

## Pak-China Partnership: U.S. And India's Response

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**Abstract:** *Pakistan and China have been enjoying multilayered ties. They have mutual cooperation and a supportive environment for each other. Their relationship has strengthened after the 2000s. They shifted their ties according to the global shadow. However, with the passage of time, their relationship transformed from geo-economic to geo-strategic. 2015 was the turning year of their ties with signing the C.P.E.C. project cost of \$46 Billion U.S. dollars. Both countries inked the agreement when the president of China, Xi Jinping, visited Pakistan in 2015. They are trying to safeguard their interests against the animosity of the U.S. and India. The pivot policy of the U.S. contains China's influence over the region. India is, on the other hand, sees it as a threat to its security. In this article, we are going to explore the ties between China and Pakistan and will observe the response of India and the U.S. towards them.*

**Key Words:** C.P.E.C, Gwadar, Geo-economics, Geo-strategic, Interests, U.S

### Introduction

Pakistan and China have robust ties, and their formidable agreements are to be implemented properly. Both are timely tested allies not in the region but also at the transnational level. China secures Pakistan's interests at international platforms such as in Security Council. On the other hand, Pakistan never betrayed China in the region. Both suit each other—however, their partnership was triggered by India over time. India has border disputes with both China and Pakistan. They share matters of mutual interest and want common output. Their ties shaped over time. It is a fact that there is no permanent friend and animosity in international politics, but there are only permanent interests. However, Pakistan and China both need each other to gain their respective goals. Pakistan has always been assisted by China over its external

threat, economic recession, and diplomatic crisis. India has been trying to get the membership of Nuclear Suppliers Group (N.S.G.) and to be the permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, but China always denied it. On the other hand, Pakistan always supports the Chinese stance over Taiwan, Xijiang, and the South China Sea. The U.S. and India consider the strong ties between Pakistan and China. China might cut the U.S. dominance over the world, and India perceived it as a security threat for itself. China and Pakistan both are very close to India with border disputes, and India is in anguish that both might trap it.

In this article, we will try to explore and address some questions. How and why Pakistan and China are important to each other? How are both supportive of each other,

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and how us and India consider it? And will use secondary data to analyze the material.

This paper will provide us with three categories. In its first category, we would explore the historical background of their ties. In the second part, we will discuss the cooperation between Pakistan and China over the war on terror and C.P.E.C. The last and third section would see the China and Pakistan relationship through the lens of the U.S. and India.

### **Historical relation between Pakistan and China**

When Mao Zingong's revolution succeeded and modern China came into being in 1948, Pakistan was among those few countries which recognized it as a legitimate government and a state. However, Pakistan established its diplomatic relation with China in May 1951. Although China did not like Pakistan's jump into SEATO and CENTO, they understood that it was the need of Pakistan to be a member of that security agreements. However, during the cold war, when China chose to protect its communist ideology through intervening in Korean War in 1951, Pakistan did not oppose the Chinese stance on international platforms.

However, India is the common animosity of both Pakistan and China. Pakistan's focus remained on India, and China also has serious concerns over India. China and India have been sharing 3,488 kilometers long border. Unfortunately, Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra stated in 1954 that communism is a threat to international democracy. However, the Chinese primer called back its ambassador over the statement of the prime minister of Pakistan. Later, Pakistan assured China that it is the compulsion for Pakistan to enter into the western-oriented organization for its security. And Pakistan would never go against Chinese interests. However, the primer of China Zhou Enlai visited Pakistan in 1956 and stated that the differences of opinion would not block our relationship.

China and Pakistan's relation more consolidated in the 1960s. The war between China and India in 1962 in which India was defeated. Pakistan's supported the Chinese stance. However, during the '60s, both superpowers, the U.S.S.R. and U.S., paid more attention to India. During the war of 1965 between Pakistan and India, the U.S did not support Pakistan. On the other hand, China gave diplomatic, moral, and military technology to Pakistan. However, that support created more respect between the people of both countries. When East Pakistan seceded from West Pakistan in 1971 by the conspiracy of India, China-backed Pakistan by its Moral support.

Pakistan's strategic location is significant. It is situated at the junction point of the Muslim world, China and South Asia. During the cold war era, Pakistan became more important for the powerful countries of the world, such as the U.S. and Russia. However, being near to Afghanistan and sharing the same ethnic people, on the other hand, Iran was also a neighborhood of Pakistan. At that time, it suited China that Pakistan would be more important for it to save its interest.

On the other hand, when the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan, numerous people fled to Pakistan and took refuge. However, Pakistan gained financial assistance from China to look after the refugees. In the 1980's China remained neutral over the Kashmir issue. Beijing was keen to settle down the border dispute with India. However, India did not do so. Indian reluctance over border settlement with China further consolidated the ties of China and Pakistan. When India tested nuclear weapons in 1998, later Pakistan also did the same. China slammed on India that it would destabilize the region and remained silent over Pakistan's move. However, China and Pakistan entered into a new age of relations after the 2000s.

Now, China has been pulling Russia towards Pakistan. Russia has opened a self-imposed embargo on Pakistan. Three Russian military commanders visited Pakistan in 2007. On the other hand, New Dehli's ties are being

spoiled with Moscow. Russia has shown its genuine concerns to the Indian government over the quad group. The quad group has been established by four countries that share common goals. The U.S., Japan, India, and Australia are those which wanted to contain China in the region. However, the U.S. and its South East Asian ally also support quad against China's growing hegemony. Therefore, the geo-political scenario has been changing very rapidly. Russia once was the foe of Pakistan, and now, her policies are being shifted from New Dehli to Islamabad. China is the country that is playing a vital role in bringing Moscow and Islamabad closer.

However, it is in favor of Beijing to bring them close. Russia also supported the Pakistan bid over Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2017. The naval drills have also been conducted between the Russian and Pakistani military. Russia also supports Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Indian (TAPI). TAPI is a gas pipeline that would supply gas to three South Asian countries. If this project operationalized, it would provide natural gas to all three energy consumer countries of the South Asia. However, bilateral ties between them are not much cordial. Their regional rivalry impeded them from opening their borders for trade, business, and people-to-people exchange. This dilemma remained to prevail in South Asian nations. Pakistan and Indian conflict is largely over the Kashmir issue. Therefore, many ups and downs come and go. However, the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan remained over the demarcation of their borders. Afghanistan does not recognize the Durand line. However, Pakistan endeavored to take Afghanistan in its confidence. Many governments came and went, and the Taliban's government remained in favor of Pakistan. Russian support for Pakistan and its decay towards India is one of the signs of opportunity for Pakistan. However, more recently, Pakistan has conducted naval exercises in the Arabian Sea, in which 45 countries participated along with Russia and the U.S. However, these indications mean a lot for Pakistan.

## Importance of China

China has been using soft power policies to integrate other nations. It never took an aggressive attitude towards any neighbor. China is a nation that supports peace and harmony among the nations. It shares a border with fourteen nations of the world and believes that peace could prevail in progress and prosperity in the region.

The walk of China towards its development and progress is incredible. It is estimated that China may bypass the U.S. within a decade. China did not make regional progress but also made progress in the international scenario. Now, it has become a major power in the world—the countries of the world, even Latin and Central American inclination towards China. The African continent has also been descended towards the progress of China. It is spreading economic connectivity through corridors of peace. However, international order is now being shifted from the west to the east as Asia. Therefore, U.S. presence in Asia has been increasing to contain China's growing power. The U.S. support for Taiwan, the Philippines, and India are some examples of how Washington is trying to counter China in the region?

On the other hand, China signed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership with 15 south East Asian countries on November 15, 2020. Before this, China's initiated Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has reflected positive impacts not only on the region but also on the world's politics. The United States of America engaged with its allies in the region to safeguard its interests. The quad group of the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia is countering the dominance of China in the Indo-Pacific and the Asia Pacific region. The U.S. has signed a transpacific partnership with its South East Asian countries to deter the trade between China and ASEAN. On the other hand, China is rising peacefully except for its border dispute with India. China's rising is for those states which had a hostile attitude with China in the past.

## **Pakistan's Importance for China**

Pakistan is a resource-rich country in South Asia. It shares borders with four countries China, India, Afghanistan, and Iran. It has open and direct access to the Arabian Sea as well. The strategic location of Pakistan is vital. It remained important for invaders from central Asia or the Middle East to the sub-continent. However, Pakistan's location is as important as then. It is very near to the Strait of Hormuz, where the largest ships of oil pass on a regular basis. However, China would get indirect access to the warm waters of Pakistan and extend its trade to the Middle East and Africa. Pakistan always stood with China during its decay period. Pakistan is the country that played its constructive role in engaging China and the U.S. as friendly nations. China could not forget Pakistan's immense role as a mediator.

In 2013, China's prime minister visited Pakistan and initiated the proposal for long-term economic development. He added that China could not make progress without Pakistan's constructive role. However, in the same year, the president of China, Xi Jinping, declared its ambition for the "Silk Road and Economic Belt" in Kazakhstan. Then in 2015, both China and Pakistan inked the agreement of China Pakistan Economic Corridor C.P.E.C. The purpose of this project was to extend the connectivity far away from the region. China's aim is to link Africa, the Middle East, and Europe with Asia.

The Gwadar port is situated in Pakistan and will provide China with indirect access to new markets. The Gwadar port is considered the gateway to the Strait of Hormuz. Three regions meet at the point where Gwadar is situated. Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia are the region that can be connected through Gwadar deep seaport.

Currently, China is taking oil from the Middle East through the Strait of Malacca, which is under the dominance of the U.S. and its allies. When oil reaches its eastern side, it gets time to deliver its oil to the west side of the country. However, in that circulation, China has been spending more money and wasting

more time to travel. Therefore, it connected western province Xijiang to Gwadar, Pakistan. In this way the time and money both would be reduced. However, China's dependency would reduce on the Strait of Malacca and the Indian Ocean.

On the other hand, growing Indo-U.S strategic partnership is a broad threat for China. However, to counter the threat, Pakistan is the best option for China in the region. Pakistan supports China's stance on Taiwan and Tibet issues. In the past, Pakistan played a tremendous role in bringing both the U.S. and China close to each other. China has also been supportive of Pakistan on international platforms. Financial assistance was provided to Pakistan by China on several occasions. The terrorism, extremism, and separatism in Pakistan were trying to derail the country, and China always stood with Pakistan to get rid of these menaces.

The U.S. is using India as the safety of its interest in the region against China's growing progress. China's speed of progress is no match. However, the U.S. has been pressurizing Beijing to give up against the hegemony of Washington. Therefore, America has made several economic and strategic agreements with India. They signed a civil nuclear deal in July 2005. Now, both the countries have given their ties a new carved by adopting 2+2 dialogues in 2018.

## **China Pakistan Economic Corridor C.P.E.C. Cooperation and Opportunities**

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (C.P.E.C.) was first proposed during the reign of President Musharraf. However, it was formally proposed by Prime Minister of China Li Keping in 2013, when he came to a state visit to Pakistan. C.P.E.C. includes several projects. The construction of infrastructures such as railway lines, roads, airports, and master plans of metropolitan cities of the country. The energy projects are also being developed. Many of them have been completed. Gwadar port construction is vital for trade and business to Africa and the Middle East. Oil and gas pipelines Special Economic

Zones are the long-term projects under the C.P.E.C.

### **Operational Activities of C.P.E.C.**

The construction of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (C.P.E.C.) has been continued. It entered into its second phase. It was partially operationalized in October 2016, when some of the Chinese containers reached the Sust port of Gilgit-Baltistan. Some of these containers had also been reached in Quetta in November 2016. The end of these containers was to reach Gwadar port I. South West of Baluchistan.

### **Response of Regional States**

The C.P.E.C. project is not only for China and Pakistan but also for the other nations. Some experts consider it a regional project. Indeed, it is not a regional project but a transnational Project which would connect Africa, Europe, and Asia to one Road. Some countries regard it as the prosperity of the gate.

Afghanistan remained under the shadow of bullets for a long time. However, it would be helpful for landlocked countries as Afghanistan is. It would provide Kabul access to the Arabian Sea through Gwadar port. The western route of C.P.E.C. is underway, which would give a tremendous opportunity to Kabul for a transit route from Chaman to Gwadar. Kabul government has shown its keen interest in the route.

### **U.S. and India view Pak-China Partnership United States Views**

The U.S. did not oppose C.P.E.C. openly, but indirectly it has been saying that Pakistan could trap into debt of China. On the other hand, America has been arguing that we would oppose the economic connectivity, but that connectivity would not be only for China and Pakistan but also for Afghanistan. The U.S. has some sort of serious concerns over the region. China, Russia, and Iran, which are opposing countries to U.S. hegemony, could cut it from the region. The erstwhile Soviet Union had a border dispute which later settled down. The dispute triggered China to be close

with Pakistan. The war between China and India in 1962 was another episode of China's closeness towards Pakistan. China and Pakistan both have a common enemy of India. India is supported by both Russia and now, particularly by the U.S. however, growing partnerships between the U.S. and India are derailing the region. It would create an imbalance in the region.

The U.S. sees the cordial relationship between China and Pakistan as a real threat to its interests in the region. However, Pakistan remained very close to the U.S. and participated in its led war on terror. Pakistan sacrificed with the blood of human resources and lost a lot in the economy. And on the other hand, the U.S. has played its double game with Pakistan. When Washington once fulfilled its interests, it left Pakistan alone. However, these experiences teach a lot to Pakistan. Now, Pakistan is exploring new opportunities to develop its ties with China and Russia. China always remained a very close and timely tested ally and friend of Pakistan. But now, Russia is also taking an interest in Islamabad. Former Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif visited Russia in 2015. They also participated in several naval exercises as well. However, the international alignment is being changed.

The U.S. wanted connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia, and its central point was Afghanistan. The new Silk Road was proposed by the U.S. in 2011. However, C.P.E.C. replaced, which is integrating the areas not only within countries but also beyond the countries.

On the other hand, many countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asian republicans are also showing their interest. Iran signed a 25 year deal with China in June 2020 in the field of economic cooperation and strategic partnership. China's Belt and Road Initiative is attracting numerous states. The central Asia republicans are under the influence of the U.S., but now their alignment is being shifted from the U.S. to China. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is common among them. Central Asian countries see China and Russia as the hub of

industries that would alleviate them. China needs energy from central Asia. Therefore, cooperation among them is inevitable.

### **India's Views**

The relationship between China and India did not remain cordial. The border dispute between them is one of the major issues. However, both have endeavored to maintain their hegemony in Asia. The issues of dominance over Asia further disunite them. India remained conscious of China's move towards Pakistan. The enemy of an enemy is a friend. Therefore, China and Pakistan have a common enemy of India in the region. Therefore, China took Pakistan as its ally against India. The new Dehli established strong ties with Washington, especially after the 1990s.

Since the inception of C.P.E.C., India has been opposing the project. The prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, said that it poses a great threat to the interests of India in the region. They argued that the C.P.E.C. passes through the disputed land of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. However, the main objective of India is to subdue the C.P.E.C. But, Pakistan and China are smoothly working on the project. Like China, India is also an energy-consuming country. India's economy is growing rapidly. Therefore, it wants to be the sole power in South Asia, which poses a threat to Pakistan.

India's major aim is to subdue C.P.E.C. and damage the interests of China in Pakistan through insurgence. However, several Indian consulates in Afghanistan are operating against Pakistan to undermine the C.P.E.C. The consulates are very close and indicated by Pakistan intelligence services, Jalalabad and Kandahar consulates providing logistic and military training to Tehreek Taliban, Pakistan, and Baluch rebels. Numerous shreds of evidence have been shown by the Pakistan military to the international community as well. E.U. chronicle further exposed India in December 2020. India has opposed the civil nuclear deal between China and Pakistan, arguing that it would violate international protocols. However, when India itself signed a

civil nuclear deal with the U.S., then at that time, it never cared about international regimes.

India has been establishing its ties with Iran. This new nexus between new Dehli and Tehran are being considered to counter Pak-China C.P.E.C. India had shown interest in Chabhar port to undermine the Gwadar port of Pakistan. However, the Iranian and Indian nexus did remain longer, and Iran signed a deal with China in June 2020. But, the Indian construction over the port is continued. India will operationalize the port in the near future. However, Indian dreams were smashed by China.

### **Analysis and Conclusion**

China and Pakistan are both inevitable for each other. However, the growing strategic partnership between the U.S. and China further closed Pakistan and China in every field. China and Pakistan's relationship will remain more cordial in the future because both are also pulling Russia towards them. The growing interest of India towards Washington is also disturbing Moscow. However, Russia has shown its concern over the quad group to India. Russia and India signed a "strategic partnership dialogue" in 2000. They annually participated in the dialogue, but 2020's dialogue has been canceled. Some experts see it as India's growing relationship with the U.S. However, China provided much to Pakistan in terms of finance. According to a report that the U.S Kerry Lugar Berman act consisted of \$5 Billion U.S. dollars, but China gave more than it. Now, Pakistan will not hear from the U.S. to do more.

Pakistan always remained supportive of China. And China also gave its priority to Pakistan. Both have a common enemy who has been triggering them to be closer. Pakistan should be more vigilant towards both China and the U.S. Washington did not derail much yet; therefore, Pakistan's relation with both China and the U.S. should be logical and balanced.

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