

## Chinese Interests in Pakistan: A Study in Regional Perspective

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Vol. III, No. I (2018)

Pages: 1 – 8

DOI: 10.31703/gmsr.2018(III-I).01

**Abstract** *The present study is an effort to analyze the mode and intensity of Chinese interests in Pakistan. By examining the policy of pursuit in finding another market in the region, the study aims to understand the current warmth of the relationship between China and Pakistan. Although maintaining a perpetually friendly relationship with China has always been a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, yet strengthening this relationship into a structured partnership remained a gradual process in the light of their mutual interests. In the politics of international relations, the relationship between countries is a complex interaction of pragmatic national interests, which are multifaceted and could take an alternate course with changing regional and international scenarios. As both Pakistan and China share many common political, economic and strategic interests due to which both are giving their utmost priority to protect their interests related to the other. This paper will investigate the situation where it is commonly believed that China is inevitable by avoiding the vice-versa. No doubt common threats and challenges faced by both the nation is the major cause to unite them in terms of security, political, economic and strategic fronts.*

**Key Words:** China, Pakistan, National Interests, Geo-Strategic, CPEC, BRI, Gwadar

### Introduction

In the international political community, relations are primarily based on national interest. It is common saying that there is no permanent foe or friend in international relations but only the national interest. The relations between Pakistan and China are of no exception; in spite of their huge claims about the friendship, their relation is mainly based on national interests. Both these countries have developed their ties since the establishment of socialist China. By analyzing the facts and figures of the historical works make us able to look back at our history to understand our present and to predict about future, and adopt a specific line of action to secure national interest. History is the best available tool in linking the past and present. For the comprehension of the present, reading of history is essential and important. Therefore, the researcher should start the understanding of Sino-Pak relations by analyzing the history of the two neighboring nations.

As per the claims of both China and Pakistan, maintenance of their relationship is the key factor of their foreign policy. The warmth of their relationship may be measured from their all-weather friendship and cooperation. It is said that their friendship is based on four goods, good brothers, good partners, good neighbors, and good friends (Munir: 2018). China and Pakistan formally established diplomatic relation in 1951 and enjoyed mutually beneficial relationships and utilized friendly relations for the benefits of one and others. Pakistan was one among the state which put recognition and international admitted the People's Republic of China in 1950. Pakistan had remained an ally to China when China was passing through the period of isolation in the international political community in the 1960s and 1970s. It is generally believed that in the 1960s, the Chinese people were inspired by the economic growth rate and development in the industrial and infrastructural fields; however, Mouw zee dung leadership articulated and utilized the nationality and potentialities in a calculated manner and made the populous world state as the emerging economy of the global political economy. The sensitive geostrategic location and continues political instability hindered economic growth and development. On most occasions, China never felt reluctant to provide Pakistan with economic, technical and military assistance. It is believed that China has provided nuclear and missile technology to Pakistan.

The increasing warmth in the US India relations also compel Pakistan to strengthen its relations with its all-weather friend China to counterbalance the supremacy of India in the region; however, the law-and-order situation and the increasing political instability added by

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the insurgent groups may have serious concerns regarding the smooth and tight relations with Pakistan. China may proceed with an immense cautious attitude to establish long-lasting relations with Pakistan in the region. Due to which China is providing considerable economic, technical and military assistance to Pakistan to her come out of its economic and military problems and to put it on the road of development and self-sufficiency. China has a big part in providing Pakistan with military equipments since 1962. It has also established ammunition factories and is providing technical know-how as well along. In the war of China and India and afterwards, the USA has continued to provide the latter with weapons and the equipment's used in a war-like situation. This resulted in a disturbance of the balance of power in the region.

The USA persistently stated that the aid was aimed at the containment of China and will not be used against Pakistan in any case; however, Pakistan felt discontent with these statements. China took notice by judging the relations with Pakistan and brings a shift to its policy in 1961. It started to take an interest in the resolution of the China and Pakistan boundary issue. They agreed to resolve their border issue, and ultimately, the issue was settled in 1963 with the conclusion of a border agreement. These two neighboring countries declared each other as the most favorable nation in shipping and trade, resulting in the cementation of relationships between the two States. The same year due to the changing line of thinking regarding china's relations USA delayed its promised \$ 4.3 million aid to Pakistan. At the end of the same year, American officials visited Pakistan to mend the fence and to re-instate the relation between the two countries are Pakistan and America. In 1964, China provided Pakistan with a \$ 60 million loan which was totally interest-free. When skirmishes started at the Rann of Kutch and ultimately resulted in the war of 1965, it was China that provided support to Pakistan against India in the shape of military equipment in the war. While America stopped the provisions of equipment's military-related weapons. At that time, it was almost the only source of military assistance while India was continuously receiving weapons from the former USSR.

In 1966 Pakistan and China planned to develop a complex of heavy machinery at Taxila and concluded an agreement for that. However, the decade of 1970s saw a marked shift in the relations of the two states. At the time of the war of 1971, China remained unable to provide Pakistan with its due support; however, it supported Pakistan in the UNO. The Karakoram Highway, connecting China and Gilgit, was opened in 1978. Pakistan also constructed three a power plant for nuclear energy with the support of China government. This started a new period of friendly relations between the two states, which are continued up today (Javaid & Javaid, 2019). China has always put warm support to the generation of nuclear energy of Pakistan for peaceful purposes. CHASNUPP-I plant is installed for commercial purpose and is located in Punjab. This project was initiated in December 2005 and completed with the help of China (Pakistan-and-china-relations-65-years-of-friendship-to-strategic-partnership, 2019).

### **Belt and Road Initiative and China's Vision**

Although China is an advanced economy of the world, its population is more than twenty per cent of the global population (Schiavenza, 2019). It has replaced the 140-year-old global status of America as the gigantic economy of the world (The American Century Comes to an End, and China Becomes the World's Largest Economy, 2019). It is generally believed that it is at the movement developing and is still faced to some extent with the problems of education, healthcare and poverty (Project Partner<sup>2014</sup>). The leadership of China has acknowledged this problem and is perusing a strategy to bring a shift in its growth models to address the issues. The previous model has worked for decades and picked out China from poverty to the status of the world rising power. But this model is not sufficient to sustain the growth rate of China's economy, and therefore, the government started to introduce changes and adopt different strategies to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

President of China Xi Jinping in 2013 started the most determined economic initiative and foreign policy. The president approved the construction of the old silk route into the maritime route. This route is named as one belt on route (OBOR). This vision is a grand project of road and rail network formation to link the least developed areas of China with Pakistan and so on. Belt and Road initiative is a game changer in the region with the basic aim to give a boost to slow domestic growth. The project will be beneficial for about 4.4 billion people and will connect 65 countries across the world, which is approximately 40 percent of world GDP (Hussain, Siddique & Mehmood, 2016). This project is believed the most mega project of the modern world (Cai, 2017). This project is based on two parts, a land route linking China with Europe, South Asia, South Asia, Russia and Central Asia, and the other is a maritime "road", which will connect the ports of China with the rest of the world's ports. This vision is comprised of pipelines, ports, highways and spinning of communication and infrastructure connecting the Eurasian continent for the purpose of promoting trade, people to

people contact and investment (Clarke, 2017). This project is aimed at connecting Africa, Europe, and Asia OBOR is primarily an economic project but has strategic and economic implications too. It is aimed at energy security, collective prosperity and joint development. It will cast magnificent results on China in particular. Though this project will give great connectivity to the world and will bring economic benefits for the community of the states, there are still concerns among the community of the nation's regarding this specific project. It is generally believed that with this project, China is determined for geopolitical benefits and global domination. However, there may be pro and cons of the project; it is aimed at promoting and accelerating global trade and commerce. No one can contradict the reality; even the bitter critics of the project is of the opinion that it is aimed at the economic development of the world.

### **Pak China Economic Corridor (CPEC)**

China, at present, is believed as the economic hub of the twenty-first century. Its GDP grew seventeen times from 1980 to 2014. It brought out about eight hundred million individuals from poverty, which has no like example in human history. In the decade 1980's the per capita income of China. China's per capita income was less or equal to Pakistan and India, but after 1980 China started its fast journey towards economic power.

After the approval of the project in 2013, Pakistan has giving prime importance to the project of CPEC. Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif stated on numerous occasions that CPEC could prove a game-changer for the region in general and specifically for Pakistan (Changer-All-Provinces-Will-Reap Benefits-Of-CPEC-Says-PM, 2019). Similarly, the foreign minister of China termed the project of Belt and Road Initiative as a flagship. Furthermore, the entire political, military leadership and the general masses are of the opinion that CPEC has the power to bring out Pakistan from economic stresses and put it on the path of development and prosperity.

The allocation of US\$46 billion for the project has provided Pakistan with an important opportunity to cope with some of the prime challenges hurdles existing in the economic development of Pakistan, i.e energy crisis, infrastructural backwardness and poor foreign investment rate. Pakistan and China concluded an agreement in November 2014 stating that 61% of the upper mentioned amount will be allocated for improving the energy capacity and its distribution and transmission networks. This will make Pakistan able to have control over its ever-increasing energy crisis (Esteban, 2016). This shortfall is consuming about 2 to 2.5 % of the country's GDP every year. In 2017 and 2018, the project is estimated to add ten thousand and four hundred Megawatts to the energy reservoir of Pakistan. The economy of China is on the rapid rise and intended to achieve the status of an international superpower. Pakistan is a strategically important country, and China is well aware of this fact and therefore connects its interests with it. They are time tested friends. Furthermore, it's a big market of consumer for China. On the contrary, India is a potential competitor for China in the region. Both America and China are interested in Pakistan for the sake of fulfilling their objectives in the region of South Asia.

Pakistan and China are time tested friends and supported each other on the different issues in history. China is the rising economy of the globe, and Pakistan is wrestling with the evil of terrorism and desires to put its economy on track. It is generally believed that China is investing a huge sum of money to counter and combat terrorism and extremism and the deteriorated law and order situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan adjacent to its regions. Therefore, making the neighborhood peaceful, China aims to secure its population from the evil of terrorism and tension to concentrate its energies on economic growth and development (Dhurbajyot, 2015). She will also get benefits from the power and energy projects operating in Pakistan. Through this infrastructural development, China will be in the position to have access to the Arabia Sea and the Middle East. The goods which in the past needed 45 days to be unloaded in China will need only 10 days to reach there. It will reduce the distance as well as the cost on its transportation. Europe will also be reached through the Strait of Malacca by the Gwadar Port of Pakistan (Rizvi, 2015)

China, at present is concerned with its ever-increasing energy consumption. Its oil trade is through the Strait of Malacca. They apprehend that in situations USA may block the route, therefore they prefer to invest in a more secure and short route in the shape of CPEC to permanently resolves its security issue. It will make China able to have an easy approach to resources rich regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan and will quench its thrust for the agenda of energy. It will also provide nearness to the gas and oil reserves of Iran, Afghanistan and Baluchistan (Javaid & Javaid, 2016). OBOR has one other objective which is, to make Renminbi (RMB) an international currency. This OBOR cover 1/3 of the globe and access an enormous population of the globe, therefore the making RMB as an international currency for the population of the world which can be accessed by the OBOR. The Bank of China has calmed that according to a survey, the adjacent areas are interested

in starting to use RMB as a new international currency in the near future. About sixty per cent ODI of China is occupied by RMB; it was sixteen percent in 2013. RMB is expected to internationalize by China in the coming years. The provision of 1.8 trillion dollars amount for the facilitation of the project will provide a huge boost to the status of RMB. Bank of China is optimistic that the neighboring countries will also start RMB as an international currency in the near future. It will boost the multi-lateral currency coordination, direct import and export in RMB. CBRC has concluded agreements with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Russia in its neighborhood.

The Middle East contains fifty percent of the global oil reserves. It also has twenty-five percent of oil production. Middle East oil reserves became a precious gift for America in the national security issue 1970's oil crisis. Jimmy Carter government in 1980 stated that any attempt an external force to take control of the region of person Gulf would be taken as an attack on the interest of America. An assault will be reacted with necessary measure, even military measures if needed. It is known as Carter Doctrine (Barnes, AB, 2015). It is reported that on Apr 20, 2016, America's utilization of oil exported from outside of the country has decreased in the thirty years lowest point (Barnes, AB, 2015). The imports of oil from the Middle East are decreasing due to the increasing use of coal. The consumption of oil is on the increase in China; therefore, its interest is increasing, and they are showing greater interest in the Middle East. For this purpose, Gwadar Port, which is the largest seaport in the world, is situated at a distance of two-fifty km with the Persian Gulf will prove of great importance and utility for the interest of China in the region in the future (Rahman & Shurong, 2017).

The most important part of CPEC is the development and utilization of its provinces of the west in the economic boost of China transition to the great economic power of the international political economy. In the take-up and economic boom of China, its par-plunged western part remained underdeveloped and poor. Most of the industrial and infrastructural development took place in the eastern coastal provinces for facilitation exports. It was reported in 2013 that the per capita income in the western provinces is half that of the eastern provinces. It is projected that the western provinces will take thirty to fifty years to reach the developmental position of the eastern provinces (Ferandinad, 2016). The thirteenth 5-year plan was aimed to make Xinjian a gateway to western, Central and Southern Asia. This will serve as a hub for industrial supplies coming from Middle East South Asia. Xinjiang is considered as a heart in the body of the western part of China. It is exporting manufactured goods and machinery to Central and South Asian markets by way of the economic corridor and import raw material needed for industrial development and energy supplies for speedy economic development of China. The material brought by the route of the Indian Ocean by CPEC to Xingjian is ten per cent cheaper than the material brought from the eastern coastal provinces of the country (Jingjing, 2017).

### **Gwadar Port and Chinese Acquisition**

Most of the earth's surface is covered with water which is a cheap way of transportation. Waters play an important role in transportation in the world. In history, water was the only way of transportation between and among the continent. The utility of the maritime routes in geopolitics cannot be ignored in the modern globalized age. Pakistan is bestowed by nature with a deep-sea port of the globe with a length of 960 Kms, spreading to the South East and west axis. On the coastal line of Pakistan there are situated the port Karachi and Qasim port Ormara is also developed to absorb the pressure of the increasing trade pressure in the future (Kashif, 2006). There are also other miner ports like Jiwani, Pasni, Kalmat, Khor, Hingol, Sonmiani, and Ketu Bandar. In the twenty-first century, maritime routes have become a major way for the process of globalization. Pakistan found in the shape of Gawader an opportunity to develop its economy, fulfil its energy needs and promote industrialization by promoting regional connectivity and mutual cooperation through the construction of the Gawadar port. It is a project which can strengthen the bleeding economy, can utilize its geopolitical strength in the continent (Naseem, 2014).

Gwadar port lies around 460 kilometres west of Karachi at the central part of the Arabian Sea. Its distances from Oman is 380 km in the northeast. The "Persian Gulf" lies at a distance of 75 kilometres from the port. Gwadar port is located at the doorway of Persian Gulf (Hassan, 2019). The area of Gwadar is 1.52 million hectares or 15,216 square km. It's one of the world mega ports of the world. The coastal district Gwadar has a length of about 600 km. Its peculiarity is its situational proximity with the "Strait of Hurmuz". The last-mentioned is the busiest shipping and trading lanes.

China is financing the development of Gwadar as a mega seaport of the region. They are strengthening geostrategic ties in communicating its influence in the international political economy. The relation cannot weight in terms of money. It was needed for the economic and political integration of the region. Pakistan had no resources to develop it, but it is all possible due to China,

took the pain to construct the port for the best interest of itself, Pakistan and the region with the entire world. China has numerous interests of economic and strategic nature.

China will be able to have a sharp eye on the focal point of the Gulf. It can make its presence felt along with India and America (Nixon, 1992). It captures a strategic position in the Caspian Region with rich energy; thus, Xinjiang province is using it as a trade way through Gwadar Deep Sea Port. The economy of China is growing at a rate of 9 percent per year. Its trade volume is the US \$1.76 trillion. Its GNP is growing at the rate of 7.3%. Its reserves of foreign exchange are the US \$ 600 billion. China is manufacturing seventy per cent of CD players, microwave ovens, photo copiers and toys of the world. Her growth rate is tremendous and is projected to be world leading economy in 2025. China is managing to readjust its fiscal structure to encompass the regional countries for a pragmatic and progressive development in regional and international economic arena. It is searching for extensive and vast buyer in the international market. It is trying hard and executing accurately the economic policies of the World Trade Organization to become its positional member. It gives importance to regional economic prosperity and is interested to link the development of the region to the internal political economy for the purpose to have a decisive role in the international community. After the fall of the former USSR, it is striving hard to chase a realistic, determined and focused economic policy with political passive mode to bring itself to the superpower status of the globe.

### **Development of Xinjiang Province**

This is the region of China which is comprised of underdeveloped areas and will meager population. It has common borders with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian states. The people inhabiting the region are Uighurs. Actually, they are ethnic Turks in origin. They live in the Xinjiang province, which is located in the western area of China. They have the same language, culture and religion. Most of them are struggling for self-determination. They consider themselves to be like their neighbors in the Muslim Central Asian Republics. The Lop Nur, where China has conducted its nuclear test, is near the province. The area can be easily approached from water by way of the Silk route. Furthermore, the area is oil-rich; therefore, China wants to include it in the mainstream developmental progress. She has adopted the go west policy in the developmental policy. China wants to make the area developed to remove the grievances of the people and combat the separatist sentiments of the people of the western province of their country.

Gwadar port project is a beneficial and wise decision for the economic development of the western part of China. It is the smallest route to the Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf. The displacement only 2500 kilometer from china to the Arabian Sea. This will provide China an opportunity to economically develop the region of Uighurs. It can also result in the cordial relationship between China and the bordering Muslim countries.

### **Observe the Navel Activities**

The port will also provide a chance for China to have an eagle eye on the movement of US naval forces in Persian Gulf. It will bring China to the position to have check on the Indian naval forces in the Indian Ocean. Indian naval forces movements in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Aden, has always been remained of great concern for China. China's director for the General Staff Logistics Department had stated that it is the People Liberation Army's strategic strategy extends its grip on Indian and Pacific Ocean by the implementation of string of pearls strategy. He added furthermore we do not consider the Indian Ocean of Indians. The construction of navy station in Gwadar port will assist the China's in having an eagle eye on the hegemonic powers of the South Asian region in the future. The port will provide China access to the continent of Africa and Gulf region, furthermore the port will gain the position of one of the prominent deep-sea port of the world. The old route which the China used was a long route consisting of South China Sea, Strait of Malacca, Sri Lanka and Pacific Rim. The China's ships used to travel for ten thousand kilometers while through the same have to travel for only 2500 kilometers. It will be an easy and short route for China to import oil from gulf and central Asian region and export manufactured goods to the rest of the world.

### **Straits**

At present Gwadar has gained the position of a most important route for the import of energy products. The energy of prime importance for China to continue its progress as the emerging power of the world by developing its western region. Till today China 80 per cent import of oil was by the way of Strait of Malacca. They consider the straight as the most venerable sea road due to its pirates. Alternatively, Gwadar is the safest and peaceful choice for China to make its import and exports (Naseem, 2014).

There is a threat of the blocked off the Malacca Strait by US, therefore, Gwadar may be termed as a substitute in west Asia and the Indian Ocean. In the case of strategic and military utility, CPEC can provide a monetary role in the Persian Gulf. It will protect the interest of China in the region as more than sixty per cent of the energy sources come from the region of the Gulf. This will serve as a post for China from where it can observe the movement of the USA and India (Malik, 2012). The road linked with the maritime route will help China to extend its trade from South Asia to Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

### **Distance**

China aims to boost, protect and multiply its sources of energy. It has a program to install an oil refinery at Gwadar port, connecting it to the Xinjiang province of China through the help of a pipeline. This transportation will reduce the distance of transportation of oil from the Gulf region to the western region of China to a considerable extent. The total length of this pipeline will be 2500 kilometres. It will decrease the distance between the Xining province and the Persian Gulf by many thousand kilometres. Within the China if they want to transport gas and oil from Xinjiang to Beijing and Shanghai seaports are at the distance of 4500 km. Shanghai Port is located at the distance of 10,000 kilometers through the way the Indian Ocean from Persian Gulf. The transportation and trade through the way of Gwadar from Eastern Africa and the Persian Gulf to China will reduce the distance by 15000 kilometers. The reduction in the distance will reduce the expenses on the transportation and it will save precious time for the Chinese authorities. It will not only save money and time, rather it is secure and safe than the sea route used by the Chinese ships. Chinese ships take about twenty days to reach the Gulf region and after completion of Gwadar and CPEC, they will reach the Gulf region in only forty-eight day through Pakistan (Lin, 2001). It is the smallest, safe and secure route for China to import energy from the Gulf region. Alongside it will make sure the existence in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea (Khan, 2013). In the days to come, this port will be an important part of China's trade masking with the rest of the world and Pakistan will become the regional hub in the terms of trade activities. The port provides a two-pronged market in the North and South and East and West. Its fictionalization will initiate a new era of friendship between Pakistan and China.

### **US-INDIA AXES**

The policy of China in the region spread the fear and geopolitical tension among the US and China. For the containment of the Chinese expansion in the region, the United States and India established strategic partnerships. To connect South Asia with Central Asian states through Chabahar Port India intensified the cooperation with Iran and Afghanistan. Both India and the US are paving strong resistance to contain the hegemonic policy of China.

Recently, the Virtual Summit of Quad was conducted by the US, India, Australia, and Japan as Quad primary aim was the containment of China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region. To counter the military expansion and economic influence in the region, the US had already in a trade and technological war with China. The US had its own vested interests in the economy and strategy in the South Asian region. America believes its interests can be served by a politically stable Afghanistan along with a cordial relation between Pakistan and India and economically sound Pakistan. The US is having clarity of the strategic importance of Pakistan; however, the partners have different opinions about the relation with India, counter-terrorism and its nuclear program (Senior US Government Official "D" in discussion with the author, 2015). The USA has an intention to invest in Pakistan. However, it wants to root out extremism and encourage the improvement of the energy sector to control energy in Pakistan. At the same time thinking realistically, they are feeling not easy on the rapid expansion of China in the continent of Asia which is militarily and economical global rival in contemporary international politics. (Senior US Government Official "D" in discussion with the author, 2015). USA uncertainty revolves around China's capacity to accomplish the project and its real designs and objectives all around the globe. Furthermore, it has serious concerns about the utilization of the investments in combating extremism. America time and again alleged Pakistan that it has not taking actions against all the extremists' groups indiscriminately in the country to discourage religious and sectarian extremism. Though America has rivalry Pakistan and China, is of the opinion that the existing amount of investment will prove a better environment for regional integration. Meanwhile, Afghanistan rejected the offer to be a part of the mega project CPEC due the dominance and pressure of the America.

On the other side, the relation between China and India are in crises due to the recent conflict on the border and future of the both nations is uncertain. Although both nations are large trade partner and worked together on different project. However, the India also opposed the CPEC and claimed as threat for the Indian Sovereignty arguing the CPEC project is passing through the Gilgit

Baltistan a part of Kashmir which and internationally disputed area. The Indian think that through CPEC the China and Pakistan will the counterbalance the economic growth of India. The Chabahar episode reveals that it was India that made a strategic move to counter CPEC. The India and China aspire to regional and global supremacy. Their ambitious policies and different approaches at the regional and international level is a manifestation of their cooperative and competitive nature of the relationship. It is said that even if Sino-Indian relations blossom, flourish and improve, will not deter the former to have friendship with Pakistan.

The India and China aspire to regional and global supremacy. Their ambitious policies and different approaches at the regional and international level is a manifestation of their cooperative and competitive nature of the relationship. It is said that even if Sino-Indian relations blossom, flourish and improve, will not deter the former to have friendship with Pakistan. Many a times, China has expressed her intention. And it is analyzed as follows:

- a) The rise of China is expected to force India to maintain peace with Pakistan.
- b) China has, time and again, expressed that its ties with India, in no way, fracture its relations with Pakistan.
- c) The absence of both political or territorial disputes and the Chinese strict adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence will further strengthen Pak-China friendship.
- d) The major factor behind Pak-China friendship is common thinking and understanding of the regional and global level.
- e) "Pakistan-China military structures suggest that they want continuous and long term friendship" (Fazal-ur-Rehman, 1998)

## **Conclusion**

At the end of this study, it is concluded that contrary to the public opinion that the existence of China is inevitable for Pakistan, the importance of Pakistan for China is far more tangible than expected. Both on economic and strategic fronts, Pakistan is having equal, if not more, importance for China. By analyzing the whole situation, it is revealed that on most of the occasions, China used Pakistan to overcome many issues becoming hurdles in the way of attaining regional hegemony. On one side, India and the USA are trying to contain the increasing influence of China in the region and on the other change of regime in Pakistan is not ready to accept the changing circumstances. Indian influence in the region is a constant threat to the Chinese position and Pakistan being an antagonistic state to the Indian designs is strong support for China. Iran, another important player of the region, is also trying to get closer to the Chinese against the American intentions yet the importance of Pakistan for China has not reduced and China is striving to retain the past co-existence.

An analysis of the China's foreign policy shows that it has little interests or motivation to alter the power imbalances in Pakistan that are being exacerbated by CPEC. China is intent on preserving political stability in its bilateral relations. This inclination is reflected by a no strings attached aid policy, reluctance to meddle in the internal issues, and respect for territorial sovereignty. The less apparent driver of China's foreign policy is its national interests, which sometimes diverge from its principles of non-intervention. For example, China is bent upon preserving political stability and is completely intolerant to regionalist ambitions given the problem of regionalism within its borders. Given this concern, China is expected to not react well to the regional elites, making diverging claims to the central planning of CPEC. A major role in this regard will be played by the Gwadar port and CPEC. Gwadar and CPEC is the key to the future of Pakistan-China relations. When its full potential will be utilized, it will take the China-Pakistan relations to new heights and the comity of this all-weather friendship will be ensured. The project has pure economic nature, but strategic pundits contend that it carries a greater geopolitical and geostrategic implication for regional and global actors.

The execution of CPEC has altered the geopolitical dynamics of South Asia where new alliances are in the making. India and the US have devised strategies to contain expanding Chinese influence and to compete with the CPEC. When its full potential will be utilized, it will take the China-Pakistan relations to new heights and the comity of this all-weather friendship will be ensured. In the foreseeable future, it seems that Pakistan-China relations, in spite of current clumsy situation, will continue to remain on solid footing and will further strengthen. However, Pakistan, by realizing its importance and having no other solid option for its existence, would move back to China if and when apprehended.

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