



Tehran-Riyadh Détente 2023: Implications for Pakistan

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Abstract:

The recently signed Iran-Saudi deal has generated a new debate in the contemporary global power politics because the role of China mediating a deal between to archrival nations has surprised the whole world. The Western powers are now compelled to alter their ongoing models of Middle Eastern policies while recognizing China as an important factor in affecting the mainstream geo-strategic calculations of the great powers. In this debate, the position of Pakistan cannot be ignored because Islamabad has a decades-long rivalry with New Delhi parallel to having multileveled relations with Beijing. Additionally, the ideological affiliations of Islamabad with the main power centers of the Muslim world have raised the significance of this development for Pakistan. This deal has significant implications for the politics of the Middle Eastern and South Asian regions, and both are the main points of Pakistan's foreign policy. Thus, this paper seeks to provide a descriptive account of various arguments related to the ongoing politics of South Asian and Middle Eastern regions in the post-deal environment. It is an academic endeavor to align Pakistan with the changing attributes of the Muslim world, where China has been recognized as an influential player and a potential force for shaping new political scenarios. This study is based on a combination of explorative and analytical method whereas its theoretical description has been maintained with the support of Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST).

Keywords: Saudi-Iran relations, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, India-Pakistan conflict, South Asian politics, détente, mediation

INTRODUCTION

The role of China in contemporary world politics has recently gone beyond its traditional reputation of becoming an active economic power in the world. Beijing's determination to establish a worldwide network of China-centric trading routes under the broader framework of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project has expanded the Chinese role around the globe. The expanding trading connections of China with different regions have changed the conventional patterns of great power politics, where Beijing has transformed the nature of the entire international system through various bilateral and multilateral economic engagements. The expanding role of BRI around the world has introduced China-specific geo-economic trends in the international system and convinced the Western powers to alter their global engagements due to Beijing's introduced new standards of great power politics (Shine et al., 2023). The American reactions to the Chinese BRI project have led Washington towards the states of the Asia Pacific region in which the combination

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of Washington's economic and strategic agreements with various states are trying to protect the territorial and maritime politics of the Asia Pacific Region from the Chinese influences. In this regard, the Western apprehensions about the Chinese emerging role in global power politics have augmented with the recently held trilateral meeting between the Chinese, Saudi, and Iranian leaders where China played the role of mediator between two archrival Muslim nations. The arrangement of a meeting between two historical contestants of the Muslim world could not be treated as an anomalous development of the international system because it was apparently a simple meeting between two Muslim states having strong trading ties with China (Brown, 2023). However, the implication of this tripartite summit on the Muslim world, international system, and South Asian region cannot be overlooked due to the deepening economic associations of Beijing with these three domains.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The international community recognized the deal Beijing brokered between Tehran and Riyadh in March 2023 as a Saudi-Iranian détente 2023 (Bishara, 2023). This détente between two conflicting regional players has been proved to be a major development in contemporary world politics, forcing the world's leading capitals to understand the role of China in the international system more than as a trading nation. It was the first step of China toward resolving the historical interstate disputes between different archrival nations. The diplomatic rapprochement of two contesting powers of the Muslim world has undermined the position of the United States in the politics of the Middle Eastern region as a mediator. The conflict management approaches of Washington in the Middle Eastern region generally and the Iranian-Saudi multileveled rivalry specifically have been challenged by Beijing's dispute-settling efforts. The post-deal developments in Iran-Saudi relations have witnessed various positive developments at the diplomatic and political levels. This has validated that the Chinese leaders could address various enduring interstate rivalries of different regions where Beijing has strong economic engagements with the conflicting states (Hafezi et al., 2023). This scenario has refreshed the international political debates regarding the South Asian regional complex security environment consisting of the New Delhi-Islamabad historical rivalry. The leading circles of the international academic community have started emphasizing the position of Pakistan in South Asian regional politics, where Pakistan and India have developed multiple conflicting points against each other while having strong trading connections with China. The increasing bilateral economic ties of Beijing with New Delhi and Islamabad could let China replace the ongoing hostile interstate interaction of two territorially adjoining South Asian rivals with its bilateral economic engagements. No doubt, the presence of nuclear weapons is a major hurdle in visualizing the situation of Middle Eastern politics in South Asian politics, but still, the probability of the Chinese dispute-settling efforts in the nuclearized subcontinent cannot be ruled out.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF TEHRAN-RIYADH DÉTENTE 2023

Based on this scenario, this paper seeks to describe various arguments validating the greater relevance of the Chinese-brokered Iran-Saudi deal with South Asian regional politics. In addition to the South Asian region, the ongoing patterns of Middle Eastern regional politics and the evolving multifaceted competition between Beijing and Washington in global power politics are the main

points of explanation in this paper. The arguments in the paper attempted to estimate the position of Pakistan in its domestic region under the shadows of Chinese geo-economic interests and the relevance of Islamabad with Middle Eastern and global power politics in the post-deal scenario. In other words, the debate in this paper tried to analyze the aftermaths of this trilateral meeting among Beijing, Riyadh, and Tehran in three domains, South Asia, the Muslim world, and global power politics. The probability of aligning the South Asian politics with the Middle Eastern region is primarily based on certain commonalities like the growth of both regions under the changing patterns of global power politics. An interstate conflict between the two contesting players of both regions has complicated the entire security environments of both regions parallel to placing the conflicts of Riyadh-Tehran and Islamabad-New Delhi under the shadows of great power politics. Therefore, it can be maintained that the growth of both Asian sub-regions always remained under the influences of the great power politics. The history of decades-long Cold War politics can be considered a proper validation of this argument that there is an inseparable connection between the regional political developments of both regions and the international politics. In this way, the main argument of this research on the regional level developments has led the main analysis of this study towards regional level analysis which cannot be completed without studying the main drivers of change in the regions. In the Middle Eastern and South Asian regions, the main drivers of change are the competing geostrategic interests of great powers. The regional level analysis has kept this research restricted to the political developments of the Middle Eastern and South Asian politics while considering the extra-regional powers as the main drivers of change due to the enduring rivalries between the regional players of both regions.

Based on this scenario, this research has emphasized the position of Pakistan in the changing power dynamics of the international power politics generally, and the great powers specifically.

This paper's concluding analysis highlights that the relevance of Pakistan with the three domains of power politics, consisting on South Asia, Muslim world, and global power politics which demands Islamabad to revise or improve its conventional patterns of foreign relations with the outside world. The main argument of this research suggests that China has started going beyond its traditional role of an economic powers in the Middle Eastern region, and it has been recognized as the potential security threat for the American global engagements, because the South Asian regional politics could be the next target of Chinese trade diplomacy. The findings of this research are supported by the main part of analysis in this research which views the Chinese-brokered deal between two regional powers of Middle East, and the probability of same deal in the India-Pakistan competition in South Asia, as a reflection of hegemonic stability theory. The proponent of this theory explains the role of a dominate power in the international system in which the stability could be ensured under the influence of a hegemon. This theory appeared in the intellectual works of Charles P. Kindleberger *The World in Depress:1929-1939*, Robert Gilpin *Hegemonic War and the Peloponnesian War*, and Robert Keohane *After Hegemony*. The intellectual contribution of these writers emphasized the changing attributes of the hegemonic stability theory in the international system where a leading role of one state could stabilize the international system through its dominating status in economic, cultural or military terms. From viewpoint of neorealist school of thoughts, the academic insight of John J. Mearsheimer explained the hegemonic stability theory under the offensive realist claims. In Mearsheimer's view, the anarchical structure of international system compels a state to remain a potential aspirant of regional or global power under its

offensive realist claims. The book of Mearsheimer *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* discusses this concept with appropriate evidences.

The application of the hegemonic stability theory in the contemporary world politics and the emerging role of China in the existing international system dictate that China is intended to gain a counterbalancing role to the US standings in the Middle Eastern and South Asia regions. The American leading policymaking circles have already mentioned in various formal documents the threat of Chinese emergence as a dominant power in the international system to US. The American formal policy documents have categorically accepted that the economic emergence of China contain substantial potential to outset the US global engagement. This situation could be seen as the decline of existing hegemon and the emergence of a new hegemon for keeping the world order stable. Additional validations to this argument can be obtained from the post-deal developments in the mainstream debates of different academic communities. These debates have started visualizing the future of South Asian under Chinese trilateral diplomatic interaction between New Delhi-Beijing-Islamabad. A brief layer of literature has been appeared in this regard because the people having interests in studying the changing role of China in the international system. Certain media platforms, along with specific research institutions, have tried to generate a constructive debate on the prevailing transformations in China's role from a trading state to a dispute-settler nation. In this way, this paper is an attempt to contribute in the emerging debates on the changing nature of Chinese global engagement.

Lack of sufficient literature on the recently signed deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran, this research intended to contribute in the emerging debates on the Chinese-mediated this deal between two archrival nations. In this way, a combination of descriptive and exploratory method has been applied in this paper to maintain the main analysis on rational and impartial grounds. With the support of existing secondary data concerning the regional security environments of Middle East and South Asia, the findings of this research attempted to predict a futuristic scenario of China's increasing role in the world politics. Therefore, this paper's central attempts to evaluate China's growing role in the international system as a reliable mediator and an effective trading partner interested in using the economic potentials of various other nations located in different regions. The impacts of Beijing's mediated deal between Tehran and Riyadh have greater implications for other regions where South Asia could be treated as an exception. The impacts of China's newly introduced role as a dispute settler on the India-Pakistan rivalry cannot be overruled because Islamabad is a key player in the ongoing Chinese global economic plans, and India is high trade volumes with China. Thus, this paper is an academic endeavor to estimate the impacts of this trilateral peace deal on Pakistan due to Islamabad's strong associations with neighboring China and Muslim countries.

THE DEAL AND ITS AFTERMATHS

The government representatives of Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to start their non-violent political communication in March 2023 with the help of China. They agreed to craft a new way for their future cooperation under Beijing's global economic designs. The deal signed between the two Muslim world contestants resulted from the constructive and positive engagement of China with both countries through its strong trading linkages with both contesting states. The deal convinced the Iranian and Saudi governments to start work in constructive dimensions by leaving their

traditional hostile visualization of each other. The first step in the peaceful settlements of the two countries was opening embassies and resuming diplomatic services within two months. The post-deal developments created a new environment of bilateral interaction between the two regional powers of the Muslim world because the signing of the deal agreement has convinced both governments to open their embassies in Tehran and Riyadh and adopt relaxations in visa facilities for their citizens ("The Impact of the," 2023). The resumption of official visits and the restoration of political communication on a reciprocal basis have persuaded the leaders of both nations to depart from their traditional hostile visualization of each other in regional and extra-regional affairs while starting talks on various territorial, ideological, and economic points of disagreement. The exploration of new ways of bilateral cooperation for expanding their positive engagements through resuming flights and boosting the combination of private and semi-private visits became the landmark developments of the Muslim world after the signing of this deal. The cooperation in these sectors showed that the two-sided governments now agreed to work for regional stability parallel to investing their potential to ensure peace and stability in the Gulf and Middle Eastern region (Figueroa, 2023). In the signed deal, the two regional players agreed to restrict their intervention in each other's internal affairs while reducing their tensions in different areas such as politics, diplomacy, media, security, and society.

This deal has created a certain level of trust between both contesting regional players, and it has provided a sense of achievement to the governments of both states. For Iran, the signing of a deal with a traditional rival has proved to be a sense of diplomatic victory which will help Tehran in overcoming its international diplomatic and economic isolations due to various factors such as a worse humanitarian record, the controversial status of its nuclear program, and support for Russia in its Ukraine war. Moreover, this agreement has generated new debates on the standing of Israel in the Muslim world and the contemporary status of American Middle Eastern policy in the Middle East (Wintour, 2023). The Iranian government's increasing engagement with China and Saudi Arabia has empowered Tehran in contemporary global politics, parallel to weakening the American anti-Iranian engagement in the Muslim world. Thus, the positions of Israel and the United States on the Tehran-Riyadh détente 2023 and the cooperative ties of both states with Saudi Arabia are presently the main concerns of Tehran, and these challenges have forced Tehran to remain active in the post-deal political communications with the Saudi government. In addition to Iran, Riyadh's decision to accept a détente with Iran is the outcome of Riyadh's updated approach to managing its foreign relations beyond the traditional domain and the determination of Saudi's current leaders for revising its foreign policy pragmatically. The prevalence of a new approach to politics has instructed the Saudi leadership to later its traditional ways of looking at the changing regional and global power dynamics ("Experts react," 2023). The increasing reliance of Saudi Arabia on China as a reliable mediator in its longstanding disputes with Iran, in this way, has caused a notable shift in the regional political order of the Middle East and its consistent association under the influences of global power politics. In this way, the role of China as a mediator has let the Saudi and Iranian governments resume their diplomatic bilateral connections parallel to starting formal visits of each other on a reciprocal basis. The element of reciprocity activated the pleasant political communications when Ebrahim Raisi, the Iranian President, warmly welcomed a visit invitation from the King Salman of Saudi Arabia, and both leaders showed their high determination to restore bilateral ties beyond the formal political commitments (Turak, 2023).

Now, the international community has started looking toward different points of confrontation between Tehran and Saudi Arabia in which the intra-state war in Yemen is a litmus test for the Chinese, Iranian, and Saudi governments because it is widely believed that the survival of Beijing's brokered deal depends on the Yemeni conflict. The peaceful settlement between Houthi militants and the Yemeni government will determine the success of this deal. Apart from the Yemeni conflict, the ongoing proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia is also a significant point in accessing the scope of this peace deal (Baker, 2023). The published research documents of various leading research institutions of the world have also endorsed the prevalence of these scenarios in the international system and the undeniable presence of these challenges for the Riyadh-Tehran détente 2023. The research analyses in the published reports, prepared by different research institutions, have accepted that improving the Iran-Saudi bilateral dealings is expected to minimize the likelihood of regional conflict between both powers centers of the Muslim world. Reducing tensions in the Muslim world is also intended to reduce the probability of hostile ideological confrontations in the Middle Eastern region. The Chinese government has its own interests in bringing on a negotiation stable the Iranian and Saudi state representatives and convincing them on the scope of peace and stability in the Middle Eastern region (Fantappie & Nasr, 2023). Beijing strongly believes that peace and stability in the Middle Eastern region will let China gain substantial trading benefits from the Muslim states generally and from the trading potentials of Iran and Saudi Arabia economies specifically. The imports of energy supplies from Iran and Saudi Arabia are the fundamental driving forces behind Beijing's sponsored Tehran-Riyadh peace deal. Thus, the combination of energy supplies and economic interests convinced Beijing to alter its role for the energy-rich Middle Eastern region and let the international community accept the role of China in the international system beyond the economic domains.

Nature of Middle Eastern and South Asian Politics

The global academic debates on the growing role of China in the international system and the expansion of its trading policies towards different regions such as Middle East and South Asia have become the prime targets of Beijing's global economic plans. Middle Eastern energy resources and the South Asian exceptional geostrategic features are the main points of attraction for China. The Chinese government has started cultivating its cooperative economic ties with the leading contesting states of Middle Eastern and South Asian regions. The contesting two regional players of Middle East can be compared with the pair of competing nuclear powers of South Asia. The conflicts in both regions attract the external players and let them jump into the regional politics of Middle East and South Asia parallel to making the contesting regional players of the both regions dependent on the changing attributes of the great power politics. In other words, the regional political developments of both regions are heavily relying on the constantly evolving great power politics where China has been recognized as the new entrant through launching its global BRI project of trans-regional connectivity. In addition to China, the Russian and American policymakers always remained important contesting players in the politics of both regions, and the role of great power started intensifying in both regions under the shadows of decades-long Cold War politics. The subsequent developments of the Cold War era proved to be ineffective in managing the unstoppable effects of the great power politics on the historical interstate rivalries of regional powers in the Middle Eastern and South Asian regions. In this way, the growth of Middle Eastern and South Asian regional security environments under the unstoppable influences of the great

power politics can be measured on certain commonalities such as the history of interstate rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and India and Pakistan. The strategic competitors of both regions have started accepting China as a reliable trading partner in which the India is a main criticizer of the China's BRI parallel to securing a high volume of trade with Beijing. Indian growing strategic engagement with the US, and Saudi Arabia's strong ties with US, were the main challenges for China now. In the case of Middle East, the Chinese authorities have convinced Saudi state officials on the trading potential of Beijing whereas New Delhi has serious apprehensions on the emerging economic role of China in the broader Asian power balance.

The acceptance of China as an effective mediator in the interstate conflicts of both regions can be understood by analyzing the nature of regional security environments of Middle East and South Asia in which the contesting regional players of both regions always remained in search of multileveled supports of external powers. The leaders of these contesting states always tried to secure an influential role in their respective regions with the support of powerful outsider. This scenario shapes the strategic alliances of Middle Eastern and South Asian regional contesting powers with the great powers. In the Middle Eastern politics, the lack of diplomatic connections and the hostile political communications between Washington and Tehran was a prime factor providing China a gateway to enter into the energy rich Middle Eastern region. In South Asia, Pakistan's historical cooperative ties with China have been proved as an appropriate opportunity for China. In this why, the relevance of South Asian regional politics with the increasing role of Beijing cannot be marginalized in the contemporary phase of unexpected changes in the strategic landscape of the international system. The US hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan, the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Germany's launching of its first declassified national security strategy, rising temperature of US-China conflict on the Taiwan issue, and the decline of dollar diplomacy have been recognized internationally the main turning points of international politics history where more unexpected developments could become the unquestionable realities for all states. In this way, the replication of Chinese-brokered deal between Saudi and Iranian government in the South Asian region could easily be rationalized.

Global Power Politics and Pakistan

The trilateral Beijing-Riyadh-Tehran deal has great implications for the ongoing trends of global power politics in which the American growing apprehensions about China's increasing role in the contemporary international system are intended to challenge the American global standings. The Chinese dispute-settling efforts have undermined the influence of American Middle Eastern policy on the energy-rich Muslim world. The geopolitical dynamics of Middle Eastern and South Asian regions have greater relevance to this new role of China, in which Beijing is determined to create more trading partners and economic allies around the world (Siddiq, 2023). The most surprising element in this deal is China's increasing global acceptance and growing collaborative tendencies of the states towards Beijing, where Saudi Arabia has become an appropriate example. The cooperative ties between Saudi Arabia and China have led the Saudi leaders to change their traditional perception of Iran as a hostile state and the growing focus of the Kingdom on economic priorities. The shift in economic values has sent a clear message to the Israeli and American defense planners that China has secured a winning position in the global diplomatic competition with the US and opened another front for Washington because American policymakers are critically

evaluating Chinese multiplying trading collaboration mainly in Asian power politics. In this way, the change in the US Middle Eastern policy will have spillover effects for other regions where South Asia is an exception due to growing US-China competition in the nuclearized South Asian region and the increasing tendencies of New Delhi and Islamabad towards Washington and Beijing. This element validates the dependency of South Asian regional politics on global power politics. The India-Pakistan hostility will, in this way, start witnessing the impacts of this deal on South Asia's nuclearized regional political order. Pakistan's quest for creating a balance between US and China at the international level and its ambitions for treating Iran and Saudi Arabia in a balanced way at the regional level will have created a greater relevance for Pakistan with the post-deal power dynamics of the Middle Eastern regional and global power politics. The ongoing features of Pakistan's foreign policy have observed a major change in the international system, and the contemporary models of Islamabad's foreign relations are now required strong upgradations and structural changes in which the post-deal developments of the great power politics could bring various opportunities for Islamabad in the political, social, security, and economic domains. While having strong cooperative economic ties with Beijing, Islamabad-based foreign policy decision-makers have already faced multileveled American criticism on Sino-Pak trading tries, parallel to witnessing serious apprehensions of Washington on Islamabad's decision for signing a mega economic corridor project (China Pakistan Economic Corridor- CPEC) with China (Garlick, 2023). The Chinese-sponsored détente between two regional players in the Muslim world has cleared the world that the global vision of crafting alternative approaches could ensure a more stable and peaceful world order beyond American influences. It has posed a serious question on the US-led global order in which the clash between two aspirants of regional powers remained a major problem, with its multiplying tendencies in diverse domains always remaining a serious challenge for Washington's Middle Eastern policy. Akin to the Middle Eastern region, the regional security environment of South Asia has always remained under the influences of great power politics due to the India-Pakistan rivalry and its unprecedented growth in diverse directions. Each development of the US-China global confrontation has a direct association with the South Asian region due to strong economic ties between Beijing and Islamabad, parallel to the growing multileveled strategic partnership between Washington and New Delhi (Markey, 2020). The next focus of Beijing could be on South Asia, where the power dynamics of regional politics could not be treated dissimilarly from the Middle Eastern region. The dependency of South Asian regional politics on global power politics always remained an essential feature of the broader Asian power balance, where the United States always remained ambitious in enhancing its influence. The combination of geo-economic and geo-strategic compulsions on the US has already resulted in American-China-specific maritime engagements in the Asia Pacific Region (Goldstein, 2015). Additionally, the construction of the Gawadar Port in Pakistan has augmented American anxieties about China's growing role in the South Asian region. It is pertinent to mention here that the construction of a port in Pakistan's ocean jurisdictions is presently restricted to the trading domain while realizing the Indo-US opposition to this port project of Pakistan. While having its strong strategic ties with New Delhi, Washington has preferred to heavily include India in its greater anti-Chinese planning, which will ultimately try to damage the emerging Sino-Pak trading collaboration in any way. Thus, the updated and revised designs of American Middle Eastern and South Asian politics will let Pakistan reconsider its position in South Asian and global power politics.

Politics of the Muslim World

The Chinese efforts to de-escalate historical Saudi-Iranian ideological contention execrated the international discussions on the changing dynamics of Middle Eastern politics where the predominating role of strategic competition between two regional players has started fading from the region. Due to the resumption of political communication and the restoration of diplomatic ties, reducing the intense security scenarios related to the Saudi-Iranian sub-conventional war-fighting behaviors will create a new regional order in the Middle East. This deal is merely a trilateral meeting, but it has been observed internationally as an important development in shaping new power dynamics of Middle Eastern politics because the continuation of the same momentum in the political conversation between the formal government authorities of the two states is expected to decrease further the chances of proxy wars in the ongoing Syrian and Yemeni conflicts. Witnessing the present commitments of Tehran and Riyadh for resolving their mainstream disagreements with the support of positive dialogue and constructive diplomacy, the reduction of conflicts will lead Middle Eastern regional politics toward peace and stability (Dorsey, 2019).

The agreement on the non-interference and respect of each other's sovereign values are the major developments, and the impacts of these developments on the entire politics of the Muslim world would be un-ignorable for Islamabad because Pakistan contains substantial significance for the Muslim world. Pakistan's status as a sole nuclear power in Muslim countries adds more value to Pakistan's standing in the Muslim world. In security matters, the Muslim world has acknowledged the role of Pakistan in the Muslim world, which could be measured at various points, such as leading the *Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition* (IMCTC). The potential of Pakistan in managing the security matters of the Muslim world could further be estimated by realizing the role of Pakistan in efficiently managing certain inter-governmental events of the Muslim world. Moreover, the ideological association of Pakistan with the Muslim world is rooted in Pakistan's foundations, and Pakistan's government always remained active in cultivating pleasant diplomatic ties with the Islamic countries.

The discussion on the status of Pakistan in the Muslim world cannot be completed without mentioning the internal security challenges of Pakistan caused by sectarian politics. The violent division of sectarian politics in Pakistan has already caused greater damage to the country's internal security apparatus, in which the country's leading architectures are ineffective in managing peacefully the sectarian divisions of the society (Abbas, 2005). Thus, the Tehran-Riyadh normalization is directly linked with the ideological disagreements between the two regional players of the Muslim world, and it is widely believed that the continuation of Tehran-Riyadh political communication will reduce the ongoing high temperature of sectarian divisions in the Islamic country. Pakistan is likely to become a key beneficiary of the reducing violent sectarian fragmentations of Islamic societies across the globe. So, Pakistan's support of this China-brokered peace deal will create various economic opportunities for Islamabad while keeping in mind Pakistan's formal vision of managing the domestic affairs of the Muslim world peacefully. The vision of Islamabad for creating a balance between both contesting pillars of the Muslim world has already been communicated to the international community by the government of Pakistan. The acceptance of China as an effective mediator in the Middle Eastern historical conflicts would be a gateway for the government of Pakistan to benefit from the energy-rich economics of Saudi Arabia and Iran. Apart from augmenting the existing commercial links with both Muslim states, Pakistan's

formal state authorities could consolidate the potential of the Muslim states in addressing common security, economic and diplomatic challenges while considering it an effective source of gaining additional diplomatic support at various inter-governmental frameworks of the international community. The extended support of the Islamic countries would strengthen Pakistan's standing in its domestic and regional security affairs, where India is a fundamental security challenge in the traditional and non-traditional domains (Jaffrelot, 2015). While keeping in mind this scenario, Islamabad-based defense planners are now required to depart the foreign relations of the country from its conventional bilateral domains for the Muslim world because the Saudi-Iranian détente has relaxed the strict divisions of the Muslim world and allowed other states to follow their footprints.

CONCLUSION

The signing of the deal and initiating cooperative ties between Tehran and Riyadh have become one of the leading factors causing structural changes in the global world order, where China is intended to sensitize the geo-economic interests of the nations located in diverse regions. The Chinese government is committed to enhancing its sphere of influence without using its strategic or security forces. Its commitment to addressing the reasons for the degrading security environment of the Muslim world and the de-escalating historical tensions between the two power centers of the Muslim world inflicted a sense of cooperation among Islamic countries. It is pertinent to mention here that the Chinese brokered Tehran-Riyadh détente 2023 is intended to change the whole structure of the Muslim world by resolving the enduring ideological confrontations between two regional players. It is the start of Chinese efforts to address the longstanding disputes between economically strong states because the Chinese authorities are intended to highlight the economic potential of conflicting states parallel to ensuring the values of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other. The respect of sovereignty and cooperation beyond ideological differences was guaranteed by Beijing in the Middle Eastern case. The most interesting point of this deal is the acceptance of China as an effective mediator in the Middle Eastern regional affairs where the United States has strong footings. The success of the initial step of the Tehran-Saudi rapprochement has cleared the world that the states having historical bilateral conflict could rely on Beijing's mediating efforts in the world and Beijing's pursuit of utilizing the trading potentials of other nations.

The impacts of this deal on Pakistan cannot be ignored due to the association of Pakistan with the Chinese emerging global economic plans and the changing dynamics of the Muslim world because of China. The unquestionable association of Pakistan with both spheres of the international system has pushed Islamabad toward critical circumstances in which the government of Pakistan is required to craft a new position in the regional and extra-regional affairs because Indian emerging trading ties with China and the Muslim world are the serious challenges for Islamabad. In this way, the timely reactions to these unexpected changes in the international system required Islamabad to re-evaluate its position in the regional politics of South Asia and the Muslim world. The government of Pakistan should be pragmatic in this regard because the contemporary international system has started witnessing a symbolic decline to the US in contemporary power politics, where Pakistan has greater relevance. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan and its involvement in the Ukraine war on the issue of NATO's extension, parallel to American active anti-Chinese standing on the Taiwan issue, have let the international community easily rationalize the emergence of the counterbalancing forces to the US global engagement generally, and in the Asia power balance precisely. In this

scenario, Islamabad-based policymakers are required to comprehend conceptually the changing dimensions of global power politics due to China's economic rise.

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