

CHINA'S SOUTH ASIAN CURIOSITIES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the China's strategic, economic and political interests in South Asia linked to its global policies. The article first looks at the swift emergence of China as a global power, besides it highlights its current worldwide targets in various social spheres. Then, it presents the political and economic scenario of South Asia so as to ascertain the current state of order within the region to account for the proper standing of China. The core of this article is version of growing importance of South Asian periphery for the accomplishment of China's security objectives. Certain positive impacts of the inclusion of China in the SAARC for furtherance of mutual cordiality have also been revealed in this paper. In pursuance of the achievement of the most crucial interests in South Asia, China has sought some significant strategies, which are featured here. The article concludes by noting that for peaceful co-existence with South Asian states in order to achieve its world-reaching interests as well as the united Asia as a world power, China needs unconditional cooperation of India.

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Introduction

China's South Asian interests are security oriented. This region is economically and strategically a source of wide-reaching opportunities for China because it leads her to oil producing region, Middle East and rich Central Asia, which is both geopolitically and geo-economically paramount for her. In order to cope with the Indian rivalry, for long time, China's fundamental strategy, designed for the extension of interests, was to build Pakistan as a competitor of India in order to maintain balance of power in the region.

In the post cold war era under the changing international scenario from bipolar to unilateralist, it had been impetus for both India and China to transform their priorities and policies for the promotion of their global interests; in this regard they emphasized the change for the better relations with strong regional powers. As a result, the two emerging-market economies initiated to engage economically and became awesome economic partners. Notwithstanding, varying Sino-India interaction from estranged relations to economic-engagement, Chinese interests in South Asian region are still challenged. Certain major challenges, China is confronting with in South Asia, are India's emergence as a rising global power and her hegemonic command over the region. Moreover, emerging US hold and interference in South Asia and US-India strategic partnership are creating hindrances in the way of its peaceful co-existence with South Asia.

Despite all these challenges China aims to enlarge multi-dimensional accommodating relations implying military as

well as political and economic relations to multiply her own economic and political power in the region and to deter back the influence of her potentially hostile powers (currently the U.S.) to damage China's welfare. In this regard there are arranged periodic visits between China and larger South Asian countries leaderships "to exchange views on mutual bilateral, regional and international concerns. Cooperation in transportation is currently particular and important form of China's expanding ties to South Asian countries. Besides, she is more concerned regarding the maintainance of existing balance of power between India and Pakistan for the security of the region as well as the extension of her own interests.

Emergence of China as a Global Power

In the literature of International Relations the term global power is an added present-day term for great power, which characterizes the impact of the various dynamics of Globalization upon states' activities and policies in all its manifestations. In keeping with this phenomenon, at present, the great power standing is a matter to encompass every sphere of social life, concurrently. Admittedly, this situation requires the states to keep more economic and diplomatic heft in their bilateral, regional and international arena so as to spin the international order in favor. Above and beyond, it conditions for states the competent interaction with non-state actors, regional associations, and the instruments and institutions of global governance. Accordingly, the term global power is above all assigned for the competent contemporary great powers that are capable to uphold their rise and make the most of their potential and resources to fortify or emasculate

the continuing worldwide configuration.

According to Hedley Bull's classic 1977 work, "*The Anarchical Society* " International system belongs to such a social order of states that preserve balance-of-power to prevent a global dictatorship emerging through imperial conquest. Besides the balancing-of-power for maintaining this socially constructed system, great powers additionally slot in the order preserving mechanisms of international law, diplomacy, and joint management of the system. Accordingly, 21st century global power retains inalienable strength for the promotion of its interest hangs on to influential position in world market, possesses formidable military capability, Information technology skills as well as pursues effectively and dynamically the projects and initiatives of international instruments against regional and global security threats.

Being a member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, and a "peer Competitor" of United States, People's Republic of China (PRC) belongs to the elite club of recognized great powers and proc-active performer of global market. It is involved in more than 1000 international governmental organizations that deal with issues of Human security besides, it is a staunch supporter of pacific settlement of disputes under UN charter and areas under discussion of International Law.¹ In the appreciation of all these tremendous characters China is globally titled as "Giant Economic Power", "Super Energy Power" and "Global Power."

Previously, In the course of remarkable and triumphant reformation period of Chinese history, the key goal and the

bedrock of its foreign policy were rigorous to revitalize the all-embracing national strength via economic development. In order to pull off the indomitable end Chinese leadership persistently pushed for non-violent regional and global environment. Sketching the key foreign policy principals of China, the architect of the reformation policy Deng Xiaoping superbly asserted the establishment's claim. According to him "We observe developments soberly, maintain our position, meet challenges calmly, hide our capacities and bide our time, remain free of ambitions, never claim leadership."

Afterward, in 1993, this statement was amended by President Jiang Zemin in order to magnetize US for unwavering relations with China. He declared that "enhancing cooperation, reducing troubles, expanding cooperation, and avoiding confrontation" were main foreign Policy objectives of China.²

However, the years ahead witnessed a prominent shift in China's foreign policy and politics which was then focused on its east coast of the Taiwan Straits even Asia as a whole ranked relatively low in its security agenda but subsequently by virtue of China's escalation via reformation policy and its self-assured regional policies of the early to mid-1990s as regards to Taiwan and the South China Sea had alarmed its neighbors and intensified the probability of curtailing expanding china as a high-flying part of United States' Asian strategy. From then on, the reserved and inert political move toward no argue for leadership, holding back competence and spotlight just on internal strength keeping aside the external regional and international issues had been no more workable for its smooth survival. Consequently, it was to demonstrate economic and military clout assuring the world regarding peaceful rise up by

way of no menace to the world community. For the sake of acting upon its new-fangled security concept by 1996, Beijing went on a track to develop mutual trust and ties of common interests with Asian multilateral security and economic organizations first.³

Bringing up the recent active policy approaches of China the Information Office of the State Council published a white paper titled "China's National Defense in 2006" It describes:

"China pursues a road of peaceful development, and endeavors to build, together with others a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity. Never before has China been so closely bound up with the rest of the world as it is today. The Chinese government works to advance both the fundamental interests of the Chinese people and the common interests of the peoples of the rest of the world, and pursues a defense policy, which is purely defensive in nature. China's national defense, in keeping with and contributing to the country's development and security strategies, aims at maintaining national security and unity, and ensuring the realization of the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way. China is determined to remain a staunch force for global peace, security and stability. China's national defense and military modernization, conducted on the basis of steady economic development, is the requirement of keeping up with new trends in the global revolution and development in military

affairs, and of maintaining China's national security and development."⁴

Presently China's Security climax highlights the under mentioned broad approaches:

- Modernization of military potential
- Endorsement of passive regional and international order contributing economic security to regional actors
- Vie with America's escalating being there in its contiguous areas, in coalition with regional actors
- Access to world markets, advanced technology, capital investment and managerial know how.⁵

Political-Economic Scenario of South Asia

South Asia is one of such regions of the world, which regardless of their fragile and backward situation hold on to a frontline position in world politics on account of their undiminishing strategic significance. Even if it is a hub of International politics nevertheless this region could haven't achieved the outstanding lead. In view of the fact that this region has witnessed a more complex order wherein the forces of conflict and cooperation are simultaneously at work. Briefly, on the one hand, there is consensus for peace and development, on the other; strife and conflict are disturbing the regional balance.

The main inter-state problems, which have given South Asia an intricate shape, are:

- Porous borders (owing to it population of one country influx another)
- Cross border terrorism
- Blame game on one an other⁶

Being a sole well-built economic and conventional military power of South Asia, India reigns not merely as a leader of the region but alongside attempts to influence policy process of almost all the countries of the region due to which all the neighboring countries with exception to Maldives, blame India for imposition of its will upon their external matters plus impede and vitiate the internal political matters. Despite all these facts, in recent times, the other states of the region have committed them to economic reforms, restructuring and national revitalization aligned with it they have made new headway in these aspects.

Growing Significance of South Asia for China

Consistent with the series of archaeological discoveries and manuscripts, China-South Asia interaction dates back to 2000 years when by 221 BC cultural and commerce interaction had initiated to develop between China and the Indian subcontinent that was known as Tian Zhu (the western heaven) as a revered swath.⁷ Buddhism exclusively provides the strongest link between the two societies. Gautam Buddha, who was born and had acquired knowledge about the ultimate truth in South Asia, very many lives life-size everywhere in China. The civilization of China and South Asia thus holds common source of inspiration with a profound degree of connectivity.⁸

Beijing's recent South Asia policy is guided by security considerations these were historical legacies of disputed border claims and mutual suspicions against the expansionist policies of the British Empire and China's communist regime. This correlation was further messed up by Cold War bipolarism.⁹ Geographically, China and South Asia are linked by land, water, mountains and rivers, which compose the two ends' ties more natural and comprehensive. Mountains pass through and major rivers flow down to China and South Asia from the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China, which has made this linkage more stable.

Tibet in particular conditioned China in formulation of its South Asia policy and to the stability in its frontier regions, because the question of Tibetan separatism raised by external forces had apprehended China regarding its national integrity and domestic stability so in order to comprehend the internal and external features of Tibetan question it was essential to reform and appreciate linkages with all those states and organizations which supported the national integrity of China and voiced against external intervention in the sovereignty of China. South Asian countries abreast of other friends of China discouraged separating elements on China's soil; therefore the immediate creed of China's South Asian policy was to maintain peace at the South West border region and signing border treaties with south Asian neighboring countries.¹⁰

China's entrée in South Asia gained impetus in 1980s after its conversion into the market economy in the 1980s, which made possible for China to risk investing capital in the strife torn region of South Asia. China skillfully deployed economic

incentives to draw Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka into its strategic orbit.¹¹ But, rather the main hindrance ahead for China concerning its achievements in the region was interstate suspicions, imbalanced attitude in relations with each other and exploitation and gains at the cost of other regional states. As a strong power of the region and rising global power India has never liked the furthering Chinese inclination towards other countries of his domain. In the face of such numerous objectionable inducements China continued to cultivate independently bilateral ties with small South Asian countries. It has ever voiced for the sovereign existence of these countries. Especially, after 1962-border war with India become more conscious about the strategic significance of small neighboring countries of South Asia as regard to the peace and stability of China's frontier regions.¹²

Strategically China keeps deep affinity with India's neighboring countries, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Bangladesh is a gateway into India's state of Arunachal Pradesh, which is bone of contention between the two countries because of China's territorial claims over this part. Bangladesh is abundant with natural gas reserves, which is the main cause of Chinese tilt towards this poor country. China accolades Bangladesh for its immense natural gas reserves. Bangladesh's geographic proximity with Myanmar makes this land accessible to China. The most interesting point in case of the strategic position of Bangladesh is that so as to get access to Myanmar for exploiting its gas reserves, India as well spin around on Dhaka's readiness to let a passageway.¹³

In case of cordial relations with Nepal it works like a shield for China's well being in Tibet area. Holding back the influence of

India over Nepal she is trying to mount her hold through infrastructure building projects. All the concerned indications reveal the strategic importance of Nepal for China, which is not energy based like Bangladesh but because of its natural boundaries and frontiers, on the one hand Nepal's borders join China's agitated western province of Tibet and on the other hand it touches the Naxalite-dominated Indian states. This cross way provides golden chance to Nepal's Maoist insurgents to infiltrate into Nexaliites influence districts of India. As a result, both China and India vie for Katmandu's favor. But China avoids interfering in the internal matters of Nepal while India likes to keep influence upon its political matters. For China Internal peace and stability of Nepal is important to keep it away from foreign (Indian and US influence) in order to save Tibet region from new troubles.

Sri Lanka too, occupies strategically important heft in the Indian Ocean stretching from the Middle East to Southeast Asia. Having an easy approach to South East Asia, it attaches importance to Beijing. After 9/11, Sri Lanka has been strategically important for the U.S too, which sought access to the ports of Sri Lanka, airfields and air space for its armed forces under the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA). This western approach to Sri Lanka is unendurable for Both China and India, which jostle to see Sri Lanka out of Western alliances to maintain their own influence in the region. India's reputation in front of Sri Lanka is already suspicious because having a Tamil-majority state of its own treads she cautiously mediates the conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils of Sri Lanka. Conversely, China keeps no profound regard for the separation movement of Tamils and vouches for the

territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and supports it from all the angles.¹⁴

In the consideration of vital importance of all the South Asian countries and a marvelous move towards the prosperous escalation of relations it can be avowed that unwavering environment in China's South Asian periphery is conducive to China's smooth economic swap with the countries of the region. Needless to mention, South Asia in many respects offers economic opportunities, which according to China laying the foundation, I-e, political understanding, peace and stability. Prime Minister Zhu Rongji views that South Asia is an important part of the world boasting a vast land area of five million square kilometers and 1.3 billion diligent and talented people.

In sum, a stable and peaceful South Asia free from military confrontation and war is actual desire of China in consideration of its geographical location, strategic position, and geo-political significance.¹⁵

South Asia in China's Energy Strategy

According to UNCTAD report:

Energy is one of the most important drivers of economic development and is a

Key determinant for the quality of our daily lives, it is probably the biggest

business in the world economy, with a turnover of at least \$1.7–2 trillion a year.

The future investment in the global energy sector is potentially the most important sole issue of international economic development other than the management of the world economy itself. In the consequence of 9/11 events, current Iraqi situation, and vitiating relations between Iran and US, the volatility in the oil market can be widely esteemed which will pose jeopardizing risks to economies. In view of these facts, the world's "giant economic power" and "Energy Super Power" China has also been concerned about energy security.¹⁶ China is the world's second largest consumer of energy after the US. In 2006, China imported 47% of its oil demand from overseas. It is the largest potential market for energy products, services and technology. This increasing dependency on oil and gas has urged her to frame its inter-state relations on bilateral, regional and international level complying with the diplomatic and pacific mechanism to ensure and guarantee the safety of oil import routes through international shipping lanes and pipelines. As a consequence, oil has been one of the chief determinants of China's foreign policy and a big constraint for future economic development.¹⁷

Presently, like other energy seekers China as well intends to apply the under mentioned polices:

- It desires to come up with sustainable way out for energy security,
- It requires to overcome obstructions in the way of exploration and quest,
- It aims at step up the progress of cross-border power and gas projects.

- It needs boosting countrywide self-sufficiency because it lacks the naval power and foreign maritime basis to guarantee the safety of oil import routes.¹⁸

With regard to aforementioned plans, China intends to take advantage of South Asian sea-lanes of communication. International shipping lanes from the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean and some critical straits, such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca and Taiwan Strait, which have exposed new importance for China as it still relies on oil supply from Middle East.¹⁹

China imports half of its oil from the Middle East plus North and East Africa. Almost all of that oil shifts to China by tankers crossways the Indian Ocean. China splendidly understands the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean for its energy security. Since, China's economic vivacity and energy depends a great deal on sea-borne trade therefore this authenticity is of mounting magnitude for China that the Indian Ocean takes over the profit-making and economic links of the Asia-Pacific region. China can confront several potential threats to its trans-Indian ocean oil supply like:

- Closure of the strategic choke points of the Persian Gulf, South East Asia and the South China Sea Strait
- A confrontation between Iran and the United States that could be cause of economic sanctions or military actions which probably restrict oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz
- As a result of escalating India China conflict India might severe China's very important oil imports

- US-PRC conflict over Taiwan might be escalated into US naval blockade of China.

These are just Contingencies which might not turned into reality even so such attentiveness keeps the military institutions on high alert to face the unforeseen events.

Advancement of robust overland transportation system between Yunnan and the Bay of Bengal, and between Western Xinjiang and Gawadar could substantially reinforce the Peoples Liberation Army's aptitude to maintain powerful military maneuver in the eastern and western Indian oceans. Newly created transport lines via Myanmar and Pakistan could also be useful to persist in China's oil commerce across the India Ocean.²⁰

To keep the sea-lanes open and escort Chinese tankers transit the strategic straits, China has found many new entrants in South Asia to keep its sea-lanes open and safe. In this regard the innovative participant is Maldives. According to Media reports Abdul Gayoom government in 2001 during the Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji's visit to Maldives gave consent to establish a base in "Marao", to monitor its sea-lanes, which run along the Indian coast. Besides, it would be able to monitor US naval activity at Diego Garcia and also engage in electronic surveillance in the area. For successful sea-lane security the China has developed a strategy directed to assist Myanmar, Maldives, Pakistan and Iran to assure naval facilities. Importantly, much of the assistance is concentrated along the sea-lane from Malacca to Hormuz. Myanmar too, provides China the desired strategic surge into Indian Ocean via

Intelligence network. This electronic intelligence network in Myanmar is masterpiece of China's strategic assistance. Chinese initiatives for oil-security can be seen in Pakistan too. In March 2002, the visiting Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Bangguo laid the foundation stone of a deep-sea port at Gwadar, which contains strategic significance for China and helps it to sit astride the sea-lane originating from the strategic choke point of Hormuz²¹.

Nurturing Close and Cordial Sino-India Relations: A Need of Time

Although China and India for the largest part of History have remained as adversary and competent allies, this antagonistic approach witnessed a good change in the Post Cold war era and both the rival countries were seen working together for the third category of relations that maintains partnership potential. Following this category the two developed powers retain a comprehensive common illustration of the globe under multipolar structure with capacity for diplomatic options and sovereignty.²²

Since the early 1990s, India is moving rapidly in the fields of economic privatization and marketing programme. Its growth rate has remained steadily at 5 to 7 percent over the last decade. The GDP has reached US\$ 484.5 billion, and ranks 12th among world economies.

In economic frontage India have abundance of learned professionals, IT personnel, and a 200-million middle-class consumer market. With this excess skills India is China's main

competitor for foreign investment and leading power in information Technology industry along with US. Simultaneously, being in the rank of militarily developed countries, its military expenses have amplified by up to 20 percent or more in a decade. Now it has been one of the prevalent importers in the world arms market. Now, being a manufacturer of high-tech military equipment and procurer of aircraft carriers by manufacturing and procuring its naval capability has augmented to project its power in the India Ocean, South China Sea, and so forth. At ease with its economic and military approaches India has set off to trail, “A look east” policy, which entails her to extend its sphere of influence and procure a larger contribution in political, economic, and strategic benefits in South-East Asia.²³

In view of India’s prevailing range of influence in all spheres of life, adopting conciliatory approach, China should try to shun treating her as a geo-political rival since any extreme approach against her could go ahead to a retaliatory policy that emasculate China’s interests in South Asia and slow down its policy options to muddle through the new strategic backdrop in this region.²⁴

There are a number of common issues between them, which can adjoin the two to the dimension of cooperation, such as:

- Both the countries share similar acuity for styling multi-polar and balanced world order in which an impartial correlation of forces will safeguard international security and prop up fair and equitable course in

economic order in place of current unbalanced economic structural design

- They hold somewhat analogous viewpoint for the way out of global issues such as, environment, nuclear Non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament and the need to narrow down the gap between the industrialized North and the developing South
- The two hold similar views on international terrorism, they are splendidly aware of its effects on global security. Consequently, they support counter terrorism actions under the aegis of United Nations. Bilaterally, they concur an exchange of information and intelligence between them on a regular basis. Such actions would lead them to greater understanding and cooperation concerning other issues as well.²⁵

A very interesting and main dimension of the evolving Sino-Indian relationship that on one hand contains competition but on the other side shows a degree of cooperation too, is based on the energy requirements of their industrial expansion and their big ventures with regard to investing in the oilfields abroad - in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. They don't afford long confrontation on this issue as they are already confronting with other major players of global oil market.²⁶.

In spite of evolving Sino-India relations the danger of escalating new problems cannot be avoided which are likely to come in the way of future Sino-China relations. The major one

could be China and India's perception of each other's position and role in Asia and in the International community. It is not only the result of China's rapid growth, but also of India's fast development. At Chinese end, it is indeed imperative to acquire a better understanding of India's growth, behavior, and the techniques as India is going to use its increasing power in the region and the world at large. In tandem, it is essential for both sides to take it into serious account whether their power would not lead to extra power politics²⁷ On Indian side it's her own responsibility to give first priority to its regional security in collaboration with neighboring country China, in this regard it should give cold-shoulder to any long term and meaningful US alliance against her counterpart. A stronger India should not jeopardize China's fundamental interests. Facing a rising India, China as well must show smiling expressions rather than bad blood. As Deng Xiaoping asserted in 1980s, "only after China and India became strong, the century could be called as a century of the Asia-Pacific region". Nurturing closer and better Sino-Indian relations are mutually beneficial for them. Therefore, being geo-strategic and geo-political partners, the two countries should take concrete steps to compete for the betterment of South and East Asia.²⁸

Pakistan's Un-diminishing Implications for China

Since the conclusion of a boundary agreement in 1963, in lieu of several changes inside and outside the circumstances of Pakistan, China has stood as her long-term time tested friend.²⁹ In the case of Pakistan, it was the security imperative arising from the hostility of a bigger and stronger neighbor, which carried her close to this neighboring great power. While, in

case of China, it was recognition of Pakistan's importance as a leader of the Muslim world and later the partnership with US exclusively against rival India, which convinced her to strengthen the stability of Pakistan for the security of its own strategic interests in Asia.³⁰ Since then the two countries have maintained very committed relationship.

It was only after 9/11 events that due to rising inclination of USA to South Asia and in consequence, China's rising cordial relations with India, some misgivings were learnt regarding future Pak-China relations. Since then two issues continue to worry the Chinese. One is the continuing ability of radical Islamists to disturb the peace in Muslim areas of China and the further one is its alarming scale of cooperation and collaboration with United States and Nato. Though China does not speak out publicly, yet it is keeping it on a side might be in the wait of Pakistan's future policy. While growing Sino-Indian relations have cautioned and concerned Pakistan regarding future Chinese policy towards Pakistan.³¹

Even with the presence of concerns on both the ends regarding each other's shifting policies in the changing international scenario there are available all mature incentives for the proper growth of cordial relations.³² In terms of China's economic engagement, Pakistan still remains China's biggest market for its capital investment in infrastructure project.³³ Meanwhile, there are a multitude of cooperation sectors between two. Pakistan's leadership has offered the land of Pakistan as 'corridor' for China's energy, trade and other regional activism. It vows to provide a shortcut route and contributes to all kinds of trade and energy cooperation to China to move on

Central Asia.³⁴ To quote Pan Zhiping, Director of the Center for the Central Asian studies of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences: "Pakistan's Gawadar Port is capable of serving as China's important energy transfer station. Oil from Africa and Middle East will reach the port and go on to China via road, rail, or pipelines. Ni Yanshuo in his article "Corridor of Cooperation", published in "Beijing Review" in March 2006, writes "To China, Pakistan's role is far beyond the energy corridor. It is also the sea channel between China and the Indian Ocean and as the land channel connecting China and Iran. Its unique geographical position connecting East Asia and West Asia and joining the Indian Ocean and the surrounding area of Asia thereby it supplies a new channel to China to come within reach of world."³⁵

China's support for Pakistan, however, is unlikely to completely diminish in the coming decade. The main reason for this continuity resides ironically in the feeble economic situation of Pakistan particularly as compared to India. Without sufficient economic, political, and military support, a further decline in its condition could introduce an element of extreme instability in Pakistan. This, in turn, would have implications for Chinese security on its western flanks. The next incentive is relevant to Pakistan's geo-strategic position, which is situated on the eastern flank of Middle Eastern/Gulf countries. Considering the US long-term presence in these regions, China is unlikely to reduce its support for Pakistan to a level where the latter is forced to align itself completely with Washington without any reference to Beijing's access to the only state straddling both South Asia and the Middle East. For the next decade, too, China and Pakistan will continue to

operate as partners.³⁶

Analyzing the future Sino-Pak relations Pakistan's analyst ought to consider the position of China in this shifting scenario, which is not only regional power but a global power too, which is dealing with other super power and great powers rivalry. Our relation with this neighboring global power must be based on economic and commercial links in the first place. . In addition, being a good strategic partner of China we ought to show concerns for the promotion of legitimate Chinese interests which would be defensive for Pakistan in future. In this respect, we should try to turn down the demands of USA for transit facilities for imports and exports through Pakistani territory via the ports of Gawadar and Karachi to reject any role in the United States policy directed at the containment of China. Pakistan should try to normalize its relations with India so that the two countries could rely less on United States.³⁷

Harmonious Advancement of Sino-SAARC Association

Since long China has been endeavoring to promote equally and liberally some common affiliations with South Asian countries but devoid of multilateral platform, her march on South Asia was short of an organized approach. This Chinese attempt was materialized by means of its inclusion as an observer state in South Asian Association along with United States, Japan, European Union and North Korea. As an observer partner of SAARC, China intends to facilitate contacts and interaction among the major regional cooperation mechanisms therefore China's involvement can be expected to further an Asian consensus and cooperation, contributing to the realization of a

harmonious Asia.³⁸

The main proposals of China for harmonizing relations with South Asia include:

- Lessening poor quality of living in the region by means of collaborative apparatus
- Setting up standard conventions between China and South Asia countries for the release and alleviation of adversities
- To make stronger the existing support with South Asia to upward key transportation and energy sectors
- Backing further ventures in SAARC countries
- Spiraling support for human resource education
- Introducing public exchange programmes
- Academic exchange programmes with SAARC countries are also one of the main proposals.³⁹

China's inclusion in SAARC as an observer has facilitated SAARC nations to seek closer economic ties with this land-linked giant neighbor. As an observer nation to SAARC, now China can feasibly push for in-depth development of trade and other economic engagements as well as political associations with all the nation states of this region.⁴⁰

In order to create a deep linkage with this association China needs to successfully enforce all its major proposals in this region. At the first place, China will have to convince India to join hands with her for the integrity and stability of region

because India was the sole adversary to the Chinese inclusion in the seven-nation regional grouping (SAARC) as a dialogue partner or observer. Even though India stood isolated on this question, because no other member country was apathetic to this proposal, rather Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal gave warm welcome to China's entrance in the association. According to South Asian Analysts and Observers "India believes that China's entry into SAARC would cast a shadow on India's influential standing in the region that means a big blow to her economic interests and political status in the region". Conversely, China's presence in SAARC means more opportunities for India and other SAARC members. Conceivably, SAARC serves China and India as a potential platform for cooperation in a multilateral setting and a precious opportunity for these two biggest developing countries of Asia to have deeper understanding about each other⁴¹

Indeed, the pleasant advance of China-SAARC relations is largely left to the well-coordinated joint efforts of parties both within and exterior the region. There is a need for institutionalized dialogue mechanism between the two.⁴²

Conclusion

The South Asian adjoins the Central Asia in the North, borders the Middle East in the West, and has power over the Indian Ocean to the South; in this manner it maintains an exceedingly vital strategic position in Asia. This extraordinary crucial footing has made it a gate way for China to the out side world and a source of promoting worldwide interests. China's

foreign policy approach is shaped by three main deliberations: swift economic enlargement, magnificent status as a major power, and its functioning as a global player. China's South Asian policy is also devised in line with these three realities therefore it engulfs all the three tracks: strategic, economic and political. In order to meet with challenges in concerned sphere of activities to achieve determined interests in the region, China is working on some imperative strategies such as; Expanding friendly and multi- dimensional cooperation with all South Asian countries, Supporting independence of these countries and their independent decision-making, Minimizing Indian Alignment with Washington, Diminishing American influence in South Asia, Maintaining China and South Asia Balance of Power. Safe guarding energy sea-lanes of communication China helps sustaining a balance in India-Pakistan relations.

For the realization of these policies China needs inevitably the mutual aid of India, which can be possible escaping the traps of USA and giving way to the wide-range deepening relationships between two. In this respect, they need to adopt common concerns and efforts in terms of the united Asia. China's inclusion in SAARC is a segment of this chain.

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