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Q No1: A critical Analysis of Pakistan's Foreign policy post 9/11?

Answer: **A critical Analysis of Pakistan's Foreign policy post 9/11 are following points:**

Points:

1. Pakistan's foreign policy after 9/11.
2. Change in Afghan policy.
3. Change in Kashmir policy.
4. Change in India's policy.
5. The quest for national security.
6. Pakistan's place in the regional and international system.
7. To promote soft image of Pakistan.
8. To fight terrorism.
9. Bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation.
10. Multilateral policy and objectives.
11. Demand of a strong UN system for stable security.
12. Conclusion.

Explanation:

1. Pakistan's foreign policy after 9/11:

The foreign policy of Pakistan is shaped largely by geographical and historical considerations, by its political and social system, by virtue of economic dependence and military vulnerability, by its relative power position with reference to the adversary, by the policies of other countries and by the world contemporary environment. Historically, Pakistan's foreign policy was primarily focused on India, but the events of 9/11 made Pakistan a front-line State in defending U.S. interests in the region. The country had already suffered due to the Cold War; this new situation placed Pakistan in a position where it had to defend itself against the barrage of allegations and look for closer cooperation of friendly

countries to avoid international isolation. Besides, it is also believed that the country's elites decided to support the U.S. because of their desire to receive economic and military assistance and also to gain political support to legitimize the then undemocratic regime of General Pervez Musharaf.¹ Given all that, Gen. Musharaf laid the foundation of a strategic partnership between the U.S. and Pakistan, and promised to cooperate on the issues of terrorism and to prevent nuclear proliferation.

2. Change in Afghan policy:

Thus, Pakistan carefully evaluated the pro-Taliban policy which was perceived to be costly, and changed its Afghan policy which was isolating the country within the entire region, both among its friends and foes. On the other hand, Pakistan had a fundamental national interest in Afghanistan's stability, unity and territorial integrity as decades of war had furthered terrorism and extremism which posed significant threats to Afghanistan's transition to a modern democratic State and to its fragile economy. During his official visit to Kabul on December 4, 2010, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, said that Pakistan had always wanted a peaceful, stable and friendly Afghanistan. The destinies of the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan were deeply interlinked. Pakistan had been aspiring closer economic and commercial ties with the resource-rich Central Asian States and had plans for establishment of energy and trade corridors with them. But all of them invariably depended on a peaceful Afghanistan.

3. Change in Kashmir policy:

The events of 9/11 and the global (war on terror) not only changed the fundamental fabric of Pakistan's foreign policy, but also complicated Pakistan's diplomatic stance on the Kashmir dispute. The new situation made it difficult for Pakistan to provide diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri indigenous freedom movement as the circumstances provided India an opportunity to project it as Islamic militancy and to gain sympathies of the international community. Subsequently, in an effort to handle the matter diplomatically, President Musharaf addressed the nation on September 20, 2001. He said that: Our main concerns are they [USA] can be hurt and harmed. And they can also devastate our main power, our main cause, Kashmir. They are to see what the intentions of our neighboring countries are. They [India] have offered all their military facilities to the United States. Very conveniently, they [India] have offered their logistic support and all their facilities to America. They want that America should come and side them and they want Pakistan to be declared a terrorist State, and thus damage our Kashmir cause. Thus, Pakistan acted according to the U.S. desire and also maintained its traditional stand that Kashmir problem needs to be resolved through dialogue and peaceful means in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people and the UN resolutions. Pakistan also urged the international community, especially the U.S, to play an active role in resolving the Kashmir dispute for the sake of durable peace and harmony in the region.

4. Change in India's policy:

The history of Pakistan-India relations is full of distrust since independence in 1947. Both the countries have fought three wars (1948, 1965, and 1971) and also have had hostilities in Kargil in 1998. The outstanding issues such as Siachen, Sir Creek, Kishanganga Dam and

above all the core issue of Kashmir have remained unsettled to date. On top of it all, the situation is alarming because of the presence of nuclear weapons in both the countries. Their relations received a serious blow after the suicide attack on Indian parliament in December 2001; and got further worsened after the Mumbai carnage in November 2008. India referred to the Mumbai attack as India's 9/11 and described the city as a hub of commercial and entertainment activities and a symbol of modern India. New Delhi blamed Pakistan for the terror incidents and was ready to attack Pakistan, but Islamabad denied the charges and matched India's military moves.

The U.S. expressed disappointment on this Indian decision. Voicing the Pakistani desire to restart the dialogue process with India, former Prime Minister YousafRazaGilani appeared on India's CNN-IBN and said that Pakistan and India must not be held hostage to the Mumbai attack because the beneficiaries will be terrorists and dialogue is the only best solution."

5. Pakistan's place in the regional and international system:

Pakistan has been actively involved in international affairs both within and beyond the South Asian region. The country has continued its partnership with the United States and the industrialized Western world based on strategic affinities and common interests in economic and trade affairs.

In this regard, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Finance Minister of Pakistan, elaborates Pakistan's economic foreign policy objectives and mentions that as a set of commitments, those objectives constitute the broad aspirational tenets of the country's approach to its economic development and, if consistently adhered to, it will render the policy predictable and in line with our perception of the kind of nation we seek to be, and the kind of world we wish to live in. Thus, there must be one yardstick which is the quality of economic development and that is the only useful policy tool."

6. To promote soft image of Pakistan:

Pakistan's diplomatic and moral support to Taliban has badly damaged its global image and its own multi-cultural society. The violence began when Taliban introduced strict interpretation of Islam and propagated that America and the West is the root cause of all evil. Following the 9/11 incidents, elements with similar views gained ground in Pakistan that resulted in increased militancy in society with suicide blasts becoming almost a routine matter for the people in Pakistan. The brutal acts of Taliban not only brought a bad name to the country but also tarnished the image of Islam.

7. To maintain minimum deterrence:

Since inception of the country in 1947, Pakistan has been facing grave security problems from India. The international community has failed to play a decisive role against Indian aggression, particularly in 1971 when the Eastern wing of the country was severed. At the same time, the detonation of Indian atomic devices in 1974 and later in May 1998 made

Pakistan realise that in order to maintain minimum deterrence, Pakistan had no choice but to go nuclear. Indian reluctance to settle disputes, particularly the core dispute of Kashmir, was also a factor. This situation is best described by Avery Goldstein that Nuclear deterrence will remain at the core of the security policies of the world's great powers and will continue to be an attractive option for many weak or less powerful States worried about adversaries whose capabilities they cannot match. The situation has become even more complicated with the signing of a comprehensive nuclear deal between India and the U.S. Pakistan has repeatedly made it clear to the world that it does not want to indulge in an arms race with India.

8. To fight terrorism:

Immediately after the attacks on the Twin Towers, Pakistan strongly condemned and unequivocally declared that terrorism is never sanctioned by Islam. A prominent Pakistani religious scholar, Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai, condemned terrorists' activities, and while giving an interview to the New York Times, he said: It is wrong to kill innocent people and it is also wrong to praise those who kill innocent people. Another Muslim scholar, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, also stated that terrorism is a perversion of religion, and those who attacked the Twin Towers have also hijacked the faith. In this context, Pakistan's decision to fight against terrorism marked the beginning of a new era in Pakistan-U.S relationship. President Bush also made it clear that taking U.S Pakistan relationship on a higher plane was one of his administration's highest priorities. After Musharaf, the new civilian government under President Asif Ali Zardari also made it clear that democratic government will not let terrorism to hijack the country's foreign policy, and voiced his government's commitment to pursue a full international agenda against terrorists.

While praising Pakistan's efforts in the war against terror, The Wall Street Journal advised Washington. Pakistan is facing blowback of the international effort to contain terrorism in the globe, but the U.S. and its Western allies must have to realize that Pakistan alone cannot defeat terrorism and concrete results are also not possible without active support and assistance to Pakistan. The Mutahidda Ulema Council of Pakistan comprising different factions of Islam condemned the militant acts at home and abroad, issued a fatwa against a deformed concept of jihad and the use of suicide-bombing in Pakistan, described Taliban's acts as counter to the teachings of the divine religion and opposed to the message of Islam. In this regard, capacity-building of the security institutions in Pakistan will be important as mentioned by Leon Hadar. It is necessary to strengthen Islamabad's counter-terrorism capacity because without that it is hard to achieve objectives.

9. Bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation:

Pakistan is a country which depends on the strength of its bilateral relations around the world to advance its national interests. The market access outcomes of the Uruguay Round (1986-94) and the Doha Conference (2001) of multilateral trade negotiations are essentially a series of bilateral agreements. In joining the war against terrorism, one of Pakistan's main objectives was to encourage other countries to help Pakistan financially and develop the

capabilities needed to deal with terrorist groups. Similarly, Pakistan is playing a vital role in the United Nations and is focusing its effort on the issues directly relevant to its interests.

10. Conclusion:

In the literature of international relations, foreign policy of small or weak countries is the product of constraints and opportunities and it responds differently as compared to the great powers. By contrast, domestic political, economic and military vulnerabilities of small or weak countries assumed to play a greater role in the formulation of foreign policy and cannot afford the pressure of great power in any crucial circumstances. In this regard, the terrible incidents of September 11, 2001 gravely influenced Pakistan's foreign policy which has created far-reaching consequences for Pakistan. In the changing circumstances, Pakistan divorced its cost oriented realist foreign policy and adopted the idealist policy with a view to avoiding confrontation with neighbors and the United States. Pakistan asserted that a rigid stance will provide a basis for the whole edifice of global pressure which might result to crumble the country's national interest. This precludes the possibility of mature relationship with the United States in which Pakistan can protect its national values and national security.

In this context, a soft policy has not only significantly reduced the U.S. pressure but in turn also covered Pakistan's desperate economic and military needs by avoiding the country to become a possible victim of global isolation. The new policy considerably warmed U.S Pakistan ties and secured the country's economic and strategic interests visa sovereignty and territorial integrity. It appeals, furthermore, to the imperialist rhetoric about Islam and on the regional front; it has resulted in less friction with neighboring countries like India, Afghanistan and Iran. On the global front, the U.S. and Pakistan both are moving towards greater strategic cooperation against terrorism and both are engaged to establish durable permanent relations. They are gradually in the process of taking measures to reduce the level of trust deficit between the two unequal powers.

QNo 2: CPEC: prospects and challenges?

Answer: **CPEC stand for:**

China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

CPEC: prospects and challenges:

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor hereafter CPEC) is the flagship of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative envisioned by president Xi Jinping in 2013 for the economic integration of Eurasia through belts and roads and other infrastructure initiatives. The OBOR is part of China's grand strategy of its peaceful rise as a great power on the global stage through financial initiatives of \$ 40 billion Silk Road Fund and the 57 members Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to generate new growth engines along the New Silk Road with a win-win and cooperative approach . The OBOR has two international trade connections namely the land based 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and oceangoing '21st -Century Maritime Silk Road; the CPEC is the part of the former one. With the former launch of CPEC between China and Pakistan in April 2015 by President Xi Jinping, the CPEC has got a status of "game changer" or "fate changer" and nationalistic fervor in the political, media and public discourses in Pakistan. The multibillion dollar (US\$ 46 bn) CPEC is a network of roads, railway tracks, oil and gas pipelines, fiber optics for communication, dams, ports, airports and economic zones linking the Western part of China to the Gawadar Port in Balochistan, Pakistan running some 3000 km from Xinjiang to Balochistan via Khunjerab Pass in the Northern Parts of Pakistan. Historically the Sino-Pakistan relations have remained more military- oriented, but it seems that a new beginning has begun to make the relationship more economic oriented focusing on trade, investment and energy cooperation. The CPEC has the potential to further deepen the relationship between China and Pakistan both economically and at public level and can change the geopolitics of South Asia connecting China to the Indian Ocean triggering concerns for India as the latter considers the CPEC, Gawadar Port under the control of China can be turned into a permanent Chinese naval facility in the Indian Ocean though it may not be a reality at least at this stage.

The CPEC is strategically and economically important both for China and Pakistan. It will pave the way for China to access the Middle East and Africa from Gawadar Port, enabling China to access the Indian Ocean and in return China will support development projects in Pakistan to overcome the latter's energy crises and stabilizing its faltering economy. Additionally, the CPEC could serve as the driver for trade and economic integration between China, Pakistan, Iran, India, Afghanistan and the Central Asian States provided the frosty political atmosphere between Pakistan, India and Afghanistan and to some extent Iran gets improved in the near future. Under the CPEC US\$ 10 billion will be spent on infrastructure development alone that could rejuvenate Pakistan's dilapidated communication and infrastructure, overcome energy crisis and could transport trade goods from Pakistan to China, Middle East and cross the regional states and global level. At this stage CPEC seems to be a bilateral initiative between China and Pakistan, however in the long run it has the prospects to be a multilateral project.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF CPEC:-

CPEC as pivot to China's economic and energy security:-

The CPEC connects China directly to the Indian Ocean and the region of the Middle East from the deep Gawadar Port reducing its existing dependence on the South China Sea as the latter is becoming a contested territory between various regional and global actors and can be choked any time by the competing powers in the Asia-Pacific region. The Gawadar port in Balochistan under the Chinese control is only 400 km away from the Strait of Hormuz and is strategically pivot for China in transporting its energy and oil needs from the West Asia reducing its current maritime transportation distance from 12000 km to 3000 km. Accessing the Indian Ocean from the Gawadar Port is inevitable for China as it makes China less vulnerable to its existing Malacca Dilemma and provides the economic security to China to access the West Asia at a time when the Strait of Malacca is increasingly becoming a contested territory among various players including China.

China currently transports 80% of its oil and energy needs through the Malacca Strait and increasingly feels that its economic and energy security interest in the region are under serious threats due to the escalation of tensions between China and the region and global players in South and East China Sea. This is why China is looking for alternative viable transit routes both economically and security wise; the CPEC is the best choice for China linking it directly to the Indian Ocean via Gawadar Port. Under the US policy of rebalance to Asia the region of Asia-Pacific has got an unprecedented strategic importance for the Obama administration and the recently signed Trans Pacific Treaty between US and its allies testifies it. This rebalance policy of the US in the region of Asia-Pacific involves military, economic and strategic focus to the countries of South East Asia including India in shaping its rebalance of the region including South China Sea and the Indian Ocean causing discomfort for China vis-à-vis its economic interests in the region.

REGIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMICAL INTEGRATION:-

Geopolitically Pakistan is the most suitable economic corridor for trade and transit activities providing a gateway to Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia and West Asia. Its role has remained important both during the cold-war and post-cold war era due to its geostrategic location and is neighbor to the rising economies of the region namely China and India. It can act as an important economic geography for regional trade. However, Pakistan failed miserably to take economic advantage of its strategic location and geography in the region. The existing bilateral trade volume between China and Pakistan is miserably low. This CPEC if extended to India will further enhance trade between China, India and Pakistan. Inclusion of India to the CPEC will further enhance the bilateral trade between China and India to new heights. The CPEC passing through the regions of China and Pakistan bordering many states could be extended to the countries Central Asia, Afghanistan and West Asia and India. The landlocked and resource rich countries of Central Asia have always set their eyes to access regional markets including Pakistan, China, India and the countries of West Asia. Both Afghanistan and Tajikistan have transit agreements; CPEC will provide them the opportunity to transport their goods and market them more competitively to the regional and global market fostering regional economic and trade connectivity. Similarly, Pakistan has the desire to access the resource rich region of Central Asia via Afghanistan to meet its energy needs and transports goods to Central Asia. The area through which the CPEC passes is at the crossroad of Asia, South Asian and Central Asia. For the greater benefit of the region and regional integration, the CPEC could be extended to Central Asia including Afghanistan and India opening them to the regional and global market. President Xi Jinping has already made a reference to such an arrangement in future during his address to the Pakistani parliament on his first visit to Pakistan in April, 2015. The changing geopolitical environment demands Pakistan to reorient its trade policy to more export oriented and must search for new markets in its neighborhood including India to boost its economy and

the CPEC seems to be the best opportunity for Pakistan to expand its trade with the region of South and Central Asia including China and India. India has always desired to have transit route to Afghanistan and Central Asia via Pakistan. However, given the political rivalry between India and Pakistan, the latter has denied transit route to India through Pakistan. India as an alternative has focused on Chahbahr Port in Iran to access Afghanistan and Central Asia via Iran reducing its long lasting dependence on Pakistan to access Central Asia. India, Iran and Afghanistan have recently inaugurated the Chabahar Port under the trilateral framework signaling bypassing Pakistan for a regional trade connection between the three countries. However, the Chabahar Port is not likely to be a zero-sum game for Pakistan, Pakistan can also be part of Chabahar trilateral arrangement and both Gawadar and Chabahar ports could be linked as regional ports fostering regional trades. The Iranian side has already offered Pakistan to be part of the Chabahar Port trilateral arrangement and not to consider the port as rival to Gawadar Port.

CAN CPEC BE TRANSFORMED INTO IICPEC? :-

Can China Pakistan Economic Corridor be transformed into India/ Iran China Pakistan Economic Corridor (IICPEC)? To address this question one has to understand the recent geopolitical and economic developments in the region of South and Central Asia that could foster the regional environment to transform the CPEC into the IICPEC. The TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India) gas pipeline agreement signed in December 2015 between India, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan signifies the melting of the long existing cold attitude and trust deficit between India and Pakistan and Pakistan and Afghanistan. The concept of TAPI was an old one but did not get materialize due to the political rivalry between the aforementioned states. Under the TAPI framework gas will be transported from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan to Pakistan and further to India. The TAPI agreement is the harbinger that a similar arrangement can be formed to extend the CPEC to Afghanistan, Central Asia and India. Despite its strategic location and favorable economic geography, Pakistan has very limited trading activity with both its eastern and north- western neighbors- namely India and Afghanistan. India needs a transit route to trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia via Pakistan and Pakistan desires access to the markets of Central Asian States for its energy needs. Pakistan's access to Central Asia is unlikely unless Pakistan allows Afghanistan the transit route to access India. The CPEC seems to be an opportunity for India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian States to have North South regional trade connectivity in addition to creating economic avenues for Pakistan. Currently the anathema between India and Pakistan could prevent India to be part of the CPEC. However, India's inclusion to CPEC can be mutually beneficial move for regional cooperation and trust building that could ultimately be stimulating in resolving political disputes between India, China and Pakistan amicably. Making India's inclusion to the CPEC will be helpful to allay the doubts between the two neighbors namely India and China toward each other's move in the region. The joint security of the CPEC between China, Pakistan and India can usher a new economic beginning in the region and can bring the countries more closely. China has already indicated that CPEC is not a bilateral move, rather a regional and cross regional move. The Oil of the international sanction on Iran has provided yet another opportunity to trade with Iran and to revive the Iran Pakistan India (IPI) gas pipeline- also known as the peace pipeline. India had left the IPI owing to the US pressure and Pakistan faced similar pressure from the US not to go ahead with the IPI. In his recent visit to Pakistan the Iranian ambivalence between Iran, India and Pakistan vis-à-vis Chahabhar Port supported by India and Gawadar Port supported and run by China. In addition to this, the Indian inclusion to CPEC will not provide a justification for India to oppose the project unwarrantedly as India claims that it passes through the disputed territory of Pakistan administered Gilgit-Baltistan. The region of South Asia has remained the least integrated one in the world despite having potential for accelerating economic growth and is rich in natural resources yet faces the energy crises that affect its economy badly. The

regional economic cooperation through CPEC and related regional moves could pave the way for cross border electricity and trade cooperation harnessing complementariness in electricity demand patterns and gains from larger market access by removing the regional trade barriers between India, Pakistan and other states of the region including China. In the lately hosted fifth ministerial conference of Hear of Asia-Istanbul Process (HOA-IP) hosted by Pakistan the participation of the top leaders from Kabul, India, Tehran have vowed to regional security situation particularly Afghanistan and its war torn-economy and ways to strengthen cooperation, security challenges and regional economic ties. The participation of top leadership of Afghanistan in the HOA-IP signals a shift in the region from geopolitics to geo-economics. This conference is a fresh start for greater economic links between Central, South Asia and Iran. By changing the transit route policies between Islamabad and Afghanistan, economic development could be brought not only to these two countries but can also foster trade between Central and South Asia in bringing the electricity and gas from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the region of South Asia (Wayand, 2016). The HOA-IP shows a commitment of the member countries for a broader economic engagement and CPEC could pave the way for such an engagement.

CHALLENGES TO CPEC:-

Despite its strategic significance both for China and Pakistan, the CPEC is not without challenges. It is surrounded by regional security and political challenges for its smooth execution.

REGIONAL AND INTERNAL SECURITIES CHALLENGES:-

Regional security could be the biggest issue to the CPEC as it passes through some of the areas facing the biggest security challenges. could hinder further to materialize the CPEC. As Lieven has noted that the Withdrawal of Western forces from Afghanistan, Pakistan's survival will remain a vital concern for the Western and Chinese interests in the region. On the other hand China is equally worry about the security situation of Afghanistan that could affect the Xingjian province which is an important region for the functioning of the CPEC. Moreover, the antagonistic attitude of the public of Pakistan and India could be a stumbling block in getting the public support for the Indian inclusion to the CPEC to make it a cross regional move. Pakistan's internal security has improved qualitatively their the military operation against the militants, yet the security phenomenon in Pakistan will remain a challenge to execute mega projects like CPEC smoothly. Although a special security force has been formed to protect the CPEC and related projects, given the porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan and some difficult terrains through which the CPEC will pass in Pakistan, security will remain a hinge for the success of the CPEC.

BALUCHISTAN CONUNDRUM:-

The long existing insurgency in Balochistan can pose constrains to the execution of CPEC and its related projects including the Gawadar Port. The rising insurgency in Balochistan is a challenge to the CPEC as well as to the federation of Pakistan and resolving it is imperative for the secure trade corridor between China and Pakistan. Lately, many non-locals, businesses and multinational companies' personnel have come under attack in the restive Balochistan region. A debate is already going on in the indigenous populace of Balochistan that the CPEC will benefit only the Chinese interest and could convert the local population into a minority. Such feelings of deprivation coupled with foreign involvement in the province as has been claimed by Pakistan recently, can be a serious challenge to CPEC. Addressing the concerns of Baloch people is imperative for the success of the CPEC and that could be done through a sane policy of integrating the least integrated Balochistan and its people in the political process of Pakistan. The political and economic deprivation is one of the major causes of uprising in Baluchistan and meeting these

deprivations is pertinent for the peace in Baluchistan. The CPEC will also pass through some parts of FATA and in future the extension of CPEC to Afghanistan is linked with the stability in the FATA region of Pakistan. Therefore security of Gawadar and the whole region is a serious concern for China and its interests in Baluchistan. In addition to Baluchistan issue, the people of GilgitBalistan are also demanding their part in the CPEC. The region has recently witnessed protests and strikes demanding political and economic rights including a fair share in the CPEC as it is the entry point of CPEC.

POLITICAL DISCONTENT OF PAKISTAN:-

The political controversy among various political parties is yet another challenge to overcome for the smooth functioning of the CPEC in Pakistan. The discontentment is mainly for route selection, dividends and allocations of funds for projects under the CPEC. Although the ruling regime through the APCs (All Party Conferences) has tried to ally the grievances of the provinces mainly of KPK and Baluchistan, yet it seems the issue has not been resolved. The political differences over the CPEC among various political parties are deep rooted in the history of political economy of Pakistan where the allocation of resources has always been politicized for political gains. The smaller provinces have concerns over the policies of the federal government where the resources including the federal budget are allocated on the bases of population rather than the backwardness and poverty conditions in the respective federating units. Given the magnitude and scope of the CPEC, Pakistan needs more highly skilled labor to execute various projects of the CPEC. The existing labor skills are not enough to pursue the CPEC and its related projects in Pakistan. The issues pertaining to transparency about CPEC related projects are also on rise. The political parties and other stakeholders have shown their concerns over the lack of transparency and have demanded that all agreements related to CPEC be made public. However, the concerned ministries are reluctant to make it public which further increases the doubts about the transparency of the project.

CONCLUSION:-

CPEC could foster socio-economic development in Pakistan if materialized timely. It can pave the way for regional economic and trade connectivity and integration between the region of South, Central and East Asia but that needs a change in the existing attitude of India and Pakistan toward more economic and trade relations. The regional economic integration through CPEC could be a harbinger to resolve the political differences through economic cooperation. The states of South Asia, Central Asia and East Asia need more regional economic connection to make the 21st century the Asian century setting aside the perennial political issues to start a new beginning. The CPEC as a flagship of OBOR can be a catalyst to begin regional trade and economic integration. However, some potential threats could hamper the CPEC to be transformed into a reality, namely the worsening security situation in Afghanistan and its spill over to Pakistan, political controversy in Pakistan regarding the selection of routes in various provinces of Pakistan and the trust deficit among certain regional states. In a longer perspective the CPEC can foster an economic community in the entire region of Asia and beyond if its vision is materialized in its true sense.