

PAKSTUDIES ASSIGNMENT

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QUESTION: 1

A critical Analysis of Pakistan's Foreign policy post 9/11.

A Brief summary:

- World's politics were transformed after an attack on the world trade centre and pentagon on 9/11/2001.
- Pakistan was very important due to its geographical location.
- Pakistan had to make changes in its foreign policy in order to avoid being in the bad books of USA.
- UNSC passed a resolution on 12th September for an attack on Taliban.
- Pakistan was aided by USA in return for its cooperation.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy after 9/11:

- Pakistan closed Talibans's bank accounts.
- Pakistan police was clear defense and avoid offense from USA.
- Pakistan rightly joined the global consensus.
- Pakistan was to give USA landing sites for their planes.
- Pakistan was to provide USA with intelligence information.
- To cut off all shipment of fuel and stop recruits to Afghanistan.

DETAILED EXPLANATION:

I. Introduction

Foreign policy of any nation is determined by the number of factors like security, economy, geography, ideological interest and many more. Pakistan, because of its historic past and its position in the Muslim

world had to face tough choices in terms of foreign policy making. The country's foreign policy was mostly based on its security and economic interests. Pakistan's rivalry with India and the issue of Kashmir reflected heavily upon its foreign policy during the Cold War period and it still does have a profound effect on the country's foreign policy. The country after maintaining a period of neutrality during the initial phase of Cold War decided to choose its path by being the part of Baghdad Pact in 1955, a move which annoyed the Muslim world. Pakistan, however, justified this alliance by claiming this was done in order to secure protection from India.¹ However, this was primarily because of the country's weak military and economic position that it chose to join the pact. Moreover, it was the pressure and promise by US of military and economic support to the country that Pakistan entered the US led Capitalist bloc. By doing this the country tried to balance its equation with its nearest rival India, with whom it had fought four wars. After the creation of Pakistan on religious grounds, there were questions concerning not only the survival of Pakistan, but also regarding its ideology - whether it would be an Islamic state or a secular one. The founding father of the country, Mohammad Ali Jinnah made it clear at the very outset that Pakistan will be a secular state with religious freedom granted to everyone regardless of their particular faith. Pakistan was a country composed principally of Muslims but essentially secular and democratic in its constitution and political institutions. He made this clear in a speech on 11 August 1947, three days before independence, when he told members of the Constituent Assembly that: 'You are free to go to your temples; you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has got nothing to do with the business of the State.'² There have been instances of Islamization of Pakistan's foreign policy under different regimes. Also, the Pakistan's establishment faced pressure from the ulemas who wanted the state to be declared as an Islamic state in principle.³ Pakistan suffered a massive jolt by the unfolding of events in 1971 when it lost its East Pakistan - present day Bangladesh, which also brought to fore the active part played by India in this process. This resulted in an even greater animosity between India and Pakistan and the two countries started looking at each other as a threat. This was aptly summed up by Bhutto, under whom Pakistan showed much vigour and vision in its foreign policy, when he made a statement in 1965 that "if India makes an atomic bomb, then we will also do so, even if we have to eat grass, an atomic bomb can only be answered by an atomic bomb."⁴ India's close ties with US meant that any plea of help Pakistan expected from US in 1965 and 1971 war against India was not met. marred by the severe challenges from both outside and within, Pakistan formally chalked its foreign policy which was based on its security and economic interests. In the wake of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan joined the US led military coalition (NATO) and fought against the Soviet led communism. In its pursuit of foreign policy goals, the country sought to improve its relationship both within the region and outside as well. Moreover, the country tried unsuccessfully to pursue its independent foreign policy and reduce its growing dependency on US. The country has maintained stronger ties with China and Saudi Arabia since long. Pakistan after a brief period of resentment from many Muslim countries, have now improved its relationship with many countries in the Gulf region, and also it has improved its ties with the countries in Central and South Asia.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy towards the United States post 9/11 : was a watershed moment in the annals of the modern times. It was an event which shook the world and changed the dynamics of world politics. This all happened when twin towers in America were hit by hijacked planes and the men from Al- Qaeda were said to responsible for the attack. This attack not only resulted in the death of more than 3000 people, but shook the very pride of the US and took the world by storm. What followed thereafter is what is referred to as "War on Terror". The US was very firm in its stand to wipe out the roots of the terrorism and to bring perpetrators of the attack to justice. In its fight against terror, the US garnered international support and thus began the never ending circle of violence, whose first victim became Afghanistan. Pakistan shared cordial relations with the US which were marred by occasional

breakdowns because of the shaping of political events in Pakistan. Disappointment at the US support to India during the Sino-India war and the breakdown of democracy in Pakistan especially after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was removed from office dented the relationship between the two countries. The shaping of events after 9/11 granted a new lease to the relationship between US and Pakistan. The US needed Pakistan for its strategic reasons, as the latter being the neighbour of Afghanistan could prove a potent weapon in its fight against terror. It was the time when Taliban had maintained a stronghold in Afghanistan and the US believed that Osama was not only hiding there, but was protected by Taliban. After Taliban refused to hand over Osama to America, the latter believed that the sanctuary of terrorists operating from Afghanistan is a threat to world peace and thus decided to invade Afghanistan for which it sought the help from Pakistan. But it was not an easy decision for Pakistan to join the bandwagon of “War on Terror” as the country was already grappling with the security problems and by choosing to be US ally it was inviting more trouble to its already precarious situation, as Ahmed Rashid has rightly described the relations between the two countries after 9/11 as torturous. Pakistan has always been a country where military has dominated the politics and is always believed to call shots even if there is an elected civilian government. When 9/11 happened, Pakistan was headed by the powerful military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, so the US had no choice but to deal with him and to seek his support. There was a growing lobby within Pakistan consisting of ulemas who didn’t want their country to fight against their Muslim brethren. Also, Pakistan supported the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Moreover, many people take it for a fact that Pakistan’s relations with the US are determined by what is in the interest of US, not Pakistan. After initial phase of reluctance shown by Pakistan, it formally joined US and became one of its most important strategic allies. Pervez Musharraf justified this alliance by saying that the country had no choice but to join the alliance as the US had threatened of “bombing it into stone age” in case it declines to join US. Thereafter the US was allowed to use the air bases in Pakistan to mount attacks against Afghanistan and also provided a loan of \$1 billion to Pakistan for its cooperation. This also meant signing of Kerry Lugar bill in 2009, which was to provide 7.5 billion dollar of aid to Pakistan over the period of five years, which was later on suspended after Bin Laden Killing. Pakistan maintained the foreign policy of strengthening its relations with the US even though it meant the heavy losses for Pakistan in terms of human casualties. This also resulted in a further decline in its already precarious relations with Afghanistan as the estranged Taliban directly blamed Pakistan and directed their attacks against Pakistan. In turn Pakistan continued to receive aid from America which it would channel into meeting its security and economic interests. Pakistan has been a constant recipient of US aid which is said to be over \$20 billion in 21st century. While the military alliance grew between US and Pakistan, Pakistan was sceptical about it, as for them US was pushing the country in a deep quagmire of political turbulence and US believed that Pakistan continued its tacit support for Taliban. Kasuri, in his book also opined the same: “The US continued to accuse Pakistan of “running with the hare and hunting with the hound” by not giving up its policy of support to the Afghan Taliban”. Nevertheless, Pakistan couldn’t abandon its relationship with US for strategic reasons including the support on much valued Kashmir issue with India. This also meant lifting of sanctions imposed on Pakistan and also how Pakistan used this opportunity to accuse India of shying away from dialogue over Kashmir issue. After the US invasion of Afghanistan and the claim of dismantling of terror network, it mounted a war against Iraq on the grounds that it possessed Weapons of Mass destruction (WMD). Pakistan was again caught in a lurch and despite denouncing the attack on Iraq couldn’t break the ties with the US. Kasuri, in his book says, “Although Pakistan faced immense pressure from the US, there was strong public sentiment in the country for respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq”. The relationship of mistrust continued as was apparent when in 2008 the US carried an air strike which killed 11 paramilitary soldiers of Pakistan Army Frontier Corps which led to a backlash from Pakistan and termed it as shaking of mutual trust and cooperation. Also, in the later period when 24 Pakistani soldiers died in US led air strikes as a result of which Pakistan asked US to vacate Salala air base which the US used in its offensive against Taliban. The incidents

like these demonstrated as to how Pakistan values its relationship with the US as they knew it is in their interest despite growing strong public opinion to sever ties with US. After Obama took over the US presidential office in 2009, he made it clear that his predecessor George Bush had largely ignored the problems faced by Pakistan and how it posed serious threat to the regional stability if left unaddressed. Pakistan also witnessed a change in its political environment after 2008 general elections, which forced Musharraf to resign and an elected civilian government formed by President Asif Ali Zardari. An important event took place on May 1, 2011 resulting in the capture and killing of the most wanted man, Osama bin Laden, who US believed was the mastermind of 9/11 attacks. This raid by US Navy SEAL and the operation inside Pakistan's Abbottabad posed serious challenges to the Pakistan –US relations. While Pakistan blamed the US of violating the country's sovereignty, the US blamed Pakistan of shielding the man they were looking for since that fateful event. There were talks of "divorce" between the two countries, but somehow that moment was not to be which reflects that the relationship between the two countries no matter how old suffered from mutual trust deficit and further aggravated the fragile situation in Pakistan. The country faced host of challenges as it can't afford to hamper its ties with rest of the world by pleasing the US. Analysts argued that certain factors deteriorated the situation in Pakistan and these include the emergence of Pakistani Taliban who has become more dangerous now, division in the Pakistan's national security paradigm and the use of Islamic militants- jihadi groups, non-state actors- to pursue its defense and foreign policy goals. Also the "drone attacks" by the US has resulted in civilian casualties and has thus become another matter of contestation between the two countries. The shaping of events in Pakistan and the relationship with the US left Pakistan with no choice but to launch assault in the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) which was believed to be a safe haven for terrorists. This ploy of seeking goodwill of US has a huge bearing on Pakistan, be it in terms of human lives lost or in economic terms. The ghastly attack on military school in Peshawar was a chilling reminder of how Pakistan has been left battered by this menace of terrorism which is threatening its existence and which is believed to be a consequence of Pakistan's joining of US led „War on Terror“.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy towards India: The incident of 9/11 worsened the already fragile security situation in South Asia where the relations between Pakistan and India have for the most part remained adversarial. Pakistan's foreign policy towards India has been primarily security driven. The two countries have over the period of time fought four wars and border skirmishes have marked their relationship for most of the times. The major bone of contention between the two is that of Kashmir issue, with both the parties claiming the land in its entirety. The two countries have always looked at each other as potential threat and tried not to concede an edge of one over the other. This has reflected in forging of alliances, and when India successfully tested nuclear weapons in 1998, Pakistan responded by successfully test firing its own nuclear weapons and thus restored balance with its rival. The separatist movement started by the Kashmiris against what they deem as an occupation by India was supported by Pakistan for its own interests while at the same time India supported the insurgency movement in Baluchistan. So, this challenging relationship between the two countries has been deemed as a threat to the peace in South Asia and hence the calls for ending hostilities have been growing. After the 9/11 incident, Pakistan's growing proximity with the US caused discomfort in the Indian camp and with both parties in order to please the US were accusing each other of fomenting trouble in their respective countries. India in its attempt to woo the US and to keep Pakistan away from the US coalition, tried to exploit the situation and seek Washington's help in declaring Pakistan as a terrorist state. Pakistan, during the time when Kasuri was the Foreign Minister made it clear that any solution to Kashmir should be acceptable to the people of Kashmir and to the Governments of both Pakistan and India. While India on the other hand has blamed Pakistan for lack of sincerity and its support for militants to wage attacks against India, which resulted in the derailment of dialogue process between the two countries. With the effective use of back channel diplomacy and Confidence Building

Measures (CBM's), growing tensions between the two were defused to a considerable extent and in a significant move Musharraf was invited to Agra Summit in an attempt to normalise the ties-- an attempt which many regarded as a failure. Another visit this time by Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee to Pakistan in 2004 on the side-lines of SAARC summit was a step towards bringing an end to the troubled relationship between the two countries. While India insisted on its demand of dismantling terror networks operating from Pakistan, Pakistan reiterated that the root causes of this needs to be addressed-- which means resolution of lingering Kashmir issue. India has always treated Kashmir issue as a bilateral one with Pakistan and thus reduced the role of Hurriyat leadership in Kashmir who claim to represent the mass aspirations. Also, the role of armed rebellion which started in 1989 was also delegitimized by India. Hence, in this scenario the negotiations between Pakistan and India over Kashmir issue have always been a subject of criticism in the two countries. Pakistan's foreign policy stance over the contested Kashmir issue, though drawing flak from many quarters, has been of taking Kashmiri Hurriyat leadership on board before entering into any negotiations. Although Kashmir issue was side-lined by Pakistan on numerous instances, but they have constantly reiterated the utmost importance of Kashmir issue by emphasising that Kashmir runs into the blood of most of the Pakistani's. The two countries realising the importance of peaceful relations with each other continued the dialogue and in General Musharraf visited India in 2005 and was pretty optimistic with the outcome of the meeting, especially with the issuance of Joint Statement with India. In another significant development bus service across the LOC in 2005 heralded a path breaking development which was the result of the negotiations and paved the way for further peace building. Although Kashmir issue occupied the central stage when it came to negotiations, there were other host of issues like water sharing issue which was deemed as major threat to peace, besides other issues related to Siachin and Sir Creek. Despite facing immense hurdles, Pakistan and India carried on dialogue process with occasional breaks to resolve all issues. Notwithstanding the cynical voices opposed to the dialogue process, it needs to be carried forward. After the change of guard in both the countries no major development in solving these issues has been reached, apart from the famous Four Point Formula by Musharraf which did not have many takers. Despite the repeated attempts to stall the dialogue by some elements, the two countries have continued negotiations. In order to boost the respective economies, Pakistan Cabinet approved the MFN (Most Favoured Nation) status to India in 2012, which would boost the bilateral trade to US \$6 billion by 2014- move which was criticised by Kashmiri freedom leaders and the people within Pakistan.³⁰ Now that India is headed by the fire brand leader Narendra Modi, many people believe that Pakistan will find it tough to deal with him and his approach on Kashmir and other issues will be different from that of the Congress Party. Some analysts believe that restoration of democracy in Pakistan, has made things bit easier and the growing friendship and bonhomie between Nawaz Sharif and Modi is expected to throw interesting things in future relations between the two countries.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy towards Afghanistan: Ever since Afghanistan and Pakistan fought on the same side in their fight against Soviet Union, the two countries have been far from maintaining cordial relationship with each other. The two Countries sharing the same history and bound by ties of faith, culture and geographical proximity have locked horns over issues related to security and Pashtuns. In its attempt to achieve its broader foreign policy goals, Pakistan has sought to mend its ties with Afghanistan with whom it also had troubled past relations as it is being blamed for its interference in country's politics including the support from ISI to start insurgency in Afghanistan for its own interests and ambitions. The underlying assumption for this Pakistan interference was that after the withdrawal of US forces, the US will grant leeway to India to use its influence in Afghanistan and thus will undermine the authority of Pakistan. Failing to achieve its set of objectives from Afghan War (rebuilding the Afghan state and defeating Taliban), the US and NATO forces began to withdraw from Afghanistan and the country was left in shambles with the threat of civil war looming war. The US regarded Pakistan as a corner stone for the regional peace and thus expected it to play a major role in

restoring some sort of stability in the region. The earlier rationale for good relations with Afghanistan and need for “strategic depth” was that in case of war with India, the latter could give its army support and space, was later discarded by Pakistan army and officers as „meaningless“ owing to the possession of nuclear weapons. After facing the difficult situation in the wake of 9/11 attacks, in their bid to improve relations, the two countries signed 2002 „Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations“ which was based on the policy of non-interference. This was followed by the visit of Pakistan’s Foreign Minister to Afghanistan in 2003 where in Pakistan ensured of not allowing its territory being used against any attack inside Afghanistan. While Afghanistan accused Pakistan of interfering in its country with increasing evidence, Pakistan on the other hand expressed displeasure that the grave problems faced by the country were being overlooked. Pakistan made it clear to the Afghanistan that it favoured the negotiated settlement which also includes bringing Taliban to the table. President Karzai of Afghanistan was very vocal in its approach about the involvement of Pakistan in fomenting trouble in his country, and made it clear that Afghans were not so foolish as to turn their country into a battleground because of clash of interests between India and Pakistan and at the same time also emphasised that Afghanistan did not hold any ill will against Pakistan. Pakistan being conscious about reducing the Indian footprint in Afghanistan provided support to Karzai Government and also marking a high point when Pakistan invited Karzai to be the Guest of Honour at the Pakistan Parade Day in 2005. Further, by bolstering their economic ties from paltry US \$23 million to the tune of \$1.2 billion between them in 2005-06, Pakistan set the precedent for the importance it attaches to Afghanistan. Giving further push to the increasing diplomatic ties with Afghanistan, Pakistan opened up its borders to accommodate the huge influx of refugees, which is the direct result of on-going war in Afghanistan, and it is being estimated that Pakistan still hosts 3 million refugees from Afghanistan. It also announced \$100 million aid to meet the challenges of reconstruction and rehabilitation in Afghanistan.

II. Conclusion

Pakistan’s foreign policy like any other country has been expanding its sphere of influence not only in the region, but in the world politics as well. Its foreign policy has for the most part been Indo-centric which has thus impeded its growth in relationship with other countries. Pakistan perceives existential threat to its territorial integrity from India and this consideration has always essentially influenced its foreign policy and behaviour. The country’s backing of non-state actors in its proxy war against India has backfired as is evident from the mounting attacks from TTP (Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan) and other elements on its own soil. The precarious security situation in the country has posed serious challenges to its existence and the elements hell bent upon seeing Pakistan in chaos should be tamed by taking every stakeholder on board. So the need of the hour is to have better relations with the neighbouring countries, more particularly with India which is in the mutual interest of both the countries. The need to initiate dialogue and negotiation for resolving the pending issues is only the best way forward. Moreover, Pakistan has excessively relied on the US that no doubt has helped the country to boost its economy and defense capability, but it has also brought miseries of unprecedented magnitude to the country and thus alienated the large section of its society, which does not augur well for any country. It is the time for Pakistan to stand up to face the mounting challenges and try to address its spiralling internal issues, rather than to remain obsessed with India. Unless and until Pakistan doesn’t have a good relationship with its neighbouring countries, more particularly with India and Afghanistan, the more problematic it becomes to pursue its own national interests and to bring about stability and peace in South Asia.

QUESTION:2

CPEC: prospects and challenges

The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a development megaproject, which aims to connect Gwadar Port in southwestern Pakistan to China’s northwestern autonomous region of Xinjiang, via a network of highways, railways and pipelines. On the whole construction costs are estimated at \$46 billion, with the entire project expected to be finished in several years. The CPEC has been hailed by many as a game changer that would help integrate Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, as well as, rejuvenate Pakistan’s debilitated economy.

Significance of the Route

As it can be ascertained from the map, The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is not a solitary road; it is a vast network. It will spur the growth of industrial zones supported by energy plants, linking Kashgar in China to Gwadar. All provincial capitals would serve as fundamental nodes for the CPEC, upon which the corridor would be constructed. Balochistan should be the primary beneficiary of the project. The other provinces, especially conflict wrecked Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, will also benefit from this megaproject.

An area of significant interest is the Northern Area of Pakistan, especially the region of Gilgit Baltistan in the route. Gilgit-Baltistan has never been formally integrated into the Pakistani state and does not participate in Pakistan’s constitutional political affairs. The Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009, was passed by the Pakistani cabinet and granted self-rule to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, by creating, among other things, an elected

Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and Gilgit-Baltistan Council. Gilgit-Baltistan thus gained a de facto province-like status without constitutionally becoming part of Pakistan. Officially, Pakistan has rejected calls for full integration of Gilgit-Baltistan with Pakistan on the grounds that it would prejudice its international obligations with regard to the Kashmir conflict.

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Traditionally the region has derived economic benefit from tourism attracted by its exotic beauty and awe inspiring environment. However, the American global campaign in the name of combating terrorism, as well as militancy in the region has caused an adverse effect on tourist activity. Despite a number of people travelling from Gilgit-Baltistan to the rest of the Pakistan in search of jobs and education, there has not been much socio-political integration. The CPEC will change all of that.

The CPEC will not only solve the problems faced due to transportation and communication but will also diversify the source of income for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. It will also enhance socioeconomic integration of Gilgit-Baltistan with the rest of the country by giving it a primary role in the vital CPEC project.

The CPEC will also pass through the restive provinces of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. The CPEC can perform a critical function in conflict management in these areas. As poverty is one of the main drivers, if not the prime driver of militancy, development induced by CPEC will go a long way in minimizing it. The CPEC could revolutionize the existing socio-economic setting of Baluchistan by dramatically altering its communication & transport sector and revamping its infrastructure.

The CPEC is intended not only to make available to China, the shortest energy supply route from Africa and the Middle East but to also augment trade and cooperation, thus reinventing Pakistan as an energy corridor between South Asia, China and Central Asia. The Gwadar port ultimately will offer China an entry point into the Arabian Gulf and consequently widen its geopolitical influence. The CPEC as well as the new Silk Road will also become an engine of economic growth for China's underdeveloped western provinces, including Xinjiang, by

opening their markets to global competition, and help them come to par with China's developed coastal cities and provinces.

Challenge Analysis

The CPEC project while it is underway, presently also faces a variety of challenges that seek to undermine its beneficial impact for all involved. The threats can be categorized into internal and external, as well as, divided along political, economic and security themes.

Political:

Political instability is the greatest impediment to any project around the world and the CPEC is no exception. In September 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan was cancelled in light of the sit-ins in Islamabad led by Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) and Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT). While the issue has been resolved between the government and the PTI through a judicial commission and the PTI has played an appreciative role in calling for national support for the CPEC, the danger has not eroded. All sides should refrain from initiating a course of action that could lead to impairment of this nation building enterprise.

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Recently a new course of action has been initiated by some sub-nationalist parties that are alleging a change in the routes by the Federal government, that would only favor the eastern provinces of Pakistan and deprive the western provinces. Despite this allegation meeting no facts on the ground, the Pakistani and Chinese governments have tried to allay the fears, by interacting with the political parties that are making the allegations. There is also a stark need to engage the common man on the ground to stop the public from taking part in acts such as agitation that could halt work on the CPEC.

Political challenges also exist on the International front. There is talk of India approaching a diplomatic route to stop the construction of the CPEC in Gilgit-Baltistan, which it considers to be an integral part of its territory. The USA also has been apprehensive of Chinese strategic access to the Arabian Sea and its presence in the region. It has reportedly tried numerous times to dissuade Pakistan from involving China in the development, including advocating the port authority of Singapore as a suitable operator for Gwadar, at one time. Its significance as a provider of military and financial aid to Pakistan, as well as the second largest export

destination after the European Union, could make it difficult to ignore. There is a stark need to engage in a diplomatic campaign to hold off any such attempts by foreign governments.

Economic:

As an economic enterprise, for the CPEC, the greatest challenge comes from competitors. The most significant is the Iranian port of Chabahar. India intends to invest significantly (\$85 million) in the development of Chabahar, which lies a few miles away from Gwadar and is part of its efforts for access to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia while bypassing rival Pakistan. Chabahar will effectively be a way station for energy imports coming from the Gulf region and destined for Afghanistan and Central Asia. It will also be a gateway to the Middle East, and possibly Europe, for exports originating from Afghanistan and Central Asia.

While the Chabahar project is not yet started due to ongoing talks on the Iranian nuclear issue, the Gwadar port has already become functional. However there is no need for contention between these two ports. Iran has a stake in the CPEC through the proposal to link the Iran–Pakistan gas pipeline with China, which has been described as a “common interest” between the three countries.

Also the Indian involvement in Chabahar is linked to Pakistan’s refusal to allow India access for transit to and from Afghanistan, so India sees Iran as the next-best option. If Pakistan extends transit permissions to India, then India may not be interested in building up Chabahar. In recent years India has been particularly active in engaging Central Asian states for the sake of pursuing energy deals. India can be easily accommodated via the CPEC itself through eastern interface in Punjab and Sind and transformed into a stakeholder in the success of both Gwadar and the CPEC.

Security:

Security concerns remain the most primary challenge to the CPEC as yet. An arc of militancy stretches from Xinjiang to Gwadar consisting of groups like the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Daesh (ISIS), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and militant wings of political parties. Most of these groups may not have an enmity with China itself but rather intend to use attacks on Chinese interests like the CPEC as a means to deal with the Pakistani state. There are also indicators of foreign intelligence agencies engaged in espionage against the CPEC. In fact, reports of formation of a specific desk to deal with the CPEC at the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) have been widely circulated.

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Inside China, Xinjiang has been classified as the soft belly of China due to low development and ethnic tensions primarily concerning the Muslim Uyghur population. For the Chinese the ETIM is a manifestation of the three evils of terrorism, extremism and separatism. The ETIM has been further augmented by training from ISIS where instances of Uyghur militants being inducted in training camps have been seen.

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) emerged as a major trouble spot domestically for China following violent riots and terrorist attacks within Xinjiang and as far away as Kunming and Beijing. Faced with this unrest, Beijing implemented a two-pronged strategy. First, the central government unleashed a severe crackdown on terrorist activities, resulting in mass arrests and trials. Second, Beijing doubled down on its previous strategy of promoting economic development in the region as a way of addressing ethnic tensions. The central government recognizes that unemployment and poverty among Uyghur is a major driver of discontent.

Pakistan Chinese friendship has been hailed as ” higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, sweeter than honey, and stronger than steel “. As China’s friend, it is up to Pakistan to counsel it on appropriate ways to deal with issues of the Uyghurs, who along with other Chinese have a deep connection with common Pakistanis. Some measures to promote more integration of the Uyghurs go against Islamic teachings, which may aggravate the situation. Measures that accommodate religious values will go a long way in battling militancy in Xinjiang and breaking the hold of outfits like ETIM.

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Inside Pakistan itself a range of actions threaten the CPEC project. Measures by militant outfits like kidnapping/murder of Chinese personnel, kidnapping/murder of Pakistani personnel, bombings of installations, acts of violence in major Pakistani cities, are a major source of danger. The recent horrifying collective murder of 43 people belonging to the Ismaili school of thought in Karachi is a means of sowing instability in the country. As Ismailis are a major portion of the population in Gilgit-Baltistan, this could raise sectarian strife impairing the CPEC project.

Balochistan remains the Achilles heel of the CPEC. Baloch ethno-nationalist separatists remain the keenest opponents of Chinese investments in the province. In 2006, three Chinese engineers lost their lives in an attack claimed by the BLA in Hub, a town west of Karachi. A week before the Chinese president's visit, at least 20 laborers were killed in cold blood by BLF gunmen in Turbat. Separatists routinely attack power and energy transmission lines besides from other acts of terrorism inside Baluchistan.

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In order to specifically counter security threats to the CPEC, the Pakistani government plans to establish a ‘Special Security Division’ for Chinese workers. The ETIM and its main ally, the TTP, have been broken by successful COIN operations. However more could be done to improve security measures. Balochistan is the key to the success of the CPEC and the strategic goals associated with it. The government must engage the local dissidents in a dialogue process, and bring them back into the national mainstream. A combination of Diplomacy, Intelligence networks, Economic measures and Military tools can be used to counter foreign designs.

Prospects and progress:

If CPEC is properly managed, it will be a game changer for Pakistan. It has brought the largest ever foreign direct investment in the country. During President Xi's visit to Pakistan, both countries signed agreements of 46 billion dollars. This would provide a boost to Pakistan's ailing economy as Pakistan is under heavy debt. According to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, the current debt is 73 billion dollars. Each year, a huge chunk of the budget goes to debt servicing. In the fiscal year 2016-17, debt servicing was around 25% of the budget. Therefore, CPEC would help Pakistan in becoming economically self-sufficient. According to

rough estimates, CPEC will create 700,000 jobs. Besides that, millions of people will benefit from it.

CPEC includes a range of development projects. Out of 46 billion dollars, around 35 billion dollars are for energy projects. The government is hopeful that through this investment they will be able to add the required electricity to the national grid which will end the shortfall of electricity in Pakistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a public address assured that by the end of 2018, not only would load shedding be ended but surplus would also be available. Furthermore, CPEC includes restructuring of the decades old railways network keeping in view modern standards. It also includes motorways, highways, industrial zones, economic zones and airports, etc. throughout the country.

CPEC provides the shortest route to China. The distance from the traditional Chinese route which passes through the Indian Ocean, Strait of Malacca and South China Sea is around 13,000 km. On the other side, the distance between Gwadar to Kashgar, Xinjiang province is around 3,000 km. Therefore, CPEC provides easy access to China and cuts down travelling time from 45 days to 10 days. Freight charges would also be lower than those in the traditional route.

CPEC is also a safe option for China. Shanghai port is not only far away but that route can also hinder the smooth supply of fuel. Because of the ongoing dispute in South China Sea between China and South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei, clashes might occur in future and the route could be disturbed. Other than that, there is constant presence of US ships in South China Sea. The US in cooperation with the rivals of China may trouble China. Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP) with these countries is a part of the strategy to counter growing Chinese dominance, particularly economic. Therefore, CPEC is a cheaper and secure option for China for its long term goals.

It can also fulfill the needs of regional states and provide transit trade facility to the landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian states. Sea trade is comparatively inexpensive than other modes of transportation. For these purposes, Gwadar port can facilitate transportation to these landlocked states. Pakistan has also offered CPEC access to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, etc. They have showed willingness to participate and benefit from the project. These states can access CPEC through Afghanistan. It would not only be beneficial for these Central Asian Republics (CARs) but for Pakistan as well. CARs could get easy access while Pakistan would earn through transit fee. Landlocked Afghanistan would also benefit from the CPEC and be able to access the port as well as earn transit charges from the goods moving to Central Asian Republics. It can also change the fate of Afghanistan.

This project will integrate the region economically and create interdependence. It will make the region more connected and peaceful ultimately. In Europe, one country has been fighting another throughout history, even in World Wars I and II. That continent has been a theatre of war in the past. However, after the application of the theory of regional integration, European Coal and Steel Community was established which led to the creation of European Union. The idea behind this was that once the warring countries became economically interdependent, it would compel the states to maintain peace

rather than to go to war. In the same way, CPEC would forge economic interdependence which would promote peace in the region.

For the smooth operationalization of CPEC, peace is imperative for the country. In spite of improvements, security remains a challenge in the long term. Terrorists have still managed to carry out attacks, like in Quetta recently. For achieving that objective, a comprehensive National Action Plan (NAP) was formulated to wipe out extremism and terrorism and it did help in tackling the menace of terrorism. Today, there has been a tremendous decrease in terrorism related incidents. However, except for a few points of NAP, other points remain unimplemented. There has always been a gap between devising and implementing strategy in our country. It is the need of the hour to review the NAP and implement all 20 of its points.

A porous border with Afghanistan has always been troublesome for Pakistan. Terrorists, after training, infiltrate that border. Afghanistan does not recognize the Durand line, so the western border remains unsealed. People move across the border even without a visa. Effective steps should be taken to manage the border so that the infiltration of terrorists could be stopped inside the country. Now Pakistan has raised 29 wings in paramilitary forces for border security. This is the first time border management has been seriously considered along with a workable plan.

In Pakistan, political stability also remains an internal challenge. It is important for the success of CPEC. Political decision-making impacts the behavior of institutions. For achieving political stability, the three pillars of state -legislature, judiciary and executive – should work in harmony. Media should also play its vital role. Furthermore, all institutions should work within their domains. Political interference in institutional functioning should be discouraged for internal stability.

Regional cooperation should be promoted. Relations with neighboring countries in particular, and other countries like Russia in general, should be improved, keeping in view the changing international political dynamics. Their participation and investment in CPEC should be encouraged as it is also in the interests of the country, as the maxim goes, “*we cannot choose neighbors, but we can choose friends*”. Geography cannot be altered. Thus, there is only one option and that is the promotion of peaceful coexistence. Pakistan has to forge regional cooperation for CPEC’s long term success. In order to achieve that objective, it is important to resolve long standing issues particularly with India and Afghanistan. The comprehensive dialogue started with India should be carried forward on the basis of equality. Moreover, during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s visit to Afghanistan in December 2015, he assured them about “*respect for sovereignty*” and that “*Afghanistan’s enemies were Pakistan’s enemies*”. There is no denying that there exists mistrust between the two countries. However, Afghanistan should be apprised of economic benefits as it is in dire need of economic development. Afghanistan could earn a transit fee which would improve its economy. Furthermore, as Iranian president Ruhani suggested, “*Chabhar is not in competition with Gwadar, but both will complement each other.*” Recently, President Hassan Ruhani while meeting with the Prime Minister of Pakistan in New York showed willingness to participate in CPEC. Therefore, promotion of regional cooperation is particularly important for CPEC.

CPEC is an extraordinary project for Pakistan and China. It will uplift the economy of Pakistan and cut down the distance to China from 13,000 km to 3,000 km. Moreover, it will be a game changer for the entire region.