

# New Cold War Scenario: Pakistan and the Emerging Geo-Political Scenario

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*[R]apidly developing geo-political differences among global powers in Asia show that the next Cold War is likely to be waged between the Russia-China alliance and the U.S.-led bloc in Asia, while Pakistan has already become its arena. Hence, U.S.-backed infiltration of militants from Afghanistan and unrest continues unabated in our country.*

Pakistan...has a strategic geo-political location at the corridor of major world maritime oil supply lines, and has close proximity to oil-rich Central Asian countries. Pakistan's location could influence Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. So, Pakistan is the focus of attention in the wake of the emerging geo-political scenario.

We are living in a world where shifts occur in international politics from time to time, depending on the relationship of big countries. Now, a new geo-political scenario is emerging rapidly in the world, focusing on Afghanistan, while Pakistan has become a special arena of the major countries' rivalries.

Although leaders of all the concerned countries express cooperation among themselves, emphasising stability in Afghanistan, in various summits and conferences held in recent years, yet all are preparing for the new Cold War which the U.S. intends to initiate against China and Russia.

In this respect, during his Asian visit, on June 2 of this year U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta disclosed in Singapore, "The United States will shift a majority of its warships to the Asia-Pacific region by 2020" as part of a new U.S. military strategy in Asia. Panetta's Asian visit came at a time of renewed tension over claims in the South China Sea between China and the Philippines, a major U.S. ally. Besides, the U.S. also backs other countries like Taiwan, Brunei, Vietnam and Malaysia by opposing China's legitimate claim.

During his trip to Australia on November 17, 2011, President Barack Obama, while sending an unmistakable message to Beijing, said, "The United States is a Pacific power, and we are here to stay," and that he would send military aircraft and Marines to Australia to a training hub to help allies and to protect U.S. interests across Asia. Obama stressed that any reductions in America's defense spending will not come at the expense of that goal.

Besides some other countries, America has also troops and security relationships with New Zealand and some Gulf countries. Disagreements also exist between Washington and Beijing over the Taiwan issue. American strategic thinkers take China's military modernisation as a great threat to its military bases in the continent.

At the same time Russia opposes U.S. intentions to deploy a national missile defence system

(NMD) in Europe and the expansion of NATO towards Eastern Europe. Against this backdrop, Russian President Putin has openly stated that his country was returning to its Soviet era practices.

Russia, on January 18, 2012 rejected the tough U.S.-led Western strategy of sanctions over Iran and Syria. In this regard, on February of this year Russia and China vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling on the Syrian president to step down. Both Moscow and Beijing had also opposed the U.S.-led NATO attack on Libya, while they have asked the U.S. to resolve the question of Iran's nuclear programme peacefully. But America and Israel are still acting on a war-like diplomacy against Tehran.

Notably, old NATO ally Turkey also changed its policy. Now, by supporting the cause of Palestinians, Ankara is increasing trade with Iran, meaning not to comply with sanctions against Tehran. In keeping with the new emerging geo-political scenario in the world, Pakistan is also strengthening its ties with Turkey.

Since May 2, 2011 tensions already existed in Pakistani-U.S. ties when U.S. commandos killed Osama bin Laden, and the same received a greater blow with the November 26 incident which killed 24 soldiers on Pakistani Army outposts. In response, Pakistan blocked NATO supplies to Afghanistan and closed the Shamsi Airbase. Finally, Islamabad decided to reassess its engagement with the U.S. It also rejected American duress in relation to the IP gas pipeline project with Iran, and is no more interested in the U.S.-supported gas pipeline project, Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP).

Taking note of U.S. anti-Pakistan plans, besides China, Pakistan has also cultivated its relationship with the Russian Federation. Moscow and Islamabad agreed to enhance bilateral relations in diverse fields. In 2010, the then Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin publicly endorsed Pakistan's bid to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which includes the former Central Asian republics as permanent members. Putin also remarked that Pakistan was a very important partner in South Asia and the Muslim world for Russia.

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari participated in the 12th summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization recently held in Beijing. While addressing the summit, hinting out towards U.S. secret designs, Chinese president Hu Jintao said, "The international situation has been complex, thus bringing many uncertainties to the regional situation." He explained that only when SCO member states remain united can they effectively cope with emerging challenges. President Putin said, "The SCO should enhance security cooperation."

After the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan in 2014, the U.S. has decided to establish six military bases in that country, having eyes on the energy resources of Central Asia, with multiple strategic aims against Pakistan, China, Iran and Russia.

Meanwhile, during his recent visit to New Delhi and Kabul, by way of reviving the old blame game U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta allegedly remarked that drone attacks would continue on terrorists' safe havens which Pakistan "offers to insurgents in Afghanistan."

Leon Panetta also encouraged India to take a more active role in Afghanistan in training Afghan forces. India, which has already invested billion of dollars in Afghanistan, signed a wide-ranging strategic agreement with that country on October 5, 2011.

In fact, it is due to Pakistan's province of Balochistan, where China has invested billion of

dollars to develop the Gwadar seaport which could link Central Asian trade with rest of the world, that the U.S. and India are irritated. America, which signed a nuclear deal with India, has been providing New Delhi with sophisticated defence-related arms to make it a great Asian power to counterbalance China, control Balochistan and subdue Iran. For these purposes, the American CIA, Indian RAW and Israeli Mossad have been supporting subversive acts in various places in Pakistan and separatism in Balochistan besides backing similar actions in the Iranian Sistan-Baluchistan and the Tibetan region of China.

At this delicate hour, when Pakistan's diplomats were negotiating the complex issue of resumption of NATO supply routes to Afghanistan with America, and no breakthrough occurred, drone attacks killed more than 50 people in FATA. This action is part of the anti-Pakistan campaign.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar reiterated that seeking an apology from the U.S. on the Salala incident is essential for resuming NATO supplies. But top U.S. officials refused to tender an apology. Pakistan's civil and military leaders remain firm on their stand that the issue of NATO supply lines would be decided in light of parliamentary guidelines.

However, rapidly developing geo-political differences among global powers in Asia show that the next Cold War is likely to be waged between the Russia-China alliance and the U.S.-led bloc in Asia, while Pakistan has already become its arena. Hence, U.S.-backed infiltration of militants from Afghanistan and unrest continues unabated in our country.

Pakistan is the only declared Islamic nuclear power. It has a strategic geo-political location at the corridor of major world maritime oil supply lines, and has close proximity to oil-rich Central Asian countries. Pakistan's location could influence Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. So, Pakistan is the focus of attention in the wake of the emerging geo-political scenario.

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