

**RESEARCH PAPER****Pakistan's Identity as a National State: A Comprehensive Analysis****<sup>1</sup>Amjad Rashid Quraishi and <sup>2</sup>Dr. Fida Bazai\***

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**ABSTRACT**

The defining geo-political contest of our time is between China and the United States. How would South Asia generally and Pakistan particularly respond to these developments is a billion dollar question, which will be addressed in this research. Significant economic, political and military changes are taking place in the world. The United States, which was a superpower after the end of Second World War, became a supreme super power at the end of the Cold War. This research paper delves in to multifaceted identity of Pakistan as a national state in order to scrutinize its relationship with United States, India, and its status for being the sole Muslim Nuclear state. In the light of these factors it analyses the identity of Pakistan at international level. China is another factor which has been comprehensively comprehended in terms of its influence on Pakistan National identity.

**Keywords:** Emergiing World Order, Identity, Constructivism, Terrorism, Security Dilemma**Introduction**

The historical roots of Pakistan in terms of its identity can be trace to violent partition of Indian Subcontinent. The separation of United India was a seismic event sparked by the Hindu Muslim tension in the region on religious basis. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the most prominent leader in this period who led the movement for the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims which culminated in the shape of Pakistan. The struggle against British colonial rule for independence and communal violence based on religion had shaped the historical narrative causing a unique identity along with its birth which Pakistan still carries to this date. (Chattha, 2013).

when the violent birth of Pakistan blends with the other realities at political, religious, cultural, economic, ethnic, regional and global level it creates a unique identity synthesis through a historical dialectical discourse which on one side creates so many social, political, cultural, economic and ethnic contradictions on one side and a unique identity at national, regional and global level on the other side. When it comes to culture, Pakistan is a mosaic of various cultural, ethnic, language, and traditional groups who together make a societal tapestry (Ali, 2001). Pakistan has four provinces each with its own history, language ethnicity and culture boasting on their local identities and cultural heritage. This makes Pakistan culturally a rich nation and adds to its identity at different levels.

Same is the case with political landscape of Pakistan which is marked by mixed interplay of democratic periods, direct military rules and so called Hybrid forms of government. the civilian, political relations have always been complex and difficult filled with unease, military coups, political instability and uncertainty. In terms of geopolitics, Pakistan possesses a unique position in the south Asian region. This strategic location has led to intricate rivalries and alliances with its neighbor Afghanistan and India influencing its regional and global role and influence since its creation (Barrington, 2006). When Pakistan became a Nuclear power by testing its nuclear bomb it brought it to the ranks of nuclear

power and at the same time changed the regional security dynamics by fostering its strategic relevance and importance in the region.

### Literature Review

Pakistan has always been at the centre of politics in the region and has been playing an active role in promoting its security-oriented national interest (Jone, 2012). It had played an important role in the early stages of the Cold War by joining the western block against the Eastern one. Unlike India that maintained a level of neutrality between during the Cold War, Pakistan became an active member of the western block. Pakistan joined the western block primarily for security assistance from the US against India. There was not any immediate threat to Pakistan from Communism, but dispute over the issue of Kashmir did not allow the two states to settle issues amicably. Those early developments, when millions of people migrated between both sides of the border and influx of refugees, fundamentally affected the national identity of Pakistan. Those historical developments and geo-strategic conditions did not allow Pakistan to evolve as normal national state to focus on economy, trade and social developments (Krasner, 2012; Jones, 2008; Tellis, 2008).

The earlier disputes and geo-strategic environment also affected the power structure within the country by giving unparalleled power to the military establishment over the definition of the national interest (Aqil, 2009). The hegemony of armed forces over other institutions on issues of strategic importance has been possible through an evolutionary process and with the help of two institutions; Parliament and Judiciary. The former has the power to make and amend the constitution, whereas, the later interpret it for common good. The influence of military on the mindset and actions of political leadership of the country was evident as early as 8 October 1948 when Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan stated that "the defense of the state is our foremost consideration ... and has dominated all other governmental activities. We will not begrudge any amount on the defense of our country" (Ali, 1967). This mindset was developed on the pretext that Pakistan has been surrounded by enemies like India and Afghanistan who want to dismantle the newly born country; therefore, a strong military is necessary to deter the existential threat to the country. In 1973, after the debacle of East Pakistan, all political parties made an attempt to create a constitution based on consensus.

By becoming a nuclear power, not only it changes the power calculus in the region it also developed a deterrent capability from any aggression by any powerful state most probably from Indian side. Becoming a nuclear power has transformed and reshaped the image of Pakistan at regional and global level it strengthened its strategic position and increased its regional influence and relevance for other major powers of the world (Barracrough, 2007).

The global political, diplomatic, economic and Technological dynamics have also played an important role in shaping Pakistan image and identity. Pakistani Diaspora which is more than eight million also contributes to Pakistan's identity as a nation at global level. Their contribution in various walks of life and services also bring and create an identity for Pakistan. Pakistan's contribution at regional and international level at political, military, diplomatic, cultural, legal spheres, international trade and other forums also contribute to its identity.

Pakistan military is another major factor whose influence and reach is beyond its constitutional limits. It is involved not only in political realms but also actively involves in economic interests making it one of the most powerful stake holder. That's why it is said that Pakistan military is a man with a sword in one hand and money in the other. Its role in national security, counter terrorism, and peacemaking missions at global level have also curved an image of Pakistan which repeatedly is seen and promoted in its national narrative.

When it comes to religion, Islam lays the basic foundations of National ethos which is deeply embedded in its national fabric and constitution. An interplay between religion and political and constitutional debates continuously influence the social fabric, social norms, political movements and state policies (Muzaffar, Khan & Karamat, 2017; Bina, 2011). There have always been debates between conservative religious and secular, liberal social and political classes on various political, social and cultural issue creating a delicate balance though most of Pakistani society conservative.

In terms of economic identity Pakistan history has been full of challenges and opportunities intertwined with enormous challenges of economic growth, economic disparities, technological and economic backwardness etc all have become trade marks for Pakistan's economic identity. Despite having great potential in agriculture and natural resources it is still grappled in the vicious circle of poverty, income inequality, unemployment and economic uncertainty. (Nasr, 2004). The governments have pursued to attract foreign investment for economic development and growth, infrastructure development, and sustainable development but every time political instability and terrorism caused obstacles failing every major project. China Pakistan economic Corridor which is considered as a flagship project bring and creating various economic development opportunities in trade, infrastructure and energy by transforming the entire countries economic landscape. However external debts, rampant corruption and governance issues affect the economic stability and financial issue.

Socially Pakistan is considered as diverse yet stratified society. Despite various government policies for gender disparity reduction and social inclusion disparity still persist in all walks of life especially in education and health. Women empowerment has made some progress and still is making progress in all walks of life yet still they face various challenges and issue due to social norms and systematic barriers. There have been education reforms to promote female literacy in the country at all level to improve quality education yet there is still huge disparity between rural and urban education. Furthermore, class division, ethnicity, cast system, are still major factors which influence the dynamics which affect the nations collective national unity and identity (Khan I (2006).

Environmental and ecological factors are other realities which are shaping Pakistan's identity. The country is facing sever water scarcity, environmental degradation, deforestation, floods and pollution challenges. Industrial growth and rapid urbanization has put strain on available natural resources and also contributes to the environmental imbalances. Some steps have been taken for reforestation, conservation, and renewable energy in order to mitigate the above mentioned issues. Pakistan's image and identity is also being affected due to its vulnerability to floods, natural disasters, and earth quakes. It makes it necessary to strengthen preparedness, resilience building measure in terms of environmental stewardship and disaster management (Ali, 2001).

## **Material and Methods**

The interview is selected as the primary method for data collection in this research. The interview method has most use in the study because it has the potential to elicit rich, thick descriptions. Further, it gives the researcher an opportunity to clarify statements and probe for additional information. Creswell (1994), Marshall and Rossman (2006), and Denzin and Lincoln (2003) state that a major benefit of collecting data through individual, in-depth interviews is that they offer the potential to capture a person's perspective of an event or experience. Kvale (1996) describes the qualitative research interview as an "attempt to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world..." (p. 1). As Patton (1990) similarly claims, "qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 278). The researcher's logic for using this data collection method is that a legitimate way to generate data is to interact with

people (i.e., talk to and listen to them), thereby capturing the meaning of their experience in their own words (Presenting methodology and research approach, chp.3, p.82).

This research is based on primary and secondary data. It extensively engages the existing literature on identity, social structure and normative values. In order to find out the role of Pakistan in the emerging new world order in South Asia and current regional structure, semi-structured elite interviews are arranged with the policy makers, scholars from critical school of thoughts, political analysts, renowned journalists, top edged bureaucrats and prominent Generals. The researcher conducts around 15 semi-structured interviews with the above mentioned people. Interviews are already identified; they are people who are directly dealing with various aspects of the CPEC. It is also important to mention that details interviews are arranged with the China's ambassador to Pakistan in order to take his perspective over the western media against the BRI and CPEC, who consider it China's conspiracy of debt-trapping in the developing countries by giving example of Sri Lanka.

## **Result and Discussion**

The debate on Pakistan's identity moves around following five factors, which have significant influence on shaping its image and interaction with rest of the world. They are; the role of Pakistan's army, the influence of religion in Pakistani discourse, India as an enemy, China as strategic ally and nuclear weapons as last resort for security and deterrence purposes.

### **The Role of Military in Pakistan**

The role of security establishment in shaping the identity of Pakistan by exerting its influence on national politics, foreign policy, and socio-economic landscapes. Rooted in the geopolitical realities, and national history Pakistan's security is completely denominated by military, played a decisive role in safeguarding and defining the core interests of the nation. With the inception of Pakistan military emerged as an influential actor and force. Due to regional and global conflicts military assumed a central role in shaping the identity of Pakistan, particularly with India with whom it has fought several wars. With the passage of time the prominence of military grew as it was portrayed as the savior and defender of the nation fostering a narrative of strength, bravery, patriotism and sacrifice which contributed to its reverend image and status within the societal and religious framework. (Hamdani, 2013) Its involvement in politics, economy, policy formulation has resulted in a unique civil military relationship which deeply influenced the political landscape of Pakistan. Military coups, controlling civilian governments directly and indirectly has deeply affected the democratic progress, maturity and evolution of the country. This continuous and aggressive behavior has left major military imprints on Pakistan's identity by shaping perceptions of authority and governance at times leading to several serious conflicts for the struggle of power between military and civilian institutions.

Pakistan continuous hostile history with India and emerging terrorism and militancy has kept the prominence of military at all time high in all times. The role of military in dealing with security issue on its two fronts have not only shaped Pakistan's identity as a security state but also has influenced the narrative of national unity concerning perceived threats from its Eastern and western borders mustering its image and position in society as the savior and guardian of territorial integrity and sovereignty. (Cohen ,2003).

The involvement of security establishment extends beyond its traditional security role and encroaches to economic activities making it the biggest commerce active role player in the economy of the country involving in dozen of business ventures at the same time. It holds sway on number of industries and has economic and financial interests in several commercial ventures by influencing resource allocation and financial and economic

policies. (Ali, 2001). Military has been deeply involved in counter terrorism operations in former FATA, Balochistan, and Border with Afghanistan and other parts of the country for maintaining internal stability. This further ingrained its role and shaped the internal; security of the state.

The military's role is visible in the foreign policy of Pakistan as well concerning regional and global strategic alliances, geopolitical alignments and defense cooperation. Militaries close ties with various regional and global powers such as China, US and Gulf countries have greatly contributed to the image of Pakistan and influence by positioning it one of the major players in the region in terms of geopolitics.

It is also criticized by the critics that the overwhelming role and influence of military has greatly damaged the political and democratic growth of Pakistani society. It has limited the democratic evolution, civilian authority, and rule of law which sometime result in to serious human rights issues. Major portion of national budget is allocated to military also comes sometimes under scrutiny which affect the public sector development projects and welfare programs. This sometimes affects the identity of the nation concerning the prioritization of the national wealth and resources (Akbar , 2015). The role of military also extends to the nation building in times of crises and natural disaster management and infrastructural development depicting the message for being at the service of nation at all time and a symbol of national solidarity during times of crises.

The influence of military establishment is vividly reflected in Media narratives, public discourse, educational curricula perpetuating by glorifying the images in national defense and downplays its shortcomings in other areas. This narrative works very well and contributes to the identity of military guardian of the nation (Barraclough, 2007).

Pakistan's ideology is based on two nation theory which was presented by Muhammad Iqbal and was politically championed and implemented by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. The two national theory says the Muslim and Hindus are two distinct identities based on religion, politics, culture and belief. They despite living in the same region of Subcontinent never mixed together therefore Muslims needed a separate homeland to protect and practice their political, religious, cultural and economic rights independently. (Bajoria, 2011) The two Nation theory became the bedrock for the creation of Pakistan and continuous to influence the national identity calming Islam to be the only unifying factor on one hand and accommodating all diverse cultures, ethnicities and local identities on the other hand.

The ideology of Pakistan is based on Islam through which religion and state both try to reconcile each other which offers a frame work for a modern Islamic state. The constitution of Pakistan is based on Islam which declares Pakistan as an Islamic state ensuring that all laws made in the state must align with the principals of Islam. However there are debates on the different interpretation and implementations of Islam claiming to be the true Islamic ideology sometimes sparking controversies over the influence of these implementations on different interpretations. These interpretations and implementations sometimes take a very serious turn and result in to violence causing political instability, social divisions, affecting social norms. (Khan, 2009).

Different political parties in Pakistan use religion as an instrument to legitimize their agendas by mobilizing public support. They use Islam as a political slogan to gain public, popularity and support for policy formation and electoral strategies. The role of Islam is inevitable in every ideological discourse as a part of governance which has always influenced the debates on minorities, legislative decision, women rights and societal norms. These all contribute to the Islamic identity of Pakistan. The ideological framework of Pakistan has created and shaped its image a champion for the Islamic cause and supporter of Islamic unity at political, economic and cultural level. Pakistan has many times proved its

image and identity as supporter of Muslim majority states at all platforms by championing major issue face by Muslim world such as Palestine issue, Kashmir conflict. This image of Islamic identity has greatly influence the foreign policy of Pakistan and its standing for the Muslim cause in the Islamic world. (Bedford ,2012)

But this interplay between religious ideology and politics have not been free from complexities and challenges there has been intense debates at various social, political and academic forums that question the balance between the modern democratic norms and Islamic principles about the women empowerment, rights of minorities, religious freedom. (Alavi, 2002) These ideological underpinnings which are the basis of the identity of Pakistan have become a constant source of tension fueling extremist narratives and sectarian divides sometimes deeply impacting the harmony of the society, disrupting social fabric and international perceptions (Yaseen & Muzaffar, 2018).

The ideological narratives also shape public consciousness and social values on issues related to cultural narratives, education. Media, education system and curricula, and various Islamic cultural expressions also reinforce and reflect the ideological outlines of the nation by influencing the perceptions of history, societal role and perceptions of national identity. (Dawn, 2018) But different interpretations of Islam with different governance models with the ideological evolution of Pakistan have made it very difficult to reconcile with. There has been debates and constant struggle at various political, cultural and ideological level to reconcile its identify with pluralism, modernity, and democratic principles impacting its social cohesion and collective identity. The ideology of Pakistan is like a two edge sword carrying cohesion and division dynamics for the nation are the same time is worth analyzing. One hand it provides a shared unifying collective national identity and purpose for the entire nation, on the other had its equally a dividing force too for various groups in the country posing challenges for accommodating different and diverse viewpoints and equal representation and equal rights for all segments of society.

The Islamic ideology of Pakistan is manifested several institutions and policies influencing the government structure and legal framework. In order to establish an Islamic state led to several laws related and aligned to the principle f Islam such as criminal law, family laws, and Sharia based Banking system. ( Dilawri S, Salim A, Ishfaq H, et al. (2014) In this regard an institution was established called the Council of Islamic Ideology whose sole job is to advise the government to make laws aligned with the basic principles of Islam. However despite the council as an advisory body yet different interpretations and implementation has been the subject of critique and debate raising questions about their compatibility with human rights standards and modern legal principles. These debates influence Pakistan's identity as an Islamic conservative state with an ongoing struggle for balancing religious principles with individual freedom. Societal dynamics are also strongly influenced by the Islamic ideology of Pakistan. (Cohen, 2003) Values of Islam permeate various facets of society by influencing gender roles, social customs, and community interactions. Islam emphasizes equality and justice cultural norms and societal practices often exhibit wide and clear disparity especially in terms of minority rights and gender equality and social justice. Rights of women have always been a source of contention and with debates surrounding cultural practices and laws impacting the identity of Pakistan concerning inclusivity and gender equality.

The ideological underpinnings have also faced different challenges in Pakistan by various interpretations from different sects and class of thoughts mostly based on conservatism. Pakistani society is a pluralistic in nature and this pluralism includes various sects, religious minorities caused many clashes impacting the national identity as a modern Islamic republic based on the principles of inclusiveness and tolerance. (Shah, 2014) Extremism and sectarian violence have posed serious threats and challenges to Pakistani society causing socioeconomic problems and Socio-political rifts and tarnishing the image

of Pakistan as a tolerant and stable society. This necessitates the to promote the interfaith harmony, tolerance, academic and religious freedom to counter radical narratives.

### **Role of India in Shaping Pakistan's National Identity**

The bloody and bitter partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan's tortured relation with India since independence has also perpetually shaped the identity of Pakistan. The partition marked by communal violence and displacement of millions of people created the perception of India as an enemy. This contributed to the memory and narrative of Pakistan's identity to struggle against the dominance and hegemony of India in the South Asian region. The ongoing and historical conflict regarding Kashmir have shaped India an all time adversary who not only wants to dominate the region but also is holding Kashmir under its control who historically should have been part of Pakistan at the time of independence. The military conflicts and unresolved territorial dispute over Kashmir have cemented the image and identity of Pakistan as a defender in the region for the aspirations and rights of Muslims creating a sense of unity the perceived Indian injustices. (Haqqani, 2010)

This long and decades based hostility has greatly affected and influenced the foreign policy of Pakistan, national narratives and defense strategies. It played a defining and decisive role in not only shaping the security paradigm of the state but also the regional outlook. Perceiving India as an existential threat to Pakistan has significantly contributed to the development of its national identity as a security state. Social and cultural exchanges in spite of political tensions have also contributed to the national identity of Pakistan. (Khan ZA, 2010) There still is nuanced interconnection at the level of language, culture, traditions, and arts fostering cultural exchanges which has a huge influence on the societal values and identities. In this struggles of influencing Pakistan by Indian culture is countered by Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India rooted in the Two- Nation theory in order to preserve its identity as an Islamic country and society and amidst its neighboring India with a predominant Hindu majority India.

It's not easy for Pakistan to apart itself and its identity from Indian despite two nations theory. Both nations have many things in common in terms of history, art, culture, values, languages, religion that transcends political boundaries. This intermingling of common heritage in many social and cultural values foster a sense of shared affinity and identity among the people on both sides of the border despite amidst political discord. The rise of India as a regional power has also influenced and shaped the identity of Pakistan in terms of its national security and strategic outlook. This idea about India being regional power and a dominant force in the region of South Asian has led Pakistan to increase and strengthen its defense capabilities influencing its regional alliances and military strategies aiming only to balance the influence of India. (Kundi, 2014)

Another factor contributing to the identity of Pakistan are periodic conflicts in the shape of Wars and attempts at dialogues or peaceful diplomatic talks mostly focusing Kashmir. The historical wars, conflicts over the issue of Kashmir, which exists at the core of Pakistan's foreign policy, have contributed a sense of grievance that deeply shaped the Pakistan's narrative that is perceived to be trying to counter Indian hegemony in the region and protecting and defending its self determination. Indian growth and international stature have also impacted the self-perception of Pakistan. The economic growth, attractive Indian market, expanding middle class and civilian control on all political and strategic policies have also influenced and shaped the discourse of Pakistan on progress, prosperity, development and international standing as a lesser played compared to India in international relations. And this gap is increasing day by day putting more pressure on Pakistani economy, military, society and foreign policy.

### **The Role of the United States in Shaping Pakistan's Identity**

United States of America has been another important factor in shaping the identity of Pakistan since cold war era. The strategic interests of US during cold war have involved her in the region most particularly during the last and final phase of Soviet- Afghan war of from 1979-89. As a strategic ally this alliance changed and transformed Pakistan's identity as a front line ideological state against Communism and Soviet Union during Cold war. This alliance during cold war was very close, interest based, and mutually dependent marked by economic and military aid greatly improved Pakistan's position at regional and global level. In response Pakistan's only task was to play its role in containing soviet expansion. This strategic partnership made Pakistan strategically relevant in international world. But this strategic alliance remained oscillating during this entire period marked by ups and downs, cooperation and strain influenced Pakistan identity as well. U.S policies have never been firm, consistent and long term regarding Pakistan creating trust issues, political and economic sanctions. The US policy had been inconsistent like conditional aid, diverging regional interests, concerns over nuclear proliferation, have challenged the perceived sovereignty of Pakistan impacting its national pride, national interests and national identity. (Talbot, 2009)

The post 9/11 era provided both the states to have a new start by entering in to new strategic partnership but this time against the menace of terrorism. Pakistan role in supporting US against the war on terror efforts created new rifts, doubts and trust issues, blame games in supporting militant groups against each other from both sides. This affected the role and identity of Pakistan against terrorism, its sovereignty and Pakistan's narrative against foreign intervention especially regarding drone attack and killing of Osama bin Laden in May 2011. US drone attack in side Pakistan mostly in former Federal Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) and concerns over the violations of Human rights during counter terrorism operations deeply influenced the public opinion contributed series of debates over the sovereignty, national identity and balance between human rights and security imperatives. (Malik, 2002)

The involvement of US in geopolitical and security dynamics of Pakistan is multifaceted. During cold war era US was all interested in containing USSR through using the strategic position of Pakistan and in the post cold war era this strategic partnership transformed to combating terrorism. But these all decades of partnership have never been smooth and easy rather there had been instances when Pakistan sometimes paid a very high price for it. During Afghan war Mujahidin were made and supported by US and Pakistan as a strategic partner against Soviet Union. Soviet Union was finally defeated and expelled from Afghanistan from Afghanistan but later the same Mujahidin institutionalized and turned in to Taliban and Al Qaeda later causing the event of 9/11 putting Pakistan insecure in to more dangerous position. Same Taliban after twenty years of fight when took hold of Afghanistan back have become a not only a source of threat for Pakistan's security but an identity of Pakistan as a terrorist hit country. (Talbot, 2009) This brought the entire policies of state to the public criticism and debates on national security, identity as moderate, progressive country, sovereignty, and balance between civil liberties and security imperatives.

Other than strategic partnership the relation between USS have other positive and cooperative face well. There has been collaboration in the field of education, cultural exchange that shaped the societal values and perceptions influencing the identity of Pakistan in terms of educational opportunities and global connectivity.

### **Impact of China-Pakistan relation on Pakistan's Identity**

The bilateral relations between China and Pakistan are the most significant reality in the contemporary geopolitics and have a profound impact on the national identity of Pakistan. The relation between both nations is rooted deeply and based on mutual support and shared interests. The underpinnings of China-Pakistan relations can be traced back in to early 1950s. They both shared the common commitment to the principle of non-

interference and sovereignty. Meanwhile mutual cooperation in the areas of technology transfer, defense, and military assistance has developed a sense of camaraderie between both nations. (Bedford, 2012) As the regional and global dynamics evolved this mutual relation also evolved compassing all major areas in terms of cooperation finally emerging in to an enduring regional and global partnership.

Chains support over the dispute of Kashmir for Pakistan has been a major cornerstone of their political and diplomatic alliance. This political and diplomatic backing for Pakistan not only bolstered its international position and stature at global level but also played a key role in shaping the national narrative and identity of Pakistan. Going through Pakistan's foreign policy it becomes visible the Kashmir is central to its foreign policy and the unwavering support from China reinforces its stance over it also contributes a sense of shared purpose and solidarity among the people of Pakistan. (Brzezinski, 2011)

Another venture that bound both national closely and makes the interdependent is China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This flagship project will connect China's northwestern region of Xinjiang through infrastructure projects with the coastal port of Gwadar. This economic project has immense potential to transform and reshape Pakistan's economy in to a developing model. This project has potential to diversify their partnership and transform it in to a perpetual regional alliance. The CPEC project has potential to catalyze economic growth, address critical infrastructure gaps, create job and business opportunities and attract foreign investment from other countries of the world. But projects related to CPEC are not risk free they equally bear serious consequences if not address adequately based on national interest. The sustainability of death, concerns related to national sovereignty, and trade and economic imbalance may bring serious problem for Pakistan and most importantly may affect negatively then identity of Pakistan. (Haider & Haider, 2015).

The most significant element that lies in the heart of China-Pakistan relation is their strategic partnership that extends beyond regional politics. China wants to enhance its geopolitical and strategic influence and Pakistan through Gwadar provides this gateway to the Arabian Sea. Meanwhile Chinese partnership is the most trustworthy source to counter balance the hegemony of India in the region. The collaboration in the areas of defense, military exercises, intelligence sharing underscore the strategic depth of this mutual partnership. It enhances Pakistan's national and military confidence fostering a strong sense of resilience while facing any external security challenge. But this strong relation between both nations is not without political and economic cost. This relation may put strain on other major global and regional players US and India who are also very strong players in the region. Pakistan has always tried to balance between both powers but it sometimes put an odd layer of complexity to the foreign policy of Pakistan. This requires a nuanced approach to balance between both powers without compromising on the national security, national interest and economic growth that may impact the very image and national identity of Pakistan. (Hartpence , 2011).

### **Nuclear Capability of Pakistan as a Symbol of National Identity**

Acquiring nuclear capability has greatly influenced its national identity at regional and global level. Since Nuclear tests in May 1998 Pakistan confidently asserts itself as a nuclear state by altering the regional security dynamics and contributing a unique sense of identity. Nuclear test turned Pakistan as a sovereign and resilient state. An existential threat from India and its advancement in nuclear technology and weapons was the most important driving forces to pursue nuclear technology. The nuclear detonation in 1998 entered Pakistan in to the ranks of nuclear club and reshaped its identity as a strong state capable of defending its borders from any external aggression. It provided the country with deterrent force against potential enemies fostering a sense of self reliance and national security. The political narrative surrounding the nuclear weapons of Pakistan most often emphasize for

the need of a credible security and defense posture that contributes to the image and identity of Pakistan as a credible and responsible nuclear state. (Cirincione, Wolfsthal, & Rajkumar, 2005).

Strategically the balance of power was recalibrated when Pakistan became a nuclear state. The concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) played an elemental role in bringing stability, peace and balance in the region by preventing any full scale war in future. This identity as a nuclear power alleviated its status at regional and level by granting it a unique position in international system increasing its influence and weight among super powers. The narrative for being a nuclear power has a profound impact on the collective psyche of Pakistani nation. It intertwines with the notion of national pride, defiance and resilience. (Dalton, & Krepon. 2015). Reminding the moment of nuclear test in May 1998 creates an emotion triumph that symbolizes the ability of Pakistan that overcame all challenges by finally passing the threshold of nuclear power to assert itself as a nuclear power at global stage.

This nuclear power states greatly contributes to the national pride of Pakistani people when seeing their country as the sole Muslim nuclear power in the Muslim world and seventh nuclear power in the world. It fosters not only the sense of national pride and security but also a great sense of national unity emphasizing the need for vigilance and national responsibility. It influences the collective national consciousness by contributing to national identity that is deeply rooted in that idea for being a citizen of a nuclear Pakistan as powerful state to be reckoned with. This global recognition of Pakistan as a nuclear power opened venues to confidently engage in diplomatic relations with international community. Initially when Pakistan tested its nuclear tests it faced serious sanction but the same power altered the international dynamics and opened paths for diplomatic negotiations. It provided it with a seat at global forums recognizing its capability and status as a major regional player. . (Cirincione, Wolfsthal & Rajkumar, 2005).

However this nuclear capability is also not with price to pay. Not only Pakistan faced international sanctions it also faced concerns and challenges from international community in terms of non-proliferation regarding global stability. concerns are most often shown by international strategic analysts and nuclear weapon experts that these weapons may not in hands of any extremist organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIS. One such case took place in 2004 in the case of Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan as well by increasing the concerns of other super powers. Since then no serious issue has taken place making Pakistan as a responsible and credible nuclear state. (Gul, 2014) Despite this all balancing its credibility as a responsible nuclear state bearing all international obligations and non-proliferation norms is a sensitive and worth heeding task that how Pakistan is perceived as a nuclear state at global level.

## Conclusion

This study in conclusion comprehensive analysis reveals the intricate layers of the identity of Pakistan at national, by elucidating its relation with US and India as well as its position as a nuclear state regional and international level. The study further open up that Pakistan's national identity has evolved with its territorial and historical disputes with India revealing the ongoing complexities determining its national narrative and foreign policy. US has been another major factor playing a decisive role in making Pakistan national identity due to its cold war alignment to the current geopolitics of south Asian region influencing its global and regional position.

It has been studied that the nuclear capability of Pakistan doesn't only makes it a strong, balancing deterrent force in the south Asia against the dominance and hegemony of India, but it also bring a sense of security and pride among Pakistani people as well at national level and contributing to its national identity as the sole Muslim nuclear state in the world. China as an emerging super power and major regional player has also played a key

role in influencing the national identity of Pakistan as a trustworthy, non interfering neighboring friend. The ideology of Pakistan not only unifies the majority of population of Pakistan it also contributes to its national identity as a nation at international arena. Therefore this study explores a holistic understanding of Pakistan's national identity by emphasizing the complex geopolitical dynamics by providing a valuable insight for policy makers, observers, scholars in order to comprehend the role of Pakistan at regional and international level in terms of evolving identity since its inception.

### **Recommendations**

It is profoundly important for Pakistan to focus on the security in the emerging neo-world order, which will be characterized by the rivalry between the United States, Europe, Russia and China. These rivalries will immediately expand to other regions, especially to South Asia due to India's growing role in the region.

Along with security, Pakistan should also increase its national unity by integrating various factions and political parties. In the presence of nuclear weapons, the only threat to Pakistan's security and sovereignty is coming from the internal side. Therefore, it is essential to improve governance, handle terrorism and resolve issues through political dialogue with various stakeholders.

Pakistan should always maintain good relations with all states including India and Afghanistan, but there should be exceptional ones with China and Saudi Arabia. They are Islamabad's strategic partners and have deep rooted decades old special relations with Pakistan. There are possibilities that Pakistan will face some challenges in the coming days due to neo-emerging world system and division of the world into blocks, but Pakistan should be clear on the choice between and against these two states.

Last but not the least, it is economically stupid. If Pakistan does not improve its economy, it will always be dependent on strategic partners and IMF, which will significantly reduce its political influence in the major power struggle and role in strategic issues. It is extremely important for Pakistan to prioritise economy and focus on overhauling the major sectors in the economy.

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