



HIGHER THAN KARAKORAM

SEVEN DECADES OF PAKISTAN-CHINA PARTNERSHIP



Edited by Dr. Talat Shabbir



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China-Pakistan Study Centre
Institute of Strategic Studies
Islamabad



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*To the people of Pakistan and China pursuing common
future for shared destiny*

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Foreword

The enduring strength of Pakistan-China relationship has given rise to an entirely new paradigm. This book is a tribute to the special bilateral relationship that would be the envy of any two neighbours. The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad is privileged to contribute to the growing literature on Pakistan-China relations. What makes this book unique is that it marks the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. With their expertise over their respective areas, the authors have provided the readers with valuable information on the past, present and future trends in the multiple dimensions of bilateral ties between China and Pakistan.

It is heartening to see that the bilateral relationship between China and Pakistan has not only deepened with the passage of time, it is, at present, far more diverse and vibrant than ever. This relationship has withstood the vicissitudes of ever-changing global geo-politics, thanks mainly to the commonality of views on major regional and international issues and mutual respect for each other's core values and interests. Of late, China also extended cooperation to Pakistan in wake of Coronavirus pandemic, which has further elevated the trust levels between the two sides.

Though Pakistan does not share common religion, language or culture, the friendship between the two countries has thrived. This is a rare phenomenon in international relations, and it gives us another reason to further explore the roots and depths of this relationship. In recent years, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has emerged as the flagship symbol of bilateral relationship, with cooperation extending from political and diplomatic domain to economic arena. CPEC has unleashed enormous opportunities for prosperity through connectivity. The mega project has boosted people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and China. The geopolitical and geo-economic implications of CPEC, and growing cooperation between the two sides under CPEC's umbrella are well covered in this book.

It is important to note that the evolving nature of this relationship is now seeking collaboration in diverse and expanding, yet inter-connected, fields of health, information technology, agriculture and higher education. Amidst growing populism and anti-globalisation sentiments in the West, it is encouraging to see these two countries from Asia carrying on their efforts for our shared future. The 21st century is called 'Asia's Century', and the reader would come across supportive indicators for this notion in this book.

Other than creating better understanding of Pakistan-China relations and regional issues, this book also highlights the practical application of Chinese principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. China's approach to dealing with regional challenges has largely been rational and measured. The authors have discussed how China will look to implement its win-win strategy in the years to come. As an emerging superpower, China's approach will certainly have an impact on our future. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how Beijing perceives its place in the region and beyond.

As a responsible member of the international community, China has taken lead in the fight against climate change. China has developed and adopted technologies to curb carbon emissions both at home and abroad. China's prowess in solar and wind energy is helping countries like Pakistan to meet their growing energy demand and protecting their environment. Similarly, many developing countries are looking towards China to benefit from its experience of lifting millions of people out of poverty. The role China is playing to ensure socio-economic development, improving provision of healthcare and a green future regionally and globally needs to be understood by a wider audience.

The fact that both Pakistani and Chinese authors have contributed in this book reflects our commitment to address our challenges collectively. Since its inception, the CPSC has carried out numerous activities to promote the relationship between the two countries and engage scholars from both sides of the border.

The Centre has done a commendable job by publishing this well researched and comprehensive book. I hope that scholars, students and practitioners will benefit from this book, and we will continue our journey towards building a community for shared future of mankind.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry
Director General
Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

May, 2021

Preface

Since the beginning of diplomatic ties, Pakistan and China have continued to deepen all-inclusive relations. Reciprocity, mutual trust and all-encompassing cooperation have been the hallmark of this time-test relationship. During last seven decades, Pakistan and China ran into regional and global political enormities but stood by each other on their core issues. Pakistan-China relations have always been reflective of the fact that China not only has profound understanding of Pakistan's position in rapidly changing global and regional political scenarios but has helped Pakistan deal with such constraints.

China is central to Pakistan's foreign policy. The cordial relations with China have served long-term objectives of Pakistan's foreign policy. China has always supported Pakistan in political, strategic and economic spheres. There is a measure of reliability that brings the two countries close. In Pakistan, China finds a reliable friend and partner who has been supportive of China in all its crises. For China, peace in its periphery is vital for economic outreach and Pakistan emerges as a responsible peacemaker with stakes in regional stability.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), launched in 2015, became another important turning point in the bilateral relationship of the two countries. Being the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the CPEC has unleashed the promise of accelerated economic integration and regional connectivity. In Pakistan, there is complete consensus across the board that the CPEC is central to the economic growth and prosperity of Pakistan.

Since 2015, people to people exchanges and collaboration in diverse fields between China and Pakistan have enhanced. The two countries realized that their joint efforts will bring prosperity to their peoples as well as the entire region. Given the traditional warm relations between Pakistan and China and strong prospects of shared futures, it is important to deepen the understanding of this relationship. China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has been tasked with carrying out dedicated research and analysis of China's policies, and their impact on Pakistan and the region.

This year is special, both for Pakistan and China. It marks the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. The bilateral relationship between the two states has grown from strength to strength and a consistent convergence of their political, economic and strategic interests was observed. All these years, China has stood by Pakistan, and so has Pakistan been a time-tested friend of China.

To celebrate this unique relationship, CPSC planned to engage scholars from all over the world working on diverse aspects of Pakistan-China relations. Our efforts culminated in this book titled which illustrates 70 years of our win-win cooperation. The topics covered in this book include CPEC and BRI, trade, geopolitics, culture, tourism and climate change. Given the commitment made by both countries to work collectively to achieve key policy objectives, the authors have presented plausible solutions for common future challenges. The chapters, while celebrating our glorious past, adopt a futuristic approach and indulge the readers to understand the significance of this evolving relationship.

With this book, CPSC attempts to bring the two countries even closer and help people understand why our relationship is considered to be higher than Karakoram. I hope this book will help readers have clear understanding of this unique relationship and will lead to further meaningful academic exchanges in the future.

I would like to thank Director General ISSI, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry for his guidance and entrusting me with the opportunity to undertake such a special project. I would also like to thank all the contributors and CPSC team for working tirelessly to accomplish this task. I hope that our efforts will help improve the understanding of our readers and inspire the coming generations to take this friendship to even greater heights.

Dr. Talat Shabbir
Director China-Pakistan Study Centre
Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

May, 2021

The 70 years of Pakistan-China relations draw their strength from principles of mutual trust, economic and strategic cooperation and shared destiny that promises development and prosperity. Besides the already existing political, economic and strategic ties between the two countries, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a mega initiative which focuses on economic development and connectivity. In view of vitality of Pakistan-China relations, China-Pakistan Study Centre has initiated a book project titled 'Higher than Karakoram: Seven Decades of Pakistan-China Partnership'. The book covers various dimensions of the bilateral relations ranging from trade, defense, maritime cooperation, opportunities in technological industry and artificial intelligence, culture and tourism, CPEC and Post-Covid-19 cooperation between the two countries.

China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad aspires to be a centre of excellence devoted to strengthening relations between Pakistan and China through research and advocacy. CPSC was established for undertaking research and advocacy on all aspects impacting relations between Pakistan and China. The centre serves as a forum for learning about Chinese society, history, culture, politics, economy and governance. CPSC also provides policy inputs to the important stakeholders on current and future direction of Pakistan-China relations. The centre has also been assigned with carrying out dedicated research and analysis of China's policies, and their impact on Pakistan and the region. CPSC is also engaged in National and International outreach programs to promote better understanding of Pakistan-China relations, develop linkages with think-tanks in China and across the world and promote people-to-people contact.

