

## CPEC: An Achilles Heel

Huma Amin<sup>1\*</sup>, Shahid Manzoor<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Student at Jilin University<sup>2</sup>Hailey College of commerce, University of PunjabDOI: [10.36347/sjahss.2020.v08i01.005](https://doi.org/10.36347/sjahss.2020.v08i01.005)

| Received: 01.01.2020 | Accepted: 10.01.2020 | Published: 18.01.2020

\*Corresponding author: Huma Amin

### Abstract

### Short Communication

China's gradually assertive naval stance in the Indian Ocean does not seem to be dwindling. Further, China endures to develop its own locus in the region through its highly funded "One Belt, One Road strategy" which pursues to revive the old trade routes with Beijing at the center of the trade. Likewise, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) exemplifies Beijing longings for connectivity with other regions and its exertions to make convinced that its economy stays the course by expanding energy import corridors. It is a reply to the United States Asia pivot and its rising support for India. The present study emphasize that this immersion of external actors and the competition between the internal powers has formed the strategies and policies of international political settings concerning CPEC.

**Keywords:** Security strategy; United States concerns; One Belt One Road; China Pakistan Economic Corridor; Security threat.

**Copyright @ 2020:** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use (NonCommercial, or CC-BY-NC) provided the original author and source are credited.

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan was one of the three countries that recognized China in 1950. From that time the relation among both States has started to grow. Furthermore, commencement with the starting political ties in 1950s both States have strengthened its relation in all scopes of life particularly in trade and military. Likewise, the ongoing China Pakistan Economic Corridor project with reserves of 46\$b along with Gwadar port, as it would give the additional boost to the already robust friendship among both countries. The treaty of construction a port in Pakistan was contracted in 2002. The village of Gwadar is positioned on the Arabian Sea coastline of Pakistan's province of Baluchistan. The importance of this area has increased due to its vital strategic location because it is distant only 72 km from Iran, and round about 400km from the Strait of Hormuz. Further, Pakistan can also taste numerous prospects due to this agreement[1]. Gwadar port also marks the Pakistan quite meaningful in the Indian Ocean region. This venture makes the position of Pakistan stronger due to the assistance of China's naval assets for Pakistan, which can keep an eye on the Indian movements in the Indian Ocean. Further the Sino-Pak partnership can make sure the Indian naval activities in the Indian Oceans.

In this context, Gwadar port project serves as a gateway to the Strait of Hormuz and other important

gateways. On the other hand, Pakistan had preferred the position of this port after great strive and contemplation, because there were numerous favorable gains that help both countries to finalize this location. Firstly, the Gwadar port is closer to the Sea Lines of Communication for the better facilities of trans-shipment. The Second advantage is that it is away from Indian influence which appends the safety of its location. Thirdly the weather disorders are also favorable on this place. Lastly, this vital strategic port offers more opportunities and it is also a gateway to the Persian Gulf. This vital location of Gwadar port provides numerous strategic and economic interests to Pakistan. Likewise, this port serves the direct route to Central Asian states in both sea and land ways. This port also adds up safe and an easy way to the warm waters [2].

The ongoing mega venture of Pakistan and China is under the massive jeopardy. Pakistan has a significantly vital geo-strategic location in the region. It is sitting at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz in the Indian Ocean region. Pakistan itself is highly dependent on maritime trade and approximately Over 95 percent of Pakistan's trade is going through the Arabian Sea. The stakes of Pakistan in the maritime arena is therefore, highly impacted by multifaceted threats and challenges. Most important threats are the emerging Indo-US strategic partnership to counter the rise of

Chinese interests and presence in the region, regional rivalries like Indo-Chinese conflict and the continued threat of terrorism and piracy and fair threats to CPEC from internal like political rivalries and non-state actors and external rivals like India and the US are including. Further, there are numerous factors of insecurity that badly affect the security of Pakistan and particularly CPEC [3].

Further, China and Pakistan have long continued partnership. However, their close economic corporation is a more recent expansion in relations of both countries. This greater venture of Chinese determined One Belt One Road Inventiveness. Likewise, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is likely to offer China's reserves to Pakistan. Meanwhile, CPEC is not only a strong profitable godsend for Pakistan's progress, but also a prospect for Pakistan to become stable and restructure its representation from a flimsy state to an emerging economy in Asia. From a geopolitical viewpoint, CPEC is also considered as a game changer development in South and Central Asia. The prospects of this project are promising, while the meticulous prospects and encounters CPEC faces, and it still requires to be prudently assessed. CPEC is a joint development among China and Pakistan but it has already haggard attention and fret from other investors in this region with the US and India [4].

In spite of numerous prospects that China Pakistan Economic Corridor possibly offers, but it has the inherited challenges too. Firstly, the insecurity would be a challenge, so in this regard, the Pakistan's government and military have specified more than 10,000 security forces for the safeguard of the people and projects of CPEC [5]. Secondly, there are also notable concerns that Pakistan would face like Pakistan can become Chinese colony and military basis will be controlled by China particularly in Gwadar. It will also rift the bilateral relation of the US and Pakistan. Finally, there are also geopolitical concerns. The grievances that Chinese endorsement of CPEC distorted the difference between radical strategy and viable objectives, which make obvious that the other key actors like India and the US may stab the CPEC and discharge the possible prospects brought by this project [6].

On the other hand, the US is comprehensively engaged with India in enhancing its economic interaction with other World. The US is also profound to represent a momentous collaboration with India, to counter the economic rise of China. The United States strategy regarding India, considered as an important strategic ally particularly for US strategic objectives and interests in Indian Ocean and across the sphere. United States shares universal goals with India of global market and trade, and for this rationale both partners are intense to have control on vital sea lanes throughout the world particularly in the Indian Ocean. Additionally,

the Indian Ocean approaches the US also ropes Indian domination in the region and consider it prolific for the regional permanency. The US security agreements with India are growing day by day and their counter strategies has taken their relation to the extraordinary heights. The Indo- US defense partnership is also strengthening with the passage of time [7].

Further the ongoing mega venture of Pakistan and China (CPEC) has pressed India and US to closer the ties. In this scenario of new partnership and collaboration, Indian strategies and policies in this region are although under the shade of the US, but these are in the favor of Indian welfares. This intensive engagement of both countries is changing the scenario for Pakistan as well. Due to their partnership for the sake of interests in this region, that makes Pakistan insecure to obtain the stable environment for the fulfillment of its interests. Further the collusion of the Indo-Us in maritime interests compels Pakistan and China to restore the counter balancing strategies in this region [8].

Since long the Indian Ocean has remained a focus point of political and strategic activities. During, the cold war era this region functioned as a competitive ring of that times powers which includes the US and Soviet Union. With the passage of time the political rivalry dies down after the fall down of Soviet Union, but on other side another competition has emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which begun among China and India. Both countries are strengthening their marine competences and both are formulating strategies for much wider approach. Both states seem really firm and vigorous in the Indian Ocean region for the fulfillment of their interests. Their approaches are not just economic but behind the scene there are really vast political and strategic intentions to progress in this region. Like the oil reservoirs of Gulf made their activities competitive and more assertive. Besides from that factor, both states have historic orientations of magnificent period and cultures. This viewpoint is a big encouragement and incentive behind both States current rivalry for much greater role in the Indian Ocean.

China has made a noteworthy speculation in order to secure its economic and strategic interests in its sphere of influence. China started to invest for the security of its shipping lanes, it has participated in the Gwadar port in Pakistan, and the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota and also in energy and mining area in Myanmar [9].

The security of these shipping lanes is very significant for China because these are the vital source of energy provision. India is also in alarming situation over those huge Chinese investments in this region. The supportive nature of China over Kashmir dispute is also another point of distress for India. Apart from these issues, India has a great significance in geographically

due to Indian Ocean. Both States India and China have noticeable objects of safeguarding their impact in the Indian Ocean through assistance and support. Their activities are point of anxiety for each other [10].

Pakistan is boosting up its maritime security to secure its territorial waters in the face of new challenges which proposed by India and other internal and external rivals. The threats are going to be divided into regional and extra regional and as well as it can be categorized along political, economic and security themes. The political instability is the furthestmost obstacle to any project across the world and the CPEC is not exceptional. In September 2014, the Visit of Chinese President to Pakistan was cancelled due to the instable political environment in Pakistan, which led by Tehreek-e-Insaaf of Imran Khan and the Pakistan Awami Tehreek. While later on the issue has resolute among the PTI and government through a judicial commission of Pakistan and PTI also frolicked an indebted role in calling of internal support for the CPEC, but the risk has not decayed. Likewise, a new progression has been commenced by some sub-nationalists that are asserting the change in the routes of this project by the Federal government. The allegation was That CPEC project would only belongs to the eastern provinces of Pakistan and also divests the western provinces of Pakistan. In spite of this accusations meeting, there were no ground facts to prove that true. The Pakistan and China both governments have vexed to alleviate the fears about this project through linking with the political parties that were making the allegations.

CPEC is also facing political challenges on international front as well. On India's consideration, it is trying to imminent a tactful route to halt the structure of the CPEC in Northern sphere of Pakistan, because it considers it an essential part of its land. On the other hand, the US is also anxious on China's strategic entree in the Arabian Sea and its significant existence in this region. The US has tried on several levels to deter Pakistan from involvement with China's development projects. There is a bleak necessity to connect in political movements to cut down those kinds of attempts which make by foreign governments [11]. Further, as economic concern for the CPEC, the biggest risk comes from participants. So in this regard, the most significant threat has posed by the Iran's port of Chabahar. India proposed to invest extensively \$85 million in the construction of Chabahar port, which lies miles away from Gwadar port of Pakistan. Moreover, it is also fragment of its efforts to get approach the landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian states by evading the competitor Pakistan. Meanwhile, due to the nuclear issue of Iran the Chabahar project is not yet started and under consideration but on the other hand the Gwadar port is already functioning.

Though, it is not essential for disputation among these two ports. Likewise, Iran has a venture in the CPEC with the link of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline along with the assistance of China, which considers as a "common interest" between these three countries. The involvement of India in Chabahar is also linked with Pakistan's denial to give transportation access to India towards Afghanistan, in this regard India considers Iran as the subsequent best option for its interests. In contemporary era, India is predominantly vigorous in strengthening relations with Central Asian states for the sake of preservation of energy deals [12]. Security apprehension remains the most primary challenge to the CPEC up till now.

Xinjiang province of China considers as the soft middle of China because of less development and racial struggles in this area, which is initially affecting the Muslim Uyghur population. In this regard, For the China's government the ETIM (East Turkistan Islamic Movement) is an amalgamation of the three evils. The Xinjiang Uyghur considers as an independent region which arose as a foremost distress for China internally because of continues ferocious uprisings and terrorist occurrences in Xinjiang region. Pakistan Chinese friendship can be summoned as it is higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, sweeter than the honey, and stronger than steel. So the Pakistan as the friend of China, it is up to Pakistan to advocate china in suitable ways to deal with issues of the Uyghur's. There are also threats inside Pakistan which can trouble the CPEC project, like the Measures took by militant groups such as abductions, murders of Chinese people's, bomb fittings and the acts of ferocity in main cities of Pakistan are considering as cause of dangers for both Pakistan and China.

The Pakistan's province of Baluchistan remains always as an Achilles heel of the CPEC due to the Baloch ethnic nationalist strives that has become the challenge for Chinese investments in the province. Moreover the Secessionists usually attack on vital lines, which considers as another acts of violence inside Baluchistan [13]. In this regard to counter the security fears to the CPEC, the Pakistani government established a 'Special Security Division' for the protection of Chinese people and CPEC project. Baluchistan considered as the key to the triumph of the CPEC and also for the strategic aims linked with it. Previously, China and Pakistan have involved in various mega plans that seemed terrible due to the proposed threats.

CPEC bids numerous prospects for China and Pakistan first of all it will enhance the economic growth. The huge invasion of funds will work as a robust economic inducement for Pakistan's government. It will not only favor the Chinese investors affianced in CPEC, but it will also give advantages to all external stockholders in Pakistan [14]. Secondly, CPEC can endow its equilibrium and enhanced safety

with designed structure and developments. CPEC will produce extra private sector chances and propose a pragmatic trail out of scarcity for the people of Pakistan. In the context of Pakistan's benefits, the north Arabian Sea significantly grasps the strategic heart in Indian Ocean Region. Due to the Gwadar Port construction and CPEC, Pakistan has got a vital role in the policymaking of the Indian Ocean. Unluckily, Pakistan is not able to show a noteworthy role in the Indian Ocean, but the operationalization of Gwadar port opens up new panoramas of prospects for Pakistan.

## REFERENCE

1. Ali A. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Prospects and Challenges for Regional Integration. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*.2016.
2. Bukhari F. Pakistan's CPEC Prospects and Goals. *TACSTRAT*.2016.
3. Khan M. Indian Ocean Region Challenges and Strategies. *Pakistan Observer*.2017.
4. Ahmad M. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: in the Context of String of Pearl Strategy. *Researchgate*.2017.
5. Elahi F. CPEC: Challenges for Pakistan. *Times of Islamabad*.2018.
6. Khan NA. Challenges to CPEC. *Pakistan Observer*.2018.
7. Malik M. Indo-US Nexus ' A threat to Pakistan Security, CPEC'. *The Nation*.2017.
8. Khalid I. Indian Ocean: Global And Regional Strategies. *Journal Of Political Studies*.2013.
9. Albert E. Competition in the Indian Ocean. Council on Foreign Relations.2016.
10. Cheng D. *China's View of South Asia and Indian Ocean*. The Heritage Foundation.2010.
11. Falak J. CPEC: Internal Significance and Challenges. *Strategic Pulse*.2015.
12. Javaid A. Assessing CPEC: Potential Threats and Prospects. *JRSP*.2016.
13. M.Ibrar JM. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Security Challenges. *APME*.2016.
14. Wagner C. The Effects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*.2016.