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## Pakistan-China-Turkey Triangle at Seoul NSG Meet June 2016

Submitted by zenno on Fri, 07/01/2016 - 05:33

**Paper No. 6140**

**Dated 01-Jul-2016**

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Pakistan-China-India Triangle was evidently in play at Seoul NSG Meet in June 2016 when Pakistan asked China to block India's entry into NSG, China strongly blocks India, so, and Turkey backs China's attempt to keep India out of NSG.

The strategic triangulation stated above to prevent India's admittance into NSG is not a conspiracy story and nor were the moves purely by coincidence. At play were the strategic 'pay-off' factors amongst these three countries transcending the earlier strategic reality that both Pakistan and Turkey were NATO Allies of the United States? Turkey was and still continues as member of NATO and Pakistan was a major 'Non-NATO Ally' and still continues to be so on paper. Pakistan and Turkey both moved against United States push for India's entry into NSG.

Analysing the Pakistan-Turkey strategic pay-offs side of the triangle first, what emerges is the ongoing Pakistan-Turkey Nuclear Partnership has been on since 1971. Turkey is being considered as a 'threshold nuclear weapons state' today and has been under close scrutiny by Western intelligence agencies. The German intelligence agency, the BWD, has by far been the most active in this direction followed by Israeli intelligence agencies.

In brief, what emerges from scrutiny of published media reports and books on the subject reveals multi-layered nuclear cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey over the years, in defiance of United States displeasure expressed on the same at various stages. Earlier Cold War compulsions may have prevented a stronger response by the United States against Pakistan and Turkey.

Pakistan-Turkey Nuclear Partnership was not aimed at solving the mutual civilian nuclear energy needs of both these nations. Pakistan-

Turkey Nuclear Partnership was directly aimed at the eventual nuclear weaponisation of Turkey via the Pakistan route since Pakistan was technologically ahead and Turkey's NATO membership would have impeded Turkey's direct nuclear weaponisation.

A slight departure in discussion is required here to highlight the different contours of Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Turkey. In case of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan's nuclear weapons project was financed by Saudi Arabia in return for Pakistan providing a nuclear weapons device for its security, in case required.

In case of Turkey, intelligence reports indicate that Turkey was actively involved as acting as a conduit for supply of nuclear materials and equipment to Pakistan. In earlier year, the 'electronics' for hundreds of inverters that Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan of Pakistan required were provided by Turkey. Freighters flying the Turkish flag were noticed by United States carrying inverters to Pakistan. USA had warned Turkey on this account but to no avail. The stakes of nuclear weaponisation of Turkey and Pakistan were too high to pay heed to US warnings.

After Iran's moves towards nuclear weaponisation became more prominent, reports suggest that Pakistan-Turkey Nuclear Partnership picked up more impetus and that Turkish nuclear scientists had been visiting Pakistani nuclear establishments for what seemed faster progress in Turkey's nuclear weapons project.

Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation was based on Chinese blueprints and it would be fair to assume that China would be exercising a 'veto' on further transfer of such know-how to other countries. But in case of Turkey it seems that there were no Chinese objections as China itself was actively involved in supplying missiles technology to Turkey directly for eventual use in Turkey's IRBM missiles, a logical requirement for acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Chinese assistance to Turkey in the production of missiles is also nearly three decades. China facilitated the production of the Turkish Yildirim battlefield missile with a range of less than 200 kilometres. Today available information indicates that the Yildirim follow-up series have touched 2500 kilometres. China is also reported to be assisting Turkey in production of cruise missiles.

Reports also indicate that it was Pakistan which initially mediated Turkey's missile cooperation with China. It was Pakistan which indicated to Turkey that China was ready to step-in since the United States was against Turkey's indigenous missile project. China is also reported to be active in providing technological assistance for Turkey's space projects.

Pakistan's role in providing its North Korean IRBM technologies to Turkey is also very much on the cards. But of course here too China's permissive nod would be required.

In a manner of putting it, therefore, China was sitting on top of the China-Pakistan-Turkey Nuclear & Missiles Pyramid where both Pakistan and Turkey were beholden to China and owed strategic pay-offs. China too was immensely indebted to Pakistan for 'rental state' services in

providing the CPEC Corridor through Pakistan to Gwadar and thereby providing a foothold to Chinese Navy on the Indian Ocean littoral. Similarly China was indebted to Turkey for facilitating China's presence in the Eastern Mediterranean manifested by the first-ever joint Air Forces exercises in the Middle East by China and Turkey.

Pakistan-Turkey intensification of military relationship has markedly moved ahead under the present Turkish regime after a lull in which Turkey was exploring other foreign policy options, including India. Incidentally, Turkey has signed both the NPT and the MTCR; but then when have nations been so deterred in the pursuit of national aspirations for power.

Pakistan was openly calling on China in the run-up to the Seoul NSG Meet in June 2016 that China should block India's entry as it would upset the strategic balance in the Indian Sub-Continent to Pakistan's disadvantage. Chinese pronouncements in the run-up to the Seoul NSG Meet reflected that China could not ignore Pakistan's sensitivities in this regard.

Pakistan openly did not call on Turkey for similar opposition to India's NSG entry knowing fully well that China itself would perform the perfect 'hatchet-man job' against India. But the fact that emerged was that Turkey was on China's side at Seoul NSG Meet in opposing India's entry to NSG. What can be analytically be made out of this performance? Obviously, the game of 'strategic pay-offs' between China, Turkey and Pakistan was in full play at the Seoul NSG Meet.

Before concluding, it needs to be highlighted that other than India, it is the United States and Iran that need to note the way the Pakistan-China-Turkey coordination has surfaced now. Iran particularly needs to note it since it should be clear to Iran that the Turkish nuclear weapons programme was directed against Iran and that the Pakistani nuclear weapons primarily directed against India is also directed at Iran. Sitting atop this Triangle is China which professes 'eternal friendship' with Iran. It is difficult to fathom how China can profess eternal friendship with Iran when it is actively involved in nuclear weapons and missiles capabilities capacity building of Pakistan and Turkey?

Concluding, what one would like to assert is that the Pakistan-China-Turkey Triangle should not be much of a strategic concern for India and it can be taken in one's stride. However, it should be an essential input in our foreign policy making process. China and Pakistan are known military confrontationist states with India. Turkey, though not in military confrontation with India, has however, strong military linkages with China and Pakistan. The political linkages and trade-offs showed-up vividly at the Seoul NSG Meet in June 2016.

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