
PAKISTAN'S SECURITY CHALLENGES: IMPACT ON CPEC

*Sabahat Jaleel
Dr Naureen Talha
Paras Mahesar*

ABSTRACT

CPEC, a flagship project, which connect China-Pakistan through different infrastructural projects. Apart from the China and Pakistan, the project is expected to influence neighboring, Central Asian and European countries. Being the biggest joint venture, the project faces certain security challenges. The research explores the lingering internal and external security concerns that surfaced due to the destabilization in different areas and create hurdles in the way of development. It is hypothesized that a negative relation between the project development and dismal security conditions exists. The work also answers some innovative questions thus helpful for the students of economics, Pakistan history, politics, internal relations, foreign policy and for those who intend to read about China-Pakistan and their joint ventures. The main objective of the study is to empirically analyze the response of Baloch community and other disturbing elements. Graphical and empirical methods are adopted to describe and analyze the facts and figures related to the topic. The results clearly indicate that CPEC will face resistance from different parts, which will negatively affect the prospects of CPEC.

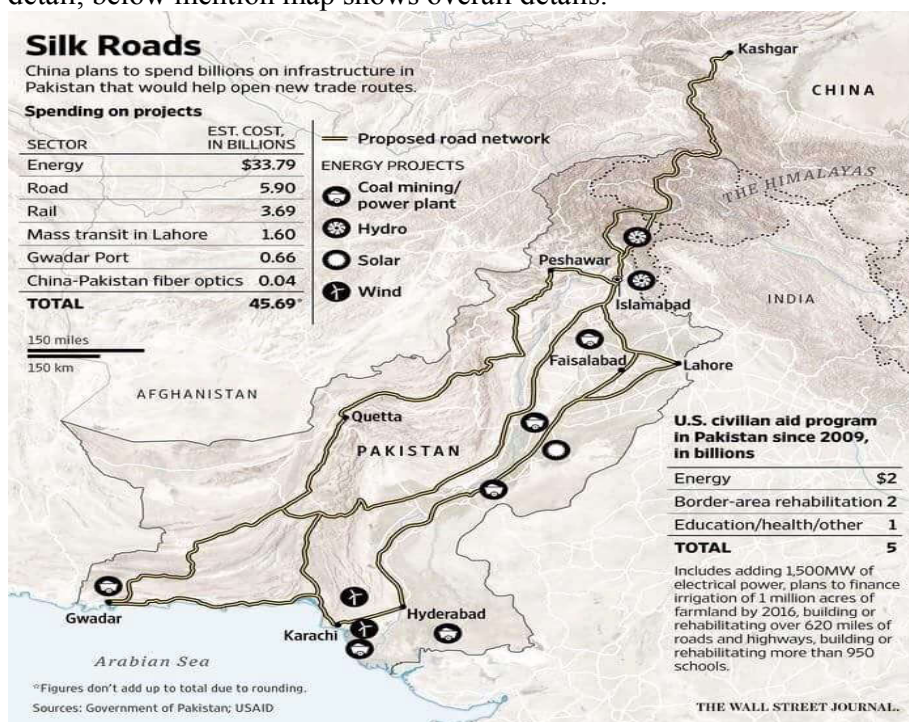
Keywords: China, Pakistan, Corridor, Security, Challenges, Threats

INTRODUCTION

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an infrastructural project which is intended to link Pakistan's less developed province Balochistan (Gwadar Port) to Chinese less developed part Xinjiang through rail, road and fiber optics network. It was, initially proposed by former Chinese Premier Li Kiang but officially signed by President Xi Jinping in 2015. The initial cost of the project was estimated \$46 billion corresponding to 20% of Pakistan's Gross Domestic product (GDP) (A. Aneja, 2015). The project is multi-faceted focusing on investment, infrastructural development and energy projects and its cost has now reached to \$62 billion (Lu Shulin, 2015). The project will definitely help Pakistan to deal with its energy and revenue or trade deficit. On the other hand, China will benefit in the form of development of it under developed region and maintain rather accelerate its economic growth. It also enhances trade opportunities with Middle East, Africa and European countries. It will also reduce Chinese dependence on Strait of Malacca which is supervised by Indian and American naval forces. Thus, the

project has assumed prime importance for both the Pakistan and China. Gwadar port provide shorter and secure route to China but it is important to stabilize the local environment of Pakistan. The CPEC is destined not only bring change in both countries it will also affect their relationship in positive manner and enhanced regional integration (Siegfried O. Wolf, 2016:11).

In broader prospective CPEC provides base to China's 'One Belt One Road' initiative which connects China to Eurasia (Riaz Ahmed & Hong Mi. 2017:2). In past decade China-Pakistan relations based on strategic and military dimension but after signing CPEC their relationship enhanced in the field of trade and investment. It is a "game changer", or a "flagship" project which would change the fate of Pakistan and China (<http://www.cpec.gov.pk/index>). The expected economic prosperity is perceived problematic to India and other Chinese competitors. The major challenge in the realization of this mega project is security conditions within Pakistan. Both China and Pakistan are mainly concerned with the maintenance of peaceful and stable environment to reap the fruit of this project. It faces certain internal and external security concerns which create hurdles in the way of development of this project which we will discuss in detail. In order to understand the project route and investment detail, below mention map shows overall details.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. By using qualitative methods, secondary and documentation sources are analyzed. Whereas with the help of quantitative methods such as sampling technique, I have evaluated the perception of common people regarding security concerns on CPEC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is available on CPEC in the form of articles and newspapers. Different authors have highlighted different security concerns to CPEC. So far two different opinions have emerged; some perceive that security challenges will affect CPEC and other opinion is based on the assumption that security challenges will not affect the progress of CPEC. Arhama Siddiq (2015) in article "Providing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a Security Blanket" argued CPEC faced security challenges on both parts of Pakistan as well as China. In China Uighur militants' presence in Xinjiang province under East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) have targeted Chinese development projects, workers and engineers. On the other hand, in Pakistan Tehrik-e-Taliban and other militant especially Baloch liberation army BLA and Baloch liberation front BLF also targeted Pakistani as well as Chinese population in their areas. But Pakistani military has taken initiative like operation Zarb-e-Azab and anti-terrorist squad to maintain peace and stability.

Naveed Elahi (2015) report on "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Security Threats & Solutions a Strategy" argued that CPEC faced internal and external security challenges in internal challenges BLF and TTP were involved while in external factors Indian RAW creates hurdles. He also provides solution that physical security, protective intelligence, media and people to people contact plays significant role to overcome these challenges. Umbreen (2015), argued in her article "Assessing CPEC: Potential Threats and Prospects" CPEC considered as a game changer or a fate changer can be affected by potential threats from India as well as Baloch liberation army (BLA), Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and ISIS etc., are working inside Pakistan. She also argued global war on terror affected Pakistan stability and security though in recent year's security situation has been improved but still there, risk exists in the way of development of CPEC (Javaid, 2016:264). Max security Britain organization special report on "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)" argued the other perspective that despite of security concerns Islamabad and Beijing continue CPEC development (Special Report: CPEC, 2016).

Imtiaz, *et.al.*, (2016) in their article “China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Prospects, Opportunities and Challenges” focuses on another perspective that India and US consider CPEC as a potential threat to their gains. While on the other hand, internally in the region of FATA and Balochistan also raised concerns related to safety and development of project but despite of security challenges China and Pakistan avail huge gains.

Majid Mahmood (2016) stated that the security of the corridor is important for both China and Pakistan because instable situation and militants activities creates hurdle in the way of CPEC development to overcome these challenges Govt. of Pakistan established special security division of 12000 men and civil Armed Forces wing.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of CPEC development, we can explain this paradigm in both perspective of realism and liberalism, the main theories of international politics. CPEC project deals both aspect of cooperation and competition. Liberal school of thought argued that CPEC project based on Chinese five principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Keohane & Nye, 1977:28). There is another important thing based on Chinese policies of mutual dependence in the era of globalization. China basically enhanced its influence through strategy of peaceful interdependence. Mainly scholars view that it's a win-win situation for both Pakistan and China. CPEC provide China shorter and secure trade route and provide market access for its goods. On the other hand, Pakistan received huge amount of FDI through CPEC in the field of energy, infrastructure, industrial boon, employment opportunities etc., in this way the major objectives of China to become soft Super Power.

Realist school of thought argued that Chinese aims are based on economic interests (Sakr, 2001:67). Major Chinese policies based on their own national interest it's not as such win-win situation for Pakistan. China is currently emerging as an economic super power and CPEC provide Gwadar to Kashgar a secure and shorter route. Simply we can combine two opposite schools of thought with the help of power and interdependence strategy. China being a powerful state adopted the policy of interdependence towards Pakistan.

CPEC BENEFITS FOR CHINA

CPEC is a significant project for both China and Pakistan. China as an emerging economic superpower becomes world largest importer of oil. CPEC provide shortest and secure route for oil imports. Furthermore, with the help of CPEC, China developed its western regions out of

poverty. China introduced such kind of policies which will increase profits for Chinese economy.

CPEC BENEFITS FOR PAKISTAN

CPEC project provide opportunity for Pakistan to overcome its problems and raise the living standard of its common people. Pakistan faces economic turmoil situation especially ‘war on terror’ and internal security challenges. Pakistan received a minor amount of foreign investment. Also faces energy crisis which creates hurdle for its economic growth. Balochistan least developed province expects more benefit from the project.

REGIONAL GEO-POLITICAL DYNAMICS

Many security experts expressed their concerns that CPEC project may effect from many internal and external challenges. These challenges mainly came from the neighboring countries like Afghanistan, India and Iran as well as the global influence of the US. Below briefly explain these challenges and their interests.

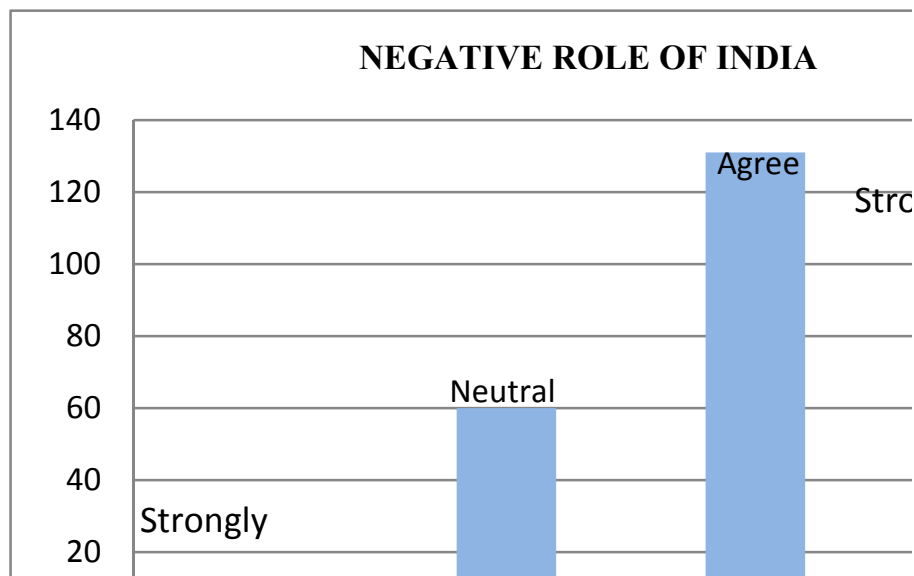
EXTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

India: Security experts consider Pakistan, India as rival countries throughout the history since their inception. The major bone of contention between India-Pakistan is Kashmir dispute; both countries fought three major wars on this issue. Now, India have a reservations on the route of CPEC which passes through Gilgit-Baltistan, this part is identified as a Pakistan occupied Kashmir and part of disputed Jammu and Kashmir state. In long term India fears that may be Pakistan legally admit Gilgit-Baltistan as a fifth province and enhance its influence on Kashmir (Curtis, 2012:255-69). India openly condemned this project. Indian Prime Minister during official visit to China urged Chinese President to stop this project and also Indian foreign minister termed the project as “unacceptable” because it passes through disputed area of Kashmir. India also has reservations on the Chinese worker and engineers these involved in this project belong to the part of People’s Liberation Army. India considers the involvement of these persons as another threat to the security interest of India (Pane, 2015).

India also fears from growing Chinese influence in the region especially Central Asia and counter China’s position in South Asia. To counter Chinese project of CPEC India invested in Iranian port of Chabahar to balance Chinese influence in Arabian Sea (Sajjad Ashraf, 2017:48). On the other hand, Pakistani leaders believe that India is

creating hurdles to disrupt the CPEC project by involving in anti-state activities (Kardon, 2011:5). The most important part of CPEC is Balochistan which faces certain uncertainties and local community also supported some militant organizations like Baloch Liberation Army BLA and Baloch Liberation Front organizations against this development project, the case of Kulbhushan Yadau also proved Pakistani claims.

Survey result shows common public perception that India plays a negative role in the development of CPEC and mainly respondents were agreed Indian involvement in Balochistan for creating hurdles in the way of this mega project (Survey by Questionnaire).



Afghanistan: Stability of Afghanistan is an important factor behind the success of CPEC. Pakistan and Afghanistan should develop their trust to enhance its regional security and reduce economic issues. Pakistan also considers Indian RAW and National Directorate of Security (NDS) involvement behind the terror activities in Pakistan to distrust CPEC development by creating instability.

Another important thing is to establish border security between Pakistan and Afghanistan because insecure borders and illegal cross border movement also develop threats for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan province. Afghanistan bordering province like Kunar and Nuristan providing base to various terrorist organizations like: TTP, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Uighur Militant East Turkestan Islamic Movement EKIM. The Chinese Uighur militant become main hurdle for China with the support of TTP because they want to establish their own 'East Turkistan

State' in the western part of China so they create obstacle in western part of China (<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2015/06/09/cpec-a-possible-peacebroker/>).

Pakistan wants a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and to control any disruptive activities against Pakistan. For China peace and stability in Afghanistan is also important for its investment in the region. China plays a vital role to develop peaceful environment in Afghanistan and negotiate between govt. and Taliban. China also supports Pakistan to become negotiator to reconciliation process and smooth transition in Afghanistan.

Iran: Initially Iran considered CPEC as rival project which counter Chabahar Port. Basically India provided an alternate connection to India-Iran and Afghanistan by passing Pakistan and access towards landlocked Central Asian countries for regional trade. After lifting of sanctions basically opening new opportunities for Iran-Pakistan relation, Iran also shows its interest to become a part of CPEC. This shows new opportunities for bilateral relationship and also the way for the construction of the much awaited Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline extend toward China (*Asian Times*, November 27, 2015).

China also desires for greater cooperation with Iran on CPEC, for economic integration. On the other hand, Iran also invites Pakistan to join Chabahar port and it not rival to Gwadar. Saudi Arab factor is important hurdle behind Pak-Iran nexus.

USA: 46 billion dollar deal of China and growing Chinese influence in South Asia basically fill the vacuum which came after US dismemberment and America refused to invest in Pakistan.

In past years US supported Pakistan militarily as well as economically, but USA never interested to build infrastructural development projects in Pakistan. Openly USA stated that they see that this project faced a lot of challenges due to internal instability of Pakistan. USA still considers Pakistan as a failed state and associated with terrorism and unstable country not secure for investment purposes.

Security Concerns from China: CPEC also faces security concerns from Chinese less developed province Xinjiang has also facing the problem of political instability by community of Uighur Muslim dominated by the ideology of East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). They have reportedly been receiving training from Pakistani tribal areas of FATA. China has adopted the policy to control these militants and illegal border movement (BBC, May 31, 2012).

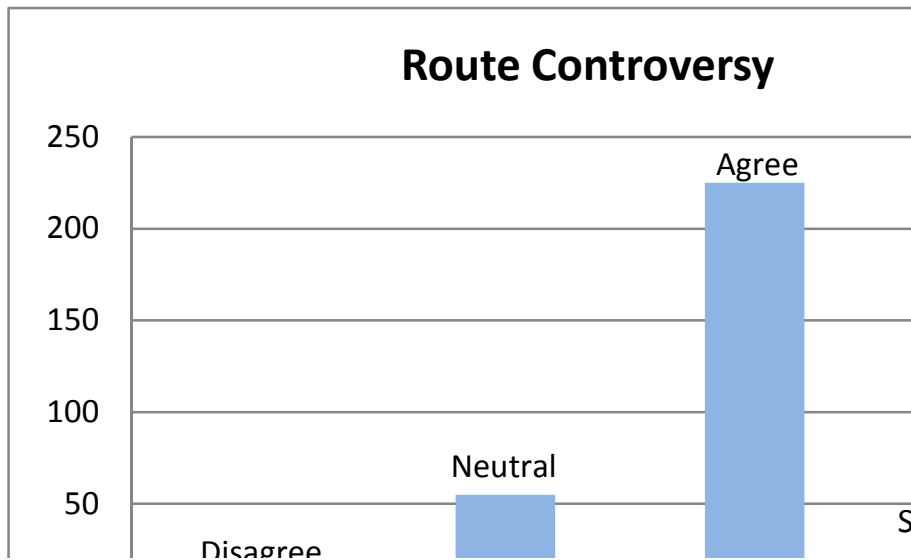
Security Concerns from Pakistan: Major part of CPEC is based on Pakistani territory which faced different security concerns.

Geographical Loopholes along CPEC Route: Geographically, CPEC passes through the different areas of Pakistan. It starts from China's less developed area of Kashgar and then enters into Pakistan through mountains of Gilgit Baltistan and KPK, barren lands of Balochistan and cultivated area of Punjab and Sindh. Due to diverse geographical features security threat is always present. Here, the CPEC will be divided into three ways: Western or Northern route, Central route and Eastern route (*The Economist*, 2015). The table-1 shows Northern or Western route is shortest route as compared to eastern route mostly based on KPK and Balochistan areas but this route is not as such secure route. While on the other hand, eastern route is longest distance as compared to central or northern route but having less security concerns.

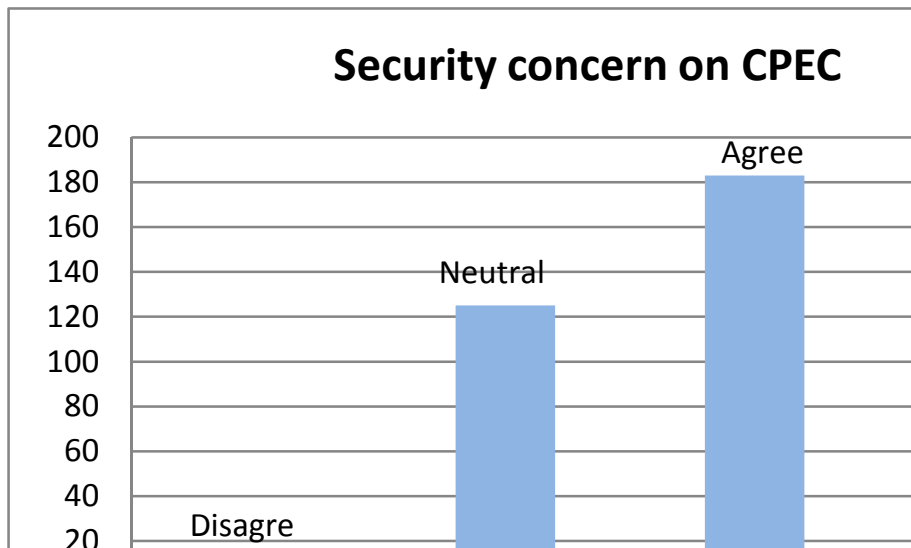
TABLE-1
CPEC ROUTE DETAILS

<u>Northern Route</u>	<u>Central Route</u>	<u>Eastern Route</u>
KKH till Hawalian	KKH till Hawalian	KKH till Hawalian
Indus crossing at Attock	Indus crossing at Multan	Crossing over River Jehlum
Area b/w Tank and Loralai	Area b/w Rojan and Rathodero	Crossing over River Chenab
Lak Pass Quetta	Area b/w Larkana and Khuzdar	Crossing over River Ravi
Area b/w Qalat and Khuzdat	Area b/w Wad and Panjgoor	Crossing over River Indus at Hyderabad
Area b/w Panjgoor and Turbat	Area b/w Panjgoor and Turbat	Crossing over Hub River
		Buzee Pass Makran
Area b/w Koh Murad and Pasni	Area b/w Turbat and Gawadar	Area b/w Pasni and Gawadar

The graph on route controversy indicates security concerns present through insecure route. Mainly they were agreed and strongly agreed on security concerns through CPEC road (Survey by Questionnaire).



The graph on security concern on CPEC shows clearly that CPEC have a security concerns mainly from BLA, BLF, BRA specifically in Balochistan. Minor respondent remained neutral in this perspective (*Ibid*).



INTERNAL CHALLENGES

Security concerns from Religious Terrorist: After the event of 9/11 US 'war on Terror' further enhanced religious terrorism which badly affected Pakistani areas especially KPK province. As we know the CPEC route also passing through KPK province which is easily accessible for

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Chinese workers also face resistance and threat in these areas (*Dawn*, Nov: 22, 2016).

Security Concerns from Nationalist Movement: The nationalist movements in different parts of the countries affect the construction of CPEC. Different provinces want that they should be given maximum part in CPEC by passing CPEC roads through their cities. The major nationalist movements which create hurdles in the way of CPEC development are Baloch Liberation Army, Baloch Liberation Front, their purpose to create hurdles in government projects and establish an independent state of Balochistan. Other prominent movements are MQM, Jiye Sindh and Saraiki Movement. They want to enhance their share in CPEC otherwise they create hurdles and political unrest.

Security Concerns from Local Tribes: Unfortunately, some Pashtun tribes of Afghanistan support terrorist groups in Pakistan. They provide them residential and financial assistance. These Pashtun tribes have a close connection with different other tribes in Pakistan such as Norzai's, Durani and Achakzai tribe. Due to the support of these tribes, terrorist groups in Pakistan have become so strong that they took control over the western areas of Pakistan and threaten CPEC progress (Ibrar, *et.al.*, 2016).

Baloch Militancy and its Effects: Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan by the geographical area. It is least populated and resource rich province. Rekodiq is a small town in Chaghi district and it has the world's 5th largest gold deposit. Balochistan produces 40% of natural gas of Pakistan. Our enemies have eyes on these resources and they have produced various militant groups in Balochistan for its separation such as BLA, BLF, BRA (Haider, 2005:1).

From its beginning, India has been trying to derail the CPEC especially in Balochistan. The largest militant group BLA of Balochistan is financially supported by India (Shanaz, 2015).

The major activities of militants groups Balochistan to target government infrastructure, gas pipelines and CPEC project development.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally we can conclude in nutshell that fate of CPEC is associated with handling Pakistan's internal as well as external challenges.

Following are important hurdles to be overcome based on above study:

1. The merchants and transporters are preferring security proof for their business. They are displaying resistance upon unsafe routes.

2. Terrorists are accompanying a number of methods to stop CPEC including suicide bombing attacks and coordinated mission to stop the project. Revolutionary development is developing heat of jealousy among the people who do not want to see growth of Pakistan.
3. There are couple of areas in Balochistan, where accessibility is limited, are the key concern of security.
4. Terrorist attacks are playing a major role in producing an instable environment than any other form of extremism.
5. TTP along with its associates are characterized as front line attacker to CPEC. BLA is mentioned as second extremist enemy in the threat list.
6. Though western route is economical but security concern is the main hindrance for the investors.
7. Assassination of drivers and obliterating the vehicles is one of the main security threats.
8. Military Forces acting as safeguards of CPEC are giving much relief to transporters regarding security concerns.
9. Establishment of special security force for the protection of CPEC.
10. Endowing collaboration of law imposing representatives is the key contribution.

REFERENCES

- A. Aneja, Xi (2015). China Comes Calling to Pakistan, bearing gifts worth \$46 billion, *The Hindu*.
- Ashraf, Sajjad (n.d.). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, *ISAS Brief*, No. 364, Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore. <http://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/isaspapers/Pages/Briefs.aspx> (Accessed on, 06-06-2017):48.
- BBC (2012). China Urges Pakistan to Expel Uighur Islamic Militants, *BBC*, 31 May 2012.
- CPEC – a Possible Peace Broker, Foreign Policy News, (November 18, 2015), <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2015/06/09/cpec-a-possible-peacebroker/>
- Curtis, Lisa. (2012). The reorientation of Pakistan's Foreign policy towards its regional Contemporary South Asia 20, No.2 (2012): 255-269.
- Dark Corridor, *The Economist*, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21653657---conflict---balochistan- must---be---resolved---trade---corridor---between---pakistan---and---china---bring> (accessed on June 18, 2016).
- Document on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, available at <http://www.cpec.gov.pk/index> accessed on 2nd February 2017)
- Elahi, Naveed (2015). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Security Threats & Solutions: A Strategy, *Pakistan-China Institute*, (November 2015).
- Haider, Ziad. (2005). 'Balochis, Beijing, and Pakistan's Gwadar Port', *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* (2005), 6: 1.

- Ibrar, Muhammad, Mi, Jianing, Rafiq, Muhammad & Karn, Arodh Lal. (2016). *The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Security Challenges*, 2nd Asia-Pacific Management and Engineering Conference (APME 2016)
- Imtiaz, Salman, Kamal, Shamraiz & Al Hinai. (2016). China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Prospects, Opportunities and Challenges, Opinion Vol. No.4, (June 2016)
- Iran's Look East Policy takes Wings, Asian Times, (November 27, 2015), <http://atimes.com/2015/07/irans-look-east-policy-takes-wings/>
- Javaid, Umbreen (2016). Assessing CPEC: Potential Threats and Prospects, *JRSP*, Vol.53, No.2, (July-December, 2016):264.
- Kardon, Isaac. (2011). 'China and Pakistan: Emerging Strains in the Entente Cordiale', Project 2049 Institute, 2011:5.
- Keohane, Robert O. & Nye, Joseph S.(1977). *Power and Interdependence*, (Canada: Little, Brown & Company, 1977), 28.
- Lu Shulin. (2015). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Flagship and Exemplary Project of "One Belt and One Road" available at http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Lu-Shulin_3435_SS_41_20142015.pdf (Accessed on 3 February 2017):114.
- Mahmood, Majid. (2016). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor- The Geo-Strategic Dimension and Challenges, *CISS Insight: Quarterly News & Views* (2016)
- N.Ahmed, (216). CPEC's territorial impact, *Dawn*, 22 November 2016.
- Pande, Savita. (2015). Sino-Pak Strategic Relationship: Implications for India, *Scholar Warrior* (Autumn 2015)
- Riaz Ahmad and Hong Mi, (2017). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Its Social Implication on Pakistan: How Will CPEC Boost Pakistan's Infrastructures and Overcome the Challenges?, *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, Vol.8, Issue,2:2.
- Sakr, Naomi (2001). *Satellite Realms: Transnational Television Globalization and the Middle East*, (London : I.E Tauris 2001):67.
- Shanaz, Iqra. (2015). Gwadar Port: Challenges and Opportunities, *INCPak*, 2015, <http://www.incpak.com/editorial/gwadar-port---challenges---opportunities> (Accessed on June 18, 2016).
- Siddiq, Arhama. (2015). Providing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a Security Blanket, *Institute of Strategic Studies*, (13th August 2015)
- Siegfried O. Wolf (2016). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: An Assessment of its Feasibility and Impact on Regional Cooperation, *South Asia Democratic Forum*, No.1, (2016):11
- Special Report: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) <https://www.max-security.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/05101201-MAX-Special-Report-CPEC-Balochistan-May-2016.pdf> (Accessed on 12-07-2017)
- Survey through Questionnaire