

Beyond the Goldsmith Line: Assessing the Intricacies of Border Control, Regional Interactions, and Cross-Border Risks in the Iran-Pakistan Border Region

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Abstract: The Goldsmith Line is a crucial 564-mile route that runs from the Koh-i-Malik Siah tri-junction to Gawadar on the Arabian Sea coast, serving as a significant connection between the Middle East and South Asia, specifically dividing Iran and Pakistan. The Baloch people living on both sides of this border contribute to the region's demographic importance. This study examines the intricacies of border management, exploring historical elements such as regional alliances, relationships with the United States, and sectarian conflicts that have influenced security in the area. The Goldsmith Line is not involved in territorial issues but has security challenges because of cross-border migration, drug smuggling, and extremism. The border has become a potential battleground due to ongoing tensions and separatist operations. Despite the 1960 Border Accord and the 2013 security management agreement, controlling the area is difficult because of insufficient infrastructure and technology. The study examines how the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has affected Iran-Pakistan relations and proposes that a strategic partnership rather than sectarianism should be the basis for bilateral ties. Transnational criminal organizations are increasing, making border security more complex, leading to attacks and allegations between the two nations. To tackle these difficulties, we need increased collaboration, technical progress, and a wider emphasis on socioeconomic growth to reduce criminal activities and promote regional stability.

Key Words: Goldsmith Line, Gawadar, Border, Middle East, South Asia, Arabian Sea, JCPOA

Introduction

The historic land of Balochistan, which is very rich in terms of its natural resources like gold, natural gas, chromite, copper, coal, oil, and a number of other precious stones, also covers vast areas of land bordering different countries. The geographical location of Balochistan makes it geopolitically and geo-strategically significant as it is located very close to the Strait of Hormuz and also serves as the gateway to many Central Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern countries. Gawadar seaport and coastal area of Balochistan make it globally important as it provides the shortest routes and has developed a great atmosphere of competition among the global powers. Balochistan is split into three regions: Eastern Balochistan, Western Balochistan, and Northern Balochistan, which are separated by the Goldsmith Line and shared by three countries, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, by a differentiating border known as the Goldsmith Line. Historically, the Goldsmith Line used to be the boundary between the Persians and the British. Historically, the Goldsmith Line was considered to be the boundary between Persia and the British as, in 1871, the superpowers of the time, the British and the Persians, came to an agreement to differentiate their boundaries. From 1895 to 1896, the Goldsmith Line officially became the boundary between Persia and the British. The Goldsmith Line later became the boundary line between Iran and Pakistan, dividing Iran's Sistan O Balochistan province from 1958 to 1959 from Pakistan's Balochistan. Managing borders is a word that refers to the intersection of two distinct domains of activity security and economics. It serves as a conduit for connection and economic integration,

but it also serves as a battlefield for security competition and a potential battleground for political struggle in the future. It is possible that the following three causes contributed to Iran and Pakistan's earlier involvement in intermittent security crises that had an influence on regional and worldwide security. This address will go through regional alliances, ties with the United States, and the sectarian problem in depth. Due to the fact that the border is where interstate wars and peace treaties are fought, border security should be of concern to both Iran and Pakistan in the future. Therefore, measures aimed at strengthening border management would be advantageous in resolving the existing security issues.

From strategic collaboration in the 1970s to confrontations over foreign alliance divergences in the 1980s and 1990s, relations between Iran and Pakistan have progressed through a number of different periods. With Iran's historic landmark agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran's and Pakistan's national interests are now clashing in the context of protecting their shared border and working toward shared economic development, respectively. Iran and Pakistan were preoccupied with a variety of concerns prior to the signing of the Iranian nuclear agreement, including border security, energy cooperation, and strategic ties with the United States. In this regard, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) would have an influence, as it would serve to define the future trajectory of bilateral relations. As opposed to adhering to the illogic of sectarianism, both countries should recognize that bilateral ties should be guided by geopolitical imperatives of strategic collaboration rather than by the ideology of sectarianism itself. To prevent terrorism in this situation, it would be essential for both countries to work together to defend the common border regions.

Statement and Importance of the Problem

Although Pakistan and Iran historically had significant disparities in their foreign attitudes and policies, the two countries have been successful in maintaining strong partnerships. The economic interests of the country, rather than ideological or political ones, are now taking precedence. Pakistan is located in a strategic geopolitical zone with Russia, China, and India all in close proximity to the country's borders. Trade liberalization is becoming more popular among governments these days.

China has chosen the Belt and Road Initiative as an international development strategy. There have been disagreements between the two on a variety of issues, including trans-border terrorism, sectarian crimes, Afghanistan, and Arab policy, among others. The economic interests of the country, rather than ideological or political ones, are now taking precedence. Pakistan is located in a strategic geopolitical zone, with Russia, China, and India all in close proximity to the country's borders.

Trade liberalization is becoming more popular among governments these days. China and Pakistan signed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2015 with the goal of developing the port of Gwadar on the coast of Makran. India replied quickly, signing the Chabahar Project with Iran the following year. ¹ It was anticipated that the two ports would compete against one another as competitors. However, not only Pakistan and Iran but also China have both denied having such plans. India views itself as a future regional power, and it is keen to play a role in that development. The relationship between India and China is fraught with violence and disputes. Most recently, scores of troops from both sides were killed during a border confrontation in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh. In the Arabian Sea, it is often prophesied that the presence of both China and India in Gwadar and Chabahar would result in a new power struggle between the two nations. Both countries are quickly expanding their economic clout in the area. Pakistan has found itself in an unusual predicament as a result of the fight with India in the east and the struggle with Afghanistan in the west, which

has left it with no alternative except to turn to an antagonistic Iran. Pakistan must strengthen its economic, political, and cultural connections with Iran to prevent India from snatching away a friend from the country.

The ports of Gwadar in Pakistan and Chabahar in Iran are next to one another, and both provide access to the Arabian Sea. These ports are very important in terms of geo-strategic importance. A rivalry between these ports based on mutual animosity might be detrimental to Pakistan's interests. Thus, the country must do all in its power to deepen its relations with Iran.

Hypothesis

This research attempts to address the question of what opportunities have been generated for Pakistan as a result of the Gwadar and Chabahar port developments. Second, it will investigate what elements may have an impact on ties between Pakistan and Iran, both positively and negatively.

Finally, what course of action would put Pakistan in the best possible position to reap the most possible economic and political benefits from its relationship with Iran? It is necessary to understand the historical context of these problems in order to get an answer.

Methodology

Primary and secondary sources have been utilized in combination for the aim of this research. A major component of the research's basic methodological framework is the geo-cultural relationship that exists between the Baloch people of Iran and Pakistan, which is studied in depth throughout the study. To analyze the data, descriptive and analytical techniques have been used. Minor comparative techniques or methodologies have also been used in the research.

According to Goldsmith, A Soft Border is Preferable

The "Goldsmith Line" is the name given to the 564-mile line that separates the two states. It starts at the tri-junction of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, known as the Koh-i-Malik Siah, and continues all the way to the Arabian Sea coast town of Gawadar. The Goldsmith Line serves as a vital link between two important Asian regions. It is a crossroads between the Middle East and South Asia. The demographic composition of the area on both sides of the border is determined by the fact that the Iran-Pakistan border territory is a part of both the Balochistan province on the Pakistani side and the Sistan-Balochistan province on the Iranian side.

The Baloch people live on either side of the border. Baloch people live in Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, among other places. Border management is a term that refers to the junction of the security and economic spheres. It is a conduit for connectivity and economic integration, but it is also a battlefield for security competition and a prospective battleground for political rivalry.

The following three factors had a role in Iran and Pakistan's earlier participation in intermittent security crises that impacted regional and international security. In particular, I will discuss regional alliances, (ii) ties with the United States, and (iii) the sectarian problem. Border security should be of interest to both Iran and Pakistan in the future since the border is where inter-state conflicts and peace treaties are fought, and so steps targeted at improving border management would be beneficial in addressing the current security difficulties. (Adamson, 2006)

Relations between Iran and Pakistan have evolved through time, from strategic partnership in the 1970s to disputes over foreign alliance divergences in the 1980s and 1990s. Iran's and Pakistan's national

interests are now colliding in the context of a historic milestone for Iran, namely the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in terms of maintaining their shared border and working toward shared economic prosperity. Iran and Pakistan had a number of issues on their minds before. The signing of the Iranian nuclear deal, including border security, energy cooperation, and strategic links. (Ahmed, 2011, pp. 213–270) The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) would have an impact on these issues, defining the future trajectory of bilateral ties. Instead of following the illogic of sectarianism, both nations should recognize that bilateral relations should be governed by geopolitical imperatives of strategic partnership rather than by sectarianism itself. Therefore, in this case, guarding the shared border areas jointly would be a critical counter-terrorist measure.

The High Points of the Goldsmith Line

This border is not the subject of any active territorial disputes at the time of this writing. The 'Border Accord' was signed between Iran and Pakistan on August 31, 1960. (Pattanayak & Fainboim, 2011) The accord was hailed as a watershed event in the development of bilateral relations. The boundary's position does not appear to be a point of contention. The problem is the security situation in border areas as a result of cross-border migration. The two major reasons for worry are the illicit migration of persons and the smuggling of products. The smuggling of drugs and narcotics is a major worry for Iranian authorities.

Talong the border has risen as a result of the recent surge in extremism and the establishment of separatist organizations, which has transformed the border into a source of conflict between the two countries. Iran and Pakistan often engage in illegal activities along their border, leading to misunderstandings between the two nations. Between Iranian security forces and terrorists operating on the Pakistani side of the border, there have been a number of border skirmishes in recent years. During a US drone assault in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region on May 21, 2016, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the Afghan Taliban's leader, was killed, presumably while attempting to enter Pakistan from Iran, according to reports. Because of ongoing ethnic or sectarian insurgencies on both sides of the border, the areas along the border are particularly vulnerable to conflict. One of Iran's eight international border crossings is one of the country's eight international border crossings. It is one of the more peaceful borders, particularly when contrasted to the more volatile borders of Iraq, Turkey, and Afghanistan. The Goldsmith Line is a leaky barrier that makes it difficult to maintain security over its length. (Cornell 2003)

The difficulties in maintaining control of this border are enormous. There is a substantial amount of 'infrastructure required for both ground patrols and aircraft surveillance. Neither country has the high-tech border surveillance systems that are required to maintain border security. A border security management agreement was signed between Pakistan and Iran on February 9, 2013, in Tehran. Drug trafficking, human smuggling, and illegal immigration combine counter-terrorism operations, better border security cooperation, and coordination in the fight. Abduction and human trafficking are all addressed in the pact. (Cornell 2003) In addition, the two parties agreed to. Expand border markets and accelerate the extradition of prisoners. On February 7, 2007, an unexplained explosion in Zahedan, the provincial capital, killed 13 persons, including nine members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Iran immediately commenced construction of the Taftan-Mand border wall. (Alam, 2004) It is a concrete barrier wall that stretches from Taftan to Mand and is 434km in length. Trenches, deep ditches, barbed wire, fences, and Watchtowers are all part of the larger project, as is the building of watchtowers.

Despite international pressure, Pakistan has defended Iran's right to guard its border. For the purpose of countering terrorist movements, both sides have agreed to share information and increase surveillance (Express Tribune, Apr 7, 2014). A hotline has been established between Pakistan's frontier corps and Iran's border security forces. Several discussions have taken place about the establishment of a comparable hotline between the directors general of military operations.

Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs)

The issue of border security between Iran and Pakistan has been a significant source of concern in recent years as a result of illegal cross-border activities. For years, border security has been a source of conflict, with both Iran and Pakistan openly voicing their unhappiness at times. Mountainous and sparsely populated, the border area is characterized by its isolation. In recent years, violence has risen in both Pakistani and Iranian Balochistan, and there is a danger that ethnic Balochs on both sides of the Iran-Pakistan border would join together to fight each other. (Awan, 2018)

A paramilitary organization known as the Frontier Corps monitors the border on Pakistan's side. A team of border security officers, supported by members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, protects the Iranian side of the border (IRGC). Ongoing problems with drug trafficking and militancy have become more serious over time. With their unhappiness expressed at the highest levels, both Pakistan and Iran have implied that either their respective borders are lawless or that there is a lack of trust, which would be even more serious in terms of security consequences. (Andreas, 2003)

In addition, the Iranians assert that the border conflicts with Pakistan are being triggered at Saudi Arabia's behest as a result of the ongoing Saudi-Iranian balance of power fight in Syria and other parts of the Middle East. This is a crucial component. Similar anti-Iran and anti-India sentiments have been expressed in Pakistan.

IRGC personnel were attacked in Sistan, bringing attention to the issue of border security. Former Iranian president Mahmud Ahmedinejad accused certain Pakistani officials of the tragedy, which occurred in the country's western province of Khuzestan. (Shah, 2014) According to the Iranian president, these terrorist organizations were able to get financial support as well as safe havens on Pakistani soil. Furthermore, he feels that the Pakistani government is apprehensive about taking meaningful action against terrorist organizations. Iranian statements have been corroborated by instances of Iran's "hot pursuit" into Pakistani territory, which has breached international borders. In the territory of Sistan-Balochistan, there existed an Iranian extremist organization called Jundallah (Soldiers of God). After being captured by Pakistan and turned over to Iran, Abdul Malik Rigi, the head of the Jundallah movement, was supposedly killed there in June 2010. (Burke & Ziring, 2017)

An organization known as Jaish-i-Adl (Army of Justice) was established in 2013. It killed 14 Iranian border guards in an attack on them in October 2013, and it was also responsible for the assassination of a local government prosecutor in November 2013. On February 8, 2014, militants affiliated with Jaish-i-Adl seized five Iranian border guards and supposedly took them to the Pakistani side of the border. In response, Iran informed Pakistan about the incident and requested aid, but Pakistan claimed not to have been aware of it. Iranian Interior Minister Ali Larijani threatened military action in the border region in order to construct a "security zone." (Buzan & Waver, 2003)

Illegal Immigration, Including Smuggling and Human Trafficking

Routine border breaches have suffered as a consequence of increased attention being paid to cross-border

militant activities in recent years. Smuggling and trafficking, which is a constant source of the Iran-Pakistan border, raises security concerns while also restricting prospects for economic growth.

The primary motivation for smuggling and human trafficking is the same everywhere in the globe, including the Middle East and the United Arab Emirates. When there is a misalignment between supply and demand in a society, citizens are compelled to go outside the community for solutions to their problems. These illegal methods are used in order to avoid paying lawful taxes and customs duties. The government's inability to channel bilateral commerce and transfer via a legitimate route is the primary reason for smuggling. Governing bodies have an obligation to look into individuals who are involved in illegal commercial activities. The boundary between Iran and Pakistan defines South Asia's border with the Middle East. A small number of individuals attempt to cross the border into Europe illegally in quest of employment.

Thus, human trafficking, along with other forms of illegal immigration, has gained widespread attention in the United States. Dealing with routine border security problems such as goods smuggling and even human trafficking may be doable with the latest technological advances in border enforcement. (Kux, 2001) Despite being medium powers with modest military capabilities and enough regional influence to get weapons from more technologically capable nations if they so choose, Iran and Pakistan are both considered to be rogue states by the United States. Providing protection against socioeconomic problems and non-state violent organizations, on the other hand, is more difficult. In this era of globalization, massive quantities of goods are transported around the world. To prevent criminal activities from taking place, it would be more difficult to provide border control, particularly along a weak frontier like the Goldsmith Line. (Ahmad, 2017)

These illegal activities along the border, on the other hand, have a negative impact on bilateral relations. Because of this, an agreement was reached between the two countries in 2004 that recognized Sistan and Baluchistan as "twin provinces" in order to foster cooperation and peace between the two countries. Under the terms of this agreement, Iran will provide assistance to the Baluchistan government in Pakistan with advanced agricultural methods. (Shaikh & Price, 2001)

It calls for more collaboration between the educational institutions of the two countries. Between the two provinces, there would be a teacher and student exchange. Those who signed the agreement committed to making every effort to ensure that visitors on both sides had the greatest possible facilities and security. In order for border management measures between Iran and Pakistan to be effective, the expansion of bilateral trade and a general improvement in the security situation in Afghanistan must be the ultimate aim." (Imtiaz 2019)

Conclusion and Future Directions

The study explores the intricate dynamics of the Iran-Pakistan border region, with specific attention on the Goldsmith Line. The historical context, geopolitical relevance, and mutual interests of both countries highlight the importance of efficient border control. The problems posed by cross-border migration, drug smuggling, and extremism underscore the necessity for cooperation, technical progress, and a more extensive focus on socioeconomic growth.

The JCPOA is vital in influencing Iran-Pakistan relations by highlighting the need for a strategic alliance over sectarian factors. Research indicates that it is crucial to collaborate in securing the border regions together to combat terrorism effectively. Despite past inequalities, both nations are encouraged to focus on economic benefits, building better connections to handle regional challenges.

The Goldsmith Line is dealing with security concerns that require focus, although not being involved in territorial conflicts. The 1960 Border Accord and the 2013 Security Management Agreement have been ineffective because of insufficient infrastructure and technology. Transnational criminal organizations hamper border security, requiring enhanced cooperation and technological breakthroughs.

In the future, efforts should concentrate on improving border security, utilizing technological advancements, and promoting economic collaboration. Addressing the underlying reasons for illicit activity, such as socioeconomic concerns, can help promote regional stability. A long-term dedication to diplomatic discussions and cooperation between Iran and Pakistan is crucial to addressing issues and creating a secure, integrated future for the Goldsmith Line region.

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