

Geostrategic importance of pakistan



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Geo- Strategic means importance of a country or a region as by virtue of its geographical location. Geo political is defined as, stressing the influence of geographic factors on the state power, international conduct and advantages it derives from its location.

Pakistan is located at a region which has a great economic, political and strategic location. It has been the hub of great activities for the past twenty years. Stephen Cohn describes this importance “ While history has been unkind to Pakistan, its geography has been its greatest benefit. It has resource rich area in the north-west, people rich in the north-east.” Pakistan is a junction of South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia, a way from resource efficient countries to resource deficient countries. The world is facing energy crisis and terrorism. Pakistan is a route for transportation, and a front line state against terrorism. Pakistan has witnessed the intervention of three great powers Britons, U. S. S. R and U. S. Its significance is further enhanced during the cold war when it became the alley of the U. S policy of containment of U. S. S. R and now the post cold war era has witnessed its significance politically after the event of 9/11.

Pakistan’s Geographical Location:

Pakistan is located in southern Asia. It is located between 24 and 36. 5 Northern latitude and between 61 and 75. 5 eastern latitude. The area of Pakistan is estimated at 803, 940 square kilometers. Pakistan is the bridge between South Asia and South West Asia.

Towards the North western part of Pakistan there lies Afghanistan. Pakistan’s boundary with Afghanistan is about 2, 250 kilometers long. In the north, it

runs along the ridges of the Hindu Kush (meaning Hindu Killer) mountains and the Pamirs, where a narrow strip of Afghan territory called the Wakhan Corridor extends between Pakistan and Tajikistan. This strip is about 16 to 25 kilometers long. The boundary line between Pakistan and Afghanistan is called Durand Line and it was drawn by Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893 and he was the foreign secretary of British India and was acceded to by the ameer of Afghanistan that same year. It was not in doubt when Pakistan became independent in 1947, although its legitimacy was in later years disputed periodically by the Afghan government as well as by Pakhtun tribes straddling the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. On the one hand, Afghanistan claimed that the Durand Line had been imposed by a stronger power upon a weaker one, and it favored the establishment of still another state to be called Pashtunistan or Pakhtunistan. On the other hand, Pakistan, as the legatee of the British in the region, insisted on the legality and permanence of the boundary. The Durand Line remained in effect in 1994.

In the northeastern tip of the country, Pakistan controls about 84, 159 square kilometers of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. This area, consisting of Azad Kashmir (11, 639 square kilometers) and most of the Northern Areas (72, 520 square kilometers), which includes Gilgit and Baltistan, is the most visually stunning of Pakistan. The Northern Areas has five of the world's seventeen highest mountains. It also has such extensive glaciers that it has sometimes been called the "third pole." The boundary line has been a matter of pivotal dispute between Pakistan and India since 1947, and the Siachen Glacier in northern Kashmir has been an important arena for fighting between the two sides since 1984, although far more

soldiers have died of exposure to the cold than from any skirmishes in the conflict.

From the eastern end of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, a boundary of about 520 kilometers runs generally southeast between China and Pakistan, ending near the Karakoram Pass. This line was determined from 1961 to 1965 in a series of agreements between China and Pakistan. By mutual agreement, a new boundary treaty is to be negotiated between China and Pakistan when the dispute over Kashmir is finally resolved between India and Pakistan.

The India-Pakistan Border, known locally as the International Border (IB), is the international boundary between India and Pakistan that demarcates the Indian states of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat from provinces of Punjab and Sindh. Pakistan borders India in the East. The border resulted from the Partition of India in 1947.

The Line of Control (L. O. C) separates The Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan administered Azad Kashmir.

Wagah, the ceremonial point of crossing between India and Pakistan lies along this border between the Indian city of Amritsar and the Pakistani city of Lahore, and is within close distance of both cities' urban sprawl.

The boundary with Iran, some 800 kilometers in length, was first delimited by a British commission in 1893, separating Iran from what was then British Indian Balochistan. In 1957 Pakistan signed a frontier agreement with Iran,

and since then the border between the two countries has not been a subject of serious dispute.

To the South of Pakistan , Arabian sea and Indian ocean are located. The costal belt of Pakistan is about 700 kilometer. Pakistan significance is enhanced as it located near the Persian Gulf from where 65% oil of the world is produced.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:

500 BC , one of the world's first great civilizations began to develop in the Indus Valley in what is now Pakistan. Ruin of Harrapa and Mhenjo- Daro , were the two major cities of the civilization, show that both were large and well planned. By about 1700 BC, the Indus Valley civilization had disappeared. Experts don't know why it collapsed.

During the next several thousand years, many people from southwest and Central Asia came into the region that is now Pakistan. About 1500 BC, a Central Asian people called Aryans came through the mountains passes to the Punjab region. In time, they settled across almost all of india.

The Persians conquered the Punjab during the 500 BC and made it part of the huge Achmenid empire. In 236BC, Alexander the great took control of most of what is now Pakistan, a few years later, the emperor Chandra Gupta Mauriya made the region, part of Mauriyan empire.

The Mauriyan Empire began to break up about 230BC. Greeks from the independent state of Bacteria in Central Asia then invaded the Indus valley, they established kingdom with capitals near the present day cities of

Peshawar and Rawalpindi. About 100BC Scythians from Afghanistan came into Baluchistan and Sindh. In time they conquered the Indus region. The Parthian, who in turn was conquered by the Kushans of Central Asia, replaced Afghans. The Kushans ruled what is now Afghan. Pakistan and northwest India from about AD 50 mid 200s. They controlled the trade routes from China to India and the Middle East, Peshawar, the kushan capital, became the major commercial center. During the mid 300 the Indus valley become part of the Gupta Empire which had expanded westward from northeastern India, Huns from Central Asia conquered the empire in mid 400s. The coming of Islam, In AD 711, Arabs Muslims sailed across the Arabian sea and invaded Sindh bringing Islam to the region, Beginning about AD

1000 Turkish Muslim invaded Northern Pakistan from Iran.

The Turkish ruler Mehmood of Ghazni established a Muslim kingdom that in time including the entire Indus Valley. Lahore become the capital of the kingdom and developed into a major entre of Muslim culture.

In 1206, most of what is now Pakistan became part of the Delhi Sultanat, a Muslim empire that included Northern India. The Delhi Sultanat lasted until 1526, when Babar a Muslim ruler from Afghanistan, invaded India and established the Mughul Empire.

By far Sher Shah's greatest legacy is the modern Grand Trunk road which ran from Bengal to Attock, however some claim it ran right up to Kabul. Along the way " Baulis" and " Sarais" were constructed which are the equivalent of Modern day Service stations. Some 450 years later, an

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incompetent ruler of Modern Pakistan also fancied going down in History as Sher Shah Suri. The result, a road though one of the best in the world but a white elephant for the Pakistani Nation.