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PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH GAWADAR SEAPORT

Dr. Mazher Hussain

The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Dr. Ghulam Mustafa

Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan

Fakhar Bilal

Royal Holloway University of London, UK

ABSTRACT

Since 1960s, Pakistan has been emerging as a convergence point for numerous corridors between the three regions with the involvement of collaboration in energy sector, shipment trade, transport and tourism. Gawadar is a place of excessive geostrategic worth, providing enormous promotion to Pakistan's prominence in the entire region and is an imperious economic and strategic chokepoint that provides unobstructed access to the Indian Ocean that has been passageway of 100,000 shipping vessels annually estimating about 70% of world's total oil trade. Gawadar being the world's third largest and deep water Seaport may have been the sole port having the potential of receiving 200,000 tons of supertankers in the region. The proximity of Gawadar Seaport to CARs, Eurasia, Persian Gulf, and chief trading and energy chokepoints of the world all contributes for demonstration of its exclusive prominence. The entire Central Asia is landlocked and it has been in the need of proper trade routes of pipelines for the export of its resources to the world market economies. The Central Asian Republics (CARs) have been exporting their supplies via Russia towards Europe that is considered to be a lengthiest trade route. The transit route towards Mediterranean Sea passing through the territory of Russia has remained to be a cause of apprehensions for Europeans, Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Turkmenistan's. Gawadar seaport route would be a viable option for the (CARs) to save time and money in the transportation of their productions. Gawadar is an inter-link between the East and the West on account which it can change the strategic atmosphere and economy of the regional political community and will increase trading volumes, growth rating, employments, foreign direct investment (FDI), and revenues in Pakistan and the region leading towards en route to affluence and prosperity. The seaport will substantiate to be a strategic nucleus for the commercial activities of the entire region. The reduction of oil resources and increasing energy requirements in the world has intensified the importance of Pakistan to manifolds, as the energy and trading routes of (CARs) Central Asian Republics,

Afghanistan and China may have to be passing through the territory of Pakistan. This paper makes an analysis of the prospects for regional integration through Gawadar in terms of geographic and commercial collaboration.

KEYWORDS

Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, Chahbahar, Dubai World Port, Caspian Sea, TAPI, IPI

1. GEOSTRATEGIC POTENTIALITY OF GAWADAR SEAPORT

Gawadar seaport is a place of excessive geostrategic worth, providing enormous promotion for prominence of Pakistan in the entire region and countenances Pakistan in order to heighten weightage throughout Southeast Asia, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. Nautically, Gawadar Seaport has been circumscribed by Persian Gulf in West and by Gulf of Oman in Southwest (Naseem, 2014). Geostrategic location of Pakistan and its geopolitical fixations have been quite substantial due to enormous significance for national security of the state. The proximity of Gawadar Seaport to CARs, Eurasia, Persian Gulf, and chief trading and energy chokepoints of the world all contributes for demonstration of its exclusive prominence. The geostrategic position of Gawadar in the Arabian Sea could also be capable of facilitation to the electronic surveillance for monitoring of naval activities through Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea (Kalim, 2016). Gawadar seaport is a strategic nautical post. Being the world's third largest seaport, Gawadar is to be found in close contact to the entrance of Persian Gulf being away from 'Strait of Hormuz' about 180 nautical miles (N.S.Goraya, Javaid, & Mazhar, 2012). Strategically Gawadar has been situated between three progressively significant areas, namely Middle East being rich in oil, South Asia populated overwhelmingly and (CARs) Central Asian Republics the emerging economies rich in natural resources (Naseem, 2014). Gawadar is positioned at the point of inter-section of three economically renowned emerging world regions of South Asia, Middle East, and Central Asia. This geographical locality imparts it being very essential strategic place (Hussain, 2016). Having been bordered to the northwest with Afghanistan and to the southwest with Iran, Gawadar has been circumscribed by Persian Gulf in West and Gulf of Oman in Southwest. It possesses 600 km long coastline strap with shorelines and natural harbors. It is located to the East of 'Strait of Hormuz' about 624 nautical miles, 460 Km beyond Karachi, and 120 Km away from Iranian boundary in the west ward (Ali Q. , 2016). It has also been positioned at a distance of about 400 Km away from 'Strait of Hormuz' that has been strategic supply line of energy from where 16-17 million barrels of world's crude oil supplies is routed annually (Sakhuja, 2013). Gawadar seaport being close to the entrance of Persian Gulf at 'Strait of Hormuz' may offer several harboring facilities for show casing & storing of marine resources, shipments, manufacturing of expediencies for UAE, and European States being key regional and extra regional players (Malik Y. , 2012). Gawadar may not only work for economic development of Pakistan but would be responsible for prospects of boosting benefits in the future and maximization of advantages due to strategic position in close proximity to Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) passing through Indian Ocean and 'Strait of Hormuz' (Kashif, 2006). Sea Lines of Communications that has remained in use for global trading and transport of energy through Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea has been precarious in relation to coastal States on account of their accumulative geostrategic and geo-economics influence on political situation of the world (Kalim, 2016). The Persian Gulf Republics are pivot of the oil trading of the world. They share 2/3

of global oil trade (Malik H. Y., 2012). Gawadar is an imperious economic and strategic chokepoint that provides unobstructed access to the Indian Ocean that has been passageway of 100,000 shipping vessels annually estimating about 70% of world's total oil trade (Tanoli, 2016). Gawadar may turn out to be world-class seaport which would be serving not only for Pakistan as regional nucleus, but will also for (CARs) Central Asian States, Gulf States, Iran and China as well (Naseem, 2014). Pakistan's geostrategic position at crossing points of South & Central Asia may offer probably shortest track towards deep waters of Arabian Sea. Pakistan could make available (CARs) Central Asian Republics with shipment trading, oil and gas pipeline routes for their exports to world outside, that has been being desperate requirement of the (CARs) for their economic growth (Alamgir, 2011). Seaport of Gawadar has been situated at aperture of Iranian Plateau being entranceway towards Persian Gulf rich in oil, providing admittance for unbound natural reservoirs of Central Asian States (CARs). Pakistan has got to be positioned at such geostrategic locality that potentially it may turn out to become pivot of regional trade (Kakar, 2014). Iran has apprehensions regarding the development of Gawadar Seaport due to its adjacent proximity to Iranian seaports of Chahbahar and Bandar Abbas (Malik H. Y., 2012). Having been situated at the western end of the coastal region of Baluchistan, Gawadar has 600 km long coastline strip with shorelines and natural harbor (Alamgir, 2011). Regardless of the apprehensions Iran has taken an initiative for the establishment of an oil processing plant at Gawadar in order to share the benefits of trade, shipment and strategic capabilities (Malik Y., 2012). Gawadar has been being located at a distance of about 624 nautical miles to Eastern side of 'Strait of Hormuz' that has been remained imperative route for shipment of oil vessels leaving through Persian Gulf towards Japan and Western States (Alamgir, 2011). Seaport of Gawadar in Pakistan is situated at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, which is rich in natural energy resources (Ali Q., 2016). Gawadar Seaport will reduce the distance between Pakistan and Central Asian traffic by about 500 Km. Due to ongoing uncertainty in the Persian Gulf region has led the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to consider Gawadar Seaport as a substitute to the Persian Gulf ports on the basis of its geostrategic location (Abro, 2015). The Caspian Region has been looking for an appropriate transit routes for pipeline approaches and in this way, Gawadar being an entryway to the Strait of Hormuz might be the most suitable preference (Malik H. Y., 2012). Gawadar seaport has pertinent importance in relation with trading linkages to Central Asian Republics (CARs), Gulf States, UAE, East African States as well as Northwestern India (Naseem, 2014). It has been estimated that during the course of the 20th century, oil has come to be holding 40% of energy resources of the world, while coal 26% and natural gas about 24% (Roberts, 2008). In the year 2035 more than twice energy would be generated with consumption of oil nearly 140 million barrels per day, as comparing to the 80 million barrels of oil today (Pascu, 2011). Reduction of oil resources and increasing energy requirements in the world has intensified the importance of Pakistan to manifolds, as the energy and trading routes approaching through (CARs) Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan and China would be passing from Pakistan. These States have been desired of admittance to the warm waters for a long time. Pakistan enjoys geo-economics and geo-political significance in the region, mainly due to the geostrategic position of Baluchistan the Southwest province of Pakistan, which has been situated at intersection of the coastlines of South & Central Asia and Middle East States (Abro, 2015). The locus and unfathomable maritime natural features of Gawadar seaport have also been accepted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as an alternative seaport for Persian Gulf Seaports in order to handle larger tankers of oil shipments and shipping vessels (Kalim, 2016). Gawadar has

potentiality for accomplishing position of being gateway towards 'Strait of Hormuz' as it may contest UAE Seaports by enhancing existing linkages with Caspian States as well as to provide better transit trading routes for landlocked region of Caspian Sea (Malik Y. , 2012). Gawadar seaport was the dire need of Pakistan due to its dependency on sea trade that has intensified up to 95%. The people of Pakistan envision Gawadar as a fortune changer for their economic development and prosperity (Tanoli, 2016). The strategic interests of nation-states inevitably stem from their monetary concerns. Gawadar, endowed with potential to function as a pivot seaport, can enable the convergence of the interests of all countries by bringing about harmony and prosperity in the region (Prospects of Gwadar as Major Regional/Commercial Hub). Gawadar, as being world's largest deep water seaport will increase trading volumes, growth rating, employments, foreign direct investment (FDI), and revenues in Pakistan and the region leading towards en route to affluence and prosperity (Tanoli, 2016). In the contemporary geostrategic and geo-economics environment, importance of seaports may not be disregarded particularly in the aftermath of the US occupation of Iraq and Kuwait that influenced Saudi Arabia enormously and caused in the neutralization of Chahbahar & Bandar Abbas Seaports of Iran. Supply demands of the European nations are going to be fulfilled by the seaports of Dubai and Salalah (Naseem, 2014). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has characterized the Gawadar seaport as an alternate to Dubai World Port of (UAE), which is out of the chokepoint and the Strait of Hormuz and is capable of handling larger 'S' class cargo ships and oil vessels (Malik H. Y., 2012). Gawadar is comparable with the cities of Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai. Being an alternate to Dubai World Port, one needs to be located in close proximity to the strategic energy chokepoints for smooth oil supplies through Gulf States to world in worst case scenario (Naseem, 2014). Gawadar has deep and hot waters coastline which is located at the intersection of various regions and is part of Baluchistan being rich in natural resources. The most advantageous characteristic giving Gawadar Seaport the paramount strategic and commercial prominence has been in relation to be a connecting region. Seaport of Gawadar has been an inter-link between East & West on account which it could be capable of changing geostrategic atmosphere and regional economy of political communities (Kakar, 2014). Gawadar is the direct and most reasonable sea route for landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs), Afghanistan and for seaports of Russia specifically during the period of winter season when most of its seaports are closed (Ahmad D. A., 2015). Gawadar links the world to a colossal economic market figuring about \$20 trillion (Tanoli, 2016) that has been holding a leading potentiality in the region of Gulf States for being part of 'Great Game' in the regional set up (Bhonsle, 2006). The novile geopolitics or what some scholars have called it the 'New Great Game' has also been manipulating the improvements in the different region. After 9/11 the US and its NATO partners occupied Afghanistan and overthrown the Taliban regime from the corridors of power. The regional states supported the US in its so called war against terrorism including Russia, China, the Central Asian Republics (CARs), India and Pakistan. Russia considers Central Asian Republics (CARs) as her neighboring abroad while on the other hand China is strengthening its relationship with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) rich in oil and gas reserves, because its local energy means are not sufficient to cope with the fast growing economy and energy requirements. The Central Asian transport routes are now directed towards Moscow (Abro, 2015).

2. PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH GAWADAR SEAPORT

Pakistan has been positioned at the point of intersection of South & Central Asia, as well as Western Asia being three important regions of the world, providing them the direct admittance to the maritime for all the landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs) as well as to the Western part of China. Pakistan has been emerging as a convergence point for numerous corridors between the three regions with the involvement of collaboration in energy sector, shipment trade, transport and tourism. The Strategic Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and trading linkages approaching from South & Central Asia and more so from Western Asia may have been passing through Pakistan that would transform the State into a commercial pivot in terms of giving enhancement to the inter-regional economic activities (Anwar, 2011). Gawadar Seaport has excessive strategic worth by enhancing Pakistan's prominence in the entire region. It encompasses the significance of Pakistan from Persian Gulf throughout Indian Ocean towards Southeast Asia and Far East because it has been located in proximity of Strait of Hormuz, being energy chokepoint and a passageway of about 13 million barrels of oil on daily basis (Ali Q. , 2016). The warm waters Seaport of Gawadar may be going to emerge as being a place of excessive geostrategic worth with the enhancement of the significance of Pakistan ranging from Persian Gulf throughout Indian Ocean towards Southeastern Asia to the Far East (Prospects of Gawadar as Major Regional/Commercial Hub). Gawadar seaport will make available a secure and adjoining point of entrance to the Persian Gulf seaports, having been located away from Strait of Hormuz about 250 miles, being energy choke point for approximately 40% of world oil supplies has been flown. Definitely, this feature makes Gawadar as being the energy hub of Asia (Dawn, 2006). Pakistan has been situated at the junctions and can play imperative part in the productive regional incorporation for maintenance of peace and development (Anwar, 2011). This seaport will substantiate to be a strategic nucleus for the commercial activities of the entire region (Naseem, 2014). Being a trading center for the whole region Gawadar seaport being equipped with the contemporary shipment handling will serve the consumer markets of Asia in order to meet the growing challenges of international trade (Tanoli, 2016). It has been going to play its due role as being an inter-link owing to geostrategic position between landlocked countries through Arabian Sea to the rest of world, on account of which it may appropriately come to be known as 'entryway of Asia' (Naseem, 2014). Seaport of Gawadar has been expected to open vistas of new collaborations for regional progress (Ali Q. , 2016). Gawadar is capable of having potential to act as a central seaport enabling the convergence of the interests of all countries, bringing about peace and prosperity to the region. Gawadar seaport has a colossal consumer market of Asia with over 1/3 of the world's population situated geo-strategically at the crossroads of natural resources. Gawadar seaport would be able to draw its part of trade to the shipment of natural resources. There are huge prospects for establishment of combined projects and the development of economic collaboration in fisheries, food processing units, exploration of oil and gas, and extraction of minerals (Abro, 2015). Gawadar Seaport may create trading opportunities through Arabian Sea for landlocked Nations of Asia (Naseem, 2014) and for the regions having strategic importance like the Middle East rich in oil, South Asia and Western China being heavily populated and Central Asian Republics (CARs) emerging economically and rich in hydrocarbon reservoirs (Alamgir, 2011). The port facilities at Gawadar may serve for entrance way towards the (CARs) Central Asian Republics, yet continuous Afghan uncertainty in the region has been inflicting restrictions. It has been estimated for approximately 20 States belonging to Middle East, (CARs) Central Asian Republics, China and South Asian States would benefit by mega-project of Gawadar. This seaport would make available the facilitations of warehouse, maritime

shipment, transportation of vessels, coastline trade, industrial and commercial services regarding global trading and import-exports, particularly those of (CARs) Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, China and other regional States (Ali Q. , 2016). Gawadar has enormous geostrategic importance on accounts of being located at the entry point of the Persian Gulf at a distance of 460 km away from Karachi. The continual insecure environment of the region of Persian Gulf particularly due to results of Iraqi-Iranian war, the Gulf War and with the emergence of the newly (CARs) Central Asian Republics after the disintegration of the USSR has supplemented to this prominence. Bearing in mind the geo-strategic and geo-economics constraints of changes in the region, the Ports Master Plan of Asian Development Bank (ADB's) studies has considered Gawadar Seaport as an alternative for Persian Gulf Seaports in addition for capturing shipment trading of (CARs) Central Asian Republic and of the whole region (Alamgir, 2011). It may be expedient for Saudi Arabia and Gulf Countries to use Gawadar not only for the transportation of oil and gas but also to make investments in the envisaged oil refineries to be established at Gawadar (Ahmad D. A., 2015). The chief oil & gas reservoirs have been explored in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. It has been due to the politics of energy and natural resources, that the Caspian Region has constantly been dominating the regional events in the States like Iran, Pakistan, India, Russia and China, as well as the other stake holders being the US, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Alamgir, 2011). The Gawadar Seaport project aims to be developed as an industrial city having facilities of private owned warehouses, cold storages, equipment of cargo handlings, corporate offices and truck yards in the similar ways as may be found at Malaysia, Singapore, Jebel Ali, and Hong Kong (Prospects of Gwadar as Major Regional/Commercial Hub). Pakistan's involvement in the schemes will represent the reappearance of the Indus valley period in terms of economic and cultural interaction at the regional level. The renaissance of centuries old trading linkages between South & Central Asia and with the establishment of newly interlinks predominantly in areas of roads, communications, and electricity infrastructures may further enhance development and economic collaboration at regional level (Anwar, 2011). With the disintegration of the USSR and the appearance of five Central Asian Republics (CARs) in to world politics has transformed the geopolitical environment of the international politics (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). The Central Asian Republics occupies an area of about 1.6 million square miles. The reservoirs of oil in the Caspian Sea have been projected about 200 (BB) Billion Barrels, while existing production has been one million barrels of oil per day that is expected to reach at 3.4 million barrels per day by the coming years in the perspective of growing demands of oil in the market of the world, while on the other hand, reservoirs of gas in the region have been estimated about 3,000 (BCM) Billion Cubic Meters. The natural gas resources of Caspian Region have been found to be larger than the oil reserves in the region (Alamgir, 2011). The Central Asian Republics (CARs) possess sufficient natural resources like oil and gas as well as several precious metals like silver, gold, uranium, manganese and the raw materials of industry like copper and iron (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). CARs have been considered to encompass up to 250 billion barrels of petroleum and the biggest gas reserves (Malik H. Y., 2012). Central Asia has been endowed with the immense hydroelectric potential, while Pakistan is suffering shortage of electricity (Anwar, 2011). Pakistan has been facing an energy crisis that has bothered ordinary and business life and has decreased 3% of the economic development yearly (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). The Central Asian Republics (CARs) are gifted with the mineral wealth of natural resources and highly skilled human capital workforce (Prospects of Gwadar as Major Regional/Commercial Hub).

Central Asian area of 4 million square km is strategically considered significant on the basis of which it has been matched with the Heartland Theory of Mackinder (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). The Central Asian Republics (CARs) have been looking for a feasible admittance to the outer world and in this way the best option remains the Gawadar Seaport (Ahmad D. A., 2015). The Central Asia region is landlocked and it has been in the need of proper trade routes of pipelines for the export of its resources to the world marketplaces (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). Gawadar Seaport will make available a reasonable and inexpensive route for trading with Central Asian landlocked Republics being endowed with the natural resources (Tanoli, 2016). Every nation state desires to gain the maximum share in order to establish its domination in the region to achieve the objectives of its strategic interest. The geographical position of Central Asia and its deposits of oil and gas have been playing imperative role in defining its significant place in politics of the world since the immemorial times. Kurecic was right to state that Central Asia would be a jewel in the crown of an economic power that will be capable of utilizing it efficiently (Kurecic, 2010). The geostrategic locality of Central Asia is nucleus of the corridors of North-South and the West-East communications. The Caspian Sea has been of great significance for the region being chief source of food and the pivot of hydrocarbon deposits. Most of the natural reservoirs are untapped and the Central Asian Republics (CARs) do not have capability to extract these resources (Aman, 2009). Central Asia has excessive importance in political arena of the world that it has been known as the 'heart of Asia'. The geostrategic situation and its enormous reservoirs of hydrocarbon have made it as a bone of contention among big powers (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). The Central Asian Republics (CARs) have been dependent on Russia for trade (Blank, 2009). Presently, most of the Central Asian Republics (CARs) have been exporting their supplies via Russia towards Europe that has been considered to be lengthiest transit route. Gawadar Seaport route could be a feasible choice for the (CARs) to save time and money in the transportation of their productions (Chengappa, 2004). The Central Asian States have depended on Russia to transport their goods and natural resources, and have been remained in the need of their access to the outer world. In relation to it the short and most viable link can be the deep waters of North Arabian Sea, either through Iran or Pakistan. Due to the unpleasant relationship of Iran with the Western world and the Gulf monarchies, the Gawadar Seaport of Pakistan has been supposed to be the preferred option of the world for linking to the CARs (Ahmad D. A., 2015). The CARs have been still dependent on Russia mainly due to Moscow based old communication grids controlling international mailing, telephones, telegraph links and other communicational infrastructures. Russia has also been frightened by the likelihood of low-priced gas of (CARs) Central Asian Republics for the economic markets of Europe that may be competing with the gas giant Gazprom of Russia (Ghaleb, 2009). The Mediterranean Sea-route has been passing through Russian territory has become source of apprehensions for Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Europe (Malik Y. , 2012). In order to turn away from the effects of the Russian influence and for strengthening of economy by the export of their mineral and hydrocarbon resources the CARs need an outlet. There are two possible routes that can be available to the CARs, one through Iranian port of Chahbahar and the other by Pakistani Seaport of Gawadar (Malik H. Y., 2012). As a result of the disintegration of the USSR, Central Asian Republics (CARs) have been struggling for the development of trade routes towards China, Turkey and South Asia. The security of smooth supplies of energy towards regional powers has brought to the agreement of TAPI and IPI oil pipeline projects. The Northern channels and transport routes have not been sufficient for the export of Central Asian hydrocarbons resources.

The alternative route lies in South Asia particularly through Afghanistan and Pakistan being a convergence point of the region by means of Gawadar Seaport (Abro, 2015). The plan for establishment of pipelines of gas either through Turkmenistan's gas fields of Daulatabad or Iranian fields of South Pars towards Gawadar Seaport have provoked anti-project and pro-project hostilities between the key players in the geopolitics of region. It has to be worth mentioning that USA opposes IPI gas pipeline, being known as "peace pipeline", while on the other hand she supports TAPI gas pipeline project (Fazal-e-Haider, 2009). The relations between India and Pakistan can be normalized through IPI and TAPI oil pipelines projects by playing their role as CBMs (Alamgir, 2011). The oil giant of the US named as 'UNOCAL' has projected the construction of (TAPI) oil pipeline, which highlights the strategic significance of deep seaport of Gawadar (Malik Y. , 2012). Central Asia is also important for the establishment of a Muslim bloc in the region by having been bordered with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and the Middle East that could be a potential threat to the rest of the world (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). According to the human geography, ideologies and understandings of the human-beings keep changing with respect to time and hegemonic culture of global politics (Kakar, 2014). The development of Gawadar Seaport and inter-connecting of trade routes with Afghanistan will reduce the distance of Pakistan-Central Asian traffic up to approximately 500 km (Anwar, 2011). Gawadar will become nucleus of regional trade and an interlink connectivity with Afghanistan and the rest of Asia (Naseem, 2014) as 85% exports of Afghanistan have been sent through Pakistan (Anwar, 2011). Gawadar Seaport will make available cost-effective and shortest possible admittance to Afghanistan towards (IOR) Indian Ocean (Malik H. Y., 2012). Gawadar may offer an inexpensive, viable and safe trading route to Afghanistan (Tanoli, 2016) and that it would become a corridor for by-road transport for linking Central Asian Republics (CARs) through Afghanistan, which makes Gawadar as the energy pivot of Asia (Gauhar, 2005). The European Nation States have been struggling to reach out this region rich in mineral and hydrocarbon resources through the Caspian Region prior to other key actors via Gawadar and Afghanistan (Malik H. Y., 2012). The regional and other great powers have interests in maintaining regional peace and security by means of economic integration that will create conducive atmosphere. The South and Central Asian regions have abundance of hydrocarbon and other natural resources. The Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) as well as regional and global powers have been taking keen interest in access to the regional gas and oil reserves (Abro, 2015). Primarily, it had been assumed due to geographical proximity of Gawadar Seaport that it would work for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan via Afghanistan (Khan D. S., 2013), whereas Kazakhstan possesses the largest energy reserves of the world and Uzbekistan has been the leading producer of gold and cotton, as well as, Turkmenistan has the world's biggest reservoirs of natural gas. The Central Asian massive energy resources and geostrategic position have appealed great powers to attain control of the region in order to achieve the objectives of their national interests (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan having prospects for more liquid cargo shipments could export their supplies by alternate routes either through the Mediterranean Sea being 1800 km, or Gawadar Seaport reducing the distance to 1400 Km (Malik Y. , 2012). Turkmenistan possesses 4th largest gas reservoirs of world estimated to 7.5 Trillion Cubic Meters (TCM), 2.41 Trillion Cubic Meters (TCM) to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan about 1.84 Trillion Cubic Meters (TCM). The Caspian Sea basin possesses about 46% of the world total gas reserves, while Kyrgyzstan is world's 8th biggest gold-mining region and exporter of gold to the world.

Moreover, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan produce a massive quantity of best quality cotton (Akbar, 2012). Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan may be producing more dry cargo in Central Asia rather than other (CARs) Central Asian Republics hence, Gawadar Seaport would be the shortest entrance point to the warm waters (Malik H. Y., 2012). The natural gas reservoirs of Turkmenistan would be linked to Pakistan and India from side to side with Afghanistan. Gawadar Seaport known as the Chinese port in Pakistan and Chahbahar being called as the Indian port in Iran would be connected to the oil and gas pipelines in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and the Nation States of other (CARs). Some of the experts have been considering seaports of Iran (Chahbahar) and Pakistan (Gawadar) to be strategic energy points for deliveries of Caspian Sea oil to world energy markets (Pascu, 2011) because the survival of the Central Asian Republics (CARs) may be dependent on the maintenance of passageways and interlinks (Ahmad, Rubab, & Akram, 2015). Gawadar has been the sole seaport having the potential of receiving 200,000 tons of supertankers in the region (Tanoli, 2016). There have been massive prospects of trade that could flow through the Gawadar Seaport, and the challenges it has to face would be to compete with the developing regional seaports. In order to make encouraging environment for the development of industry in the region, concentrated efforts have been required on the basis of scientific approach and effectual directions for making it an inclusive project. If there is existing no collaboration between regional and extra regional actors, then there would be no security (Abro, 2015). Iran has apprehensions regarding Gawadar that may erode the importance of her ports for Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Afghanistan, particularly Chahbahar being helped by India to be developed in order to counter Gawadar Seaport. The competition between the two emerging seaports may exaggerate Pak-Iranian economic competitiveness due to the deteriorating relations since 1990s (Aneja). The UAE and Iran envision Gawadar Seaport as an emergent challenging port in the region. They are afraid of Gawadar by sharing with them the economic and trade incentives that may otherwise be enjoyed by them exclusively (Malik H. Y., 2012). Iran has been developing its own seaport of Chahbahar being built with the help of India along with a plan for the construction of 200 Km road joining the Iranian Seaport of Chahbahar and Afghanistan that would offer to-and-fro trade from the Central Asian Republics (CARs). Iran and India would manage to overturn the intimidations posed by Gawadar Seaport by this way (Kakar, 2014). The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran may also have incompatible interests in relation to Gawadar, while the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and China would have most important economic interests (Malik Y. , 2012). Pakistan, China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been agreed for the initiation of bus service that will enhance trade and promote the people-to-people contact between the States (Anwar, 2011). The geographical position of the Seaport and the willingness of China to help in building and operationalization of the port have attracted responsiveness of the regional and extra-regional players equally. Strategic policymakers, politicians, and international scholars have since been debating Gawadar, giving rise to different theories, assumptions and stratagems. Gawadar has been specified to become a core of transit trade, shipment and logistics, and may also be responsible for opening the new vistas of progress and prosperity for Baluchistan and Pakistan (Ahmad D. A., 2015). The accomplishment of Gawadar Seaport depends upon its utilizations by (CARs) Central Asian Republics, South Asia & China. In this perspective, collaboration regarding establishment of peace and security with Afghanistan may be need of time (Malik H. Y., 2012) that may create employment prospects and offer enormous economic activities which would directly be transformed into the regional progress and prosperity (Ahmad D. A., 2015).

3. CONCLUSION

It is imperative to conclude that geostrategic location of Pakistan and its geopolitical fixations have been quite substantial that has attained enormous significance for national security. The geostrategic position of Gawadar in the Arabian Sea could be capable of facilitation to the electronic surveillance for monitoring of the naval activities throughout the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea (Kalim, 2016). Strategically Gawadar has been situated between three progressively significant areas of the world, namely the Middle East, being rich in oil, the South Asia overwhelmingly populated and (CARs) the Central Asian Republics being emerging economically and enriched by natural resources (Naseem, 2014). This geographical locality imparts Gawadar Seaport to be very essential strategic place in the region (Hussain, 2016). It has found to be located at a distance of 400 Km away from Strait of Hormuz which has remained to be a strategic energy chokepoint and one of the main supply lines of oil to the world where 16-17 million barrels (MB) of crude oil has been routed annually (Sakhuja, 2013). Gawadar may not only work for economic growth of Pakistan but would also be responsible for prospects regarding boosting of the economic benefits and maximization of advantages through strategic position in close proximity to the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean and Strait of Hormuz in future (Kashif, 2006). Gawadar Seaport has pertinent importance with reference to trading linkages to UAE, CARs, the region of Persian Gulf, Eastern Africa as well as Northwestern regions India (Naseem, 2014). Due to the locus, and unfathomable maritime natural features of Gawadar Seaport, it has also been accepted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as an alternative seaport for ports of Persian Gulf region in relation for handling of large shipment oil tankers and shipping vessels (Kalim, 2016). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has characterized Gawadar Seaport as an alternate to Dubai World Port of (UAE), which is out of the chokepoint and the Strait of Hormuz and that Gawadar has been capable of handling larger 'S' class cargo ships and oil vessels (Malik H. Y., 2012). Pakistan has been situated at the intersection of South, West & Central Asia, being three important regions of the world, providing them the direct admittance to the maritime for all the landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs) as well as to the Western part of China. The Strategic Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and trading linkages between South, West & Central Asia have been passing through Pakistan that would transform the State into a commercial pivot in terms of giving enhancement to the inter-regional economic activities (Anwar, 2011). Being a trading center for the whole region Gawadar Seaport having been equipped with the contemporary shipment handling would serve the consumer markets of Asia in order to meet the growing challenges of international trade (Tanoli, 2016). The Central Asian Republics (CARs) have been looking for a feasible admittance to the outer world and in this way the best option remains the Gawadar Seaport. The Central Asian States have been depending on Russia to transport their goods and natural resources, and have remained in the need of their access to the outer world. In relation to it the short and most viable link can be the deep waters of North Arabian Sea, either through Iran or Pakistan. Due to the unpleasant relationship of Iran with the Western world and the Gulf monarchies, the Gawadar Seaport of Pakistan has been supposed to be the preferred option of the world for linking to the CARs (Ahmad D. A., 2015). There may have been two possible routes that could be available to the CARs, one through Iranian port of Chahbahar and the other by Pakistani Seaport of Gawadar. The European Nation States have been struggling to reach out this region rich in mineral and hydrocarbon resources through the Caspian Region prior to other key actors via

Gawadar and Afghanistan (Malik H. Y., 2012). The geographical position of the seaport and the willingness of China to help in building and operationalization of the port have attracted responsiveness of the regional and extra-regional players equally (Ahmad D. A., 2015). The accomplishment of Gawadar Seaport depends upon its utilizations by the Central Asian Republics (CARs), South Asia and China (Malik H. Y., 2012) that will create employment prospects and offer enormous economic activities which would directly be transformed into the regional progress and prosperity (Ahmad D. A., 2015).

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