

PAKISTAN-CHINA COOPERATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract

It is fact that there is no permanent friend and no permanent enemy in the international Politics but those are only interests which are permanent. But it is global fact that China and Pakistan are only friends which are only permanent friends in the world and now relationship seems deep-rooted and appears at higher levels in all contemporary times and all aspects. Since establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries, China and Pakistan have developed an all-Weather friendship which is based on equality, brotherhood and overall cooperation.

Recently Pakistan-China relations have entered into new peak when Pakistan and China signed 51 agreements worth of US \$46 billion and agreed to build China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) which shall not only the shortest route for business to China but will serve as a cheapest trade route from Arabian Sea of Afghanistan and Central Asian States. Though, after development of China-Pakistan Economic corridor, the whole region of Asia would enter into new era of progress and prosperity. According to experts, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will prove as a game changer in the region.

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Introduction

It is almost nation's self interest which makes its foreign policy. South Asia and East Asia are two sub regions of the Asia. South Asia consists of seven countries namely; Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Whereas, East Asia consists of the China, Hong Kong, North Korea, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. East Asia is one of the world's largest, successful and prosperous economies. In East Asia China is most populous and powerful state. China is second largest economy of the world as well as world's largest exporter and importer of goods. China has market everywhere in the world. China is considered as a next superpower of the world and in fact China has potential and capacity. China has world's largest army and also a member of nuclear club. Sino-Pakistan relations started in the real sense with the boundary agreement of 1963 (Butt Ijaz Muhammad 2007). China is trying to have good relations with all neighbor countries and other Asian states. China and South Asian countries established their relations since revolution/independence of China. On the other hand, China shares common border with four South Asian countries, Pakistan, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Particularly, after the end of Cold War situation, Chinese leadership reviewed foreign policy choices (Ibid). South Asia is very significant in the world in terms of geo-strategically and geo-politically. It is also said that 21st century will be the century of Asia and China will be main actor in the region particularly and in world generally. However, South Asia is also considered as the world's vulnerable region because of various issues in the region that have attracted the world and the superpowers of the world has tried to create dominance over the region.

Issues in the South Asia are following:

- War between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971
- East and West Pakistan issue of 1971
- Unresolved Kashmir issue
- Pakistan and India's nuclear tests
- Soviet invasion on Afghanistan in 1980's
- 9/11 tragedy and post 9/11 USA presence in Afghanistan

There is issue of balance of power in Asia generally and in South Asia particularly. China is a state which has created balance of power in South Asia in order to maintain peace and security in the region. Though, US is trying to escalate its influence in the region. China is strengthening its relation with Pakistan. On the other hand Indo-US relations are becoming stronger day by day by the sign of various pacts and civil nuclear deal between both states, which make vulnerable situation in the region. It's China which can play an active and

pivotal role for the development and economic development of the region. China is major player for maintaining balance of power in the region.

China's foreign policy towards South Asia consists of state to state relations with five principles of co-existence, which are noninterference in internal affairs, confidence and understanding, mutual trust and respect of sovereignty of independent state. China's bigger interest in South Asia is economic interest. To all South Asian states china is big donor and especially for Pakistan.

No doubt that China is a great power in the world but despite of that it has never shown hegemonic position and avoids interfering in the internal affairs of the Pakistan. Both states have deep strategic partnership. Both Pakistan and China have committed to fight against terrorism, separatism, fundamentalists and religious extremists in order to maintain stability, peace and security in the region which is very much essential.

Pakistan-China Bilateral Relations

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between two states, China and Pakistan have developed all weather friendship which is based on mutual interests. China is considered as a corner stone of Pakistan's foreign policy. On the other hand Pakistan takes very important place in the foreign policy of China. Pakistani people love the China, which is measured as a beloved in Pakistan. According to the recent research and survey that 84 percent people of Pakistan had favorable view of China and 16 percent of US.

Once former president of China Hu Jintao described the relations of China and Pakistan as "Higher than mountains and deeper than seas". Recently the Chinese president Xi Jinping said that Pakistan is known as a sincere and reliable friend of China. The people of both states have emotional feelings for another. The Pakistani love China what it can do for them, while the Chinese love Pakistanis despite what they do for themselves (Small Andrew 2015).

It was Pakistan that was the first state which recognized China. Our diplomatic relations began in 1951, since that both have enjoyed mutual respect, mutual interests, trust, friendship and deep cooperation. Both are immediate friends, brothers and partners.

Pakistan was also that state which opposed the resolution of United Nation that depicted China as an aggressor in Korean War. Since that time two countries moved to have multi-dimensional cooperation and assistance in varied grounds. Despite of the opposition of US Pakistan never left China alone. Though it was

risky for Pakistan to recognize and to support China during Korean War but Pakistan regardless of any interest did that. Despite of international threats and unstable international situation, China-Pakistan relations remained strong and stable. China is important, because it appears to be a global power challenger in near term-at least in the minds of others (Friedman George 2009). China and Pakistan friendship has proven time tested friendship all the time.

Various Phases of China-Pakistan Relations

The Sino-Pakistan Relations can be divided into four phases.

- The first phase starts from 1951 to 1954
- The second Phase starts from Bandung conference of 1955 to 1962
- The third phase starts from 1962 to early 1973
- The fourth phase starts from 1973 to onwards

The First Phase (1951-1954)

It was such a difficult and cold period for China and Pakistan. In early years Sino-Pak diplomatic relations were cold just because of the fact that Pakistan decided to align with the US in international politics, while China chose to have an align with the communist state USSR. Yet in the study of both Chinese and Pakistani foreign policy, it remains an unusual case (Small Andrew 2015). In the initial time, China was perceived as a threat to Pakistan due to its communist ideology. The boundary between two states was undefined during that phase and China claimed few areas of Gilgit and Hunza as their own territory and it was shown in the map of China.

The Second Phase (1955-1962)

The second phase starts from Bandung conference which was held in 1955 in Bandung (Indonesia), it is also known as Asian-African conference. After signing the SEATO 1954 and CENTO 1955 western pacts by Pakistan which, created the concern for China. Pakistan signed a bilateral agreements with US for the purpose of strengthening its security and building economy on echo footings (Memon Aman 2008). The Bandung conference was the first high level talks and contacts between Chinese and Pakistani leadership which clarified mutual doubts and reservations. It was told then by Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra to Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai, that, these western pacts signed by Pakistan are not directly against China but against India because Pakistan feels threat from neighbor state. It was really a needy time for Pakistan to have such kind of agreements with powerful states or superpowers in order to have a security umbrella. Precisely, Pakistan's membership in both blocs was not against China. Pakistan even assured China that if US take an aggressive measure against

China. Pakistan will not participate neither it would be a party of US but will remain neutral as it was during Korean War. China also showed its confidence in Pakistan and since that time the mutual understanding was built. In the result of Bandung conference, the leaders of both states paid reciprocal visits. China was very enthusiast to escalate close relations with Pakistan. The proof is that when Chinese president Zhou Enlai visited India and Pakistan in 1956, he spoke with equal passion of “Hindi.Cheni Bhai Bhai and Paki-Cheni Bhai Bhai”.

However in the following years, the policies adopted by Pakistan were not constructive for improving relations with China. In July 1957, when Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy paid visit of US, the joint statement issued after having meeting that both the premier of Pakistan and President of US agreed that “International communism is a major threat to the security of the world”. The mistrust was created between China and Pakistan and continued until first Military takeover in Pakistan by General Ayub Khan in 1958. The issue of “two Chinas” was an other annoyance during this phase (Ibid). The situation became worst more, when Pakistan signed another defence pact with US in 1959. China asked from Pakistan for the defence pact against whom. Pakistan clarified that it is not against China. Moreover, the skirmishes between both states broke out in 1959 on Hunza border and violation was made by Chinese MiG planes in the area. In reaction, Pakistan sealed its border with Xinjing in November 1959. The situation was more deteriorated in this phase of relations. China-Soviet relations started to be split during this phase and Pakistan desired to come closer of China.

The Third Phase (1962-73)

This phase was highly important for both states China and Pakistan in terms of escalating coordination and establishing deep relations because of two reasons, first Sino-Indian hostility which resulted Sino-Indian border war in 1962, Secondly Pakistan’s disappointment for US support and loosing trust on western alliance. Pakistani president General Ayb Khan tried to have a joint defence pact with India but it was India who refused to have any joint defence proposal with Pakistan at that time. India perceived that this proposal was on the condition that Kashmir issue will be settled therefore, India refused to accept this joint proposal of Pakistan with India. China raised the question on proposal of joint defence pact by Pakistan with India against whom. Though China showed patience every time and never lost relations with Pakistan.

The talks on the issue of demarcation of Sino-Pakistan border was started in march 1962. Though, in the initial time it was slow to resolve the issue but after Sino-Indian border clashes, the talks were impetus between Pakistan and China.

Finally, in March 1963, the border agreement between Pakistan and China was signed by foreign ministers of both states. The border agreement further strengthened relations between both states. The post 1962 period witnessed entente cordiale between two countries on the public and government level (Ibid).

The foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto played a very pivotal role in making iron and brotherly relations with China. He categorically said in the parliament that “we have friendly relations with China and nothing can harm us. Further he said that relations with China are an independent factor in our foreign policy”. The border agreement between China and Pakistan was not in favor of India. Keeping in view that during border clashes between India and China, United States provide more stock of weapons to India than India needed. Pakistan understood and cried that weapons should not be provided because those will be used against Pakistan in future.

It was an essential period when Indo-Pak war of 1965 was fought with full scale. During that war India used those weapons against Pakistan which were provided to India by United States during Sino-Indian border clashes of 1962. China provided all kind of support to Pakistan during that war and also warned India to step back their forces. US halted the arms aid and it was China who stepped for help.

Once again full scale of war was fought between India and Pakistan in 1971. In the result of war, the East Pakistan was disintegrated from West Pakistan. China again rendered economic, political and moral support to Pakistan in order to meet the challengeable situation that was created after war of 1971. India tried to isolate Pakistan but failed. It was the period that for the first time the Pakistani Airline PIA a noncommunist airline was landed on the land on China. Pakistan had played also role for the restoration of China's membership in the United Nations. Pakistan was a state who had relations with United States and China as well. Due to these close relations, Pakistan played very important secret role for the arrangement of secret visit of Present of US Nixon to China in 1972. The visit was made possible only with the efforts of Pakistan. In the result of visit, the relations between China and United States moved towards normalization.

The Fourth Phase (1973-Present)

This phase is very critical and period of development as well. India carried out nuclear tests in 1974 with the name of “Smiling Buddha”. This step of India was a paradigm strategic shift in the balance of power in the region. On the other hand these tests compelled China and Pakistan to have defence pact so that balance of

power can be created. Although, China is much further along than India (Dahlman J Carl 2013). In 1978, the government was change with the emergence of reformist under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping which emphasized on the economic policies much more than rest of others. He introduced reforms at domestic and foreign level. These reforms left a positive impact on the Pakistan and China relations. Pakistan had developed politically, economically and strategically in relations with China.

The Soviet Union's invasion on Afghanistan in 1979 opened a new way of collaboration and agreements for China and Pakistan. Both states were agreed that invasion of Soviet Union pose a big threat for the security and peace of whole region.

Pakistan became the most reliable ally of China by 1980's. During that period the relations were more developed. Pakistan supported China on all national interests such as Taiwan issue, Hong Kong, Tibet and human rights issues. Although, China was developing and improving relations with all neighbors. Pakistan was imposed military sanctions during 1990's by US and China was only hope and source of Pakistan's military hardware procurement. Pakistan called upon three great powers to sponsor very urgent talks between two South Asian nuclear rivals (India and Pakistan) to deescalate their nuclear competition (Cheema Zafar Iqbal 2015). But India refused with the pretext amid at regional non proliferation.

The balance of power disrupted one again in the region when India tested its nuclear devices in 1998. Indian defence minister and prime minister portrayed China as a biggest security threat. Following the Indian nuclear tests, Sino-Indian trust and relations suffered acute hinder. The importance of Pakistan was increased in the eyes of China, especially in China's South Asian policy after deterioration Sino-Indian relations. In retaliation, Pakistan tested nuclear devices and China showed confidence on the stance of Pakistan. It was the need of an hour. By Pakistan's nuclear tests, the balance of power was created in the region of South Asia.

During kargil crises in 1999, China stayed neutral and suggested to resolve the issue through dialogue. In 2002 India and Pakistan reached at eye ball to eyeball confrontation. The world was so worried about two nuclear powers that reached at the brink of war. At that time, China played neutral role and stressed for the international community to take measures and unbiased approach to resolve the problem.

After 9/11 Pakistan and China relations have become closer and both states are committed to fight against terrorism. In 2005, Indo-US civil nuclear deal was made which once again destabilized balance of power of the region. After Indo-US civil nuclear deal, Pakistan and China increased coordination and made civil nuclear deal in reaction. According to (SIPRI), China is Pakistan's top supplier of weapons. China is investing greatly in Pakistan. As compared to US, China is a reliable and "all weather" friend of Pakistan which is more trust worthy, supportive strategic partner, non-interfering and helpful. China is considered as a time tested friend of Pakistan.

During the visit of Chinese premier Li Keqiang to Pakistan proposed a project of CPEC in May 2013. On the visit of China by Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Nawaz Sharif in July 2013, signed a memorandum of understanding on CPEC. On 20 April 2015, Pakistan-China signed \$46 billion agreement to commence a work on "Pakistan-China Economic Corridor". Pakistan and China agreed to work on 51 projects. It is surprising that in January 2015, \$10 billion has been extended and approved for the implementation of China-Pakistan economic corridor project successfully. Pakistan and China both are eager to complete the project early so that the economic development can be placed for the countries and region. On the other hand, security dilemma lies over there due to frequent terrorist attacks, extremism and suicide bombing in Pakistan and other states of the South Asia. China is much worried about security lapses and in the result she has requested to UNO to provide security for CPEC routes. India already looms threat for CPEC.

According to some reports that this is the biggest overseas investment of China announced as yet and the corridor is expected to be operational within three years. Yet for China, Pakistan's importance in longer terms goes well beyond central position in volatile politics of its western neighborhood (Small Andrew 2015). CPEC is considered as game changer in the region. Pakistan and China both have greater advantage of CPEC. India is unhappy and showed its reservations on the CPEC. India tried to halt China for construction of economic route through Pakistan but China refused to listen India. CPEC is considered vital economically for Pakistan in improving economic growth. China is really an advantage for the region but not a threat. China has played an important role in maintaining stability and balance of power in South Asia. China is playing very rational role in order to maintain peace and security in Afghanistan. China understands that peace in Afghanistan will create stability and security in Asia generally and South Asia particularly. Pakistan has great hope in China and China has in Pakistan. China is more than opportunity for the Asia.

Conclusion

China-Pakistan friendship is time tested. China is considered as a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. China is emerging as a superpower of the world. Though, world is confused with three rising questions about the position of China, that whether China is rising, whether China has risen or whether China will rise. In fact, keeping in view that China has risen and will raise more in near future. China is increasing its cordial and friendly relations with neighbors and all other Asian states. China is not a threat for them in Asia but a blessing. Pakistan-China friendship is based on mutual interest, mutual trust, brotherhood and friendship. Friendship is higher than Himalaya, sweeter than honey and deeper than ocean. China has always assisted Pakistan in difficult time. Simultaneously, Pakistan has always supported Chinese point of view of various issues at different forums. China –Pakistan have made Civil nuclear deal in order to maintain balance of power in South Asia and to compete with India. China has multidimensional role in Asia as a whole. South Asia region is very important geo-strategically which has always attracted superpowers of the world. Perhaps, USA may not tolerate to see China in the region of South Asia as a major player and game changer. Besides, India will never desire for China being a helping hand and source of assistance for the states of South Asia because that would deescalate the influence of India in the region. However, India is dreaming for global power.

Recently, Pakistan-China relations have reached to a new peak when Pakistan and China signed 51 agreements worth of US \$46 plus \$10 billion and agreed to build China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) which shall not only the shortest route for business to China but will serve as a cheapest trade route from Arabian Sea and Central Asian States.

China Pakistan economic corridor will built new roadmap and connectivity and open market for the local produce and render access to education, energy system, socialization and medical care. Such as air, rail and road network shall bestow benefits to people of areas/region. CPEC is in the interest of South Asia as well. In the result, CPEC will prove as a game changer for the whole region if it has been implemented successfully within planned time framework. All should understand that China is biggest source of economic development, regional peace and integrity. China is an opportunity rather than threat for South Asia.

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