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PIVOT

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Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

CPEC: Pivot of Connectivity



Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad



China-Pakistan Study Centre



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Chief Editor's Note

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) constitutes an array of energy projects, infrastructure networks, special economic zones and socio-economic development in Pakistan. The CPEC, part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, links China's strategically significant city of Kashgar to the port of Gwadar giving China access to the Indian Ocean and beyond.



Most scholars recognize that China has been a steady friend and development partner of Pakistan. China, in their view, is a reliable stakeholder that could potentially help boost Pakistan's economy, upgrade infrastructure and allay energy concerns without engaging in diplomatic coercion and arm-twisting. With regards to CPEC, the diplomats, officials and political experts of a major power which regards China as its competitor have voiced an uncharitable view of the CPEC without taking into account Pakistan's interests and perspective.

Regardless of the underlying objectives of the detractors of CPEC, we in Pakistan know well that CPEC holds promise for Pakistan's healthier economy and bright future. If economic engagement is the measure of state relations, then CPEC has the potential to be the recipe for fixing Pakistan's economy and putting it on a path towards independent, long-standing and sustainable development. The right narrative, hence, is that CPEC not only holds an abundant economic potential for future but also reflects the very special relationship Pakistan and China continue to enjoy. The best riposte to the unfounded denunciations against CPEC is to keep on iterating and practising what CPEC represents – a harbinger of prosperity in Pakistan and the region. If envious states can twist the reality of CPEC, there is no reason why Pakistan and China should not thwart false narratives by providing rational accounts of the project.

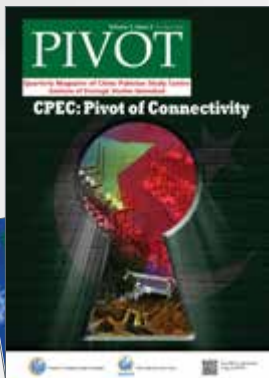
It is also appropriate to make a mention of how China had to grapple with COVID-19 that had cast China a huge loss of precious lives. The resilient Chinese nation handled the global health challenge in an unprecedented manner as China has not only faced the deadly outbreak but has now embarked upon to help states across the globe to address this massive health crisis.

Talat

Dr. Talat Shabbir

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Truth of CPEC

By Ambassador H.E. Yao Jing

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a landmark project of China-Pakistan cooperation in the new era, and also an important pilot project of Belt and Road Initiative. It enjoys the support of Chinese and Pakistani people, serves the well-being of the two countries, and is widely recognized by the two people. Prime Minister Imran Khan terms CPEC the top priority of the Pakistani government, and the Chinese Government also fully supports it.

When the people of China and Pakistan are working together to jointly promote CPEC for a better future, there are some noises from time to time. Some western officials and medias alleged

that there was no transparency in CPEC projects, claiming Pakistan's debt burden was growing due to the Chinese financing. To retaliate the negative propaganda, it is necessary for me to introduce the actual situation to people from all walks of life who care about CPEC, to restore the truth and to ensure a correct understanding of the facts.

CPEC has brought tangible economic and social benefits to Pakistan since its construction nearly 7 years ago. The generating capacity of the completed energy projects of CPEC accounts for nearly 30 percent of Pakistan's total power generation. These projects have provided the energy security for Pakistan's economic development. The Havelian-Mansehra section

of Karakorum Highway (KKH) opened to traffic on Nov. 18, 2019, the whole KKH II is expected to open to traffic this year. The Initial District of Gwadar Free Zone has got over 20 enterprises, with a direct investment over 600 million U.S. dollars. Catalyzed by CPEC, Pakistan is ranked 108 in 2019 in the ease of doing business from 136 in 2018, according to the latest World Bank annual ratings, while it moves up to the 82nd place from the 108th on global competitiveness index. All these make great opportunities for attracting foreign investment and realizing industrial upgrading. Whether the CPEC works, the answer should be given by the Pakistani people rather than other countries.

Under the CPEC, during its planning or implementation, every project is equally discussed, carefully studied and jointly implemented by both China and Pakistan. The Chinese government always requests the Chinese companies to operate according to local laws and regulations. All Chinese companies joining the CPEC enjoy international reputation. All projects strictly follow the market-oriented and internationally accepted business model, adopt state of art technology and strict environmental protection standards. The entire process is open and transparent and is in line with international norm. We keep in touch with the relative accountability agencies of Pakistan and it is agreed that the CPEC is clean.

Prime Minister Imran Khan terms CPEC the top priority of the Pakistani government, and the Chinese Government also fully supports it

Regarding the issue of "high electricity rates", facts have proved that China has provided the Pakistani people with cheap and clean energy and has won unanimous support from Pakistani people of all walks of life. Pakistan had a serious power shortage before 2014. The average load shedding was 6-12 hours per day, and the cost was as high as 17 cents/kWh. In order to reduce power generation, cost and solve the power shortage problem, the Pakistani government issued the 2014 Upfront Tariff Policy for imported coal power plant in 2014 to attract investment.

The policy is open and transparent and applies to both local and foreign investors.

With the joint efforts of Pakistani and Chinese peoples, Port Qasim Power Plant and Sahiwal Power Plant have been completed and put into operation. Pakistan's Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) regularly posts the electricity prices of 131 configurable thermal power units, and purchases electricity according to the price. In the ranking in June 2019, Qasim Power Plant and Sahiwal Power Plant ranked 4th and 16th from the bottom respectively, which are among the lowest. Due to their advantageous power prices, advanced technology and stable power supply, the Pakistani government has been asking the two power plants to operate at full generating capacity and purchasing all the electricity generated.

CPEC has brought tangible economic and social benefits to Pakistan since its construction nearly 7 years ago. The generating capacity of the completed energy projects of CPEC accounts for nearly 30 percent of Pakistan's total power generation

As to the cost of the ML-1 project, we have said many times. The initial design of the project was jointly accomplished by the China Railway No 2 Bureau, National Engineering Services Pakistan Limited (NESPAK), and Pakistan Railway Advisory & Consultancy Services Ltd (PRACS). The project was launched in 2016, and the initial design was submitted in May 2017. In April, 2019, it has successfully passed the initial design review, organized by Pakistan Railways (PR), of the complex including Mott McDonald Pakistan (MMP), Canarail and the Crimson. As the project has not yet been approved, the amounts of the project will be determined according to the actual condition and the needs of Pakistan. After finalizing the design of the project, we would initiate a bidding in accordance with international practice. This is a completely normal business practice.

Since the construction of the CPEC, it has created more than 75,000 jobs directly and 200,000 jobs indirectly for the Pakistani people, with its per capita income increased by 23 percent

Since the construction of the CPEC, it has created more than 75,000 jobs directly and 200,000 jobs indirectly for the Pakistani people, with its per capita income increased by 23 percent. More than 100 small and medium-sized enterprises have participated in the construction of the CPEC, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs. Among which, the transport infrastructure project Sukkur-Multan Motorway has created about 29,000 local jobs, and a large number of Pakistani technicians have been trained during its construction. The CPEC is expected to create 2.3 million jobs between 2015 and 2030 and boost the Pakistan's annual economic growth rate by 2-2.5 percent, according to the Pakistani government. The two sides are also working hard to finalize 17 fast track project under CPEC social & economic working group, covering agriculture, health and vocational training center, etc. Under the joint planning of the two governments, the next phase of development of CPEC will continue to advance infrastructure constructions, focus on people's livelihood, and industrial and agricultural cooperation, maintain a sound momentum of high-quality development and bring more benefits to the two countries and peoples.

Regarding the so-called "debt trap", according to statistics from the State Bank of Pakistan, the total foreign debt of Pakistan is 110 billion US dollars. In fact, international financial institutions including the Paris Club and IMF are the largest creditors of Pakistan. Loan for the CPEC is about 5.8 billion US dollars, accounting for 5.3% of Pakistan's total foreign debt, with a repayment period of 20-25 years and an interest rate of approximately 2%. Its repayments will start in 2021, with annual repayments of about 300 million US dollars. It will never be a burden to Pakistan. Moreover, China has never forced other countries to pay debts, and will not make unreasonable demands on Pakistan.

China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic partners who stand together through thick and

thin and share weal and woe. For example, soon after the coronavirus breakout, the Pakistani government allocated 300,000 medical masks, 800 protective coveralls and 6,800 pairs of gloves from the stocks of public hospitals around the nation and transported the aid to China. The Chinese government also donated COVID-19 Real-time PCR Kit to Pakistan for novel coronavirus detection, and send emergency aid to help Pakistan fight the ongoing locust disaster. In recent years, China has built infrastructure projects with grant in Pakistan such as the Karakoram Highway, Pakistan Sports Center and China-Pakistan Friendship Center, Faqeer Primary School, and FATA District School. In order to help Balochistan's development, China has also assisted in the construction of the Gwadar East-bay Expressway and the new Gwadar International Airport. China will also provide solar lighting system, medical supplies and vaccine refrigeration equipment to Pakistan.

I confidently believe that mutual respect and win-win cooperation are the mode of economic cooperation. The CPEC adheres to the principles of 'Belt and Road' international cooperation, which are extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits

I confidently believe that mutual respect and win-win cooperation are the mode of economic cooperation. The CPEC adheres to the principles of 'Belt and Road' international cooperation, which are extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. In the era of globalization, the international community bears responsibility for world peace and development. As a responsible major country, China has always been unswervingly fulfilling its commitment to sustainable development and attached great importance to enhancing global cooperation ■



The writer is Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Pakistan.



Webinar- Political, Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19

By Muhammad Faisal

China-Pakistan Study Centre, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in collaboration with Mishal Pakistan and AGAHI launched a series of webinars to deliberate on the political, economic and social impacts of COVID-19. The first debut seminar was held online on April 18, 2020 attracting senior academics, researchers, media, diplomats and members of the civil society and business community.

Speakers from Government, development sector and international institutions expressed their views on post-pandemic scenarios. More than 100 participants joined the online session and took part in the discussion. The session was moderated by Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China Pakistan Study Centre, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad.

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world entirely. An unprecedented crisis of a scale and intensity not experienced in recent past, it has potential to become a turning point in the modern human history. Analysts argue that world is undergoing far-reaching changes, and post-pandemic, it will be a completely new and different world.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in his keynote speech said, 'COVID-19 has brought the changes in the patterns of globalization. The pandemic has also brought into consideration, how to use modern technology in a more efficient manner to communicate and connect. Regionalism could become more popular, offering new opportunities.' He further said, 'The responsibility to combat the COVID-19 situation cannot just be put on the government alone, the private sector, civil society, media and other institutions should work together to lessen the suffering and anguish of the people of Pakistan.'

Sharing his views, Amir Jahangir, Chief Executive Officer, Mishal Pakistan, a Country Partner Institute of the New Economy and Societies Platforms, World Economic Forum, said, 'COVID-19 has confined the societies in a forced incubation. It is pushing societies to embrace digital transformation, enabling people to adopt the 'new' norm. The pandemic is transforming societies to adopt new social and economic outlook for the future.'

Hasan Daud Butt, CEO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade said, 'The COVID-19 has brought the paradigm shift and it would push the governments to enhance the spending on technology. Pakistan's external relations with countries will also change because of this pandemic. This change will move Pakistan to adopt and embrace the fourth industrial revolution, both for doing business and serving the citizens.'

He further briefed the participants that, 'The impact on Pakistan's economy is dependent on the measures taken by the government to stop COVID-19 spread. Asian Development Bank stated in its report that the virus outbreak could cost Pakistan economy in around \$5 billion, or 0.01% to 1.57% of GDP. The report also highlighted that this loss would plunge Pakistan's GDP by at least 1.57 per cent and trigger 946,000 job losses.'

Puruesh Chaudhary, President AGAHI and Member Global Agenda Council on Futures and Foresight, World Economic Forum stated, 'Early proof shows that the well-being and financial effects of the infection are being borne lopsidedly by unprivileged. For instance, marginalized communities and the poor below the poverty-line might not be able to securely protect and preserve. Individuals and senior citizens, without access to necessities and immunities might be the first line society.'

Yasir Masood, Geo-Political Analyst expressed that most of the economies in the world are going through this challenging time, giving very slim chances to avoid a recession as the crisis is evolving from health to economic crisis of human social interactions, attacking the societies at its core. COVID-19 has brought the changes in technology and it has changed the way we think, look and see the world.

Sharing his views from USA, Dr. Ma Haiyun, Associate Professor, Frostburg State University and President of Xhenghe Forum said, 'The economic and health impact of COVID-19 is being borne disproportionately by poor people. If this crisis cannot be addressed properly, it may also increase the inequality, exclusion, discrimination and unemployment in the short and long term, which might whirl out of control of societal leaders.'

Through these webinar series, 'Convergence', the China Pakistan Study Centre will be compiling analytical and scenario reports for the relevant stakeholders. The reports will also be shared by the Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad's website for further public debate and policy position papers ■



CPEC: COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS AND MYTHS

By Ziad Alahdad

In Pakistan CPEC is presented as the all-important, highly-praised yet highly-criticized initiative. It is either a game changer or a disaster in the making - nothing in between. It is touted as payback from China for allowing access to the Arabian Sea. Lack of consensus on the prevailing narrative indicates that the message from the authorities is either not convincing or not understood. Also, there are geo-political actors who want to see it fail for which they have launched a massive campaign of misinformation. The critics of

CPEC are pressing Pakistan to discontinue collaboration with China and revert to traditional Western partners. The purpose of this brief article is to present a fact-based view, dispelling the myths and highlighting the current and potential benefits and shortcomings. The figures given below are subject to change as estimates are refined and individual projects are implemented.

Following the recent inclusion of Phase 2 initiatives, CPEC's updated program is estimated at \$62 billion of which 65% is for the energy sector, mainly for setting up independent

private power (IPP) projects to feed the national grid. A small but not insignificant portion of the financing, roughly \$12 billion, will be grants or in the form of highly concessional loans guaranteed by China. Typically, loan terms include 20-year repayment, 5-years grace and 2-3% interest. The bulk of the financing, including all the energy projects are on commercial terms, mainly under sovereign guarantees from Pakistan. Under international financial conventions, all sovereign guaranteed financing is counted as Pakistan's debt exposure. The commercial

terms depend on the strength of individual projects, quality of the reform agenda, country risk perceptions, and our ability to negotiate. Nearly half of the program is either completed or under implementation -- 11 projects worth \$11 billion completed and another 13 projects worth \$18 billion under implementation. Clearly, there is no going back.

The \$62 billion program spanning 10-15 years, is small in relation to Pakistan's annual GDP of \$300 billion (excluding the informal economy) and CPEC is not the panacea for all the economic problems of Pakistan. However, individual CPEC projects are well-chosen and critical for Pakistan's development. If implemented as envisaged, CPEC would increase GDP growth by 2-2.5%, create up to a million new jobs, and add projects worth 17% of Pakistan's 2015 GDP, equal to all foreign direct investment since 1970 -- impressive figures the likes of which Pakistan has not encountered in its economic history.

Some projects are on schedule and others behind. Implementation delays are due to our inadequacies and not the Chinese. Examples include the delayed approval of the Gwadar master-plan and the pace of building connective infrastructure, without which there is a risk of Gwadar becoming a "docking-station" for ships rather than a true port. Programs to provide critical water and power supplies have been bogged down by bureaucratic red tape. This includes delayed approvals

for a desalination plant offered by China. Then there is the immense opportunity cost of delays in establishing Special Economic Zones. An example of the benefits from SEZs is the one in Thailand which, under BRI, employs over 30,000 Thai personnel and exports over \$15 billion annually. Implementation issues can and must be addressed in the coming years.

CPEC naysayers are urging Pakistan to desist from pursuing a partnership with China and returning to the US model for development on the grounds that the latter is superior

One fact is clear. CPEC is not about concessional handouts. More importantly, it is implicitly calling on Pakistan to catch up on the backlog of reform, improve governance, enhance security and build capacity to mobilize funds on viable terms, with guidance from Chinese experts. CPEC is a well-thought out initiative designed to develop Pakistan rather than increase its dependence on handouts. True to its tradition as an all-weather friend, China is adhering to the time-tested development philosophy of "teaching us how to fish, rather than providing the fish". In effect, China is holding Pakistan's feet to the fire, to accelerate its transition to an economically powerful nation. In serving its own strategic interest, China is also investing in CPEC's

success to improve its own market access. If managed correctly, CPEC could help turn Pakistan around. If not, it could become a liability. Success depends on Pakistan's ability to reform. With its limited options, this is an opportunity Pakistan cannot afford to squander.

Under CPEC's energy program, some features stand out. CPEC is the largest consolidated program of energy investment in Pakistan adding over 17,000 MW of power capacity, nearly doubling the grid. It focuses on indigenous energy, designed to reduce dependence on imports and enhance energy security. It introduces solar and wind power at a scale never before envisaged in Pakistan. There is a balance between environmentally benign renewable energy sources (hydro, solar and wind) and a polluting fossil fuel (coal) the reserves of the latter being too large to ignore. China has world-class expertise in each of these areas from manufacturing through to operation. It is the world leader in research and development in solar and wind technology spending 100 times more annually than the US. China also has over 60% of the world's market in solar and wind hardware. The program is well-conceived and put together within an integrated energy concept, tempered by strategic and energy security considerations, much like China's own energy plans. What China proposes for us is no different from what it does itself.

The contention that the debt-burden due to CPEC is crippling the economy is not supported by fact. Yes, Pakistan's overall public debt and its growth is

clearly a cause for concern. However, Pakistani authorities have made it abundantly clear that Chinese contribution to Pakistan's overall public debt is currently \$6 billion, less than 10%. The rest is attributable to International Financial Institutions and Western sources. Moreover, with the generous grace periods, future Chinese debt repayments are not due for several years.

Commercial loans (for mostly power projects) underwritten by Pakistan are effectively Pakistan's own contribution to the debt. The risk is borne by Pakistan. Lack of transparency on financing terms could be an issue. But, in the absence of information, it is prudent to reserve judgment on the viability of the investment. Reluctance to release data could be due to the confidentiality of commercial terms. This was true in the 1990s when IPPs were set up using US and European commercial funds.

In the end, at the time of need, it was China which stood by Pakistan. US support (in word only) is largely reactive premised on opposition to China's BRI initiative, of which CPEC is a flagship program

CPEC naysayers are urging Pakistan to desist from pursuing a partnership with China and returning to the

US model for development on the grounds that the latter is superior. This is a spurious argument as Pakistan should pursue all economic opportunities globally which benefit its economy, subject to its capacity constraints. As far as the two models are concerned, the criteria for success should always be based on results. China's record of raising over 600 million people out of poverty since 1979, is a historic precedent which makes it a natural partner for Pakistan. It is encouraging to note that the new phase of CPEC includes a major social support component.

In the US, on the other hand, average wages have been stagnant from 1982 onwards. The Chinese had realized decades before the West that trickle-down economic growth must be supported by a strong social agenda. The US, while eventually grasping the necessity of a social program, never really adopted it resulting in stagnant wages, a shrinking middle-class and mushrooming income inequality. The rise of stock-exchange indices or declining unemployment figures (which exclude those who have quit looking for jobs) are not indicative of overall economic success.

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The Legacy of Pakistan's Independent Private Power (IPP) Projects serves as a vital lesson for both China and Pakistan. Critics of CPEC urge that Pakistan should revert to

Western support which had been instrumental in adding substantial private power capacity in the 1990s.

Pakistan's Private Power Policy of 1994 which underpinned the IPP projects, was based on experience gained during the preparation during the early 90s of the 1292 MW Hub Power Project, itself initially hailed as a global milestone in private infrastructure finance

To make an informed judgment, we need to revisit the 1990s experience. Pakistan's Private Power Policy of 1994 which underpinned the IPP projects, was based on experience gained during the preparation during the early 90s of the 1292 MW Hub Power Project, itself initially hailed as a global milestone in private infrastructure finance. It was named "deal of the decade" by the Euro-money Institutional Investor magazine. For the global financial market, it was the first major private infrastructure project in a developing country, deploying limited recourse financing from international commercial banks.

Under the 1994 Policy, 19 IPP projects were completed rapidly, adding 3,400 MW to the national grid, with financing mainly from Western commercial sources.

Pakistan achieved international recognition as a model country for private power development. After visiting Karachi in September 1994, the U.S. energy secretary referred to Pakistan's energy policy as the best in the world.

This praise was premature and, in hind-sight, self-serving for the commercial interests involved. Within the space of four years, a notice of intent to terminate 11 of the IPPs (two-thirds of the capacity contracted) had been issued, signaling a complete reversal. An extremely difficult and highly controversial process of renegotiation was begun. The collapse, stemming from flaws in the 1994 Policy, are attributable to six main causes: disregard of least-cost expansion plans, overcapacity, questionable choice of fuels and technology, unaffordable tariffs, unaffordable power purchase agreements, and reform shortfalls.

Capacity, location and prioritization of individual projects were not in line with least-cost system expansion programs. There was excessive reliance on imported fuel. The technology chosen was also questionable, relying on diesel generation and steam turbines instead of the more efficient combined-cycle plants. The rapid rate of capacity expansion exceeded demand, resulting in excess capacity. Under the Power Purchase Agreements, the government-owned system was obligated to take, or pay for, an agreed minimum power offtake. As demand declined, it was unable to service this obligation.

There were perceptions of lack of transparency in selecting suppliers and afterwards, in disclosing the terms agreed upon. Rather than competitive bidding for private power, policymakers chose the route of a tariff ceiling for investors. While this accelerated financial closure, it did so at the cost of creating excess capacity. Moreover, the tariff ceiling approach provided no incentive for investors to reduce costs leading to the perception that privately generated power was too costly. Accordingly, tariff became the primary focus in the re-negotiation process.

We need to recognize the risks, learn from past experience and understand that success lies in the strength of individual projects, quality of the Government's reform agenda, country risk perceptions, and our bureaucracy's ability to negotiate

The success of the IPP program also depended on the pace of the restructuring and privatization of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and the establishment

of an appropriate regulatory regime. WAPDA was unable to match the rapid expansion of the IPPs. The resulting mix of private generation and government-owned transmission and distribution led to a cumbersome and inflexible system incapable of withstanding external shocks including fuel price fluctuations.

This experience sowed the seeds of what has become the spiraling Circular Debt issue.

In light of the above, the contention of CPEC critics to discontinue with IPPs under CPEC and revert to support from Western sources, is unfounded, particularly when Western sources are free to partake in the IPPs under the CPEC umbrella, both as suppliers of equipment and financiers. Equally, CPEC authorities should learn from the experience to avoid repeating past mistakes.

The criticism of CPEC and the myths surrounding it are not based on facts and are, at best, premature. At the same time, we need to recognize the risks, learn from past experience and understand that success lies in the strength of individual projects, quality of the Government's reform agenda, country risk perceptions, and our bureaucracy's ability to negotiate. With the substantial progress already achieved under CPEC and with no other tangible and comparable partners in the offing, choices are limited. We must strive to make CPEC a success ■



The writer is Former Director of Operations, World Bank.



China's Education Sector and the Fight against COVID-19

By Arhama Siddiq

As the coronavirus spread across the globe, education and learning entities were faced with an extraordinary challenge. The virus swept across China in late January, coinciding with Chinese New Year celebrations. In March 2020, when schools in the United States were just starting to enforce lockdown, Chinese schools had already been closed for more than ten weeks and some were in fact beginning to recommence. In early April, the Chinese government announced it would postpone important exams, including the 'Gaokao', the annual university entrance exam in China.

In China, the education

community quickly united to continue teaching over 270 million students through flexible online methods. Since January, Chinese administrators undertook many big decisions which included the time frame for the closure of schools, when education companies would open or close, and what resources were accessible to support learning in the meantime. The UNESCO International Research and Training Center for Rural Education (INRULED) in Beijing, the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, along with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technology in Education (IITE) conjointly launched a guidebook on how to establish flexible learning options, as well as support on active

learning at home during the Covid outbreak.

China is also offering significant support for teacher professional development in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries

China's Ministry of Education (MOE) broadcasted school closure policies for the entire country. Tutoring centres and day-cares closed. The central government suggested delays in K-12 and higher-ed new semesters and postponed any regional and national exams.

On 31st March, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education (a regional branch of MOE), publicised that elementary

and middle schools would start new programmes virtually from the mid of April. Furthermore, in order to minimise impediments for students who were appearing for exams, most provinces re-opened their schools on April 27. MOE also stated that colleges would re-open in September.

At the tertiary level, around 110 higher education institutions (HEIs) and enterprises in China, along with 37 online curriculum and technology platforms, have released over 41,000 massive open online courses (MOOCs) and virtual reality (VR) courses to students for free

Additionally, the Chinese government also strengthened two existing virtual education platforms. The first is called Empower Learning. It was built by the government, in partnership with China's seven largest EdTech companies, offering a digitised syllabus. Through the provision of live streaming courses, students can participate virtually from their homes. The MOE set up an official website called Educloud. It brings together videos and teaching plans for ease of access.

Although both platforms existed before the current pandemic; supplementary scheduling tools were created within them in order to help educators select and share materials with students and widely circulate them to the public during the period the schools were to remain closed. It is common knowledge students rarely show up for online classes. Either

they cannot due to inaccessibility to technology or they are not willing to. The former, holds true especially for rural China, where access to internet or computer technology may not always be possible. In this regard, the MOE announced in early February, that no new syllabus would be introduced until a new term officially started. Meanwhile, students and parents were given the flexibility to take classes in other subjects from their school or other virtual education providers.

Research says that excessive usage of screen-time is damaging for health. In light of this, the MOE suggested restricting screen time. In Guangdong province, the Department of Education even published a detailed guidance according to which each online class was limited to 20 minutes.

Given the current situation, technology companies have taken advantage by quickly developing new online educational tools. One example is the 'Future School' launched by Alibaba. While another is the Tencent Meeting software. Both provide online learning platforms for schools and also support live streaming sessions. Furthermore, since these brand-names have been well recognised over the years and have garnered much goodwill because of the consistency of their servers, people have been very receptive to their services.

Meanwhile, at the tertiary level, around 110 higher education institutions (HEIs) and enterprises in China, along with 37 online curriculum and technology platforms, have released over

41,000 massive open online courses (MOOCs) and virtual reality (VR) courses to students for free.

Additionally, China is also offering significant support for teacher professional development in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries. On April 2, 2020, the International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) was co-launched online by UNESCO-ICHEI with top-tier HEIs in 11 BRI in Asian and African countries.

In China, the education community quickly united to continue teaching over 270 million students through flexible online methods. Since January, Chinese administrators undertook many big decisions which included the time frame for the closure of schools, when education companies would open or close, and what resources were accessible to support learning in the meantime

No doubt that online transition may be overwhelming and unfamiliar, but it is important that education continues. Education is after all fundamental to the progress of any country. The Chinese education sector was frontline in the fight against Covid. The reverberations continue to be felt. However, all countries would do well to learn from China's example and do everything they can to prioritise education by utilising existing resources ■



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Webinar to Commemorate 'International Day of UN Peacekeepers'

By Neelum Nigar



Peacekeeping has evolved from a military to multi-faceted robust model. The evolution of peacekeeping can be traced from initial years, post-cold war years to contemporary years. Today, the role of peacekeeping has broadened through multi-dimensional peace operations; political security, human rights and gender parity. Pakistan 's troops have shown exemplary professionalism in the UN peace building missions,' stated Lt. Gen. Hilal Hussain (Retd), Former Advisor and Permanent Representative to UN, in a webinar organized by China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) to commemorate the 'International Day of UN Peacekeepers' on May 29, 2020.

Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC at the ISSI, in his introductory remarks said that, 'May 29 is marked as day of UN peacekeepers. The dedication and courage demonstrated by UN peacekeepers over the decades has played a critical role in strengthening peace across the world. Many professionals soldiers-men and women serving under the UN lost their lives for the cause of peace and today is the day that we honor their memories. Pakistan has a long history with UN peacekeeping, having been one of the largest contributors of troops and police for decades. The country has lost more than 150 peacekeepers throughout its history in UN peacekeeping. Dr. Shabbir further said that besides, commemorating the UN peacekeeping day, the aim of this event is to understand the

significance of peacekeeping contributions and how can Pakistan consolidate on what it achieved by making supreme sacrifices and contributions during peacekeeping missions across the world.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, in his welcome remarks stated that, 'On the occasion of UN day for peacekeeping, we pay tribute to the courage and professionalism of all UN peacekeepers. Pakistan, as a major troop contributing country, is proud of its contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, which is a cardinal principle of Pakistan's foreign policy.' Ambassador Chaudhry further noted that in sync with the enhanced role of UN peacekeepers to peacebuilding, Pakistan has also provided police peacekeepers who have earned us respect all around the world, especially in Africa where most of UN peacekeeping missions are located. Ambassador Chaudhry also recognized the importance of UNMOGIP, which could play an important role in monitoring peace and tranquility on the line of control. Pakistan's armed and security forces are proud of our contribution to the world peace, Ambassador Chaudhry concluded.

Mr. Farrukh Khan, DG UN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Islamabad, paid tribute to the UN peacekeepers. He further said that, 'It is very timely conversation to build our approach towards the future of peacekeepers while witnessing the changes that have taken place over the decades. Peacekeeping architecture has evolved over time. It started with truce-monitoring and delved into arenas of political security, human rights and, gender balance. Peace keeping has shaped according to security situation. However, there is greater need for delivery according to the availability of resources. With new concepts emerging, there is a greater need for clarity, while putting this together; we need to look at the future of these peacekeepers.' He further stated that the role of women peacekeepers has become even more important and today, apart from COVID-19 challenges, there is a need to address the issues of climate change as well.

Major General Samrez Salik, Former DG ISSRA congratulated the Institute for celebrating

this day. While commenting on the role of Pakistan in peace keeping mission, Gen. Salik said that, 'Pakistan is one of the oldest as well as the highest contributor of UN peacekeepers. Despite numerous security challenges, our forces displayed tremendous amount of professionalism with exemplary services in the whole mission.' With regards to future concerns, General Salik said that given the peculiar threat environment, there will be stress on our armed forces to provide additional obligations to the UN, however, the system is geared up to deal with all these challenges ahead.

In his remarks, Dr. Tughrul Yamin, Associate Dean of CIPS, highlighted Pakistan's participation in UN missions. Pakistan has amicably operated in UN peacekeeping missions and the prominence in such operations has earned both the country and its forces immense goodwill. He further stated that, 'Numerous men and women peacekeepers laid down their lives to serve humanity at large and the institute has played a significant role in remembering and learning from the struggles of peacekeepers.'

The keynote speaker, Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam, Inspector General of National Highways & Motorway Police, applauded the institute for celebrating the day. While commenting on the significance of this day, Dr. Imam said that, 'Peacekeeping is a unique force where people from army, police hailing from different countries across the globe serve together for a common cause.' While applauding the efforts of UN, Dr. Imam said that UN has played a significant role in saving and serving humanity and the participating countries are playing their due role in this mission. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI, in his concluding remarks, commended the role of UN in building peace and security, however, he emphasized that more clarity is required in UN peace keeping mandate. A pressing problem in peace operations is that some oldest conflicts like that of Kashmir and Palestine are frozen rather than being resolved. He further said that Pakistan is proud of its role in the UN peacekeeping and will continue to be a part of this cause ■



Dr. Aliya Hashmi Khan

By PIVOT Team

PIVOT. What are your views on Pakistan's economic performance in the last five years or so, and how do you foresee the future?

AHK: Pakistan's economy has been struggling with the twin deficit phenomenon of budgetary and current account deficits, which, in combination with mounting levels of public debt (both domestic and foreign) has led to a lower growth trajectory. The future appears to be challenging as stabilization measures need to be balanced with growth enhancing strategies to enable Pakistan's economy to transition to a higher growth path.

PIVOT: Amidst the pandemic, the global economy has come to a grinding halt, and every aspect of human life has been affected. What lessons we need to take from COVID-19 crisis?

AHK: The main lessons emerging from the COVID-19 crisis are that we need to strengthen our public health systems and our social protection systems so that we are able to save both lives and livelihoods at the same time without being confronted with the difficult choice of saving either lives or livelihoods.

PIVOT: Uncertainty around various social sectors under

corona pandemic has increased in many countries. What strategies/ measures our government needs to take in short-term, medium-term and in the long-term to sustain or stabilize the economy?

AHK: The Corona pandemic has exposed the fault lines in the delivery of social sector public services all over the world. Countries that have reacted in a short span of time and responded by strengthening the delivery of social sector public services especially health and education services, have also been able to cope better with the adverse economic impacts of COVID-19.

In the short-term, Pakistan should try to consolidate all efforts to expand and upgrade the delivery of public health services, retain emphasis on social protection, and devise mechanisms to address the discontinuity in educational services at all levels (primary to higher). For the medium to long-term a concrete action plan needs to be devised in order to restore the disruptions in the economic sectors arising from the impact of world-wide lock-downs which have severely affected manufacturing supply chains and trade linkages.

PIVOT: How effective is the existing social protection program in ensuring safety of the vulnerable households against calamities like COVID19? Do you think, programs like BISP, Ehsaas and Prime Minister's Relief Fund are effective and helpful in reaching out the daily wagers and under-privileged segment of our society?

AHK: The existing social protection programs in Pakistan provided a good base for reaching out to the vulnerable households for provision of emergency cash relief transfers. However, in the wake of the seriousness and scale of the COVID-19 calamity, it has become evident that the scope, and coverage of the existing social

protection programs needs to be considerably enhanced.

BISP/Ehsaas and Prime Minister's Relief Fund have been partially successful in reaching out to the daily wagers and other segments of workers in the informal economy. However in the absence of a dedicated registry of all categories of informal economy workers, a more complete coverage was not possible. I am a member of the Labour Expert Group which was constituted in May 2019 under the umbrella of the PM Ehsaas program to develop recommendations for extending social protection measures to the informal economy workers. The registration of informal economy workers is a key recommendation of the Labour Expert Group Report which is expected to be launched soon.

PIVOT: As Pakistan enters in the thick of COVID-19 what do you think are the key lessons we can learn from China?

AHK: As the first country to grapple with the crisis, China has been on the frontlines of public health interventions to fight the human ravages of COVID-19 and to embark on post-COVID-19 economic recovery. One of the key lessons emerging from China is that the battle against COVID-19 cannot be waged without strengthening the public health systems and enhancing the coverage of public health services to identify the infected population and, consequently, take all measures to contain the spread of infection. Raising public awareness on COVID-19 containment measures and extension of social protection measures to the vulnerable segments of the population under lock-down have also been integral components of China's COVID-19 strategy.

On the economic recovery front, China has followed a structured approach in lifting the lock-down by first ensuring that all Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) measures were appropriately instituted at work places to protect the returning workers and their families from infections.

In the process of developing plans for upgrading the national and sub-national public health systems, it is vital to incorporate the learnings from the vast pool of global knowledge generated in the context of public health responses to pandemics in general and COVID-19 in particular

China has also accelerated the use of digital technologies in the production and service sectors of the economy. Last but not least, China has effectively promoted public-private partnerships to combat the human, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

PIVOT: COVID-19 has not only exposed the fragile global health care structure but also the health-care capacities of individual countries like Pakistan. In your view, what steps are required to improve the public health care system in Pakistan?

AHK: The most significant message from the COVID-19 pandemic calamity is that Pakistan has to considerably step up its public health crisis response through multi-pronged initiatives to face up to the challenges of an epidemic outbreak. First and

foremost, adequate budgetary resources have to be allocated and efficiency of public expenditure ensured for this critical task which encompasses major initiatives like expansion of public health facilities to treat and quarantine affected members of the population, upgradation of institutional and human resource capacity for all epidemiological activities relating to disease control and prevention and improvement in case-reporting systems to name a few important ones. In the process of developing plans for upgrading the national and sub-national public health systems, it is vital to incorporate the learnings from the vast pool of global knowledge generated in the context of public health responses to pandemics in general and COVID-19 in particular.

PIVOT: How do you see the financial aspect of CPEC? Do you think it is manageable?

AHK: As laid out in the CPEC Long-Term Plan (LTP), the investment and financing modes for CPEC projects are jointly determined by China and Pakistan depending upon the nature of the project. The governments of the two countries bear the primary responsibility for investment and financing of the public welfare projects. Also, according to the LTP, relevant policies and procedures are honoured to coordinate the use of grants, interest-free loans and concessional loans. In view of the above commitments, it can be confidently inferred that the investment and financing framework for CPEC projects is being managed in a professional and transparent manner.

PIVOT: To what extent China will facilitate Pakistan in easing its obligations under the power sector projects keeping in view the crisis inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

AHK: As reported in the press,

Pakistan has requested China for relaxation in payment obligations of CPEC related power projects to help cope with the financial and economic difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. China has agreed to consider Pakistan's request for a reduction in the mark-up on debt from Libor+2 percent to Libor+4.5percent and for an extension in the debt repayment period from the existing repayment period of 10 years to repayment period of 20 years. It is expected that the matter will be taken up in the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Energy for due deliberation.

PIVOT: Millions of migrant workers working in the Gulf countries are facing a crisis, due to COVID-19 and the fall in oil prices. What will be the impact on these migrant workers from Pakistan? What strategies the Government needs to take to protect the repatriated workers?

AHK: There is a sizeable reduction in the demand for migrant workers in the destination countries due to the COVID-19 induced economic slow-down. A large number of Pakistani workers have also been repatriated. The Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment is monitoring the stream of return migrants and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & HRD has announced a registration procedure on the Overseas Employment Corporation portal for returning overseas workers through which they would be linked to employment and business opportunities in Pakistan, seek skill certification and up-gradation and be prioritized for re-employment opportunities abroad in the future when global economic recovery restarts. The registration data will be shared

with the PM Ehsaas Program as well as other relevant Government Departments.

PIVOT: How do you think government is responding to the locust outbreak in Pakistan? Do you think there are lessons we can learn from China in fighting it?

AHK: The desert locust swarms entering Pakistan through various eastern corridors are adversely affecting crops in multiple districts of Pakistan. The Government has declared a national emergency against locust swarms and the federal and provincial governments as well as the district administrations are working in close coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to combat the menace of locust swarms.

Pakistan embarks on its Post-COVID-19 economic recovery journey, the role of CPEC projects (Energy, Infrastructure-Road & Rail, Gwadar, Proposed Special Economic Zone) in reviving and boosting economic activity through continued financial investments and employment generation is indeed significantly important

China sent a group of experts to Pakistan to combat the locust plague and has donated 300 tons of malathion pesticide and 50 air-powered high-efficiency remote sprayers to Pakistan in this regard. Pakistan can further benefit from the Chinese experience of devising a comprehensive strategy

of preventive management to fight locusts in Pakistan, which aims to keep locusts and grasshoppers at lower densities, so that the dense swarms seen in the past are no longer common and crop and pasture damage is minimized.

PIVOT: How do you foresee Post-COVID-19 world? Do you think CPEC can play a role in rejuvenating Pakistan's economy post-COVID-19?

AHK: The Post-COVID-19 world is indeed a 'New Normal'. As economic lockdowns are being lifted progressively across the world, the entire economic order is being reconfigured with a serious realization in the COVID-19 ravaged economies to 'Build Back Better'. There is an outpouring of research that is pointing towards the emerging features of a Post-COVID-19 world. One of the striking lessons that COVID-19 has taught the world is that it cannot afford to lose focus on developing responsive public health systems, expanding coverage of social protection measures, protecting employment and harnessing digital technologies for socio-economic development. As Pakistan embarks on its Post-COVID-19 economic recovery journey, the role of CPEC projects (Energy, Infrastructure-Road & Rail, Gwadar, Proposed Special Economic Zone) in reviving and boosting economic activity through continued financial investments and employment generation is indeed significantly important. As per a recent press release of the Embassy of China the Chinese companies have not suspended construction nor have they laid-off a single local staff. The CPEC projects have secured local employment and kept contributing to Pakistan's economy ■



Webinar on 69th Anniversary of Pakistan-China Diplomatic Relations

By Ali Haider Saleem

Pakistan and China enjoy a unique relationship, which has grown with the passage of time, and at present it is far more diverse and vibrant, than ever', stated, Mr. Zahoor Ahmed, Additional Secretary (Asia-Pacific), addressing a webinar organized to commemorate 69th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China on May 21, 2020.

On 21st May, 1951 diplomatic relations were established between Pakistan and China. To mark the occasion, China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a webinar. H.E. Yao Jing, Ambassador of China in Pakistan made keynote remarks, while Mr. Zahoor Ahmed, Additional Secretary (Asia-Pacific) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the Chief Guest. Panelists included Pakistan's former diplomats who had represented Pakistan in China over the past decades.

Dr. Talat Shabbir in his introductory remarks said that, 'During past 69 years' relationship between China and Pakistan withstood changes in international system. Pakistan and China have complete identity of views on all major regional and international issues.' He highlighted that CPSC continues to strive towards deepening and promoting Pakistan-China bilateral relationship through research, analyses and outreach activities.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director-General ISSI, in his welcome remarks, underscored that it is special occasion to mark establishment of diplomatic relations. Projects such as construction of Karakorum Highway, JF-17, FTA-I and II, and CPEC are building blocks that have only strengthened the relationship over the decades. He said work of CPSC and ISSI have assumed greater importance in the age of narratives and it is extremely important for both sides to maintain constant communication and coordination to save the relationship from detractors.

Speaking at the occasion, former Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir paid tribute to leaders and diplomats who have nurtured the relationship over the decades. He noted that it is truly genuine friendship which cannot

be quantified and explained through traditional theories of the international relations. Meanwhile, former diplomat, Riaz Khokhar opined that Pakistan-China relationship is a story of model state-to-state relationship that has evolved over the decades. Pakistan cannot thank China enough for extending vital support during difficult times in 1965 and 1971.

Additional Secretary Zahoor Ahmed highlighted that at present we are in new stage of the relationship which is dynamic and multi-dimensional. Most importantly, relationship with China remains a central pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. He specifically highlighted extensive support of China to Pakistan during the recent COVID-19 crisis, which he noted underscored strength of the relationship.

Mr. Masood Khalid, Pakistan's former Ambassador to China, underlined the significance of strategic cooperation for regional stability, and noted that Pakistan-China relationship has assumed regional and international importance. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI and also former ambassador of Pakistan to China underscored that five principles of peaceful co-existence continue to guide the bilateral relationship. He highlighted that youth needs to be engaged in various facets of expanding cooperation for enhancing people to people contacts.

In his keynote remarks, Ambassador Yao Jing commended CPSC and ISSI for organizing the webinar to commemorate establishment of bilateral relationship, which he noted continues to be guided by mutual respect and mutual support to each other. He underscored that a key feature of bilateral engagement is non-interference in internal affairs and support to each other's core interests. These central tenets have remained consistent over the decades. He said China is satisfied with the current direction of the relationship, as it has expanded in recent years to economic sphere.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG-ISSI, delivered concluding remarks and thanked esteemed guests and panelists for joining the webinar ■



US and China Policies in the Region and Foreign Policy Perception of Pakistan

By Prof. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi

When it comes to Pakistan, global great powers come under scrutiny and observation due to its pivotal position. USA, which has been a long-standing great power ever since the end of the Cold War, has eventually come to be seen as lesser of an influencer. And at such mention, the country that directly comes into mind is China without a doubt. It has taken and expanded its integrative approach to such an extent that it is establishing a legacy of its own. With a bolstering economy and promising future in all aspects, it is being seen as the next super power, with different super power definition. So it is obvious their approaches would be compared.

Considering the current COVID Crisis, their approaches have been rather opposite. This as a whole is highly reflective of

their contrasting policies. On the 3rd of January this year, two days after informing the World Health Organization of the Pandemic, China centralized its testing services under the National Health Commission. Ever since the corona outbreak they have won the hearts of many by deploying their 'mask diplomacy', a dire need of the time. Looking at the response from Trump, it took him almost around a month to be convinced enough to assign a task force under Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar. This approach, added with the complex and hefty system of its Federation, is what has resulted in the US being the worst of states in handling the COVID Crisis. China, on the other hand, has made its mark by majorly confining the virus to just the source city-Wuhan.

It is to note that the US Policy throughout the course of history

has been turbulent to say the least, especially with regards to Pakistan. While there can be a shift seen in forms of power throughout the globe, Trump's rhetoric of nationalism and 'America first' has established what we may call an individualistic approach whereas China keeps promoting its message of integration, inclusive and global approach; the Belt and Road Initiative being an embodiment of that. Pakistan holds a key place for both China and US despite its erratic relations with the latter; it is Pakistan's biggest exporting partner. Other than this, their political areas overlap many a times, especially with regards to the War on Terror in Afghanistan.

Adopted by the Ninth People's Congress, the 'National Economy and Social Development Five-Year Plan' is what the pivot to China's contemporary approach is (Frankopan, 2018). This is

what started China's 'zouchuqu zhanlue' (going out) strategy. Hitting various sectors in order to expand development, it has made people-to-people contact one of its top priorities. It is clear how important of an aspect this is to China's foreign policy, seeing how it is on its top objectives in the Belt and Road Initiative as well. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor, being one of its six major projects, just tells on what pedestal China places Pakistan onto.

While the US focuses on politics and economics, it is China that is talking about the 'uplift of the people'. Taking an extremely soft and integrative approach, it is still very idealistic for many to picture it as just that and many parties have engaged in establishing counter-narratives. With so much opinion in their favor, it is not hard for China to establish and build even stronger relation with Pakistan especially people to people contacts has set pleasant precedents.

Ever since the corona outbreak they have won the hearts of many by deploying their 'mask diplomacy', a dire need of the time

The region has seen extensive US involvement, be it direct or indirect and in comparison to that, the people in Pakistan are more welcoming towards China, a lack of link to the West being a major contributing factor.

Chinese culture and all that it entails is being slowly and gradually accepted with open arms. When President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in 2015, he emphasized the role of language in bringing economic prosperity

in the country and region. Under umbrella of Pakistan-China relations, there have been multiple Chinese Courses and research centres established across the nation in various forms, one such China Study Centre was set up in the University of Peshawar, and another such well-known centre is the China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad to name a few. Other than this, the China Cultural Heritage Foundation (CCFH) and the Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce have been working together to bring awareness regarding Chinese culture, politics etc and to further strengthen the already robust ties.

However, even if one sees this through just the majorly prevalent 'realist' approach in international relations, there is not much to raise a finger on. The approach China holds is progressive and inclusive in nature. Instead of engaging in proxy wars, it talks about human resource development, instead of emphasizing on arms and ammunition, it is focusing on establishing versatile industries in the country, utilizing the same materials and resources in construction and technology. Its emphasis on soft-diplomacy is what the world exactly is in need of; these mechanisms not only bring states and their people together but even prompt collective development. It is what the highly integrated societies need in the current scenario. Pakistan has a lot to gain if CPEC is handled aptly and Pakistan-China relations keep on going smoothly as they are. The public are ready and eager to gain benefits out of CPEC, it is now

time for the state institutions to materialize CPEC projects and through it begins a golden era of prosperity and success with its 'all-seasons ally'.

China is being accused of subtly taking more benefit of the agreements between the two countries, and to counter these false narratives, it is the responsibility of both the states to bring forth a clear and transparent agenda and counter-narrative in front of the critics in order to garner further trust and support

How prudently China is dealing with the country's local perspective and its people's pathos is exemplary on its own. The only projects that could be worked on more efficiently and have shut the skepticism are the ones with clarity and transparency in the agreements being signed between the two states. China is being accused of subtly taking more benefit of the agreements between the two countries, and to counter these false narratives, it is the responsibility of both the states to bring forth a clear and transparent agenda and counter-narrative in front of the critics in order to garner further trust and support. Both nations trust each other and have stood by each other in difficult times. However, transparency will turn down and shun all the negative propaganda regarding CPEC and will be the best answer for the detractors ■



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Developing More Positive Perspective Change for

BRI and CPEC

By Nauman Munir Afzal

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is one of six land routes under Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (Belt and Road Initiative) previously known as OBOR (One Belt One Road) started in 2013. 'Belt' refers to six overland routes for road and rail transportation, called 'the Silk Road Economic Belt'; whereas road refers to the sea routes, or the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Basically, it is revival of old silk route which remained functional from 2nd century BC to 18th century BC. Silk route was not just a trade route to export Chinese silk, as the name implies, but this was a source of forming an interaction between different civilisations along the route in economic, cultural, political and religious domains. Chinese government looks at this initiative of CPEC as not only a way for global connectivity, to boost trade and economic growth, covering

Asia, Europe and Africa but also with reference to infrastructure development and investment in nearly seventy countries, consisting of 65% of the world's population. However, United States of America and her allies look at it as a Chinese centred trading network and Chinese endeavour for global dominance. Whatever the case may be, the fact remains that this initiative has challenged US supremacy in the current international world order.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a very ambitious initiative allowing China to have presence in the involved countries which may not be acceptable to US led western block presently leading the world, so their opposition to BRI is natural. On the other hand, at first look, BRI appears to be a trade route where Chinese goods will be transported to these countries and beyond. There is a genuine question about

what will be coming back to China in return, whether this will be a foreign exchange from these countries, or natural resources and raw material for Chinese manufacturers or there is something else of value from these countries. Countries which are a part of BRI hold the right to ask these questions. Moreover, transportation infrastructures to export Chinese goods, are establishing with Chinese loans and concern about earnings to payback the loans with interest are genuine. In business, a financially viable project is one that returns its investment in 6-8 years, will that happen in case of Chinese projects? There has to be a clear business plan to earn and pay back the loans Pakistan is taking from China. Some of these issues are still not very clear, at least to the general public. For any international joint venture, there is always this fear that the stronger country will dictate the terms. These suspicions can be

offset by bringing transparency to the agreements and by making these matters open and allowing a public debate. Until and unless a clear picture is given, there will be a continuous debate tarnishing the Chinese image at global level.

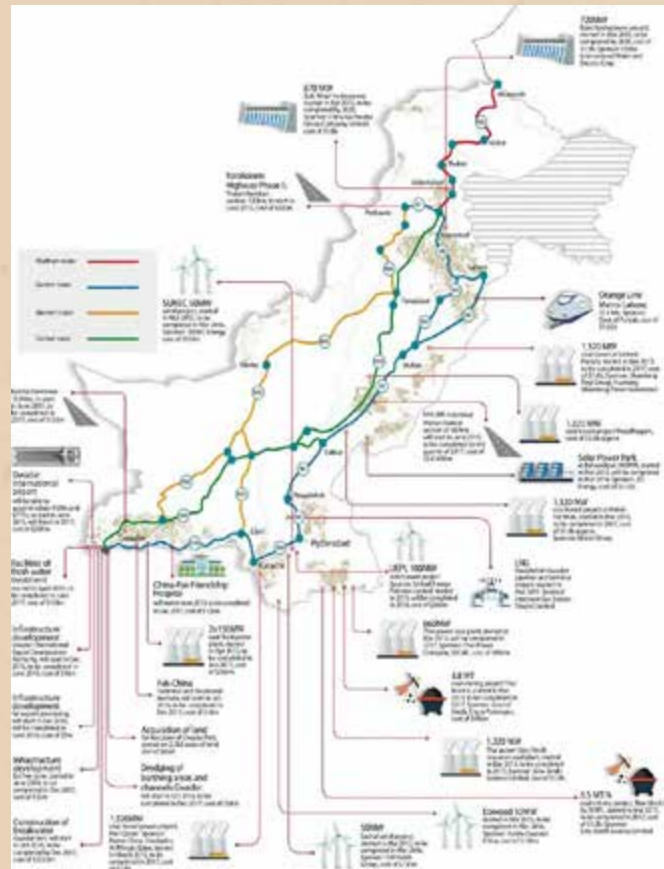
CPEC is a small yet very important part of this project. Pakistan needs to critically analyse the projects to get maximum benefits as per our needs. As our needs may be different from Chinese vision, so we should be fully involved in planning and execution of CPEC projects. There is a lot of potential for Pakistan in CPEC projects but we need to identify and effectively exploit these opportunities in our favour. People are concerned and they want to know about the benefits and dividends of the projects' in tangible terms. Economic viability of these projects to payback the loans is also a genuine concern.

CPEC projects shall bring economic benefits and prosperity to the region, allow sustainable growth, raise standard of living (eliminating poverty and hunger, improving health and education), bring stability and more importantly shall win hearts of people

CPEC shall be considered as a framework or a foundation for a new era of economic development but the actual building has to be built by Pakistan. We as a country need to redefine our policies, to make these projects, business friendly, time efficient, allowing equal opportunities and an environment of fair competition. The newly established communication infrastructure does not just support trade and economy, but acts as a means of creating an interaction in cultural, political and religious domains. In

such a situation people have their own concerns, which need to be addressed. Environmental impact of any project is also very important to consider. We need to make sure that these developments have least impact on environment. CPEC (KKH) is passing through Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan where glaciers, which are main source of fresh water for this country, are already receding. Detailed EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) of each project is essentially required. There is a need for more open debates and to allow people from different walks of life from both countries to interact at different forums. CPEC projects shall bring economic benefits and prosperity to the region, allow sustainable growth, raise standard of living (eliminating poverty and hunger, improving health and education), bring stability and more importantly shall win hearts of people.

A lot of controversies have been raised on the Chinese initiatives under BRI and CPEC. We must listen to these arguments with patience and there is a need to critically analyse each observation individually and respond effectively with some counter-arguments based on facts and data. We must realise that these projects are part of a business and in business there are



always negotiations and a person or a state that can negotiate in a better way earns economic gains. Chinese institutions, effectively ensuring transparency and accountability within their country, are required to look after the work ethics and behaviour of Chinese firms working in other countries with weak institutions leading to ineffective or inefficient systems. Someone could argue that weak institutions and incapacitation of these countries to effectively negotiate, is doing no harm to China, rather this is good for China to get good business and huge profits. It is a common belief that China being an emerging super power has to play a leading role in the coming times which demand China to remain away from any controversies and present herself as a just and fair nation. This is of more value to China as a world leader rather than looking for temporary financial gains and will enable China to win trust of the world ■



The writer is Telecom Engineer and has interest in Belt and Road Initiative and China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Chinese Progress:

A Lead to Prosperous Pakistan

By Ambassador Syed Hasan Javed

In 2020, Pakistan stands where China was in 1980, India in 1989, Vietnam in 1999 and Bangladesh in 2009. Their respective period of time shares the same situation as Pakistan faces these days. Pakistan must learn how to fish instead of asking for fish. It needs to improve itself, which can be accelerated by introducing comprehensive policy reforms in the strata of the society.

In 1980, China had more than 90 percent of its population living under poverty line with US\$2 per day while almost 70 percent was living in the rural areas. These figures posed a highly challenging situation for China: nearly nine out of ten Chinese were living under poverty. In 2019, still 30 million people in China were below the poverty line. In November 2015, the State Council stood up to win the fight against poverty. In terms of intensity, scale and impact, the Chinese efforts to eradicate poverty remain unparalleled.

Beijing's next step is to bring down poverty to an absolute zero. Since 2010, China has been lessening the distance towards its destination by taking initiatives like giving micro-credits to poverty-struck household; relocating them from inaccessible areas, providing access to digital technology, and facilitating them with e-commerce, agricultural innovation, and using drone technology.

If we look at Chinese success in alleviating poverty, we find a unique path to follow. China

learnt from its mistakes and then rectified them through a result-oriented program under its sagacious leadership.

In the developing countries, poverty alleviation programs are meant for political expediency only. Resultantly, increase in poverty surfaces as an inevitable outcome as the funds are more often siphoned off by political maneuvering in China, however, the approach towards this cardinal issues is altogether different.

China capitalized on globalization, industrialization and digitalization to for turning its biggest advantage -- human capital -- into the largest workshop in the world

For instance, in the 1980's, under stewardship of Deng Xiaoping, poverty alleviation campaign morphed into empowering the farmers to develop mindset of an entrepreneur so that they can become the masters of their own destiny. The farmers and the Korean War veterans were the first Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Township Village Enterprise (TVEs). This was how the farmers were allowed to take control of the market system to a great extent.

China capitalized on globalization, industrialization and digitalization to for turning its biggest advantage -- human capital -- into the largest workshop in the world. The success of its Proto-Industrialization is evident by the Township Village Enterprises (TVEs); reforms of

the state owned enterprises (SOEs); and the Special Economic Zones (SEZs). These painstaking efforts and innovative initiatives transformed the centuries-old poverty landscape as if it never existed before.

Popularized during the Socialist Central Planning era (1949-1979), the Marxist-Leninist mantra of 'Chi Da Guo Fan', (eating from the same iron rice bowl) actually did not work as expected rather it made 'China the largest orphanage of the world'. The visionary statesman and reformist leader, Deng Xiaoping realized that it was neither sustainable nor desirable. Therefore, he changed the Chinese course.

China's development sets a mirror to Pakistan's economic development paradigm. Chinese honest and visionary leadership was open to acknowledge mistakes and ready to fix them.

The main contours of reforms and Open Door Policy launched by China under Deng Xiaoping at the 3rd plenum of the 11th congress of the communist party in December 1978 included: Establishment of rule of law, freedom, individual rights, adoption of economy state paradigm, end to security paranoid, investment in higher education. The measurements accelerated its development in the region and proved as the stepping-stone towards a better and prosperous China.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor brings, an opportunity for Pakistan to give a strong push to its economic take-off. However, our country has to take tough decisions if we want to make CPEC a success. The CPEC (worth USD 62 billion and still expanding) is now becoming a reality with 22 projects worth USD 20 billion in energy, ports and infrastructure, nearing completion by June, 2020, under Early Harvest Projects. The speed and quantum of mobilization by Chinese state enterprises to complete these mega-projects, deserves appreciations. In the second phase of CPEC, it becomes important to introduce new policy, initiatives and reforms to attract Chinese private sector investments in Pakistan's proposed nine Special Economic Zones (SEZs). As it is the process of re-location of the factories from China. Despite the opposition from the external factors like Indian and United States CPEC has been materializing rapidly. This deserves commendation. The negative, myopic and elitist detractors at home are shocking.

With the completion of the early harvest projects, the CPEC has already contributed to the removal of supply-chain bottlenecks such as energy shortage, infrastructure impairments and lack of investor

confidence. But now is the time to look ahead of 'Early Harvest Phase' and focus on establishing the nine Special Economic Zones (SEZs) as planned under CPEC.

Pakistan has to undertake comprehensive domestic reforms for moving towards a developing economy. Pakistan needs to attract Chinese private sector by giving them additional incentives package. Their investment in joint ventures of Small and Medium Enterprises will bring in 90 percent of the investment envisaged under medium and long term programs of the CPEC.

Despite the opposition from the external factors like Indian and United States CPEC has been materializing rapidly

Pakistan's existing policies are inadequate. Unfortunately, it has become a captive market for existing monopoly investors, who blackmail the government. Without policy reforms, the CPEC is unable to trigger economic boom in the country.

Pakistan because of its close strategic and cultural ties with China can benefit more than any other country from its development experience. The sectors which are badly in need of new urgent policy initiatives, especially for successful implementation of CPEC projects, are: agriculture, taxation, civil service, documentation of economy, higher education, water resources, expatriate population, SEZs, Start Ups, science and technology, industrialization, energy, mining, blue economy, tourism and various others.

It is quite ironic that countries like India, Vietnam and Philippines are learning lessons from China's development experience, whereas Pakistan despite having close strategic ties, is lagging far behind. Universities in Pakistan need to introduce China Studies Modules at early basis for human resource development, not only for CPEC, but for the global demand.

Overall the governmental and industrial institutions along with the academia can draw that curve of development which China has traced out after 1980 hard decisions by visionary leadership can better prepare Pakistan to experiment new ideas. It will lead Pakistan to break the vicious cycle of poverty to make it prosperous ■



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Deciphering CPEC Critiques

By Muhammad Abbas Hassan

In a blitzkrieg visit to Pakistan, Ms. Alice Wells the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs left no stones unturned to reflect her dismay over the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). She ensured that her words were heard in the right quarters of the country and get quoted in the mainstream media. Instead of offering a solid evidence based critique she rested her case on the sanctions imposed by World Bank on some Chinese companies. The same companies have completed multiple infrastructure programs across the globe and are known for their high end and high performance delivery. Same corporations are

driving the CPEC project through engineering excellence.

As an alternate, Ambassador Wells offered Pakistan to work closely with some large US conglomerates that are interested in working with Pakistan. She quoted the example of Bangladesh where Chevron Corporation has played a significant part in boosting the economy. At the same time, she mentioned companies like Exxon Mobil and Wells Fargo that are eager to invest in Pakistan. Furthermore, she went overboard by saying that the American companies follow well-established practices that are transparent and host country friendly. Not only the companies would contribute to the economy but would also create man power that is highly skilled and capable

of working anywhere across the globe.

In short, the Ambassador Wells was of the view that American companies are far superior and corruption free. This claim by a country that has a very tainted history with Pakistan is clearly an indication that Americans have not learnt from their mistakes in the past. To further strengthen the Pakistani perspective, it is necessary to analyze the performance of the American companies pointed out by Ms. Wells.

Exxon Mobil is one of the largest publicly traded international oil and gas company in the world. But at the same time, it has been subject to a number of controversies. Since 2000, the company has been fined for approximately 400 times on account of various

violations. Some of the violations include; environmental violation, False Claims Act and related, economic sanction violation, workplace safety or health violation, federal leasing royalty violation, wage and hour violation, labor relations violation, railroad safety violation, offshore drilling violation and tobacco litigation. The estimated fine paid by the company stands at One Billion Five Hundred Seventy Million Five Hundred Ninety-Five Thousand Five Hundred Seventy-Seven dollars.

Moving to Wells Fargo & Company, it is an American multinational financial services company headquartered in San Francisco, California. It is one of the largest banks in the world. Since 2000, the bank has been penalized for almost 140 times.

Ambassador Wells was of the view that American companies are far superior and corruption free

The violations include; mortgage abuses, toxic securities abuses, banking violation, investor protection violation, False Claims Act, consumer protection violation, wage and hour violation, anti-money-laundering deficiencies, price-fixing or anti-competitive practices and benefit plan administrator violation. The estimated fine paid by the bank stands at Seventeen Billion Two Hundred Ninety-Six Million Eight Hundred Thirty-Five Thousand Nine Hundred Forty-Nine dollars.

Chevron Corporation is an American multi-national energy corporation. One of the successor companies of Standard Oil, it is headquartered in San Ramon, California. Just like Exxon Mobil, the company has had a fair share of controversies under its belt. Since 2000, the company has been penalized for 660 times.

This is approximately equal to 2 violations per month over the period of almost 20 years. Some of the key violations committed by Chevron include; environmental violation, False Claims Act and related, tax violations, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, employment discrimination, workplace safety or health violation, wage and hour violation, offshore drilling violation, economic sanction violation and federal leasing royalty violation. The estimated monetary penalty paid by the company stands at Nine Hundred Three Million Four Hundred Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Eight dollars.

It is pertinent to note that the Ambassador was also gravely concerned about the damages to the Pakistani environment that the Chinese companies may cause and that the damage would be irreparable. What is even more fascinating is that the American companies, Ms. Wells mentioned have been fined over 750 times on the count of damaging the environment.

It is true that no project is a flawless project. Every project has a room for improvement and the partners learn from mutual mistakes. This might also be the case for China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Nonetheless, Chinese and Pakistanis have shared a wonderful working relationship where the Chinese have always stood up and helped Pakistanis in the hour of need. They have never been involved in any arm twisting neither have they imposed themselves on the Pakistanis.

CPEC was the need of the hour as no country was willing to invest in Pakistan and China responded by launching a magnum opus project. Not only CPEC is important for

Pakistan but it will also set the puzzles in the right place for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The projects will not only strengthen regional connectivity but would also create economic integration among the partner countries. This is one of the key reasons why the west has launched a malicious campaign against CPEC and BRI.

The American companies whether they are in engineering services or in financial services have a long history of gross violations. So instead of showing the American dream to Pakistan, US should realize that CPEC is now a reality and an actual hope for Pakistan

Criticism is good and healthy in most of the cases. This is not true in the case of Ms. Wells. Before launching an attack on China she should have analyzed the states of the so called alternate option she proposed to Pakistan. The American companies whether they are in engineering services or in financial services have a long history of gross violations. So instead of showing the American dream to Pakistan, US should realize that CPEC is now a reality and an actual hope for Pakistan. Now with the project entering into the next phase, Pakistan is expecting a new wave of industrialization. This would not only give the economy a much needed space but would also create employment opportunities for the masses. Once this is done, the US backed criticism on CPEC would not only die down but would strengthen the China- Pakistan friendship that has not only stood the test of time but also has been proven on multiple occasions ■



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STREET 798- THE ENCHANTING ART DISTRICT OF BEIJING

By Andleeb Rana

Landing in Beijing was a dream come true for me. The plane entered the alluring air of Peoples' Republic of China and vibrant dawn embraced me at the land of workaholics.

After acclimatization with the city, I headed to visit art galleries to quench my ever-thirsty soul of an artist. Street 798! It was the alley to discover first.



The Art Zone is a complex made from a 50-year-old decommissioned military building which is now the hub of art and craft activities. It's an avant-garde of naïve amateurs and renowned professionals alike. The experience was no doubt one of its kind. This particular locality is comprised of galleries, art and craft shops, and various other eye-catching outlets. One can find all types of galleries and pieces of art there.



Chinese people are very detail oriented. They go for minute intricacies and perfection in whatever they get involved into may it be art, sports or film and media they leave their mark in every field. For calligraphic art Chinese follow the old-school approach. They choose mountainous landscapes and use the traditional ink and brush technique to paint. However recently, they are exploring all mediums, materials and methods. Young artists are more inclined towards oil painting. The canvasses can be found from ten by ten centimetre to ten by ten meters long. The shape could be square, rectangle, oval and circle. They exquisitely paint super realistic objects. There are numerous



art studios in 798 art zone. Chinese and international artists are seen working there diligently.

Coming towards the abstract art, it is more inclined towards minimalism. A very stark bold brush stroke of a catchy colour against the blur background evokes many thoughts in the mind of the viewer and leave them into their own imagination. Chinese abstract art is simple rather than complex. Of all forms of art, the most outstanding are the sculptures. The material used in carving out sculptures are various ranging from wood to metal and some novel material. To make sculptures more interesting Chinese artists sometimes create sculptures of dragons, clouds and various other object and animals. Especially, cloud hold great significance in the history of China. So, it can be concluded that Chinese modern art is a good combination of traditional as well as contemporary art. Apart from the artistic masterpieces we see that street 798 area holds various other delicacies and relics of cultural and historical importance.



There are a large range of souvenirs which attracts the tourists: like classical Chinese embroidery, funky jewellery, small ceramic statues and incense. The extravagant carpets of Iran are also sold out in Street 798. Apart from this one can also find Pakistani handmade carpets and rugs on this street of Beijing which to my surprise are of quite good quality as well. In a nutshell, I would say that with Street 798 I have a close sentimental connection and every corner and every street of Beijing is special for me and is very close to my heart ■



The writer is an artist from Lahore who is doing art entrepreneurship in Beijing since 2016.

WEBINAR ON 'EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES' IMPORTANT TOOL TO COMBAT COVID-19'

By Uroosa Khan

COVID-19 patients. This technological advancement is helping China to combat Corona effectively.'

Mr. Hassan Syed, founding member BIR Ventures during his remarks opined that, 'To keep everything going in this hard time, we need to focus on care and cure. Our top priority should be producing more ventilators, test kits and telemedicine should be made available for masses.'

Ms. Aamna Rafiq, Research Associate at ISSI stated that, 'Corona-tracking can be improved by data control, air traffic, social distance patterns, medical histories and how government handles epidemiological parameters at local/national levels of AI systems.'

While sharing his views, Dr. Akber Gardezi, Assistant Professor, COMSATS said that, 'While the use of technology is very important to deal with this crisis, it is important to note that due to weak access to technology along with poor infrastructure, the marginalized community has become more marginalized. So it is important to create inclusion, so that a wider segment of society is benefited.'

Dr. Shumail Daud, President Prime Institute said that, 'Pakistan and the world need to invest more in healthcare systems and for this technology and digitization are the best tools. Based on the world experiences, data scientists should be working not only with private sector but also with the public sector.'

Mr Yusuf Hussain, former CEO Ignite, while sharing his views said that, 'COVID-19 has impacted the world at large. In Pakistan, surveillance eco-system is being used to detect COVID-19 patients, which is very important and timely response to minimize the costs on the already fragile health system. Equally, it is important to ensure food availability to the marginalized communities. With technology taking lead in today's world, there is an opportunity for democratization of education across the world.'

Dr. Abdul Rauf in his comments said that, 'Indigenous applications must be developed to deal with the multi-layered crisis and for this more emphasis must be laid on knowledge production.'

While concluding the webinar, Ambassador Aizaz Chaudhry, DG, ISSI said that, 'The responsibility to combat COVID-19 rests with the private sector, civil society, media and other institutions and they should work together along with the state organs to lessen the suffering of the people of Pakistan ■'



China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC), Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in collaboration with Mishal Pakistan and Wusool hosted a webinar on 'Emerging Technologies: Important Tool to Combat COVID-19' on April 27, 2020. The webinar was attended by senior academics, researchers, media personnel, diplomats and members of the civil society community.

Speakers from government, development sector and international institutions expressed their views on significance of technology to combat the crisis. Almost 100 participants joined the online session and took part in the discussion. The session was moderated by Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director, China Pakistan Study Centre, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad in his keynote remarks emphasized on the significance of technology to deal with COVID-19 and said, 'This pandemic has also brought into consideration, how to use modern technology in a more efficient way to communicate and connect.' He further said that although the technological race has already begun, but it is important to ensure its equitable access to every segment of society. Moreover, for indigenization of technology, we need to have more home-grown solutions. Research and Development at home is extremely important for detection, vaccine development, data collection and analysis. In order to deal with current health crisis, it is important to enhance regional cooperation; regionalism could become more popular, offering new opportunities.

Sharing his views, Amir Jahangir, Chief Executive Officer, Mishal Pakistan, said that, 'It is the need of hour to understand and make use of emerging technologies. Government needs to devise a system to use digital technologies for welfare of the people. Also, tax regimes on technologies that would help fight COVID-19 should be revisited to create more value for the citizens.'

Addressing the webinar, Mr. Barkan Saeed, founder of Vizteck Solutions stated that, 'China is successfully using thermal detectors and cameras to detect

ROLE OF CHINA IN BATTLING GLOBAL LOCUST OUTBREAK

By **Muhammad Armughan Tufail**
Muhammad Omer Sabahat

As the world is fighting the coronavirus pandemic which has caused thousands of deaths across the world there is another epidemic that has devastated crops on thousands of acres of land mainly in Asia and Africa. Locust outbreak has threatened the global food security and can derail economies of many poor countries of Asia and Africa. Locusts are a collection of certain species of short-horned grasshoppers from the family Acrididae. The desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*), which is found in more than 70 countries, normally lives a solitary lifestyle in the deserts between West Africa and the Indian subcontinent. It breeds after the period of rainfall because it needs moist land to lay its eggs. But due to climate change under certain circumstances like the heavy rains, they keep multiplying and adapt themselves according to new environment and change their behavior which leads to a fast growth in their production, resulting in vast swarms.

Each swarm has a width of approximately 15 to 30 km but can expand to thousands of square kilometers and can travel hundreds of kilometers each day in the direction of the wind. At evening locusts take rest and fulfill their energy needs by eating crops and plants. The current locust outbreak is spreading across East Africa, Asia,

and the Middle East, threatening food supply and livelihoods. Millions of people are at risk as governments and agriculturists race to control the outbreak.

The swarms of current locust attacks are unusually very large for example in Kenya, one unusually large swarm occupied an area of 2200 square kilometers, more than three times the size of New York City. A typical swarm of 100 sq. km can contain between 4 billion to 8 billion locusts, with the capacity to consume the equivalent of what at least 4 million people would eat in a single day.



Photo Courtesy: Deutsche Welle

The present locust outbreaks are related to extreme cyclones in 2018, and hot and humid

witnessed in year 2019, combined with unusually heavy rains. Large swarms were detected at the start of 2020 in Ethiopia and Somalia. From here, they spread rapidly to other countries including Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan. Swarms have also been forming in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and India.

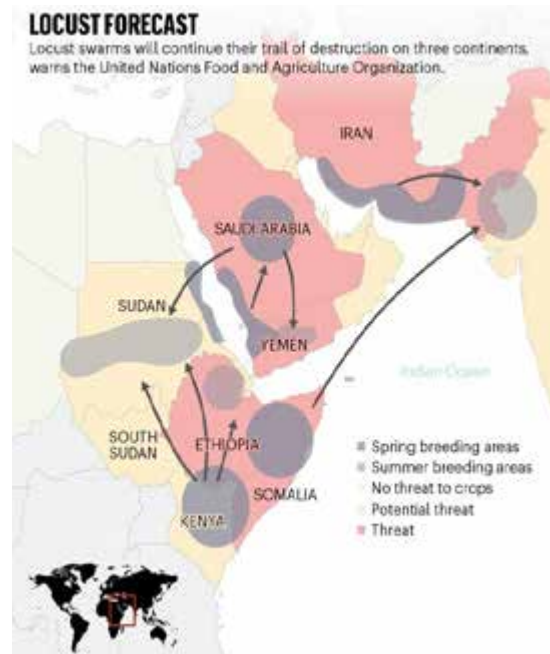


Photo Courtesy: Nature.com

Desert locusts continue to inflict damage on crops across Pakistan, with the attacks gaining momentum in several districts of Punjab and Sindh. Desert Locusts attacked crops in Vehari, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rahim Yar Khan, Sadiqabad, Bahawalpur, Okara in Punjab, and Sanghar, Matiari, Sukkur, and Ghotki in Sindh. The outbreak has created problems for the farmers, and due to lack of financial resources to buy pesticides, they are using decades-old techniques such as beating drums to scare the attacking insects.

The desert locusts have attacked mainly mango, cotton, and sugarcane crops, causing severe damage to the agricultural sector as well as the economy of Pakistan. In Okara, Desert locusts caused major damage to green trees and plants. In Rahimyar Khan, the insects attacked mango farms, severely damaging the production of the fruit in that area and it seems difficult to meet export targets of 115,000 metric tonnes of Mango this year.

China being the largest producer of pesticides in the world has been doing a great service by eradicating locust plague in African and

Asian countries such as Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Kenya. China's pesticide industry has made great progress during the past few decades. China can manufacture more than 3,000 pesticide formulations. After over 50 years of research work and development, China has become the biggest production base of pesticides in the world, with over one-third of its output exporting to over 150 countries. Chinese companies Adama, Nutrichem, and Rainbow Chemicals are among the top 10 pesticide companies in the world. The production of pesticides hit a historic high, reaching approximately 4 million tonnes in 2016.

For the past many years, China is battling a locust outbreak through innovative methods. China is currently fighting the locust outbreak through three methods. The first is Chemical Pesticides, second is Bio-Pesticides and the last one is through the use of Agricultural drones.

China has become the biggest production base of pesticides in the world, with over one-third of its output exporting to over 150 countries

China through its research produces a chemical pesticide known as Malathion, a broad-spectrum, low toxicity, and low price organophosphate insecticide, which has been used in China for about 35 years. Low toxicity and high efficiency is one of Malathion's largest advantages as China is determined to develop low-toxic and highly efficient pesticides to reduce potential environmental hazards.



Photo Courtesy: Biostadt.com

Broad-spectrum and low prices are another two key aspect of Malathion. Many Chinese farmers are familiar with mixing Malathion with other chemical pesticides to control the effects of Locusts and other insects. Malathion can kill all types of locusts and it is very effective

in eradicating locust outbreak. It is also very efficient, it can kill locusts within days as compared to other pesticides which take weeks to control the locust outbreak.

In March and April 2020, China provided 350 tons of chemical pesticides mainly Malathion to fight the Locust Outbreak in Punjab and Sindh, this is expected to help Pakistan in eradicating this plague.



Photo Courtesy: Chinese Embassy Islamabad

China is also producing another type of pesticides which is known as Bio- Pesticides, it uses natural materials such as animals, plants, bacteria, fungus, and certain minerals. China through its research is producing thousands of tonnes of Metarhizium, a Biopesticide to help fight the locust outbreak in Asia and Africa.

Agricultural Drones have been used by China in the past to monitor crop growth and to enhance crop production

Metarhizium is a genus of fungi with more than 40 species, some are genetically modified in laboratories, and then it is used as a biological insecticide because it destroys the hard exoskeleton of insects and gradually kills them. In China, it is known as lu Jiang jun, which means green zombie fungus, because it gradually turns the insect in a green mossy lump. Metarhizium is extracted by growing fungus spores on rice plants. Each group of plants can produce hundreds of tonnes of fungi powder per year.

There are many factories in China that produce tonnes of Metarhizium, and it is now shipped to African and Asian countries to fight the locust outbreak. The only disadvantage of Biopesticides is that it takes more time than chemical pesticides to kill insects, but its low toxicity and fewer environmental effects outweigh its disadvantages.



Photo Courtesy: Chinese Academy of Sciences

Agricultural Drones have been used by China in the past to monitor crop growth and to enhance crop production. They are also used by China to spray pesticides on crops from air. A drone is 50 to 70 times faster than the traditional way of spraying pesticides such as by hand or tractor. Two big agricultural drone-making companies in China are DJI and XAG, they take up almost 85 percent share of the Chinese market of agricultural drones. China has promised to supply agricultural drones to Asian and African countries such as Pakistan and Kenya to fight the desert locust outbreak.



Photo Courtesy: Dronelife.com

China is effectively helping countries in Asia and Africa to fight the Locust outbreak through its scientific innovations and we expect that Pakistan will also be able to overcome desert locust plague with the help of its time-tested friend China ■



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The writer is currently working as a Mechanical Engineer in Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) Islamabad.

Webinar on Launch of Special Edition of PIVOT

By Mir Sherbaz Khetran



Cooperation between Pakistan and China against COVID-19 is an example for international community to follow as it is time for international cooperation and unity', stated H.E. Yao Jing, Ambassador of People's Republic of China addressing Soft Launch of Special Edition of PIVOT Magazine focusing on China-Pakistan cooperation against COVID-19 on May 18, 2020.

PIVOT is the quarterly magazine of China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. CPSC has published a Special Edition of PIVOT titled 'China-Pakistan Combating COVID-19 Together' which carries special contributions from Foreign Minister of China, H.E. Wang Yi, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, and renowned Pakistani scholars and analysts on various dimensions of COVID-19 and Pakistan-China cooperation.

Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC, introduced the Special Edition of PIVOT, and highlighted that PIVOT was launched with the goal of creating awareness among general public, academia, and media about diverse relations between Pakistan and China. Special edition advances same goal and sheds light on the steps taken by China to combat the pandemic.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director-General ISSI, in his remarks, underscored that, 'We will fight COVID-18 collectively as humanity has faced and battled such pandemics before. History shows that beating pandemics requires collective actions from all nations.' He noted that PIVOT magazine has become popular and CPSC prepared special edition on very short notice.

Ambassador Masood Khalid, member of CPSC advisory board and former ambassador of Pakistan to China, reviewing special editions of Pivot said that, 'CPSC has done a remarkable job in a short period of time.' Commenting on the pandemic he noted that while the world has interconnected through globalization and made strides in technology, we are helpless against the powerful virus. World is divided, while the invisible enemy is changing global, political and economic landscape impacting billions of lives. He underscored that despite global divisions, Pakistan-China have demonstrated force of cooperation amidst the pandemic.

Dr. Huma Baqai, Associate Dean at the Institute of Business Administration, in her review underlined that, 'PIVOT is an important contribution to form logical narratives in challenging times. While emerging powers and the current super powers should have been fighting

pandemic together, as blame games will not help anyone.' She noted that Pakistan and China are together in fight against COVID-19, and are also on same page in putting across our viewpoints.

Dr. Abdul Rauf, a faculty member of National University of Science & Technology (NUST), and regular contributor to the PIVOT, commended CPSC for producing a comprehensive magazine covering broad range of topics. On COVID-19, he noted, swift and strong action of China was remarkable to control spread of disease. China employed technology in its response as an enabler. Pakistan can learn lessons in pandemic control from China.

In his keynote address, Ambassador Yao Jing, commended CPSC for producing a special edition highlighting cooperation between Pakistan and China against coronavirus. He underscored that first Pakistan sent nearly 1 million PPEs to China in February, and when virus hit Pakistan, China has so far sent over 7 million masks to Pakistan. He underscored that while Pakistan is undertaking preventive measures against COVID-19, China is collaborating in economic revival. Both governments are coordinating on next phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), particularly, supporting construction of new projects. China is willing to extend cooperation in development of hydropower projects and speed up negotiations on ML-I projects. In his remarks, Ambassador Yao especially referred to suffering of people of Kashmir, as they are facing extraordinary hardships of detentions and pandemic in these challenging times.

Ms. Kanwal Shauzab, Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, Development & Special Initiative addressed the webinar as Chief Guest. She underscored that COVID-19 Pandemic carries significant challenges for socio-economic structures across the world, and dealing with it requires cooperation among international community. She highlighted that Pakistan can learn from China's experience of controlling the outbreak of pandemic and also opening up of economy. She commended CPSC for producing special issue of Pivot with focus on COVID-19, which sets narrative for future discussions.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI, in his concluding remarks, said that, 'PIVOT has made its mark during past 18 months through focus on quality. Special edition is a step in the right direction.' On pandemic Ambassador Mahmood highlighted that international community needs to work together, more than ever with cooperative spirit. As China has shown that it is extending assistance to over 100 countries across the world. Similarly, other big powers need to come forward ■

Chinese Vision of Exploring 'Polar Silk Route' for Balancing Maritime Trade

By Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik

Water has always played a pivotal role in forming and developing civilizations; as most of the rich cultural empires have dwelled and progressed along the water channels. Encompassing the facets of socio-diplomatic growth waters have helped explorers like Zheng He, Ibn-e- Battuta and Marco Polo to explore the world mainly through the sea routes. The explorations have introduced the cheapest and bulk trade system, principally through waters from Mediterranean to South China Sea. The maritime trade ultimately led to diplo-economic competition among different empires and nations. The competition entailed the presence of a strong navy with a view to ensure the protection including the Sea Lines of Communications. The trade competition which started in 11th century initially included the clashes among Sirivijaya and Chola reigns from Sumatra Island to Bay of Bengal. The Pursuit between the Ming empire, Arabs, Portuguese, Japan and the US started in 15th century and continued mainly till the Cold War era. As part of Chinese Ming dynasty Admiral Zheng He (Muslim) commanded

expeditionary voyages to Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and East Africa from 1405 to 1433. His large ships carried hundreds of sailors on four decks and were almost twice as long as any wooden ship ever known. His fleet consisted of 317 ships and 28,000 crew. During the voyages Zheng presented gifts like gold, silver, porcelain, and silk, and in return, he received novelties like ostriches, zebras, camels, ivory and giraffe from the Swahili. Such expeditions enhanced Chinese socio and diplo-economic influence in the region.

Race to colonial and later imperialist mastery by the western countries transformed the tranquility of the sea waters in to devastation. After the Cold War Era; U.S started dominating the Indo-Pacific Oceans by controlling most of the choke points like Strait of Malacca, Hurmuz, and

Adan etc. US domination of Indo-Pacific Region has been a concern for Chinese regional maritime trade. With a view to safeguard its diplo-economic interests in the oceans, China apart from building a Blue Water Navy has also adopted a 'String of Pearls Strategy' recently in line with US policies.

Encompassing the facets of socio-diplomatic growth waters have helped explorers like Zheng He, Ibn-e- Battuta and Marco Polo to explore the world mainly through the sea routes

China is establishing several naval bases to secure its sea lines of communication in Indo-Pacific Region; contract to develop and make use of Tulagi Island close to Second





Island Chain is another effort in this direction. With a view to augment its trade, meeting its future hydrocarbon requirements and to avoid U.S pressure along Mediterranean Route, Beijing has recently adopted 'Arctic Policy' in January 2018. Basing on which a route from Rotterdam to Shanghai through the Northeast, Northwest and Arctic Passage will be adopted. The Polar Silk Route primarily passes through Exclusive Economic Zones of China itself and Russia. The adoption of Polar Silk Route will have a few implications.

Firstly, the Polar Silk Route will be comparatively free of any U.S influence hence

allowing more freedom of trade to China, Russia and other countries. Secondly, it will shorten the trade distance between China and Europe to 8919 km as compared to Suez Canal Route, hence saving thirteen days a trip for three to four months a year; aspect of fuel and time saving as compared to Suez Canal Route will add to the tune of two more months.

Increase in number of trips and ships combined with reduced distance is likely to compensate the trade which is being carried out through Mediterranean Sea in term of time. Thirdly, the trade linkages among Arctic and Pacific Oceans will allow Beijing to augment its sway

in Indo-Pacific Region as well. Fourthly, it will be easier for China to utilize huge Arctic reserves of oil and gas more pragmatically; which as per



estimates of U.S. Geological Survey are 90 billion barrels of oil, 1.7 BCF of natural gas and 44 billion barrels of LNG. It will be pertinent to understand that these reserves in combination with reserves of South China Sea which are 12 billion barrels of oil and 190 TCF of gas will be much helpful in meeting the growing Chinese energy needs.

Adoption of Arctic Policy will not only enhance the Beijing's global influence for peace and prosperity but will add to Chinese leverage in Indo-Pacific Region, hence paving way for peaceful and a prosperous global blue diplomacy

Fifthly, it will ease out Beijing to utilize Russian 'Yalam Gas Field' reserves more pragmatically. Sixthly, this will enhance the Russia- China diplo-economic ties hence will prove to be more prudent for Chinese global 'One Belt One Road' initiative; it is estimated that 18 per cent of global trade will shift to Arctic Region from Indo-Pacific Region. Adoption of Arctic Policy will not only enhance the Beijing's global influence for peace and prosperity but will add to Chinese leverage in Indo-Pacific Region, hence paving way for peaceful and a prosperous global blue diplomacy ■



The writer holds Ph.D. in International Relations.



China against COVID-19 Winner at Home, Savior Abroad

By Irfan Shahzad Takalvi

COVID-19, now having engulfed almost the entire world, is rightly described as a once-in-a-century kind of a challenge. At the same time, China's response to this challenge also leaves no parallels in sight, in recent recorded history of the world.

Just over two months ago, China was criticized, mimicked, ridiculed for its handling of the epidemic in Wuhan that later became a global pandemic. However, today, every passing minute is proving that China's response was timely, effective, and the best possible approach in the then prevailing circumstances.

It is now on record that China's measures, which were then taken as too strict, saved not only millions inside China from

being infected, but also bought the world precious time to get ready for it. Disappointingly, the world did not get ready for this humongous challenge but that is another story.

The response has also proven that the Chinese are a nation united against challenges and whenever so required, exhibit, what I would describe as 'Three Rs' – Resilience, Responsiveness, and Responsibility

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united against challenges and whenever so required, exhibit, what I would describe as 'Three Rs' - Resilience, Responsiveness, and Responsibility.

On top of it is the undeniable reality that the country is steered by a very able, forward-looking, visionary leadership that rises up to every challenge - no matter what the scale, scope and spread of it is and selflessly apply their capabilities to lead their people out of such a challenge. No wonder that Chinese people are confident and rather happy, in rallying behind their leaders in such a time of crisis.

It indeed was a testing quarter - precisely some ten weeks - for the People's Republic of China (PRC). The lockdown, the closures of livelihoods, the halt in mainstream economic activities, and virtually no social life for tens of millions, is no ordinary thing by any standards

or measures. However, the people of Hubei province in particular and China at large demonstrated the highest possible level of citizenry and humanity.

Wuhan - the locked-down capital of the most affected Hubei province was opened on April 8 after around two and a half months of strict measures. Over 80% of China's total infections (more than 80,000) and deaths (some 3,330+) were recorded in the city. Yet, some 11 million residents of the city would be remembered for bearing the harshest measures imposed on any city since World War II, to save the lives of tens of millions of others.

Beyond the leadership at the top, cadres of the Communist Party of China (CPC) all along, provincial and district administrations, deserve credit in their respective roles. And especially the healthcare practitioners and workers did a marvelous job. Many of them lost their own lives too, but did not turn their backs on the challenge. That is something to remember in the times to come.

The message has been clear, and resounding: China prioritizes public health and more so human life over everything else. Economic activity and growth will never stand at the expense of human life. Economy and growth is for the people, not vice versa, China has engraved this principle in the stone for generations to come. And after controlling the pandemic, China has also rolled out a number of financial and taxation measures to minimize the economic losses, especially those of small and medium businesses.

The fight against COVID-19

has also brought another fact to the forefront; China is now a technological superpower and, importantly, well-equipped to put its technological prowess to best possible use when it comes to human suffering and misery. From early stages of screening to diagnostics to hospitalization - and for the relief of those locked down and hospitalized - China's high tech and Artificial Intelligence was put to, perhaps the best humanitarian use ever recorded.

It is not without solid reasons that officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) are all praise for China's efforts

Now, after defeating the malaise at home, China is out to rescue the world grappling with devastation of the virus. It is evident by now that the virus is going to infect millions, if not tens of millions and the death toll is going to be phenomenally high; much of this is because countries in Europe and the US did not take the virus as seriously as they should have.

Chinese aid - medical supplies, expertise as well as cash - has already reached just less than a 100 nations by now. Not only the state but private sector of China - such as AliBaba / Jack Ma Foundation, associations of Chinese enterprises and others - are also engaged tirelessly and dedicatedly to minimize the world's losses to as low as possible.

Here in Pakistan, some half a dozen plane-loads of Chinese assistance have already arrived; Chinese doctors are here assisting the local health administration, and moreover the scope of cooperation is being expanded. Europe, reeling under the destruction of the virus, is recipient of mammoth Chinese supplies. Chinese companies operating in Pakistan are generously donating to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. And a lot more is in the pipelines.

In a time where global supply chains are exhausted, China is putting all resources at its disposal to use to meet the world's foremost necessities - supplies saving lives - while continuing to strive for the topnotch quality of the same. Even a country such as India - China's arch rival next door - is a major recipient of Chinese aid, official and well as private, to cope with the pandemic.

Unfortunately, Sino-phobic political leadership and opinion-makers in certain countries continue to concoct one conspiracy theory after the other, trying to implicate China in a heinous propaganda instead of devoting their resources - including time and energy - towards the first challenge at hand; dealing with the virus. These self-inflicting allegations, propagandas and campaigns are all set to die their own death.

It is not without solid reasons that officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) are all praise for China's efforts. The world, getting out of this extraordinary challenge, would remember China's fight at home and contributions abroad as golden chapter of the history of the mankind ■



The writer is Founder of the Eurasian Century Institute (ECI), Islamabad.



Pakistan-China Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) Project – Phase-II

By Dr. Abdul Rauf

We have witnessed the completion of phase-I of Pakistan-China Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) project on July 13, 2018. This is a 820km long Optical Fibre Cable link between Rawalpindi and Khunjerab Pass on Pakistan-China border. Despite of the fact that the cable was required to be laid across one of the toughest and harsh terrains under extreme weather conditions, the project was completed in a record time of two years against the expected time of three years. The OFC link is operational and fully functional since its inauguration. The total cost of the project was 44 million US\$, out of which 85% was provided by Exim Bank of China as a soft loan with an interest rate of 2% per annum and remaining 15% was local funding by Pakistan. Although the loan is required to be paid back in fifteen years with five years grace period but keeping in view the profitability of the project, the loan is planned and expected to be paid back in just four to five years. The OFC link has a capacity of 4 Tbps (4,000 Gbps) out of which just 500 Gbps (one eighth of capacity) is presently utilised. The OFC project was completed and is managed by Special Communication Organization (SCO), a public sector organization working under Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), Government of Pakistan. SCO was raised in 1976 to develop, operate and maintain all telecom services in areas of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K), where communication infrastructure was found lacking due to the harsh terrain and scattered population. Telecom infrastructure of Gilgit Baltistan and AJ&K has progressed tremendously under SCO and is presently a complete range of Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) services including landline telephony, broadband Internet and mobile (3G / 4G) services are offered.



Laying of Pak-China OFC along KKH

Pakistan-China OFC is a flagship CPEC ICT project that provides first ever land-based communication link between Pakistan and China. The project aims to provide a shorter, secure and alternate international connectivity route with China thus reducing reliance on submarine cable system. In addition to providing high capacity Pakistan-China connectivity, the project is also facilitating the launching of broadband, landline and mobile services (3G/4G) in areas alongside the OFC alignment. At the same time this OFC link has the potential to link China with Iran and landlocked countries of Central Asian Republics and Afghanistan. For further details about phase-I of Pakistan-China OFC project, Issue 1 of PIVOT from January 2019 may be consulted where a detailed article on the subject was published.

As CPEC projects are progressing and business activities are increasing, people of the two countries need to interact and communicate with each other more frequently, thus there is going to be a huge

demand for modern ICT services. Nothing less than a direct Pakistan-China OFC link could have provided the required services with desired quality of service (QoS). Along the CPEC route, a number of special economic zones and other infrastructure projects are planned and those also require ICT connectivity. Moreover for ensuring security and safety of travellers on the CPEC route, an effective monitoring, surveillance and tracking system is mandatory all along the route.

Pakistan-China OFC project as a whole is actually the 'Digital CPEC' with the same pivotal role in China's 'Digital Silk Road', as CPEC in BRI

All this can be achieved through a reliable information highway alongside CPEC routes, thus necessitating an OFC link from China to Gwadar and Karachi along roads and railway tracks being developed by National Highway Authority (NHA) and Pakistan Railways (PR) respectively. A close coordination among Special Communications Organization, National Highway Authority and Pakistan Railways is therefore required. The real benefits of phase-1 of the Pakistan-China OFC project can truly be achieved if phase 1 of the OFC link is further extended from Rawalpindi to Gwadar and Karachi, where it will be connected to international submarine cable links.



Pak-China OFC Project (Phase-I) Rawalpindi – Khunjerab alignment

Establishment of a new submarine cable landing station at Gwadar will also enhance the security of Pakistan's international connectivity with rest of the world. Pakistan & East Africa Connecting Europe (PEACE) is a new submarine cable system under development by China which originates from Pakistan (Gwadar and Karachi) and spans over 12,000 km will connect Asia, Africa and Europe. Connectivity of Pakistan-China OFC link with this PEACE cable will be providing a shorter, faster, secure, low-cost and reliable international connectivity both for Pakistan and China, without involving submarine cable systems from other countries and consortiums. An

alternate route for international connectivity available to Pakistan through China will bring resilience and reliability to Pakistan's international connectivity. Successful completion of phase-I of Pakistan-China OFC project much ahead of the given time despite challenges and effective operation management of the link by SCO shows the dedication, commitment and technical expertise of this organization to go-ahead with the phase-II of the project for which SCO has already submitted a PC-I to Planning Commission.



SCO Technicians Managing Pak-China OFC Communication Centre at Khunjerab Pass

To summarize, phase-II of Pakistan-China OFC project is essential, not only for the telecom sector of Pakistan but for the general uplift of remote areas of Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan. This project has the potential of boosting the quality of life of people in Pakistan by providing modern ICT services with improved QoS at affordable prices. Such mega projects have the potential, of poverty alleviation and socio-economic development by generating business activities in the field of industry, services, digital governance, e-commerce, tourism etc. Another factor that cannot be ignored is the strategic advantages, the project will generate both for Pakistan and China in the form of provision of direct secure Pakistan-China communication link and provision of secure and reliable international connectivity by linking this cable to PEACE submarine cable and thus reduce the overall dependability of both countries on the existing submarine cable network controlled by other countries. Foregoing in view, it seems that it is the golden opportunity for Pakistan to immediately go ahead with the phase-II of the Pakistan-China OFC project. Pakistan-China OFC project as a whole is actually the 'Digital CPEC' with the same pivotal role in China's 'Digital Silk Road', as CPEC in BRI ■



The writer holds PhD in Telecom Engineering from University of Sheffield, UK and is a faculty member at NUST.

Webinar on COVID-19 Learning from China's Experience

By Muhammad Faisal



China has been transparent about its struggle against the COVID-19 pandemic. World can learn from China's experience of fighting the pandemic. It is only when those lessons are implemented that we will be successful in defeating coronavirus', Mr. Zahoor Ahmed, Additional Secretary (Asia-Pacific), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, addressing a webinar on 'COVID-19: Learning from China's Experience' organized by China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad on June 11, 2020.

The webinar brought together China Study Centres across Pakistan. Panelists included Directors of leading China Study Centres situated in Gilgit, Islamabad, Peshawar, Jamshoro, Lahore, Quetta and Muzaffarabad. H.E. Yao Jing, Ambassador of China in Pakistan made keynote remarks, while Mr. Zahoor Ahmed, Additional Secretary (Asia-Pacific) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the Chief Guest.

Dr. Talat Shabbir in his introductory remarks

thanked panelists for graciously attending the webinar, which highlighted the importance China Study Centres give to learning from China's experience in fight against the pandemic. He underscored research institutions have played a crucial role in creating awareness about the on-going pandemic situation. In this, world can certainly learn from China's experience. Pakistan in particular, can see what lessons can it learn from China's experience and we need to see what strategies China adopted to minimize spread of COVID-19, despite being the first epicenter of the virus.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director-General ISSI, in his welcome remarks, underscored that it is a special webinar with diverse panelists, and participation from all four provinces and regions of Pakistan. He underlined that China Study Centres are working hard to consolidate Pakistan's relations with China. He underscored that, in the evolving geo-political situation Pakistan-China

relations has come forth as center-piece of unity and strong diplomatic ties. As the coronavirus pandemic spreads, countries realized that it is extremely serious and cooperation was required to contain it. Earlier, China was mocked for its efforts to deal with the virus. Now China has recovered from the pandemic, while Pakistan is entering the thick of it and as we hit peak next month, we need to take into view how China tackled the menace.

Ambassador Yao Jing, in his keynote address, elaborated on Pakistan-China cooperation in fighting the pandemic from January till now. He underscored that Chinese government has issued a White Paper on fight against COVID-19 pandemic and China's efforts for international cooperation. He highlighted mutual support extended by Pakistan and China to each other as they battle with pandemic. He noted that Pakistan and China extended material support to each other and Chinese medical teams have visited Pakistan and shared experience in pandemic control. At present, both governments are focused on supporting Pakistan's economy and adjusting economic cooperation under CPEC framework. In this he highlighted China's support to Pakistan in freezing debt repayments under G20 framework Pakistan. Moreover, despite the pandemic situation, China and Pakistan are collaborating in locust control and supporting Pakistan's agriculture sector.

Meanwhile, panelists highlighted various aspects of China's exemplary response in battling the pandemic. Dr. Fazal-ur-Rehman, Director Pakistan Institute of China Studies, University of Sargodha, highlighted role of strong and dedicated leadership in leading the swift response to the pandemic. Similarly, Mr. Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Director Asia Study Centre, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, while referring to Sun Zu, Confucius and Tao, underlined that China overcame the challenge with a dedicated strategy of attacking the virus, wisdom of planning for it and belief that it will succeed.

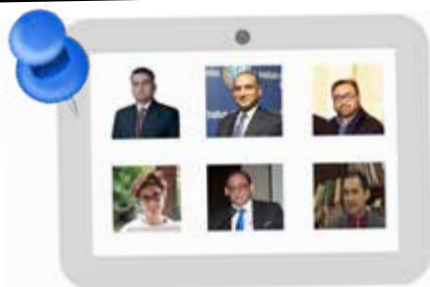
Dr. Samina Sabir, from University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir stressed that from China's experience we can learn that screening, testing and monitoring with epidemiological investigation are key factors to cut virus transmission. Dr. Saranjam Baig, Director Centre for Research on CPEC, Karakoram International University, underscored that enhancing the capacity of health workers and organization to effectively tackle the COVID-19 crisis is crucial.

Dr. Kaleem Ullah Mandokhail, Focal Person China Study Centre, University of Balochistan, highlighted that Government of Balochistan has learnt lessons from Chinese experience while formulating protocols for health-care workers in the province. Similarly, Dr. Mukesh Kumar Khatwani, Director Area Study Centre for Far-East, University of Jamshoro emphasized on raising awareness among masses.

Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt, Director China Study Centre, Government College University Lahore, highlighted role of responsive government and exemplary coordination between party organizations and people at the grassroots' level in fighting the pandemic. Dr. Zahid Anwar, of China Study Centre, University of Peshawar, underscored that the world needs unity, and should follow science and facts to deal with COVID-19 as China did. Dr. Liaquat Ali Shah, Executive Director, CPEC Center of Excellence, underlined that self-discipline of Chinese people and government at all levels has been the driving force in beating the pandemic.

Meanwhile, in his address Additional Secretary MOFA, Zahoor Ahmad, underscored the element of efficiency in China's response. He commended China for being transparent by publishing the recently released White Paper. He specifically highlighted extensive support of China to Pakistan during the recent COVID-19 crisis, which he noted underscored strength of the relationship.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI, in his concluding remarks, underlined that the way China reacted with great speed and valour in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic is exemplary. The lesson from China is: countries don't need to wait for the virus to hit them; rather they have to take action first. China, he highlighted, did a great service to humanity by delaying inevitable spread of the virus and allowed other countries to make arrangements before it reached them. He noted that pandemic has shown that countries cannot tackle such threats on their own. It requires extensive international cooperation, and China has been fully cooperative with World Health Organization from the very beginning ■



China Pakistan Study Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in collaboration with Mishal Pakistan organized a titled, 'Political, Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19.' - April 16, 2020

China-Pakistan Study Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a Webinar in collaboration with Mishal Pakistan & Wusool on 'Emerging Technologies: Important Tool to Combat COVID-19.' Keynote Speaker at the occasion was Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG, ISSI- April 27, 2020



The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad held the soft launch of its Centre for Middle East & Africa (CMEA). Additional Secretary Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, Mr. Ali Javed, and Director General Middle East, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, Syed Zahid Raza were also present on the occasion- April 30, 2020

India Study Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a webinar titled, 'IOK; Caught between Curfew and Covid-19.' Ambassador Arif Kamal and Mr. Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman Kashmir Institute for International Relations (KIIR) were also present on the occasion - May 11, 2020



The China-Pakistan Study Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted the soft launch of a Special Edition of its PIVOT magazine on COVID19- May 18, 2020

The Centre for Middle East & Africa at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a webinar to commemorate 'Africa Day'- May 20, 2020





The Arms Control & Disarmament Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a webinar to commemorate 'Yum-e-Takbeer' (Day of Greatness) - May 28, 2020

The China-Pakistan Study Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a webinar to commemorate 'International Day of UN Peacekeepers.' - May 29, 2020



Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad organized a webinar titled, 'Providing Debt Relief: Time for Solidarity' to discuss Prime Minister Imran Khan's Global Initiative on Debt Relief, the current economic situation emerging out of the pandemic and to dwell on possible solutions- June 1, 2020

Centre for Middle East & Africa (CMEA) at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad organized a webinar titled, 'COVID-19 & Repatriation of Pakistani Workers: Socio-Economic Implications' - June 4, 2020



China Pakistan Study Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad organized a webinar titled, 'COVID-19: Learning from China's Experience'. The purpose of the webinar was to highlight different methods implemented by China to counter and contain the spread of COVID-19- June 11, 2020

The India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad organized a webinar on an important subject, titled 'India's Aggression towards its Neighbours: A Threat to Regional Stability' - June 12, 2020





Pakistan, China universities sign agreement on textile cooperation

An agreement on textile cooperation was jointly signed by National Textile University (NTU), Pakistan and Shanghai University of Engineering Science (SUES), China in first week of June.

According to SUES, NTU is the very first Pakistani partner for SUES, and the move is of great significance when it comes to the educational exchanges and cooperation between universities of South Asian countries involved into China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China Economic Net reported on Friday.

Xia Jianguo, the President of SUES, noted that the signing ceremony was SUES's first move of international cooperation ever since the COVID-19 outbreak. The iron-clad friendship between China and Pakistan has laid a solid foundation for the cooperation and exchanges between both universities.

Prof Dr. Tanveer Hussain, the Rector of NTU, expressed his heartfelt thanks to SUES for the arrangement and preparation for the video signing ceremony.

He said NTU has been the premier institute of textile education in Pakistan, meeting the technical and managerial human resource needs of almost the entire textile industry of Pakistan ever since its inception. The signing ceremony was held in video form. Directors from SUES's Office of International Cooperation and Exchange and the Institute of Textile and Garment were present.

June 5, 2020 (APP)

Sinovac's Vaccine Trial Data Suggest Potential in Virus Defense

Sinovac Biotech Ltd. said its coronavirus shot is safe and capable of eliciting an immune response from human trials, suggesting the shot's potential in defending against infection of the novel coronavirus. The Beijing-based company's vaccine, called CoronaVac, hasn't caused severe side effects and more than 90% of people administered with the shot on a 14-day interval have induced neutralizing antibodies two weeks after inoculation, Sinovac said in a press release on Sunday.

The preliminary findings come from phase I and II trials in China. A total of 743 healthy people ages 18 to 59 either received shots on two schedules or a placebo. More data will be uncovered from another group in the trial that received shots on a 28-day interval. Sinovac plans to publish its results in academic journals, according to a company spokesman.

Using a killed version of the coronavirus, Sinovac's vaccine is among five Chinese experimental shots that have reached the crucial final stage of human testing before they can be approved for public use. The company announced a partnership this month with Instituto Butantan to conduct its phase III trial in Brazil, where the novel pathogen has caused the second-largest outbreak in a global pandemic that so far infected more than 7.7 million people and killed over 428,000.

June 14, 2020 (Bloomberg News)



Three Chinese hydel projects get ECC approval after a one year wait

In fast moving developments, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Thursday approved important revisions to the terms on which three hydropower projects, worth more than \$5 billion in total, are being executed by Chinese companies. The meeting presided over by Adviser to PM on Finance and Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh also reduced regulatory duties on six categories of smuggling-prone items and approved technical supplementary grants to various agencies and ministries. The ECC on April 8 agreed to the demand from the Chinese firms for up to seven per cent foreign exchange loss after resisting it for almost a year.

The Cabinet Committee on Energy, led by Planning Minister Asad Umar approved on June 20 the signing of implementation agreements on two of these three projects — Kohala and Azad Pattan — with an estimated cost of \$3.758bn. The meeting also approved Rs5.323bn technical supplementary grant for five proposals. These included Rs4.313bn grant for employee-related expenditure by the Interior Division, Rs900 million for adjusting pays and allowances of the National Commission for Human Development employees, Rs52.70m for the Revenue Division, Rs39.22m for the Pakistan Rangers and Rs18.53m for the Islamabad administration for taking measures to control and fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

June 26, 2020 (Dawn)

Rs.7.5 billion allocated for ML-1 under CPEC

The Federal Government has allocated Rs.6 billion for the up-gradation of Pakistan Railways existing Main Line-1 (ML-1) and establishment of Dry Port near Havelian Phase-1 under CPEC including Rs.500m as foreign component. Meanwhile, Rs1.5 billion was also included in PSDP 2020-21 for Preliminary Design/Drawings for up-gradation and rehabilitation of main line (ML- 1) and establishment of Dry Port near Havelian under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and for hiring of design / drawings vetting consultants. Rehabilitation & up-gradation of Karachi-Lahore Peshawar (ML-1) Railway's 1,872km long track is an important project of CPEC. The project include doubling of entire track from Karachi to Peshawar and after its completion the speed of passenger trains to be raise from 65/110km/h to 160 km/h while freight trains will operate at 120 km/h. The computer based signaling and control system and grade separation to ensure safety of train operations is also a part of this important project.

June 13, 2020 (THE NATION)



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