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## Relevance and Significance of Pak- China Relationship for USA in Changing Regional Dynamics

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### Abstract

Pakistan and China enjoy the bilateral and friendly diplomatic relations since 1951. Both countries are trustworthy allies of one another. China has always backed Pakistan in the difficult matters to stabilize the geo-political and geo-economic situation in the region. Although, Pakistan also enjoys good diplomatic relations with America but down the line these relations and ties weakened due to increasing mistrust and unreliability between both the countries. Pakistan had various occasions has been ally of the United States (US) such as War against USSR in Afghanistan. But after the war the US has put sanctions on Pakistan and tensions between both countries arose. On the other hand, China has always supported Pakistan stance even in the wars against India. These relations took a new turn with the Chinese project of Belt Road Initiative (BRI) generally and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) from 2013 onwards. This huge transformation of Pak-China dealings seen the two-sided connections long-drawn-out from military to the economic domain. The collaboration under CPEC, with increased investment of China in building Pakistan's power and infrastructure segments. The deepening relations of China and Pakistan and Pakistan's decreasing dependency on the US has grabbed attention of the USA. America has moved its all energies to East Asia from the European and Arab countries. Therefore, the aim of current study is to look headlong from this viewpoint and pursue to sightsee and explore the expansions that took place in two-sided associations outside CPEC keeping the US stance on this collaboration and its significance.

Key Words: Significance, Pak-China relationship, USA, Regional dynamics

### 1. Background

The relations between Pakistan and China are unparalleled and incomparable. It is the truly well-known and commendable association of the age due to their time-tested friendship and keen brotherhood. During 21<sup>st</sup> century joint relationships acquired worldwide considerations due to Free Trade Agreements and The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The global focus in 21<sup>st</sup> century has been shifted from Europe and Middle East to Asia. Asia has gained attention and importance due to its economical and geo-strategical importance. Especially, South Asia has magnetized consideration of numerous nations and key international and national forces with the publication of Chinese financial endeavor i.e. CPEC in Pakistan. The strategic relationship of Indo-US and Pak-China-Russia triad coalition are flash point in South Asia for geo-political diversion.

The basic elements of Pak-China relationship involve not only geo-political harmony but also faith and mutual respect. The ties between China and Pakistan are developing stronger since 1955 at different levels including diplomatic, strategic and political. People's Republic of China was recognized by Pakistan as the first Islamic state. In 1951, the diplomatic relations were started to build between two countries. Then, in September 1954, Pakistan joined Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) led by US military. Later, in 1955 became part of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The sole motive behind joining these forces was to strengthen Pakistan against threats of India. Pakistan courting side with China during Sino-India war in 1962 left SEATO and CENTO where America was in support of India. Pakistan also favored China for stable seat in 1961 for United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Trusting the famous phrase, enemy of an enemy is a friend began a different period of devoted and reliable Pak-China friendship.

During the war of 1965 between India and Pakistan, China not only preferred Pakistan but also forewarned India to finish war.

### 1.1. Impact of Pak-China Relations on Pakistan

Pak-China bonding not only includes political and diplomatic association but surpass a broader agenda integrating different dimensions of trade, economics and Defense ties. Stance of China on Kashmir issue has also been unquestionably transparent with Beijing reiterating the impugned land of Kashmir. China has supported for the solution of the problem according to UN resolution and in accordance with the desires of Kashmiri people, a standpoint Pakistan has retained since 1947. Additionally, China also guaranteed Pakistan for its enthusiastic backing to Pakistani situation on the Afghan matter. Pakistan and China favor the evacuation of US forces from the region.

### 1.2. Impact of Pak-China Relations on China

China is the world's second largest economic market and world's largest exporter and importer of goods. The market of China has spread massively all over the world. China with its great potential and capacity is considered as an economic superpower. There has been a long-standing matter of power stability generally in Asia and particularly in South Asia. China is a country that has shaped power equilibrium in South Asia with the intention of maintaining goodwill and peace in the region.

The noteworthy aim of Chinese diplomacy in South Asian framework is to create an economically integrated and developed region with win-win situation for all countries. China views neighboring countries to increase collaboration and develop its political and economic influence. Thus to counteract other authorities to damage interests of China in the region. Even though creating its links with industrialized nations of the world, China is expanding her dealings with adjacent countries and areas. China is not only financing in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (Figure 1) but also aims to benefit from in the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) with Southeast Asia. The Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) with Central Asia (Figure 2).

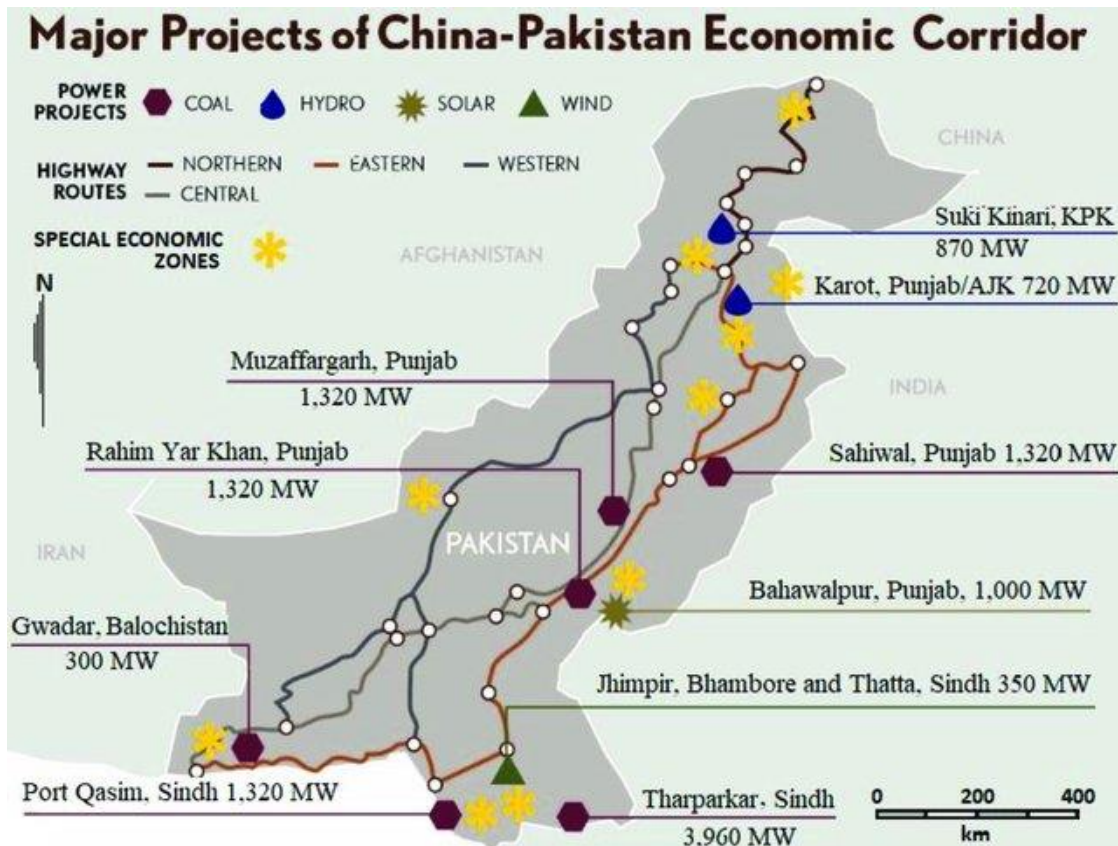


Figure 1: Map is representing the projects of prime significance in CPEC

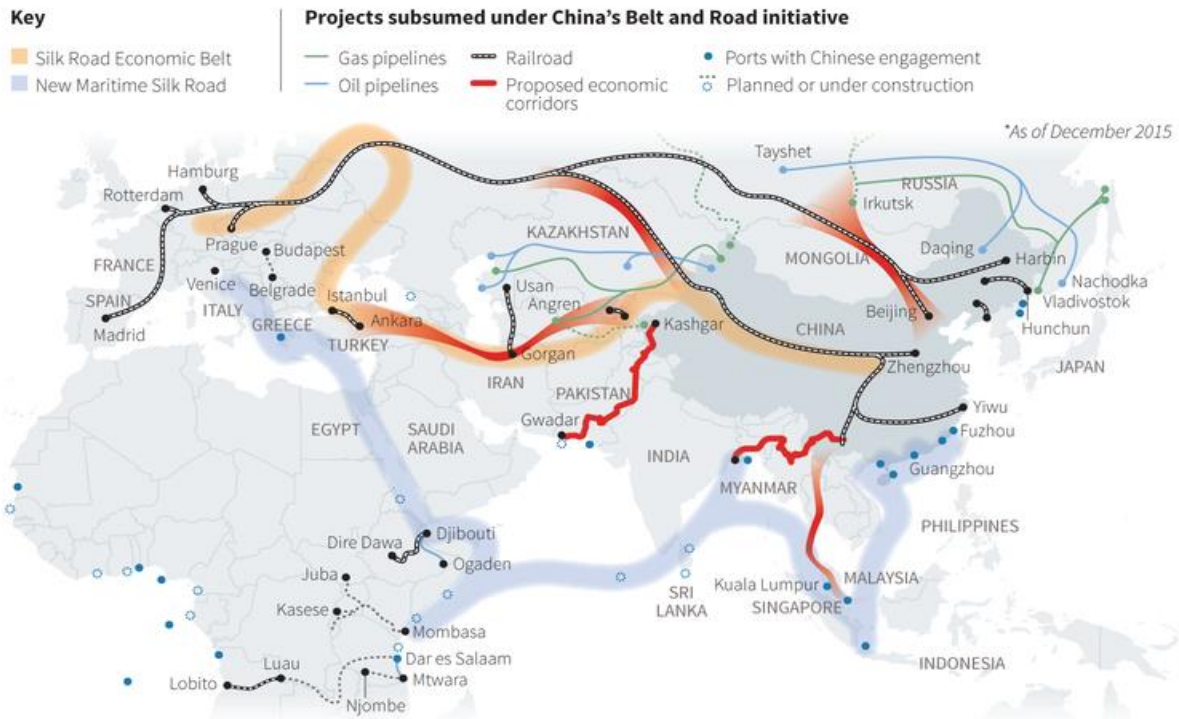


Figure 2: Overview of projects under China's Belt and Silk Road program (Habib, 2017)

### 1.3. Impact of Pak-China Relations on United States of America

During the early years of Cold War, the major concern of US was the expansion of Soviets in Asia. It was combined with compulsions between Pakistan and India that has given an enticement and break to US and thus developing close relationship with Pakistan. Though, Pakistan was being cautious not to provoke China by appealing in direct or incidental clash. With respect to the region, China was beginning intimate links with communist administrations in the Eastern and Central Europe i.e. the Soviet Union. Along with in the South and the East Asian nations including North Korea, North Vietnam, Laos and India. Alternatively, the diplomatic and political association between US and Pakistan were mounting. Even though Pakistan's attempts to pressure its impartiality to China in the Bandung Conference 1955, Beijing knew about the escalating ties between Pakistan and US and the reliance of Pakistan on US for financial aid and armed assistance. Pakistan clutched the chance of signing the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement while US protracted its assistance of security pack in 1954 and soon followed by the pacts of regional treaty including the SEATO and the CENTO. The diplomatic alertness of Pakistan at that time was such that these pacts and its association with the US faced no reluctance from starting a pleasant and non-aggressive liaison with China.

After a smooth 10 years, in 1960s there was twist in the relations of two countries and shifted from the correct to some regional compulsions. It was actually due to the principally beleaguered to angle the equilibrium of control away from India. The war between China and India in 1961 on disputed border land and still unresolved i.e. Aksai Chin. China and Pakistan in the year 1963, signed a border agreement in which 5,180 km<sup>2</sup> of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir was conceded to China, generating a sturdy Indian objection. While under all these situations, US disappointed Pakistan in 1965 war with India because US enacted a weapons restriction on Pakistan as well as on India. Thus, in such a critical situation China supported Pakistan by providing military aid by not being part of the war itself. Fundamental variations in Pak-China associations started to arise in the initial 1970s. Henry Kissinger was fled to Beijing from Islamabad via undisclosed mediation to devise US dealings with China. Pakistan exploited the US-China reconciliation to grow armed and even atomic nuclear collaboration with China. Even if Washington was conscious of this nuclear support amid China and Pakistan. This was overlooked due to Pakistan's extraordinary usefulness in the policy of US about South Asia.

Afterward the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979, in 1980s the financial aid was being poured by US and Saudis in the expansion of religious war principle (Jihad) in contradiction of the "godless". The

Soviet attack of Afghanistan had escorted a conjunction of welfares amongst US, Pakistan and China. Pakistan developed as a forefront state in defying the Soviet army in Afghanistan. Thus, taking a benefit of this different setting to excerpt capitals from the US and China.

After the war has ended, the utility of Pakistan meant nothing for US anymore. US not only dropped but also imposed strict sanctions over Pakistan owing to nuclear project of Pakistan in which the collaboration of China was involved considerably. In 1990, US deferred all armed auctions and financial assistance to Pakistan by raising the Pressler Amendment. Pak-US affairs were so tense by middle of 1990s that US was on the edge of announcing Pakistan as country which backs the terrorism. It was then, China which has become supplier of arms and ammunition to Pakistan.

As far as ties and relationship of Pakistan was continually sabotaged with US and became less reliable over the period. On the other hand, China was respected and counted on as a regional trustworthy and consistent companion which presented substantial and moral support. After all these years the weakened ties of Pakistan with US due to suspension of armed resources aid as well as anti-Pakistani grandiloquence, there is an apparent untrustworthiness of US sustenance for Pakistan. All of this has caused in the Pakistani leading the insight that contrasting the US, Pakistan was among one of the initial states to authoritatively identify the People's Republic of China subsequently the communalist victory in 1949 and China has proved to be Pakistan's all-weather acquaintance. China played main part in the advancement of Pakistan on its initial nuclear defense in 1998 as Pakistan has been dependent on the knowledge and uranium from China. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has added strength to this association. CPEC has linked the western city of Kashgar of China through Gwadar port of Pakistan on the Arabian Sea, which is 3,000 km away. The investment of China in this big project of CPEC is a portion of One Belt One Road inventiveness taken by China, is anticipated to lunge over \$62 billion by the year 2030.

## **2. Historical Overview of Pak-China Relationship**

### **2.1. Stage One Begins from 1951 to 1954**

The first stage of relations between both countries were initially challenging and very cold. Concerning the first years Pak-China ambassadorial affairs were icy merely for the reason and the fact that Pakistan determined to line up with the US in worldwide policymaking, whereas China picked to arrange in a line with the socialist state USSR. Hitherto in the learning of Chinese and Pakistani both, the foreign strategy, it stays an infrequent circumstance. During the initial phase, China was supposed as a danger to Pakistan due to its communist belief. The border amid two countries was indeterminate throughout that stage and China taken few parts of Gilgit and Hunza considering it as their own land.

### **2.2. Stage Two Begins with Bandung Conference of 1955 to 1962**

The subsequent stage commences from Bandung conference that was conducted in 1955 in Bandung (Indonesia). This conference is also recognized as Asian-African conference. The Chinese concerns were raised when Pakistan had signed the SEATO 1954 and CENTO. Pakistan contracted a two-sided arrangement with US for the determination of consolidation its safety and edifice economy on reverberation equilibria.

### **2.3. Stage Three Initiation from 1962 to 1973**

This segment was extremely imperative for both countries i.e. Pakistan and China in rappings of mounting harmonization and founding deep-seated affairs with one another. In March 1963, the borderline frontier contract concerning Pakistan and China was signed up by foreign ministers of both countries. After this agreement about the settlement of border line and limit, the bonds of both nations started to strengthen. The time period onward of 1962 viewed friendly alliance amid two republics on both public and management level. In 1971 a high-level war was breaking out between India and Pakistan. Because of war, the East Pakistan was split from the West Pakistan. It was China that had decreed political, financial and ethical support to Pakistan to cope up the tough and challenging condition that was formed after the war of 1971.

### **2.4. Stage Four from 1973 to Headlong**

The fourth stage tends to be extremely essential and era of growth and expansion on top. In 1974, nuclear tests were carried out by India with the term of “Smiling Bhuda”. This very move of India was an epitome tactical shift in the equilibrium of control in the area. Whereas, the neighboring countries of India i.e. Pakistan and China were constrained to make a defense deal so that stability of influence can be formed. The war on the Afghanistan by the USSR back in 1979, unlocked a first-hand means of partnership and contracts for Pak-China dealings. Pakistan and China mutually agreed on the regional situation that infiltration of Soviet Union impersonate a great danger for the peace and security of entire region. Both Pakistan and China became reliable partners and allies to one another in 1980’s. Moreover, during nuclear test in 1998, china was the only country standing by her side when Pakistan was strangled by sanctions from all over the world.

The ties of Pakistan and China affairs took a boost after 9/11 and determined to fight against the terrorism that had emerged in the region. The nuclear dealings of India and the US back in 2005 enforced de-stability in the region for the balance of power. As a reaction to the nuclear agreement between US and India, Pak-China management boomed up and concocted a civil nuclear deal.

### 2.5. Global vs Regional Impact of Pak-China Relationship

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being a significant part of this initiative. Successful completion of this project would potentially transform the not only just geo-political but also geo-economic land setting with superior interconnectivity of substructure plans comprising a network of pipelines, roads, railways, and ports throughout the Asia and the Middle East, expected to include Africa, and Europe too. Beijing labels the CPEC as per a “flagship project”. Jointly, this magnificent plan could benefit Pakistan assimilate more profoundly into the regional market and lift Islamabad’s upright in South Asia, despite the fact spreading China’s tactical impact from the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. Linking city of oasis of China, Kashgar in Xinjiang with the extensive seaport of Gwadar in Baluchistan province of Pakistan.

### 2.6. Shift of Global Geo-Political Power to Asia with China as Emerging Leader

In near future, China is likely to overhaul the United States as the sphere's major market (in buying power terms). If it really happens, China is going to be ending a century and a half of US supremacy but will also be regaining the preeminence it first got an epoch previous when it was taken away from Western Europe to convert the principal economy on the earth. Nowadays, the Chinese "factory to the world" is creating not only clothes and stilts but computer machineries, wagons, and airplane, and locates its eyes even greater. The Chinese have positively hurled operated space tasks, somewhat only two other states have accomplished beforehand, and are forecasting promote space investigation. They are capitalizing profoundly in the expertise and technologies of the upcoming, such as nanotechnology and fuel cells that will assist their nation strengthen a leadership place in the economic ground as well as in world policymaking.

In current months there has been an important upsurge in the rhythm of Chinese armed maneuvers in both the South and East China seas, more violent conflict with India over borderline limits and more vigorous foreign ministry “wolf warriors” looking for to punish adversaries in target states. Beijing has also progressed conclusively to execute its national security law on Hong Kong and suppress the terrain’s determination in the direction of democracy. And throughout the first episode of a pandemic, China expatriate the US from its typical part as assistant to distraught nations by becoming the world’s dealer of face masks and protective apparatus. Probably, these movements have activated pushback. They have fired increasing aggression on the road to China in the US, where both presidential applicants have entitled for versions of “decoupling”. Hitherto Chinese influential leaders linger to gamble that the gravitational attraction of their mounting economy will demonstrate tempting to key businesses and republics. Critical examination of the actions instead of words, Beijing is captivating that gamble.

## 3. Analysis

### 3.1. Significance and Strategic Relevance of Pakistan in South East Asia

In Southeast Asia, Pakistan holds a critical position both geographically and politically. Geographically, Pakistan provides a key transit route which connects the landlocked central Asian region with the warm water ports of Qasim and Gwadar. This geostrategic location is critical in overland routes and provides networking for inter-dependent trade and transportations both at intra-regional and inter-regional levels. Pakistan being the member of regional societies and organizations of Asia such as SAARC, SCO and ECO have enabled Pakistan to stand strong in the projects pertaining to regional collaboration. The regional collaboration projects are of varying nature, starting from road links, to natural gas import and export, to integration of the textile industry and the recently popular CPEC.

### **3.2. Relevance as Generator of Natural Capital as Commercial Commodities**

Pakistan holds a significant pillar of economic performance in terms of natural resources. Pakistan has been endowed with a diverse range of capital of petroleum, natural gas, minerals, mines etc. this gives a natural competitive edge to other regions that do not naturally generate these resources. However, the debate of this natural and God-gifted advantage is very controversial among the economists.

### **3.3. Relevance as a Land of Economic Investment Opportunity - Gwadar Port**

The deep seaport of Gwadar has the potential to give a boost to the trade volume between Pakistan and the landlocked regions of Southeast and Central Asia. For example, in the case of Afghanistan the transportation distances have been reduced by a total of 500 km. The development of Gwadar as a commercial port will increase the oceanic trade by two times. Gwadar port has the advantage of being closer to the Chinese region Xinjiang.

### **3.4 The Karakoram Highway and Road Links**

Karakoram highway also known as the Pak-China friendship highway has been a transit route which passes along the entire length of Pakistan to China. Recent upgradation and reconstruction of the Karakoram highway has been an active part of the CPEC works. On similar lines, China and Pakistan have also collaborated to develop four more new roads throughout the Pakistani region of Khunjerab pass which will bring the land links between Pakistan and China to eight.

### **3.5 The Cotton and Textile Industry**

Pakistan along with a few other countries are the major cotton producers and exporters of the world. There has been an ongoing discussion about integrating the cotton and textile industry of Pakistan with other countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This joint venture is suggested to establish a cotton and textile cartel or consortium.

### **3.6. Strengthening Cooperation**

Emerging as a new global power, China holds a very high number of economic channels to safeguard. For this purpose, China has a requirement to establish expert military competencies. As China continues to extend its interests around the world, the requirement for development of militia and supporting military alliances become crucial. The continuing visits of Chinese leadership to Pakistan place more than enough stress on connectivity among the nations and the association of maritime sectors. The OBOR initiative which later developed into BRI was a proof of China's interest in strengthening cooperation between Pakistan and China. The CPEC is also said to be driven by the interest of the US in the Chinese political and economic value and the constant need to keep a check on its interests.

### **3.7. Strategic Triangle**

This strategic triangle between Pakistan, China and United States poses various threats and opportunities for all the players. This triangle is quite active in the CPEC initiative of China that is dedicated to improving Pakistan's economy. During Barak Obama's tenure in United States, they were welcoming of this investment as a means of promoting the welfare of Pakistan. US supported the idea of such a big investment by their rival China in Pakistan which is of strategic importance to them. Notwithstanding, the Trump's United States has received an altogether different position on this big investment by China. Instead of trying to orchestrate the standpoint Obama took on this investment and promote solidarity between Pakistan and U.S. and further Chinese advancement endeavors in Pakistan, Trump currently appears to be resolved to featuring their disparities in an offer to raise Pakistani mindfulness and mix distrust about China's offerings with respect to the investment. It's not very shocking to know that Chinese and Pakistani authorities reacted brutally to this hard stance of United States line.

### **3.8. The Strategic Enmity between China and US**

The matter on the way is international supremacy balance and their standing within the global scheme. The analysts suggest that there are grounds to be certain of the fact that President of the US Mr. Donald Trump esteems power and, above everything, martial supremacy as a close in the rather than merely a resource to encourage certain benefits and standards. The Chinese President Xi Jinping give the impression to be motivated more by a Chinese idea of a new world order. This new world order devised by the Chinese people holds that the state dominance is both resources and the fruit. Nevertheless, this US-China clash also has other dimensions such as state security, economic aspect, industrial, and the conceptual scope.

### **3.9. The Trade Policy Clashes of China and US**

The trade policy and agreements between US and China have seen both good and bad days. For rivals such as China and the US the main difference comes with the leaderships, style of leaderships and the personal and state interests of the leaders and governments now. The US and China issues over the dimensions of trade and commerce, economic and fiscal policy gave rise to an economic competition and from a different dimension which preexists since the nationalist course assumed by the United States under the leadership of the current US President Donald Trump. The Washington's disapprovals of the trading practices of Beijing has led to a biased competition and trade rule desecrations are extensively shared in the Europe.

### **3.10. The Aim of Global Sovereignty of Two Rivals**

Over time, China threatens not only the situation in the United States as a leading power, but also the economic rights and benefits arising from that situation. The skeptics claim that China could gain lasting political, economic, and technological power, impose common laws and norms, and create a kind of "totally inconsistent influence". In this case, the United States could no longer guarantee the security and prosperity that it had enjoyed so far. This race of influence meets the conflict of ideas. But if China's rise was not seen as a global challenge, and as long as the hope remains that China will eventually be unobstructed, China could not be seen as an ideological opponent in the United States. This is particularly evident in China's maritime borders, where the conflict is dominated by the views of military threats and the American perception that China aims to create a special sphere of influence in East Asia. In the South China Sea, Washington's insistence on uninterrupted access and freedom of navigation contradicts China's efforts to establish a haven and weaken U.S. power. The political turmoil surrounding the South China Sea is also linked to nuclear magnitude. China appears to be turning the South China Sea into a haven for submarines using nuclear power to retain its power during the second strike and the United States.

### **3.11. The Technical Rivalry**

The global competition for influence is closely linked to US-China rivals' technologies, which affect technological advances in the digital age. What makes this conflict so significant is that technological leadership creates global competitive advantage and ensures the foundation for military supremacy. As shown in the anti-Huawei campaign, we see a turning point in the balanced concept of economic relations with China. As long as Washington is not afraid of the rise of a strategic rival the economic concept has dominated much. They also see military threats, although less important in the race for world influence, currently involving the Arctic. The current U.S. administration is certain that China's growing economic and political presence is at stake in the United States. In response, Washington is using pressure and incentives to prevent other states from expanding their economic ties with China.

### **3.12. Pakistan as Keystone for Chinese Economic Development**

For Pakistan, China is the largest supplier of nuclear weapons, nuclear reactors, and counterweight to the United States. The port of Gwadar is likely to play a key role in further strengthening and bringing two nations closer than ever. At the same time, Pakistan would be a new source of foreign direct investment and would be able to function as a corridor and energy hub in the region. It is a strategic advantage of Pakistan rather than rival India. Pakistan is expected to generate \$ 60 billion in annual travel costs over the next 20 years, while China guarantees a cheap energy route. China is now the world's second largest consumer of oil after the United States.

## **4. Recommendation and Future Prospects**

China has actively initiated joint ventures in big industries like Military and United States comes with financial aid to Islamabad. It is highly recommended that Pakistan should balance relations with both China and United States, this is a tough task considering that the relations between China and United States have been deteriorating and has taken sharp dives since the Donald Trump has taken office in United States. Pakistan requires to draw in with the US on local security, exchange and examination in science and innovation. Pakistan must be careful with their decisions concerning international ties specifically in big forum meetings like United Nations and IMF. Pakistan and its leadership recognize improved binds with United States which has won pivotal United States support for Pakistan to improve its qualifications with FATF and to try not to be moved to the office's boycott of countries. United States leadership states that their current organization has additionally clarified that satisfying the relationship's latent capacity requires progress on joint endeavors to carry soundness to the area and on Pakistan's "supported and irreversible" activity against assailant bunches utilization in its region. Considering these aspects and the consistent criticism of United States against the CPEC investment from China, it would not be easy to stay on the fence on critical matters.

Unmistakably, Pakistan would not like to give the feeling that the nation has totally become a piece of either the Chinese or US. Independent of China's developing clout and profound pockets, the United States will keep on excess a force that Pakistan might want to remain related with. It will be essential to speed up CPEC initiatives to cover the time value of money loss that Pakistan is foreseeing in the coming years due the huge amount of loans taken up to finance these initiatives yet revenue generating activities are slow and not going as planned. Ensuring that the borrowed money is invested strategically and efficiently would be important to ensure that future losses are mitigated and the possibility of paying back China remains in the loop. Financial security can also be achieved by including other big countries in this segment like Iran and Russia as they will be interested in the one belt initiative taken by China. Their investment or linkage with CPEC could be a leverage Pakistan can play with when things go south.

In the meantime, Pakistan also requires investing in their own infrastructure to ensure there is a system in place to handle all the potential investments within their country. China and United States have their own share of investment within Pakistan and that investment is not being effectively utilized which is evident through their depleting reserves and high debt to GDP ratio. Investments in infrastructure is crucial to showcase these investors that Pakistan can handle big investments and can cater to the needs of the world accordingly. This will also provide a strategic advantage to them in comparison to other struggling countries like Iran and Afghanistan. China has likewise taken a harder line against Pakistan in the midst of stresses over the potential destabilizing impact of Pakistani aggressors on Muslims in China in several of their provinces. The progression of arms and psychological training of militants from across the fringe in Pakistan stays a significant cerebral pain for Chinese military specialists, and Islamabad's powerlessness and additionally inability to control radicalism makes it hard for the Chinese to confide in Pakistan totally.

In summarizing, while endeavors are being made between Sino-Pak are justified bearings of success, to improve its two-sided relations United States and other powerful nations in the neighborhood, and to accomplish a meaningful degree of commitment with all these player's improvement in Russians, Indian, Chinese and US relations is of great significance. Without great working relations with Russia and India, given the degree of impact they have in Central Asia, Pakistan would keep on defying issues as far as extending its commitment in Focal Asia.

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