



## China-Pakistan Relations and Implications for India

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2575

### Abstract

Pakistan is a country in South Asia which got independence on 14 August 1947 after partition of British India. Since independence India and Pakistan have been two hostile neighbors and they fought many wars mainly on Kashmir issue. Apart from Kashmir issue India and Pakistan have conflict on several other issues such as terrorism, sharing of Indus river water etc. China is another hostile neighbor of India and it wants to counter India in the region by increasing its influence in India's neighborhood. It is in this regard China has been maintaining very good relations with Pakistan for a long time and this was witnessed when China helped Pakistan in 1965 and 1999 wars with India. Besides, China has also helped Pakistan to become a nuclear power. China also helps Pakistan by providing support on many issues in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) such as Kashmir issue, issue of terrorism etc. All these make it clear that the China-Pakistan nexus has great implications over the security and other aspects of India. It is in this backdrop the present study is an attempt to discuss China-Pakistan relationship in modern times. The study also examines implications of the China-Pakistan nexus on India.

### Keywords

India, China, Pakistan, Kashmir, terrorism

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### Introduction

South Asia consists of seven states. Pakistan is a country in South Asia which got independence on 14 August 1947 after partition of British India. Since independence India and Pakistan have been two hostile neighbors and they fought many wars mainly on Kashmir issue. Apart from Kashmir issue India and Pakistan have conflict on several other issues such as terrorism, sharing of Indus river water etc. China is another hostile neighbor of India and it wants to counter India in the region by increasing its influence in India's neighborhood. It is in this regard China has been maintaining very good relations with Pakistan for a long time and this was witnessed when China helped Pakistan in 1965 and 1999 wars with India. Besides, China has also helped Pakistan to become a nuclear power. China also helps Pakistan by providing support on many issues in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) such as Kashmir issue, issue of terrorism etc. All

these make it clear that the China-Pakistan nexus has great implications over the security and other aspects of India. It is in this background the present paper makes an attempt to discuss China-Pakistan relationship in modern times. The present study also examines implications of the China-Pakistan nexus on India.

### Objectives of the Study

The present study is based on the following two objectives;

1. To study modern Sino-Pakistan relationship.
2. To examine implications of the China-Pakistan nexus on India.

### Methodology

The study is a secondary one. Data for the present study has been collected from secondary sources such as official documents, newspapers, journal articles, websites, internet sources, books etc. The collected data has been analyzed by using an analytical and descriptive method of study.



## Literature Review

Literature reviewed for the present study are given below;

a) Rizwan Zeb in his article ***“Pakistan-China Relations: Where They Go from Here?”*** deals with China-Pakistan relations since 1950 when Pakistan recognized the PRC as the legitimate government of mainland China. In this article the author also explains the reforms taken by China during the 1970s and Sino-Pakistan relations further (Zeb, PAKISTAN-CHINA RELATIONS: WHERE THEY GO FROM HERE?, 2014).

b) Muhammad Faisal in his article ***“Pakistan-China Relations: Beyond CPEC”*** discusses Pakistan-China Strategic relations mainly after the inauguration of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Author in his article also highlights the Sino-Pakistan engagement in multilateral forums (Faisal, 2020).

c) Masood Khalid in his article ***“Pakistan-China Relations in a Changing Geopolitical Environment”*** analyses the historical evolution of Pakistan-China relationship and the context of its growing importance in the fast changing regional and global developments (Khalid, 2021).

d) Zahid Yaseen, Manzoor Khan Afridi and Muhammad Muzaffar in their article ***“Pakistan and China’s Strategic Ties: Challenges and Opportunities in Trade Perspective”*** highlights the factors responsible for rise of China as an economic power and its trade & economic relations with Pakistan mainly after 1970s (Yaseen, Afridi, & Muzaffar, 2017).

e) Allauddin Muhammadi in his article ***“China, Pakistan Extended Relation: An Overview of CPEC Opportunities, Expectations and Fear of Balochistan”*** deals with China-Pakistan relations since 1951. It also deals with CPEC Opportunities for Pakistan and Fear of Balochistan (Muhammadi, 2017).

f) Dr. Moonis Ahmar in his article ***“Dynamics of Pakistan-China Relations”*** examines the dynamics of Pakistan-China relations from four perspectives: first, historical; second, strategic and security; third, economic; and fourth, futuristic (Ahmar, 2020).

g) Chintamani Mahapatra in his article ***“India-China-Pakistan Triangle: The US Factor”*** deals with China-India-Pakistan relations in modern times. Author in his article also highlights perceptions of the USA in the CHINA-Pakistan-India relations briefly (Mahapatra, 2011).

h) Muhammad Saleem Akhtar and Umbreen Javaid in their article ***“Sino-Pakistan relations: Repercussions for India”*** discusses the evolution of Sino-Pakistan relations in modern times. The article also highlights repercussions for India (Akhtar & Javaid, 2018).

i) Waheeda Rana and Hasan Mahmood in their article ***“Changing Dynamics of Pak-China Relations: Policy Recommendations for Pakistan”*** analyses the changing dynamics of Pak-China relations in the context of Indo-China entente. It also explores factors responsible for growing India-China relations and its implications over Pakistan's traditional links with China (Rana & Mahmood, 2015).

j) Christian Wagner in his article ***“The Effects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on India-Pakistan Relations”*** examines the China-Pakistan relations and implications of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on India-Pakistan bilateral relations (Wagner, 2016).

## About Pakistan

Pakistan is a South Asian country. It gained independence on 14 August 1947 after partition of British India. Its capital is located in Islamabad and its largest city is Karachi, in the south of the Arabian Sea (Ziring & Burki, 2022). Pakistan shares a border with India in the east, Afghanistan and Iran in the west and China in the northeast. The country is surrounded by land from three sides, while the Arabian Sea is



located in the south (Geography: The borders of Pakistan, 2009). Pakistan came into being after partition of British India on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947. At that time Pakistan consisted of West Pakistan (present day Pakistan) and East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) which were separated from each other by around 1600 km of Indian territory. After a prolonged civil war in 1971 East Pakistan got separated and Bangladesh came into being as an independent state in South Asia. Pakistan became a nuclear powerful state in the year 1998 (Ziring & Burki, 2022).

### **China-Pakistan relations**

Despite joining western alliance, Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize China in the year 1950 (Awan, China-Pakistan: A journey of friendship (1950-2020), 2020). In 1951, formal diplomatic relations was established between Pakistan and China. Pakistan was the first Muslim and third non-communist country to establish diplomatic relations with China. After joining the SEATO and the CENTO, Pakistan Prime Minister (PM), Mohammad Ali Bogra assured the Chinese leadership that Pakistan has no hostile designs towards China (Zeb, 2012). Premier Zhou Enlai met with Prime Minister M. Ali of Pakistan during the 1995 Bandung Conference and the two leaders agreed that there should be greater interchange and cooperation between the two nations in a number of areas (Bilateral Relations, 2022). Subsequently Pakistan's then Prime Minister Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy visited China in October 1956 and Chinese Prime minister Zhou Enlai visited in December (Zeb, 2012). In 1961, Pakistan voted in favor of China's legitimate rights in the United Nations. In March 1963, China and Pakistan signed a boundary agreement on PRC's Xinjiang and the adjacent areas whose defense was under the actual control of Pakistan (Bilateral Relations, 2022). In 1963, Pakistan and China signed their first

bilateral trade agreement for improving trade relations between them (Bilateral Relations, 2022). During the 1965 Pakistan-India war, China provided necessary support to Pakistan. This made China a reliable partner of Pakistan while China got another player in the region that could be used in its rivalry against India. During the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war Chinese leadership was sympathetic towards Pakistan. After the formation of Bangladesh, China provided economic, political and moral support to Pakistan to overcome the traumatic situation (Mahesar, Ghumro, Khuskh, & Mahesar, 2016). In 1972, China used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council against the proposal to recognize Bangladesh's independence (Chaudhury, 2020). Further in the year 1982 Pakistan and China established a Joint Committee for Economy, Trade and Technology (Bilateral Relations, 2022).

The bilateral relationship continued even after the end of the cold war. In 1996, then Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Pakistan during which the two countries decided to establish an all-round cooperative partnership into the 21st century. During the decade of 1990s, Pakistan and China continued to have good relations (China-Pakistan relations, 2006). After the 9/11 attack on the USA, Pakistan took side of America in the mission 'war against terrorism' (Hussain, 2005). Despite this Pakistan's relations with China remained strong and expanded even further. China provided help to Pakistan to become a nuclear power. In 2006 Pakistan President Musharraf visited China (Dutta, 2019). To make this visit memorable and to celebrate the 55 years of China-Pakistan bilateral relationship, the Chinese government issued special postage stamps and several agreements and Memorandums of Understanding were signed in various sectors including energy, trade, defense and communications (Krishnan, 2020). In November



2006, the Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Pakistan. During this visit Hu Jintao stated that the Sino-Pakistani strategic partnership would remain intact under all circumstances (Zeb, PAKISTAN-CHINA RELATIONS: WHERE THEY GO FROM HERE?, 2012).

### **Nuclear Cooperation**

China made Pakistan able to become a nuclear powerful state. Although China publicly stated in 1984 that it would follow IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards on its nuclear exports, reports claim that China continuously exported unsafeguarded nuclear material to Pakistan and other nations during late 1990s (Chansoria, 2009). With the help from China, Pakistan conducted successful nuclear tests on 28 May 1998 and became a nuclear powerful state (28 MAY 1998 - PAKISTAN NUCLEAR TESTS, 1998).

In 2006 Pakistan President Musharraf visited China and during this visit both the countries agreed to establish cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology (Dutta, 2019). As a result of it in 2016, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the Chashma Nuclear Project – III, with a capacity of generating 340 megawatts of electricity. The power project is a joint collaboration between the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and China National Nuclear Corporation. In 2017 Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi inaugurated nuclear power plant Chashma-4, with capacity to generate 340MW electricity. In 2016, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated construction work on a China-backed \$10 billion nuclear power plant here. China has been providing assistance to build the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant II (Kanupp II) with capacity to produce 1,100 MW electricity. It is China's one of the biggest investments in energy and infrastructure projects in Pakistan (Dutta, 2019).

### **Defense and other areas of cooperation**

Since the 1960s China has been playing the role of a major arms supplier for Pakistan (Afridi & Bajoria, 2010). On May 23, 2006, Pakistan and China agreed to a U.S. \$ 600 million defense contract, as part of which China would renovate the Karachi dockyard, build four frigates for the Pakistan Navy, and transfer technology to Pakistan for use in the domestic manufacture of a modern surface fleet. Admiral Tahir of the Pakistan Navy claims that this agreement marked a turning point in Sino-Pak defense cooperation, particularly in the naval field. The Joint Statement on Deepening Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation, which serves as the foundation for CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor), was released by both nations after Premier Li Keqiang's visit to Pakistan in 2013. A flagship project under China's BRI mega-initiative is the CPEC. The 3,000 km long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is made up of pipelines, railroads, and roadways, is being built as part of this project. Through a massive network of highways and railways, the CPEC eventually seeks to connect the city of Gwadar in South Western Pakistan to China's North Western region Xinjiang. 2018 saw the start of CPEC's Second Phase, which was aimed towards accelerating Pakistan's socio-economic growth. The Remote Sensing Satellite-1 (PRSS-1) was launched by Pakistan from China's Jiuquan Satellite Center in the same year. An important diplomatic step toward ending the Afghan problem was made in 2019 when Pakistan held the Third China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers Dialogue in Islamabad. Extensive bilateral relations were also visible during the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 itself. The majority of Pakistan's support in battling the outbreak has come from China. China views Pakistan as one of its closest allies and partners,



and Pakistan views China as its "Iron Brother" (Awan, 2020).

### **Economic and Trade relations**

Although Pakistan and China signed their first bilateral trade agreement in 1963, the economic relationship was almost neglected up to 1990. In the post cold war period both had realized and started improving trade and economic relations between them. In April 2005, Premier Wen Jiabao for the first time visited Pakistan and also attended the China-Pakistan Business Cooperation Conference. In his address, he pointed out that both countries complement each other in more than one way. He added that Pakistan has huge natural resources and China has the power of technology and know-how to utilize them. For him, China will work with Pakistan to improve Sino-Pakistan bilateral trade and will address the trade imbalance with Pakistan. In 2008 a comprehensive free trade agreement was signed by the two countries which gave each country unprecedented market access to the other. Both countries are also cooperating in infrastructural development especially in Pakistan. Important infrastructure projects include highways, gold and copper mines, major electricity complexes and power plants, and numerous nuclear power projects. One significant joint development project is the major port complex at Gwadar, Balochistan. Gwadar port complex was inaugurated in December 2008 and it provides a deep-sea port, warehouses, and industrial facilities for more than twenty countries. The port is about 180 nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz, through which 40 percent of all globally traded oil is shipped. Gwadar provides China access to the Persian Gulf and helps China to ensure freedom of navigation in the Arabian Sea (Zeb, PAKISTAN-CHINA RELATIONS: WHERE THEY GO FROM HERE?, 2014).

### **Implications for India**

China and India are cooperating in a number of areas and are major trading partners. However, it is also right that both India and China view each other as long term rivals. Since its second nuclear test in 1998, India has been quite vocal about this fact. General K. V. Krishna Rao, a former Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, stated, "China is the real enemy not Pakistan. We are capable of finishing Pakistan with ease" (Zeb, PAKISTAN-CHINA RELATIONS: WHERE THEY GO FROM HERE?, 2012). Therefore, China-Pakistan relations have various implications for India. For example:

- 1) China Pakistan nexus can create disturbances for India's getting access to Central Asia and Middle East via Afghanistan. Recent Taliban takeover of Afghanistan on 15 August 2021 has brought significant threat for India related to its projects in Afghanistan.
- 2) China may use its linkage with Pakistan in order to destabilize India's Jammu & Kashmir region by pushing Taliban and other Pakistan based terrorist outfits in the Indian territory.
- 3) In case of any direct conflict with India, China may use its linkage with Pakistan and can start a two front war by involving Pakistan.
- 4) China-Pakistan nexus is also a threat for India regarding the success of the SAARC (The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). Already the India-Pakistan bilateral issue is a major cause of concern for the success of the SAARC.
- 5) China through its Gwadar port in Pakistan may create unrest at any time in the areas adjoining the Strait of Hormuz which may threaten India's trade with the Middle East and other parts of the world.
- 6) China Pakistan relation can also be used by Pakistan to get support on Kashmir issue and issue related to terrorism etc at international organizations such as the UNO.



## Conclusion and suggestions

The above discussion says that Pakistan and China are two potential threats for India. They are hostile neighbors of India. With Pakistan India have conflict on many issues such as sharing of Indus river water, terrorism, Kashmir issue etc. With China India also has many issues of conflict such as border issue, issue of Dalai Lama etc. Along with these, China Pakistan relationship has been creating huge tension for India in many areas. China Pakistan relationship has huge security implications for India. China is an aggressor country and continuously doing illegal encroachments on the Indian border. Besides China Pakistan relationship may cause unrest in India's Jammu & Kashmir region. Report also claims that China along with Pakistan has been involved in supply of illegal arms, narcotics in India's northeast in order to destabilize the frontier territory of India. Therefore, following suggestions can bring positive results.

- a) India needs to improve its relation with other South Asian neighbors to counter China in the region.
- b) India needs to deepen its ties with major powers in the world such as the USA, France, Japan etc.
- c) India needs to raise voice against terrorism continuously in various platforms in order to express real faces of Pakistan and China.
- d) India should improve trade relations with both China and Pakistan, because economic interests often play an important role in resolving other issues between nations.
- e) India should work towards permanent settlement of the border with Pakistan and China.

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