



Innovating Future

Pak-Gulf Defense and Security Cooperation

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January, 2013

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Pakistan-Gulf defense relationship is almost as old as their political and diplomatic contacts. Most of the GCC states depended heavily on Pakistan's assistance in raising their defense and security forces.

There is long history of security relations between Pakistan and several Gulf countries. In 1970s and 80s, many Gulf countries flushed with oil money bought state of the art equipment but local population lacked technical skills.¹ A number of Pakistan army and air force personnel were deputed to several countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Syria and Iraq. A much smaller number of naval officers also served in UAE training local naval forces. The main role of Pakistani officers was in training local security forces although they also manned complicated equipment such as radars.

The recent Arab spring and subsequent incidents and their basic motives have given a chance to Gulf countries to come further close to Pakistan. Pakistan through its military and bilateral cooperation has always tried to shield these countries from various external and internal threats. The GCC is now looking towards East and recent joint military exercises of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Al- Assam IV) are one of its examples. The following narrative of defense cooperation between Pakistan and the individual GCC States explains depth of their defense relationship:-

Pak-UAE Defense Co-operation:

Army

Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nayhan requested President Ayub Khan in 1968 to send Pakistani troops for training defense personnel of Abu Dhabi and to equip them with requisite knowledge so that they become capable to take over command of Abu Dhabi Defense Forces from the British commanders. Interestingly enough, the defense relationship worked outside any formal agreement till mid 1970's when a not-so-elaborate protocol was signed. In 1980's when Pakistan has excelled in small arms and munitions, UAE was one of those thirty countries, which bought small arms in excessive quantities from Pakistan. Cooperation in the field of defense was institutionalized in June 1994, with the establishment of the Defense Consultative Group. The Group aims at increasing defense cooperation through joint military production, military exercises, training and intelligence sharing.

Pakistan Army has also established the UAE Armor Training School and imparted training to commando battalions as well. For the initial few years, all Artillery and Armed

¹ <http://pakistanpal.wordpress.com/2011/07/14/pakistan-and-arab-world-security-cooperation/>

Corps officers were trained in Pakistani establishments. Pakistani Armed Forces also invited UAE officers at Staff College, Quetta and other training institutions.

In 2003, UAE showed interest in buying Al-Khalid main Battle Tanks, Mushshsk trainers and various other defense items. Pakistan exported Al-khalid MBTs and other defense items to UAE in 2003 to onward.²

In 2006 both countries signed a defense cooperation agreement to strengthen the military relations. Pakistan's Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Ehsan Ul Haq paid a two days visit to UAE and met with Lt. General Hamad Mohammed Thani Al Rumaithi, Army Chief of UAE to discuss the avenues of defense cooperation between both countries. At the end of the meeting both signed an agreement to develop and strengthen the military relations between two countries.³ General Hamad Mohammad Thani Al Tumaithi has also been awarded the Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) by the President of Pakistan, in recognition to his services for further strengthening the bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries.

Since initiation of Global War on Terror UAE have been assisting not only US but Pakistan in combating terrorism in its northern areas. The UAE cooperation in counter terrorism and de-radicalization with Pakistan has become an example for other Muslim countries in the World. UAE has helped Pakistan in rehabilitation of Swat after the counter terrorism offensive was launched by Pakistan Army. UAE built roads, bridges schools and healthcare facilities in affected areas.⁴

Air Force:

In June 2003 Major General Abdullah Al Syed Mohammed Al-Hashmi met with Vice Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Tanvir Mehmood Ahmed and pledged to enhance cooperation between air force of both countries.⁵ Pakistanis have been prominent as advisors and trainers in various fields of activities in the UAE. Its Air Force was at one time like an extension of the Pakistan Air Force

Sheikh Zayed appointed Air Commodores Sadar-ud-Din of Pakistan Air Force as Chief of Staff Abu Dhabi Air Force. He was succeeded by Air Commodore Ayaz Ahmed Khan, Ghulam Haider, Jamal A. Khan and Feroz A. Khan. Thereafter, Group Captain level

² Pakistan Intelligence, Security Activities & Operations Handbook, Int'l Business Publications, 2002, p-224.

³ UAE, Pakistan sign military cooperation agreement, April 30, 2006, UAE Interact, see at, http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/UAE_Pakistan_sign_military_cooperation_agreement/20615.htm

⁴ Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, Pakistan-UAE Bilateral Relations: Infinite Voyage, Overseas Pakistani Friends, November 2012, see at <https://www.opfblog.com/13398/pakistan-uae-bilateral-relations-infinite-voyage/>

⁵ Ibid 3.

officers of Pakistan Air Force took over as Deputy Chief of Air Staff and native officers were appointed as Commander.

In 2004 Pakistan had 55 flying instructors in the UAE Air Force, ten personnel in Navy and a very small number of officers in UAE Army. UAE being strategic partner of Pakistan sent a strong message to NATO and the West on their air strikes in Pakistan's mountainous check posts in 2011. UAE also demanded apology from the NATO with the promise not to repeat it again in the future.

Navy

Recently President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari decorated the UAE naval Chief Major General (Navy) Ibrahim Salim Mohamed Al Musharrakh, with Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) during a special investiture ceremony. The President was of the view that Ibrahim Salim is a "sincere friend of Pakistan who has played a prominent role in expanding cooperation between UAE Navy and Pakistan Navy and strengthening the bond of friendship between the two nations, the citation said."⁶ Later I meeting with decorated General and UAE ambassador President expressed his satisfaction over the cooperation between the navies of two countries and also offered training facilities in Pakistan for UAE's naval officers and soldiers.

Earlier in April 2012, Pakistan's ambassador to UAE expressed his sentiments on visit to Pakistan Naval Ships Madadgar and Shujaat, currently on a good will visit to the UAE. The ships are part of the Pakistan Navy Task Group (PNTG) that is visiting friendly countries in the Gulf.

He said that "Pakistan and the UAE enjoy deep-rooted relations that will further strengthen with co-operation between their naval forces." During this voyage Pakistan navy also participated in a joint naval exercise with the navy of UAE. Talking about the exercises Pakistani ambassador expressed his satisfaction and said that "The joint naval exercise between Pakistan and the UAE during their current voyage is yet another manifestation of military cooperation between the two countries"⁷

In 2009 UAE along with twenty eight countries of the World participated as an observer 2009 in naval exercises 'Aman' by Pakistan navy in the Indian Ocean. Moreover in UAE Navy, Pakistan Naval officers manned all patrolling operations in high seas and secured the shores of Abu Dhabi.

⁶ President decorates UAE Naval Forces Commander with Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Pak Armed Forces, November 2012, see at, <http://pakarmedforces.com/2012/11/president-decorates-uae-naval-forces.html>

⁷ Pakistan to fabricate, sell ships, Khaleej Times, April 2012, see at, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/business/2012/April/business_April93.xml§ion=business

Pak- Saudi Arabia Defense Co-operation:

Pakistani people have always felt a special reverence for Saudi Arabia as the land where Islam grew. The identity of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's views on major regional and international issues is exemplary. The leadership of Saudi Arabia and its government has been coordinating with Pakistan on many important issues and share similarities on different regional and international issues. The defense relation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia improved and flourished during the past five years of democratic government in Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are leading members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Saudi Arabia has always supported Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir and encouraged both the countries to start confidence building measures. Both the countries were at same wave-length at the time of Afghan War and remained closed allies fighting against communism during 1980s. During the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War, Pakistan on request, sent troops to protect the Islamic holy sites in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia rescued Pakistan in May 1998 (nuclear test) and promised to supply 50,000 barrels per day of free oil to help Pakistan cope with likely economic sanctions in the aftermath. In turn up to 1980 almost 15000 Pakistani troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia to defend the holy land.⁸

Army

Mutual Cooperation Program between the Armed Forces of the two countries commenced in 1967; in March 1979, Saudi authorities requested for military manpower assistance. Consequently, a Protocol Agreement with Saudi Arabia was signed on 14 December 1982 and Pakistani Armed Forces personnel were sent on deputation to Saudi Arabia. Pakistani troops assisted Saudi Arabia in the siege of Mecca in 1979. According to a 1991 Associated Press report, Pakistan deployed 13,000 troops and 6,000 advisers during the first Gulf War.

The Protocol Agreement signed in 1982 was revised to widen its scope and to include provision of cooperation in defense production, defense science & technology and to raise its present level to Joint Defense Collaboration. Under the Mutual Cooperation Program Pakistan provides military training to Saudis on a large scale. Parallel to this training program both countries have organized and conducted multiple joint military exercises to harness the combat skills of the armed forces.

⁸⁸ Bruce Riedle, Saudi Arabia: Nervously Watching Pakistan, Brookings (January 2008), see at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2008/01/28-saudi-arabia-riedel>

In November 2009, contingent of Pakistan Army comprising of heavy mechanized Armour, infantry and artillery took off from Bahawalpur and reached Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to participate in a joint military exercise “Al-Samsaam-3” (Sharp sword) with Saudi Royal Land Forces (RSLF).

This exercise was a sequel to the series of joint military exercises, which are held regularly from time to time between the forces of both countries. The purpose of the exercise was, to enhance and improve coordination among the forces of both countries, with a view, to enhance combat efficiency and combat stability during joint operations against the whole spectrum of threats, posing both nations.

Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Heavy Industries Axial as well as Institute of Industrial Control System are playing a vital role in providing defense production facilities to Saudi Arabia. The leaders of both the countries decided to strengthen bilateral military cooperation and arrange joint military exercises on regular basis since 2004 (Al-Assam I – Al- Assam IV 2011).

A three-week long joint exercise (AL-SAMSAAM-IV-2011) between Pakistan Army and Royal Saudi Land Forces was held in September/ October 2011. AL-SAMSAAM-IV-2011 aimed at familiarizing and sharing of information through inclusive training program in real time. This also included collective training at unit and brigade level to observe drills and procedures in low intensity conflict operations.

Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoy close brotherly relations since their inception. This relationship has matured and strengthened further over the years and has long history of deep-rooted cooperation.⁹

Air Force

The air forces of the both nation have a long history of mutual cooperation that extends back to the early 60’s. Pakistan helped the Saudi Royale Air Force to build and pilot its first jet in early 1960’s. Being disappointed by the British policies of encouraging anti Saudi forces in Gulf in 1060’s, King Faisal refused to renew the Magic Carpet, an agreement between Saudi Arabia and UK for lightening and strike master aircrafts of Saudi Royale Air Force. The Air Force training and maintenance was given to Pakistan.¹⁰

Pakistani Air Force pilots flew the Saudi Aircrafts in 1969 to repel the Yemeni incursion into Saudi Arabian southern borders.¹¹ Former Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Rao

⁹ http://dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C10%5C15%5Cstory_15-10-2011_pg7_24

¹⁰ Tore T. Petersen, the Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East, 1961-1969: A Willing Retreat, Sussex Academic Press,(2006), P-122.

¹¹ Bruce Riedle, Saudi Arabia: Nervously Watching Pakistan, Brookings (January 2008), see at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2008/01/28-saudi-arabia-riedel>

Qamar Suleman personally visited Saudi Arabia on 15th December 2010 and flew one of F-16 aircraft of Pakistan Air Force during the Pak-Saudi Joint Air Exercises Al-Saqoor-II. These exercises were held between the air forces of two brotherly nations from January 2010.¹² Furthermore Pakistan Aeronautical Complex has sold its indigenously build Karakoram -8 (K-8) and Super Mushak to Saudi Arabia.¹³

Navy

The navies of both countries are the guarantee of maritime security in the Indian Ocean. Pakistani Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, speaking to reception on Pakistan's Navy ship PNS Zulfiqar that was on good-will visit to Saudi Arabia along with PNS SV Behr Paima and PNS/Sub Marine Hamza said that Relation between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are deeply rooted and are people centric and Saudi leadership "considers these relations beyond any limits."

Commander of Saudi Royal Navy Rear Adm. Khalid Hammadan, Consul General Abdul Salik Khan, consul general's of other countries, diplomats, dignitaries, media persons, officers of Saudi Navy and a large number of community members were present on the occasion. He further elaborated that relations between both countries are at institutional level and also are time tested. He said that every Pakistani considers "Security of Saudi Arabia as his personal matter." Referring to the recent visit of Pakistani Premier and his meeting with King Abdullah, the ambassador said that the leadership of both countries considers Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as one country.

In 2008, Seven Saudi naval ships took part in the joint naval exercise 'Naseem al Bahr' with Pakistan Navy. These exercises were ninth in series of Naseem al Bahr exercises, in which state of the art air and sea platforms took part along with Special Forces from two sides. The exercise was in the backdrop of changing security calculus and a paradigm shift in threat perception.¹⁴

The asymmetric threat, in the form of trans-national terrorist networks in the backdrop of fifth generation warfare operations poses a great challenge to the security of regional states. The quest for energy resources and influence over global commons has become basic tenet of major super powers. In this regard the area of Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea has come under the focus of regional and extra-regional powers. In this context this

¹² Joint Exercise Al-Saqoor II, Press Release by PAF, see at

<http://www.paf.gov.pk/news/uploaded/Exercise16012011.pdf>.

¹³ Pakistan Air Force, Andrew Brookes analyses the Pakistan Air Force which, with the lifting of a Western arms embargo, is in the process of modernisation. See at <http://www.defence.pk/pakistan-air-force/>

¹⁴ Pakistan Defense Forum, Saudi-Pak Joint Naval Exercises' January 2008, available at, <http://www.defence.pk/forums/pakistan-navy/86996-pns-babur-reached-saudi-arabia-naval-exercise.html>

exercise was quite significant and was according to the security contingencies of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

On November 10, 2009, Royal Saudi Naval Forces delegation led by Rear Admiral Faraj H Al-Rawdhan, Commander Royal Saudi Naval Forces School, alongwith 5 staff officers is on an official visit to Pakistan on the invitation of Pakistan Navy. Though the visit did not attract much media coverage, but remained significant because of enhancing collaboration between the navies of two brotherly states.¹⁵

In May 2012, Pakistani Naval Chief, Admiral Asif Sandela, paid a high level visit to Saudi Arabia on the invitation of Saudi Ministry of Defense. In meeting with Saudi Defense Minister, Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, the issues of mutual interest. Both high officials discussed and reviewed the existing bilateral cooperation between navies of both countries.

Admiral Sandela extended the greetings and good wishes of the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan as well as the Minister of Defense, which was warmly reciprocated by Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz. Saudi Defense Minister on this occasion talking about the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan said that “is the priority country for Saudi Arabia.”¹⁶

Meanwhile, in a simple yet impressive ceremony at the Ministry of Defence, Minister for Defence Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz conferred on Admiral Asif Sandela the award of King Abdulaziz Medal of Excellent Rank in recognition of his services for the promotion of closer cooperation and expansion of bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.¹⁷

Pak-Kuwait Defense Co-operation:

During the Gulf War, the Pakistani men had filled many prominent seats in Kuwaiti army especially in the technical fields. Officers from army, air force and navy provided their military expertise to the Kingdom.¹⁸ During this conflict Pakistan also sent its troops to join coalition

¹⁵ Royal Saudi Naval Forces delegation, November 2010, available at, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Pakistan+Navy+and+Royal+Saudi+Naval+Force+enjoy+close+and+mutually+...-a0211842860>

¹⁶ Sandela, Prince Salman review Pak-Saudi Naval ties, Pakistan Observer, May 1, 2012, available at, <http://pakobserver.net/201205/02/detailnews.asp?id=153245>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See Details at http://www.mongabay.com/history/kuwait/kuwait-organization_and_equipment_of_the_armed_forces.htmln

forces against Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Pakistani soldiers were deployed at sensitive and religious places all around the Saudi Arabia. After war Pakistani soldiers also took part in UN Mission for mine hunting operation in Kuwait.

Pakistan's defense cooperation with Kuwait dates back to 1968. It essentially covers military training and deputation of armed forces personnel. In August 1990, there were nearly 700 personnel from Pakistan armed forces in Kuwait. Well over 200 Kuwaiti armed forces personnel have been trained in the training institutions of Pakistan, as well. During February 2011, Pakistani President Zardari visited Kuwait and discussed with Sheikh Sabah the potential of cooperation in diverse fields for the mutual benefit of the two countries and their people. During this visit President Zardari called for institutionalizing defense cooperation training and military exchanges.¹⁹

Recently Pakistan's navy ship Alamgir has paid a goodwill visit to Kuwait. This visit was aimed at enhancing the naval cooperation between both brotherly nations.²⁰

Pak-Qatar Defense Co-operation:

During his visit to Qatar in November 2012, President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari expressed his satisfaction over the cooperation between two states in the fields of defense and security. He said that training of Qatari Armed Forces and deputation from the Pakistan Armed Forces to Qatari defense forces are central strands of this collaboration between both states.²¹ Defense cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in December 1983 and subsequently replaced by a Protocol in 1985.

During July 2010, Pakistan and Qatar signed two (MOUs) on Defense Cooperation. It was discussed that Qatar and Pakistan occupy strategically pivotal locations and being the extended neighborhood, their security narratives are intertwined. While underlining the need for more regular consultations on defense and security issues especially counter terrorism, counter narcotics and maritime security cooperation, Pakistan offered increase in training, technical manpower and military hardware support to Qatar Armed Forces, Emiri Guards and security enforcement agencies. Pakistan also invited investments and proposed joint ventures in defense industrial sectors. Qatar in response expressed keen desire in expansion and diversification of defense cooperation.²²

¹⁹ <http://dawn.com/2011/02/26/zardari-kuwait-amir-vow-to-boost-cooperation/>

²⁰ PNS Alamgir on Voyage to Kuwait, see at, <http://pafnp.blogspot.com/2013/01/pakistan-navy-ship-alamgir-will-visit.html>

²¹ Pakistan desirous of multifarious ties with Qatar: Zardari, The Nation, November 2012, see at <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/07-Nov-2012/zardari-dual-office-case-lhc-adjourns-hearing-to-nov-21>

²² Press Release by ISPR, July 2010, see at http://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&date=2010/7/2

Army

Due to the lack of sufficient human resource capacity, Qatari land forces are mostly composed of the recruits from the other countries. A large number of Pakistan army officers and soldiers are serving in Qatari combat units. Apart from the combat duties, officers from the Pakistan Army are also appointed on key advisory and technical seats. In Gulf war, the Qatari Tank Battalion which was deployed on Saudi-Iraqi borders was mostly composed of recruits from Pakistan Army. This battalion did a great job in repelling the Qatari forces back from the occupied town on Saudi Iraqi border.²³

Pakistan provides training facilities to Qataris in its military training establishments. Accordingly, during the past 10 years, about 120 Qataris have received military training. 23 retired Pakistani Defense officers (20 in Air Force and 3 in Navy) also are serving in Qatar.

In 2009, an agreement between Pakistan Armed Forces and Qatar defense establishment was signed to depute soldiers and officers from Pakistan Army to Qatari Amiri Guards. Through this agreement Pakistan will provide specialized officers, technicians and other persons from other military fields to serve in Amiri Guards.²⁴ Pakistan Ordnance Factory (POF) exported arms and ammunition worth US\$9 million between mid-70s to mid-2000.

Air Force

Cooperation in the building the Air Force of Qatar by Pakistan has been remained mainly in training and technical assistance. The serving officers from Pakistan Air Force have been deputed to Qatar to train and provide technical and advisory services to Qatar Air Force. While a significant number of Qatari Air Force officers and technicians have been trained and enlightened in Pakistani military institutions.

Navy

Naval cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar has been remained though limited but significant. Naval officers and technicians from Pakistan navy have been deputed to Qatar for mainly training, advisory and technical services. The Qatari naval officers have been trained in Pakistani naval training facilities.

²³ Qatari Amiri Land Force, Global Security, see at, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/gulf/qatar-army.htm>

²⁴ GHQ-Qatar Deal for Guards, see at <http://www.lahorerealestate.com/pakrealestatetimes/showthread.php?tid=6645>, also see at

Parallel to this Pakistan and Qatar in 2007 held joint naval exercises in which three main vessels; PNS Larkana, PNS Shujaat, PNS Kalamat and the submarine, PNS Saad participated in exercises. The exercises were aimed at enhancing mutual capabilities and skills at seas.²⁵

Pakistan has also participated in participation in Ferocious Falcon, a Multinational Crisis Management Exercise, held in Qatar in 2012. PNS Khaiber, which went to Qatar to participate in these multilateral exercises, was a gesture by Pakistan to enhance cooperation with Qatar in maritime matters.

Pakistan's Minister for Defense Naveed Qamar also attended the exercises on the invitation of COS Qatar Armed Forces Maj. General Hamad Bin Ali Al-Attiyah. The minister said that "participation in Ferocious Falcon, a Multinational Crisis Management Exercise is not only a significant leap for Pakistan but speaks volume of the all expanding Defense Industry."²⁶

Pak- Bahrain Defense Co-operation:

Military cooperation with Bahrain commenced in 1971, covering mainly the fields of military training and provision of deputations for the Bahrain Defense Forces. Pakistan Armed Forces personnel were sent on deputation to Bahrain after November 1977 under a Protocol Agreement. However, at present there are no deputationists in Bahrain mainly due to employment of retired Pakistan Armed Forces personnel on contract basis by Bahrain Defense Forces (BDF).

Defense cooperation with Bahrain has been institutionalized in the form of Joint Program Review Group (JPRG) formed in 1985 which holds its meetings every year alternately in Pakistan and Bahrain. Many Pakistanis along with other foreigners serve in Bahrain's police, National Guard and armed forces.

Bahrain saw large scale protests recently against ruling dynasty. Government needed more man power to control the situation. GCC under the leadership of Saudi Arabia sent about 4000 soldiers to Bahrain. Bahrain's foreign minister Khalid Bin Ahmed al Khalifa visited Islamabad in March 2011 and Commander of Bahrain's National Guards.

²⁵ Qatar, Pakistan Stage Naval Exercise, see at <http://www.defence.pk/forums/pakistan-navy/3891-qatar-pakistan-stage-naval-exercise.html>

²⁶ Defence exercise starts in Qatar, see at <http://www.defence.pk/forums/pakistan-navy/219980-defence-exercise-starts-qatar.html>

Lieutenant General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman al-Khalifa visited Pakistan in December 2010 and June 2011. In his 2010 visit he called on the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari in Presidency, in Islamabad. Matters related to the evolving geopolitical changes and bilateral relations were discussed during the meeting. President Zardari emphasized on the need to enhance the defense ties along with labor and manpower.

Prior to this meeting the General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman al-Khalifa also met with the Prime Minister Syed Yousef Raza Gilani in Prime Minister House. Prime minister of Gilani said at the occasion that Pakistan “attached great importance to its fraternal and cordial ties with the Kingdom of Bahrain and he is looking forward to his official visit to Bahrain in the first quarter of 2011 to add new impetus to the political, defense, economic, labor and manpower cooperation.”²⁷ The current Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf in his visit to kingdom also desired to enhance and strengthen defense ties with Bahrain.²⁸

Army

Commander National Guards of Bahrain Muhammad Bin Esa-ul-Khalifa visited Pakistan in 2007. In his meeting with the then President General Pervez Musharraf, he said; “Enhancement in defense and military sectors between Pakistan and Bahrain would further strengthen the relations.”²⁹ He was of the view that Pakistan army fulfills all the international standards of capabilities, skills, development and production and Bahrain is taking interest to obtain defense equipments from Pakistan, as they are akin to international standards.³⁰

Following this visit a delegation of Pakistan defense officials, including the secretary of Ministry of Defense visited Bahrain in January 2008. During this visit delegation held meetings with top brass of Bahraini defense forces, including minister of state for

²⁷ President, PM for enhancing ties with Bahrain, The News (December 10, 2012), see at,

<http://old.thenews.com.pk/03-12-2010/National/18553.htm>

²⁸ Pakistan keen to strengthen relations with Bahrain: Raja Pervez Ashraf, Associated Press of Pakistan (October 2010), see at http://app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=211999&Itemid=2

²⁹ Pakistan keen to promote defence relations with Bahrain, (June 2007), see at;

<http://www.defence.pk/forums/strategic-geopolitical-issues/5104-pakistan-promote-defence-relations-bahrain.html#ixzz2ly455QWk>

³⁰ Pakistan keen to promote defence relations with Bahrain: Musharraf, Pak Tribune, (June 2007), see at, <http://www.paktribune.com/news/print.php?id=177214>

Defense Affairs, Chiefs of Staff, and Bahraini National Guard Commander. Both sides agreed on enhancing military ties.³¹

Military cooperation between Pakistan and Bahrain dates back to 1950's and 60's. Till now almost 10000 military personals from various fields have or have been serving in Bahrain Defense Forces. A battalion of Azad Kashmir Regiment was deployed in Bahrain to train the local troops of Bahraini Defense Forces. Moreover significant numbers of military officers from Bahrain have been trained in Pakistani military institutions.³²

Air Force

In October 2012 Pakistan Air Force participated in the in a huge air maneuver in Bahrain. US, Arab Allies and Pakistan experienced the biggest air combat drills experience since 1988. The exercises were aimed at enhancing the security and stability in the Gulf. Technically the drills were aimed at enhancing the competence of pilots and technicians in air force.

Pakistan Air Force has a history of cooperation with the Bahraini Royale Air Force. Officers and technicians from Pakistan Air Force have been deputed to Bahrain to train the Royal Air Force recruits. Moreover the military training facilities Pakistan have been hosting a significant number of Bahraini Air Force and technicians for training purposes.

Navy

Pakistan had helped Pakistan to set up its naval force. A large number of naval officers and technical staff have been deputed to train the Bahraini Naval Force. Initially the top brass of Bahraini navy comprised of officers from Pakistan navy. The naval cooperation has been remained central to the strategic relations between two brotherly nations. The naval cooperation between both states aims at maintaining the legitimate naval order in the northern Indian Ocean region.

Multiple high level visits from the navies of both nations have been carried out to further strengthen the naval ties. Deputy Chief of Naval Staff for Operations of Pakistan Navy

³¹ Pakistan, Bahrain Defense Forces Strengthen Relations, America's Navy, (January 2008), http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=34341

³² Saba Imtiaz, Ex-servicemen 'export' mercenaries to the Middle East, Express Tribune, (March 2011), see at, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/131455/ex-servicemen-export-mercenaries-to-the-middle-east/>; also see Miranda Hussain, Bahrain or Bust, News Week, (April 2011), see at; <http://www.newsweekpakistan.com/the-take/287>

along with his delegation paid a visit to Kingdom. In his meeting with Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defense³³ Force (BDF) Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa he discussed the ways of bolstering naval cooperation, as well as the matters of mutual concerns.

Pak- Oman Defense Co-operation:

Pakistan and Oman share a history of deep cultural and security ties, which are bound with the geographical proximity. Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yousef Raza Gilani visited Oman in 2010. In his meeting with the Sultan Qaboos, the Prime Minister Gilani agreed with his counterpart to increase and augment the defense ties between two brotherly states. Both agreed on enhancing the defence cooperation between the armed forces, defense procurement, joint exercises, training and exchange of defence delegations.³⁴

Army

The main feature of our military cooperation with Oman has been deputation of our Armed Forces personnel to the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF). Around 212 Omani officials have been trained in the various military training institutions in Pakistan since 1993. POF has sold various types of armaments and ammunition to Oman from 1972 to 1994 in small quantities.

However, a declining trend was noticed thereafter. Traditionally, Oman recruits from specific Baluch communities to man its state security forces. This is not new and the practice goes back to several decades. Pakistan is not the sole source of manpower for security services but citizens of a number of other countries also serve in Omani security forces.

The Southern Regiment of Omani Army mainly consists of the recruits from Pakistani Baluch community. According to Halliday, the Omani Armed Forces are, to large extent, composed of Pakistani Baluch.³⁵ Oman was facing a rebellion in southern region in 1960s and 70s. In 1960s, two Southern Regiments consisting of Baluchis were raised. In

³³ Pakistan-Bahrain defense co-operation discussed, Bahrain News Agency, see at;

<http://www.twentyfoursevennews.com/bahrain-news/pakistan-bahrain-defence-co-operation-discussed/>

³⁴ Pakistan, Oman vow to boost economic, defence relations, Pak Tribune, (December 2010), see at,

<http://web.archive.org/web/20110715035925/http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?234853>

³⁵ Fred Halliday, Arabia without sultans: a political survey of instability in the Arab world, Arabia without sultans: Vintage Books, 1975, P-360.

1971, a Frontier Force battalion consisting of Baluchis was also raised. A Pak-Oman Joint Programmer Review Group (JPRG) was formed in 1985. This is a formal forum to hold meetings regularly in Pakistan and Oman once every two years.

Air Force

The cooperation between Pakistan and Oman in Air Force remained limited in the spheres of training and small defense equipment procurements. To this day Pakistan has sold eight PAC Super MFI-17 Mushshaks to Oman. The officers from Pakistan Air Force Have been deputed to Oman to train and provide technical and procedural assistance to Omani Royal Air Force.

In August 2007, the Air vice Marshal (AVM) Yahya bin Rasheed bin Rashid al Juma'ah, Oman's Royal Air Force Commander visited Pakistan. He held multiple meetings with the top brass of Pakistan Air force and officials from Ministry of Defense. He was briefed at Air Headquarters in Islamabad about the organizational structure of the Pakistan Air Force. After that he was awarded with Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) by the Federal Minister of Defense Rao Sikander on the behalf of President of Pakistan.³⁶

Navy

Pakistan Navy and Omani Royal Navy have been in close collaboration since 1950's. Both share common objectives in the domain of maritime security. Both have conducted joint exercises multiple times to enhance operational coordination and naval combat skills. Pakistan has signed Maritime Boundaries Agreement with Oman in 2000.³⁷

In 2008 Pakistan Navy and Royal Omani Navy held joint naval exercises in the northern Indian Ocean. The exercises were aimed at enhancing the technical coordination during maritime operations The Royal Oman Navy's surface ships Dhofar and Albatnah are participating in the exercise.³⁸

Former Pakistani Naval Chief Admiral Noman Bashir visited Oman in 2010. He met with Oman's Defence Minister Sayyid Badr Bin Saud Al Busaidi and discussed possibilities of cooperation between the Royal Navy of Oman and the Pakistani Navy.³⁹

³⁶ Commander Royal Air Force of Oman visits Air Headquarters, Associated Press of Pakistan, August 2007, see at; http://www.app.com.pk/en/_index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15495

³⁷ Available at; www.jag.navy.mil/organization/documents/mcrm/pakistan.pdf

³⁸ Pak-Oman Joint Naval Exercises, See at; <http://www.defence.pk/forums/pakistan-navy/17904-pakistan-oman-hold-joint-naval-exercise.html#ixzz2J4VZXt85>

³⁹ Pakistan Naval Chief in Oman, Pakistan Military Review, see at; <http://pakmr.blogspot.com/2011/05/pakistani-naval-chief-admiral-numan.html#ixzz2J4WZR9mo>

In a reciprocal response the Commander of Royal Navy of Oman Rear Admiral Abdullah Bin Khamis Bin Abdullah Al Raisi, Commander Royal Navy of Oman, accompanied by his personal staff officers visited Pakistan. In his meeting with the Pakistani Naval Chief Admiral Noman Bashir, he discussed the possibilities of cooperation with Pakistan Navy in terms of training and manpower.⁴⁰

In January 2011, Pakistan Navy ships Shamsheer, Quwwat, Jalalat and submarine Khalid visited Oman to participate in Joint naval exercises with Omani Royal Navy. Commodore Farrokh of Pakistan Navy said at the occasion that "In fact, the naval forces are the true ambassadors of their country. Nearly 700 of the Pakistan Navy crew are involved in the exercise this year. This exercise takes place annually in Pakistan and Oman."⁴¹ F-16 from the Oman Air Force and gunship helicopters from Pakistan Navy also participated in the exercise.

Conclusion

The Gulf today is establishing its role as a unified powerful regional bloc and Pakistan stands as a strong, trusted and credible support with most cordial and brotherly relations based on the aspiration and sentiments of their peoples, shared history, religion and cultural affinities.

⁴⁰ Commander Royal Navy of Oman in Pakistan, The News International, (June 2011), see at; <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-53662-Commander-Royal-Navy-of-Oman-in-Pakistan>

⁴¹ : Oman, Pakistan Navy seek partnerships , see at; <http://www.defence.pk/forums/world-affairs/88802-oman-pakistan-navy-seek-partnerships.html#ixzz2J4a5qpJp>