

Pakistan China Relations and CPEC



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Abstract: *In Foreign relations Pakistan and China are always considered as all-time friends. Their relations started since China recognized Pakistan in 1950 and with the passage of time it is becoming deeper. At every time of distress they not only helped each other but also signed many agreements. China started the policy of “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) in order to expand regional integration and boost up economic growth; China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is part of this policy. It is a long term project which started in 2013 and will be accomplished in 2030.*

Although many impediments came in the way of this project in order to stop it like security situation of Pakistan, political turmoil in the region, threat from India, interference of America and Russia but irrespective of all these it is going on with the pace. This project is beneficial for both countries as it helps in boosting up the economy of both countries i.e. Pakistan and China therefore the project is considered as a Game changer. It is help full in making their bilateral cooperation in economic sector, through this project the cultural links between both countries also started which helps in promoting the culture of one another in their respective countries. Their bilateral relations will also raise to the higher level because of this project.

Keywords: CPEC, BRI, Economic, Bilateral, Relations, Pakistan, China

Introduction

In making relations with other countries the only important thing is National Interest as no country will be considered as all-time enemy or friend. Every nation make their foreign policy by over viewing self-interest therefore for getting strategic and economic perks China has also trying to build good relations with South Asia. ¹

Pakistan and China shares border of 520 kilometers from Northern side of Pakistan, Gilgit and Hunza. China was declared as Republic in 1949 and Pakistan in 1951 recognized it; although the communist system of China was opposite to Islamic fundamentals but

Pakistan established relations with China. Their relationships are so strong that Chinese President Xi Jinping stated as ‘higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, sweeter than honey.’ ²

Overview of Pak China Relations:

Pak China relations have always been friendly and people of both countries have warm feelings for each other. Irrespective of ups and downs the friendship between two countries is becoming stronger as the time passes. At the critical times of 1965 and 1971 wars of Pakistan when the West curtailed the supply of weapons and ammunition to Pakistan, it was China who

supported Pakistan.³

Relations in 1950s:

Pakistan was first Muslim state who recognized People Republic of China. After recognizing China, in 1951 Pakistan appointed its first Ambassador to China. In 1952 Barter agreement was signed between them which helped the economy of Pakistan.⁴

When Pakistan joined West block so the relations of both countries were not much strong as Pakistan became members of South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) pacts so India tried to deteriorate the relations between Pakistan and China. China started to consider that Pakistan has signed these pacts against China. It was in 1955 at Bandung (Indonesia), a conference took place in which Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Bogra met with his Chinese counterpart Chou En Lai and clarified the stance of Pakistan that these pacts are totally signed as defensive measures not to harm China. This Bandung conference proved successful in removing misunderstanding and their relations took a new turn after it.⁵

Relations in 1960s:

Some steps were considered as the symbol of common interest like Pakistan supported the case of China in United Nation and in the war between India and China, Pakistan was in the favor of China. So formal trade agreements and air service agreement between both countries were also signed during this era.⁶

Cultural exchange agreement between both countries was signed during this time. Machinery for Heavy Mechanical Complex in Taxila to Pakistan was also given by China costing 15 million rupees.⁷

Relations in 1970s:

This era is considered as the time of alliances; development process started earlier continued till this time. With the help of Pakistan, the relations between China and United States normalizes as Pakistan arranged their meetings for which both of them thanked Pakistan.⁸

China helped Pakistan in building heavy rebuild

factory. Karakoram Highway construction also completed during this time period which helps in improving tourism sector, trading as well as linkage between both countries.⁹

Relations in 1980s:

Presidents of both countries visited one another countries during this era. Pak China Joint Committee for Trade and economic development was also made in this time period.¹⁰

China supported Pakistan on Afghanistan issue in this era. Kamra Aeronautical Complex in Pakistan was also set up with the help of China. Both countries celebrated their 30 years of relationship.¹¹

Relations in 1990s:

The relations of both countries get closer during this time period. China helped Pakistan by supplying defense technology like Missiles to Pakistan. When Pakistan became Nuclear power so sanctions were imposed on Pakistan by the West, T that time of distress and isolation it was China who stood with Pakistan and declared it necessary for the security of Pakistan.¹² China helped Pakistan in the construction of 300 MW Chashma Atomic Plant in Mianwali District.¹³

Relations since 2000 onwards:

Their relations move towards more cooperation and advancement after 2000. In the year 2001, their 50 years of friendship was celebrated on the occasion of which Prime minister of China came to Pakistan and said that we will work on Gwadar Port later on in 2013 the project of CPEC started on it.¹⁴

The visits of both countries leadership helped in strengthening their relations as during their visits they signed many agreements in the field of science, culture, infrastructure etc. China has also investment in Pakistan by starting many projects including construction of Corridor on Sea Port of Gwadar. The investment of China in Pakistan proves their everlasting and deep friendship.¹⁵

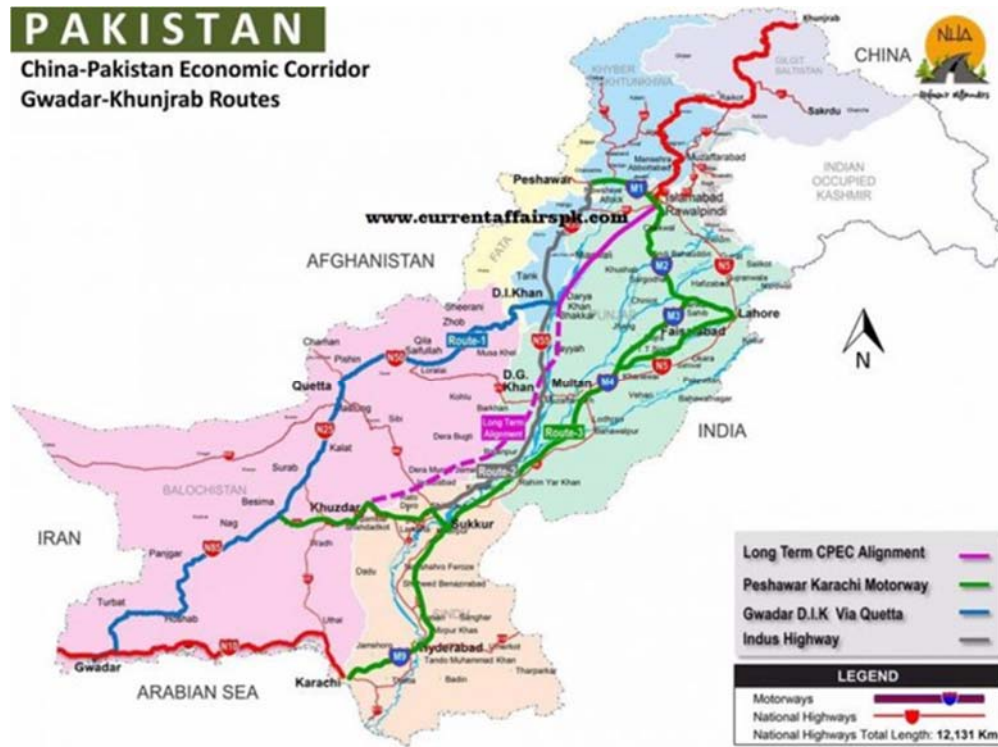
“Pakistan China Friendship Centre” was inaugurated by Prime Minister of China during his Pakistan visit in 2010. In this year more

devastating flood also came in Pakistan so China also helped Pakistan financially as well as sent medical teams to Pakistan.¹⁶

In the year of 2013 Memorandum of

Understanding was signed between both countries whose purpose was to build an economic way by connecting Kashghar city of China with Gwadar port of Pakistan.¹⁷

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC):



Silk Road was an old trade route which connects China with West so in order to revive that old channel through which things and ideas transported China started Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Belt and Road Initiative often mentioned as New Silk Road is an international infrastructure development policy which China started in 2013. Some of the objectives behind it is to connect China with the world, to build an interdependent market for China, to develop the feeling of trust among members of this policy and economic integration. Under BRI there are six land corridors connected through rail, roads and sea ports.¹⁸

China considers BRI as extremely significant in order to secure its borders as well as doing trade and infrastructure partnership with other countries. There are many projects in BRI and CPEC is one of them. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor comprises of railways, roads, bridges, energy systems and development

of the port of Gwadar.¹⁹

Year 2006 is considered as important because it defined the launch of CPEC in 2013. Then in 2013 Pakistan People Party Government gave approval of transferring Gwadar port operation to China. In the next year that is in 2014 China said that we want to start energy and infrastructure projects, it will help in overcoming the energy crisis of Pakistan. So the development in CPEC project took a long time therefore the credit of CPEC cannot be given to any specific government.²⁰

The project was estimated to cost \$46billion and will complete up to 2030. It is considered as a long term project, with the passage of time this estimated cost reached to \$62 billion, Some Pakistani officials have mentioning even higher amount than this now.²¹

CPEC connects Gwadar Port in South Pakistan to North West Xinjiang area of China with the help of roads, sea, railway and pipelines for

transporting oil and gas.²²

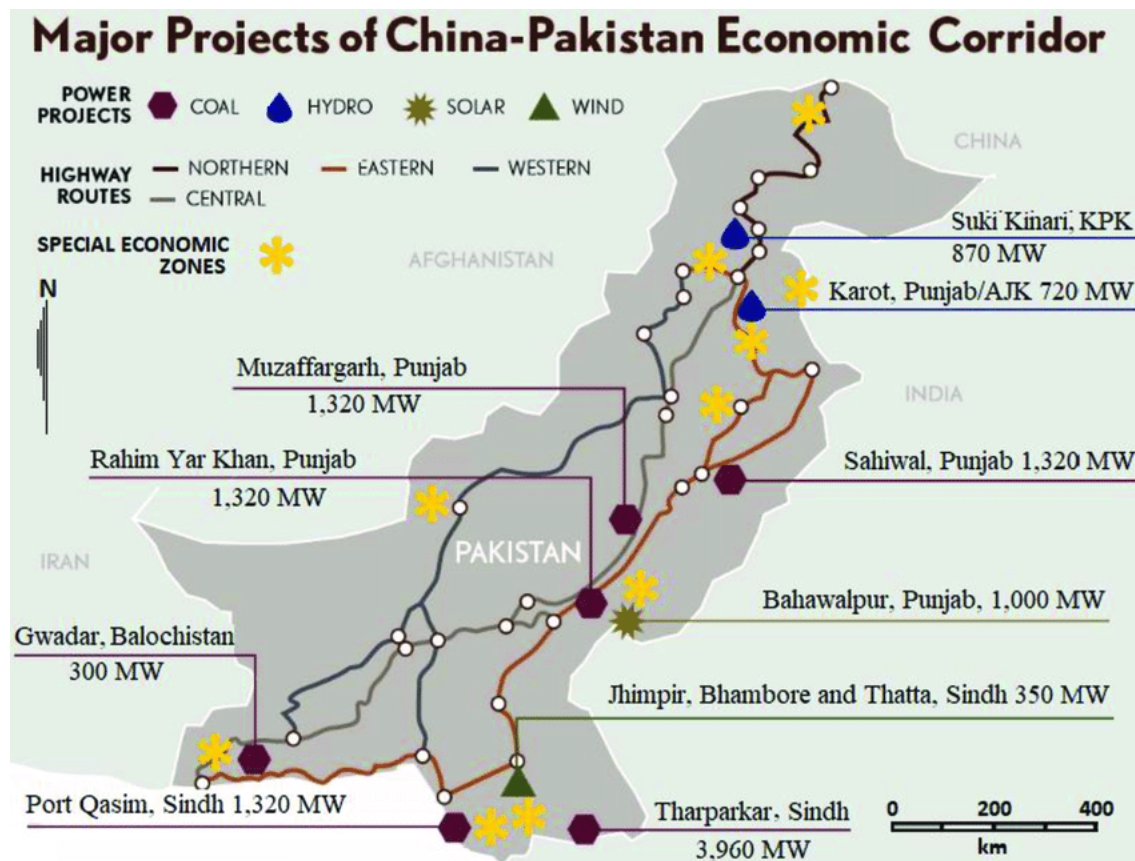
The project consists of these key areas:

1. Socio-economic development of the area of Gwadar
2. Projects related to production of energy
3. Railway projects and construction of roads including highway, expressway etc
4. Investment in making Gwadar a free zone area²³

Nine Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are also part of CPEC project namely Rashakai SEZ, Dhabeji SEZ, Industrial Zone of Bostan, Sheikhupura Zone, Industrial Zone in Islamabad, Industrial Park advancement at Port

Qasim, Mirpur Zone, Marble City Mohmand and Moqpondass Zone. The completion of these zones will help in boosting the economy of Pakistan as well as reduces the bill of imports.²⁴

CPEC consists of three routes passing from all provinces of Pakistan namely central route, eastern route and western route. Central route initiate from Gwadar and reach to D.I.Khan by passing through Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab. Eastern route initiate from Gwadar and consisting of areas of Lahore, Khuzdar, Bahawalpur reaches to Islamabad. While the Western route initiate from Gwadar encompassing many cities of Baluchistan then D.I.Khan and finally reaches to Islamabad. The areas of Central route are rich in Minerals.²⁵



Many projects of CPEC has been completed so far like Sahiwal Coal fired Power Plant consisting of 1320MW energy has been completed in 2017 and operational.

Coal-fired Power Plant at Port Qasim Karachi (1320MW) also completed in 2018. China Hub Coal Power Project, Hub Balochistan and Engro Thar Coal Power Project (660MW) completed

in 2019.

50 MW Hydro China Dawood Wind Farm, Gharo, Thatta completed in 2017 and is operational also. 330MW HUBCO Thar Coal Power Project (Thar Energy) completed in 2022 and is functional.²⁶

In Transport infrastructure sector Havelian

Thakot Highway, Peshawar Karachi Motorway (Multan-Sukkur section), Orange Line Metro Train Lahore, Hakla D.I.Khan Motorway and some other projects have been completed while others are under progress.²⁷

No Special Economic zone has been fully completed although work is going on in the economic zone of Rashakai, Bostan and Dhabeji economic zones.²⁸

For the development of Gwadar city some of the projects under CPEC has been completed like Development of Free Zone, Pak-China Technical and Vocational centre, Pak-China Friendship Hospital and Gwadar Eastbay Expressway.²⁹

Significance of CPEC:

The project is of highly important for both Pakistan and China. Pakistan wants to overcome its economic issues, development problem, energy and social problems while China need to be dominant over the world and secure trade routes for future supply. On the one hand it will boost up the economy of Pakistan while on the other hand it will give China access to Europe, Middle East by using the way of Pakistan. This project also enhances the prosperity and peace in the region which is among one of the goal of China to integrate the region for development. It not only improve the economic condition of Pakistan but also improves the lives of three billion people in the region. The project further help in exploration of minerals in Pakistan and boost the trading. Additionally this project will be beneficial for China in the way that when it will complete then China will be able to counter the dominance of United State as well as this project helps to advance the under-developed area of Xinjiang in China.³⁰

It is estimated that by 2030 Pakistan's energy consumption will be 41% higher than 2013, while CPEC project completion will help Pakistan to overcome this energy shortage.³¹

Conclusion:

CPEC is not only one dimensional connectivity in the relations of Pakistan and China in fact it is a project which can be called as multi-facet. By view it seems as only one corridor but this one

corridor will open up many doors in the field of science, technology, economy, culture etc. CPEC is a large scale project with the help of roads, railway and water routes linking both countries.

With the investment of China in Pakistan the image of Pakistan in the world also become higher and people from other countries also try to invest here so prosperity came in the country. Once the project will complete then Pakistan become regional economic centre as it is expected that GDP of Pakistan will increase by 15% due to Chinese investment.

People will get jobs as industrial sector start development so the problem of unemployment and poverty also decreases because of this project. On part of China, it will provide fastest, easiest and cheapest way to reach Europe by using the route of Arabian Sea.

The project of CPEC is not only based on construction of roads and connecting Pakistan and China, it will also connect Europe and Central Asian states with the region which in turn help in the promotion of culture of these countries. China will easily reach to the markets of Middle East and North Africa through this which is helpful for their future development. Therefore this project is termed as the Game-Changer project.

The relationship between Pakistan and China is already termed as "all-time friend" which helped one another in time of distress but with the help of CPEC project this relations of China and Pakistan will become closer and stronger. It will further increase the element of trust and cooperation between them.

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