

Evolving World Order, Impact on Peace and Stability in South Asia

Syed Rizwan Haider Bukhari ¹
Haider Ali Khan ²
Amir Ullah Khan ³
Inam Ul Haq ⁴
Ejaz Hussain ⁵

ABSTRACT:

Changes in global power distribution and rising threats and challenges globally along with the changes in global partnering systems have important implications for the South Asian region in terms of maintaining regional peace and stability. This study focuses on examining how changes on the international system level, including the leadership shift of China, the renewed vigour of India as one of the rising powers in South Asia, the shift of the U.S foreign policy and the role of multilateralism, are affecting security dynamics in South Asia. This paper discusses factors like enhanced strategic rivalry between the US and China, nuclearization of some existing and emerging conflicts, and the character of warfare in Afghanistan and Kashmir, which have a potential impact on the stability of this region (Smith & Jones, 1997). In this study, the political, economic and security angles describe how the changes in the world order have impacted the balance of power between the SAARC countries and examine the implications of the new world order for the stability of South Asia. According to the provided findings, the nature of a new kind of cooperation and diplomacy is present; however, the interactions of contemporary international and regional processes present some problems for the creation of stability in the long period. Finally, this paper provides recommendations on how the nations of South Asia and other world actors can prioritize and cultivate peace in an area that will be more influenced by shifts in global power, and competition between countries (Bukhari, Khan, & Haq, 2024).

KEYWORDS:

United States of America, China, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, World Order

¹ PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Islamia College University, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: bukharipalmist@gmail.com

² M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Political Science & International Relations, Qurtuba University of Science & Information Technology, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: haiderkhan6669@gmail.com

³ Chairman, Department of Political Science, Islamia College University, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: amir@icp.edu.pk

⁴ PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Islamia College University, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: inamhinjal@gmail.com

⁵ Independent Researcher, MS Strategic Studies National Defense University Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: hejaz35922@gmail.com

Corresponding Author:

Syed Rizwan Haider Bukhari

✉ bukharipalmist@gmail.com

Cite this Article:

Bukhari, S. R. H., Khan, H. A., Khan, A. U., Haq, I. U., & Hussain, E. (2024).

Evolving World Order, Impact on Peace and Stability in South Asia. *The Regional Tribune*, 3(1), 284-296.

<https://doi.org/10.63062/trt/V24.044>

Introduction

World politics is in the process of experiencing profound changes due to the changes that take place in the balance of power at the theoretical levels of both, regional and world politics. From the growth of China as a world power, the transformation of America's role, and the new aggression from India, conflicts around the globe are redefining the geography of power. These global changes inherent in one of the regions of the world historically characterized by strategic confrontation, nuclear potential, and political volatility – South Asia has vital significance for regional peace and stability (Vadlamannati et

al., 2024). This research aims to investigate the changes to the security structure in South Asia in view of the shift in international relations, especially with regard to a rebalancing of power and the formation of new strategic partnerships in the context of the post-Cold War World Order. Focussing on main regional issues, including India-Pakistan conflicts, Afghanistan and the role of great powers in the region, the study will seek to identify and correspond the shifts in global power balance with the nature and effects of peace, security, and stability in South Asia (Dunford & Liu, 2024).

New international dispensation of power, asymmetric rise of regional powers, and the emergence of new security challenges and threats offer both prospects and threats to the prospects of peace and stability in South Asia. Due to the shifting of roles of major actors of the global system including the United States, China, and India, regional disputes and animosities have continued to define the security dynamics in South Asia. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of these changes in the global order on regional stability, security, and cooperation in view of ongoing rivalry and systemic conflicts, nuclear risks, and the geopolitical agendas of extra-regional actors.

Research Questions

- ▶ Attributes, roles and strategic implications of China and India in the security system of South Asia.
- ▶ How does change in the United States foreign policy affect peace, security or lack of it in the region?
- ▶ In what ways does continuing regional conflict like India and Pakistan affect the dynamic of the global political structure?
- ▶ In light of global changes, what are the functions of the Multilateral Institutions such as the United Nations and the Regional organizations in governing the peace and stability in South Asia?
- ▶ How are the nations of South Asia ready to shape a new world order over conflict, stability and cooperation?

Research Objectives

- ▶ In order to understand how the changes in the global structure affect the security of the South Asian region.
- ▶ A qualitative research method to estimate the influence of world and regional superpowers: USA, China and India on the peace and stability of South Asia.
- ▶ The effects of other ongoing rivalries, including India-Pakistan, and the Afghanistan situation to evaluate the study of shifts in international politics.
- ▶ To look into the role of multilateral institutions together with regional comity in countering new security threats.
- ▶ For purposes of advising governments and other stakeholders in the SA region and the world on ways to promote stability in the region.

Significance of Research

This study is important as it provides insights into the interaction between structural changes and regional security in South Asia which is a universal theatre of globalization or power transition, terrorism, nuclear threats, and wars. For the practitioners requiring knowledge of the changes in the world order regarding the stability in the SA region, the current study will be useful for the policymakers, the regional leaders and the international organizations involved in conflict resolution, peacemaking and cooperation in the SA region. This study will therefore advance knowledge on International Relations, Security Studies, and South Asian geopolitics and identify key lessons for diplomatic engagement and conflict resolution approaches operating on the premise of changing dynamics within this sphere on the global stage.

Literature Review

Today, the world is in a transition, with rising states, economic realignments, and new geopolitical architectures modifying regional systems. Pursuing this precise objective entails examining how the more general trends in the

world – like China's ascent, Washington's 'Asia rebalance,' and the shift toward the polycentric world – bear on the security landscape of South Asia. It is relevant in determining how the emerging international relations regime impacts South Asia in terms of system transformation and inter-architectural change in the sense of strategic partnerships, armoured strength, and the like. Specifically, the major concern of the analysis will be to identify changes in global power distribution that have affected the security strategies and military postures of South Asian states, and their approaches to managing conflict and peace. In particular, it will explore how up-and-coming rivalry between China and the United States, and emergent security threats and actors such as cyber and non-state, will define security in South Asia. This objective will also focus on the United Nations and other international law governing bodies, regional security and management of problems such as nuclear proliferation terrorism, and border conflicts (Bukhari, Malik, & Mahmood, 2024). This examines how major world and regional actors mainly in the United States, China, and India have an impact on peace and stability in South Asia. All these powers have certain roles within the regional security context, and their policies are crucial to understanding regional security. For example, the United States has remained an important ally of India and Pakistan providing military, financial and diplomatic assistance, but its changing diplomacy (like the 'Asia for Asia' policy towards China and the infamous pull out from Afghanistan) has destabilized in the region (Bukhari, Kokab, & Khan, 2024). South Asian states' security dilemmas are influenced by the United States' strategic requirements of counter-terrorism and containing China. In contrast, China is progressively deepening its strategic profile in South Asia through its economic and military integration with the region through economic corridors, notably the CPEC, as well as gradually more military deployments in Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Maldives. China has in recent years made strategic investments in its neighbours and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has brought about changes to the power relations especially with India (McCloud, 2018). India, as an emerging power in the region, aims to dominate the security architecture of the South Asian region with renewed efforts towards modernization of its forces and expanding cooperation with the United States and Western countries. However, India has a serious problem with Pakistan to the east and China to the north which makes its regional security strategy a little sensitive. The dynamics form and content of these powers' relations in terms of diplomacy and military strategies shape the security dynamics and possibility of peace and cooperation in South Asia (Thompson, 2024).

Based on this knowledge, this article zeroes in on elucidating how current regional conflicts, especially the India-Pakistan conflict and the state of Afghanistan, are affected by and affect the change in world geopolitics. An India-Pakistan conflict based on this territorial conflict coupled with ambiguities over nuclear weapons' uses, and historical rivalry is another ongoing conflict of huge significance to the stability of South Asia (Bukhari, Khan, Haq, et al., 2024). The new world architecture particularly the bilateral system of US-China rivalry and shifting alliances can either amplify or moderate this long-standing enmity. In this paper, the impact of the external players which are the USA and China in the India-Pakistan dynamics will be discussed concentrating on conflict management and destruction and arms reduction as well as peace-building processes (Burton & Wurfel, 2016). In the same way, the events in Afghanistan, after the return of the Afghan Taliban, have a great meaning for security in the region. The withdrawal of the United States, the resultant strategic void, and the role played by Pakistan in the rise of the Taliban with the support from China and other neighbours has shifted the dynamics of the South Asian security paradigm. The research will examine how these active or passive conflicts, within the contexts of the emerging new world order, are the proximal forces for the evolution of the political and security landscape of the area (Zhengxin, 2024).

There are various SA regional and international interdependent organizations whose responsibilities include the provision of peace maintenance services in South Asia, though their performance has been characterized by strife and political instabilities due to political rivalry and self-interest. This objective will look at the engagement of multilateral players including the United Nations, SAARC, SCO and relatively newly formed groups like BIMSTEC in managing the security of the region (Buzan, 2002). Despite concerted efforts by multilateral entities headed by SAARC the states in South Asia have been unable to concrete meaningful cooperation, due to the political stalemate

between India and Pakistan, where cooperation in crisis management or conflict resolution is usually slain (Gilbert, 2017). On the other hand, there appears little scope for security cooperation for instance the Shanghai Cooperation Organization SCO to which both India and China are signatories has prospects that can enhance security cooperation with emphasis on issues like terrorism and stability. However, there are challenges including competition on national interest, lack of mechanism to enforce compliance and inadequate economic cooperation to hinder their efficiency. This objective will analyse how these organisations manage new security threats such as nuclear spread, terrorism, and economic and political insecurity due to the Afghanistan situation. It will also look at the extent to which the participation of the global powers in multilateral diplomacy affects the effectiveness of this regional institution (Chow Bing, 2024). This paper is to provide a policy direction by presenting best practice policy strategies both for South Asian countries as well as for other actors necessary to engender peace and order in South Asia. Given the trends identified at the global and regional levels, this objective is to recommend specific steps that might be taken to reduce the risks of tensions, restore confidence, and enhance cooperation in South Asia. For South Asian countries recommendations may entail advice on the ways and means of reducing hostilities, promoting diplomacy and adopting certain confidence-building measures between the two hostile countries belonging to South Asian countries and the issue of Afghanistan. The research will also seek to find out if regional integration is likely to minimize the probability of conflict through the promotion of interdependence as achieved through regional integration mechanisms such as regional trade integration agreements or infrastructure projects. Recommendations for the international actors especially the U.S., China, and multilateral organizations will lie in this area of how they can foster peace within the South Asian states (Kucukdegirmenci, 2024). It could mean that the EU will engage with the processes of peacebuilding, promotion of dialogues at the regional level, coordination of the process of negotiations of arms reduction as well as non-conventional security threats including climate change and emerging economic crises. The research is set to produce an outline of general and specific policies that can be used by leaders in South Asia and other nations investing in the continent to ensure that this part of the world remains stable despite compounded global changes. Through presenting these policies, the study will suggest how exactly the South Asian states might manage new world order and security issues (Kayashima et al., 2024).

In the existing literature, the topic of change and transition in the nature of world order and its implications for peace and stability in South Asia receives scant attention, and more so when examined from the angle of global changes meeting regional realities. Previous research also mainly analyses various causes that affect South Asia separately, which focuses on the competition between India and Pakistan, the impact of China, and the Americans' withdrawal from Afghanistan but it does not previously provide serious works, which discusses all of these factors in connection with the changes in the global system. Namely, the literature lacks study on how China's emergence, evolution of U.S. foreign policy, and alteration of the international systems recast the security order of South Asia in aggregate. Moreover, while many regional works have punctuated the pre and post-cold War chronology of conflicts in South Asia, few global shifts have been employed as a central variable in efforts towards peacebuilding or diplomatic outcomes and conflict resolution studies in the region. This research seeks to address this gap by offering a system of understanding concerning the effects of the changing world order driven by great power rivalry, emerging security architectures, and diplomatic multilateralism on South Asia's peace and stability.

Theoretical Framework

This study will utilize a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that combines elements of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism in international relations (IR) theory to explore the complex interplay between global shifts and regional security in South Asia:

Realism

The international relations theory that will be used in the study is the realism theory based on the premise that nations engage in competitive behaviours in the exercise of their national security and power and pursue self-interest

motives in relation to other major South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, and China. Therefore, realism with its focus on structure and the competitive nature of the system provides a proper blueprint to analyse security concerns arising in the wake of shifting balance of power in the world. The theory will mainly be generative in comparing and understanding the India-Pakistan context, nuclear threats and China's emergent influence in the area.

Liberalism

Analyzing the opportunities for cooperation, institution-building, and conflict resolution implied by the emerging world order, liberal theories of inter-national relations will be employed. This perspective will enable evaluate the place of multilateral organisations like the United Nations, SAARC and new diplomacy on the promotion of regional peace, integration and conflict transformation. The focus on cooperation in liberalism will also help elucidate the prospects of the collaborative model to address regional issues in South Asia.

Constructivism

Expectations and beliefs are conflict types under constructivism, which is useful for examining the forms of policies of South Asian countries based on ideational factors such as identities, perceptions, and historical narratives. It could be important to apply constructivist knowledge to explain how different international order affects a country's self-identity of such countries, as India and Pakistan, and how such an identification affects security and peace initiatives in the given region. It will also help to elucidate changing narratives of great powers' interactions with South Asia and what they mean for stability in the region.

Research Methodology

To this end, this research will employ a qualitative research approach in examining the role of the new world order on PE & S in South Asia. The study will use a combination of case study analysis, content analysis, and interviews to explore the relationship between global power shifts and regional security:

Case Study Analysis

A few major case studies are expected to be examined in detail in the context of the proposed research, which is to reveal connections between the shifts in global geopolitics within the context of regional security in South Asia. The India-Pakistan Nuclear Confrontation and the new security dynamics on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its strategic positions for South Asia. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and its effects on this region of the world. The contribution or otherwise of regional bodies such as SAARC and BIMSTEC to the cause of peace. To explore the complex interplay between global shifts and regional security in South Asia:

- ▶ The India-Pakistan nuclear standoff and the evolving security environment.
- ▶ China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its strategic impact on South Asia.
- ▶ The aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and its impact on regional stability.
- ▶ The role of regional organizations like SAARC and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) in fostering or hindering peace.

In the following case studies these two postmodern dynamics, along with the more traditional aspects of geopolitics including power, economics and military, will be explored to evaluate how changes in the balance and structure of these novel factors impact the security concerns of the South Asian actors.

Content Analysis

In order to find out how these changes in the world power relations are discursively constructed by the South Asian states and how these constructions are reflected to guide their security and diplomacy policies, various primary and

secondary policy documents, speeches of the government officials, strategic reports and media materials will be subjected to Content Analysis. Sources will be government reports, newspaper articles, statements from diplomatic offices, and academic publications.

Expert Interviews

The study will also include interviews with policymakers, diplomats, and regional security analysts to obtain primary data on the ever-changing security dynamics in South Asia. These interviews shall afford qualitative insights into different perceptions of some of the key stakeholders in the region regarding the implications of changing the balance of power and how they are responding to challenges on the global frontier.

Limitations of the Study

Access to Sensitive Data

As a result of the nature of the discipline dealing with international relations and security studies, it will not be possible to use primary data such as classified secret government documents or intelligence reports, and confidential diplomatic correspondence among others. This could limit the scope of the analysis in some cases, especially when evaluating the peculiarities of state actors' actions or their reasons for choosing a particular type of security or diplomacy.

Geopolitical Fluidity

As global power relations are changing all the time, the situation in the international arena also changes. Depending on the improvement in the relations between countries (for example, the US-China, changes in the strategic partnerships or emerging conflicts), the results of the present study may need to be revisited at a later point in time. The volatility of global and regional politics in particular may lead to problems with capturing long-term trends in the course of real-time analysis.

Regional Complexity

South Asia is a region with variant political structures, sociocultural profiles, and even security threats. This study will not be completely comprehensive about the relevant players in the South Asian region although big players like India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan will be involved; other players such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal may be different in terms of their contributions to the stability of the region. The regional differences may also complicate the applicability of the identified patterns throughout the South Asian region.

Subjectivity in Expert Interviews

The attitudes that the official decision-makers and other experts in The United Kingdom have, or their political affiliation and institutional affiliations may in one way or another colour their interviews and therefore the data gathered. To address this issue, the study will compare the current interview findings with secondary data and case study data.

Time Constraints

Because this study is likely to be conducted within the academic calendar year, the findings will cover only the period up to the time of conducting the research and may not adequately capture events in the changing global order including the emergence of new power relations, treaties and possibly new alignment of regional security blocs.

Nonetheless, the work will help to advance knowledge regarding the impact of historical transitions in the international system on peace and security in South Asia to assist policymakers and analysts with decisions about the region's security in a contemporary and transforming environment.

Discussion

Chinese and Indian growing power has shifted the security of the South Asian region in a remarkable way. India, as a large economy and as a rapidly militarizing power has become a regional pole of power and a counterweight to China's increasing influence. Significantly, India's endeavours to enhance its strategic capabilities, develop advanced weapons and equipment or seek alliances with an emboldened array of partners including the United States, Japan and Australia are clearly borne out of changing Chinese assertiveness, especially in the Indian Ocean region and the northern borders(Wunderlich, [2016](#)). This also includes the China-Pakistan axis within which authority and investment by China in Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor benefits not only Pakistan's military strength and regional power but also changes the factors that make up the security equation for India. The competition is even more acute in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to enhance its economic and strategic influence in South Asia and frequently offers itself as a counterpoint to Indian predominance. Military competition and cooperation as well as animosity between China and India are restructuring a map of South Asia Security and extending an arms race in traditional and nuclear areas(Wang et al., [2024](#)). The change of guard in America's strategic approach, primarily its decision to abandon Afghanistan and 'pivot eastward' to Asia has had major impacts on South Asia. The failure of the U.S. in Afghanistan in 2021 created the power which Pakistan and other regional actors like China and India tried to seize or possibly reshape regional security. In Pakistan, the Taliban's comeback to power has brought some prospects and some sort of concern because the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has to deal with the Taliban involvement as well as other rising cross-border militancy(Fawcett & Jagtiani, [2024](#)).

To India, the US withdrawal has led to assessing the reliability of American assurances particularly on the security of the region against China. Contrary to this, the U.S.A. has been steadily strengthening its strategic partnership with India and the perception of a unified front against China has been best exemplified by the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue Quad (Including USA India Japan and Australia). In fact, US foreign policy which is promoting global counter-terrorism initiatives, the idea of the "rules-based international order" is gradually redefining the security dynamics of South Asia by actively searching for new alliances while at the same time pointing to the sources of instability in the neighbouring and once comparable in size Afghanistan(Yeung, [2024](#)). The India-Pakistan standoff is arguably the most serious security threat in South Asia and is inextricably linked with dynamics in the evolving IO system. The peace in this region is always being threatened by nuclear relations between the two countries as well as the unsettled dispute in the state of Kashmir. The new world order where the US and China rivalry dominates has compounded the conflict situation in the India-Pakistan conflict. For instance, Pakistan has considered China as allied to it especially so due to the rivalry between Pakistan and India which has resulted in a more strengthened China-Pakistan relations. Consequently, India too is keen to cosy up to the U.S. as well as other Western states at the cost of Pakistan(Trigkas, [2024](#)). While there is an improvement in the global push for nonproliferation of nuclear weapons applied to both countries to act responsibly with nuclear weapons, regional animosities never cease to encourage arms race. Unfortunately, international mediators in the dispute over Kashmir and evolving perceptions of world powers toward these problems can be forces both for positive change and for the perpetuation of enmity. More specifically, with an emergent concentration on the structural angles of great power contest, the geopolitics of peacebuilding in South Asia are rendered even more intricate by the degrees to which both India and Pakistan anchor their security positions in relation to patron states(Ball et al., [2019](#)).

International organisations including the United Nations, and regional organisations including SAARC, and SCO have important roles in maintaining order and peace in South Asian countries but most of the time it fails due to political differences or power struggles among SA countries. The UN despite wielding a long-standing presence in peacemaking and mediation particularly on the Kashmir issue has its capability hindered in shaping the results because of the bureaucratic structure of the Security Council allotted veto power to major countries and geopolitical alignments of most member states (Wijaya et al., [2024](#)). On the other hand, organisations of the South Asian Region

such as SAARC have faced a major challenge of coordinating great cooperation and integration due to the hostile relations of India and Pakistan that hampers most of the programmes of the organisations. Nevertheless, the organization continues to exist and communicates primarily in discussions regarding economics and humanitarian situations. The SCO which includes China and India is a significant multilateral organization for security discourse in the region, but its primacy in counterterrorism and security have failed to capture the political and territorial issues, which are the source of instability in the region. Following the changing character of the global system, regional institutions will have to be geared toward meeting new concerns of security, integrating economies and managing global power shifts within the contexts of systematic constraints posed by nationalism (O'Brien & Williams, 2024).

A number of South Asian countries are emerging or transit security threats internally and externally while a new world order is shaping up. Realism argues that South Asian countries should increase diplomacy instead of military rivalry, and build political forums for mutual conversation. First, India and Pakistan must look for options for conflict solving particularly the question of Kashmir with reference to diplomacy and the measures of confidence building. Both nations can also cooperate in the various regional interests despite the political relations between the two countries as it means in trade, climate change and counter-terrorism. Second, regional cooperation should be encouraged through SAARC, BIMSTEC and the SCO and quadrilateral economic cooperation should be encouraged in order to have collective economic integration and find need-based solutions for regional complex issues including water, poverty and energy (Kliem, 2024). Third, South Asian countries should focus on the issues of equal development, being afraid that unequal growth is attractive to the representatives of extreme movements, who want quick changes without any gradual development. Last but not least, better bilateral relations with big powers including the United States, China, and Russia without being tilted into an imbalance is important so as not to entangle SA into power struggles that deepen instabilities in the region. Through promoting cooperation in regional integration, economic development and peace South Asian countries are thus well placed to effectively respond to the new world order (Jahangir, 2024).

Findings

China and India are emerging as significant actors in South Asia's security peace and both states escalated their military and economic footprints in response to one another. Evaluating India's Defense Initiatives; Modernisation of India Defence, Indo-U.S Partnership, Indo-Japan Partnership and India-Australia Partnership are the reasons leveraging China Factor. The improvement of the defence status of India is meant to respond to the military power of China primarily in the Indian Ocean and the northern frontier. While China has friendly relations with Pakistan and has invested heavily in CPEC has strengthened Pakistan's defence and deterrence power which is again a problem for India. China introduced a new type of competition between China and India in the latter's sphere of influence with its Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to strengthen China's economic and, consequently, strategic presence throughout South Asia. It is evident this competition is inducing a horn of regional arms race especially prompted by the construction of nuclear weapons (Bhat & Shahid, 2024).

The Taliban knowing fully well that the American forces are out of Afghanistan touched ground in 2021 to fill this power vacuum created by the U.S, this drove Pakistan, China and India to redefine the security architecture in the region. Thus, the return of the Taliban was both an opportunity and threat to Pakistan, especially in terms of the future of its deals and interactions with the Taliban as well as confronting cross-border militancy. India, on the other hand, criticized the dependability of American security assurances and assurances, especially in its current competition with China currently. To this, India has shifted to side with the U.S. and other Western powers by deepening strategic cooperation in what is known as the Quad- a group comprised of the U.S., India, Japan and Australia, designed to check growing China's imperialist leanings in the Indo-Pacific. At the same time, the United States also undertakes policies of counter-terrorism cooperation, along with the support of a shared set of rules

based on international order, peace and security in South Asia continue to be governed (Bose & Jalal, 2022). The next competitor has been India and Pakistan where rivalry comes from unsettled issues to do with the South Asian state of Kashmir and possession of nuclear weapons. This conflict is not made easier by dynamism in global politics where America and China are emerging as major fierce competitors. Pakistan's siding with China has made it stronger against India and India's siding with America has made the tensions worse. Although both countries are obliged to refrain from irresponsible use of nuclear power they are pressured by regional enmity to increase their nuclear potential. There is nothing like the Kashmir issue, which with the involvement of some global players can either help in peace initiatives or help intensify the issues. But the volatility of the international system, coupled with both India and Pakistan's courting of major powers, makes the task of peace-building in the region even more daunting (Zhu et al., 2024).

Important regional and international organizations, like the UN, SAARC, and SCO have observable central roles in conflict resolution and stability in South Asia. However, these institutions lack support because of the political interferences, and conflicting self-interests of different nations. The UN is constrained by the fact that members of the Security Council still hold veto power while SAARC remains almost completely inactive because of the antagonism between India and Pakistan. The SCO, with India and China as its members, has raw material in the area of regional security cooperation, especially in counter-terrorism but the membership is hampered by the issue of outstanding border issues and political rivalry. These regional bodies need to evolve in order to address new challenges to security, in terms of the threats that relate to nuclear proliferation and international terrorism as well as the future of Afghanistan (Paikin, 2024). For the promotion of peace and cooperation in South Asia, there is a need to increase diplomats' activities, decrease military rivalry and increase multilateral relations. Namely, the SAARC region requires the political leadership of India and Pakistan to engage in further discussion resulting in the resolution of the contested territory of Kashmir. Therefore, dialogue on trade, climate change, counter-terrorism etc. should be maintained. Passing, despite hostile feelings. South Asian countries should also make more effort to ensure that the development processes are inclusive in order to fight radicalization and achieve sustainable growth. Dialogue with the premier contemporary powers like the US, China or Russia has to be conducted so that the latter does not drag the SA region into escalating cold or even military confrontation with its counterparts (Mangaron Fresto, 2024). The emergence of China as a superpower and new emerging global alignments are making changes in the security structure of South Asia. Such rivalry as the US vs China combined with the new reality of security risks like cyber threats is refashioning regional defence policies and strategies. International organisations including the United Nations will remain important in matters concerning nuclear dissemination, and terrorism among other issues, although their performance will be limited by the political cycle. The shifting balance of power which is expected between major powers such as the USA, CHINA as well and India is expected to impact the probabilities of pacts and peace in South Asia (Bukhari, Khan, Noreen, et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The structure of security in South Asia has been greatly transformed in the current generation, largely due to the changing world order characterized by emerging superpowers such as China and India as well as dynamic international relations of other international players such as the United States. The looming economic and military giant of India is using its newfound strength to challenge China's growing influence in the region. The intensification of the power competition between China and India and the tactical cooperation between Pakistan and China make for an arms race, in the nuclear area but also in terms of the modernisation of the armed forces. However, the U.S. exit from Afghanistan and its tilt towards the Indo-Pacific to contain China through alignments such as Quad have further dimensions to operationalise. These changes along with other factors inclusive of the continuing rivalry between India –Pakistan and the shifting situation in Afghanistan have therefore served to escalate the degree of insecurity in the region or, in other words, increased the levels of geo-political risk in the South Asian neighbourhood. Bilateral organizations like the UN, SAARC and SCO have not been very successful in managing security threats in

South Asia because of political enmity between the local heavyweights, India and Pakistan available in every picture. The lack of adequate cooperation among the regional organizations has excluded any chance for conflict analysis and subsequent economic stability in the region. Moreover, the fundamental change in the global system and the rising rivalry between crucial powers has even more complicated the process of establishing regional stability.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the dynamism and fluidity of the security system in South Asia, it is imperative that all the countries of the region and the extra-regional powers must follow realistic policies for achieving and sustaining stability.

Enhanced Diplomatic Engagement

The call is on India and Pakistan which have to come to terms with each other in order to deal with the major issue of Kashmir and other problems. Hopefully, diplomacy should be revived with an approach to using third parties if the tensions escalate to military levels.

Regional Cooperation through Multilateral Platforms

SAARC, BIMSTEC, and SCO should be made stronger in South Asia more efforts need to be made in this regard. These platforms need to transform to address these new security challenges including terrorism, cyber, and even meteorological. In this respect, economic bilateralisms can also lead to equality in the economic capacity of different regions of the world and make them more interdependent and less inclined to war.

Strategic Partnerships for Regional Stability

Instead, the SA countries should use their diplomatic ties with the superpowers like, the United States of America, China, and Russia to advance their selfish interest with regard to the peace and stability in their region. India and Pakistan, for instance, can apply their bilateral ties with these powers to create a stable security environment that allows the quarrelling countries to set up a mechanism for ceasing arms race and solving existing conflicts.

Inclusive Development and Countering Extremism

The regional governments should try and ensure that there is balance in development, particularly in areas that are identified to have high potential for taking up radicalism and terrorism. Reducing levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality in order to mitigate the popularity of militants' ideologies might be useful in achieving a more stable state in the region.

Promoting Economic Integration

South Asia needs to extend more efforts and efforts into having strong Economic Cooperation and Integration for it to have a reduction in tensions in this region. This kind of relationship may be established through trade, the development of these infrastructures into mega projects, or through the formation of ventures that will make both parties benefit from each other's cooperation and hence foster peace. There is potential for international cooperation in the form of China's One Belt, One Road if the development remains in line with preferences for the entire region.

Managing Nuclear Rivalry

The two countries, India and Pakistan, have to undertake steps towards Nuclear confidence-building measures. This may include discussions on nuclear risk reduction; arms control; and preventing an arms race that could complicate

the stability of that region. The international community should also have the capacity to undertake the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation and security assurances.

Supporting Regional Security through Global Cooperation

The UN and other global powers including the U.S., and China should play a more aggressive role in peace-making and the maintenance of peace in South Asia. It may be inbound in providing backing to peace keeping operations, anti-terrorism and in establishing and maintaining certain focal points like Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Thus, it is needed to establish the principles of how to navigate the South Asia in the changing world order which based on diplomacy, regionalism and balancing with great powers. Through dialogue, cooperation in economic fields and negotiation of conflicts South Asian states may lessen the threats inherent in strained relations, helping to make the region safer.

References

- Ball, D., Béraud-Sudreau, L., Huxley, T., Raja Mohan, C., & Taylor, B. (2019). Geopolitical evolution in South Asia. *Adelphi Series*, 59(478–480), 125–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19445571.2019.1968723>
- Bhat, M. A., & Shahid, R. (2024). Introduction: Mutual attrition of citizenship, democracy and the rule of law in South and Southeast Asia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(19), 4787–4808. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2376403>
- Bose, S., & Jalal, A. (2022). *Modern South Asia: History, culture, political economy*. Routledge.
- Bukhari, S. R. H., Khan, A. U., & Haq, I. U. (2024). Beyond Ukraine: Examining the Potential for Great Power Competition in Africa. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices*, 3(1). <https://journals.sprypublishers.com/index.php/CONTEMPORARY-EDUCATIONAL-PRACTIC/article/view/99>
- Bukhari, S. R. H., Khan, A. U., Haq, I. U., & Ullah, T. (2024). The geopolitical implications of Taiwan-China relations on regional security. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices*, 3(1). <https://journals.sprypublishers.com/index.php/CONTEMPORARY-EDUCATIONAL-PRACTIC/article/view/68>
- Bukhari, S. R. H., Khan, A. U., Noreen, S., Bashir, F., Rafi, G., & Haq, I. U. (2024). Navigating Sovereignty: Legal and Geopolitical Implications of Territorial Disputes in South China Sea. *Remittances Review*, 9(1). <https://remittancesreview.com/menu-script/index.php/remittances/article/view/1331>
- Bukhari, S. R. H., Kokab, R. S., & Khan, E. (2024). The Role of China in the Global Economy: Political Strategies and Economic Outcomes. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices*, 3(1). <https://journals.sprypublishers.com/index.php/CONTEMPORARY-EDUCATIONAL-PRACTIC/article/view/92>
- Bukhari, S. R. H., Malik, S. M., & Mahmood, M. A. (2024). Chinese BRICS: Contamination of US-led Neoliberalism. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 8(2), 320–331. [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2024\(8-II-S\)28](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2024(8-II-S)28)
- Burton, B., & Wurfel, D. (2016). *Southeast Asia in the new world order: The political economy of a dynamic region*. Springer.
- Buzan, B. (2002). South Asia Moving Towards Transformation: Emergence of India as a Great Power. *International Studies*, 39(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002088170203900101>
- Chow Bing, N. (2024). Diplomatic Battleground or Arena for Cooperation? How China's Scholars Analyze India's Act East Policy, Indo-Pacific Strategy, and Sino-India Relations in Southeast Asia. In A. Ranjan, D. Chattoraj, & A. A. Ullah (Eds.), *India and China in Southeast Asia* (pp. 281–298). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-6903-2_13
- Dunford, M., & Liu, W. (2024). China's evolving international economic engagement: China threat or a new pole in an equitable multipolar world order? *Area Development and Policy*, 9(2), 131–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23792949.2023.2225092>
- Fawcett, L., & Jagtiani, S. L. (2024). Regional powers, global aspirations: Lessons from India and Iran. *International Politics*, 61(1), 215–238. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-022-00374-z>
- Gilbert, M. J. (2017). *South Asia in World History*. Oxford University Press.
- Jahangir, A. (2025). Governance Innovation in South Asia: The Pakistan Governance Journey. In *Mapping Governance Innovations* (pp. 147–166). Routledge India. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003506720-8/governance-innovation-south-asia-amir-jahangir>
- Kayashima, N., Umemiya, N., & Tsujimoto, A. (2024). Diverse Impacts of University Faculty Study Abroad on Higher Education Development in Southeast Asia. *Impacts of Study Abroad on Higher Education Development*, 275. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/92731/1/978-981-97-0775-1.pdf#page=277>
- Kliem, F. (2024). Not our war. What ASEAN governments' responses to the Ukraine war tell us about Southeast Asia. *The Pacific Review*, 37(1), 211–243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2023.2202925>

- Kucukdegirmenci, O. (2024). Second Tier: Japan's Security Multilateralism in East Asia–Pacific. In O. Kucukdegirmenci, *The Shifting Sands of Japan's Security Landscape* (pp. 109–137). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-7578-1_4
- Mangaron Fresto, C. J. (2024). Navigating Corporate Sustainability: Unpacking ESG Disclosure and Rating in Southeast and East Asia. *Eurázsia Szemle*, 4(1), 54–71. <https://unipub.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/10408/>
- McCloud, D. G. (2018). *Southeast Asia: Tradition and modernity in the contemporary world*. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780429493065/southeast-asia-donald-mccloud>
- O'brien, R., & Williams, M. (2024). *Global political economy: Evolution and dynamics*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Paikin, Z. (2024). Multipolar Competition and the Rules-based Order: Probing the Limits of EU Foreign and Security Policy in the South China Sea. *The International Spectator*, 59(1), 161–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2023.2280598>
- Smith, M. L., & Jones, D. M. (1997). ASEAN, Asian values and Southeast Asian security in the new world order. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 18(3), 126–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523269708404172>
- Thompson, A. (2024). Contestation and Resilience in the Liberal International Order: The Case of Climate Change. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 4(2), ksae011.
- Trigkas, V. (2024). *Recentering Pacific Asia: Regional China and World Order by Brantly Womack*. Oxford University Press US. <https://academic.oup.com/psq/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/psquar/qgae104/7749942>
- Vadlamannati, K. C., Rodrigues Vieira, V. G., & Song, T. (2024). Calling the Shots through Health Diplomacy: China's World-Wide Distribution of Anti-Covid Vaccines and the International Order. *International Interactions*, 50(1), 168–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2024.2305968>
- Wang, T., Chen, S., Gong, Y., & Li, C. (2024). Evolution of the South China Sea geo-pattern based on the “geo-potential-strategic triangle” framework. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 248, 106963.
- Wijaya, T., Liao, J. C., Baik, E., & Katada, S. N. (2024). Pivotal power of small states to save the international liberal economic order: The case from East Asia. *The Pacific Review*, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2024.2369700>
- Wunderlich, J.-U. (2016). *Regionalism, globalisation and international order: Europe and Southeast Asia*. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315604459/regionalism-globalisation-international-order-jens-uwe-wunderlich>
- Yeung, H. W. (2024). From regional to global and back again? A future agenda for regional evolution and (de)globalised production networks in regional studies. *Regional Studies*, 58(7), 1480–1491. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2024.2316856>
- Zhengxin, Z. (2024). Decoding China-India Engagements in Southeast Asia-A Chinese Perspective. In A. Ranjan, D. Chatteraj, & A. A. Ullah (Eds.), *India and China in Southeast Asia* (pp. 187–210). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-6903-2_9
- Zhu, R., Wang, H., Wang, H., Wang, X., Wan, B., Zhang, W., Zhu, H., Liu, Y., Liu, J., Meng, Q., Hao, F., & Jin, Z. (2024). Multi-spherical interactions and mechanisms of hydrocarbon enrichment in the Southeast Asian archipelagic tectonic system. *Science China Earth Sciences*, 67(2), 566–583. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11430-023-1254-4>