



CHINA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS: ALL-WEATHER STRATEGIC COOPERATIVE FRIENDSHIP

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Pakistan China friendship is higher than mountains, deeper than the ocean, stronger than steel and sweeter than honey.

Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani

Abstract

China and Pakistan have shared an “all-weather friendship” for the last five decades. Beijing and Islamabad have civilian and military contacts, traded nuclear secrets, exchanged intelligence, and importantly, cooperated against Indian Territory over 5,180 square kilometers of land in Northern Kashmir and Ladakh. Lastly, the two countries collaborated on the Trans-Karakoram highway, which is often referred to as either the ninth wonder of the world or “Friendship Highway.” In 2011, they commemorated 60 years of diplomatic ties, which was also designated as the “China-Pakistan Year of Friendship”. As staunch allies and strategic partners for the past few decades, China and Pakistan have shared a friendship which has proved of great value in furtherance of their geo-political and strategic objectives. To understand the evolution of this relationship from a correct perspective, it is important to have a brief overview of the relationship between the two countries.

Keywords; All-Weather, Geo-Strategic, Gwadar, Karakoram Highway, Nuclear, Aksai Chin, Stadium diplomacy



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Introduction

The China Pakistan relationship stands as one of the most unique and durable relationships between two sovereign states, where both states have been complementing each other's strategic requirement in spite of different cultures, political systems and social values. Pakistan's relations with China have always been the most important of its relationships with other countries. Pakistan-China friendship has often been termed as “higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the oceans” and of late, sweeter than honey, is a unique case in the international system we live in, yet the relationship is based on sound geostrategic and realist calculations. It is based on trust, respect, and mutual benefit. Over the past 55 years,

since the two countries established their diplomatic relations, this relationship has evolved in a manner to serve the interests of both countries.

What was China's mega-strategy at the outset in setting up ties with Pakistan? According to Mao Zedong's Pakistan was nothing but China's easy access to the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. Besides China's building up of economic and military partnership with Pakistan, the most significant element in Sino-Pak relations lies in the fact that China has been using Pakistan as an economic and military corridor to reach the Middle East and Africa.

Pakistan's Geo-Strategic Significance for China

Pakistan holds immense geo-strategic significance for China. Pakistan is strategically located between the twin forces of competition and collaboration in the mega-region that embraces Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East, and Caucasus. Central Asia and South Asia form two contiguous strategic sub-regions of this mega-region. Since the beginning of the 21st century, these two sub-regions have formed the focus of international politics as a result of the US-NATO war on terror in Afghanistan, the next-door presence of a rising China, a post cold-war resurgent Russia, and the hegemonic pretensions of India. US war of terror generally was seen in reality as the sole superpower usurping the strategic void available in Taliban's Afghanistan and thus trying to exude the strategic effects, including containment of China and driving a wedge between China and Pakistan. Pakistan sits right in the middle of this regional geo-political dynamics. This dynamic force influences the complexion of both the foreign policy and the national politics of Pakistan. It provides a secure access to Gwadar port which is route to Persian Gulf and Central Asia. It provides the shortest route to Chinese goods through Gwadar port to Indian Ocean and Karakoram highway (KKH) providing an easy trade access to Central and Western Asia. Currently, the most of the Central Asian states export their goods through Russia via Europe which is the longest route. As the current Gulf of Aden route is lined with US military bases, China's strategic military goals running through to 2025, includes expanding the role of its Navy in order to mitigate this potential threat, its presence in Gwadar is therefore strategically important. The Gwadar port would be the most viable option for these countries helping them to save money and as well as time in transporting their goods. As far as significance and implications of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), which runs through occupied Kashmir, for the Indian security are concerned. No single highway has run through such sensitive territory through an area, where the borders of Pakistan, India, China, the Soviet Union and Afghanistan come close together. By traversing these lands, the Karakoram Highway and its

associated routes have posed threats and presented opportunities to all states of the region. China has used the KKH as a form of ‘stadium diplomacy’ and simultaneously strengthened ties with the enemy of its enemy. Although the route has yet to be used in wartime, Pakistan and China have used it to send strong messages to their rivals and neighbours. China has economic and strategic interest in Gwadar. Gwadar is expected to play a key role in Beijing’s development plans and will serve as a gateway for western China because Xinjiang lies 4500 kms from China’s east coast but just 2500 kms from Gwadar. Pakistan can act as “a transit facility” giving China access to Central Asian markets and energy sources”. China is much concerned about the possibility of disruptions in the movement of oil and gas tankers to China from the Gulf and Africa through the Malacca Straits due to pirates and terrorists attacks. For this reason, China wants to reduce its dependence on the Malacca Straits and is making eminent efforts to develop alternate routes. Presence in Gwadar will allow China not only access and basing facilities in the Indian Ocean but also the chance to control the Straits of Hormuz to ensure smooth energy supplies from West Asia. This would help China to acquire a strategic presence in this region. Pakistan has also agreed to let China set up a “Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Gwadar, exclusively for the use of Chinese industries manufacturing goods for export to Africa”. This would help reducing the manufacturing and transport costs for Chinese goods. Pakistan can provide China an access to Indian Ocean, where India considers China its competitor.

Pakistan was the first Islamic country and third non-communist state that recognised the People’s Republic of China on May 21, 1950, when the two nations officially established their contacts thus providing China with a corridor into the non-communist world. Pakistan established diplomatic relations with China in 1951 when China got involved in the Korean War. Pakistan, much against American stand opted to abstain from voting in a U.N resolution that called China an aggressor. Pakistan provided China with comparatively cheap raw material like cotton and jute which was of high military importance during the war and thus helped China in times of her economic crises. Pakistan’s chief interests in pursuing a friendly policy towards China was aimed at countering growing Indian influence in the region. The China-Pakistan relations started on low ebb as China was disappointed over latter’s joining of the western military alliances South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Pakistan had expressed its desire to foster friendly relations with China even before joining the SEATO. The Bandung Conference 1955 provided Pakistan the opportunity to dispel Chinese mistrust and to explain Pakistan’s reasons for joining western alliances. This dispelled the Chinese government’s

misunderstanding and the Chinese Premier conceded that that Pakistan's membership of SEATO should no way become a hurdle to friendly relations between Pakistan and China.

The actual consolidation of relations started in the early 1960s, when Pakistan changed its previous stand and supported China's seating in the UN in 1961. Following the Sino-Indian War of 1962, Pakistan and China came closer to build common strategic understanding. Pakistan at that time overtly condemned India as an aggressor. The American and Soviet aid to India during the war, made China realize Pakistan's significance in counterbalancing the regional and global power configurations. Thus, realizing Pakistan's geo-political importance and its historic enmity with India, China sought to cultivate and consolidate its friendly ties with Pakistan to balance off New Delhi. Moreover, the geographical proximity of Kashmir to the disputed India-China boundary has also contributed as major factor bringing Pakistan into the strategic centre stage of China's South Asia policy.

1962 Sino-Indian War was a major turning point in Pakistan's foreign policy. although President Kennedy's promises to Pakistani President Ayub Khan that Pakistan would be consulted before any military aid was given to India, the United States, along with the United Kingdom, sent 120 million US Dollar of emergency aid to India. As far as Ayub Khan was concerned, not only had the Americans rescinded their promise to first consult Pakistan before giving military aid to India but they had failed to link the delivery of arms with a permanent and acceptable solution of the Kashmir problem. It was in the wake of Washington's support for India in the 1962 border conflict that Pakistan began to look elsewhere for international support, particularly China.

In 1963, the China and Pakistan signed a border agreement that transferred 2,000 square miles of territory in Pakistan-held Kashmir to China, and China began selling weapons to Pakistan, a practice that continues today. In Pakistan and China signed a boundary agreement to demarcate the boundary between Chinese region of Xinjiang and the contiguous areas, over which Indian government strongly protested saying that "there was no common border between Pakistan and the People's Republic of China", and described the decision as a step further in the China's aggressive aims towards India.

During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, China gave diplomatic, economic and moral support to Pakistan and it was the Chinese ultimatum to India to dismantle its military works on the Chinese side of the China-Sikkim border, which led to Security Council's urgent call for ceasefire. During the 1971 India-Pakistani conflict, which led to dismemberment of Bangladesh from Pakistan, China extended it complete diplomatic support to Pakistan and strongly condemned India as an aggressor. China threatened to exercise its

veto in favour of Pakistan and blocked the entry of Bangladesh into UN in defence to Pakistan's demand of release of 90,000 prisoners of war by India. This goal was achieved in 1973. In 1974, China had sent Pakistan sixty MiG-19 fighter jets, 150 tanks and other weapons as part of a 300 million US Dollar economic and military aid agreement.

In 1979, Beijing and Islamabad added a new layer of converging interests to their friendship when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Beijing and Moscow were in the thick of the Sino-Soviet split, and the Soviets, in accordance with the 1968 Brezhnev doctrine, believed that Moscow had the right to intervene in Communist countries threatened by domestic upheaval. Chinese officials saw this as a veiled attempt at expansionism—the first step in a broader Soviet plan to achieve complete domination in Europe and to extend its hegemony into South and Southeast Asia. China feared that if the Soviets were able to gain control of routes to the Indian Ocean, its own lack of an early warning system and sufficient naval forces would not be able to match up with Soviet naval supremacy, and therefore China would be at the Soviet's mercy from all sides.

In 1989 the two countries signed a military cooperation agreement which envisaged, inter alia, “the purchase of military goods, mutual research and cooperation along with the manufacturing of arms and the transfer of technology”. This agreement was supplemented in 1993 with one that made China “the most important military seller” of weapons or systems to Pakistan. The substantial sale of Chinese arms to Pakistan in 1971-2008, which was 9.8 billion US Dollar compared to US sales to telling only 3.4 billion US Dollar, confirms that Islamabad then already was heading towards heavy reliance on one source. China also helped build two nuclear power plants in Pakistan in the 1990s and signed a deal in 2009 to build two more.

In the Post-Cold War era, although Pakistan-China relations did undergo a slight shift, but the overall content and strategic relevance remain as significant as ever. China still considers Pakistan an important factor that can help it secure its strategic objectives. Pakistan always supported China on all issues important to Chinese national interests such as sovereignty over Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Tibet and issues relating to human rights and democracy. China always appreciated and counted on Pakistan's strong support as a trusted friend over all these issues at international arena.

The year 2006 saw the signing of the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the 5 year Development Program on Economic and Trade Cooperation—directed at accelerating bilateral trade between Pakistan and China. They were put to force the Following year in 2007. It set a trade target of 15 billion US Dollar by 2010; while this target was not

achieved, bilateral trade—that stood at 7 billion dollar in 2006—rose to 12 billion dollar by 2012, which was also a 17.6 % increase on the previous year. In 2006 China was Pakistan's 3rd largest trading partner, accounting for 9.8% of Pakistan's import, it ranked 11th (3%) for Pakistan's exports. In comparison, Pakistan was China's 54th largest trading partner (0.13% of China's imports) and 33rd largest for exports (0.44%). By 2013, China was Pakistan's 2nd largest trading partner. From 2004 to 2008 exports from China to Pakistan increased on average 55% per annum while exports from Pakistan to China rose by 35%.

The two Countries again set to pursue a trade target of 15bn US Dollar, this time by the year 2015. Most likely due to Pakistan's long ailing economy, Pakistani officials have been more expressive in pushing for greater investment trade between the two countries, eagerly pursuing the 15bn US Dollar target and inviting and encouraging China to explore more and more economic opportunities in Pakistan Presently, Pakistan is the only country in South Asia with a free trade agreement and currency swap agreement with China. The Agreement contained annexes that included the elimination of import custom duties, tariff reduction or elimination was set to complete within a five year period, and effectively by January 2012. In May 2013 China stated it will “step up consultation with Pakistan on second phase tax reduction negotiations.” To stimulate trade growth, on 7 May 2013, State Bank of Pakistan and People's Bank of China (PBoC) agreed on a currency swap arrangement (CSA); implying the two countries can now trade directly without the use of US dollars as the intermediary trade currency.

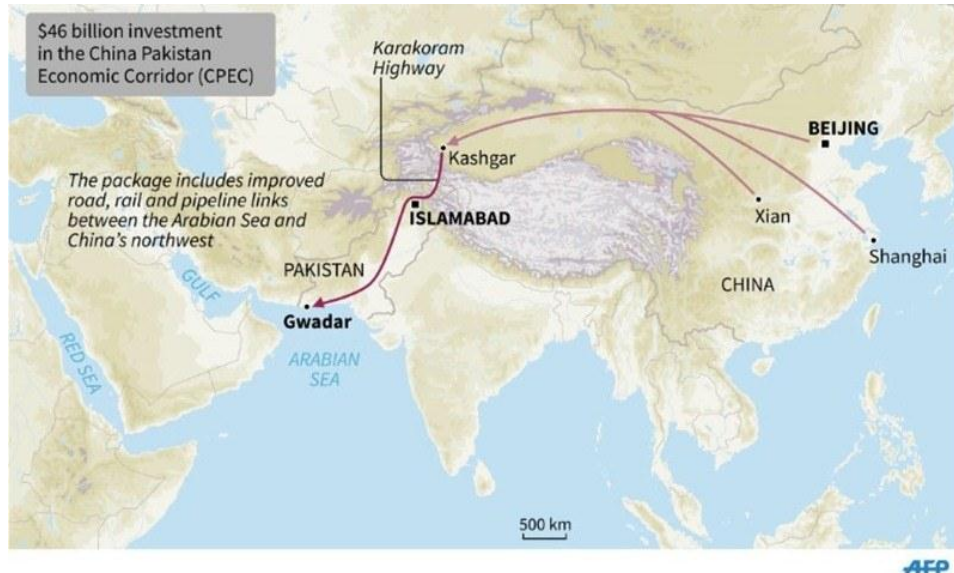
The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a crucial component of the Chinese President's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project, which has become an indispensable element of China's foreign policy and one of the Chinese President's most emblematic policy initiatives. OBOR would comprise a cluster of land corridors and a Maritime Silk Road. It encompasses 4.4 billion people, 64 countries, and a combined economic output of 21 trillion US Dollar –roughly twice the annual gross domestic product of China, or 29 per cent of global GDP. The strategic significance of the CPEC has accordingly been sensed timely by the perspicacious leadership of both countries. Determined efforts are already afoot to realize this grandiose multi-project venture the speediest possible.

CPEC has been heralded as a game-changer for regional and global geopolitics, for reasons that go beyond the unprecedented scale of China's largest overseas investment project to date. The project consists of extensive investment in Pakistan's transport,

telecommunications and energy infrastructure, with an estimated value of over 46 billion US Dollar.

Map- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)



Source- <https://www.google.co.in/search?q=china-pakistan+economic+corridor>

The CPEC belongs to the Silk Road Economic Belt/Maritime Silk Road, which Beijing has begun to build across south Asia to the Indian Ocean, and across Central Asia to Europe. The CPEC is a project for a network of railways, roads and pipelines connecting Pakistan's port city of Gwadar in the province of Baluchistan with the Chinese city of Kashgar in the landlocked Xuar. It requires infrastructural upgrades to Pakistan's outdated railway system, road network, pipelines, ports and electricity production, as well as the stabilisation of Pakistan's security environment. The four main areas of cooperation between the two countries in this context are transport, infrastructure, energy and industrial cooperation. The route of the corridor has not yet been finalised, and all that is certain for the moment is its reach, from Kashgar to Gwadar.

The opening up of the Sino-Pak “trade and energy resource” corridor assumes an immeasurably favourable significance in developing the economy of both countries. Pakistan’s deepwater harbour at Gwadar overlooks the Indian Ocean in the south, and faces the Arabian Sea and Red Sea in the west. It is close to Iran in the north, located 400 km away from the Strait of Hormuz. Situated 500 km from Pakistan’s biggest economically developed port city of Karachi, the geographical location of Gwadar is extremely advantageous. Oil pipelines laid from Gwadar port would enter Xinjiang in China through the northern region of Quetta. It is also close to the Central Asian pipeline. Besides, if a railway line is laid between

Quetta and Gwadar, then this would not only be a convenient maritime outlet for China, it would also be a vital overland communication line between China and Pakistan. Its importance is self-evident.

In November 2014, China undertook to invest 45.6 billion US Dollar in Pakistan over a period of six years—out of which 33 billion US Dollar is allocated for the energy sector and 11.8 billion US Dollar for developing infrastructure. The proposed projects come within the ambit of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which was undertaken by both the countries in April 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Islamabad to inaugurate the China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a 46 billion US Dollar investment in Pakistan's energy and transportation sectors. As part of China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, CPEC is designed to promote regional connectivity among Pakistan, China, and Eurasia. CPEC is bound to have geopolitical implications for Pakistan and the broader region, especially given the scale of the proposed investments and its connection to OBOR. It is expected that energy projects costing 15.5 billion US Dollar will generate 10,400 MW by 2017, with an additional output of 6,120 MW to be added by 2021, at a cost of 18.2 billion US Dollar. This initiative by China holds immense importance for Pakistan, given that it has been facing an energy crisis for the last few years. This has hampered industrial growth, impacting all sectors of the economy. The proposed power projects include, coal fired power stations as well as projects that would augment the existing hydropower, wind and solar power production, which are all areas whose share the Pakistan Government hopes to increase in its energy basket. It is hoped that through the implementation of these projects, the need to mitigate the acute shortage of electricity, and the need for improvement of the country's transmission networks will be met. As energy projects can be expected to yield high returns, the projects are to be financed on a commercial basis. Chinese companies which are expected to invest in the energy sector include the Three Gorges Corporation and China Power International Development Ltd. As the infrastructure projects would only give returns over a longer period of time, it is expected that they will be given concessional loans. Chinese companies will be involved in building infrastructure, and banks including the China Development Bank and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China would provide financing. Earlier, in February 2014, China and Pakistan signed agreements to upgrade the Karakoram highway and to build an airport at Gwadar, as well as to establish research institutes for small-scale hydropower technology and to set up Confucius Institutes in Pakistan.

Other occasions marking this bonhomie includes the 100,000 pieces of commemorative coins bearing flags of both countries and inscriptions reading “Sixty years celebrations of the Independence of the Jamhoria China” and “Long live Pak---China friendship” that were issued by the State Bank in Pakistan in 2009 in an endeavour to express its solidarity with the People’s Republic of China on the occasion of the latter’s 60th anniversary. Another example is “Year of China---Pakistan Friendship”; 2011 was designated thus in order to Celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Defence and Security Cooperation

The two countries agreed to further strengthen cooperation in areas such as joint exercises and training, personnel training and equipment, technology transfers, and cooperation in defence technology and production. During his visit, President Xi finalised a long-promised deal to sell eight conventional submarines to Pakistan for EUR 4.4 billion. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Pakistan is China's largest buyer of arms.

Nuclear Energy

China has supported the construction of six nuclear reactors with a total capacity of 3.4 million kilowatts (MK) in Pakistan. The two new plants being built in Karachi, with a capacity of 220 MW, also benefit from technological and financial assistance from the China National Nuclear Corporation and Chinese banks.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan's stability has an impact on domestic stability in both China and Pakistan. The two countries committed to strengthen cooperation to support the Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process. China, which shares a 76-km-long border with Afghanistan in Xuar, has a growing industrial and economic interest in the country and is discretely stepping up its involvement there. One example is Beijing's offer to help mediate talks with the Taliban and to support Pakistan in hosting the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process.

Major Chinese Economic Projects in Pakistan

Gwadar Port Project

Estimated cost of project is 248 million US Dollar, 198 million to be provided by the Chinese side (60 million commercial loan, 58 million soft credit, 31 million interest free loan and 31 million grant). The China has agreed to provide additional financing for new

proposals about construction of Gwadar-I Project. However, the Chinese side informed that financing of Gwadar-II Project needs deep deliberations.

Chashma-II

Financial contract for Chashma-II has been signed. The Chinese government will provide 150 million US Dollar from the Preferential Buyer's Credit Facility of 500 US Dollar. The Chinese side will also provide a concessional loan of 200 million US Dollar for the project.

Thar Coal Project

Shenhua Group prepared the feasibility report in consultation with WAPDA. Shenhua Group in their report stated that the capital expenditure estimate of the project level at current stage was higher than investment level previously predicted. Negotiations between the two sides are under way to settle the outstanding issues related to the Project and to ensure early start of work on the site.

Saindak Copper and Gold Mine Project

Government of Pakistan has leased out Saindak Gold Project to M/S MCC/MRDL for a period of ten years. The life of the project with present capacity (15810 Metric Tons (mt) blister copper containing 1.47 tons of gold and 2.76 tons of silver) is 19 years. Due to recent increase in metal prices in international market, MRDL has proposed 30-40% enhancement in production capacity of Saindak i.e. from 15810 mt to 24000 mt per annum. This would require an investment of 20 million US Dollar approximately. An MOU to this effect was inked between Chinese MCC/MRDL and Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC), Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Resources during President's visit to China.

Jinnah Hvdro-power project

The project remained unimplemented because of ECNEC condition calling for international bidding. ECNEC has recently lifted this conditionality.

Railways Up-gradation

The Pakistan Railways have signed MOUs for purchase of locomotives, carriages, freight wagons to be financed with Chinese credits. The main issue for signing future contracts under the existing MOUs will be the term of financing, especially interest rates. Pakistan facing problems on the railway engines supplied by the Chinese side as some engines have developed cracks in the main frame. The Chinese Government has given assurances for repair/replacement of the defective locomotives.

Repairs on the Karakoram Highway

On our request, the Chinese companies have undertaken repair of bridges along the Karakoram Highway at a cost of 6 million US Dollar, which may be adjusted against available Chinese grants.

Raising of Mangla Dam

A Chinese company has been awarded the contract to raise height of Mangla Dam. There were some difficulties in implementation of the Project at early stage but now the work is moving forward smoothly.

Chinese Projects in PoK

China involved in the Neelum-Jhelum hydro-electric project in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). The 4,500 megawatt project is installed by the builders of the Three Gorges Dam which can have dangerous consequences for the ecology of India. Since Gilgit Baltistan is a disputed area, China has no business to build projects here. India is objecting to various Chinese-funded projects in PoK namely Neelum Jhelum project, Diamer Bhasha Dam, Extension of Karakoram Highway, Sost Dry Port and Bunji Dam to name a few.

In addition, China's trade and investment ties with Pakistan have been expanding since the late 1990s, with Chinese companies investing in Pakistan's transportation and energy-related infrastructure. China's strong ties with Pakistan affirm the fears of some Indians that China is attempting to encircle India. India is especially concerned about China's support for Pakistan's military through arms sales and technology transfers.

- China is the top exporter of arms to Pakistan. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), between 2004 and 2015, Pakistan received \$4.1 billion in deliveries of Chinese arms, exceeding the 2.7 billion US Dollar in U.S. arms deliveries during that period. Among the platforms and weapon systems Pakistan procured from China are airborne early warning and control aircraft and missiles and bombs for the JF-17 combat aircraft. Pakistan also acquired Chinese JIANGWEI-class frigates and ship borne surface-to-air and anti-ship missiles. All of these platforms and weapon systems could be used to challenge the Indian Navy and Air Force in a potential India-Pakistan conflict. China and Pakistan also have been negotiating the sale of six Chinese submarines. If the deal is realized and the submarines are armed with anti-ship cruise missiles, the submarines would significantly enhance the Pakistan Navy's ability to hold Indian surface ships at risk.

- China-Pakistan defense-industrial cooperation has supported the development of Pakistan's combat aircraft. The Pakistan Air Force has over 30 JF-17 aircraft, which the two countries jointly developed, and it plans to procure more than 150 in total. China and Pakistan also are developing a variant with improved avionics and weapon systems. Pakistan intends for the JF-17 to replace its aging fleet of fighter aircraft.
- China appears to have played a critical role in Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Beginning in the 1970s, China is reported to have provided Pakistan with support for its nuclear weapons program, including nuclear weapon blueprints, weapons-grade uranium, and various components for the production of a nuclear weapon. In the 1990s, China is reported to also have assisted Pakistan with the development of its Shaheen-I short-range ballistic missiles and its Shaheen-II medium-range ballistic missiles. These capabilities fundamentally changed the India-Pakistan security relationship, because they provided Pakistan with a deterrent against invasion by the more militarily powerful India.
- China and Pakistan reached a deal in 2013 for China to build two more civil nuclear power plants in Pakistan, which would supplement the two plants that China has already built. The Chinese government argues the deal would not violate its international nonproliferation obligations, but the U.S. and Indian governments have raised concerns about expanded China-Pakistan civil nuclear cooperation.

Sino-Pak Strategic Cooperation and India

Sino-Pak strategic cooperation pins down India, the Chinese analyst expressed the view that Sino-Pak friendship is a thorn in India's flesh. It is a saga of unfolding disputes between India and Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir. In fact, for India the problems are far from being simple because strategically the further strengthening of Sino-Pak ties goes so far as China building up railways encircling Asia through Pakistan, and Pakistan is becoming an important outlet as well as a pivotal corridor for energy resources of China to the Indian Ocean. All these would contain India with some perception of danger and would have a chain of reaction on it.

Conclusion

Today, China's primary interest in its relationship with Pakistan is to pursue a "classic balance of power strategy," using Pakistan to confront India with the possibility of a two-front war. Sino-Indian relations were not always hostile. At the time of their founding in 1948 and 1949, respectively, the Indian and Chinese governments declared a postcolonial

brotherhood. But when China conquered Tibet in 1950, China and India suddenly shared an un-demarcated border stretching 2,500 miles. To this day, Indian and Chinese maps of their border do not match. As a result, some disputed territory exists between China and India concentrated in two places: the Aksai Chin Plateau, which China controls but India claims, and Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian state that China calls “South Tibet.”

Pakistan is important for China because the latter’s geo-strategic needs in the region, to an extent, are reliably provided for by Pakistan. Pakistan is conscious of the fact that China has always displayed a special concern toward its neighbours. Pakistan, being a vital part of China’s strategic periphery, is, as always, fully committed to fully support China’s peaceful development policies and prevent destabilization of Xinjiang from within its borders by Uighur-related militancy. Pakistan also recognizes that China should be afforded a broad-based mutually beneficial opportunity of leveraging Pakistan’s geopolitical position to make up for the limitations imposed by its own geography.

Since the border agreement between the two countries which was the actual starting point of this unique relationship in modern history, both countries have been through thick and thin and have supported each other. Although the relationship was unbalanced as China was stronger and bigger in every aspect yet both countries have been vital to each other. If China has been a major source of military hardware and financial assistance to Pakistan, Pakistan was the only window and contact China had with the outside world. It acted as a bridge between China and the Muslim world. It has supported Chinese position on the issues of Tibet, Taiwan and the Xinjiang province and stood by it when the world criticized China for alleged human right violations. Therefore, it would be appropriate to point that both countries have supported each other and this is why the relation continues to be higher than the mountain and deeper than the oceans, using the way most of the leadership of the two countries define it.

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