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**CHINA-PAKISTAN NEXUS: IMPLICATION ON INDIA'S SECURITY**

**KEY WORDS:**

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**ABSTRACT**

How can we understand the special relationship between china and Pakistan? Why have the two countries enjoyed such friendly and stable diplomatic relations across a whole range of areas over the past 65 years? If we can accurately answer these two questions, we can more fully understand the strategic importance of Pakistan both in the region and worldwide. As one of the world's major powers, China's development across a range of areas has been the subject of increasing international attention in recent years. China is widely considered to be an "emerging Power" that may threaten the United States in the future. Therefore, China's strategic relationship with Pakistan must be understood from an international strategic perspective, specifically the interlocking geopolitical relationship between China.

**Introduction:**

For almost two hundred years China seemed to fellow Napoleon's instruction staying dormant and serving as an arena for rivalry among great powers. This is applicable to India as well China in 1979 and India in 1991 began the process of coming out of long slumber and world began shaking, China and India reawakening is reshaping the global economic and political landscape. Economic and technological pressures are pushing New Delhi and Beijing towards a cooperative integration into the world. Growth also means that China and becomes more assertive, casting a larger shadow on the region and the world. If there ever was a race between India and China, it is now over. China's economy the second largest is three times the size of India and is growing at a faster rate than before. China has marched far ahead of India on a whole gamut of indices – i.e. economic, social, military, space and technology. Therefore, it is important to examine and analyze the capabilities and capacities of both the countries.<sup>1</sup>

The paper examines the key contours underlying in China's current Pakistan Policy. Specifically, it emphasizes China's strategic reach, goal and future ambitions in Pakistan. It extends to argue that the primary goal of China's Pakistan policy is to expend steadily. Its strategy in the region is in checking India's economic progress without diverting the normal course of Sino-Indian relations. It wants to delineate further that an aggressive Pakistan policy of China would impact hugely the strategic outcome of Asia security. Specifically, there is need to delve into the pattern in China's Pakistan policy and look at how an increasing Chinese presence in Pakistan recently has influenced the Asian security dynamics, as rightly, a People's Daily piece notes that "China has lately been taking a lot of initiatives in South Asian neighbors and particularly in Pakistan."<sup>2</sup> A primary inquiry in this context lies with China's individual connection with the countries in Asia. However, in the discourse of China's regional strategy, it seeks to answer two specific queries. First, is China collaborating with Pakistan for enhancing regional security strategy. Second what large objectives it tries to achieve while it embraces these South Asian countries particularly Pakistan.<sup>3</sup>

**Pakistan remains faithful partner of China:**

In the Chinese power building approach in Asia, South Asia has been a strategic focus for quite some time, its main objectives is to expend "multi-dimensional "strategic cooperation with the countries in this region. In this regard, Pakistan remains the first choice in Chinese strategic calculus. China has in fact, built close strategic ties during Pervez Musharraf's rule with Pakistan and all helped it in two ways, first it could be taken as a reliable and secured partner in the Indian Ocean and it fits into the geo-political equation of China; second, to check the strategic growth of India in the region. Pakistan's anti-India stance has always been supported by China, making it a proxy for Chinese intentions towards India. In the words of President Hu Jintao's, the China-Pakistan relationship is '*higher than the mountains and deeper than seas*'<sup>6</sup>

Pakistan has a long and symbiotic relationship with China. The

long-standing ties between the two countries have been mutually supportive. A close identity of views and mutual interests remain the hallmark of bilateral ties. Since the 1962 Sino-Indian War, Pakistan has supported China on most issues of importance to the latter, especially those related to the question of China's sovereignty like Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet and other sensitive issues such as human rights.

Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China were established on 21 May 1951, shortly after the defeat of the Republic of China in 1949. While initially ambivalent towards the idea of a Communist country on its borders, Pakistan hoped that China would serve as a counterweight to Indian influence. India had recognized China a year before, and Indian Prime Minister Nehru also hoped for closer relations with the Chinese. Since 9/11, Pakistan has increased the scope of Chinese influence and support by agreeing to a number of military projects, combined with extensive economic support and investment from the Chinese. This is partially due to Pakistan's strategy of playing off the two powers against each other, but also a genuine effort to prevent America's influence in the region from becoming too strong. In return, the Chinese hope to strengthen Pakistan as a counterbalance to American and Indian influence.

**Wider Proliferation Circle:**

China has been instrumental in assisting Pakistan in becoming a nuclear power as well as providing the delivery means for its nuclear arsenal. The start of China's terrible record of proliferating nuclear weapons goes back to 1983. In 1986 Chinese scientists assisted the Kahuta Laboratories to solve problems on their uranium enrichment centrifuges.

Pakistan's first nuclear device was tested at *lop Nor* in china in 1990. China is now providing technology to Pakistan to develop the alternate plutonium route for production of nuclear weapons. Likewise, having initially provided M-9 missile to Pakistan, it has paid for Pakistan's acquisition of Nodong and Taepodong missile from North Korea. Currently, most of the hardware for the Pakistan military, such as tanks, artillery, aircraft and communication equipment is being provided by China either gratis or at friendly rates. During Pakistan Prime Minister Gilani's visit to China in May, 2011, the schedule for providing 50 JF-17 Fighter Aircraft was expedited and negotiations for providing J-20 stealth fighters commenced.

The opening of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) which connect the two, the laying of a gas pipeline from Gwadar Pasni to Xinjiang and literally leaving the Gilgit –Baltistan region to China for development are indicative of the close strategic relationship between the two nations. According to media report, as many as 11,000 Chinese personnel, including soldiers, engineers, technicians and labor, are present in the Gilgit-Baltistan area. Not with standing the irritant of Pak-based Uighur fundamentalist Islamic groups creating unrest in Xinjiang and the deaths of number of Chinese due to Islamic terrorist acts with in Pakistan, the relation between the two countries continues to grow.

In the long-term horizon, the relations between China and Pakistan will remain good. Pakistan has a long and symbiotic relationship with China. The long-standing ties between the two countries have been mutually supportive. A close identity of views and mutual interests remain the hallmark of bilateral ties. Since the 1962 Sino-Indian War, Pakistan has supported China on most issues of importance to the latter, especially those related to the question of China's sovereignty like Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet and other sensitive issues such as human rights.

#### **Chinese Nuclear Missile Assistance to Pakistan:**

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#### **Gwadar Sea Port Development:**

The Chinese penetration with economic purpose having strategic clouts with Pakistan will certainly a step forward for other smaller countries to get inspired for better ties with China. In keeping with its economic and strategic expansion, China has developed its strategic influence in the region with India's other neighbor's like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. Among these, Bangladesh deserves an analysis. Gwadar Port China is the largest investor in the Gwadar Deep Sea Port, which is strategically located at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. It is viewed warily by both America and India as a possible launch pad for the Chinese Navy, giving them a good ability to launch submarines and warships in the Indian Sea. However the Gwadar Port is currently delayed due to a multilateral diplomatic standoff between the project leaders and the Singapore government<sup>8</sup>.

China has offered Pakistan military aid in order to fight against terrorism in Pakistan. Pakistan has purchased military equipment from China in order to bolster their efforts against Islamic militants. In the past, China has played a major role in the development of Pakistan's nuclear infrastructure, especially when increasingly stringent export controls in Western countries made it difficult for Pakistan to acquire materials and uranium enriching equipment from elsewhere. China has supplied Pakistan with equipment to advance their nuclear weapons program, such as the Chinese help in building the Khushab reactor, which plays a key role in Pakistan's production of plutonium. A subsidiary of the China National Nuclear Corporation contributed in Pakistan's efforts to expand its uranium enrichment capabilities by providing 5,000 customs made ring magnets, which are a key component of the bearings that facilitate the high-speed rotation of centrifuges. China has also provided technical and material support in the completion of the Chashma Nuclear Power Complex and plutonium reprocessing facility, which was built in the mid 1990s. China may also have supplied nuclear technology to the Pakistanis, enabling Pakistan to become a nuclear state with an estimated 100

warheads as of 2011

The support with which China and Pakistan give each other is considered important in global diplomacy, and has been compared to Israel – United States relations. According to a Pew survey of Pakistan public opinion in 2010, 84 percent of respondents said they had a favorable view of China and 16 percent had a favorable view of the United States. Gwadar is strategically located at the apex of the Arabian Sea and at the mouth of the Persian Gulf and is the location of Gwadar Port, a newly-built strategic warm-water, deep-sea port, which was developed by the Government of Pakistan at a cost of USD \$248 million and inaugurated by the President of Pakistan on 20 March 2007.[3]

The M-11 Transfer was actually a smokescreen for the transfer of an entire M 9 factory to Pakistan and that explains the discrepancy in the figures. At a congressional hearing in 1992, the CIA spokesmen made it clear that in the light of the M 11 transfer he could not explain the information they had received about the M9 transfers. China at the time was not and is still not a member of MTCR which has a 300 kms limit on the transfer of missiles. The ghost of Gwadar is back, looming large again as China gears up to assume operational control of this strategic deep sea port close to the Strait of Hormuz. The recent decision of the Pakistan Cabinet to transfer the functional responsibility for this port from the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) to a Chinese company (China's Overseas Port Holding) has sent alarming signals to India as this port has larger strategic implications. India is concerned as the port offers an exceptional much-desired strategic depth not only to Pakistan but also cements China's foothold in the Indian Ocean region.

The move is a win-win situation for both Pakistan and China. For Pakistan, the Chinese takeover serves the purpose of closer Sino-Pak economic cooperation and possibly a greater engagement on security issues. A fully operational Gwadar port means the end of near-total dependence on a relatively vulnerable Karachi. Even prior to the completion Pakistan had started considering Gwadar as an important naval base after Karachi and Ormara in an attempt to improve Pakistan's maritime security posture. Karachi, which lies about 470 km east of Gwadar, was effectively blockaded during the India-Pakistan war of 1971. Gwadar, located much further to the west, away from the Indian coast, will certainly provide a safe alternative for Pakistan to improve military flexibility. For the Chinese, Gwadar has the strategic significance of being close to the Strait of Hormuz. The Gwadar-Karakoram link road will offer strategic access to the Indian Ocean as well as greater economic benefits to its restive Xinjiang province. It will also Beijing to ensure better security of its energy shipments along the existing maritime links and oil imports from the Gulf to the Xinjiang region through overland. Perhaps, the proposed multi-modal Gwadar-Kashgar road, rail and gas-oil pipeline links will put to rest the much discussed China's Malacca dilemma Besides, on the security front with a listening post, China will be able to monitor US naval activities in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden, activities of the Indian Navy and future India-US cooperation in the Arabian Sea.

Besides the road links, China and Pakistan are also planning to build a railway link between Xinjiang and Gwadar, almost parallel to the Karakoram Highway. The proposed railway line runs from Kashgar to Havelian and is expected to join Pakistan railway network for further connection to Gwadar. This rail link is not only aimed for economic benefits, but also to carry oil from the Persian Gulf to Xinjiang in case the pipeline option turns out unfeasible. Energy transportation through the comparatively secure Gwadar-Xinjiang overland corridor would always be an easier and faster option for China. The distance from Kashgar to Gwadar through the overland route is about 1000 miles while the present oil shipments from the gulf region cover a distance of more than 3500 miles in reaching to the east coast of China through the Malacca Straits.<sup>9</sup>

An apprehensive India, soon after the commencement of the Gwadar project, decided to help Iran in developing the Chabahar

port. This port, located in southeastern Iran, is the only Iranian port which has direct access to the Indian Ocean. Chabahar, connecting Afghanistan to the Persian Gulf waters, could be good alternative to the Gwadar and Karachi ports being a low cost option for Afghanistan and Central Asia to reach the warmer waters of the Indian Ocean. In 2003, a trilateral agreement was signed between India, Iran and Afghanistan in infrastructural development. Under this, Iran was to build a highway from Chabahar to the Afghanistan border and India was assigned to develop road connectivity between Delaram (a city on the Iran-Afghanistan border) and Zaranj (capital of Nimruz province of Afghanistan). Despite the existing flux in Afghanistan, India has already completed 213 km Zaranj-Delaram road while progress from the Iranian side is unexpectedly slow. In addition, India is also engaged in helping Iran to upgrade the Chabahar Milak rail road.

**The New-pivot of China Pakistan Nexus: CPEC**

The CPEC is strategically and economically importance both for China and Pakistan. It will pave the way for China to access the Middle East and Africa from Gwadar Port, enabling China to across the Indian Ocean and in setum China will support development projects in Pakistan to over come the latter’s energy crises and stabilizing its faltering economy. Additionally, the CPEC could serve as the drive for trade and economic integration between China, Pakistan, Iran, India, Afghanistan and Central Asian states provided the frosty political atmosphere between Pakistan, India and Afghanistan and to some extant Iran gets improved in the near future.

The CPEC connects China directly to the Indian Ocean and the region of the Middle East from the deep Gwadar Port reducing its existing dependence on the South China Sea as the latter is becoming a contesting territory between various regional and global actors and can be choked any time by the completing powers in the Asia-Pacific Region.

China currently transport 80% off its oil and energy needs through the Malacca strait and increasingly feels that its economic and energy security interest in the region are under serious threats due to the escalation of tensions between China and the region and global players in south and East China sea. This is way China is looking for alternative viable transit routes both economically and security wise, the CPEC is the best choice for China linking it directly to the Indian Ocean via Gwadar Port.<sup>10</sup>

**Policy Implications**

- The coming period is full of strategic vulnerability for India. India needs to fast-track its plans for military modernization and its procedures for procurement.
- India needs to develop a strong bilateral relationship with its partners, based on a congruence of strategic interests, as a hedge against China.
- To build its indigenous defense capability and industrial base, India needs to seriously examine offers of defense cooperation, particularly in critical areas.
- India needs to initiate a full proof maritime strategy and maritime cooperation among the Asian littorals in order to establish a strong hold on sea lines of communication.

India’s strategic concerns regarding China arise from the latter’s emergence as the most influential actor in Asia—one with the ability to shape the future balance of power. What is even more worrisome to India is growing Chinese influence in South Asia and the extended Indian Ocean region (IOR), where New Delhi believes Beijing is severely depreciating its area of influence. Furthermore, China is backing its aggressive assertions with a steady buildup of comprehensive national power and regional military capability.

There is a general understanding in India that the main focus of China’s military modernization and grand strategy is geopolitical competition with the United States, particularly in light of Washington’s recently announced “rebalancing strategy” for the Asia-Pacific. Indian concerns about the modernization of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), however, arise primarily from what Robert Kaplan calls the “collapse of distance brought about by

advances in military technology,” allowing countries to encroach on each other’s sphere of influence. Although China tends to underplay the threat from India, both in terms of India’s military modernization and existing capabilities, Beijing has recently exhibited a tendency to look at these capabilities from the larger perspective of strategic collusion between India and the United States.

**Conclusion:** A central feature of Chinese strategic is to persist with a policy of no-compromise on core strategic issues and to try and win a war without having to fight a battle.

China continues to delay delineation of the LAC and resolve the boundary dispute. The Chinese strategic presence in the POK particularly the Northern areas of Gilgit-Baltistan which has been accepted by them as a disputed area in 1963-64 is a collusive venture. It is also becoming shrill on its recent claim over Arunachal Pradesh. As China’s comprehensive power grows, diplomatic and ground pressure on disputes will keep building. Ambiguity with smile is characteristic of Chinese diplomacy.

Pragmatism demands that we do all that we can to contain our differences with China and prevent a two-front war situation. We can continue to build economic links which have made impressive strides, and separate our bilateral differences from the global issues on which we can work together to mutual advantage. However, at the end of the day, India’s ability to deal with its external security challenges will be determined by its own comprehensive national will, and tangible power in its economic and military spheres.

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