

Reconstituting Sovereignty: Strategic Realignments and Connectivity in a Fractured World

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Amid great-power competition and more intricate global interdependence, sovereignty is increasingly practised as a security function performed through calibrated alignments that protect territorial integrity, diplomatic agency, and economic resilience. This article synthesizes structural realism and securitization theory to argue that sovereign robustness today hinges on the collective safeguarding of non-traditional domains – trade, energy, transport, and data – alongside classic defence concerns. The dynamics are especially visible in Southwest and Central Asia, where states advance multi-vector strategies that emphasize non-interference, sovereign equality, and pragmatic connectivity. Using Pakistan as a focal case, the analysis shows how corridor development (e.g. the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), regional platforms (e.g. the Shanghai Cooperation Organization), and logistics innovations (e.g. National Logistics Cell’s feeder shipping and Gulf-Central Asia cargo services) can translate geo-economics into ‘connectivity security’ without contravening regional red lines. The article concludes that sustainable sovereignty in Eurasia’s interior increasingly rests on a cooperative securitization of connectivity, treating shared infrastructure as stabilizing public goods rather than zero-sum prerogatives.

Keywords: securitization, Central Asia, Pakistan, CPEC, geopolitics.



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Introduction

The Westphalian model of sovereignty, grounded in the principles of territorial integrity and non-interference within internationally recognized borders, has long provided the foundation of the international system. For centuries, this legal-bureaucratic conception of sovereignty served as the primary metric of statehood and legitimacy. Yet, the unipolar moment that followed the Cold War, characterized by U.S. predominance and the liberal international order, is now giving way to a more plural, complex, and interdependent global environment.

This evolving order is not simply a return to the balance-of-power politics of the 19th century. Rather, it is shaped by the ascent of non-Western powers, the growing influence of non-state actors such as multinational corporations (MNC), and the emergence of new, non-physical domains of contestation, including energy flows and critical logistics networks.

This article argues that such structural shifts are actively reconstituting the very nature of sovereignty. Sovereignty today is no longer merely a legal status to be recognized, but a dynamic security condition to be continuously safeguarded and performed. In the contemporary age, sovereignty is increasingly manifested as a security construct, where the traditional guarantees of international law require reinforcement in the face of hybrid threats, economic coercion, and systemic vulnerabilities. In the absence of such reinforcement, states are compelled to pursue strategic realignments, strengthen resilience, and diversify connectivity to secure what they define as their core sovereign interests: territorial integrity, regime stability, and economic survival.

Accordingly, this study asks the key research question: “*How is sovereignty being reconstituted as a security construct within a fractured world order, and enabled by the use of multi-vector foreign policy and logistics innovations to navigate great power competition?*”

To address this question, the study employs a theoretical framework that synthesizes structural realism and securitization theory. Realism provides a macro-level understanding of how states, as rational actors in an environment of limited central authority, behave under the structural pressures of a shifting power distribution.¹ Securitization theory, developed by the Copenhagen School,² offers a micro-level perspective

1 K. N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

2 B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*

on how certain issues are elevated from ordinary politics to existential concerns, thereby legitimizing extraordinary measures. Bringing these two perspectives together reveals how systemic pressures associated with multipolarity drive states to ‘securitize’ an expanding array of domains, including trade corridors and digital infrastructure, thereby producing a reconstituted, security-centric practice of sovereignty.

This article is structured as follows. The first section outlines the theoretical framework, integrating structural realism and securitization theory to conceptualize sovereignty as a dynamic and securitized practice. The second section examines the geopolitical imperatives of great-power rivalry in South and Central Asia, providing the contextual foundation for this reconstitution. The third section presents Pakistan as a case study, illustrating how its multi-vector foreign policy and connectivity initiatives operationalize this evolved notion of sovereignty. The final section concludes by synthesizing the findings and proposing a shift toward the collective securitization of connectivity as a pathway to sustainable and shared sovereignty.

Theoretical Framework: Sovereignty as a Securitized Practice in an Anarchic System

The classical realist tradition, from Hans Morgenthau to Kenneth Waltz, viewed the international system as inherently anarchic, lacking a central governing authority. In this environment of limited central authority, states remain the primary actors, and their paramount goal is survival, achieved through the accumulation and prudent exercise of power.³

Sovereignty, within this framework, is understood as the institutional expression of a state’s autonomy inside its borders and its capacity to resist external coercion. The transition from a unipolar to a multipolar order has sharpened this condition of uncertainty, echoing Waltz’s observation that “as the number of great powers decreases, the system becomes simpler and the relations of the remaining powers become more intimate and intense.”⁴ In a multipolar world with several power centres – the U.S.-led West (including the UK and the European Union), China, and Russia – strategic alignments are less predictable, alliances

(Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

3 J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

4 Waltz, K. N., *op.cit.* p. 131.

A state today is sovereign not merely because its borders are internationally recognized, but because it can safeguard digital frontiers, secure economic and energy flows, protect logistics and connectivity chains, and maintain internal stability against hybrid disruptions.

are more fluid, and the security dilemma for both large and small states is intensified.

This systemic pressure creates fertile ground for the process of securitization. According to the Copenhagen School, securitization theory holds that security is not an objective fact but a speech act: “by labelling something a security issue, the ‘securitizing actor’ claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means.”⁵ An issue becomes securitized when authoritative actors successfully frame it as an existential challenge to a chosen referent object (such as the state, the economy, or societal cohesion), thereby legitimizing exceptional measures beyond routine political procedures.

The synthesis of realism and securitization theory offers a powerful lens for analysing sovereignty today. The structural uncertainty of a multipolar environment compels states to securitize a widening range of concerns. Where sovereignty was once primarily threatened by military invasion, it is now perceived as vulnerable to diverse non-traditional risks: cyber intrusions into critical infrastructure, disinformation campaigns enabled by artificial intelligence, disruptions of global supply chains, and economic dependencies that can be weaponized through sanctions. Hybrid threats increasingly blur the boundary between war and peace, challenging states to defend sovereignty across multiple domains simultaneously.

In this environment, sovereignty is transformed from a static legal condition into a dynamic, performative practice of securitization. A state today is sovereign not merely because its borders are internationally recognized, but because it can safeguard digital frontiers, secure economic and energy flows, protect logistics and connectivity chains, and maintain internal stability against hybrid disruptions. This performance requires continuous investment, strategic partnerships, and diversified connectivity to reduce vulnerabilities. The failure to sustain such practices risks rendering legal sovereignty hollow, particularly as the Westphalian model is increasingly tested by rising ‘interdependence and vulnerability’ that transcend territorial boundaries.⁶ The modern state must therefore securitize not only its traditional defence capabilities

⁵ Buzan et al., *op.cit.* p. 26.

⁶ D. Deudney, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 22.

but also its logistics, trade, and communication domains in order to reconstitute sovereign authority in meaningful and durable ways. This theoretical synthesis therefore provides the analytical lens through which this study will examine Pakistan's strategic realignments and connectivity initiatives as performances of reconstituted sovereignty.

Geopolitical Imperatives: Great Power Rivalry and its Repercussions in South and Central Asia

The strategic interaction among the U.S.-led West, China, and Russia is not a distant phenomenon; it is the dominant structural factor reshaping the environment in which South and Central Asian states operate. This rivalry compels regional governments to navigate a highly complex landscape, where economic partnerships, security arrangements, and infrastructure development acquire heightened significance given the region's pivotal role as a trade and energy hub.

The U.S. National Security Strategy explicitly identifies Central Asia as a region where the U.S. will “continue to support ... independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.” The U.S. pledged to “foster efforts to enhance resilience and democratic development in the five countries in this region. We will continue to work through the C5+1 diplomatic platform (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and the United States) to advance climate adaptation, improve regional energy and food security, enhance integration within the region, and build greater connectivity to global markets.”⁷ This partnership thus seeks to comprehensively cover strategic areas, including security, counterterrorism, economic connectivity, trade (e.g. B5+1 initiatives), energy, infrastructure, critical minerals, governance, civil society, and regional sovereignty.

Similarly, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy⁸ is defined for the Asia Pacific region, of which South Asia is a subset. Initiatives such as the ‘Indo-Pacific Framework’⁹ seek to strengthen partnerships with key regional

7 The White House, “National Security Strategy”, October 12, 2022, Available at: <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

8 Historical Office of the Secretary of Defense, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America December 2017”, Available at: <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

9 U.S. Department of State, “Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)”, Available at: <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/agreements-under-negotiation/indo-pacific-economic-framework-prosperity-ipef> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

actors while maintaining influence across critical and emerging technologies. Other initiatives, such as the India–U.S. Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET),¹⁰ illustrate this approach by forging closer technological and defence ties with India. Sanctions regimes, including the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA),¹¹ create compliance dilemmas for states such as Pakistan and Central Asian countries that pursue cooperation with Russia. These pressures do not eliminate sovereign choice, but they complicate it. As U.S. International Trade Administration data show, U.S. trade with India reached over US\$128 billion in 2022, while trade with Pakistan stood at around US\$6.5 billion, reflecting the divergent strategic priorities.¹²

On the other hand, China and Russia have consolidated their influence through institutional and project-based mechanisms. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),¹³ co-led by official Beijing and Moscow, provides a platform that emphasizes sovereign equality, non-interference, and mutual security principles that resonate with many Eurasian states wary of conditionalities. China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)¹⁴ as its flagship, represents a major securitization of economic statecraft. BRI investments are estimated at US\$575 billion for ‘corridor economies’¹⁵ and approximately US\$124 billion for Central Asia. Much of this is directed toward manufacturing, information and communication technology (ICT), renewable energy, trade-enabling infrastructure, and

10 Bajpae, C. and Bhandari, K. “The U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 23, 2024, Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/the-us-india-initiative-on-critical-and-emerging-technology-icet-from-2022-to-2025-assessment-learnings-and-the-way-forward?lang=en> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

11 U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act-Related Sanctions”, August 2, 2017, Available at: <https://ofac.treasury.gov/sanctions-programs-and-country-information/countering-americas-adversaries-through-sanctions-act-related-sanctions> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

12 Office of the United States Trade Representative, “India Trade Summary”, Available at: <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/south-central-asia/india> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

13 The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Homepage, Available at: <https://eng.sectsc.org/> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

14 Ministry of Planning, Development, & Special Initiatives, “CPEC Secretariat”, Available at: <https://cpec.gov.pk/> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

15 World Bank Group, “Belt and Road Initiative”, Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

strategic projects that are reshaping the region's economic geography. Russia, meanwhile, remains a cornerstone of regional energy security through projects such as the 'Power of Siberia' pipeline, economic linkages through Russia's Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), and security guarantees via frameworks such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO).

This competition represents the core structural pressure that informs the central research question of this study: how sovereignty can be reconstituted as a security construct, enabled by multi-vector foreign policies, to navigate external competition.

For South and Central Asia, this rivalry creates both opportunities and vulnerabilities. On the one hand, it provides strategic space for multi-vector diplomacy, allowing countries to diversify partnerships and extract concessions. On the other hand, it requires careful calibration to avoid provoking major powers. The region has thus become a critical arena where the management of trade routes, energy flows, and strategic alignments is securitized.

In this environment, connectivity projects are rarely perceived as purely economic. A railway or pipeline increasingly carries geopolitical weight, symbolizing alignment and trust. This compels regional states to 'perform' sovereignty through deliberate balancing and hedging, showing that, in a multipolar order, sovereign agency is not exercised through isolation but through the adept management of external pressures. The experience of South and Central Asia therefore illustrates how great-power competition compels sovereignty to be reconstituted as a continuous, adaptive practice grounded in strategic flexibility.

Case Study: Multi-Vector Foreign Policy of Regional Connectivity as Sovereign Strategy

As discussed earlier, the theoretical dynamics of reconstituted sovereignty, articulated through the combined lens of realism and securitization, are vividly demonstrated in South and Central Asia. This region functions as a microcosm of the multipolar world, where the interests of the U.S.-led West intersect and overlap with those of China and Russia. This section substantiates the research enquiry by offering a case study of Pakistan, which is ideally situated at the confluence of South and Central Asia.

For a pivotal middle power such as Pakistan, navigating this landscape requires a foreign policy that elevates diplomatic and economic connectivity as central instruments of sovereign practice. Pakistan's approach reflects the core argument of this study: sovereignty is no longer a passive condition but an active security construct, safeguarded through the securitization of domains such as communication, energy, and logistics.

For post-colonial states like Pakistan, sovereignty is a dynamic process that requires shielding the state from both internal vulnerabilities and external pressures, where economic viability is as critical as military security. Over time, Pakistan's strategy has evolved from reactive balancing into a proactive endeavour that leverages its geographic position as a conduit for trade and energy. In doing so, it transforms sovereignty into a dynamic performance of connectivity-driven security embedded in international law and regional norms of non-interference.

Historically, Pakistan's regional posture was shaped by its eastern frontier. Yet a critical juncture was reached in May 2025, when a brief but intense four-day confrontation with India catalysed recalibration of Pakistan's deterrence posture and external relations. The episode functioned as a securitizing moment: Pakistan's defensive capabilities, paired with strategic restraint that facilitated an internationally mediated ceasefire, reinforced perceptions of the country as a responsible actor whose stability was essential for regional order.

The process also corresponds with the Copenhagen School's framework, whereby crises are utilized to justify policy shifts. In Washington, the event prompted a reassessment of South Asia strategy after decades of India-centrism. High-level dialogue with Pakistan was revived, centred on counterterrorism and economic cooperation.¹⁶ The U.S. also indicated renewed interest in intelligence sharing, operational coordination, and selected security assistance – pillars of modern sovereignty – with Pakistan. The post-2025 détente thus widened Islamabad's diplomatic space.

Pakistan has used this space to accelerate its core foreign-policy priority: becoming a hub of regional connectivity. The CPEC remains the cornerstone, consistently securitized in official discourse as not only

16 Naveed Atif, "Resetting the Arc: The Strategic Reawakening of U.S.-Pakistan Relations in 2025", *Modern Diplomacy*, August 16, 2025, Available at: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2025/08/16/resetting-the-arc-the-strategic-reawakening-of-u-s-pakistan-relations-in-2025/> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

an economic initiative but also a vital component of national resilience. By linking infrastructure development to regime security and territorial integrity, CPEC has been elevated beyond routine politics into the realm of high national security. This securitization of development underscores how Pakistan frames sovereignty as strengthened not by isolation but by becoming indispensable to regional economic security.

Crucially, this vision now extends to vigorous outreach toward Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Pakistan offers continental Central Asian states sovereign-controlled access options to maritime outlets for global trade. Beyond seaports, opportunities exist in transport, logistics, agriculture, ICT, education, culture, tourism, and people-to-people exchanges. Specific seaport opportunities include container handling, logistics services, off-dock terminals, free-trade zones, and other port facilities under the CPEC.¹⁷

Moreover, several transformative initiatives include the:¹⁸

- Uzbekistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan (UAP) Railway Project: a proposed 640-kilometre line linking Termez (Uzbekistan) with Hairatan and Kabul (Afghanistan) before entering Pakistan’s Kurram district. A Framework Agreement on its Joint Feasibility Study in July 2025 in Kabul formalized the initial steps.
- Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) Pipeline: designed to bring Turkmen gas to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and onward to India;
- CASA-1000 Power Project: exporting surplus hydropower from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan;¹⁹
- Lapis Lazuli Corridor: a multimodal transit route connecting Afghanistan to Türkiye via Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, where Pakistan stands to benefit through enhanced access to the Caucasus;

17 Arab News, *Pakistan Seeks Overland Access to Central Asia, Europe*, September 9, 2025, Available at: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2614639/pakistan> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

18 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, “Central Asia”, Available at: <https://mofa.gov.pk/central-asia> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

19 Modern Diplomacy, *Regional Connectivity: Tajikistan’s Race to Finish CASA-1000 by 2026*, June 14, 2025, Available at: <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2025/06/14/regional-connectivity-tajikistans-race-to-finish-casa-1000-by-2026/> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

- Preferential Trade Agreements (PTA): one signed with Azerbaijan and another under negotiation with Kazakhstan; and
- Trans-Afghan Railway Project: a broader vision to integrate Central Asian and Pakistani rail systems, overlapping with the UAP railway concept.

Within this framework, the National Logistics Cell (NLC), a state-owned enterprise, has emerged as a key state instrument of connectivity securitization. By launching Pakistan's first containerized shipping service to Gulf ports in 2025 and delivering the first UAE–Tajikistan commercial cargo via Karachi the same year, NLC operationalized multimodal corridors that demonstrate resilience and reliability.²⁰ Its launch of shipping services is significant because it shows that the state directly involves itself in securing logistics chains. These initiatives complement rather than replace other connectivity vectors through Iran, the Caspian, or the South Caucasus, respecting each state's sovereign choices. They also highlight how logistics facilitation itself has become securitized as a sovereign capability.

These steps collectively seek to unlock access to energy resources and new markets, diversify dependencies, and reduce vulnerability to coercion – a realist imperative of maximizing autonomy and embedding sovereignty in economic resilience.

Furthermore, Pakistan's participation in the SCO has also become strategically pivotal. Since becoming a full member in 2017, Islamabad has emphasized counterterrorism and connectivity. SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) has enabled Pakistan to contribute extensive counter-extremism experience while benefiting from intelligence-sharing and joint exercises with Central Asian and Russian counterparts. According to SCO Secretariat reports, Pakistan has attended major RATS meetings and participated in 'Peace Mission' exercises, thereby improving interoperability with partner forces.

Economically, the SCO provides a vehicle for advancing Pakistan's geo-economic vision, particularly in harmonizing CPEC with initiatives such as Russia's Eurasian Economic Union. Trade with the SCO member states rose from US\$12.8 billion in 2018 to over US\$18.5 billion in 2023, nearly 35% of Pakistan's global trade. At

²⁰ Arab News, *New Feeder Service Launched between Dubai and Karachi to Strengthen Trade Ties*, January 17, 2025, Available at: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2586791/pakistan> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

the 2024 Astana Summit, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif emphasized the country's strategic geographical positioning as an ideal trade and transit hub for the entire SCO region,²¹ linking South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. This is being operationalized through projects like the UAP Railway, which secured the SCO's endorsement. Pakistan's deepening energy partnerships, such as the proposed Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline with Russia and energy cooperation with Kyrgyzstan²² and Tajikistan,²³ further underscore its use of the SCO platforms to diversify energy sources and strengthen sovereignty.

For states, great-power rivalry presents both opportunities and risks. On the one hand, it enables multi-vector bargaining and diversification. On the other, it requires careful calibration to avoid provoking major powers.

Thus, Pakistan's contemporary diplomacy represents a sophisticated performance of reconstituted sovereignty through a focus on: deepening ties with China, Russia, and Central Asia through initiatives such as CPEC; managing a renewed U.S. partnership by engaging on technology and counterterrorism and economic cooperation; pivoting to Central Asia and the South Caucasus, thereby transforming from a peripheral state to a central connectivity node; and maintaining a credible deterrent capability, as reaffirmed during the May 2025 conflict between Pakistan and India, which provides the essential security foundation upon which connective strategies are built.

Despite the challenges, Pakistan's experience demonstrates that sovereignty in the multipolar age increasingly depends on a state's ability to integrate into overlapping economic and technological ecosystems. By positioning itself as a bridge between South Asia, Central Asia, and beyond, Pakistan aims to embed its security and prosperity within a wider community. This case study illustrates the theoretical shift from zero-sum contestation toward a collective securitization of connectivity, which will be explored in the conclusion.

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21 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Participation of the Prime Minister of Pakistan in the Summit of the SCO Heads of State in Astana", July 4, 2024, Available at: <https://mofa.gov.pk/press-releases/participation-of-the-prime-minister-of-pakistan-in-the-summit-of-the-sco-heads-of-state-in-astana> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

22 Daryo, *Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan Sign Agreements*, July 29, 2025, Available at: <https://daryo.uz/en/2025/07/29/kyrgyzstan-pakistan-sign-agreements-to-strengthen-trade-energy-and-investment-cooperation/> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

23 GulfNews, *Pakistan and Tajikistan Agree to Develop Energy and Corridors*, December 15, 2022, Available at: <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/pakistan-and-tajikistan-agree-to-develop-energy-and-corridors-1.92719135> (Accessed: November 22, 2025)

the one hand, it enables multi-vector bargaining and diversification. On the other, it requires careful calibration to avoid provoking major powers. Connectivity projects, such as railways, pipelines, and ports, thus acquire a securitized dimension, requiring deliberate sovereign management.

Toward a Collective Securitization of Connectivity

The transition to a complex multipolar order is not a temporary disturbance but a defining feature of the 21st-century international landscape. This article has argued that such structural change is fundamentally reconstituting the meaning and practice of sovereignty. Moving beyond the Westphalian model of legal recognition, sovereignty today emerges as a performative security construct. States are compelled to safeguard their autonomy and integrity not only against conventional threats but also against a spectrum of hybrid risks. This reconstitution is driven by systemic pressures that incentivize the securitization of ever-wider spheres of policy, ranging from digital infrastructure to logistics chains and energy flows.

The case of Pakistan illustrates how middle powers are adapting to these realities. Through multi-vector diplomacy, participation in cooperative platforms such as the SCO, and strategic partnerships including CPEC, Pakistan has sought to cultivate economic and technological resilience as essential components of sovereignty. This trajectory is not without risks – it may generate new dependencies or sharpen regional dilemmas – but investment in connectivity has consistently proven to be a stabilizing strategy. The operational role of Pakistan’s NLC in inaugurating new maritime and overland trade routes to Central Asia exemplifies how logistics securitization is now part of sovereign performance, strengthening resilience while broadening regional options.

The persistence of a zero-sum paradigm, dominated by realpolitik and great power competition, risks fragmenting global systems into rival blocs of technology, infrastructure, and influence. Such fragmentation could exacerbate instability rather than mitigate it. Therefore, this analysis points toward a necessary, though challenging, paradigm shift: the long-term sustainability of sovereignty in a deeply interdependent world may depend less on solitary securitization of infrastructure, and more on a collective securitization of connectivity. This entails reframing shared assets – from undersea cables and data flows to power grids, rail corridors, and port systems – not as vulnerabilities

to be cordoned off, but as common goods whose security is vital to all stakeholders. Instead of pursuing digital or infrastructural autarky, states could work toward international norms and cooperative mechanisms that protect connectivity.

Rather than treating corridors like CPEC, the Middle Corridor, or U.S.-led initiatives as exclusive spheres of influence, major powers and regional actors could collaborate to ensure stability, transparency, and openness, thus reinforcing sovereignty through inclusivity rather than exclusion. In this mindset, the true existential threat is not the ascent of a rival power but the collective collapse of interconnected systems upon which prosperity and security depend.

This is not a call for idealism over realism, but for a more nuanced recognition that, because of profound interdependence, rational security policy may eventually necessitate cooperative practices. The COVID-19 pandemic and the looming climate crisis illustrate that many threats transcend borders and cannot be managed unilaterally. The ultimate reconstitution of sovereignty may therefore rest on its evolution from a doctrine of solitary defence toward a foundation for collaborative action.

In an era when a cyberattack can cripple supply lines or a single disruption can paralyse regional trade, the most resilient sovereignty is perhaps the one most securely connected, both technologically and logistically, to its peers. The multipolar world will test whether states can embrace this lesson, building a cooperative architecture of connectivity securitization before today's fractures deepen into irreparable divides.

Conclusion

This study set out to answer the research question: *“How is sovereignty being reconstituted as a security construct within a fractured world order, and enabled by the use of multi-vector foreign policy and logistics innovations to navigate great-power competition?”*

It examines how sovereignty is being reconstituted as a security construct within a fractured world order, enabled by multi-vector foreign policy and logistics innovations. The findings, grounded in a synthesis of structural realism and securitization theory, confirm that sovereignty is no longer a static legal condition but a dynamic performance, securing the state across an expanding range of domains.

The analysis of Pakistan's strategy provides a compelling case in point. Faced with the structural pressures of great-power competition, Pakistan has actively securitized economic connectivity and logistics through initiatives such as CPEC and the NLC's shipping services. By framing these projects as vital to national resilience and territorial integrity, Pakistan performs its sovereignty by becoming an indispensable connectivity hub, thereby diversifying dependencies and strengthening its diplomatic agency. Its participation in the SCO further illustrates this performative aspect, enabling it to engage in collective security and economic cooperation while adhering to principles of non-interference.

In answer to the central research question, the article concludes that, in a multipolar age, sovereign robustness is increasingly a function of a state's ability to integrate into and secure the connective tissue of the global order, treating shared infrastructure as a stabilizing public good rather than a zero-sum prerogative. The ultimate safeguard of sovereignty may thus lie not in isolation, but in a state's strategically managed and securely embedded position within regional and global networks.