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Post-9/11 Sino-Pak Strategic Engagements in South Asia and its Impact on India

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Abstract

There is a long history of bilateral engagement between China and Pakistan. China and Pakistan relations have developed into a close friendship over the years after diplomatic ties were established in 1951. In addition to traditional diplomatic and political sectors, this collaboration has expanded to cover political, diplomatic and commercial aspects as well. In this backdrop, the study examines the history of the Pakistan-China partnership and its rising interest in the light of continually shifting regional and global dynamics. Despite repeated failures over the last seventy-three years, this partnership has survived and is usually mentioned as an example of inter-state cooperation. In light of the aforementioned, this paper seeks to answer a number of questions about how China and Pakistan's increasing military and other bilateral relations have an impact on India.

Keywords: *China-Pakistan relations, All-weather friendship, South Asia, CPEC, OBOR, Strategic*

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1. Introduction

In 1947, just after the separation from India, Pakistan within a very short span of time established its relation with China. Consequently, it became the first Islamic country to recognise the People's Republic of China in 1950. Thereby, it established its diplomatic relations with the former in 1951, the same has lasted over seven decades uninterrupted and still being maintained from both sides. This ties up between both the two countries has contributed significantly in the development of Pakistan. For China, it has been proven as a bridge for economic growth and a stepping stone into the international market and politics as well, especially from south Asian point of view.

After 1962, the Sino-Pak Entente Cordiale gained even more pace as a result of high-level bilateral exchanges. Their friendship has recently achieved unprecedented heights as a result of China and Pakistan viewing one

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another as vital allies in achieving their shared political and economic objectives. China has recently stepped into a number of economic and strategic partnerships in Pakistan, as well as the northern areas of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PoK). China and Pakistan have taken a number of economic measures to assure transit channels, particularly for oil, to avoid the long and dangerous sea routes from the Persian Gulf to China. While China's significant investment in Pakistan's strategically important Gwadar Port is an example of moves to connect Central Asia to global marine trade, it has also ushered in a new era of security in South Asia, which will only grow in the coming years. Pakistan will be reaping the fruit of this Chinese investment in its different sectors. The researcher feels that in this altering security scenario in South Asia, India's top objective must be to limit Sino-Pak maneuvering.

2. What these Diplomatic Relations Meant for China and Pakistan? and its Imperatives

Depending on the context, a discussion of Pakistan-China ties elicits a variety of responses. From a Western perspective, the relationship is mostly regarded through the lens of pragmatic and geopolitical considerations. However, expressions like "higher than the mountains" and "sweeter than honey" have a more euphoric connotation in Pakistan and China. In essence, such terms are meant to illustrate the "content" of a link rather than just rhetoric. Skeptics frequently disregard the fact that a merely rhetorical relationship between two unequals would not continue long. Most China observers are still baffled by it; therefore, some historical references are required to put it in context. National interests are commonly used to construct Pakistani-Chinese relations, which are significantly influenced by regional security frameworks and economic imperatives. In the context of Pakistan's emergence as a newborn state seeking security in a hostile environment, this predicament may be justified. In the current environment, strong cooperation with China has become a feasible option for Pakistan's political and security establishment. Although Pakistan's foreign policy has traditionally prioritised keeping a close relationship with China, translating that friendship into formal collaboration has taken time. In international relations, the relation between countries involves a complicated balance of realistic national interests. National interests are multifaceted, and they evolve as regional and international circumstances change. In Pakistan's foreign policy architecture, however, a favourable connection with China has developed as an emergent trend, which successive Pakistani governments have embraced and promoted. Both leaders understood the need of teamwork and were willing to adapt their strategies.

3. The Role of Pakistan Economic Development of China, and India's Response

Pakistan is an important regional partner for China because it gives access to the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, which account for 20% of global oil trade. India's regional hegemonic ambitions are thwarted by Pakistan. Maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan is crucial for regional connectivity and preventing militancy and extremism from seeping into China's Xinjiang province. Furthermore, by strengthening economic ties between Pakistan and India, China promotes peace in the South Asian region. Pakistan and China, as key partners, are both concerned about rising regional instability and turmoil. Both nations are opposing the hegemony and seeking peaceful solutions to their problems. Subsequently, Pakistan-China ties have grown even stronger in this setting. Pakistan views China as a voice of rationality and restraint in world affairs, both nations have pledged to work together to achieve their common objectives. Due to its unique nature, this alliance has weathered all storms and will continue to contribute positively to regional peace and security.

As the major regional power, India sees closer connections between China and Pakistan as a step to challenge its dominance in the region. China has been most anguished by India's shift toward the West, notably the US. As a result, China and Pakistan have engaged India on a number of issues, including border and the issue of Kashmir. In contrast, India is also receiving a lot of support from its allies as it takes on both China and Pakistan. The primary focus of this research is on the potential effects of growing China-Pakistan relations on their neighboring States.

4. Sino-Pak all-Weather Friendship: CPEC as a New Beginning

In Chinese diplomacy, the language used to transmit information is carefully chosen. While China's relationships with many friendly countries are described as "strategic," "comprehensive," or "cooperative," the Chinese leadership refers to Pakistan's relationship as "all-weather" to emphasize the unique character of

the two countries' relationship. China's authorities refer to Pakistan as an "Iron Brother," indicating their confidence in the strength of the bilateral relationship (Fels, 2017). The governments of Pakistan and China have made significant investments in the relationship, which has now become deeply entrenched at the grassroots level. Both countries show a real willingness to improve their collaboration as well as a common set of objectives. Pakistan views its mutually beneficial cooperation with China as a pillar of its foreign policy, while China regards it as a top priority. Their support for one another on national problems demonstrates their mutual trust. Pakistan has backed China at the Human Rights Council and on topics such as Xinjiang, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, and the South China Sea (Gore, 2020).

China is the only major country to publicly support Pakistan's attempts to safeguard its independence and sovereignty. Despite its rocky relationship with the US, Pakistan is eager to invest in developing a strategic relationship with the country. China recognises Kashmir as a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and favours a peaceful resolution in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions, the United Nations Charter, and bilateral agreements. Moreover, China has condemned India's decision to abolish Jammu and Kashmir's special status in August 2019 at various platforms (Bhatt, 2019). The abrogation of special status to Kashmir has once more deteriorated already diminishing Indo-Pak relationship. Pakistan and China's mutual support stems from a common aim to respect the UN's inter-state relations ideals of non-interference, peaceful cohabitation, multilateralism, fairness, and justice, as well as geopolitical considerations. Both are opposed to hegemony, unilateralism, and a zero-sum approach to international affairs, as well as the desire of poor countries for a more just and equitable global order (Hoo and Mckinney, 2022).

5. Economic Collaboration

Economically, China and Pakistan come closer to each other in 1963 when first trade agreement was signed and the economic ties were further strengthened in 2013 with establishment of CPEC. In recent years, Pakistan and China have placed a considerable focus on their trade ties. As a BRI experimental project, the CPEC has achieved proven outcomes in less than NINE years. For starters, it has aided Pakistan in resolving a long-standing energy issue. Pakistan was losing approximately US\$4 bn owing to this imbalance prior to the CPEC. Some significant energy projects have been developed in record time as part of Pakistan's ambition to diversify its energy mix, and more are in the works. Chinese companies have used ultra-critical technologies in coal-fired power plants to reduce pollution. The Karakoram Highway is one of the biggest infrastructure and transportation projects that has been completed. The Gwadar Port and its infrastructure are still under construction. Three key Special Economic Zones are also gaining traction. These programs have cost China roughly US\$26 bn, resulting in the development of approximately 75,000 local jobs (Butt *et al.*, 2015). For many years, China has been Pakistan's most important investment and trading partner. Chinese investment in the CPEC is expected to rise as more projects are added.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an open public-private partnership with no hidden goal. Its goal is to assist Pakistan in closing the growth gap and becoming a regional commerce and energy powerhouse. Western China is developing, and Pakistan's closeness provides new business opportunities. Pakistan wishes to capitalize on its strategic location as a commercial and investment hub for China, South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Central Asian countries that are landlocked want to link to Pakistan's Gwadar and Karachi ports through the CPEC. The CPEC route will help China overcome the Malacca Straits dilemma and reduce costs and time in exporting its commodities to Africa and the Middle East, in addition to building a communication network with Central Asia and Afghanistan (Ali, 2020). Additionally, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is Pakistan's first large-scale foreign investment project. It not only strengthens China's friendship with Pakistan, but it also demonstrates China's belief in Pakistan's economic potential. The CPEC is a vehicle for Pakistan's prosperity as well as enhanced intercultural and interpersonal interaction. The CPEC was designed to be debt-sustainable, environmentally friendly, and transparent. The facts, on the other hand, are frequently manipulated to offer a one-sided viewpoint. Chinese loans, according to Pakistan, account for only 10% of the country's total debt, are concessionary, and have a long maturity period. Any rumors should immediately be dispelled (Rizwanullah *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the BRI has the ability to contribute to the global community's ultimate goal of eradicating radicalism and extremism.

6. Sino-Pak Friendship Amidst China-US Struggle

“The Belt Road Initiative (BRI), Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Signature foreign policy undertaking and the world’s largest infrastructure program, possess a political and economic, climate change, security and global health interest” (Council on Foreign Relation, 2021). However, it is regrettable that the current US-China standoff has had an effect on the BRI. The White House said that the BRI will provide China “undue political influence and military access” in a report to the US Congress in May 2020 (Singh, 2020). Due to the US’s alleged desire to dominate China, both the BRI and the CPEC have faced criticism. Using the anti-China stance as an illustration recent summit discussions at the G-7, NATO, and US-EU summits, as well as the attendance of US President Joe Biden at the G-7 Summit. It was asserted that China and the United States were fighting for democracy against autocrats (White, 2020). In response to American claims that the Communist Party of China is responsible for all issues, Beijing has responded angrily and properly (White House, 2020).

In this background, the majority of objective analysts agree that efforts to restrain China’s growing sway, especially in South Asia, are likely to be ineffective since they won’t have the backing of countries seeking to benefit from China’s economic cooperation. Most countries would be cautious to support one side because China is frequently a larger economic partner than the US. But this Game of Thrones will feature a lot of conflict and strife, and there may even be violence between the warring factions (Stromseth, 2019). For instance, a conflict between the US and China over Taiwan would deteriorate. The majority of observers believe that the Australia, United Kingdom, and US Security Alliance (AUKUS) and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) will cause a prolonged destabilization of the Indo-Pacific region and a struggle for dominance between China and the US as well as among regional nations. The world will be destroyed by a new cold war, if this ongoing standoff Between China and US would not be stopped, further, the same have potential to impact the process of implementation and success of Sustainable Development goals.

Despite the fact that China does not appear to be interested in either governing the globe or reforming it in its own image, many famous historians assert that China is making an effort to restore the glory that it lost during the “century of humiliation” (Masood, 2021). It merely asks that its fair part of the global political and economic infrastructure built after World War II be fairly represented and distributed. Pakistan is in favor of a global framework that guarantees fair participation for all countries, big and small, and is built on win-win outcomes. Given the magnitude of the issues that humanity is currently facing, making informed decisions is essential. Few plausible strategic choices are available to the US and China. Due to its high risk of error, controlled competition will have less of an impact on China, the US, and the rest of the globe than conflict. Due to the interdependence of their economies, China and the US must cooperate and confront global issues jointly. However, the patterns suggest the reverse. Competition between the US and China is undermining the advantages of globalization. As a result of adopting unilateralism, protectionism, coercion, and the use of force to impose new norms, the UN has turned into a directionless organization (Paul, 2019). The American government has declared that relations with the revisionist giant China will now be “adversarial, competitive, and cooperative.” The Quad, the Coalition of Democracies, the Build Back Better World initiative, and the founding agreements with India are excellent illustrations of the US strategy to compete with China on a global scale in the economic and security spheres. Its strict and unfriendly China policy worries its allies in Europe and East Asia. The US has begun to make new alignments and realignments that demonstrate how it seeks to decrease its impact at the regional and sub-regional levels (Maleeha, 2021). The solution is a strategic partnership between China and Russia. The current world order is rapidly eroding and changing.

By keeping excellent and cordial ties with both of the major countries, Pakistan would prefer to stay out of this conflict. Similar to Pakistan’s partnership with China, the CPEC represents an inevitable window of opportunity for Pakistan’s economic development. Any initiatives aimed at persuading Pakistan to withdraw from the CPEC are unjust and go against US policy, which promotes regional connectivity and economic cooperation. Members of the C5+1 and Quadrilateral alliances, which allegedly operate toward the same goals as the CPEC, include the US, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. A deterrent to terrorism and extremism, Pakistan’s strong economy safeguards regional peace and security. As a result, Pakistan views any opposition to the CPEC with animosity.

7. Expanding Strategic Ties of China and Pakistan: What this Voyage Means for India

The geostrategic context of the post-Cold War political landscape favours the growth of China and Pakistan's military ties. Pakistan has been able to successfully retain its strategic connections with China ever since it joined the US 'SEATO' and 'CENTO' alliance systems during the Cold War. Pakistan's troubled history with the US has made China and Pakistan dependent on one another. Pakistan and China's strategic partnership became stronger over time as US-Pakistan tensions increased. China has been assured by Pakistan that it is not associated with any people or organisations that are hostile to China. An already strong affinity has been deepened by a shared Indian presence. Pakistan considered that the only way to prevent the expansion of Indian influence in the region was to join forces with China (Liaqat *et al.*, 2022). The United States' Asia Pivot strategy, which exploits Chinese regional rivalries, and military encirclement are currently seen by China as impending threats with unintended consequences. According to the Chinese leadership, it has devised a "String of Pearl" policy and has reacted cautiously to US goals in order to thwart any attempts to isolate or deter China. In response to Chinese outreach, India has emphasized the Arabian Sea and the strategically located Gwadar, both of which the Chinese navy may exploit in the future for operations. Similar opinions are held by the United States, which is concerned about this rise and sees it as China's strategic foothold near the Strait of Hormuz, which is responsible for the bulk of the world's petroleum supplies (Dasgupta, 2019). China and Pakistan have not openly endorsed the US and Indian ambitions for Gwadar.

China has provided Pakistan with military support during the conflict from 1965 to 1971. In 1971, China gave Pakistan a number of tanks, missiles, and other Soviet-made armaments. The late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was successful in obtaining supplies of MIG-19s and tanks during his trip to China from January 31 to February 3, 1972, which aided Pakistan's military capabilities (Subramanian, 1982). However, China's assistance in helping Pakistan establish a missile manufacturing facility and develop the Shaheen I ballistic missile in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the beginning of extensive defense cooperation between the two nations, significantly aided Pakistan's efforts to modernize its military. The 1992 supply of M-11 short-range ballistic missiles by China to Pakistan marked the start of what is likely the most active military cooperation. China has since eclipsed all other producers of military hardware for Pakistan. Along with other armaments, China gave Pakistan the T-96 frontline tank and F-7 fighter planes (Jetly, 2012). In 2006, Pakistan and China reached an agreement to modernise Pakistan's naval and maritime infrastructure for \$600 mn. This agreement covers four F-22P frigates, electronic equipment, and dockyard improvements in Karachi. Two more Chinese weapons Pakistan might use are the FC-1 fighter plane and the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) helicopter. It also represents the 2005 Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration, and Good Neighbor, which places a major emphasis on a commitment to defend national interests through successful regional and global cooperation (Allauddin and Ahmed, 2020). To establish this cooperation and strategic alliance against India, both nations have undertaken a number of notable and significant acts, such as supplying Pakistan with JF-17 Thunder fighter jets and technical support so that Pakistan could produce JF-17 Thunder aircraft on its own.

The commitment of China to supporting Pakistan's domestic weaponry sector through cooperative engagement is the most significant aspect of their military relations. In 1980, China aided Pakistan in constructing the Heavy Rebuilt Factory, which is currently known as the Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) (Azeemi, 2007). A number of military tools with Chinese and Western roots have been created and improved by this complex, most notably the Al-Zarrar and Al-Khalid tank, which has become a front-line weapon and formed the basis of Pakistan's artillery. HIT is also creating a brand-new hybrid Al-Haider tank. The Collaborative-Fighter 17 (JF-Thunder) is a symbol of China and Pakistan's collaboration (Bajpai, 2021). In collaboration with the Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC) and the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, China started building a multirole fighter jet in 1999. In March 2007, the initial offerings were made. Pakistan now has a state-of-the-art combat field fighter aircraft with full offensive and defensive capabilities attributable to the JF-17.

Along with their military relations, Pakistan and China have improved their military and civil nuclear cooperation. Given the country's nuclear ties to Pakistan, it is reasonable to understand China's efforts to stabilize the regional power balance, which is noticeably skewed in favor of India due to that country's conventional military superiority over Pakistan. India will undoubtedly prevail in the arms competition between Pakistan and India; thus, China cannot take a back seat. Pakistan began to improve its nuclear program in response to India's nuclear tests in 1974. The then Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto was aware of American

hostility toward Pakistan's nuclear program (Ganguly and Hagerty, 2012). Bhutto was coerced into going to China to ask for help with the nuclear program so that Pakistan could continue to maintain its national survival. Pakistan and China began working together on nuclear technologies in 1976. US intelligence assessments claim that soon after the Pressler Amendment, which restricted Pakistan's nuclear program in 1985, took effect, Pakistan and China began working together on both civilian and military nuclear technologies.

The first nuclear cooperation agreement between Pakistan and China was signed in 1986, opening the door for extensive defence cooperation (Dwivedi, 2013). China approved the construction of a 300 MW nuclear station in Chashma in 1991. Pakistan's historic nuclear tests in May 1998 in response to world pressure hindered nuclear cooperation between Pakistan and China. China's ability to provide Pakistan with nuclear technology for military purposes is subject to stringent constraints as a result of China's 2004 membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). American sanctions against Pakistan's nuclear program were swiftly implemented. China began granting Pakistan a second nuclear power facility in 2005, despite the fact that the pace of civil nuclear cooperation is actually quickening. After China's second Chashma Power Plant opened on May 10, 2011, the Shanghai Nuclear Engineering Research and Design Institute (SNERDI) was given the contract to build Chashma Nuclear Power Plants II and III (Khalid and Ali, 2021). Six nuclear power reactors with a total capacity of 3.4 million KW are reportedly being developed in Pakistan under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), according to a statement made by China in December 2015. On August 9, 2015, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, formally inaugurated the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation's K2 Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP) (Ghazali and Ali, 2015).

Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China have worked together to increase regional stability. Xinjiang would act as a platform for the region's economic growth, enhancing security, and facilitating trade, according to Wang Yi, China's foreign minister. Pakistan was crucial in bridging the communication gap between the PRC and the West as well as serving as China's main entryway to the Islamic world by allowing US President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972. According to a 2014 BBC World Service poll, 75% of Pakistanis are in favor of Chinese influence, while only 15% are against it (Hongdo *et al.*, 2019). The majority of people in China, Indonesia, and Pakistan are in favor of Pakistan's participation in the Indo-Pacific area. Pakistan was rated favorably by 73% of Chinese respondents in a Palacky University Olomouc online survey in March 2022, making it the second-most popular country after Russia (Turcsányi *et al.*, 2022).

China has historically played a significant role in Pakistan's development of its nuclear infrastructure, particularly during the period when Pakistan found it difficult to obtain plutonium and uranium enrichment technologies from other sources due to the stricter export regulations of Western nations. One example of this collaboration is China's assistance in building the Khushab reactor, which Pakistan needs to generate plutonium. A division of the China National Nuclear Corporation gave Pakistan 5,000 specially made ring magnets to aid in its efforts to expand its uranium enrichment capabilities. These magnets are a crucial component of the bearings that allow centrifuges to rotate at high speeds. China has also provided material and technical help for the Chashma Nuclear Power Complex and the plutonium reprocessing plant, both of which were built in the middle of the 1990s. In July 2022, China and Pakistan collaborated on the maritime exercise "Sea Guardian 2" (Ramesh, 2022).

China and Pakistan are developing their military and strategic ties. The Pakistani Army has received the first shipment of VT-4 combat tanks built in China. In a similar spirit, Pakistan's use of UCAVs created in China against India must be acknowledged. Drones along the India-Pakistan Line of Control are thought to pose significant hazards, according to several security experts and Indian military officials. On December 1, 2020, China's defence minister, General Wei Fengshe, paid a visit to Islamabad and signed an agreement to expand defence collaboration between the Pakistan Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). Wei claims that the program's declared goal was to "expand military-to-military cooperation to a higher level, so that it can cope with changing obstacles and uncertainties together, and steadfastly maintain the two nations' sovereignty and security interests, and protect peace and stability" (Allauddin and Ahmed, 2020).

The strategic location of Pakistan's "Gawadar Port" has consequences for both world politics and economics. China, a significant project partner and potential future military ally, entered the conflict forcefully. As a result, both the regional power structure and China's military influence have changed. This endeavor is

all the more significant since it shows China's might in politics, energy diplomacy, and global trade. By investing in China's oil refineries, several countries will be able to diversify their markets, reduce their dependence on the US, and safeguard their revenue because the damage will only be to a few local ports (Saba and Jamil, 2022).

The expanding China-Pakistan axis presents India with a greater threat. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor has made their regional and geopolitical objectives easier to achieve. With its armed forces now stationed on our northern, eastern, and western borders, China has effectively surrounded India as a result of its incursion into Pakistan. Along with making "two-front" conflicts more likely – which do occur – it also gives China more sway over Kashmir and the surrounding area. As a result, both countries should be seen as potential enemies (Sheng and Nascimento, 2021). Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Aksai Chin, Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir are among the allegedly targeted Indian states by China. This is having an effect on India. This is further supported by the fact that inhabitants of Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh were given "stapled visas" in response to India's protests. China is addressing the border issue more forcefully as its national authority increases, raising the possibility that these areas could develop into future flashpoints for conflict (Kurita, 2022).

China and Pakistan are both interested in preventing India's rising. When Xi Jinping announced the CPEC in Islamabad in April 2015, it signified a dramatic change in China's perception towards India. By pursuing the CPEC and making significant investments in it, China rejected India's claims of sovereignty over PoK, Gilgit, Baltistan, and the Shaksgam Valley and de facto recognized Pakistan's claim over these areas (Boon and Ong, 2021). In an effort to safeguard its military and strategic interests, Beijing began arguing with India at official and non-official events, including those with opinion leaders and think tanks, to "ease tensions with Pakistan by resuming talks with Islamabad, resolve the Kashmir issue, and then look to improving relations with China." After India withdrew Article 370 in August 2019, China brought up the issue three times in the UNSC, and it may do so again, signaling its aim to sour relations with India.

Despite their strong relations in the political, economic, military, and nuclear domains as well as in the development of weapons systems, China and Pakistan's growing maritime cooperation raises serious worries. Cooperation in the development of submarines, autonomous underwater vehicles, and frigates is also covered. They will be stationed in Jiwani, Gwadar, and Karachi if China delivers them to Pakistan, thereby increasing the vulnerability of India's western coast and the Arabian Sea (Shah, 2022). China may sell Liaoning, its first aircraft carrier, to Pakistan after its fourth aircraft carrier is built, according to Chinese military media in 2019. They added that if war broke out with India, Pakistan would obtain fighter jets from the Chinese air force.

China will keep on working to isolate India, restrict its rise, and strengthen Chinese influence in South Asian neighborhood. India should be prepared for growing Sino-Pakistani cooperation on Kashmir-related matters, often opposing its demand that people like Masood Azhar and Zaki-Ur-Rahman be classified as international terrorists. Sino-Pak interests on territorial and strategic issues converge, indicating rising Chinese military pressure on India, as is currently seen in Ladakh.

8. Conclusion

In concluding remarks, it is assumed that the growing China-Pakistan relationship poses a threat to India. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has solidified their strategic and territorial interests. Additionally, China's decision to invest \$46 billion in an economic corridor between its western region and Pakistan's Gwadar Sea port, which will reduce the country's route to middle eastern countries for oil imports by about 12,000 km, has sparked new worries about China forming a "pearl of strings" around India. This would mean that China is developing a plan to encircle India by establishing naval bases in the Indian Ocean, posing a serious security threat to India. Furthermore, With the inflow of Chinese military power into Pakistan, China now effectively straddles India, with armed forces stationed on our northern, eastern, and western borders.

In order to challenge China and Pakistan's hegemony in the region, Washington and New Delhi formed a strategic alliance. China supported Pakistan on regional and international forums militarily, economically, and politically to weaken the influence of India and the US. However, China and Pakistan's strategic partnership

grew even stronger in the years following the death of Osama bin Laden. The One Belt, One Road Initiative, which was launched in 2013, included the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Future economic and security dependence is also made possible by this economic corridor, allowing them to maintain their strategic alliances. In counter to these aforementioned strategies, it is essential for India to maintain long-term strategic relationships with western countries and Quad member courtiers to counter Sino-Pak growing influence in the region.

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