

SPECIAL EDITION

Quarterly Magazine of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

A JOURNEY OF PEACE, MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT





Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI)

Established in 1973, the Institute of Strategic Studies is an autonomous, non-profit research and analyses organisation. It is devoted to provide an in-depth understanding and objective analyses of regional and global strategic issues, affecting international peace and security. The Institute also promotes a broad-based and informed public understanding of vital issues affecting Pakistan and the international community as a whole.

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Chief Editor's Note



As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, this special edition of PIVOT pays tribute to a journey defined by resilience, modernisation, and shared development. Over the past seven and a half decades, China has transformed into a global economic hub, pioneering advancements in infrastructure, technology, and quality development—principles

that have also shaped the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

CPEC stands as a beacon of regional connectivity and economic transformation. What began as a vision of trade and infrastructure development has evolved into a multidimensional partnership, driving industrialisation, energy security, and socio-economic progress in Pakistan. As we make transition into the second phase of CPEC, the focus extends beyond physical connectivity to knowledge-sharing, green development, and fostering a high-tech industrial base. This is a moment to reflect on the milestones achieved and the opportunities ahead in creating a modern, prosperous, and interconnected region.

This issue brings together insightful perspectives from policymakers, diplomats, and experts on the impact of China's development model, the evolving regional order, and the future of CPEC. We explore how strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan continues to redefine economic integration, cultural exchanges, and innovation-driven progress.

As Pakistan and China move forward in this shared journey, it is imperative to embrace modernisation with sustainability, inclusivity, and vision. With careful planning, strong governance, and continued collaboration, the promise of CPEC and our broader bilateral relationship will continue to flourish, shaping the future of both nations for generations to come.

Talat

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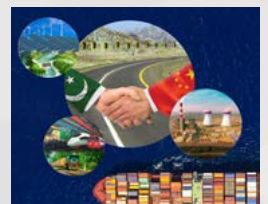
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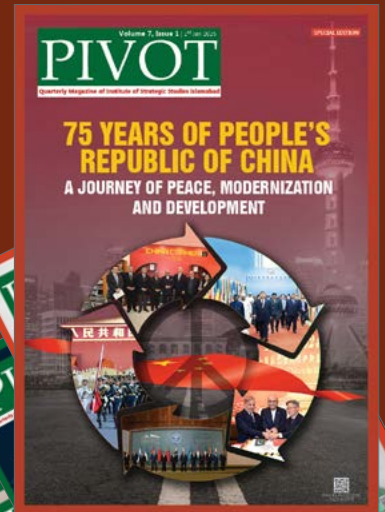
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This Issue





Message From Ambassador of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong

On the occasion of the 75th National Day of the People's Republic of China, on behalf of the Chinese Embassy, I would like to extend my best wishes to our great motherland, and may the great country enjoy prosperity forever! And I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to friends from all walks of life in Pakistan who care about and support China's development and actively promote China-Pakistan friendship!

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China 75 years ago, China has embarked on the great journey of modernisation independently, turning from an impoverished and backward land into the world's second largest economy, top trader in goods, biggest holder of foreign exchange reserves, and biggest manufacturer. We have put in place the world's largest compulsory education system, social security system, and medical and health system. China has completed industrialisation, that Western developed countries took hundreds of years. We

have caught up with the times in great strides, and hit a miracle in the history of world development. Especially since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, Chinese people have written a new chapter of the two miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability, lifted nearly 100 million rural people out of poverty, solved the absolute poverty problem historically, built a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, and contributed more than 70% to the world's poverty elimination and more than 30% to the world's economic growth for many consecutive years. This is fundamentally due to the fact that General Secretary Xi Jinping, as the core leader of the CPC Central Committee and the Party, is at the helm, providing scientific guidance through *Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era*. In particular, President Xi Jinping, with extraordinary political courage and strong historical responsibility, personally planned and guided the overall design of reform, coordinated and promoted the overall progress, and provided strong and powerful

guidance and guarantee for us to make such historic achievements and realise historic changes, and led the Chinese people to embark on a new journey of comprehensively promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with Chinese modernisation.

In July 2024, the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee was successfully held. The most important achievement of this plenary session was the review and approval of the “Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernisation”, which proposed more than 300 important reform measures and made systematic arrangements for further comprehensively deepening reform and promoting Chinese modernisation. President Xi Jinping has played a decisive role in the drafting of the decision by planning, organising research, providing guidance, and setting the tone. At present, more than 1.4 billion Chinese people are deeply implementing the spirit of the plenary session and the resolution, implementing the new development concept, building a new development pattern, promoting high-quality development, and marching towards modernisation.

Especially since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, Chinese people have written a new chapter of the two miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability, lifted nearly 100 million rural people out of poverty, solved the absolute poverty problem historically, built a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, and contributed more than 70% to the world's poverty elimination and more than 30% to the world's economic growth for many consecutive years

China and Pakistan are linked by mountains and rivers, and have enjoyed ever-lasting friendship. Since China and Pakistan established diplomatic ties in 1951, no matter how the international and regional situations change, our two countries always understand, trust, respect and support each other. “China-Pakistan bilateral relations

can be called an exemplar of state-to-state relations”. The iron-clad friendship between the two countries is deeply rooted in hearts of the two peoples. In April 2015, President Xi Jinping paid a historic state visit to Pakistan, during which the two sides elevated China-Pakistan bilateral relations to all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, opening up a new chapter in the development of bilateral ties. In June this year, H.E. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif successfully visited China, which was the first highest-level meeting after the establishment of Pakistan's new government. It is of great significance for planning and promoting major strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan in the new era.

This year marks the beginning of the second golden decade of jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative and the start of the second decade of the CPEC. Currently, under the strategic guidance of leaders of both countries, the CPEC is entering a new stage of high-quality development. So far, it has brought 25.4 billion US dollars of direct investment to Pakistan, generated 236,000 local jobs in total, added 510 kilometers of new highways, 8,000 megawatts of electricity and 886 kilometers of national core transmission grid, which has laid a solid foundation for Pakistan's economic and social development and has become a vivid example of the all-weather friendship between our two countries.

Looking ahead, we are ready to work with Pakistani side, by implementing the important consensus reached by President Xi Jinping and Pakistani leaders as the guiding principle, building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era as the main line, and promoting high quality development of the CPEC as the major platform, to continuously consolidate, deepen and expand China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperation, and better benefit the two countries and the two peoples. I, together with all my colleagues at the Chinese Embassy, will exert our best efforts to work closely with Pakistani friends, and make new contributions to the development of China-Pakistan relations!

Long Live The People's Republic of China!

China-Pak Dosti Zindabad!

Pragmatic Evolution in a Civilizational State: Learning from the PRC's Political Tradition

By Dr. Afsah Qazi



China's rapid economic rise is an extraordinary achievement, unmatched in modern history. While its political tradition often remains unappreciated or misunderstood, it is just as significant as its economic success. Many Western critiques, filtered through liberal frameworks, mis-characterised China as an authoritarian regime where political liberalisation is essential to avoid a Soviet-style collapse. Another common perspective sees China struggling to balance its Confucian heritage with modern liberal values. However, these narratives miss the reality of China's unique and evolving governance system, which blends traditional civilisational elements with modern pragmatism.

A nuanced understanding would tell that 75 years of the People's Republic of China (PRC) embody in between decades of pragmatic evolution in a civilisational state, which offers a lot to the world it inhabits. The political tradition of PRC, therefore, is a

self-contained yet substantially metamorphosed version of what the Chinese Empire passed on to it. Far from facing instability or stagnation, China's political system has demonstrated resilience, flexibility, and strength—offering valuable lessons for other nations navigating their own development paths. To start with, China exemplifies that what is often described as 'authoritarianism' is, in fact, a deeply ingrained sociopolitical structure rooted in Confucian ideals, Imperial China's hierarchical systems, and the Marxist-Leninist principles that formed the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This continuity allows for long-term political stability, which counters the liberal argument that economic modernisation automatically leads to political liberalisation. In China's case, stability has been a necessary condition for its economic rise. The respect for authority and hierarchy, culturally embedded in Chinese society, has helped China achieve a unique form of governance, 'a functional

democracy' that thrives without following the conventional Western model.

Second, while critics predicted a Soviet-style collapse for China, the PRC has only grown stronger. One key reason for this success has been the CCP's model of decentralised governance combined with centralised political control. This unique approach allows for economic diversification and innovation across various sectors while maintaining firm political authority at the national level. Under this model, China has achieved an unprecedented economic transformation, which defies the expectations of those who insisted that political liberalisation was essential for development.

Deng Xiaoping's famous cat theory—"It doesn't matter if the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice"—aptly symbolises China's pragmatic approach to governance. Deng let the capitalist cat loose to pursue 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics while not dislocating

CCP's status as the central political force'. This approach has enabled China to retain its unique governance structure, integrating external economic influences without yielding to external political pressures.

In China's case, stability has been a necessary condition for its economic rise. The respect for authority and hierarchy, culturally embedded in Chinese society, has helped China achieve a unique form of governance, 'a functional democracy' that thrives without following the conventional Western model

Moreover, China's approach to international relations reflects the same pragmatism. The PRC has prioritised shared interests and mutually beneficial cooperation over ideological conformity. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a prime example of how China fosters global partnerships based on equality, non-interference, and respect for sovereignty. Unlike some other global powers, China has worked with developing nations across Africa, Asia, and Europe to build infrastructure and spur economic growth without demanding political reforms. This approach has allowed China to extend its influence globally, envisioning a community of shared destiny that prioritises development, stability, and mutual respect over the imposition of liberal values. China's rise in the global order has not only challenged traditional Western dominance but also introduced a new model of international engagement—one that respects

the sovereign equality among nations in pursuit of shared development goals. This respect for local political systems is what makes China's BRI distinct and appealing to many nations across the world. China has demonstrated that cooperation based on complementarity of interests rather than imposition of political ideals is a better recipe for sustainable international relations.

Another important lesson from China's political evolution is the significance of continuity and learning from the past. The PRC's development story is one of gradual progress, where each phase builds on the successes and lessons of the previous one. This emphasis on continuity ensures that China's political and social fabric remains cohesive, even in the face of external challenges. The CCP's ability to balance respect for its political ancestry with the need to adapt to changing circumstances has been key to China's resilience. While distancing itself from certain mistakes of past leadership, such as the excesses of the Mao era, the CCP has always maintained its ideological continuity, incorporating elements from each leadership era into its current governance model. Deng Xiaoping's strategic re-evaluation of the past, particularly through the CCP's 1981 Resolution on historical questions, allowed China to move forward without discrediting its predecessors. This nuanced approach to political leadership has enabled the CCP to remain the dominant force in Chinese politics while adjusting to the evolving needs of the state and society. Today, China incorporates the governing ideologies of all its leaders, including *Marxism-Leninism*, *Mao Zedong Thought*, *Deng Xiaoping Theory*, *the Theory of Three Represents*, and *Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New*

Era. This ideological continuity is the bedrock of China's political tradition and the foundation of its current success.

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At 75, PRC stands as a testament to the benefits of pragmatic evolution in governance. The Chinese political system, far from being a rigid authoritarian model, showcases dynamism and adaptability that blends tradition with modernity. For nations seeking development short of conforming to the Western liberal model, China offers valuable lessons. The PRC has shown that political stability, economic innovation, and respect for history can coexist to create a thriving, resilient state. China's political tradition is a model of civilisational continuity, pragmatic adaptation, and developmental success. As the world becomes more unequal, the lessons from China's political evolution will only grow in relevance for nations seeking sustainable growth without sacrificing their sovereignty or cultural heritage.



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China-Pakistan Relations: From Statements to Vision

By Ambassador Masood Khalid

In diplomatic practice, joint statements or joint communiques are adopted after negotiations between states during an exchange of high-level visits or at multilateral engagements, and contain respective parties positions and perspectives on the issues under discussion, including on the health of their relationship. While in most situations, the outcome documents would be a result of probably intensive and at times cumbersome negotiations, yet its significance in the context of historical record remains sacrosanct. Both in the bilateral and multilateral engagements, the joint statements normally portray a broad consensus arrived at and intended to be conveyed by the participating states or parties. There are exceptions, where such statements, also reflect the divergence of views.

Also extremely important is the choice of words or the language selected by negotiators to spell out their positions, or the differences to safeguard their national interests.

Joint statements normally portray a broad consensus arrived at and intended to be conveyed by the participating states or parties. There are exceptions where such statements also reflect the divergence of views. Also extremely important is the choice of words or the language selected by negotiators to spell out their positions, or the differences to safeguard their national interests

A classic example of such a divergence was the joint communique issued after President Nixon's historical visit to China. "No doubt Shanghai Communique of February 27, 1972" was a breakthrough in melting the ice between the two ideological foes since it heralded a new era not only in their bilateral relations but also in world politics. However, the communique was glaring in highlighting the exceptionally contentious global environment and the differences between China and the United States particularly on the Vietnam war, Korean peninsula and the stability of the Asia-Pacific region. Although both sides agreed to conduct their relations on the basis of the principle of peaceful coexistence, the communique acknowledged that there were "essential differences between



China and the United States in their social systems and foreign policies.”

In the context of current tensions between the United States and China, it is important to note that Taiwan which is a core issue for China, the US conceded in 1972 that “there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China”. However, only a decade after President Nixon’s visit and despite US commitment, their perspective on Taiwan reflected sharp differences. Their joint communique of August 17, 1982, negotiated laboriously over eight months, mentioned that the question of “US arms sales to Taiwan was not settled” and that the “two sides held differing positions.”

Of particular interest is the language on South Asian issues in the Joint Communique of 1972. The level of trust their bilateral relations had come to enjoy by early seventies, could be gauged by the support China extended to Pakistan for its sovereignty and independent and on the Kashmir dispute. The Chinese position was unequivocal in its support and in sharp contrast to the US stance. The communique attributes the following position to China.

“It (China) firmly maintains that India and Pakistan should, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions on the India-Pakistan question, immediately withdraw all their forces to their respective territories and to their own sides of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir and firmly supports the Pakistan government and people in their struggle to preserve independence and sovereignty and the people of

Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for the right of self-determination.”

The US position states “Consistent with the United Nations Security Council Resolution of December 21, 1971, the United States favors the continuations of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan and the withdrawal of all military forces to within their own territories and to their own sides of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir. The United States supports the right of the people of South Asia to shape their future in peace, free of military threat, and without having the area become the subject of great power rivalry”

When this journey started, their Joint Statements of 1950s and 1960s merely spoke of “friendly relations.” As the cooperation grew in 1990s, such descriptions graduated to “comprehensive friendship.” The word “All-weather” was introduced in 2003. By 2013 both countries felt that the substance of their relationship warranted an amendment, so it was upgraded to “the China-Pakistan-weather strategic cooperative partnership”

In the last over seventy years, both Pakistan and China have invested a great deal of energy and resources in building their relationship. Both countries take pride in this relationship, which made a tentative beginning in early fifties due to their divergent

ideological orientations and imperatives of security, yet it succeeded in overcoming the tumult of the cold war and built an architecture of a durable partnership.

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The February 2022 Joint Statement issued after the visit of former Prime Minister to China emphasises “closer strategic ties and deep rooted friendship”, which is “time tested” and “timeless” marked by “traditional warmth”, “strategic mutual trust” and “Commonality of views.” When it is stated that this friendship serves the “interest of both countries” and is the “historic choice of both peoples” or is “timeless”, it implies



that both countries view it as “futuristic” and will not allow any attempt to derail it.

The Joint Communique of June 2024, issued after the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif further reinforced the high premium placed on the relationship. The statement highlighted that “Pakistan-China relations have stood the test of changing international environment and have been as solid as a rock, and as unshakable as mountain. The Chinese side reiterated that the Pakistan-China relationship is a priority in its foreign relations. The two sides would continue to view the relationship between Pakistan and China from a strategic height and a long-term perspective.”

A clear message which emanates from the above wording is that the defence cooperation is not for any offensive purpose but to ensure that Pakistan is able to meet its legitimate security needs especially as it faces a virtual arms embargo from the West, while its bigger neighbour has full access to western arms markets and technology and continues to amass itself feverishly

On defence cooperation, which is a key pillar of bilateral ties, the communique “underscored that stronger strategic, defence, and security cooperation between Pakistan and China plays an irreplaceable and critical role in maintaining peace and stability and ensuring strategic balance of the region.”

A clear message which emanates from the above wording is that the defence cooperation is not

for any offensive purpose but to ensure that Pakistan is able to meet its legitimate security needs especially as it faces a virtual arms embargo from the West, while its bigger neighbour has full access to western arms markets and technology and continues to amass itself feverishly. In any case, the defence budgets of India and Pakistan are not comparable, and neither is Pakistan engaged in an arms race. But it is imperative that South Asia maintains a strategic balance.

Pakistan-China defence cooperation, which has a seventy year long history, its often criticised, invoking the myth of a clandestine axis “founded with a shared enmity with India.” This argument is not entirely convincing as Pakistan-China relations have not only sustained but grown in strength even when India-China relations were on an even keel.

What has brought the two countries closer to each other is the trust mutually developed over the years, especially when they refused to succumb to external pressures to compromise on their relations. There were times when Pakistan was asked to distance itself from China, but it stood its ground. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi wrote in Dawn on May 2, 2022, that “during the Cold War Pakistan was a member of western alliance, but none of this prevented Pakistan from pursuing an independent line to forge relations with Beijing. After the 1962 Sino-Indian war, Pakistan significantly strengthened its ties with Beijing in the midst of US efforts to isolate China. US warnings were cast aside that it would review ties with Pakistan if it built its relations with China.”

Earlier when two countries established their diplomatic relations in 1951 and China viewed Pakistan’s membership of SEATO

and CENTO with suspicion, their maiden meeting in Bandung in 1955 helped to clear the air.

After meeting Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra, Premier Zhou Enlai stated, “through these explanations we achieved a mutual understanding.” He was referring to Bogra’s explanation that Pakistan’s decision to join the Western alliance was not against China but as a counter to security threat from India.

Muhammad Younus, a former Pakistan Ambassador to China writes in his book, “Reflections on China,” that “it is a significant factor in the evolution of what may be called unwritten SinoPakistan alliance that, while Pakistan’s explanations made little headway in Moscow, these were eventually accepted in Beijing.” While the former USSR took a hostile position towards us, Pakistan and China took several steps even in the formative years of their relationship to ensure that their interests did not clash.

When Pakistan’s Ambassador Gen.N.A.M. Raza, who was on his second appointment in Beijing, met Premier Zhou Enlai in 1962, he found a change in his assessment of India. The very first remark the Premier made to the Ambassador was that he had been mistaken about India. This was quite a shift in the Chinese perception of India from the 1950’s, when India and China relations were marked by “Hindi-Cheeni Bhai Bhai era.”

According to former Foreign Secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan, Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, who was the senior official in the Foreign

Ministry and, also later served as Ambassador to China and UN moved a note to the President of Pakistan in mid-1963, suggesting closer ties with China, which was endorsed by late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He wrote, "in the vastness Of Asia, buffeted by currents of history", Pakistan and China were poised to forge a bond like the one between India and the Soviet Union.

China's progress over the past four decades has been astounding. It has lifted almost 800 million people out of absolute poverty; constructed more than 159,000 km of railways with 45,000 km of high-speed rail; 177,000 km of highways; 254 airports; 34 major ports and more than 200 minor ports; developed Maglev Train with a speed of 450 km; commercial launch of 5G and Beidou Navigation Satellite and Moon landing of its spaceship

A major confidence-building measure was the commencement of border talks between Pakistan and China at the initiative of Pakistan. By then, China felt frustrated as its negotiations with India on border demarcation had not made any headway. And Pakistan had also become disillusioned with the American attitude of favoring India, especially on the Kashmir issue. When Pakistan's Ambassador Gen.N.A.M. Raza, who was on his second appointment in Beijing, met Premier Zhou Enlai in 1962, he found a change in his assessment of India. The very first remark the Premier made to the Ambassador was that he had been mistaken about India. This was quite a shift in the Chinese perception of India from the

1950's, when India and China relations were marked by "Hindi-Cheeni Bhai Bhai era."

In the course of border negotiations, Premier Zhou Enlai's gesture to give some grazing land, historically inhabited by people from Hunza, and was aligned to China, but on Pakistan's request, he "generously agreed to the amendment of the boundary so that an area of 750 miles remained on the Pakistan side." That was the defining moment in developing bilateral trust and friendship. The conclusion of the Border Treaty of 1963 and the 1964 landing of PIA in Shanghai, effectively lifting China's air blockade, signified major steps in fostering goodwill between Pakistan and China. The parameters of their future partnership had thus been defined.

The upward trend in Sino-Pakistan relations today is a result of decades-long investment by the leadership in fostering bilateral cooperation with "mutual trust" as its bedrock. When the Chinese leaders declare that no matter how the international situation changes, Pakistan-China cooperation will continue to prosper, is an affirmation of faith in the durability of ties and its prospects. Both countries find their ties irreplaceable because they have always met each other's expectations.

Riaz Muhammad Khan seconds the above view, "China's new status as an emerging global power, its worldwide engagement, and even the burgeoning relations with India may appear to eclipse the erstwhile uniqueness of Sino-Pakistan relations of the 1960's and early 1970's, when China was isolated, and Pakistan was one of its very few friends on whom it depended for its contacts with the outside world. But such a

comparison is out of place and irrelevant. The strength of these relations has to be judged for the quality of the bilateral relations maintained by two countries in the new global and regional environment as well as where and how this interaction and cooperation can be expanded."

Given the past history, Pakistan and China feel confident in their relationship. Imperatives of regional peace and security and convergence of interests drive Pakistan-China relations.

On its part, Pakistan views China to be an anchor for peace and security in the region. Pakistan shares the Chinese perspective that connectivity and development are critical to regional peace, progress and prosperity. Pakistan appreciates China's support for its sovereignty and independence. Pakistan is of the view that the BRI presents a win-win scenario for global prosperity

The level of bilateral cooperation is deep and substantive. There is never a sense of abandonment in Pakistan-China mutual ties. There is no cause for conflict in the relationship, only the potential for growth as manifest in their mutual support on each other's core issues. This mutual support is not driven only by geo-political considerations but also by their shared perspectives on upholding the principles of the UN charter and international law, multilateralism and fairness and justice in international relations.



Ambassador Masood Khalid,
Former Ambassador of
Pakistan to China

Pakistan-China

Innovation Corridor: Forging a High-Tech Future under CPEC 2.0

By Shah Muhammad



The transition of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to the next phase - CPEC 2.0 - is a testament to the strategic vision behind the project, steered by policy continuity on both sides. Although CPEC continues to face certain irritants in its envisioned implementation, it has successfully yielded tangible outcomes. Pakistan has completed 50 CPEC projects worth USD 25 billion while securing an additional pledge of \$65 billion for further development. Along with bridging persistent gaps in the first phase, CPEC 2.0 aims to elevate the Pak-China economic proximity in terms of inclusive growth, agricultural modernisation and technological cooperation. The potential of CPEC 2.0 should be analysed in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) where high-tech cooperation could enable Pakistan to leapfrog into the digital era.

Under the aegis of CPEC 2.0, five new corridors were announced at the 13th session of the Joint Cooperation Committee in May 2024. These are being

called the 'Growth Corridor', 'Economic Development Projects Corridor', 'Innovation Corridor', 'Green Corridor', and 'Regional Connectivity Corridor'. The Innovation Corridor essentially envisages greater bilateral engagement for technological growth and imparting IT skills to youth. Successful conceptualisation and implementation of this Corridor will be crucial to the success of other new corridors and the broader CPEC 2.0 initiative. This is because leveraging advanced technology across all sectors has become an essential requirement in today's rapidly evolving world.

The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China are yet to devise concept papers of these new corridors which would craft a clear roadmap for their implementation. Nevertheless, key features of the Innovation Corridor may be characterised by (but not limited to) joint research centres, technology parks and innovation

hubs, shaping the contours of a vibrant innovation ecosystem in Pakistan. It would likely be driven by cutting-edge research and viable commercialisation of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Robotics, Fintech, Biotechnology and Cloud Computing. China is leading the world in advanced robotics, holding a about 27.89% global share, and is the second most advanced nation in AI. Hence, the concept papers of the Pak-China Innovation Corridor could lay out a detailed roadmap as to how the corridor would enable technology transfer and foreign investment from China so as to enhance Pakistan's footprint in emerging technologies. Ultimately, the corridor could play a pivotal role in addressing Pakistan's socio-economic challenges.

Pakistan has completed 50 CPEC projects worth \$ 25 billion while securing an additional pledge of \$65 billion for further development. Along with bridging persistent gaps in the first phase, CPEC 2.0 aims to elevate the Pak-China economic proximity in terms of inclusive growth, agricultural modernisation and technological cooperation

Nonetheless, there is a need to address certain enduring hurdles that might constrain proper

implementation of CPEC 2.0, especially the Innovation Corridor, in particular. In the fiscal year 2024, Pakistan's GDP growth rate was 2.4% and fiscal deficit was recorded as 6.8%. Although Chinese investments would be a significant driver of the Innovation Corridor, Pakistan's dire economic straits might impede local investments in high-tech ventures. Needless to say, economic uncertainty has taken a toll on investor's ability to take risks in high-tech ventures. Moreover, the innovation ecosystem of the country is not as vibrant as that of China and other developed countries. Failure to bridge this gap is likely to constrain actualisation of the full potential of the corridor.

Additionally, high-tech ventures in the Innovation Corridor would hinge on the legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms of intellectual property rights. Although Pakistan has sufficient legislative enactments in place such as Patents Ordinance 2000; Trademarks Ordinance 2001; and Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act 2020, their weak enforcement is a challenge to reckon with. Apart from that, the Corridor would not be immune from longstanding security threats faced by CPEC at large. The militant onslaught and criminal activity are considerable causes of concern in this regard. Recurrence of security threats might obstruct the viability of high-tech projects and entrepreneurial spirit that otherwise thrive in a peaceful and stable social environment.

A series of well-directed and pragmatic measures may be undertaken to address these challenges, enabling Pakistan to leapfrog in the digital era. In order to attain fiscal strength and macroeconomic stability, Pakistan ought to focus on enhancing the

tax-to-GDP ratio, incentivising local industry and shoring up forex reserves through export-led growth. Economic stability would allow greater fiscal space for funding relevant projects. In the shorter term, however, the government should invite private venture capital into the Corridor and the stakeholders can then develop proposals to attract foreign funding.

Enforcement of intellectual property rights is crucial for entrepreneurship and innovation to thrive. Pak-China joint intellectual property offices can also be established to protect the integrity of patents, trademarks and trade secrets associated with the projects in Innovation Corridor

Although Pakistan has struggled to adopt cutting-edge technologies, it is steadily building a strong foundation which is crucial to the success of the Pak-China Innovation Corridor. Pakistan has made a significant leap in Global Innovation Index rankings, from 117th in 2020 to 88th in 2023, demonstrating its growing commitment to innovation. To build on this progress, it is recommended that the existing sixteen special technology zones in Pakistan be integrated with the Innovation Corridor, paving the way for synergic endeavours between Pak-China scientific and business communities. Moreover, the Planning Ministry has proposed a 'one plus four' model wherein each Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Pakistan would collaborate with four Chinese entities, i.e. province, private industry, SEZ and state-owned enterprise. This model can also

be extended to the technology zones in the Innovation Corridor as well. Importantly, China-Pakistan Science and Technology Cooperation Centre, established in 2022 in Beijing, may be integrated in this corridor. It should have vibrant linkages with academic institutions and industries in both countries, enabling scientific engagement and technology transfer. The corridor could benefit immensely from the development of a popular culture in Pakistan that rewards innovation and entrepreneurship.

Enforcement of intellectual property rights is crucial for entrepreneurship and innovation to thrive. Pak-China joint intellectual property offices can also be established to protect the integrity of patents, trademarks and trade secrets associated with the projects in Innovation Corridor. With regard to security threats, a Special Security Division is already in place to accord protection to CPEC projects and Chinese nationals. The capacity of this division may be augmented through regular simulations and the employment of technologies. For instance, drones and surveillance cameras may also be leveraged to enhance the situational awareness of security personnel.

To conclude, the Pak-China Innovation Corridor is a timely initiative that aligns CPEC 2.0 with the evolving epoch of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Under the ambit of this corridor, joint research centres and high-tech hubs could help boost the technological credentials of Pakistan and bolster its innovation economy. Despite the challenges, sustained bilateral engagement and consistent policies will be crucial in ensuring the success of the Innovation Corridor. The dream of a high-tech future for Pakistan may indeed be a tangible reality through CPEC 2.0.



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China's Strategy for the Shared Future of Mankind

By Muhammad Arslan and Mahnoor Babar

In contemporary times, the world is confronted with multiple challenges and dilemmas.

Chinese foreign policy, rooted in the principles of peace and multipolarity, is driven by the desire to maintain territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Moreover, it aims to create an international environment conducive to its reform agendas. Against this backdrop, Chinese policymakers have introduced interlinked global initiatives to address common global challenges and contribute to the betterment of a shared future for humanity. These three initiatives are:

- Global Civilisations Initiative (GCI)
- Global Security Initiative (GSI)
- Global Development Initiative (GDI)

The Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI) advocates for the diversity of civilisations, upholding common values, and emphasises their importance. It calls for enhanced people-to-people cooperation and exchanges. This initiative, proposed by President Xi Jinping, has been warmly received by the international community as it incorporates principles of mutual

learning, equality, inclusiveness, and dialogue among civilisations. It promotes shared solutions to common problems and underscores the need for collaborative efforts between civilisations to address evolving geopolitical complexities.

The Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) advocates for the diversity of civilisations, upholding common values, and emphasises their importance. It calls for enhanced people-to-people cooperation and exchanges

The GCI reflects the Chinese perspective that appreciates and cherishes the unique traits and concepts of each civilisation. China believes that the world can enrich itself by learning from the historical experiences of various civilisations that have existed for millennia. Furthermore, this initiative reiterates that equity,

peace, justice, development, freedom, and democracy are common aspirations of people from all backgrounds and nationalities. With its 5,000-year history, China understands the significance of historical heritage and how it can amplify a state's credentials on the global stage. This understanding of civilisational politics is demonstrated in China's vision and global initiatives.

Closely linked to the GCI is the Global Security Initiative (GSI), proposed by President Xi Jinping in April 2020. This initiative adapts to the changing international landscape, addresses both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, and provides a new pathway to security that favors partnerships over confrontations, and win-win scenarios over zero-sum games. The GSI embodies Beijing's approach to managing competition and rivalries through peaceful means. Over the past two years, China has collaborated with multiple states worldwide to build on its vision of creating a better future for humanity.

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Another core element of Chinese foreign policy is the Global Development Initiative (GDI), proposed in 2022. This initiative has garnered positive international responses, with over 100 states and international organisations, including the United States, expressing support. The GDI emphasises linking global development efforts with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030. Its alignment with national and regional development goals has led various states to express their support for the GDI's bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. Cooperation under the GDI Centres around eight key areas: food security, pandemic response and vaccination, poverty reduction, climate change, development financing, digital economy, industrialisation, and digital connectivity.

China is investing more than \$10 billion as a special fund for the implementation of these initiatives, which helps Beijing amplify its soft power capabilities. Pakistan, as an all-weather friend of China, can capitalise on this opportunity by aligning its own strategic aims with these initiatives.

Pakistan, with its rich cultural heritage, can foster civilisational cooperation by sharing its cultural experiences, strengthening people-to-people collaboration, and bridging social, ethnic, and linguistic differences. Through the Global Civilisation Initiative, Pakistan can leverage its shared heritage, including connections through the Silk Road and Buddhist influences, to cultivate deeper ties with the Far East. Pakistan can also act as a bridge between China and the wider Muslim world, helping to combat harmful constructs like violent extremism, Islamophobia, and the "Clash of Civilizations" narrative promoted by certain groups.

In the context of the Global Development Initiative, China and Pakistan can collaborate in various sectors, such as poverty reduction, climate change mitigation, improving local livelihoods, and enhancing the education system. This cooperation can help Pakistan address its challenges of chronic underdevelopment, economic instability, and brain drain. Additionally, the GDI may enable Pakistan to become an important component of the global supply chain, ensuring economic prosperity.

Regarding the Global Security Initiative, China and Pakistan can further strengthen defense

partnerships in the domains of counter-terrorism, cyber warfare, and conventional security. Through this platform, Pakistan can help maintain strategic equilibrium in the region while also gaining regional support on major issues such as the Kashmir dispute and the situation in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the GSI allows Pakistan to portray itself as a responsible member of the global community and counter malicious propaganda spread by adversaries.

Cooperation under the GDI Centres around eight key areas: food security, pandemic response and vaccination, poverty reduction, climate change, development financing, digital economy, industrialisation, and digital connectivity

It is in China's interest that Pakistan remains stable and prosperous. By working together on these initiatives, both countries can move beyond merely aligning policy interests and establish comprehensive, full-spectrum relations. Through the GCI, GDI, and GSI, China aims to achieve national rejuvenation while also seeking to reshape the international economic and political landscape.



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China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) 2.0

By Laiba Farooq

Improving physical access and communication between different parts of the world has become crucial for global economic growth in recent years. However, the foundations for this were laid centuries ago by Adam Smith in 1776, when he said, “Good roads, canals, and navigable waters, by diminishing the expense of carriage, put remote parts of the country on level with towns. They are the greatest of all improvements.” China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a significant step in this direction, with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being its crown jewel. This article explores CPEC as a game-changing project for both Pakistan and China.

The BRI aims to enhance regional connectivity and integration by reviving the old Silk Road trade routes. It comprises a land belt with six corridors and a maritime Silk Road connecting trade ports in Asia to those in Africa and Europe. CPEC, the largest of these corridors, is estimated to involve an investment of \$65 billion, according to the Council on Foreign Relations, USA. Phase I focused on road and energy infrastructure, while Phase II focuses on cooperation and exchange in agriculture, industry, and technology between China and Pakistan.

Andrew Small, in his book *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics*, noted that China has committed to investing \$62 billion in Pakistan through CPEC. Essentially, CPEC is structured into three phases: Short Term (Phase I), Middle Term (Phase II), and Long Term (Phase III). Phase I (2015-2020) focused on essential infrastructure and electricity generation plants. Phase II (2021-2025) emphasises on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and cooperation in agriculture, IT, and science and technology. Phase III (2026-2030) aims to develop a robust economic system and complete the CPEC framework.

CPEC 2.0 promises mutual gains for both Pakistan and China by deepening economic cooperation and strategic ties. For Pakistan, the five new corridors will drive economic growth, innovation, and regional connectivity, directly supporting its Vision 2025 goals

The five new corridors under CPEC Phase 2.0—Growth Corridor, Economic Development Projects Corridor, Innovation Corridor, Green Corridor, and Regional Connectivity Corridor—

are pivotal for aligning Pakistan’s development agenda with its Vision 2025 and Five Es framework. The Growth Corridor focuses on enhancing economic growth through key infrastructure investments, while the Economic Development Projects Corridor aims to bolster socio-economic development through targeted projects. The Innovation Corridor emphasises fostering technological advancements and innovation-led growth. The Green Corridor underscores sustainable development by promoting environmentally friendly initiatives, such as renewable energy and green practices. The Regional Connectivity Corridor aims to strengthen Pakistan’s integration with regional markets, enhancing trade and cooperation with neighboring countries. Together, these corridors represent a holistic approach to sustainable development and regional connectivity under CPEC 2.0.

Focus on Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

CPEC Phase II also focuses on Special Economic Zones. An SEZ is a designated area within a country where economic regulations differ from the rest of the country to promote trade balance, employment, investment, job creation, and effective administration. Nine SEZs are included in this phase:

1. Rashakai Economic Zone, Nowshera, KPK

2. China Special Economic Zone, Dhabeji, Sindh
3. Bostan Industrial Zone, Balochistan
4. Allama Iqbal Industrial City (M-3), Faisalabad, Punjab
5. ICT Model Industrial Zone, Islamabad, Punjab
6. Industrial Park, Port Qasim, Sindh
7. Special Economic Zone, Mirpurkhas, AJK
8. Mohmand Marble City, FATA, KPK
9. Moqpondass Special Economic Zone, Gilgit-Baltistan

Challenges in CPEC Phase II

To ensure the success of CPEC Phase II, several challenges must be addressed. First, there must be an uninterrupted energy supply in all Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to ensure they function effectively. The availability of raw materials near the SEZs is also crucial; for example, raw materials are not readily available in the vicinity of the Rashakai Economic Zone in Nowshera, KPK. Security concerns are another significant challenge, particularly in SEZs located in KPK and Balochistan. Ensuring security in these areas is a critical responsibility of the state. Furthermore, social infrastructure near the SEZs must be maintained. For instance, the SEZ in KPK faces issues such as water management, drainage systems, and labor shortages, leading to the import of labor from China, which creates demographic imbalances

and potential political tensions. Besides these national challenges, CPEC also faces international challenges, including opposition from India, the United States, and propaganda against the Belt and Road Initiative.

Mutual Gains for Pakistan and China

CPEC 2.0 promises mutual gains for both Pakistan and China by deepening economic cooperation and strategic ties. For Pakistan, the five new corridors will drive economic growth, innovation, and regional connectivity, directly supporting its Vision 2025 goals. The initiative will help revive key projects like those in Gwadar, strengthen infrastructure, and enhance energy security by focusing on hydropower and the shift towards a green economy. It also offers a pathway to stabilise Pakistan's economy by boosting exports, tapping into the agricultural and industrial sectors, and unlocking the potential of its vast mineral resources, especially in Balochistan.

For China, CPEC 2.0 reinforces its strategic Belt and Road Initiative by ensuring a reliable trade and energy route through Pakistan, enhancing China's access to regional markets and resources. The renewed focus on green and sustainable projects aligns with China's global leadership in climate action, while investments in infrastructure, energy, and technology sectors foster stronger economic and political ties with Pakistan. Additionally, collaboration in new areas like water resources and climate change presents opportunities

for China to export expertise and strengthen bilateral cooperation. Overall, CPEC 2.0 serves as a cornerstone for deepening China-Pakistan friendship, fostering stability, and promoting shared economic prosperity.

Collaboration in new areas like water resources and climate change presents opportunities for China to export expertise and strengthen bilateral cooperation. Overall, CPEC 2.0 serves as a cornerstone for deepening China-Pakistan friendship, fostering stability, and promoting shared economic prosperity

To conclude, CPEC 2.0 marks a significant evolution in the China-Pakistan partnership, offering a comprehensive framework for economic growth, innovation, sustainability, and regional connectivity. The five new corridors align with Pakistan's development goals and provide a foundation for addressing key challenges such as energy security, climate change, and infrastructure gaps. For both countries, CPEC 2.0 enhances mutual economic gains, strengthens strategic ties, and contributes to regional stability. This renewed phase is not just a continuation of bilateral cooperation but a commitment to a shared vision of prosperity and sustainable development.



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From Friendship to Strategic Partners: A Historical Perspective of China-Pakistan Relations

By Syed Muhammad Saad Zaidi

In the realm of international relations, Pakistan and China relations are commonly cited as an example of enduring friendship. Leaders from both states are often seen using phrases such as “iron brother”, “all-weather strategic partner” and “higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the deepest sea in the world, and sweeter than honey” to highlight and emphasise the cordial nature of the bilateral ties. Diplomatic relations between the two states were established on May 21, 1951. Pakistan was the first Muslim and third non-communist country to recognise China. Ever since, with each passing day, the relations between the two states have strengthened.

In the initial years, China had some concerns vis-à-vis Pakistan, given the fact that soon after establishing bilateral relations with China, Pakistan joined two

anti-communist/socialist military alliances: the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) (1954) and with The Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) (1955). However, Pakistan assured China that in no way will these military pacts compromise China’s interests, and that Pakistan joined these alliances due to security imperatives. In March 1963, a border agreement was signed between the two states, in which Pakistan ceded 5180 sq km to China whereas China ceded 1942 sq km to Pakistan, and this became the foundation for future amicable ties.

Soon after, Pakistan and India fought two full-scale wars: 1965 and 1971. Surprisingly, Pakistan despite being a member of two United States (US) led military pacts did not receive military support from the US. On the other hand, China extended its support

to Pakistan on both occasions. Shortly after the war, in 1966, \$250 million military assistance, which included F-6 fighter aircrafts and T-9 tanks, was given to Pakistan by China. More importantly, the then Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai, issued a statement declaring China’s complete support to Pakistan to maintain its independence, sovereignty and integrity. After the 1971 war, China gave Pakistan economic aid worth \$300 million as well as military assistance of \$600 million, which included 25 naval vessels.

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In the 1970’s, by facilitating the US-China rapprochement, which led to China’s induction into the United Nations (UN) and becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Pakistan proved that it was looking after Chinese interests. The 1980’s proved to be the decade which elevated the bilateral relations to the next level, as a civil nuclear agreement was concluded between the two states in 1986 as well as two military agreements were inked in 1988 which not only included purchase of military equipment but also transfer of technology and joint research. Pakistan-China relations in the proceeding decade, the 1990’s, were dormant given Pakistan’s nuclear tests and the Kargil war.

Nevertheless, with the dawn of the new millennium, Pakistan-China relations were back to normal. In

2001, which marked the 50th anniversary of Pakistan-China relations, the bilateral relations witnessed new heights. During the Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji's visit to Pakistan, \$1 billion were pledged by China for the development of the Pakistan. The very next year, the Chinese Vice Premier Wu Bangguo visited Pakistan. An agreement was concluded to construct the Gwadar port, where China would invest \$198 million while \$50 million would be invested by Pakistan. Also, China agreed to invest \$200 million to increase the connectivity between Gwadar and Karachi port.

In 2004, a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) was signed between Pakistan and China, in which China agreed to give concessional tariffs on 893 items whereas Pakistan gave concessional tariffs on 200 items. The very next year, the Early Harvest Program (EHP) was concluded, which further facilitated bilateral trade as it guaranteed no new tariffs be levied by either side. Building upon these initiatives, in 2006, Pakistan and China signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and in 2009 the FTA in services was also concluded. As a result, the \$2.6 billion bilateral trade recorded in 2004 prior the PTA, EHP and FTAs, in 2014 - before the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - reached \$ 17.08 billion.

From this point onwards, the Pakistan and China relations grew at a brisk pace, especially as a paradigm shift was witnessed in the region's geopolitics, the US and India becoming strategic partners that too at the expense of the US relations with Pakistan. Consequently, in 2013, the Gwadar port's operations were

handed over to a Chinese state-run company, "China Overseas Ports Holding Company Limited", after PSA International of Singapore was forced to forfeit its 40-year long contract of Gwadar's operation and development. Soon after, in April 2015, China and Pakistan concluded a strategic partnership, the CPEC. Under CPEC, China initially agreed to invest \$46.5 billion in Pakistan; however, according to the latest statistics, China will be investing \$62 billion in Pakistan. The most important aspect of the CPEC is that it was carefully designed by China keeping in mind the needs of Pakistan; thus, a lions share of the CPEC is designated to overcome Pakistan's energy and infrastructural needs. In 2020, CPEC's Early Harvest Program was completed which resulted in \$25.4 billion being invested in Pakistan and more importantly creating 200,000 jobs for Pakistanis.

Since bilateral diplomatic ties were finalised between the two states, China has supported Pakistan; facilitating the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan after the 1956 war, helping Pakistan to negotiate release of its Prisoners of War after the 1971 India and Pakistan war by vetoing Bangladesh's entry in the UN utilising its veto power, and consistently highlighting Pakistan's role in the war on terrorism

In addition, with each passing year, Pakistan and China defense ties rapidly strengthened. Despite the fact that the military ties

between the two countries were established in 1965, by 1972, in terms of cumulative value, China became Pakistan's leading arms supplier. Most importantly, since the Indo-US strategic partnership, China has significantly increased its arms sales to Pakistan. In recent years, China has sold Pakistan military equipment worth \$8.4 billion. This amount is nearly equal to the total arms sales China made to Pakistan in the previous 50 years, which was \$8.7 billion. Moreover, since 2015, China accounted for 75% of all arms imports of Pakistan. Thus, painting a clear picture of the nature of China-Pakistan military ties.

Moreover, since bilateral diplomatic ties were finalised between the two states, China has supported Pakistan; facilitating the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan after the 1956 war, helping Pakistan to negotiate release of its Prisoners of War after the 1971 India and Pakistan war by vetoing Bangladesh's entry in the UN utilising its veto power, and consistently highlighting Pakistan's role in the war on terrorism. Likewise, Pakistan has backed China diplomatically; facilitating the US-China rapprochement in the 1970s and unconditionally supporting issues critical to its national interest: Taiwan, Tibet and Hongkong.

To sum it up, over the decades, undoubtedly, the Pakistan-China bilateral relations have developed into a robust strategic partnership, underpinned by shared geoeconomic, geopolitical and geostrategic interests.



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By PIVOT Team

developing SEZs with favorable conditions for businesses, potentially boosting FDI inflows. Similarly, China's heavy investment in infrastructure, including transportation networks and energy projects,

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is another area where China is investing heavily, aiming to become a global leader by 2030. Through initiatives like the National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan, China is poised to make advancements in AI applications across sectors such as healthcare, finance, and manufacturing

PIVOT: China's economic rise is often cited as a model for other developing nations.

What lessons can Pakistan and other developing countries learn from China's economic policies and reforms?

Xing Yang (XY): China's economic rise over the past few decades has been nothing short of remarkable, transforming the country into the world's second-largest economy. While each country's context is unique, there are several key lessons that Pakistan and other developing nations can draw from China's experience. First, China prioritised manufacturing and industrialisation, leveraging its abundant labor force and moving up the value chain, which could inspire Pakistan to strengthen its manufacturing sector by promoting industrialisation, skill development, and infrastructure investment.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) played a crucial role in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in China, offering tax incentives and creating export-oriented industries. Pakistan could benefit by

facilitated trade and supported industrial growth. Pakistan can enhance its infrastructure through public-private partnerships to improve connectivity and reduce costs.

Export-oriented growth also fueled China's economic expansion, a strategy Pakistan could emulate by diversifying its product mix and improving export competitiveness. In addition, China's emphasis on human capital development, particularly in STEM education and vocational training, highlights the importance of investing in education to enhance productivity and innovation in Pakistan.

China's state-driven development, where the government proactively shaped economic policies and development priorities, serves as another lesson. A strong, visionary government with clear goals and policies can drive sustained growth. Pakistan could also take a page from China's economic reforms, which liberalised markets while maintaining control over key sectors. This balance could encourage competition and innovation while preserving stability.

China's focus on rural development through targeted poverty alleviation programs offers valuable insights for Pakistan. By addressing rural poverty and improving agriculture, Pakistan can reduce inequality and create a more balanced economic landscape. Finally, China's focus on technological innovation and regional cooperation through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) presents Pakistan with opportunities to participate in regional frameworks, opening new markets and investment opportunities.

PIVOT: China has made significant strides in technology and innovation. What role do you see for China as a leader in global technology and innovation in the coming decades?

XY: China's role as a leader in global technology and innovation is set to grow significantly in the coming decades. The country has

already taken the lead in 5G technology, with companies like Huawei and ZTE playing key roles. Looking ahead, China may spearhead the development of 6G networks, which could revolutionise data transfer speeds and connectivity.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is another area where China is investing heavily, aiming to become a global leader by 2030. Through initiatives like the National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan, China is poised to make advancements in AI applications across sectors such as healthcare, finance, and manufacturing. Quantum computing is also receiving substantial investment, positioning China to lead in solving complex problems in fields like cryptography and pharmaceuticals.

In renewable energy, China is the world's largest producer of solar panels and wind turbines, driving the global transition to renewable energy. This leadership in green technology will help reduce carbon emissions and promote global sustainability. In the e-commerce and digital economy space, Chinese giants like Alibaba and Tencent continue to set global standards for digital payment systems, further integrating the physical and digital economies.

China is also making significant strides in biotechnology and healthcare innovation, with a focus on genomics and personalised medicine. Advances in these fields could result in breakthrough treatments that benefit both China and the global community. In space exploration, China has achieved milestones with its lunar missions and Mars rover, and it plans to play a major role in future space exploration.

Finally, China's commitment to green technology and sustainability, particularly in the development of smart cities, will not only address its environmental challenges but also offer global solutions. By participating in global forums and setting international standards, China is poised to shape the future of technology and innovation.

PIVOT: How important is cultural diplomacy in the China-Pakistan relationship? What more can be done to enhance people-to-people ties?

XY: Cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in the China-Pakistan relationship, fostering goodwill, strengthening ties, and deepening mutual understanding. Through cultural exchanges, both countries highlight shared values and common historical ties, reinforcing their strategic partnership. These interactions build trust at the grassroots level, which can translate into stronger political and economic relationships.

China is also making significant strides in biotechnology and healthcare innovation, with a focus on genomics and personalised medicine. Advances in these fields could result in breakthrough treatments that benefit both China and the global community

Cultural diplomacy promotes mutual understanding by allowing citizens to learn about each other's traditions and perspectives, reducing misconceptions and enhancing appreciation for different ways of life. This type of diplomacy can also stimulate economic cooperation by paving the way for increased tourism, educational exchanges, and creative industries. Additionally, it enhances China's soft power, creating a positive image that leads

to greater acceptance of its policies and initiatives in Pakistan.

To further enhance people-to-people ties, China and Pakistan could expand educational exchanges, facilitate tourism, and promote media collaboration. Organising cultural festivals and events, engaging in sports diplomacy, and fostering language learning programs would also help. Joint humanitarian efforts, youth exchanges, and social media engagement can strengthen the bond between the two nations at various levels, making the relationship more resilient and dynamic.

PIVOT: How do you evaluate China's efforts to address climate change and its commitments to green development? What can Pakistan learn from these initiatives?

XY: China's efforts to address climate change and its commitment to green development have been transformative and far-reaching. The country's renewable energy expansion is a hallmark of its green agenda, positioning China as the largest producer of solar panels and wind turbines. By reducing reliance on fossil fuels, China has significantly decreased its greenhouse gas emissions, emerging as a global leader in clean energy technology.

One of China's most ambitious targets is to peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. These commitments reflect China's determination to transition to a low-carbon economy and serve as an example for other major emitters. Additionally, China has undertaken large-scale afforestation projects, such as the Great Green Wall, which aim to combat desertification, enhance air quality, and sequester carbon.

China's green technology innovation is another key area of

its climate strategy. Investments in electric vehicles (EVs), battery storage, and smart grids reduce environmental impacts and promote sustainable industrial practices. Furthermore, China's Green Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) incorporates sustainability principles, encouraging eco-friendly infrastructure projects and reducing the ecological footprint of development ventures.

Pakistan can learn several lessons from China's comprehensive green initiatives. Investing in renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydropower can help diversify Pakistan's energy mix, reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels. Setting ambitious climate targets, such as carbon reduction goals, would provide a roadmap for policy-making and attract international funding. Additionally, promoting afforestation, supporting green technology innovation, and enforcing environmental legislation are vital steps toward sustainable development.

China's public awareness campaigns on climate change, along with its emphasis on green infrastructure, offer another area where Pakistan could make progress. Engaging the public and integrating sustainability into infrastructure projects will be crucial for Pakistan's long-term environmental and economic health.

PIVOT: As you are representing China in Pakistan, what do you believe are the most misunderstood aspects of China's development and policies that the world should better understand?

XY: Several aspects of China's development and policies are often misunderstood or misrepresented on the global stage. One such area is China's economic model, which is frequently seen as purely state-driven. In reality, China's

system is a hybrid that combines significant state involvement with market mechanisms and private enterprise. This combination has been a key driver of China's rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation. Furthermore, while China is renowned for its manufacturing prowess, its recent focus on innovation and technology in areas such as artificial intelligence, 5G, and green energy is often overlooked.

China's economic model, which is frequently seen as purely state-driven. In reality, China's system is a hybrid that combines significant state involvement with market mechanisms and private enterprise. This combination has been a key driver of China's rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation

China's political system, particularly its one-party model, is another area where misconceptions arise. The Communist Party of China (CPC) has overseen significant developmental outcomes and social stability, which many Chinese attribute to its long-term planning and governance. The emphasis on stability allows for consistent policy implementation, which has contributed to China's sustained economic growth and improvement in living standards.

China's foreign policy, especially the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is sometimes viewed as a form of neo-colonialism. However, the initiative aims to enhance global connectivity and economic cooperation through infrastructure development, benefiting both China and participating countries. Similarly, China's principle of non-interference in other nations' internal affairs aligns with many developing countries' desire for sovereignty and self-determination.

Another misunderstood aspect is China's human rights record. While there is often criticism of its policies, China emphasises the importance of economic development as a way to improve human rights conditions. Significant achievements in poverty reduction and improved living standards are key components of China's approach to human rights.

Environmental policies also merit greater recognition. China is investing heavily in renewable energy and aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. Finally, China's cultural diplomacy, often misinterpreted as cultural imperialism, is an effort to foster mutual understanding and exchange through institutions like the Confucius Institutes.

A more nuanced understanding of China's development model, political system, foreign policy, and environmental strategies can contribute to a more balanced global discourse and foster better international cooperation.

PIVOT: The China-Pakistan relationship is often described as an "all-weather strategic partnership." How do you assess the impact of this partnership on regional stability and economic development?

XY: The China-Pakistan relationship, often described as an "all-weather strategic partnership," has significantly impacted regional stability and economic development. On the security front, the partnership includes extensive military cooperation, with China providing advanced weapons systems and training to Pakistan. This strengthens Pakistan's defense capabilities, acting as a deterrent against potential threats from neighboring countries. The two nations also collaborate closely in counter-terrorism efforts, particularly in regions like Afghanistan, contributing to broader regional security.

Diplomatically, China supports Pakistan on key international platforms such as the United Nations, enhancing Pakistan's standing and influence in global and regional forums. Moreover, China has played a mediating role in regional conflicts, leveraging its strong ties with both India and Pakistan to promote peace and stability.

In terms of economic development, China's financial assistance and investments have been critical for Pakistan. Major infrastructure projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of the broader Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), have been pivotal in improving Pakistan's infrastructure and industrial capacity. These investments, particularly in energy, transportation, and telecommunications, have created jobs and spurred local economic growth.

The partnership has also led to a significant increase in bilateral trade, with China becoming one of Pakistan's largest trading partners. Furthermore, Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) has boosted key sectors such as energy and manufacturing, transferring technology and enhancing productivity.

Despite these benefits, there are challenges to the partnership. Concerns over debt sustainability are an ongoing issue, as many of the development projects are funded through Chinese loans. Managing this debt is crucial to Pakistan's long-term economic health. Additionally, large-scale infrastructure projects have raised environmental concerns, which need to be addressed to ensure sustainable development.

Overall, the China-Pakistan strategic partnership has played a vital role in enhancing regional stability and fostering economic

growth, though careful management of challenges will be key to its continued success.

PIVOT: Based on current trends, what are the possible future trajectories of Chinese foreign policy, and how might these align with China's ambitions for global leadership in the coming decades?

XY: China's foreign policy in the coming decades will be shaped by its ambitions for global leadership, with economic growth, technological advancements, and geopolitical strategies playing pivotal roles. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is expected to continue expanding, focusing on infrastructure development, trade facilitation, and financial integration across Asia, Africa, and Europe. By creating new markets and enhancing global connectivity, China will strengthen its economic influence worldwide.

Technological leadership will be another cornerstone of China's strategy. The country is making significant investments in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, 5G, and renewable energy. As China drives innovation in these areas, it aims to become a global leader in high-tech industries, which will further bolster its economic and geopolitical clout

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Geopolitically, China is likely to

assert its influence in regions such as the South China Sea, the East China Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Strategic partnerships with countries like Russia and Iran, as well as deepening ties with developing nations in Africa and Latin America, will provide China with greater diplomatic leverage.

Soft power will also play a critical role in China's global ambitions. Through cultural diplomacy, such as promoting Chinese language and culture via Confucius Institutes, and through its humanitarian aid and development initiatives, China seeks to shape global perceptions and influence public opinion. Environmental diplomacy will further enhance China's image, particularly through its commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 and its leadership in green technology.

China's foreign policy will balance multilateralism and bilateralism. On the one hand, it will support reforms in multilateral institutions like the United Nations and World Trade Organisation to reflect its interests. On the other hand, China will continue to sign bilateral agreements to deepen economic ties and reduce dependence on Western-led institutions.

Internally, China will prioritise maintaining domestic stability and economic growth. Achieving self-reliance in critical technologies, especially in light of rising global competition, will be a key focus to ensure national security and economic independence.

In conclusion, China's foreign policy is likely to emphasise economic expansion, technological leadership, geopolitical strategy, and soft power, all aligning with its global leadership ambitions. As China navigates global competition and domestic challenges, these strategies will shape its rise as a dominant global power.

China's Evolution in the Middle East: From Energy to Economics & Security

By Prof. Dr. Ishrat Abbasi



The Middle East has long been a strategic zone for great powers due to its rich energy resources, geopolitical importance, strategic location, and critical international sea lanes. Currently, three powers—the United States, China, and Russia—are key players in the region. The US has maintained its influence and power for a long time. However, China's growing presence in the Middle East has altered this dynamic. Scholars of International Relations argue that energy needs were initially the primary interest that drew China to the Middle East. However, China's interest in the region is no longer just about energy; it is now focused on three core interests: energy, economics, and security, all of which align with China's comprehensive foreign policy visions.

At the start of the 20th century, China's rapid industrial growth led to a severe demand for oil. China began strengthening ties with Middle Eastern countries to meet its oil needs, as only this region could support its burgeoning demand. As a result, China started

importing more than half of its total oil from the Middle East, becoming the primary consumer of oil from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). By the end of the 20th century, China sought to secure its energy resources by forming a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" with key Middle Eastern states, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, the UAE, and Egypt. This partnership has been productive for China's energy interests on both bilateral and multilateral levels.

With its energy needs largely met, China's industry developed rapidly at the beginning of the 21st century. As China embarked on a trajectory of economic development and emerged as a global economic powerhouse, it began to explore economic opportunities in surrounding regions, with the Middle East once again becoming a focal point. Chinese leaders believed the Middle East would prove to be an extremely promising market for Chinese products and a central hub for investment. Their assessment proved accurate. Currently, China's

economic interests in the Middle East encompass energy, trade, labor, and investment. The region has been identified as a vital zone for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), through which China channels these economic policies in the Middle East.

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Among the significant BRI-related investments China has initiated in the Middle East, the most critical is access to the Maritime Silk Road facility through the Suez Canal. Additionally, Iran and Israel are part of the BRI, with the Tehran railway route linking China with Pakistan and the Red-Med Railway Project connecting Israel's Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The construction industry, which underpins the BRI, has welcomed China's investment in the Middle East, as demonstrated by projects like Kuwait's Silk City. Due to economic decline and political instability, Middle Eastern countries increasingly seek economic collaboration with China. Peace and stability in the region are



central to China's Middle East policy to sustain these economic interdependencies.

China has adopted a more practical approach to peace and security in the Middle East, emphasising comprehensive, standard, and balanced security. China avoids involvement in domestic matters, believing that regional countries should first attempt to resolve their security issues, while external powers should encourage dialogue through diplomatic and economic channels

To safeguard its economic interests and enhance its reputation as a dependable global power, China has also engaged in the political affairs of the Middle East for security purposes. However, China's political involvement differs from that of the United States, which often seeks to maintain its hegemony by pitting one country against another to upset the regional balance of power. The United States has not made significant efforts to ease tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, instead focusing on monitoring Iran's regional and global activities. Likewise, since Israel's establishment, the U.S. has consistently supported it—both through official and unofficial means—against Palestine and other Arab nations. This approach has contributed to the challenges facing the U.S. peace and security strategy in the region.

In contrast, China has adopted a more practical approach to peace and security in the Middle East, emphasising comprehensive, standard, and balanced security. China avoids involvement in domestic matters, believing that regional countries should first attempt to resolve their security issues, while external powers

should encourage dialogue through diplomatic and economic channels. China's strategy for maintaining harmony and security in the region is illustrated by its role in the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran has experienced significant tension over the years, primarily due to their different geopolitical interests. Both nations have sought to play leading roles in the region, which has occasionally led to disagreements and competition. Also, their alleged involvement in the affairs of other regional countries has further complicated their relationship. These dynamics have contributed to sometimes challenging diplomatic landscape in the Middle East. China has consistently advocated for resolving these issues through negotiation and reconciliation to reduce regional tensions.

In early 2024, President Xi Jinping engaged in extensive communication with the leaders of Iran and Saudi Arabia, urging them to resume dialogue and put aside past conflicts. China successfully mediated détente between Saudi Arabia and Iran, leading to a restoration of diplomatic and economic ties and sparking a wave of reconciliation across the region.

Another long-standing and complex conflict in the Middle East that China could mediate due to its neutral stance is the Israel-Palestine conflict. Although China intends to mediate for regional security, Israeli intransigence and US support for Israel's aggressive policies have thwarted these efforts. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories has not only disrupted regional peace but has also caused one of the worst humanitarian crises in history. China has always supported United Nations resolutions advocating

a two-state solution to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict. While China's bilateral relations with Israel are strong, it does not support Israeli tactics against Palestine. Unlike the US, China has never established military bases in the region in favor of Israel, nor has it boycotted Israel to support Palestine. However, when it comes to violations of international law or human rights, China strongly condemns such actions, particularly Israel's brutal actions and genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and other Israeli-occupied territories.

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China's approach to the Palestine issue aligns closely with Russia's stance. Both countries seek to de-escalate the conflict while maintaining communication and coordination, aiming to implement the two-state solution for a lasting resolution.

Overall, China's foreign policy principles in the Middle East are grounded in respect for states' territorial integrity, sovereignty, non-interference, non-aggression, harmonisation, and mutual benefits.



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Beyond Borders: Triumphs and Trials in the SCO's Quest for Regional Connectivity & Integration

By Dr. Uzma Siraj

In an era where regional cooperation is more vital than ever, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) stands at a crossroad. Despite its ambitious agenda and diverse membership spanning from Central Asia to South Asia, China, Russia and beyond, its progress in regional connectivity and integration has been a mixed bag- highlighting both potential for collaboration and hurdles that impede its full realisation. Regional connectivity is the prerequisite for regional integration. After more than two decades of its existence, it is important to analyse its limited success and failures to

explore the future prospects of cooperation.

While it has made strides in security, with its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) supporting coordinated anti-terrorism efforts, and has provided an effective platform for diplomatic dialogue, its economic and infrastructural integration efforts have been limited

SCO encompasses a diverse group of economies, from resource-rich Russia and Central Asian countries to large consumer markets like China and India. With a rich resource endowment, a \$23 trillion collective GDP, and around 40% of world's population, the potential for increased intra-regional trade is significant, as these countries could mutually benefit from access to raw materials, industrial products, and consumer goods. However, without formal mechanisms like a free trade agreement, trade is hampered by tariffs, regulatory barriers, and a lack of streamlined customs procedures.

The SCO has traditionally been focused on security and political cooperation, as these were the primary concerns at the organisation's inception. This focus has often overshadowed economic considerations, leaving less room for discourse on trade integration. While it has made strides in security, with its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) supporting coordinated anti-terrorism efforts, and has provided an effective platform for diplomatic dialogue, its economic and infrastructural integration efforts have been limited. The SCO has facilitated energy projects linking Central Asia with South Asia, underscoring economic cooperation potential, yet projects remain underdeveloped. Yet these differing priorities also present complementary factor for connectivity. While the SCO aligns with initiatives like China's Belt and Road, CAREC and Eurasian Economic Union's agenda for connectivity, progress is often hindered by geopolitical tensions and competing agendas of the member states.

Geopolitical complexities, differing economic systems and level of developments hinder discussions on cohesive economic policy and complicate the creation of common framework. For instance, China and Russia may prioritise state-led economic initiatives, while India and Central Asian states may prefer more market-oriented approaches

SCO faces key challenges such as trade barriers, significant

infrastructural gaps, differing prioritised, and varied political interests among its member states. Economic interdependence is fundamental in any regional integration process. Yet the absence of formalised economic framework within SCO, restricts the interdependence, hindering regional integration and leading the member states to bilateral trade agreements.

A structured economic framework within SCO could address economic disparities among member states by promoting trade and investment in less developed regions. Without this framework, economic inequalities persist and may worsen political divergences. Establishing such a framework would better balance member interests and create a fairer trading environment.

Energy security can be a very crucial factor in connectivity and ultimately in regional integration. The composition of SCO states basically complements each other on the issue of energy. Central Asia and Russia as the major energy suppliers and India Pakistan and China as major consumers can prioritise their energy supplies with the orbit of SCO.

Geopolitical complexities, differing economic systems and levels of development hinder discussions on cohesive economic policy and complicate the creation of a common framework. For instance, China and Russia may prioritise state-led economic initiatives, while India and Central Asian states may prefer more market-oriented approaches.

Potential Areas for Future

i- Free Trade Agreement

One of the most crucial yet less discussed area for the SCO in achieving regional integration is its limited progress in establishing a cohesive economic framework and a free trade agreement among its member states. Unlike other regional organisation such as the European Union or ASEAN, which have significantly advanced economic integration through structured trade agreements and economic zones, the SCO lacks a formal economic architecture that encourage and facilitate the intra-regional trade and investment on a large scale.

SCO encompasses a diverse group of economies, from resource-rich Russia and Central Asian countries to large consumer markets like China and India. With a rich resource endowment, a \$23 trillion collective GDP, and around 40% of world's population, the potential for increased intra-regional trade is significant, as these countries could mutually benefit from access to raw materials, industrial products, and consumer good

ii- Digital Connectivity

While the SCO has discussed the importance of cybersecurity and digital cooperation, there is no formal mechanism for enhancing digital infrastructure, such as broadband networks,

e-commerce, and digital trade facilitation. Establishing a digital connectivity framework could help member states share best practices and collaborate on technology-driven solutions.

iii- Environmental Sustainability

Despite the growing impact of climate change and environmental degradation in the region, the SCO has not developed mechanisms for regional cooperation on environmental sustainability, resource management, or climate change. Collaborative efforts in this area could include joint initiatives on water resource management, pollution control, and renewable energy projects.

iv- Health Cooperation

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for coordinated health responses among countries. However, the SCO lacks a comprehensive health cooperation mechanism to address public health emergencies, share information on health crises, and promote joint research in medical sciences. Establishing such a framework could enhance regional resilience against future health challenges.

One of the most crucial yet less discussed area for the SCO in achieving regional integration is its limited progress in establishing a cohesive economic framework and a free trade agreement among its member states

v- Cultural and Educational Exchanges

While there have been some cultural exchange programs,

the SCO has not sufficiently prioritised educational cooperation or cultural exchanges among member states. Strengthening ties through scholarships, joint research initiatives, and cultural festivals could foster understanding and trust among diverse populations.

vi- SCO has not developed coordinated tourism initiatives. Establishing a coordinated framework for promoting tourism among member states could boost travel, enhance cultural ties, and contribute to regional economic development.

vii- The SCO also lacks a formal mechanism for regional cooperation in disaster management and humanitarian assistance. Establishing protocols for joint responses to natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods, could enhance regional connectivity and improve coordination among member states during crises.

viii- Agricultural Cooperation

Agriculture is a vital sector for many SCO member states, yet there is a lack of cooperation mechanisms to address food security, agricultural innovation, and sustainable farming practices. Collaborative efforts in research, technology sharing, and market access could improve food security and economic stability in the region.

For SCO states, regional connectivity is essential for integration and unlocking the socio-economic potential. Improved transportation, energy, digital and cultural connections facilitate trade, reduce barriers, and strengthen ties among member countries.

For SCO states, regional connectivity is essential for integration and unlocking the socio-economic potential. Improved transportation, energy, digital and cultural connections facilitate trade, reduce barriers, and strengthen ties among member countries. Efficient transportation and digital networks not only open new markets and drive innovation but also promote trust through cultural exchanges

Efficient transportation and digital networks not only open new markets and drive innovation but also promote trust through cultural exchanges. These connections are vital for achieving economic growth and regional stability, enabling collective actions on shared challenges. By reducing trade barriers and enhancing market access, the SCO can stimulate the economic activity, create jobs and support sustainable development. In light of common security and economic recovery challenges, a coordinated approach within SCO is crucial for fostering regional connectivity and integration, bridging disparities and building a resilient interconnected region ready to thrive in global economy.



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CHINA'S
KEY ECONOMIC
INDICATORS
IN 2024

GDP

134.9 TRILLION YUAN

(\$18.41 TRILLION)

UP 5.0% Y-O-Y

Fixed-asset
investment:
up 3.2% y-o-y

Retail sales of
consumer goods:
up 3.5% y-o-y

Industrial output:
up 5.8% y-o-y

Celebrating 75 Years of Pakistan-China Partnership

Amid Shifting Geopolitical Tides

By Durdana Najam



was not just symbolic; it laid the foundation for a partnership built on mutual respect and shared strategic interests. Both nations, emerging from colonialism and conflict, saw in each other a partner that could help secure their respective futures in a turbulent world.

The 75th anniversary of the Pakistan-China partnership marks a significant milestone in both South Asian and East Asian diplomacy, highlighting a relationship that has grown into a strategic alliance with global implications. This bond, forged in the early days of Pakistan's independence, has evolved over the decades, rooted in shared historical experiences, economic cooperation, and a mutual commitment to regional peace and stability.

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the global geopolitical landscape was shifting rapidly. Pakistan, newly independent in 1947, found itself navigating a complex international environment. China, having emerged from its revolution in 1949, recognised Pakistan's sovereignty, becoming one of the first countries to do so. This early diplomatic recognition

China, having emerged from its revolution in 1949, recognised Pakistan's sovereignty, becoming one of the first countries to do so. This early diplomatic recognition was not just symbolic; it laid the foundation for a partnership built on mutual respect and shared strategic interests

Over the decades, this partnership has deepened, characterised by unwavering support on key international issues. On matters such as Kashmir, Xinjiang, and Taiwan, the two countries have consistently supported each other's positions, reflecting a profound alignment of their strategic priorities. In multilateral

forums, including the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), they have championed each other's causes, demonstrating a robust diplomatic synergy that has only strengthened over time.

Pakistan has adeptly balanced its relationships between China and the United States, navigating the complexities of international diplomacy with a focus on its national interests. While its partnership with China has deepened through initiatives like CPEC, Pakistan has also maintained strategic ties with the United States, particularly in areas such as security cooperation and economic aid. This balancing act reflects Pakistan's pragmatic approach to foreign policy, where it seeks to leverage its relationships with both major powers to achieve stability and development. At the same time, India's growing role in regional connectivity, particularly through initiatives like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and its alignment with U.S. strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific, presents both challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. While India's ambitions could lead to competition in regional influence, Pakistan's strategic partnership with China offers a counterbalance, ensuring that its own connectivity projects and regional interests remain robust. This dynamic interplay of relationships underscores Pakistan's ability to maintain a delicate equilibrium in a region marked by shifting alliances and competing interests.

The relationship has also been tested and fortified in the face of common threats, particularly terrorism. Both nations have confronted the scourge of extremism, and their collaboration in this area has been exemplary. Joint military exercises, such as the Warrior VII series, have not only enhanced their tactical capabilities but also underscored their commitment to regional security. The seamless coordination between their intelligence agencies has been a critical factor in anticipating and neutralising threats, proving the effectiveness of their alliance. China's diplomatic support has further bolstered Pakistan's efforts on the international stage, ensuring that its contributions to the global fight against terrorism are recognised and valued.

Cultural exchange and people-to-people ties have added another dimension to this multifaceted relationship. The increasing interest in Chinese language and culture in Pakistan, facilitated by institutions like the Confucius Institutes, reflects a growing cultural affinity between the two nations

Economic cooperation remains a cornerstone of this partnership. China's rise as a global economic powerhouse has been paralleled by its increasing economic ties with Pakistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a centrepiece of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), exemplifies this relationship. CPEC has not only transformed Pakistan's infrastructure but has also

catalysed its energy and industrial sectors, driving economic growth and job creation across the country. The corridor, with its network of highways, railways, and energy projects, symbolises a shared vision of development and prosperity, linking the two nations more closely than ever before.

Beyond the economic sphere, defence and security cooperation have also been pivotal. Joint military exercises, such as Shaheen and Sea Guardians, reflect a shared commitment to enhancing regional security. This cooperation extends to defense technology and equipment, with both nations collaborating on projects like the JF-17 Thunder fighter jet. Such collaborations underscore the depth of their strategic alliance, which has been crucial in maintaining regional stability.

Cultural exchange and people-to-people ties have added another dimension to this multifaceted relationship. The increasing interest in Chinese language and culture in Pakistan, facilitated by institutions like the Confucius Institutes, reflects a growing cultural affinity between the two nations. Conversely, Pakistani culture has found a receptive audience in China, with events like Pakistan-China cultural weeks fostering mutual understanding and respect.

China's role in assisting Pakistan's nuclear program is a testament to the strategic depth of their relationship. Through technology transfer, scientific collaboration, and support in building nuclear facilities, China played a crucial role in helping Pakistan develop its nuclear deterrent. This collaboration, while aligned with China's strategic interests, was a reflection of the deep trust and shared security concerns that underpin the partnership.

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As both nations look towards the future, there is a shared optimism about the potential for further cooperation. New areas of collaboration are emerging, including technology, climate change, and healthcare, which are expected to redefine the contours of their relationship. The challenges of the 21st century—such as cybersecurity, environmental sustainability, and global health—demand innovative solutions and collaborative efforts. Pakistan and China, with their shared history and strong partnership, are well-positioned to address these challenges together.

The vision for the future is clear: to build on the strong foundation of their partnership, continue playing a pivotal role in regional and global affairs, and work towards a more prosperous and peaceful future together. The 75 year tapestry of their relationship is not just a testament to the power of diplomacy, cooperation, and mutual respect but also a beacon of hope for the continued strengthening of ties that will shape the future of both nations in the decades to come.



Durdana Najam, Columnist and Communication Expert



Enabling Business-to-Business (B2B) Prospects in CPEC

By Moaaz Manzoor

Pakistan stands on the brink of an economic renaissance with the advent of a new era in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The first phase of CPEC transformed a nation facing an infrastructure and energy deficit into one with an infrastructure and energy surplus. The second phase of CPEC envisions a business-to-business (B2B) framework in strategic sectors such as agriculture, green energy, mining, and information technology (IT) that could boost Pakistan's exports and rejuvenate its stagnating economy. The key to achieving this lies in Pakistan's ability to create an enabling environment by eliminating bureaucratic inefficiencies, reducing insecurity, and ensuring political stability. This will pave the way for economic dynamism in both nations, rooted in innovation and sustainable growth.

However, the path ahead is fraught with challenges. A significant over-regulatory footprint by the government impedes the prospects of a robust B2B framework. Additionally, rising insecurity, economic stagnation, and institutional inefficiencies pose severe obstacles. The solution lies in strategic, collaborative planning and the implementation of a home-grown reform agenda. In essence, CPEC 2.0 offers an opportunity to galvanize Pakistan's modernisation and industrialisation, steering the nation toward a prosperous future.

Overview of Pakistan's B2B Environment

The deteriorating economic situation in Pakistan presents a bleak picture for the B2B environment. Since 2022, the country has been caught in a cycle of stagflation, characterised by high inflation and low growth. According to the Economic Survey of 2023-24, Pakistan's growth rate was a mere 2.38%. The economy is projected to slow further, averaging just 2% over the next five years. With a population of 240 million, Pakistan's growth rate is unsustainable. To absorb this burgeoning population, Pakistan must achieve and sustain a growth rate of 5-6% for at least a decade.

Under CPEC 2.0, Pakistan has the potential to reform strategic sectors such as manufacturing, textiles, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), agriculture, and IT, which can help absorb this population. A thriving B2B framework will lead to enhanced economic cooperation, technology transfer, and knowledge exchange

Under CPEC 2.0, Pakistan has the potential to reform strategic sectors such as manufacturing, textiles, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), agriculture, and IT, which can help absorb this population. A thriving B2B framework will lead to enhanced economic cooperation, technology transfer, and knowledge exchange.

Furthermore, a B2B approach offers

an alternative path to economic rejuvenation, centring around SME development, laying the foundation for industrialisation, and driving significant innovation and productivity. This approach can attract foreign investors, stabilise the economy, and boost growth. China's opening-up strategy of the 1980s, which transformed Shenzhen into a global innovation hub, serves as an inspiration. Similarly, Pakistan can leverage the potential of its Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC 2.0 to attract foreign direct investment and foster collaboration between SMEs and large enterprises. However, institutional incapacity, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of cohesive planning have prevented CPEC from realising its full transformative potential. By addressing these bottlenecks, SEZs can play a pivotal role in overcoming current economic challenges and paving the way for sustainable growth.

Potential Sectors under CPEC 2.0 for B2B Growth

B2B Framework in the Agriculture Sector

China presents Pakistan with a diverse and rapidly growing agricultural market valued at \$1,701 billion. As a leader in agricultural innovation through advanced technology,

The SEZs under CPEC 2.0 can facilitate the relocation of Chinese service sectors to Pakistan. As China charts a path toward high-quality productive growth, incentives like tax breaks, sovereign guarantees, and skill development for Pakistan's youth could unlock mutual benefits

China can help revolutionise Pakistan's agriculture sector. Agreements such as the one between China's Litong Foods and Pakistan's Guard Agricultural Research & Services in 2023 offer collaboration and investment opportunities in exports like chili. China can boost agricultural growth by modernising Pakistan's agriculture sector through advanced technology, capacity building, and knowledge transfer. Additionally, using the Yuan for transactions can help bridge the trade deficit. Under CPEC 2.0, the agriculture sector holds significant potential for expansion and investment, which could lead to increased exports and improved food security.

B2B Framework in the Information Technology (IT) Sector

China is advancing to become a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI). Chinese tech giant Huawei's interest in establishing its international service center for the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa in Pakistan signals emerging opportunities. By streamlining processes under the B2B framework, Chinese companies can invest in and strengthen partnerships with Pakistani IT firms. Pakistan's IT sector is experiencing unprecedented growth, with exports reaching \$310 million in April 2024, a 62.3% increase from the previous year. Consequently, the IT sector offers substantial dividends for both sides. Moreover, digital taxation, e-invoicing, and revenue automation could transform Pakistan's digital landscape. President Xi Jinping's

vision of upgrading CPEC to the China-Pakistan Digital Corridor (CPDC) marks a strategic shift. By unlocking Pakistan's booming IT industry, both nations can become digital hubs of innovation, entrepreneurship, and connectivity.

B2B Framework in the Mining Sector

Pakistan is endowed with abundant mineral resources, including salt, coal, copper, gold, iron, and gemstones, making it an ideal destination for mineral exploration. China possesses the expertise and technology, while Pakistan has vast mineral reserves. Under the B2B framework, Chinese companies can accelerate the development of Pakistan's mining sector. Potential future zones, such as the Khewra salt mines in Punjab and Mineral Economic Processing Zones in Sindh (Thar and Lakra for coal) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Dargai for chromite, Kurram for antimony, Waziristan for copper, Chitral for antimony, Besham for iron ore and lead, Nizampur for iron ore, and Mohmand for marble), along with the Saindak Copper-Gold Project in Balochistan, exemplify the sector's untapped potential. Establishing mineral industrial parks under the B2B framework will increase investment feasibility in sub-sectors such as metal refineries and processing plants. The interest of MCC Tongsin Resources, one of the world's largest metallurgical construction companies, in investing in Pakistan's mining sector could deepen cooperation and collaboration. By creating streamlined operations and eliminating bureaucratic bottlenecks, this sector could become a major player in Pakistan's economic development.

B2B Framework in the Industrial and Services Sector

The B2B framework can be transformative for the services and industrial sectors. In the fiscal year 2023-24, the services and

industrial sectors posted growth of only 1.21%, which is low compared to their contribution to GDP. The SEZs under CPEC 2.0 can facilitate the relocation of Chinese service sectors to Pakistan. As China charts a path toward high-quality productive growth, incentives like tax breaks, sovereign guarantees, and skill development for Pakistan's youth could unlock mutual benefits. Moreover, targeted investment and access to finance in strategic sectors like manufacturing and textiles, along with reducing delays, could significantly enhance productivity and growth for both nations.

The future of CPEC 2.0 hinges on Islamabad's ability to foster a thriving B2B environment. Enabling a B2B environment is not merely an option but a necessity to lift the country from its current economic malaise. Policy consistency and predictability are crucial elements that can transform CPEC from a bilateral to a multilateral initiative

The future of CPEC 2.0 hinges on Islamabad's ability to foster a thriving B2B environment. Enabling a B2B environment is not merely an option but a necessity to lift the country from its current economic malaise. Policy consistency and predictability are crucial elements that can transform CPEC from a bilateral to a multilateral initiative. At this critical juncture, Pakistan must take decisive actions to make CPEC 2.0 a success by fostering an environment conducive to a robust B2B framework. Failure to do so could render CPEC 2.0 redundant, with low growth and economic stagnation as the inevitable consequences.



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China's Technological Triumph: A Deep Dive into Emerging Innovations

By Misbah Zainab

China's evolution from a global manufacturing hub to a leader in technological innovation, backed by major high-tech companies and research institutions, is both inspiring and commendable. Its significant advancements in cyber technologies, outer space exploration, artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, and 5G technology have positioned China as a key player in emerging technologies alongside the United States.

According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a leading think tank, China leads in 37 out of 44 critical technologies, including defense, space, robotics, energy, environment, biotechnology, AI, and quantum technology. China is at the forefront of drone technology, electric vehicles,

electric batteries, photovoltaics, renewable energy, and nuclear energy. Many of the top ten leading research institutions in these fields are based in China, highlighting its ability to dominate not only current technologies but also future innovations that have yet to emerge.

China's leadership, alongside academicians and researchers, has long emphasised the importance of technological innovation in rising as a great power—a notion rooted in Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms

China's leadership, alongside academicians and researchers, has long emphasised the importance of technological innovation in rising as a great power—a notion rooted in Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms. In 2019, a white paper issued

by the State Council, China's National Defense in the New Era, underscored the need to compete in modern strategic technologies to achieve global power status. China views technological transformation as integral to national power, and it has proven this to the world with its consistent, reformative mindset.

At the 2023 annual combined meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), President Xi Jinping identified three critical technologies for China's strategic dominance: artificial intelligence, space, and quantum computing and communication. China aims to establish global leadership in these fields by 2049.

China's space program is undeniably impressive. It is the

only nation with an independent low-Earth orbit space station, Tiangong, which has successfully regenerated 100% of its oxygen supply and up to 95% of its water supply. China's ambitions include establishing a permanent lunar base by 2036, completing a space-based solar power project by 2050, exploring asteroids, and sending missions to Mars between 2033 and 2049. China's space efforts extend to both civilian and military domains. In addition to its 35 navigation satellites, China has deployed around 250 military satellites for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting, as well as anti-satellite capabilities to maintain deterrence in space.

China has also become a leader in artificial intelligence, investing approximately \$14.7 billion in generative AI development, including recognition systems, self-driving cars, autonomous drones and planes, and credit systems. By 2030, China plans to lead the world in AI

The government's substantial investment in AI research and development has resulted in China topping multiple rankings for peer-reviewed papers on AI.

AI has seamlessly integrated into daily life in China, with driverless cars, facial and voice recognition systems for surveillance and payments, traffic management systems, and medical diagnostics. Robots serve as assistants and servers, making China one of the most advanced AI nations. AI is also incorporated into educational curricula at all levels, ensuring that the current generation is immersed in innovative technologies from birth.

China's ambition to become the global AI hub is evident through policies like the "Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan." This strategic initiative aims to foster significant breakthroughs in machine learning and language processing, along with the development of essential hardware and software to support AI technologies.

China leads in quantum computing and communication as well, having launched the first quantum communication satellite in 2016. Quantum technology is a nascent field that uses the principles of quantum physics to create impenetrable systems through advanced encryption, making them immune to hacking. China aims to have fully operational quantum-based systems by 2038. Furthermore, China is a global leader in 5G technology, having successfully expanded its network nationwide.

China's commitment to technological supremacy is evident in the establishment of the Central Science and Technology Commission, ensuring the highest levels of political oversight for science and technology initiatives. This body ensures proper planning and implementation of policies at the highest levels of the Communist Party of China.

Technology and geopolitics are inevitably intertwined. The rapid pace of China's technological innovation has been perceived as a threat to U.S. global dominance, sparking strategic competition between the two nations. The U.S. has imposed trade barriers and export bans on critical materials for technological development, such as silicon chips, which power AI. Despite these challenges, China's technological progress remains largely unaffected due to robust policies, diverse investment

sources, and advanced domestic industries capable of minimising dependency on foreign companies. Initiatives such as "Made in China 2025" and "China's Innovation Strategy" further underscore China's drive toward self-sufficiency and reduced reliance on technology imports.

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China's relentless pursuit of technological innovation has transformed the nation into a global leader in emerging fields like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, space exploration, and 5G technology. Its strategic focus on research and development, combined with strong political will and resource allocation, demonstrates China's commitment to shaping the future of global technologies. As China continues to push the boundaries of innovation, it is well on its way to securing a dominant position in the technological landscape of the 21st century. The nation's achievements in these fields not only enhance its own economic and strategic capabilities but also contribute to global technological progress.



Misbah Zainab,
Independent Researcher

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Beyond 2030: A Green Alliance for Sustainable Development

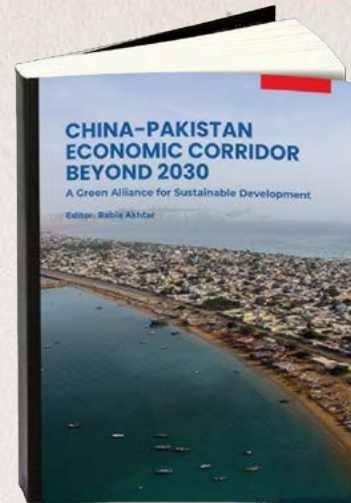
By Haris Bilal Malik

Edited by Dr. Rabia Akhtar, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Beyond 2030: A Green Alliance for Sustainable Development takes an insightful, comprehensive look at the environmental sustainability of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as it moves beyond the current decade. This volume is not only a technical exploration of CPEC's accomplishments but also a strategic vision for its future as a model of green, sustainable development. The book addresses various dimensions of CPEC, examining its role in sustainable development, particularly within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

A central theme in the book is the ambitious vision of transforming CPEC into a "Green Alliance," a concept that reflects its goal to integrate sustainable practices within a massive infrastructure project that spans multiple sectors, including energy, transportation, and industry. In her introduction, Dr. Akhtar highlights CPEC's role as both a catalyst for economic growth and a vehicle for addressing climate change and resource management challenges, emphasising that the project's continued development will require an intentional alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The book is divided into six well-curated chapters, each delving into an essential aspect of CPEC's trajectory, with particular emphasis on economic, environmental, and geopolitical considerations. This structure allows for a progressive exploration of CPEC's development from multiple perspectives, providing both depth and breadth in its coverage.

Ambassador Naghmana A. Hashmi's opening



Author: Rabia Akhtar

Publisher: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)

chapter, The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Past, Present and Future, provides a historical overview of CPEC's impact on Pakistan's socio-economic landscape. Ambassador Hashmi makes a strong case for CPEC's transformative potential, citing its positive effects on infrastructure development, job creation, and regional connectivity. The chapter outlines how CPEC has solidified Pakistan's economic standing, particularly through projects like the Gwadar Port, and presents a strategic outlook for CPEC's future development.

Ambassador Naghmana A. Hashmi's opening chapter, The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Past, Present and Future, provides a historical overview of CPEC's impact on Pakistan's socio-economic landscape. Ambassador Hashmi makes a strong case for CPEC's transformative potential, citing its positive effects on infrastructure development, job creation, and regional connectivity

Several chapters focus on CPEC's environmental dimensions, offering a critical examination of its ecological impacts and the strategic imperatives for mitigating them. Dr. Hassan Daud Butt's chapter, Policy Lessons for Developing Environmentally Sustainable Special Economic Zones (SEZs), introduces readers to the challenges and opportunities of creating green SEZs within the CPEC framework. By exploring the importance of

strict environmental policies, energy-efficient transportation, and government-backed incentives for sustainable practices, Butt presents SEZs as potential drivers for a green industrial revolution within Pakistan.

In *The Green Dimension: Environmental Considerations of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor*, Dr. Asif Amin addresses the environmental costs and benefits of CPEC's energy and infrastructure projects. Amin's analysis is particularly relevant given Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change. The chapter's thorough examination of water scarcity, pollution, habitat loss, and air quality challenges underlines the importance of green growth strategies. By focusing on policies that can foster environmental stewardship, such as renewable energy investments, Amin effectively advocates for a CPEC that supports sustainable growth.

Further expanding the book's thematic scope, Dr. Yan Zhen's chapter *The Road to a Green Alliance: Synergizing CPEC and SDGs* emphasises the alignment of CPEC with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. By exploring CPEC's role in renewable energy, sustainable cities, and climate action, Zhen demonstrates how CPEC's integration of SDG principles can enhance regional stability while safeguarding environmental health. This chapter's focus on the broader significance of CPEC as a model for green infrastructure is invaluable, reinforcing the need for strategic partnerships between China, Pakistan, and other nations.

Dr. Marriyam Siddique's chapter, *Transforming CPEC into a Green Alliance: Challenges and Opportunities*, provides a nuanced discussion on the practical hurdles of embedding sustainability into CPEC, such as the high cost of green technologies and limited regulatory frameworks. Siddique suggests innovative solutions like green financing, policy alignment, and stringent environmental regulations, underscoring the economic potential that green investments can unleash. These policy recommendations offer concrete steps for Pakistan to harness CPEC's full socio-economic potential without compromising ecological integrity.

In the concluding chapter, Dr. Xiaoyu Zhang presents CPEC as a model for global sustainable development, linking it with China's "Green Belt and Road" philosophy. Zhang's discussion on CPEC's dual role in economic and environmental sustainability effectively contextualises CPEC within the wider BRI initiative. This chapter argues that CPEC's accomplishments can serve as a template for future projects, positioning it as an exemplar of how large-scale infrastructure can contribute positively to global sustainable development.

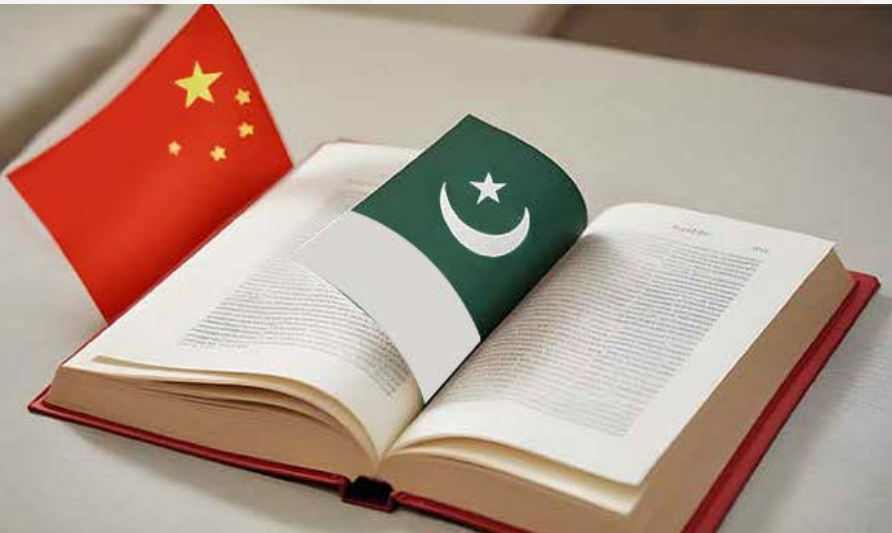
Several chapters focus on CPEC's environmental dimensions, offering a critical examination of its ecological impacts and the strategic imperatives for mitigating them. Dr. Hassan Daud Butt's chapter, *Policy Lessons for Developing Environmentally Sustainable Special Economic Zones (SEZs)*, introduces readers to the challenges and opportunities of creating green SEZs within the CPEC framework

Overall, *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Beyond 2030: A Green Alliance for Sustainable Development* is an enlightening volume that captures CPEC's dual promise as a driver of economic growth and a blueprint for green development. By combining rigorous analysis with actionable policy recommendations, this book contributes significantly to the discourse on sustainable infrastructure development. Each chapter's focus on actionable recommendations ensures that the book serves as both an academic resource and a practical guide for policymakers and stakeholders invested in the future of sustainable development.

The book's forward-looking perspective, comprehensive structure, and strategic insights make it an invaluable contribution to discussions on sustainable development within Pakistan, China, and beyond.



Haris Bilal Malik,
Consultant, China Pakistan Study Centre,
ISSI



Pakistan's Academic Exchanges with China: A Personal Journey and Reflection

By Dr. Gulshan Rafiq

Academic exchanges between Pakistan and China have grown significantly over the past few decades, especially as both nations seek to deepen their bilateral ties beyond traditional economic and political spheres. My personal experience as a PhD student in International Relations (IR) at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA) at Fudan University in Shanghai, coupled with various academic and cultural engagements across China, offers a unique perspective on the strengths and challenges of these exchanges. From a short fellowship at Peking University to visits to Tsinghua University and travels across various Chinese provinces, I have been fortunate to witness the evolution of academic exchanges firsthand.

However, despite the immense potential, certain shortcomings still hinder deeper collaboration in social sciences and international relations between the two countries.

My time in Shanghai allowed me to explore the city's rich history, its rapidly evolving modern identity, and its role as a financial hub of China. This cultural immersion was critical in broadening my worldview and understanding the complex layers that make up Chinese society

My journey began at Fudan University in Shanghai, one of China's most prestigious

academic institutions. As a PhD student in International Relations, I was immersed in the dynamic intellectual environment at SIRPA, which attracted scholars from across the globe. The rigorous curriculum, coupled with the opportunity to engage with some of the leading minds in international relations like Dr. Lin Minwang, Professor Shiping Tang, Professor Barry Buzan, and Professor Su Changhe provided me with a solid academic foundation.

I was particularly struck by how Chinese academic institutions approach global governance, geopolitics, and diplomacy from a distinct lens that differs from Western narratives. This exposure reshaped my understanding of the role that China seeks to play on the global stage and, by extension, its relationship with Pakistan.

Beyond the academic sphere, I was given opportunities to make significant contributions to the university community. I played an active role in the International Student Office and the Fudan Pakistani Student Association, fostering a supportive environment for international students and promoting cultural exchange.

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My time in Shanghai allowed me to explore the city's rich history, its rapidly evolving modern identity, and its role as a financial hub of China. This cultural immersion was critical in broadening my worldview and understanding the complex layers that make up Chinese society. I also spent two weeks as a fellow at Peking University, another leading Chinese institution, where I had the opportunity to engage with scholars specialising in Chinese foreign policy and South Asian studies. My visit to Tsinghua University, renowned for its focus on engineering and technology, further expanded my appreciation for China's academic diversity. Although

Tsinghua is primarily known for its contributions to the hard sciences, the interdisciplinary approach it fosters has significant implications for fields like international relations and political science.

Throughout my academic journey, I made it a point to travel to various provinces in China, each offering its own unique cultural and historical experiences. My travels took me to Shanxi, Yunnan, Xinjiang, Ghansu, Wenzhou, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu, among others. These journeys were instrumental in providing me with a deeper understanding of China's regional diversity.

For instance, Shanxi, with its ancient temples and traditional architecture, offered a glimpse into China's historical heritage. In contrast, Yunnan, known for its ethnic diversity and natural beauty, showcased the pluralism that exists within Chinese society. Xinjiang, a region often in the news for political reasons, provided a firsthand look at the complexities of China's ethnic policies and its integration into the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has significant implications for Pakistan. Wenzhou, a coastal city, highlighted the entrepreneurial spirit of China, and Jiangsu's blend of traditional and modern development captured the rapid urbanisation sweeping across the country.

These travels enriched my academic pursuits by enabling me to contextualise the theoretical knowledge gained in classrooms with real-world experiences across China. They also strengthened my understanding of how regional disparities and cultural diversity influence China's domestic and foreign policy decisions,

especially in relation to Pakistan.

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As a Pakistani student in China, I experienced incredible warmth from the local people. There is a deeply rooted camaraderie between the two nations, symbolised by the phrase “巴铁” (“Bā tiě”), which translates to “Iron Brother” in English. This term reflects the deep mutual respect and affection between the people of China and Pakistan. Whenever, I introduced myself as a Pakistani, I was often greeted with enthusiasm and the phrase “Bā tiě!”. This cultural bond is something unique and deeply meaningful, adding a layer of personal connection to the academic exchanges.

While the academic exchanges between Pakistan and China have been fruitful, there are notable shortcomings, particularly in the fields of social sciences and IR. One of the most pressing issues is the imbalance in academic output and the exchange of ideas. Much of the focus in China-Pakistan academic collaboration has been on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

(STEM) fields, driven largely by China's prowess in these areas and Pakistan's need for technological advancement.

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In contrast, social sciences, especially International Relations, have received comparatively less focus. Pakistani scholars may face challenges due to limited access to Chinese-language sources and a shortage of academic work in English that comprehensively reflects China's perspectives on international relations. On the other hand, Chinese scholars studying Pakistan sometimes rely on older or less comprehensive sources, which may not always capture the full depth of the political and social dynamics in the country.

Moreover, the academic exchanges tend to be one-sided, with Pakistani students and researchers frequently traveling to China, while there are less structured programmes for Chinese scholars to visit Pakistani institutions. This creates a gap in mutual understanding and limits the development of a more balanced, bilateral academic dialogue.

In China, the academic system often follows a structured, top-down approach that emphasises hierarchy and tradition. While this has led to significant advancements in many areas, it can sometimes present hurdles to fostering greater critical thinking and independent scholarship. However, China is increasingly recognising the importance of innovation and creativity in research, and steps are being taken to encourage a more open and collaborative academic environment. These efforts are helping to bridge gaps and enhance China's global academic influence.

To address these challenges, there needs to be a concerted effort to enhance collaboration in social sciences and IR. Joint research initiatives, co-authored publications, and bilingual academic programmes could significantly enhance mutual understanding. Furthermore, increased funding for exchange programmes, specifically targeting social sciences, would allow more Pakistani scholars to engage with Chinese academia and vice versa. Collaborative platforms, such as workshops and conferences,

focusing on shared issues like regional security, global governance, and the implications of the Belt and Road Initiative, could also foster more balanced exchanges.

Increased funding for exchange programmes, specifically targeting social sciences, would allow more Pakistani scholars to engage with Chinese academia and vice versa. Collaborative platforms, such as workshops and conferences, focusing on shared issues like regional security, global governance, and the implications of the Belt and Road Initiative, could also foster more balanced exchanges

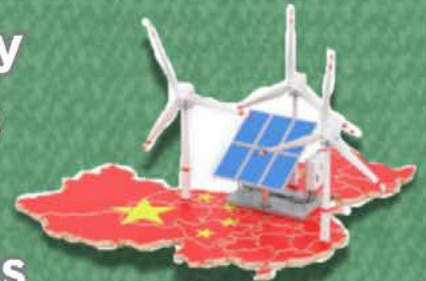
In short, my academic journey in China has been transformative, offering deep insights into China's approach to global affairs and its relationship with Pakistan. The warmth I received from the Chinese people, symbolised by the affectionate term “巴铁” and the enriching experiences of walking the Great Wall and attending the China-Africa Forum further underscore the special bond between our countries. However, to fully harness the potential of China-Pakistan academic exchanges, particularly in the social sciences and international relations, both nations must address the existing imbalances and work toward creating a more inclusive and equitable framework for intellectual collaboration.



Dr. Gulshan Rafiq, Assistant Professor, Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), NUST

China's Renewable Energy

**Total Production of Electricity
Through Renewable Sources
in 2022:
Approximately 800 gigawatts**



**Energy Generated by Hydro:
57.6%**



**Energy Generated by Wind:
28.2%**



**Energy Generated by Solar:
14.6%**



Pakistan-China Unparalleled Relations

By Ayesha Alam

Pakistan's recognition came at a time when China genuinely needed it. Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China were established on May 21, 1951. Despite having little in common – such as differing histories, social structures, cultural practices, and political systems – a friendship began that has thrived through every season and festival, built on love, affection, camaraderie, and trust. This relationship, established in 1951, still stands today as one of the best examples of friendship, with reliable partners and wholehearted collaborators, resembling that of loving brothers.

Over the 75 years from 1949 to 2024, Pakistan and China have consistently demonstrated the strong foundation of their friendship. The historic journey of this friendship also includes the aviation agreement of August 29, 1963, when a Pakistani jet touched down at Shanghai International Airport. The flight was warmly welcomed, with the airport adorned with the national flags of both countries, reflecting the enthusiasm and fervor that still resonate between the people of both nations today

Pakistan and China share a unique relationship in today's modern world. In international politics, fluctuations in relationships between countries are quite common. In fact, it can be said that in the present era, relations between nations are often limited to their respective interests. Where there is mutual interest, a relationship will be established; where there is none, the relationship between two countries may lack significant strength. However, in this changing world of interests, among the 206 countries, there are two nations that meet every standard of friendship and stand by each other in all circumstances. This

bond is something everyone can learn from; in international relations, it is known as an "all-weather friendship." In today's rapidly changing political world, the friendship between these two countries stands as an exemplary model of enduring and strong partnership.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, established on August 14, 1947, and the People's Republic of China, which emerged with a distinct international identity following the Communist Revolution on October 1, 1949, have maintained this bond since January 4, 1950, when Pakistan became the first Islamic country to officially recognise China.

The unique relationship known worldwide as the Pak-China friendship began in the early years and saw significant developments in the 1960s.

In this changing world of interests, among the 206 countries, there are two nations that meet every standard of friendship and stand by each other in all circumstances. This bond is something everyone can learn from; in international relations, it is known as an all-weather friendship"

Regional changes during that time created a favorable environment for both countries to maintain harmonious relations. On March 26, 1963, the two countries signed a historic border agreement, marking the beginning of a series of treaties that continue to this day, exemplified by projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Over the 75 years from 1949 to 2024, Pakistan and China have consistently demonstrated the strong foundation of their friendship. The historic journey of this friendship also includes the aviation agreement of August 29, 1963, when a Pakistani jet touched down at Shanghai International Airport. The flight was warmly welcomed, with the airport adorned with the national flags of both countries, reflecting the enthusiasm and fervor that still resonate between the people of both nations today.

Over the past 75 years, the People's Republic of China has witnessed numerous ups and downs, particularly in international politics. For a long time, China did not have a seat in the United Nations (UN), and Pakistan played a remarkable role in ending China's isolation by representing its perspective in the UN. During the Indo-Pak wars of 1965, 1971,

and 1999, China consistently supported Pakistan, both defensively and diplomatically. The Pak-China friendship has always been characterised by mutual trust and agreement on regional and international issues, a level of mutual understanding rarely seen in international relations. On the diplomatic and political fronts, both nations have not only respected each other's decisions but have also supported one another, never leaving the other isolated on international platforms.

The friendship between Pakistan and China has passed through various stages in history and has set remarkable examples at every opportunity. One such historic day was March 23, 1966, when China provided significant support to Pakistan in contemporary cooperation by supplying defence equipment on Pakistan's National Day. This gesture made it clear to the region and the world that China wishes to see Pakistan as a strong and developed nation. It is an acknowledged fact that China has stood by Pakistan in both good and bad times. China has always played a role in advancing Pakistan's economic independence, even at a time when China itself was striving to rise above the poverty line. In the 1970s, China laid the foundation of the Heavy Mechanical Complex in Taxila, and in 1979, the Karakoram Highway, which connects Pakistan and China, was completed. The construction of the Karakoram Highway, cutting through high mountains and steep cliffs, stands as a testament to the determination and courage that underpin the friendship between Pakistan and China. This road not only facilitates trade but also plays a significant role in promoting educational and

cultural exchanges between the people of both countries.

In Pakistan, Confucius Institutes have been established in major universities to promote the Chinese language. Similarly, in 12 Chinese universities, departments of Pakistan Studies and Urdu Studies have been set up, demonstrating how China is strategically working to educate its younger generation about Pakistan. These language institutions are helping the people of both countries better understand each other's culture, civilisation, and history. When it comes to education, exchange of delegations, or people-to-people contact, both nations have always stepped forward. Even on the international stage, when Pakistan faced isolation – especially during the war on terror and extremism led by the United States – China never hesitated to protect its beloved brother and friend at every opportunity.

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From 2001 to 2013, foreign direct investment in Pakistan nearly

disappeared, and the outside world abandoned the country due to Western propaganda that painted Pakistan as a victim of terrorism. Despite this, China surprised the world by announcing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project in 2013.

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The world was further astonished when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in April 2015 and formally launched this project. As of last year, 2023, the project has completed its first decade, and a network of roads has been laid across Pakistan. The work on the infrastructure and energy corridor projects is ongoing to address the electricity shortage. Several hydropower projects have been completed with Chinese

assistance, such as the recent completion of the Suki Kinari Hydropower Project.

Despite many changes and shifting interests in the world of strategic and cooperative relationships, the friendship between Pakistan and China remains steadfast and enduring. This relationship is evident in ongoing projects such as CPEC, which has resulted in a network of modern roads in Pakistan. Other countries are showing interest in Pakistan, and energy projects also serve as a gateway between the two nations. Pakistan is connecting China's Xinjiang region to the Gwadar deep-sea port, which is set to become a major commercial hub in the future. With ongoing development and investment, Pakistan is emerging as a more developed nation on the global map compared to its pre-2013 status.

The Pakistan-China relationship is a remarkable example of an enduring and strategic partnership in a world where alliances often shift with changing geopolitical interests. Over the past 75 years, this friendship has withstood the tests of time, strengthened by mutual respect, shared interests, and unwavering support. From diplomatic cooperation and military assistance to economic collaboration and cultural

exchanges, Pakistan and China have consistently demonstrated their commitment to each other's sovereignty and development.

Despite many changes and shifting interests in the world of strategic and cooperative relationships, the friendship between Pakistan and China remains steadfast and enduring. This relationship is evident in ongoing projects such as CPEC, which has resulted in a network of modern roads in Pakistan

As both nations continue to face new challenges and opportunities on the global stage, their partnership remains a beacon of hope, exemplifying how two countries, despite their differences, can build a bond based on trust, understanding, and mutual benefit. Moving forward, the strength of the Pakistan-China relationship will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting regional peace, stability, and prosperity for generations to come.



Ayesha Alam, Head of the Department of Pakistan Studies, Hazara University, Mansehra



Pakistan - China Academic Partnership

CHINESE ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

**CHINA SCHOLARSHIP
COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP**



**SCHWARZMAN
SCHOLARSHIP**



**SILK ROAD
SCHOLARSHIP**



China Pakistan Study Centre, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

CYBERSECURITY CHALLENGES AND COLLABORATION: STRENGTHENING CHINA-PAKISTAN CYBER DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

By Tayyaba Khan

In today's increasingly interconnected world, cybersecurity has emerged as a critical component of national security and economic stability. As people and countries become more dependent on internet facilities for communication, economic activities, and governance, the threats in cyberspace are unfolding and becoming more lethal. From data theft and ransomware to cyber espionage and attacks on critical infrastructure, these threats can undermine economies, expose confidential information, and threaten security. Consequently, bolstering cybersecurity defenses is more crucial than ever. Governments and societies must ensure robust security measures and cooperation in defending their information infrastructures and personal data against ever more complex cyber threats.

For China, as one of the world's leading economies and a technological innovator, adopting robust cybersecurity measures is crucial for protecting intellectual property, defending its growing digital economy, and safeguarding national security. Pakistan, due to its strategic location and involvement in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is a key contributor to regional security

The longstanding and friendly relationship between China and Pakistan now extends

beyond traditional areas such as trade, defense, and construction. As technology increasingly integrates into all sectors of national development, cybersecurity has become one of the most sensitive aspects that China and Pakistan share. The constantly evolving nature of cyber threats requires a partnership that enables both nations to protect their critical infrastructure and information. Cybersecurity is a vital concern for both countries, given their positions in the world economy and international politics.

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due to its strategic location and involvement in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is a key contributor to regional security. It must employ robust cybersecurity measures to prevent cyber incidents that could hinder economic growth and infrastructure development in the region. Both countries understand that their digital futures are intertwined, making strong cybersecurity measures essential.

Technology and cyberspace have been central to China's rapid economic growth and rise to global prominence. Leading in areas such as E-commerce, 5G telecommunications, and artificial intelligence, China has leveraged technological innovation to enhance its military capabilities, accelerate economic growth, and increase its international influence. Secure and efficient digital infrastructure is crucial for initiatives like the Digital Silk Road and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Technology and cyberspace have been central to China's rapid economic growth and rise to global prominence. Leading in areas such as E-commerce, 5G telecommunications, and artificial intelligence, China has leveraged technological innovation to enhance its military capabilities, accelerate economic growth, and increase its international influence. Secure and efficient

digital infrastructure is crucial for initiatives like the Digital Silk Road and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, China's heavy reliance on technology also makes it highly susceptible to cyberattacks. The rapid digitalisation of business, government, and critical infrastructure increases the country's vulnerability to cyberattacks that could jeopardise national security, disrupt economic activities, or compromise state secrets. China faces significant cybersecurity challenges due to geopolitical tensions, data breaches, state-sponsored cyber warfare, and cyber espionage. To safeguard its digital assets and maintain its global reputation, China must strengthen its cyber defenses.

A survey by the Polish electronic company "Storware" shows that the world faces serious data privacy issues in the 21st century, with an average of over 2,200 cyberattacks per year, affecting 71.1 million people. Cybersecurity is, therefore, a major issue for Pakistan and many other nations. Although information and communication technology (ICT) use is expanding rapidly across Pakistan's industries, the country remains underprepared for cyberattacks. In response, Pakistan introduced its first National Cyber Security Policy in 2021, which takes a comprehensive approach to safeguarding the nation's critical cyber services. Nonetheless, reports indicate increased cyber threats in Pakistan's IT sector, exposing the country's weak digital security infrastructure. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) reported a rise in cybercrime incidents, such as data theft and ransomware, in

both private and public sectors in 2023. Furthermore, a 2023 Price waterhouse Coopers (PwC) report indicates that Pakistan is becoming a hotbed for state-sponsored cyber espionage, targeting the energy, finance, and telecommunication sectors.

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Both China and Pakistan face cyber threats, including state-sponsored espionage, hacking, and attacks by criminal organisations. Foreign governments, particularly India and the U.S., use cyber espionage to steal military and economic data, while criminal organizations disrupt vital infrastructure.

To counter these threats, China and Pakistan signed a cybersecurity cooperation memorandum in 2015, focusing on technical support, information sharing, and capacity building. In 2019, they conducted joint cybersecurity drills and launched capacity-building projects, including training courses, technical support, and best practices sharing. Additionally, both nations have established systems for exchanging data regarding cyber threats and vulnerabilities and for coordinating countermeasures against cyberattacks. China has also

provided Pakistan with technical support in various cybersecurity areas, such as developing cyber incident response teams and cybersecurity policies.

China and Pakistan signed a cybersecurity cooperation memorandum in 2015, focusing on technical support, information sharing, and capacity building. In 2019, they conducted joint cybersecurity drills and launched capacity-building projects, including training courses, technical support, and best practices sharing

China has established a comprehensive cyberspace regulation framework based on the principle of cyber sovereignty, asserting that every country should govern cyberspace within its own borders according to its laws and policies. Pakistan aligns with this perspective, and both countries advocate for a stable international cyberspace regime based on cooperation. They engage in international negotiations on cyberspace governance through bodies such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Bilaterally, the Long-Term Plan for CPEC (2017-2030) emphasises ICT infrastructure as a key aspect of cybersecurity cooperation. Major projects, such as the cross-border optical fibre links from Rawalpindi to Khunjerab and the upcoming Sukkur to Gwadar link, are designed to enhance connectivity and

internet usage. The joint development of the “Pakistan & East Africa Connecting Europe (PEACE)” submarine cable system will significantly improve Pakistan’s internet capacity and cybersecurity. Further initiatives, such as the establishment of another submarine cable at Gwadar, aim to reduce internet outages and enhance connectivity. Agreements to set up a Cybersecurity Research Centre and a Data Centre underscore the diplomatic significance of cyberspace cooperation between China and Pakistan, enhancing regional security and economic growth. This partnership also aligns with Pakistan’s National Science Technology and Innovation Policy (2012) and Digital Pakistan Policy (2018).

To expand China-Pakistan cooperation in cybersecurity, several strategic recommendations are proposed. First, a bilateral framework for frequent communication and information sharing on cybersecurity threats should be developed, facilitating a joint approach to addressing cyber incidents. This framework would enhance the detection and prevention of potential cyber threats. Second, cooperation should focus on research and development projects, emphasising advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and quantum computing, which are key to strengthening cybersecurity. Third, both nations should expand civil cybersecurity awareness programs to develop a world-class workforce capable of handling modern cybercrime. Exchange programs between students and experts, joint cybersecurity seminars,

and educational events could contribute to this effort. Additionally, establishing a Cyber Security Cooperation Committee to protect specific infrastructures and forming a bi-national team to proactively address cybersecurity in financial networks, government systems, and the energy sector would further enhance their capabilities.

To expand China-Pakistan cooperation in cybersecurity, several strategic recommendations are proposed. First, a bilateral framework for frequent communication and information sharing on cybersecurity threats should be developed, facilitating a joint approach to addressing cyber incidents. This framework would enhance the detection and prevention of potential cyber threats

Improved cybersecurity cooperation between China and Pakistan offers potential benefits, including enhanced protection against common cyber threats such as state-sponsored hacking, espionage, and attacks by criminal groups and non-state actors. It could also lead to greater economic and political stability, as both countries heavily rely on digital technologies for growth and governance. Moreover, this cooperation could serve as a model for other countries in the region, promoting greater regional stability and security.



Tayyaba Khan,
Independent Researcher

STUDY CENTRES

中国和巴基斯坦

PAKISTAN STUDY CENTRES IN CHINA



TOTAL NUMBER: 7

OBJECTIVES:

**CONDUCT
RESEARCH
ON
PAKISTAN**

**PROMOTE
ACADEMIC
EXCHANGES**

**ENHANCE PAK-CHINA
RELATIONS**

CHINA STUDY CENTRES IN PAKISTAN



TOTAL NUMBER: 12

OBJECTIVES:

**PROMOTE
RESEARCH
ON
CHINA**

**FACILITATE
ACADEMIC
COLLABORATION
AND
EXCHANGES**

**STRENGTHEN CHINA-PAK
RELATIONS**



Strengthening Educational Ties Between China and Pakistan: A Win-Win Opportunity Through CPEC

By Nawal Fatima & Jawaria Afzaal

Pakistan and China have enjoyed long-standing and friendly bilateral relations, encompassing diplomatic, economic, and cultural domains, since the 1950s. With the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), these ties have been transformed into a strategic economic partnership aimed at mutual prosperity. Education has become a pivotal component of this cooperation, serving as a bridge for deepening people-to-people ties and ensuring the long-term success of CPEC. Both countries are expanding their collaboration in education, ensuring it aligns with the goals of CPEC and national development.

CPEC: Boosting Bilateral Relations and Educational Cooperation

CPEC has significantly boosted Pakistan's economy by improving infrastructure and fostering socio economic development. This partnership aims to economically connect Pakistan to China, unlocking new economic opportunities, improved energy resources, and employment through various infrastructure projects. Beyond trade and investment, CPEC has created new avenues for cultural and academic exchanges, with education emerging as a vital area of cooperation. As CPEC advances, educational collaboration is increasingly contributing to the enhancement of bilateral ties.

In April 2015, China and Pakistan elevated their relationship to the



level of an "all-weather strategic partnership." This political move laid the foundation for deepening educational cooperation.

To enhance international cooperation in higher education, Chinese universities have developed partnerships with their Pakistani counterparts. Several educational platforms have been established to unify resources from top universities in both countries. One such initiative is the Silk Road University Alliance, launched in 2015 by Xi'an Jiaotong University, which includes 21 Chinese universities and over 100 global institutions

Chinese companies involved in CPEC projects require personnel fluent in local languages, Chinese, and English, further underscoring the need for education and cultural exchange programs.

Educational Platforms and Alliances for Bilateral cooperation

To enhance international cooperation in higher education, Chinese universities have developed partnerships with their Pakistani counterparts. Several educational platforms have been established to unify resources from top universities in both countries. One such initiative is the Silk Road University Alliance, launched in 2015 by Xi'an Jiaotong University, which includes 21 Chinese universities and over 100 global institutions. This alliance fosters collaboration in education, science, and technology, in line with the goals of the BRI. Pakistan's National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) became a member of the alliance in 2015, marking a new era of academic cooperation between the two nations.

In 2017, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor University Alliance was formed, comprising 18 leading universities from both countries. This platform has become an essential part of university collaboration, enhancing academic

and research capabilities across sectors such as finance, innovation, entrepreneurship, and education. While challenges remain, such as the unequal distribution of tasks among alliance members, the groundwork laid for long-term educational cooperation will continue to strengthen bilateral ties.

Language Programs: A Crucial Tool for Collaboration

Language plays a critical role in fostering closer ties between China and Pakistan. It enhances interpersonal relationships and promotes a deeper understanding of cultural differences.

The sharing of skills and knowledge between China and Pakistan is crucial for the future trajectory of CPEC and the BRI. As both countries strive to improve their educational systems, the potential for enhancing cultural relations, economic growth, and technological advancement is immense. Educational platforms, language programs, and student exchanges have already laid the foundation for successful cooperation

Recognising this, both countries have introduced programs to popularise Chinese and Urdu. Interest in learning Chinese has grown in Pakistan due to CPEC and China's rising influence in the region. Pakistani students, proficient in Chinese, Urdu, and English, are crucial intermediaries, facilitating communication and collaboration.

Confucius Institutes have been established in Pakistan to teach the Chinese language and promote cultural exchange. Currently, there are five Confucius Institutes and two

Confucius Classrooms in Pakistan. However, the number of Chinese students learning Urdu remains low. By 2019, six Chinese universities had introduced Urdu as a major, but security concerns in Pakistan have limited long-term career opportunities for Chinese students. Nevertheless, efforts to strengthen Urdu learning in China continue, and overcoming these hurdles will further improve bilateral relations.

Overseas Student Programs: Bridging Cultures

Educational exchanges between China and Pakistan have proven to be a bridge between students from both countries. With China's reputation for excellence in higher education, many Pakistani students aspire to pursue their studies in China. According to the Ministry of Education in China, the number of Pakistani students studying in China has been increasing since 2014, with Pakistan becoming the eighth-largest source of international students in China.

Many Pakistani students benefit from scholarships such as the Chinese Government Scholarships, the Youth of Excellence Scheme of China (YES CHINA), and various provincial scholarships. These opportunities reduce the financial burden of language and degree programs in China and foster educational and cultural exchanges that strengthen bilateral ties.

Addressing Challenges: Security and Socio-Political Concerns

Despite the promising outlook, there are challenges that must be addressed to ensure the sustainability of educational cooperation. Socio-political risks, including security concerns, political instability, and social unrest in Pakistan, have made Chinese students and professionals hesitant

to commit to long-term stays in the country. To overcome these challenges, both nations must work together to create an environment of mutual understanding and cooperation. This will allow them to fully capitalise on the opportunities for educational and cultural exchange that CPEC presents.

Looking Ahead: A Future of Shared Growth

The sharing of skills and knowledge between China and Pakistan is crucial for the future trajectory of CPEC and the BRI. As both countries strive to improve their educational systems, the potential for enhancing cultural relations, economic growth, and technological advancement is immense. Educational platforms, language programs, and student exchanges have already laid the foundation for successful cooperation. By leveraging support from governments, universities, and the private sector, China and Pakistan can cultivate the human capital needed to ensure the sustainable development of CPEC.

As the bonds between the two nations strengthen, education will remain a key pillar of China-Pakistan relations, paving the way for a brighter future. The educational collaboration under CPEC is not just about exchanging programs; it is about nurturing a generation of leaders committed to the enduring friendship between China and Pakistan, united by a shared vision of growth and prosperity.



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75-Years of China-Pakistan Educational Diplomacy

By Sidra Fatima Ali

For 75 years, China and Pakistan have shared a unique bond marked by strong diplomatic and cultural ties. While much attention has been focused on high politics, such as military and economic ties, the realm of “low politics,” particularly educational diplomacy, has emerged as a significant aspect of their bilateral relations. Educational diplomacy, involving the exchange of students, scholars, and knowledge, stands as a vital tool of soft power. It promotes mutual understanding, cultural exchange, and the development of human capital. As we mark 75 years of China-Pakistan relations, it is important to

explore how educational diplomacy has shaped their partnership and its impact on the people of both nations.

In recent decades, China has emerged as a popular destination for Pakistani students, offering approximately 20,000 scholarships annually—the highest number of scholarships offered by China to any single country. Over the past decade, the number of Pakistani students studying in China has risen from 5,000 to 22,000. Currently, there are approximately 6,156 Pakistani students enrolled in PhD programs and 3,600 in Master’s programs, with around 7,034 students studying on scholarships. It is estimated that

there are currently 28,000 Pakistani students in different Chinese universities, making Pakistan the third-largest source of international students in China, trailing behind South Korea and Thailand.

China and Pakistan effectively facilitate educational and project based opportunities for each other’s students. Pakistan extends project based opportunities to Chinese students, while China provides scholarships for Pakistani students to pursue studies in Chinese universities and contribute to various projects in Pakistan. These scholarships span across diverse fields and educational levels, including primary education, post-doctoral studies, social

sciences, applied sciences, Chinese language, and vocational training. Currently, Pakistan hosts around 1,000 Chinese students in different educational institutions on different projects, fostering a platform for mutual understanding and cooperation.

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The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has implemented an Indigenous Scholarship Program aimed at students from Gwadar. Under this program, undergraduate students from Gwadar are allowed to pursue BS degrees in prestigious universities in Punjab, while those with bachelor's degrees can opt for Chinese language courses. This initiative is significant as it provides the youth of Gwadar with opportunities to study in Pakistan's leading universities and enhances their employment prospects with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, given the increasing prevalence of the Chinese language as a primary mode of communication. This development signifies that the talent and skills of Balochi and Gwadar students, previously underrepresented, will now contribute significantly to the CPEC project.

Pakistan has recognised the importance of China studies and has established multiple China Study Centres at various institutions across the country. These centres aim to advance Chinese language, culture, and historical studies, as well as serve as think tanks for initiatives under the CPEC. Examples include the Confucius Centre at Karakoram International University, the China Study Centre at Peshawar, and the Confucius Institute at Punjab University, which also hosts two Centres of Excellence. Bahria University has launched the Pakistan China Study and Research Centre, focusing on research, innovation, collaborative facilitation, and cultural cohesion.

Recognising the importance of communication and the need to enhance collaboration between China and Pakistan, numerous Chinese universities and institutions are establishing Centres for Pakistan Studies to better prepare their graduates for opportunities arising from the CPEC. The inauguration of the Center for Pakistan Studies took place during the opening ceremony of the 7th China South and Southeast Asia Think-Tank Forum in Kunming, marking a promising beginning for the future relationship between the two countries. Additionally, China hosts Pakistan Studies and 11 Urdu departments within its universities.

China is not only supporting Pakistani students in the field of education but is also funding the construction of various educational institutions in Pakistan. For instance, the China Foundation for Peace and Development (CFPD) sponsored the expansion project of Faqeer Middle School in Gwadar Development Authority.

Additionally, CFPD plans to sponsor other educational institutions and arrange cultural and educational tours for local teachers and students to visit China.

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The educational partnership between China and Pakistan has been a cornerstone of their bilateral relations for the past 73 years, fostering deeper understanding and cooperation between the two countries. The increasing number of Pakistani students in China and the growing interest of Chinese students in Pakistan demonstrate the success of this educational exchange. Through scholarships, joint research, and the establishment of study centers, both nations have invested in human capital development, cultural exchange, and mutual respect. This educational partnership not only strengthens diplomatic ties but also equips students with the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to projects like the CPEC. As China and Pakistan continue to collaborate in education, they are laying a strong foundation for future generations to build on this enduring friendship.



Sidra Fatima Ali works at China Pakistan Study Centre, ISSI



China's Economic Growth Pre and Post Reforms

PRE REFORMS

POST REFORMS

1960-1978
89.2 billion
USD



1978-2023
17,640 billion
USD

**GDP
GROWTH**

PRE REFORMS

POST REFORMS

BUILDING ON PAST ACHIEVEMENTS & FORGING AHEAD TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE FOR MANKIND

WANG YI, FM OF PRC
AT THE 79TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEPT 28, 2024



Global Context

- Humanity at a crossroads: Insecurity, imbalance, and governance gaps
- Multipolarity and Global South rise as hopeful trends



China's Four Global Proposals

- 1 Peaceful Coexistence – Global security architecture for lasting stability
- 2 Openness & Inclusiveness – Shared prosperity via development cooperation
- 3 Cultural Harmony – Dialogue among civilizations, mutual learning
- 4 Fairness & Justice – Democratic global governance, multilateralism



Security Vision

- Common, cooperative, sustainable security
- Respect sovereignty, address major-power tensions peacefully
- Oppose external interference in Asia-Pacific



Development Goals

- Modernization is every nation's right
- Inclusive globalization, no country left behind
- Support for LDCs and Global South partnerships



Civilization & Values

- No "superior" civilizations; advocate diversity
- Promote peace, equity, democracy, freedom
- Oppose ideological confrontation



China's Global Contributions

- Initiatives: Global Development, Security & Civilization Initiatives
- Green Leadership: Rapid carbon neutrality path
- AI Governance: Ethical, people-centered approach
- Human Rights: National path, mutual respect



Years of People's Republic of China

