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The Security Dilemma and the Impact of the Russian-Ukraine Conflict on Pakistan-U.S. Relations

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Abstract

On February 24, 2022, Russia has attacked Ukraine, met, claiming that its action was in response to a threat to national security and enlargement of NATO membership. This invasion, which is the most complex and large-scale military aggression in Europe after the Second World War, has negatively impacted not only Russia and Ukraine but also the international political and economic systems. The conflict has distorted the food value chain across the globe since Russia and Ukraine are significant producers of agricultural commodities, which was given the name 'Breadbasket of Europe." This war has resulted in major shifts in peoples' consumption patterns and put great pressure on producers to adapt the supply chain models. The global implications arising from this are issues of food and fuel inflation, macro-economic fluctuation, pressures on exchange value and security risks. From the perspective of Pakistan the war is full of opportunities and constraints in managing its foreign policy and particularly relationship with United States. This paper focuses on the security dilemma whereby states consider certain actions of other states as posing a threat, and act defensively in response; This paper analyzes the security dilemma with relation to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This research is specifically devoted to the analysis of Pakistan's neutrality in the war, its economic effects on Pakistan, and the relations between Pakistan and the United States, as well as Pakistan's positioning between Russia, China, and the United States. Understandably therefore, this paper offers an understanding of the various strategic management problems faced by Pakistan in Remittances Review July 2024, Volume: 9, No: S 3, pp.1352-1367 ISSN: 2059-6588(Print) | ISSN 2059-6596(Online) handling the war and more profoundly, grasps the picture of the war and the interplay of the forces of global power in the current international relations system in a climate of growing globalization.

Keywords: Security Dilemma, Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Pakistan-U.S. Relations, Global Supply Chains, Geopolitical Strategy

1. Introduction

A shift in the historical era is the Russian attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, which heralded profound implications not only for the belligerent participants—Russia and Ukraine— but also for states beyond the theatres of the conflict. Both Ukraine and Russia are internationally famous destinations as the "Bread basket of Europe" where important food products like wheat, barley, corn and sunflower oil have been produced. This particular conflict will increase the tension between these two nations in addition to complicating the foods supply chain for not only these nations but the world. Food and fuel prices have skyrocketed, worsening the existing delicate economic situation of most countries including Pakistan, due to this disruption (Al Jazeera News, 2022).

The impact of the war however is not strictly and only economic. It has brought about a more extensive system transformation, leading to states to consider their stance in the international political and their security measures in relation to change of world politics. To countries like Pakistan, security dilemma whereby nations develop policies based on considering security threats from defensive policies of other nations has become a focal point to the conflict. China and Pakistan partook in history as a global pillar curb and Pakistan's close relation to the United States and Europe is now under pressure for the outcomes unequivocally linked to the war in Ukraine (The UN and the war in Ukraine, 2022). The question to ask here is how Pakistan can manage its strategic location in the region and it's own economic concerns in a shifting global order where bilateral relationships are realigning.

Due to the continuation of war in Ukraine, many aspects of the Pakistan economy have become worsened; Pakistan became more dependent on foreign aid again, the rate of companies of essential commodities became higher or lower than expected, and insecurity in the region also increased. The disruption of the supply chain around the globe resulting from the war has also led to increased prices for food and fuel, which also have put inflationary pressures in Pakistan. They have been forced to experience the 'new' high costs of goods and services, which are not only an issue locally but also to sectors that include manufacturing. In addition, the economic problems created by the war also make it very hard for Islamabad to navigate its relations with the United States, Pakistan's important ally, and build a relationship with Russia and China at the same time.

This conflict provides Pakistan with some benefits and some problems for focusing on its foreign policy. On the one hand, there are economics benefits that can be gained from interact with Russia especially in the area of trade and energy resources where Pakistan is interested to import from Russia. On the other hand, Pakistan also has numerous dilemmas to maintain neutrality but at the same time work in the same solidarity with the international community regarding the Russian aggression. Historically, Russia and the United States had a partnership based on their cooperation against terrorism; however, the new goals and new threats arise as the tension between Russia and the west increases.

In this context, the directions of Pakistan's actions in the conflict are influenced not only by urgent practical needs for the development of its economy and ensuring its security but also by the country's long-term vision of its future as an independent state, its desire to achieve economic growth and become an influential player on the international stage. The conflict in Ukraine underlines the challenges Pakistan faces as it strives to maintain satisfactory relationships with both the major global players and its neighbours: the contemporary international system is characterised by entanglement of economic, security and diplomatic concerns. This paper discusses the security dilemma that translates Pakistan's foreign policy strategy into this crisis, providing a comprehensive understanding of Russia Ukraine war effects on Pakistan economy and geopolitics. Moreover; it discusses all these trends' implications for the Pakistan-US relationship also considers the significance of the conflict for South Asia and the emerging world order. Hence, the paper aims at constructively analyzing the unprecedented and vital challenges in order to come up with a full appreciation of the strategic choices Pakistan has to make.

2. Aims and Objectives:

• To understand the possible reasons as to why Pakistan remains neutral on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and how this neutrality is shaping the nation's relations with the major powers.

• To determine how the conflict has shifted the dynamics of the Pakistan economy regarding energy and food import costs and long-term impacts on its economy in the COVID aftermath.

• To identify the degree to which the conflict impacted economy of South Asia states and to analyze Pakistan's strategic approach towards the new changes in terms of diplomacy and trade.

3. Research Questions

• How has the Russia-Ukraine conflict impacted Pakistan's foreign policy and its relationships with the United States, Russia, and China?

• What are the key economic consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war on Pakistan, particularly regarding energy imports, food security, and trade?

• How has the Russia-Ukraine conflict affected the broader economic landscape of South Asia, and what role does Pakistan play in managing these regional impacts?

4. Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology shall be used in this research to help understand the effects of the Russia–Ukraine conflict on the Pakistan's foreign policy and economy. In gathering data, the research will mainly use secondary research sources which include; Government reports, academic journals, economic reviews, newspapers, and documents, official statements that relate to various aspects of conflict impact in Pakistan. Most of the analysed countries have similar geopolitical and economic concerns, therefore, a comparative case study approach will be used to show the comparison of Pakistan's foreign policy to other countries of South Asia. This will involve a combination of primary research data (such as policy declarations and diplomatic communications and economic plans) and secondary research data (which includes economic indices, trade flows, energy costs etc..) Furthermore, the content analysis approach will be used where available to analyze articles from the press as well as reports from international organizations like the World Bank and international Monetary Fund and policy briefs that have

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made analysis on Pakistan conflict response. This will assist in achieving the following objectives to establish patterns of current and past accounts of Pakistan's neutrality or, its strategic planning in response to the conflict Challenges to the Pakistani economy will also be highlighted. An Additional ten experts in diplomacy, economic, and policy-making will be interviewed, in order to gain more information about the possible future evolution of Pakistans external policy in concerning the war and its economical consequences. This multiple source data collection approach will enable the analysis of the research questions and objectives in a comprehensive manner.

5. The Security Dilemma and Geopolitical Tensions

Security dilemma is the situation when one state seeks to improve its security, which brings about negative responses from other states. It has been a factor in the interactions of the Russian–Ukraine crisis. To explain Russian motivations for their actions, Russia regarded NATO expansion into Eastern Europe including Ukraine as impinging on its vital strategic interests and threatened its very existence. In response, actions aimed at Ukraine are presented as necessary for Russia to safeguard its interests, but this has only increased the security threats not only of NATO and the West countries but also Ukrainians.

For a country such as Pakistan, which has always been in a melting pot of multiple powers, the security dilemma created by the Russian-Ukraine war is not very simple. As expected, the Pakistan foreign policy that has strong historical connection with the USA on the other hand, the increasing connection with China and Russia is going to face the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

6. The Role of NATO and the U.S.

The former military integration and the attempt to include the former Soviet republics into the NATO have been the motives of the conflict for a long time. From Russian perspective possible NATO enlargement which included Ukraine was regarded as threat to Russian power and influence. Consequently, the Russian military intervention to Ukraine was verbalized as an action to protect its own interest from NATO's advancement.

In the eyes of the US and its partners Russia has been seen as an antagonist that has invaded Ukraine's territory uninvited. When economic sanctions on Russia were introduced as a way to weaken it, and therefore discourage it from any further aggression, the rift with the West widened.

For Pakistan, this split is a dilemma. Currently Pakistan is a strategic ally of USA in the war on terrorism and a non NATO ally; therefore it is in Pakistan's best interest to remain on the good side of America. Nevertheless, Pakistan has been also establishing fairly rising relations with Russia, especially in defense exchanges and energy sectors. The above-discussed security dilemma before the government of Pakistan is further amplified the fact that the country has to manage all these alignments carefully to not leave a single strategic ally displeased.

7. It also analyses economic loss after/effects on Pakistan.

To some extent, Pakistan does not have strong direct trading with Russia or Ukraine, but the broader consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict are felt (Haque and Kim, 2022). There has been distortion of supply chain during the war in energy and food markets. Since being an energy-deficit country, Pakistan has been greatly affected by increase in the international oil prices that have reached records highs since the invasion of Ukraine.

7.1 Impact on Energy Prices

Of all the sectors concerned in Pakistan, the energy sector comes closer to experiencing the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war in the shortest possible time. The above nations are major suppliers of oil and natural gas in the world and sanctions against them have unstable these supplies. The increase in prices of oil has affected Pakistan badly as Pakistan has the major chunk of its imports in the form of oil to fulfill energy requirements of the country. In the fiscal year 2022, Pakistan's import bill for petroleum jumped to over \$13 billion, up from \$6.3 billion in the same year of the last fiscal year. These increases in dollar and oil prices have led to high levels of inflation which has seen the price of basic needs of the people of Pakistan rocket." In such a case, if the global oil prices persist in the higher range, the problem of oil import bill for Pakistan could be more than double with severe impacts on its forex reserves and worsening of its fiscal balance.

7.2 Impact on Food Prices

Apart from energy, the war has also affected food security worldwide. Ukraine and Russia form part of the key producers of wheat, sunflower oil, and other agricultural products (Al Jazeera News, 2022). This was interconnected with the disruption of production of agriculture in Ukraine or the Russian ban on exports of its grains and cement – a problem for the developing country like Pakistan (Bankova, Dutta, and Ovaska, 2022).

The situation combined with high food insecurity and skyrocketing cost of essential imports in Pakistan means that the country has more hurdles to leap. Food prices have been rising through the roof and wheat, which is a staple in most households in Pakistan is no exception thanks to the disruption of the supply chain caused by the war. It is estimated that the country will spend millions of tones imports wheat to feed it's population, this will continue to exert more pressure on the foreign exchange reserves and increase food inflation rate (Thomson Reuters, 2022).

7.3 Worsening Inflation and Economic Growth

The rise in global energy costs, food inflation, and supply shocks have put Pakistan in a critical position when it comes to the economy. The economic position is worst in a country that is already experiencing high inflation, lower growth rates, and political instability. Conflict in Ukraine has forced inflation rate to record high with the prices of goods having been increased in 2022. In addition, Pakistan's GDP growth is expected to decrease, or the war will worsen existing problems in the country's economy.

According to the World Bank, economic growth of South Asia is expected to fall in 2023 and Pakistan will be among those with the biggest decline. Ongoing political instabilities also imply that the region is sensitive to the shock that originate from the global economy, meaning it will be most affected by the Russia-Ukraine conflict (The Dawn News Editorial, 2022).

8. Pakistan's Neutrality and Foreign Policy Dilemma

Regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict, yet another dimension of the foreign policy of Pakistan has remained neutral. Although the U.S. and other western countries have urged Pakistan to register strong protest against Russia, Pakistan has not categorically condemned Russia while at the same time has advocating for peace.

8.1 Importance of the Policy and Place of Strategic Neutrality

This decision is due to the strategic interests of Pakistan. Pakistan has been an 'entrant' of US since the beginning of cold war and especially in the post September 11 war on terrorism Pakistan supports the US policies friendly in Washington. But, Pakistan also wants to increase cooperation with Russia and China, which are its important economic as well as military partners.

Pakistan is surrounded by the United States and the western world and on the other side, its arch rival India has joined the wagon of United States and the western world. In this regards, the official policy of neutrality of Pakistan gives it a certain diplomatic advantage, because not imposing on any of the large forces, it occupies the position of an unbiased mediator.

8.2 The external pressure from the US and Europe

As you can see, Pakistan remains uncommitted to either side throughout the conflict yet over the course of years, western countries have pressured Pakistan to take their side against Russia. In particular, the United States has demanded that Pakistan express disapproval of Russia's actions and support Ukraine. That however has not changed because Pakistan's leadership has not given in to this pressure instead, they have advocated for diplomacy and peaceful means of solving the conflict.

During the talks via telephone with the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the premier worried about the circumstances seen in the countries because of the war and emphasized that Pakistan wished to see the end of the fighting. On the other hand, Pakistan has not openly criticized Russia either it knows the fact that world affairs demand to be sensible in every respect.

9. Pakistan's Neutrality in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

9.1 Diplomatic Stance and the Pressure to Take Sides

Pakistan has not fully taken the side of either Russia or Ukraine, which is the main factor of this research. Such a stance has been mostly spurred by the country's intentions to enjoy cordial relations with both Russia and the United States as well as for promoting its economic and

security agenda. This approach has become more and more difficult as the United States and the European Union have urged Pakistan to denounce Russia's invasion.

The United States and its allies have been pressuring Pakistan to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine, calling it part of an ideological war between democracy and authoritarianism. Nevertheless, as was the case with other Pakistan foreign policy decisions, Pakistan's foreign policy decision-makers have been reluctant to align the country with this western geopolitical plan, especially taking into consideration the historical-economic relationships between Pakistan, on one side, and the United States and Russia on the other side. Moreover, they are surrounded by other countries of South Asia and are a frontline ally of United States which is recognized as non-NATO ally, and they are in partnership with China as well which make the diplomatic relationship more complex (Kiani, 2022).

During the recent United Nations General Assembly vote on the Russia-Ukraine crisis, Pakistan struggled to remain neutral. Some countries, including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and a few more avoided to raise their voice against the Russian aggression and thus refused to vote on the resolution. This decision could be attributed to Pakistan's policy of not wanting to take sides in the world power politics since it saw itself as more of a negotiator than a fighter in implementing an either ideological or military divide of the world.

9.2 The 'Neutrality' as a Strategic Approach

Pakistan's policy of non-alignment is to some extent an alloidal adaptation to the realisation of new trends in world politics. In the course of the Cold war, Pakistan felt compelled to take the 'side' of the West notably through supporting the United States; hence coming in to direct conflict with the Soviets. For Pakistan this history has provided the lesson of being adaptable, and of steering clear of hostile alignments and of great power conflicts. The present day global climate which has seen tensions rise between the western world, Russia and china makes Pakistan's non aligns self more important than ever.

It has also criticized that conflict is affecting developing countries through increased energy prices and food emergency. This is because Pakistan is a land that depends on imports of both energy and agricultural products and therefore struggles with economic insecurity and the situation that arises from being forced to choose sides among world powers (Bennett, 2022). The prices of petroleum products have since increased sharply since the start of the conflict, which is bad news for Pakistan's struggling economy. As well, the price of foods also went up, especially wheat due to the distortion of the supply chain by the war. Thus, Pakistan, which imports most of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine, has been compelled to search for other providers – definitely a time-consuming and expensive exercise (Hunter, 2022)..

In addition, Pakistan's attempts to sustain the good relations with both Russia and China, while at the same time preserving its relations with USA and Europe to not want to get involved in new cold war style systems of warfare. Although Pakistan is benefited from its relationship with USA and China, it certainly understands the need of friendly relation with Russia. In the past, relations between Pakistan's military and defense forces and Russia were not very strong but show an upward trend in the contemporary world because of changing configurations of power in Central Asia and the Eurasian space.

9.3 The Political and Economic Imperatives of Neutrality

This is also true because of Pakistan's economic and political matters of interest with regards to Russia and Ukraine. Pakistan as a developing country cannot afford to make those decisions that may increase its detachment from international financial institutions or the major trading partners. The country still relies on the grant and foreign credits from the IMF, the World Bank and other overseas lenders. Pakistan cannot risk losing this financial assistance and standing up to Western powers by siding on the Russia Ukraine war could prove costly.

Likewise, most of Pakistan's export destinations are the USA, Europe, and the UK, which constitutes a substantial amount of the trade. Hence the government has to find a middle ground between the west and between Russia and China and its trade policies in way that will not compromise its stand in the international market.

But at the same time, Pakistan remains a neutral country and it does not want to aggravate tensions in the region. The country has several times demanded to resolve a military conflict using the diplomatic initiative. Pakistan's foreign policy decision makers have tried to focus on the adverse economic effects of the war on the developing nations in the aspect of increased

10. South Asia's Economic Challenges and the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

10.1 Economic Impacts on South Asian Countries

The effect of Russia Ukraine war on the economy is widely felt in South Asia as energy prices sky rocket supply chain disruptions and an imminent food crisis lingers (Chia and Haiqi 2021). These factors have made the World Bank to make a projection of slow economic growth for the region; inflation, fiscal deficits, and imbalance of the current account deepened the region's economic outlook (Hunter, 2022).

That is why the changes, that take place in the largest economy of South Asia, Pakistan, are especially threatening. The country has always highly dependant on import and significant portion of energy import come from Russia and the middle east making it highly vulnerable to the affects of the war (The Express Tribune, 2022). The up surging cost of oil has been known to have led to inflation, hence decreasing the real purchasing power per head, and therefore increasing poverty levels. This economic pressure is accompanied by other hiking essential products, for instance foods such as wheat that are essential imports from Ukraine and Russia.

10.2 The Challenges for Indian and Sri Lankan Economies

India is the largest economy in South Asia and it also has similar economical issues like Pakistan after the conflict. It is an oil importer and increased prices had taken a toll on the country's economy. While criticizing India for violating the anti-Russia sanctions, Europe and the United States have seen New Delhi benefit from the opportunity to purchase affordable energy sources in comparison with the global average. However, the increased consumption of oil imports, the inflation that affects food expenses, and a surge in food price may stall India's economical bounce back and growth (The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, 2022).

The social impact of a war in Ukraine would most certainly hit Sri Lanka, which is already reeling from an unprecedented economic crisis. Currently, the island nation's food and fuel prices continue to rise, further worsting the already simmering economic crisis. He has

contributed to the case of stretched and broken up supply systems, scarcity in the provision of basic foods and other needs, and persistent increase in the general prices. Sri Lanka also depends heavily on money transfer by its workers living in Middle Eastern countries and this has also been affected by the war, mainly due to soaring cost of living and job losses.

10.3 Regional Economic Slowdown

In the South Asia Economic Focus Q&A document, the World Bank points out that growth in South Asia would likely be below earlier projections because of the Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as continuing problems related to COVID-19. The report forecasts South Asia growth rate was previously set at 6.6% in 2022, but has lowered it to 6.3% for 2023. Further the economic activity is getting decelerated due to disruption in supply chain, increased commodity prices and inflation eroding the purchasing power of the population in the region.

It will further be visible that how the Russia-Ukraine war is going to affect the South Asian country's economy in the long term where further economical predicaments are possible if the war persists or intensifies. Sharp increase in the food and energy prices, together with a looming threat of a world-wide recession, may have unfavorable consequences in the sphere of poverty and social development in South Asia especially Pakistan, India, and sri lanka.

11. Conclusion

This paper aims to analyse the relationship between Russia and Ukraine and its implications on South Asia with special reference to Pakistan. By affecting each state's relations to the others in terms of the result of perceived threats, security dilemma in context of the war has influenced diplomatic and economic reactions of Pakistan. Although Pakistan has remained neutral, the kind of pressure from Russia on the one hand and the western world on the other cannot last forever. It goes without saying that Vietnam war also affected the economy of Pakistan particularly by having negative impacts on the inflation rates, increase in the prices of energy and food, which put lot of pressure on the economy of the country. The Projected overall effect of Covid 19 on South Asia's economy is a higher Inflation rate and disrupted supply chains that make it difficult for Pakistan to rebound and achieves economic stability. Fighting the conflict, Pakistan needs to manage its orientations to the great powers and at the same time, it has to protect its economic and strategic interests. This may be the country's best bet given that its foreign policy is focused

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on neutrality, diplomacy and economic relations not only with Russia but with any western country as well given the current security dilemma posed by the Russia Ukraine conflict. Nevertheless, growing changes in international relations and the long-term impacts of the war on the economy provide evidence that Pakistan will have to rearrange and adjust its foreign policy to fit into the current and future global changes in a more bipolar world. Altogether, the given conflict observed in relations between Russia and Ukraine has proven that the policy of neutrality and diplomacy are the key priorities in the modern global world. For Pakistan, the future lies in perpetuating this delicate diplomatic tightrope act: to secure its economic, political and security goals, without allowing itself to be the proxy of the new great power contest of the 21st century.

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