

## Assessing Implications Of Social Welfare Of CPEC: A Provincial Level Analysis

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**Abstract:** CPEC is a megaproject that aims to bring economic prosperity to Pakistan. The key purpose of the dissertation is to investigate the influence of the social welfare impact of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Baluchistan Province. The research article is based on an analysis of the projects by CPEC and how much social change has been instigated through the establishment of the schemes by CPEC. The theme of the article is social influence, this is the main perspective of the examination in this dissertation vis-à-vis CPEC in Baluchistan. The examination article has been oriented towards a social goal, therefore, this study has a qualitative and quantitative approach mainly sourcing primary and secondary data. The research dissertation has found that the CPEC, from its establishment, has had an economic alignment, and has influenced social growth mainly indirectly.

**Key Words:** CPEC, Gwadar, Socio-Economic, Strategic

### Introduction

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an initiative between the government of Pakistan and China. CPEC is considered a crown jewel of BRI through which China aims to prove itself as a trusted partner for the Global South.

CPEC has been one of the most prominent BRIs in Asia, connecting Gwadar to China. The Collection of constructed and ongoing Economic and infrastructure projects is a part of a globalization project. Baluchistan has been one of the prime beneficiaries of the programs and initiatives by the BRI to promote economic, social development and alleviate poverty.

With the need for economic integrity, social and geopolitical development, CPEC has been keen to strengthen Baluchistan domestically. The Province of Baluchistan has been neglected, leaving the region being the

most underprivileged in Pakistan. The CPEC has not been in a position of entire control over the challenges in Baluchistan that have impeded the social, political and economic progress of the province. The study's social focus on Baluchistan will analyze how much the CPEC has become revolutionary towards its social objective in the province. There is a need to discern the current situation from a social focal point and debunk the myths that root conspiracies amongst the Baluchistan locals. The contemplation of China becoming a reliable strategic partner for Pakistan should have impacted the region of Baluchistan to curb the extreme levels of poverty and underdevelopment.

The prosperous economic corridor was initiated in May 2013 with the intention to link Pakistan China both countries with economic and rapid infrastructural development. The

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Gwadar port was to be connected with the Karakoram High Way which was built in 1959 and is an essential part of the CPEC. Therefore, in 2012, Pakistan's President, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari in collaboration with the Chinese Authority took the initiative to connect the two countries. The Gwadar port was handed to the Chinese authority in 2012 under the BRI project. The economic corridor, however, will create unprecedented opportunities for Pakistan as well as China

because it will engage a huge number of employees from both countries. Besides this, there will be other major and minor projects would be linked to the CPEC for the benefit of Pakistan. Consequently, both countries took the step; put themselves in a memorandum for mutual benefits.

Under the umbrella of CPEC, it will connect the Gwadar port in Baluchistan all the way to China.



Map 1

## CPEC Coverage

“This map of Pakistan and the CPEC, trail from Gwadar Port in Gwadar District, Baluchistan Province extending all the way to China” b ([Instagram, 2019](#)).

The CPEC involves a series of projects that are to benefit both the economies of China and Pakistan ([The News 2018](#)). The initiative has had implementations that have benefitted Pakistan economically, including the establishment of a stable trade connection and the formulation of job opportunities. The study, however, emphasized the social development of CPEC specifically in Baluchistan province. CPEC in its functionality has focused on several pillars that guide its objectives.

The seven pillars of the CPEC are laid out in a long-term plan that ends in 2030.

The pillars include:

- Agricultural development and poverty alleviation
- Connectivity
- Energy
- Financial cooperation
- People's livelihood and non-governmental exchanges
- Tourism
- Trade and Industrial parks

The study aims to analyze the effects of the multi-billion dollars corridor which have both short and long term projects in two dimension i.e. social welfare and reduction of poverty. This article evaluates the CPEC which aims at transforming the lives of the inhabitants and inducing welfare benefits

among them. This article would give a comprehensive overview of the project and its long-standing impacts on Balochistan and Pakistan.

The study fills those informational gaps of the socio-economic influence under the CPEC, in Baluchistan Province, which is the main target of the research. The dissertation considers the achievements of the CPEC in Baluchistan and compares them to the goals of social welfare.

The study exposes the current perceptions endorsed by the people of Baluchistan and recommends the best practices for the situation for both the locals and CPEC. The study edifies its audience in attaining harmony of objectives in Baluchistan between CPEC and the locals.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory that pivots the hypothesis in this research article is the theory of Social transformation by Teune and Milner (1978). Social transformation is the social change (in large scale terms) of cultural norms and reforms. It is also defined as a process that involves an individual or a group in a particular generation altering the ascribed predecessors' social status to a status of social achievement for themselves (Fozdar, 2018).

#### **The Social Transformation Theory**

“involves developing, a conscience within the society, an organization or the government so that reality is defined by a consensus and induces altering attitudes and norms to a new subject of understanding (Fozdar, 2018)”. This theory will go through the creation of a new understanding of society. However, it is prognosticated that it will a holistic atmosphere in the targeted community.

The social transformation theory is also valid on the social impact of the different influential organizations in Baluchistan. Moreover, it fulfils the gaps induced by resentment of the Baluchi community over CPEC. The CPEC should, bridge the Baluchi community over their ambiguous reservation

and the perks of CPEC which brings their conflict into some viable agreement.

According to my opinion, “it evidently displays that the CPEC’s socio-economic projects will influence the social welfare of the people of Baluchistan. The CPEC last year formulated new plans that have socio-economic objectives, with projects such as the development of Gwadar University that are to be completed by the end of next year. The social venture by the CPEC has been concentrated on more slightly, as from 2018, the organization planned for plenty of projects, in the social sector.”

To attain social transformation, the understanding of a perspective or an idea by CPEC should be ensured by a cluster of people in Baluchistan. Social transformation involves attaining a consensus, therefore, the CPEC should target a mutual social relationship between a few inhabitants of the province. In this context, the participation of the people of Balochistan in the activities and projects and CPEC will enable a reliable bond between the locals and CPEC.

### **Contribution of CPEC to the Social Welfare of Baluchistan**

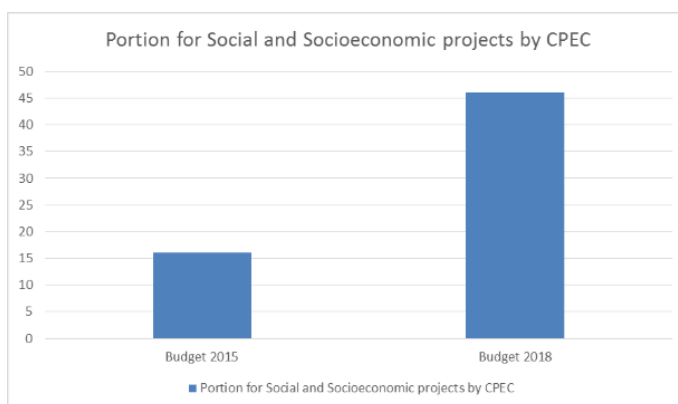
The right organization of the society and the nature of the political and social institutions have been largely influenced by CPEC over the past 6 years. CPEC has affected the social standard of Baluchistan, majorly indirectly by reducing poverty and increasing the human development index. CPEC is playing a crucial role in bringing social stability to Baluchistan and has been influential in dealing with some of the daunting problems of Baluchistan such as the creation of employment opportunities for the locals of the province.

The orientation of the communal objectives by CPEC in Balochistan remained in limelight for a few years. The reason behind this attention is the economic and huge infrastructure development in the province. CPEC will not exercise its entire efficacy without providing stable social welfare to the locals of Baluchistan.

CPEC has played the main role in bridging the gap between poverty and low development index in Baluchistan, where the project has been primarily based in the area. The development of health centres and education institutions by the government, IGOs and NGOs has been primarily engineered and power-housed by CPEC. CPEC has been at the forefront of investing in Baluchistan, even after conspiracies that Baluch soil is subjugated to serve the safety of others.

The picture portrayed by media over the socio-economic factor of CPEC in Baluchistan was highlighted recently, whereas this article encompasses all vital spheres. According to the 2018 plan of CPEC, socio-economic speculations are more than in the recent 4 years (Melecky, Roberts, & Sharma, 2019).

The mega project likewise addresses the social issue in the province such as the sense of deprivation and other social injustices which our Bloch people many times cited. By establishing prosperity and economic opportunities in the Balochistan province, the inhabitants will feel more prosperous as the successful development of the project is directly linked to the prosperity of the inhabitant. The economic corridor, however, will create unprecedented opportunities for Pakistan as well as China because it will engage a huge number of employees from both countries. Besides this, there will be other major and minor projects would be linked to the CPEC for the benefit of Pakistan. Consequently, both countries took the step; put themselves in a memorandum for mutual benefits.



**Graph 1**

CPEC, from its establishment, did not focus on the development of social sectors. However, in 2018 the leaders of China and Pakistan met and restructure the orientation of the goals of CPEC. This re-structuring of social projects rose from 16% in 2015 to 40% compared to 2018.

### **Transformation of Baluchistan Society under CPEC**

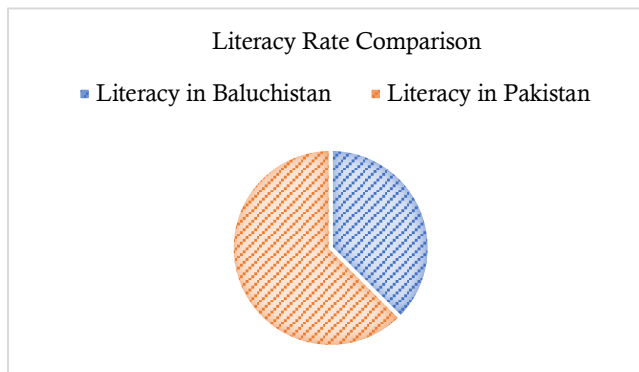
CPEC, since being established in 2013, has had focused on fields such as energy, transportation and infrastructure. The CPEC

restructured its orientation in 2018 to a more socially concerned objective. In Baluchistan, the social influence of CPEC has been indirect. CPEC has enabled the placement of about 70000 youths in Universities and colleges in China and Pakistan (Melecky, Roberts, & Sharma, 2019) the project has also provided internship opportunities for some students at the industries, plants and projects by CPEC. The social venture of CPEC has received re-orientation even in the education field with the establishment of Gwadar University.

In 2018, the CPEC kicked off the socio-economic projects for Baluchistan, and precedent to the previous years, many projects were only economically oriented. The consideration for social projects rose from “16% in 2016 to about 40% by December 2018 (Khan, & Li. 2018).” This is because the state

of Balochistan has a high poverty rate due to which socio-political instability exist there.

CPEC is a collection of implementations that owns a number of electricity projects, however, in Baluchistan province, only about 25% is covered by electricity. This shows that Baluchistan is the most poverty-stricken area.



Graph 2

According to reports, “the literacy levels of Baluchistan, when compared to the rest of Pakistan, stands at 30 per cent for Baluchistan and 50 per cent for other provinces in Pakistan (Ahmad, et., al. 2018).”

The mega project also addresses the social issue in the province such as the low level of

literacy rate, the sense of deprivation, and other social injustices which our Bloch people many times cited. By establishing prosperity and economic opportunities in the Balochistan province, the inhabitants will feel more prosperous as the successful development of the project is directly linked to the prosperity of Pakistan and Balochistan.

**Table 1.** Socio-Economic Sector and Projects of the CPEC

Project	Budget	Details	Completion Due
Establishment of Technical and Vocational Institute in Gwadar	\$10.00m	“This project is amongst the preceding projects to increase the literacy levels of Baluchistan. The project is to train the locals of Baluchistan in order to exploit business opportunities in various business fields in Baluchistan; including marine, transport, and construction and building. The Pakistan government contributed about 200 million rupees towards the project.”	March 2016
Establishment of the University of the Gwadar	2 Billion Rupees	“This is among the recent projects by the CPEC in social Sector Development. The project is in its proposal process and the budget details shall be released at its launch. This project will lead the set of social projects that are to be implemented in Baluchistan by the CPEC.”	Initiation, has only been proposed, therefore has not even started yet.

Project	Budget	Details	Completion Due
The Project of Gwadar Livelihood	Inestimable	“This is a socioeconomic implementation that is targeted by the CPEC. This project entails the growth of the living standards of the people of Baluchistan. The project aims to grow the dependency levels of the families in Baluchistan and promote their methods of obtaining livelihood thus positively affecting their living standards.”	A project is a gradual implementation therefore it cannot be scaled in a quantitative manner.
CPEC has laid the foundation of a 300-bed Hospital	270 million Rupees.	“This followed the development of several expressways to connect the Gwadar port to the Makran coastal highway through the hospital.”	Inaugurated in April 2017.

### Prognosis of Socio-economic Endeavours by CPEC on Baluchistan: Expansion of Social Sector

A study conducted by the scholar where has laid that the “CPEC has reviewed its plans to contribute to social goals more indirectly than directly as it has created opportunities and improved the living standards. The studies suggested that CPEC has had a significant impact on the rehabilitation of the nation’s industrial units which are passing through deterioration. In addition, further studies concluded that the employment rate has increased and hence the poverty level will reduce due to generating local employment opportunities in Pakistan rather than outsourcing from other nations (Saeed 2017).”

The main focus is subject to the direction of CPEC where “the projects would unveil the benefits to western, central and southeastern countries from an economic perspective but still end up affecting the social sector positively. Furthermore, it is concluded that CPEC has increased the social connectivity between the people of both nations, by reducing the time for travelling between the nations and this has helped the people to reach the advanced level of health care utilization, education and infrastructure facility. As a result, the whole project accelerates the regional perspective of global development (Saeed 2017)”.

Since 2013, the prime focus of the CPEC is the development of the technical and economic sector not in the Balochistan

province but also across Pakistan by connecting all phases of development with the route of CPEC.

The mega project will strengthen the nexus between China and Pakistan where both states share their culture, language, history, and food. This will prove to be a dynamic because it will bring the people of both states together; consequently, CPEC will make both states more pluralistic and diverse.

Besides this, the CPEC road will also benefit the neighbouring area from where the route is passing. As it has an eastern and western route, it will bring prosperity to the areas from which the CPEC route is passing. Thousands of people will get employment, as a result, the state will be economically boosted.

### CPEC and its Nexus with the Inhabitants of Baluchistan

The “Wider Economic Benefits of Transport Corridors: A Policy Framework and Illustrative Application to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” clearly states that as much as the “CPEC is at the forefront of development, the locality of Baluchistan has concerns regarding the activities of CPEC. In 2018, it was discovered that the locality of Baluchistan is afraid of loan sanctions. China has been in the trend of giving loans then seizing resources whenever the loans are paid. The people are afraid that China might seize its resources. The people are worried that their involvement with the CPEC projects, this is

because of outsourcing practices by the CPEC in its projects. The people of Baluchistan province are showing concern for wanting to be involved in the projects by the CPEC. The locals are also resilient to CPEC; this is understandable as normally people get resilient to foreign help. INP says that there is a lack of effective social cooperation between the organization and the local people. This has led to the formation of local terror groups to counter the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Terror groups and gangs deny local peace and stability. The people of India have not stopped resolutely opposing the CPEC and its associated implementations and this has contributed to the unrest that has gone as far as affecting Baluchistan (Melecky, Roberts, & Sharma 2019b).”

The Baloch community was facilitated by the bounties of CPEC through the association of Gwadar to China. However, CPEC has deteriorated the international security on borders between Afghanistan and India. As result, turmoil had contrarily influenced Baluch people, with monetary alarm; CPEC failed to reestablish solidness in Baluchistan.

On the 11th of May, a fear-based oppressor assaulted the hotel near Gwadar Harbor. The brutal incident claimed numerous lives and wounds. The shooters raged within the inn shooting the likely casualties (BBC News 2019, May 12).

## **Debunking Myths on CPEC**

### **Myth 1: CPEC Aims to Create Sales for Chinese Products**

There is a claim by the people of Baluchistan that Baluchistan will be flocked by Chinese products. There is a myth bearded that CPEC is connecting Gwadar to China because of promoting trade for China as a bulk producer. The increase of potential competition with local producers is getting the Baluchistan local businessmen wary (C.P.E.C, 2018a). China is a producing country, one of the largest exporters in the world, the myth emphasizes

that CPEC is meant to maintain the high sales and exportation status of China.

The population of Baluchistan and their economic power has the least effect on the revenue from exportation sales of Chinese products. The Baluchistan market first has very little impact in terms of sales and exportations due to the present economic condition. Besides, the aim of the BRI as stated in 2013 is not to use Gwadar as one of its products outlets. The Chinese government connects with Pakistan through CPEC, majorly on a non-profit basis. The projects that have been put up by CPEC are focused on infrastructure and the internal growth of Baluchistan rather than the expansion of connections for sales (C.P.E.C, 2018a). It is also illogical to assume that CPEC wants to use Baluchistan as a product sale point when the region is still impeded by crucial economic and social lags.

### **Myth 2: Land and Minerals Acquisition by China**

The land of Baluchistan is rich in minerals like Copper and marble. This makes the resource very lucrative for a superpower like China. The issue of land acquisition in Baluchistan by the Chinese government through CPEC is also another major concern regarding the CPEC in Baluchistan. The locals of the province and even other provinces have suspected that the CPEC is a scheme to acquire natural resources in Baluchistan by China.

Legal documentation on the ownership of land states that the land that CPEC has used for its projects is still in Pakistan's ownership (C.P.E.C, 2019). CPEC has not been involved in any illegal or suspicious land acquisition procedures. The projects being established in Baluchistan are not bounding for Baluchistan at their agreement, therefore Baluchistan is not at risk to surrender any resources. The Chinese government in the treaty that formulated CPEC mentioned that the collection of projects was aimed at growing the Pakistan government like other BRI's with a connection, i.e. from Gwadar Port to China.

### Myth 3: Cultural invasion by China through CPEC

The people of Baluchistan are afraid of a Chinese cultural invasion through CPEC. The locals of Baluchistan have alleged that through CPEC, China seeks to spread its culture to Pakistan. The people are further worried that through CPEC, more Chinese people will populate Baluchistan. The Chinese population is feared to erode the culture of Pakistan in Baluchistan with the new Chinese culture.

The myth of cultural invasion amongst the people of Baluchistan and Gwadar province has already been debunked after evolving in a number of Media stations for quite a while. The Chinese working on CPEC projects in Pakistan are about 10000 (C.P.E.C, 2019), a similar number are involved with activities that are not associated with the CPEC. When compared to other countries Pakistan has the least population of Chinese living in the country. Even in the USA, millions of Chinese are living in countries without much cultural transformation. Pakistan is one of the least Chinese populated countries in the world, even after the establishment of CPEC; this should show there is no cultural interest by China in Pakistan.

### Findings

By narrowing down the study to one province, the article has discovered the following key findings:

1. The CPEC has had a social progression in the target district through the assistance in infrastructure regarding hospitals schools and water projects. The study also found out that the CPEC has planned further new projects likely to be implemented in the CPEC. CPEC has been working on projects to allow easier access to transport and will facilitate inter-regional and international products to promote.
2. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor since its establishment in 2013 has intended to connect Pakistan and China to boost the economic development in Pakistan. CPEC is a hub of projects

with a vision to improve Pakistan's economy. CPEC has been observed as a game-changer project for developing countries like Pakistan. The massive bilateral trade agreement signed between China and Pakistan on 20th April 2015, valued at \$43 Billion is a great opportunity to transform Pakistan's economy and make regional cooperation between China and Pakistan.

3. CPEC has been influencing social development indirectly, through the growth of the transport sector and the creation of education and job opportunities for better living standards. The CPEC also, in December 2018, rectified its budget to include more socio-economic projects in order to change the lifestyle of Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan.
4. The Baluch community are yet to benefit more from the projects to be implemented by CPEC. There are, however, present myths in Baluchistan that are countering the social progress of CPEC, the reservations are endorsed by the locals of Baluchistan against the Chinese through CPEC. The locals of Baluchistan are wary of their involvement in the activities of CPEC and think that CPEC has the aim of exploiting Pakistan besides growing it.

### Recommendations

1. Re-budgeting for the previously proposed social projects by the CPEC in Baluchistan province will be a major turnaround for the agency. In order to attain a social goal, the projects by CPEC that have a social orientation need to have remade budgets, as the planning in December 2018 was not as intensive towards the social goals of CPEC in Baluchistan.
2. The CPEC should formulate awareness and educate the people of Baluchistan on their intent as a BRI project. The CPEC should convey their aim in Baluchistan, make it known to the

people that they do not have financial oriented objectives that will later on press on the people of Baluchistan. The connection between the corridor and Baluchistan will be stronger when the intent of China through CPEC is properly communicated and locals of Baluchistan are aware of it.

3. The plans of CPEC and their budget should also be communicated to the targets, in this case, the Baluchistan people. The CPEC has been keen on communicating to Pakistan media on their proposals but do not consider as much communicating with the people who are to benefit from the projects. CPEC should properly inform the people on the projects that are to come and even go an extent further to ask for reviews, opinions and suggestions from entrusted Baluchistani leaders. This informative activity will go a long way to building a strong social relationship between CPEC and the locals of Baluchistan.
4. The CPEC needs to establish itself as an organization that does not have an economic target on Pakistan. This means that China should pronounce that the benefits Pakistan reap through CPEC are entirely on a non-profit basis for China. This recommendation involves the change of terms of CPEC from China's perspective; however, it will give Pakistan social comfort. Social comfort will assist in debunking the myths by the locals on CPEC.
5. The locals of Baluchistan also have a role to play; the CPEC should be involved more in the activities of Baluchistan. This involvement will create a stronger social bond between CPEC and the people of Baluchistan, the bond will create trust within Baluchistan on CPEC hence simplifying objective attainment.

## Conclusion

The CPEC covers plentiful projects aligned for Balochistan, keeping in view the

poorest region in Pakistan despite Gwadar Harbor. The said project has already catered for the upcoming perks and privileges for locals to improve the societal as well as strong infrastructure specifically in terms of Gwadar port and marine modernization.

China made a great difference by expanding its influence globally and advancing its exchange associations with neighbouring nations; it'll offer assistance to modernize road infrastructures, airports and Gwadar seaport. The objective of CPEC in 2018 described the right application of the social change in Baluchistan. With the projected foundation and implementation of social ventures, CPEC ought to make an appreciative project for the advancement and betterment of individuals.

Since 2013, CPEC adhered to the development of Baluchistan starting from Gwadar Harbour and entails the financial and infrastructural improvement of the entire province. Baluchistan province also anticipated that the CPEC will support Pakistan to achieve financial development, up to 2.3 million work openings. The societal objectives of CPEC remained distant other than the advancement of the budget with an approximate consumption of CPEC by almost 40%.

The advancements by CPEC mainly focused on infrastructural development, whereas compared to social turmoil, the success of infrastructure is huge and great. The nearness of instability places the CPEC at hazard; typically since distress, such as the assault on Pearl lodging recently. The CPEC project is operational to accomplish financial and social welfare, usually as compatible with the progress as depicted this April.

The Chinese Pakistan Economic Corridor in its planning, activity, implementation and assessment has relied more on sectors of economic growth and infrastructure. The agency has faced challenges connecting China to Gwadar through Baluchistan. The focus on Social Welfare projects arose from the corrections the agency made to its budget in December 2018. The agency aims to grow a stable and reliable social welfare and

socioeconomic setup in Baluchistan. The ability to change matters to attain social goals also depends on the efficiency of the application of the social transformation theory. The CPEC has an honest intent that involves helping Baluchistan with development; the agency has been involving the province in its legal and political progress. This intent and progress should be understood by the locals of Baluchistan as well.

The state of instability is a concern in Baluchistan, more so in the Gwadar district.

The CPEC has sought to rectify its plans to attain social welfare goals. The creation of stability in Baluchistan will largely contribute to the social attainment of the goals.

The change in projections and plans by CPEC on Baluchistan is however a beam of hope regarding the social welfare goal. This is because CPEC has now aimed to consider its social goals more than it did, in the implementation of its social and socio-economic goals.

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## Appendix

### Pictorial

In April 2019, the President of the Republic of China Xi Jinping met with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in order to discuss and plan for the socio-economic projects to be implemented in Pakistan, more so in Baluchistan Province.

The map and its connectivity lines show that Baluchistan has the most lines by CPEC which means CPEC has made developments that are mainly focused on Baluchistan province. This shows the regard for Baluchistan by CPEC.



Image 1

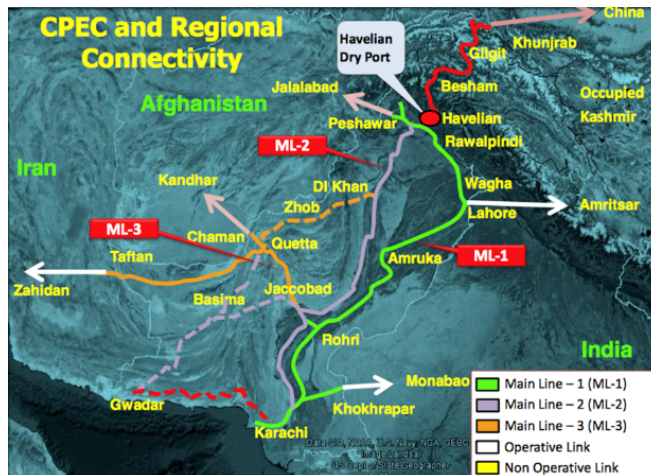


Image 2