



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Debunking Concerns of the New Delhi over CPEC

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#### ABSTRACT

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This paper analyzes the New Delhi's resistance to the CPEC initiative is motivated by three main factors. The first argument is that the economic corridor passes through Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region, which was partly ruled by the state of Kashmir at the time of Partition. Second, India fears that if the CPEC corridor continues to work effectively across Gilgit-Baltistan, the Kashmir dispute will then be internationalized. New Delhi has traditionally resisted this notion, stressing that the Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. The third factor India's opposition to CPEC is concern that China will use it to counterbalance India's economic growth. Based on this argument, India claims that foreign corridor passes through an Indian-claimed territory between Pakistan and China and therefore violates Delhi's economic sovereignty as well. Hence the paper culminates with the remarks that "through CPEC, regional growth is possible if India looks at this project through the lens of development and not enmity".

#### Introduction

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is a mega endeavor made up of numerous economic and infrastructure projects across Pakistan. It is considering as one of the star project of Belt and Road Initiative. The key highpoints of the \$62 billion CPEC include a network of 3,000 kilometers of highways, oil and gas pipelines linking both countries, as well as new renewable ventures. It is not like a multilateral export control regime because CPEC project is open and comprehensive and invites other countries to invest in the mutual benefit and common prosperity of

the respective regions. Pakistan and China are collaborating on the economic cooperative project, and the UN and many other countries around the world support it, indicating that it is not aimed towards any third party. According to a study published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, India's opposition to CPEC represents a concern about the internationalization of the Kashmir issue and China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean. It says there is a lot of concern within India that China, which has remained neutral on Kashmir since 1963, can no longer be so now that its economic and security interests in these territories are growing. The port of Gwadar, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes in the Arabian Sea, has been leased to Beijing for 40 years. New Delhi fears the port could become a Chinese naval outpost, threatening India's energy and economic security, as more than two-thirds of India's petroleum traverse through the region. However, Beijing has agreed to address India's concerns. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told the media that Beijing was committed to building friendly and cooperative relations with others and that the CPEC would not affect China's position on Kashmir (Choudhry, 2017).

Andrew Small, author of *The China-Pakistan Axis: "The New Geopolitics of Asia does not believe that in the near future the offers to India to join CPEC will evoke a positive reaction. Yet he claims that there is a view among a number of officials in China and Pakistan that the door must be kept open in the long term. A change in regional alliances was set in motion as soon as CPEC was publicized"* (Small, 2015). India has been opposed to the CPEC and BRI from the outset – even though China has asked them to engage in the project on a number of occasions. India, however, continues to oppose the project as it passes through the Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan areas of Pakistan (India says these regions belong to them). Their fervent disappointment with CPEC is however due to two other factors. "Firstly, the success of CPEC will bolster the role of China as the global hegemon, propelling them to the rank of superpower. Second, if CPEC succeeds, then Pakistan, India's traditional competitor would become a stronger and more stable regional and economic actor. This is dismaying not only India but also America, which sees BRI and CPEC as a threat to its status as hegemony and superpower" (Small, 2015).

The ultimate aim of China is to use the strategically located deep-sea port of Pakistan, Gwadar, for energy security purposes. Therefore CPEC and BRI are signaling a political and economic advantage for Pakistan and China. Recently, particularly after Trump became president, America replaced Pakistan as its primary ally in South Asia with India and is supporting India in an effort to resist Chinese influence. The White House suspended \$2 billion in military assistance for Pakistan in 2018, though at the same time assisting India with economic and military alliances. Where India now sits in America's warm (still unreliable) embrace, Pakistan finds itself paired with its ever-loyal iron brother, China. While India is working hard by investing in Chabahar Port and other initiatives, such as funding 116 important projects in 31 provinces in Afghanistan, why is it opposed to the progress being made in the disputed areas that CPEC is passing through? Such projects funded by India will include, among others, hydropower development,

farmland water conservation projects and renewable energies that will directly affect the lives of Afghanistan's common people. Regional development can be achieved through the CPEC if India looks at this project through the prism of the development and not enmity (Clemens, 2018).

### **CPEC: A Regional Interplay Model**

Traditionally Pak-Sino relations are based on military-oriented at a large scale but now it commencing of the new relationship which is more economic-oriented concentrating on trade, investment and energy cooperation. In this way, it is projecting towards opening the new doors of relations between two reliable friends and has credible to further deepen the economic relations between China and Pakistan. Therefore it has been declared as a game-changer or fate changer for regional and global geopolitics because it is one of the leading Chinese overseas investment projects till to date. "According to Dr Shahid Rashid Executive Director, CPEC Centre of Excellence at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), total CPEC project cost has gone up to \$62 billion from \$46 billion. The expectation is that the cost will further increase to \$100 billion by 2030. As more projects will be added and more money will be needed for those projects thus the \$100 billion marks will cross" (Farwa, 2016).

The CPEC has profoundly strategically and economically significance both for China and Pakistan. Through Gawadar port China will get direct access to the Middle East and the Indian Ocean while in return China will sponsor development projects in Pakistan to lift its faltering economy, reconstruct its infrastructure and overcome the energy crisis. It is imminent that it has potential to alter the geopolitics of South Asia linking China to the Indian Ocean has prompting apprehensions for India because Delhi contemplates the Gwadar Port under the mechanism of China can be turned into a permanent Chinese naval facility however it may not be certain at this stage. Moreover, the CPEC could serve as driving force to bring the other neighboring states of like Iran, India, Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics for the economic integration of the entire region. The project has invested 10 billion USD alone on infrastructure development that will renew Pakistan's frail communication system and could transport trade merchandise from Pakistan to China, Middle East and across the regional level and then at a global level. However, at this stage, CPEC is by all accounts a bilateral enterprise between China and Pakistan but in the long run, it has the visions to be a multilateral project. Generally, "reservations and opposition of Delhi over CPEC can be explored in the framework of its territorial assertions with Pakistan and hazards to its stakes in the Indian Ocean.

### **CPEC's Matrix to Delhi**

India is increasingly concerned about China using regional connectivity initiatives in its favor to change the narratives that surround disputed territories. The statement issued by the Indian government in May 2017 claims that China has displayed a disregard for territorial integrity, particularly as regards the CPEC,

which runs through the disputed Kashmir territory. "According to India, this is a violation of their sovereignty, and taking part in the BRI would undermine the position of New Delhi on the dispute, as Beijing supports the view of Islamabad on the dispute. More generally, the CPEC and many other elements of the BRI appear to ignore India's concerns regarding sovereignty and territorial integrity" (Singh, 2017).

China claims Arunachal Pradesh in its entirety on India's eastern border, and Ladakh in the north, states that are under its jurisdiction. The Sino-Indian War of 1962 was fought over Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh. The fact is that many Indians are more skeptical of Beijing's intentions to build infrastructure projects in the border areas and disputed areas. However, India is very wary of China's plans to develop projects in India's neighboring countries (such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan), projects that could give Beijing an additional strategic edge in its rivalry with India. Jaishankar, India's foreign minister told Chinese officials in Beijing that "the CPEC threatens Indian sovereignty as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. India has questioned China to clarify how it could engage in the CPEC project as it moves across the contested Kashmiri region. The Chinese government rejected this claim and reiterated that the CPEC did not change Beijing's position on Kashmir (Singh, 2017).

Moreover, India fears that "if the CPEC corridor successfully begins to operate through Gilgit-Baltistan, it will internationalize the Kashmir dispute. New Delhi has historically opposed this possibility by insisting that the dispute is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. This view is based on the claim that the whole Kashmir area, including Gilgit-Baltistan, is Indian Territories" (Rizvi, 2019). The explanation is that the Kashmir Maharaja has annexed the entire region of Kashmir in India and Pakistan has not complied with the mandate. Consequently, the fact that the CPEC corridor runs through Gilgit-Baltistan is necessarily breaching the territorial integrity of India. Although the emergence of Kashmir as a land bridge between China and Pakistan is sharpening the conventional geopolitical divide between New Delhi and Beijing, Gwadar is helping to lend the BRI a maritime dimension. India considers the Pakistani port as part of China's ongoing sea power expansion into the Indian Ocean. While Gwadar is currently a civilian site, many in New Delhi expect it to emerge as an important naval base for China. If this happens to be the case, Chinese access to Gwadar port will allow the Chinese Navy to retain its presence in the Indian Ocean, altering the balance of power in the region. Without ports and proximity to military bases, in this body of water where the Indian navy has historically held a dominant presence, China will face significant challenges. If China were to have a more permanent military presence on India's northwestern border via Pakistan, that would affect New Delhi's priorities in defense and security. India even has frequent border skirmishes with Chinese forces in Arunachal Pradesh along its eastern frontier. In fact, Sino-Indian relations were deeply compromised by the 2017 standoff between Indian and Chinese forces on the Doklam plateau along the Himalayan border (Rizvi, 2019).

## **Debunking myths on CPEC**

Quite a few stories have recently appeared in both local and foreign media on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The cynics of CPEC gained a lot of attention by publishing factually inaccurate facts. Consequently, myth spurring on CPEC is on the rise. So these misconceptions need to be debunked by mentioning the following evidence as below;

### **The Case of Gilgit-Baltistan**

The territory now Gilgit-Baltistan was previously partly under the jurisdiction of the state of Kashmir and partly under the control of the British paramountcy. The Kashmir state sent its governor to Gilgit to take charge of the area after partition, but the Gilgit Scouts, a paramilitary force, did not recognize the Kashmiri Maharaja's authority. The Gilgit Scouts revolted against the governor just a few days after Kashmir's divisive accession to India and demanded Pakistan to assume possession of the region. So, in historical words, the essence of the Gilgit-Baltistan conflict is entirely different from that of the regions of Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore, India cannot claim Gilgit-Baltistan the same way as Pakistani-administered Kashmir can claim it. India's claim on Gilgit-Baltistan can be justified only if the comprehensive accession of Kashmir to India is ratified as legal by the United Nations, which is not yet the case (Amir, 2020).

In addition, instead of the historical dispute over Gilgit-Baltistan, for the past 72 years, this area has been firmly under Pakistan's control. Pakistan has made it a federally administered, semi-autonomous region that is part of Pakistan for all practical purposes. The current Karakoram Highway, which links Pakistan to China, literally passes through the same area. Pakistan has refrained from including Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, ruled by Pakistan, as official areas of Pakistan to comply with the UN conflict resolutions. Moreover, still being a contested region, India has radically altered the geographic arrangements in its part of Kashmir. By this argument, how can it challenge every action taken by Pakistan in its part of Kashmir? There is therefore no realistic reason for the Indian argument that CPEC in Gilgit-Baltistan violates its "sovereignty".

### **CPEC: A Counterweight**

The second explanation for India's opposition to CPEC is its fear that China is using it to offset India's economic growth. It's a fact that Pakistan's economy was failing in early 2015 when Beijing signed the CPEC agreement with Islamabad. Via rising energy production and paving the way for more foreign investment, CPEC has so far supported the Pakistani economy. It makes sense, therefore, that India would see CPEC as China's effort to prop up Pakistan against India. The fact that India is responsive to the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor under the BRI, but rejects CPEC, further reinforces this proposition. India's hostility

to the CPEC should thus be viewed from a Pakistan-centered viewpoint and not as a general opposition to the larger Belt and Road Initiative (Farwa, 2016).

In parallel, Indian newspapers and American newspapers created a buzz that inside the canvas of CPEC, a military dimension is also installed. Nevertheless, both Pakistan's foreign ministry and China's president have made strong claims that such relations do not exist. Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman clearly openly stated that there was no strategic component to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC is an economic bilateral project that is not against any nation. No doubt, China and Pakistan have close military relations but for decades, both friends, independently prior to the CPEC initiative, have enjoyed close political, geopolitical and military ties. As two sovereign nations, China and Pakistan have the right to nurture close economic and military relations in compliance with their national interests.

India is entitled to reject any project it finds contrary to its interests, but its distrust of the CPEC is irrational. Neither Pakistan nor China has shown any strong intention of using CPEC to counter India by any way. Indeed, the Indian economy is far larger than that of Pakistan and CPEC alone could not help Pakistan become India's equivalent economic rival in any way. Moreover, Pakistan also has a sovereign right to enter into deals and negotiations with other countries for the sake of its economic needs, even though India rejects them. CPEC, however, does not in any way reflect any act of aggression against India (Farwa, 2016).

#### **India's Chabahar port plan: A plan to counter Gwadar port**

The port of Gwadar in southwest Pakistan is the main pillar of the CPEC. Joining hands with China, Pakistan plans to make Gwadar a regional commercial centre in the future. Parallel, India invested in Chabahar Port of Iran, situated just 175 kilometres from Gwadar, to offset the progress of Gwadar Port. According to Chinese reports, India spent \$100 million in Chabahar; the only obvious explanation was to counteract Gwadar Port's progress. The timing of the Indian agreement with Iran further confirms the Chinese media's assertion. In 2016, only a year after the CPEC agreements were concluded, India began investing in Chabahar. If India began investing in a port just 175 km from Gwadar if it had no intention of countering the CPEC, it would be too large a coincidence (Singh, 2017).

Chabahar may have been Gwadar's powerful rival, but the then US presidential election has changed the situation. The new US administration under Donald Trump has reimposed sanctions on Iran, and it has become extremely difficult for India to continue investing in Chabahar, which cannot be built at the planned rate. As a result, the prestige of Gwadar Port again expanded and it also began to service the Afghan transit traffic, which would have been a client of Chabahar Port if no restrictions had been imposed by the US government. The Chabahar episode shows that a strategic attempt to beat CPEC was made by India, but it did not succeed. Pakistan will do the same with CPEC, just as India has the right to make unilateral investment decisions such as that concerning Chabahar. The

Chabahar investment, however, is a case where India made an attempt against CPEC, labeled hostile by Pakistan and China, but it has not worked out so far. Hence CPEC is all about integration, growth, connectivity that seeks rapid development, notably for those locations that are left behind, and it is an opportunity for the sixth most populated nation in the world to eradicate poverty and allow its talented individuals to seize the potential to form a better and more productive existence. However, with the project, some foes and existential threats have bellyache. The intrusion on the Chinese Consulate in November 2018 Karachi was only an attempt to bring a crack in the relationship of the two partners but security forces made it failed and both countries' strategic wisdom cognize the circumstances very well. Both countries have proven committed, reliable and friendly towards each other in the times of crises. Pakistan has always supported China and China has understood Pakistan's sensitivity and security vulnerability vis-à-vis India (Hassan, 2018).

### **Delhi's Hands to Sabotage CPEC: Supporting Baloch Insurgents**

Narendra Modi, India's anti-Pakistan and jingoistic Prime Minister publicly said that Baloch citizens praised him for raising the issue of Pakistan's humanitarian abuses. Islamabad interpreted his declaration as direct evidence of Indian intervention in the province. In addition, the arrest of a RAW spy named Khulbhashan Yadav was disclosed by Pakistan's intelligence services in March 2016. Yadav confessed on camera that he was a sleeper cell of the RAW who carried out operations to weaken Pakistan and CPEC. He told authorities that he was serving under the nickname 'Mubarak Patel' in the Iranian Port City, Chahbahar. Vis-à-vis Balochi terrorist networks, he revealed that the meetings he used to coordinate were meant "to ensure that the goals and objectives of RAW to carry out the various terrorist operations within Baluchistan are properly transmitted to the terrorists and that any conditions they required were returned to RAW officials. Vis-à-vis CPEC, he said "the territory of CPEC between Gwadar and China had to be skewed and disturbed by multiplying the intensity of Baluchistan and Karachi insurgency" (Ahmed, 2017).

Similarly, in all of these atrocities against Pakistan and China, the US-India axis is complicit. In Baluchistan and other parts of Pakistan, America is constantly funding India's machinations of anarchy. America seeks to build and support discord in Pakistan's Baluchistan region, which is the nucleus of the CPEC, in order to abolish CPEC. America added Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, for instance, to its terror list in July 2016. This has been troubling for both China and Pakistan, as commonly, since the White House attacked terrorist groups along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, terrorist attacks have escalated in Pakistan. Baluchistan is in a much-improved position today, though. The active dissemination and sponsorship by India of militant groups based in Baluchistan, "such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), to subvert Pakistan and CPEC is still underway, with the CIA and the Research and Analysis Wing of India (RAW) collaborating in their Baluchistan mission. According to commentators like Brigadier Aslam Ghuman, a former ISI

official, Pakistan's spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), is aware of such machinations and has foiled many of its terror plots" (Shah, 2017). Nazar Baloch, the RAW-backed leader of the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), formally acknowledged in 2016 that he would accept all India's support and vowed more attacks on CPEC. Numerous murders of Chinese engineers in Baluchistan have been propagated by RAW through its proxies. These attacks on Chinese CPEC staff are purposely plotted to eviscerate China from Pakistan. However, the strategy of segregating Pakistan and subduing the CPEC has stalled, as the excellent actions of the Pakistani military in Baluchistan and FATA have stabilized the security situation. Since 2014, the country has been witnessing record lows in crime. In Operation Zarb-E-Azb, the Pakistan Army vanquished its biggest internal adversary, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, and its armed forces were lauded globally as one of the leading anti-terrorist and conventional forces (Shah, 2017).

### **Kashmir-CPEC Nexus: Internationalization of Kashmir Issue**

The disputed territory of Kashmir is the key point as the road passes from the Gilgit-Baltistan which is part of Azad Kashmir so Indian resistance on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is predominantly based on its stance to Gilgit-Baltistan region. India is still worried about the global importance of CPEC, assuming that internationalization of CPEC would hinder its influence over IHK directly and indirectly. India's opposition to CPEC represents anxiety about the internationalization of the Kashmir conflict, according to a study published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Center, a Swedish-based think-tank. Since Beijing's stance on the matter has been impartial to date, but at the same time, India has requested to become part of the CPEC by negotiating with Pakistan and settling the Kashmir conflict. China has long adhered to the concept of non-interference in other countries' domestic relations, but that does not mean that Beijing should turn a deaf ear to Chinese enterprises' requests to safeguard their overseas investments. Given China's major investment in countries along the One Belt, One Road, China now has a vested interest in helping to settle regional tensions, including India and Pakistan's dispute over Kashmir. China will gain expertise by playing the role of a mediator between Myanmar and Bangladesh, which could possibly act as a prelude to China's potential attempts to participate in regional relations in South Asia and Southeast Asia (Shah, 2017).

This setting has forever bound up Kashmir and CPEC with each other in a new geostrategic scenario. Their correlation has opened up a new window to settle the Kashmir crisis, which is believed to be an unresolved history or historical agenda. "As Kashmir and CPEC will be strongly interdependent on each other, shaping regional stability and prosperity, their destiny and future will depend on how India, Pakistan, and China will outline new strategies" (Khan, 2019). Kashmir was a bilateral dispute between Pakistan and India before the CPEC but with the emergence of CPEC, China is now considered to be the third stakeholder. India does not want to internationalize the Kashmir issue as India has always claimed that the Kashmir dispute is a bilateral issue and must be resolved by bilateral agreements



under the 1972 Simla Agreement and therefore refused any involvement by third powers, including by the United Nations, but it happens with Pakistan, China, and the CPEC moving in.

Similarly, Ms. Mehbooba Mufti, former Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, the local leadership of Indian held Kashmir remained vocal for CPEC ties with Indian Held Kashmir as she said, "It is important to be included in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for Kashmir's future, arguing that the inclusion of Kashmir in the corridor will be an opportunity for the state and not a security threat as perceived by security experts and policymakers." Likewise, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, the influential pro-freedom chief of the Hurriyat Conference, firmly requested the Indian government to welcome CPEC, calling it the gateway to India, and J&K should join CPEC, part of the old Silk Road, again to become integrated with larger economic activity. He proposed communicating with CPEC, which is not part of the South Asian discourse, but part of the Central Asian discourse in this way Kashmir may also be India's entrance, he said (Khan, 2019).

### **Critical Evaluation on the Speculations regarding CPEC**

As Pakistan and China began the next step of the CPEC, they called for greater commitment to poverty reduction. "World acknowledged the significance of the BRI of China, explaining that it "marks a modern and distinct stage in the world's onward march of nations along the path of globalization but India and the US, continue to deny CPEC. In this regard, well-penetrated Indian lobbies in the US administration and Europe, study centres, think tanks and so-called human rights organizations use digital mediums to globally defame Pakistan. In particular, the Indian RAW is taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the US-led coordinated propaganda campaign against Pakistan. Now, the specific target of these malicious entities is CPEC. In this relation, a study published on April 13, 2017 by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) in collaboration with Mahatma Gandhi International AISBL was granted a lot of attention by the foreign media. The subject report depicted full Indian derogatory propaganda themes regarding the provinces of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Baluchistan and Sindh in Pakistan (Clemens, 2018).

Undoubtedly, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is CPEC's gateway to Pakistan, thus multiplying the strategic and socio-economic importance of GB. Like Baluchistan, China's commerce, tourism, minerals, diamonds, precious stones, agriculture and hydropower development have tremendous potential for the region. Therefore, the people of GB, who reinforce their alliance with Pakistan, do not pay heed to fake propaganda. While these US-led Western entities, "especially India, who are also providing excessive coverage of the meetings and protests against Pakistan's integrity, are particularly exaggerating the statements of the Baloch Separatist leaders who have taken refuge in Europe and America, and are serving their foreign masters' agenda against the CPEC" (Shah A. Z., 2017). The truth is that the establishment of CPEC would connect Gilgit-Baltistan via Khunjerab Pass between

the deep Gwadar seaport of Baluchistan and the ancient Silk Road city in the western regions-Xinjiang of China. An international airport at Gwadar will also be constructed while the road infrastructure at Gwadar would connect the rest of the country's connectivity network to promote the transport of goods. It would connect the landlocked Central Asian states with the rest of the globe when Gwadar seaport becomes fully operational. As a commercial hub, the port is likely to increase the volume of trade, providing Pakistan with numerous economic and financial benefits and would allow for the transport of high-volume container vessels in the major oceans. The Gwadar project, which is the backbone of the CPEC, will enhance the poor people of Baluchistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, including developments in other provinces, by providing thousands of employment opportunities by remedying their grievances, especially in less developed areas. The ensuing prosperity in Baluchistan and Gilgit-Baltistan will dampen the people's nationalist feelings that the hostile forces, backed by the US, India and Israel, do not want. Hence, these entities and their media describe the CPEC in derogatory terms (Amir, 2020).

### **Indo-US Enviousness**

CPEC has become a hotspot where the interests of the US and India converge particularly when it comprehends the likeliness to entertain as a counterbalance to the mounting Indo-US enterprises and their shared strategic interests in the region. In reality, the United States is sowing the seeds of another Cold War, a New Great Game in the region by echoing India on CPEC, pitching its proxy, India, to 'counter and contain' China, further destabilizing the region with a growing proxy war between India and Pakistan as India is already well engaged in the process of cross-border terrorism against Pakistan. CPEC offers a genuine correlation between the Belt and the Road venture of China. Without this two-way communication contributed by the CPEC, the two constituents of the OBOR would stay separated from each other and low in their centrality. Since the Marshall Plan of USA after World War II the Pak-China enterprise is prevalent infrastructure advancement inventiveness in the world while OBOR exceeds the Marshall Plan mutually in the relationship of determination as well as in scope. US distinguishes OBOR as a source of hostage measurements towards its Pivot to Asia Strategy that has destined to check Chinese escalation at the global level" (Shah F. , 2017).

Even though conventionally non-alignment approaches in foreign policy, India rests one of the key partners of the US to hostage Chinese impact in the region of South Asia. India has a vital part in the employment of US's scheme of Asia pivot and as a calculated partner; she is building military bonds with the leading realms in the Indo-Pacific region. She is consolidating its bilateral ties with Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Australia and Vietnam against China. India has been regularly contrasting the enterprises directed by China and likewise the ones relating to the progression of China. Regardless of certain healthy dimensions of Indo-Sino bilateral relations, it endures contradicting CPEC. India has not only been contrary to CPEC but also it has never greeted OBOR as well. It has refused to participate in OBOR's summit which was held in China in 2017" The worries of Delhi had been stirred

further when Chinese Premier characterized CPEC as a flagship venture to reinforce affinity with neighbors. (Clemens, 2018).

China is a fast-growing country economically and politically it has succeeded in getting global attention and it keeps unique respect and prestige in the world. So China is measured as an intimidation to the US and a trial to its supremacy assumed the former's remarkable evolution not only in the economic domain but also in the military ring. Similarly, in case of the politics of the energy security, the US has frightened and considered CPEC as a trial to its stakes in energy-rich regions of the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. The CPEC also offers a strategic depth to the Chinese Naval strength via Gawadar port this will be a gigantic vulnerability for the US Navy in blue waters. Subsequently, the worries of Washington are visible regarding the vital preferences that China is going to increase through the CPEC and in a wider sense through OBOR is imminent.

### **Indo-US grievances and mourning**

After President Trump's flawed South Asian strategy was unveiled on August 21, 2017, for the first time U.S. Defence Secretary, Jim Mattis made such public statement from an American high official on OBOR said that "In a globalized world, there are many belts and many roads, and no one nation should put itself in a position of dictating One Belt, One Road. He added another ground for the U.S. opposition, when in an oblique reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is the flagship and pilot project of OBOR that OBOR also goes through disputed territory" (Rizvi, 2019). As it is contradictory to previous American policy, Secretary Mattis' assertion is shocking and inexplicable and both his doubts are very baseless. There are three things notable. In May 2017, when China hosted the OBOR Summit in Beijing, attended by 110 countries and international organizations, the United States sent an official delegation to the National Security Council, headed by Matt Pottinger, Special Assistant to President Trump and Senior Director in Charge of East Asia. His presence, like that of other nations, was an endorsement of OBOR and no reservations were raised in this respect. Second, the American government enlisted U.S. contractors to build the Mangla Dam in Azad Kashmir after the World Bank-brokered Indus Waters Treaties led to the agreement to build new dams, and the U.S. then never voiced concerns that it was 'disputed land.' Third, China dictates OBOR in no way to any country, which, in any event, includes 65 countries spread across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, all voluntarily part of OBOR, which is possibly the 21st Century's single most significant diplomacy and growth initiative. In the region, only India is out of it, as it sees itself as a 'rival' of China (Rizvi, 2019).

In addition, responding to the reservations raised by India over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Islamabad asserted that "CPEC is a development and connectivity project for the betterment of the people in the region and beyond", and urged the international community to rather focus on the human

rights violations committed by Indian forces in Kashmir. Pakistan made blood and treasure sacrifices after 9/11, while India was busy building up terrorist networks using its own land and spaces in the immediate neighborhood of Pakistan and beyond and there is a strong connection between the declaration of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the rise in terrorist attacks in the southwestern region of Baluchistan. Further, the Modi regime has proven to be divisive by actively promoting politics of hate, bigotry and extremism against liberal Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. Actually, by echoing CPEC the United States and India pitching its proxy in the region to 'counter and contain' China and Pakistan simultaneously. In this way the development of the region is further spoiling with the proxy war between India and Pakistan since India is already well embarked on the process of cross-border terrorism against Pakistan. Thus, the contrasting future visions, paths and policies are clear: Pakistan is seeking win-win collaboration and connectivity, while India is opting for rivalry and conflict. The U.S. and India are going against the tide of history because neither the U.S., having squandered \$ 3 trillion in the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan, is in a position to sustain another Cold War, while, India, having failed to quell the popular, spontaneous, indigenous and widespread uprising in Occupied Kashmir, is mired in 16 other indigenous insurgencies.

## **Conclusion**

Where the CPEC has contributed to the creation of new opportunities for collaboration through which regional actors have the potential to build on their economic interests through this mega-project, on the other hand the possibility of tension between the interests of different regional actors has also increased. Several statements on various international or national forums from the Indian side have been roaring up since the unveiling of this initiative. The project has been going very well, amid these stern comments. In addition, the US has also shown its weight behind India by stating that it also claims that the corridor path passes through a contentious area, a nod to Pakistan's northern regions. However, both China and Pakistan should be motivated by these obstacles and threats to follow a cohesive, balanced and equitable path to the successful completion of the project within its defined time span in 2030.

## **Recommendations**

At present, Pakistan should consider the emerging conditions on the ground; and, through diplomatic efforts, it should take a cautious approach to both China and the West in its foreign policy; and it should seek and build on all possibilities so that its economy is not trampled under the interests of strong powers. Pakistan should also make steps to reduce tensions with its Eastern and Western neighbours, which, in the near future, are crucial countries for Pakistan's stability and productive economy.

China is rewriting the rules as the pre-eminent Asian power, so it is important to nullify the dominance of other major powers such as the US and even

India, which might attempt to leverage its love affair with the former to encircle China and inflict harm to the CPEC, in order to further cooperation between China and South Asia.

India should confess the fact that it does not have many possibilities at its disposal to manipulate the design of the CPEC, although it is currently attempting to take advantage of all narrow windows to offset the venture. India will benefit from this undertaking by opening trade channels through Pakistan if it shows a constructive gesture towards CPEC, as Indian ambitions are to enter Afghanistan and CARs to expand access to its economy.

Afghanistan provides immense importance in geo-strategic calculus, as it is a bridge connecting other sub-regions of Asia. Thus, not only for Pakistan and China, but for the security of the entire region, peace and prosperity in Afghanistan are of crucial importance. It is high time for the economic growth of Pakistan and Afghanistan to join hands and build on the economic prospects that CPEC would create.

Finally, the entry of Iran into this venture will lead to a period of increased economic growth across the province of Sistan-Baluchistan by improving trade between Pakistan, China and Iran and would deliver a cost-effective gateway to the Gulf region, and CPEC will also have the potential to accelerate the completion of the Iran-Pak-India gas pipeline to meet the region's energy needs.

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