., *Past the Last Post* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 192.

²⁷ Fouad Ajami, 'The Summoning', *Foreign Affairs*, 72:4 (September/October 1993). 1-15.

²⁸ Ziauddin Sardar. *op.cit.*, 83.

adversary in actual politics. However, Samuel Huntington emphasises the role of religion in forming identity and, consequently, in making political decisions. He asserted that if the Confucian and Muslim oil industries were combined, they would pose a real threat to the West and advised the American administration to pursue a military strategy in response to the growing likelihood of Sino-Muslim socio-political symbiosis.²⁹

But it has long been and is still argued by the West that diverse (Islamic as well as Hindu) South Asian and the Chinese world inherit ideological collusion. The former assassinated prime minister of Pakistan contextualizes in 1967 the predicament of grand Asian geopolitical Orient:

in less than a quarter of a century, Pakistan's relations with the United States and India have completed a cycle in each case. Vigorous efforts have been made to drag Pakistan away from the posture of confrontation to cooperation with India and, in this very process, relations with the United States have changed dramatically from those of the most 'allied ally' to the point at which it is alleged that there is 'collusion' between Pakistan and the United States' principal antagonist—the People's Republic of China. Plow these twin cycles have been completed offers an exciting study of the interplay of a host of related factors: national ethos, geography, a turbulent past, and hoary traditions. The pride and passions of an ancient people stirred by nascent Asian nationalism are involved. The story ranges over a wide horizon: from religion to economics, from geography to politics, from history to myth, from race to genocide. In this web the United States has been entangled at almost every point.³⁰

By making a binary opposition and by creating a virtual plurality that curtains the continuity in domination and disparity, the control of the Western culture is in fact perpetuated by the successors of liberal modernity. Western articulation of South Asia is fundamentally signified through representation, therefore there is no chance that the actuality of the region's cultures can be liberated from the fabricated descriptions of the West. Mainstream international relations view larger Asia as a land that is conflicting within. It is viewed that historic cultural animosity between Muslims and Hindus, between Hindus and Chines, is the natural

²⁹ Tariq Ali, *op.cit.*, 298-299.

³⁰ Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, *op.cit.*, 6.

outcome of the modern establishment of the nation states.³¹ That South Asian political stability must not be an epistemological question as per the needs of global politics in the future.³² Here it should be argued that the theory of clash of civilization should not be interpreted as it is presented.

America Inherits British Orientalism: South Asia: Inching towards Epic Transformation: Balance of power' in politics are the newest expression under nation states. The emergence of nation states in the South Asian region provides a typical illustration of how colonial rivalry can proliferate in post-colonial settings. The Hindu-Muslim relationship, which led to the founding of the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League, caused the subcontinent to divide. The demarcation of the religious difference established the groundwork for an ongoing struggle that both India and Pakistan acquired and developed following independence.³³ Conflicts in the region have lasted for more than seven decades, yet they have never been thoroughly examined from beginning to end. Nonetheless, there aren't many research on comprehending the similarities and patterns among all of the regional conflicts and integrating them into a cohesive whole. Rob Johnson's *A Region in Turmoil: South Asian Conflicts Since beginning* is one of these rare sources.³⁴

A contentious and problematic component of regional classifications is territorial nomenclature, which reflects the syllogistic activities of the British Empire's colonial era and its dishonest approach to nation building.³⁵ But South Asian geography and history have a long history of essentialising, fixing, and stereotyping, which has led to a recurrent fixation with nationalism's lexicon as a prelude to independence.

³¹ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72:3 (1993), 22-49.

³² Robert D Kaplan on South Asian Political Stability, *Rearranging the Sub-Continent*, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stratfor/2014/12/24/rearranging-the-subcontinent/?sh=29a9dcbc790d>

³³ Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 101.

³⁴ Rob Johnson, *A Region in Turmoil: South Asian Conflicts Since 1947* (Reaktion Books Ltd London: 2005), 7.

³⁵ Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 3.

The extreme and patriotic view of Indo-Aryan history by the Arya Samajis planted the seeds of Arya supremacy, restored national self-worth, and suggested that India would one day become one. The original anti-British movement, especially the Hindu-Muslim unification during Mutiny, was not the same as the liberation movement in British India. Tony Ballantyne, pointing to the survival of Arya philosophy in colonial India, critiques the practice of recording patriotic histories in South Asian history.³⁶

It's very interesting to note that these notions have been historically surpassed from Indian nationalism to Hindu fundamentalism equating India and Hinduism ascribing a narrower vision of the nation. The role of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has become prominent in the 2014, 2019 and 2024 elections in India and 'within South Asian context at least, the story of Aryanism continues, as it remains a central discursive formation in post-colonial politics' exposing that 'Aryan idea was inserted into various forms of colonial nationalism, indigenous social reform, and anti-colonial prophetic movements.' The author concluded that British India was a kind of imperial head quarter for transmitting Aryanism to other corners of the world, for creating connectivity among regions, for transforming worldviews, and finally for 'constructing a truly global picture of geography'.³⁷

The neglected field of conflicts generated by major global entities is brought to light by this research, whereas the demands of global order command significant scholarly interest.³⁸ Examining hostility and strategic rivalry in South Asia is a significant scholarly and public outreach endeavour. Gaining an understanding of how international political environments contribute to the never-ending conflicts in South Asia would require a real and concentrated effort. Conflicts within the region are still created today due to political conditions that have evolved over time and are based on administrative and creative orientalist concepts. According to Tariq Ali, American imperialism is the root-cause of all fundamentalisms and the most dangerous one that exists now.³⁹

People assert that South Asia lacks peace. However, what role does the actualisation of conflicts and the support of religious fundamentalism play in this process? And how arbitration is the latest

³⁶ Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (PALGRAVE, 2002), 49.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 181-95.

³⁸ S.D. Muni, *op.cit.*,

³⁹ Tariq Ali, *op.cit.*, xi.

tool in hands of global powers? Just like the lack of sciences, lack of literary traditions, lack of real human South Asian subjects, the idea of the lack of peace demands a level of political interference: this influence works as entry points not only for monetary loans and other structural adjustments and market monopoly and whole regional politics. There are structural flaws in global power politics as inequality is the natural outcome for small countries' national self-interests. Arbitration is the key area where they are betrayed against new rules of diplomacy.⁴⁰ Srinath Raghavan in his *The Most Dangerous Place: History of the United States in South Asia* has vividly elaborated how regional politics is directly affected by global forces agendas, globalisation waves, and the overall hierarchical nature of liberal political order.⁴¹ Indeed, Western Politics on inter-Asian conflicts is also a liberal peace enterprise.

This part concludes that how the British policy of 'make weighting' has been a constant feature of British Orientalism arguing that Euro-Atlantic policy unfolds even today around the notions of 'swing of pendulum' i-e giving one cultural group more value over other native cultural groups to manage political unity within and between varied communities of Asia. The wavering in Western appraisals of South Asian nations reflects particularly in shifting of the 'special relationships' against the requirements of global political systems. That both India and Pakistan though internally hostile sort of nations that can be jointly pulled for the containment of anti-western superpowers. Western 'arbitration', after all, is one of the identifying features of neo-colonialism, and West, in turn, is historically connected with 'deep animosity within the region' however the categories it offers for neutral appearance.

Prospects in Future: Proposing Critical Research on Peace: Though the significance of mapping out hotspots and consistent operational strategy has recently been identified by non-traditional experts on the region, yet various peace plans are ignored under the shadow of geo-economy and the supposed decline of geo-politics, which can normally be marked out to not only ineffective identification and handling of conflict but also lack of resources as well as the strong will. To be sure, if the conflicts are poorly addressed during planning stage, consequent war zones in the region are inexorable. Peace in contemporary sense is not an easy beast to pin down. And, the typical or ahistorical peace methods, mapping out

⁴⁰ Bhutto, *The myth of Independence*.

⁴¹ Srinath Raghavan, *opcit.*,. Also see, Robert Jackson, *South Asian Crises-India – Pakistan – Bangla Desh* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd, 1975), 25.

and Roman peace methodology (RPM) which are generally recycled as a bedrock of dispute assessment, unsympathetically blur our vision in demonstrating peace-conflict diagram during conundrum of power-politics analysis. Such efforts are no longer devised owing to their boundaries in neo-colonial/ postmodern endgames, including powerlessness to cope with radicalization movements and difficulty to cohabitate in multicultural environment.⁴² That is why, we should understand relatively more sophisticated approach to conflict management lies in identifying conflict analysis with critical theories and non-Othering interventions.

Conclusion

Sustainable Development Goals in South Asian cannot be achieved without regional cooperation and economic connectivity. Though the region, particularly India, has experienced high economic growth rates due to its adoption of the neoliberal model and increased private sector growth, however this approach has not been much successful.⁴³ Therefore, South Asian countries (where 36% of the world's poor live) need to increase public expenditure on education and health, create more jobs, and invest in social protection strategies for all individuals and households and promoting regional cooperation through SAARC can help reduce conflict and accelerate economic growth and human development.⁴⁴

The dilemma of South Asian peace revolves around ideological mystifications of critical geopolitics.⁴⁵ Therefore conceptually colonized and ahistorical accounts of its political history must be scrutinized as a necessity of regional political stability and peaceful futures. It takes provincializing global schemata of power politics and growth of international relation and diplomatic origins of democratic constitutionalism. Given that Narrow-Europeanism saw independence an opportunity for neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism and neo-realism for postcolonial dependencies, South Asia must understand how to vanquish the radical tendencies of global politics. This also involves systematically dissociating from the world system theories that gradually

⁴² Ziauddin Sardar. *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture*. London: Pluto Press, 1998.

⁴³ Sagarika Dutt, Peace and Development in South Asia: Problems and Prospects, *South Asian Survey*, 30:1 (2023).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Iqbal Shailo, 'Critical Geopolitics and the Construction of Security in South Asia' (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2013).

became ascendant since independence through such concepts as balance of power and arm race in the region. However, Pakistan must focus on permanent dialogue and all diplomatic channels for bilateral relations with India as well as West along with indigenously allowing regional peace strategy and development policy. The sooner Pakistan realizes the compromises it has to make under monetary compulsions, the easier it will be to catch up the course of self-interest-based national economic plan, political philosophy, and geographic compatibility. Instead of becoming a sandwich between two rivalries - between the United States and China and India and China, Pakistan must focus identifying the locus of confrontation covered under the devices of ideological mystifications, political domination, and economic exploitation.