



RESEARCH PAPER

Challenges for Pakistan and CPEC in China USA Rivalry

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: March 13, 2022 Accepted: June 12, 2022 Online: June 14, 2022 Keywords: Challenges, Cooperation, Pakistan, Security, South Asia *Corresponding Author: salmashaukat12 2@gmail.com	This study explains that the world political and economic situation is undergoing complex and profound evolution. The process of globalization has encountered a counter-tide, the process of integration in some regions has been frustrated, and the world has entered a relatively turbulent and changeable period. The South Asian region continues to maintain the overall momentum of its rise and further prominence on the world map, which is inseparable from the efforts of South Asian countries to promote regional cooperation. This study emphasizes that Pakistan is an important member of the South Asian family. Pakistan has always regarded it as its mission to promote prosperity, stability, and security in the Asia-Pacific region. Pakistan is willing to work with regional countries to solidly promote security dialogue and cooperation, deal with various traditional and non-traditional security challenges, jointly maintain a good situation of regional peace and stability, and promote the development of a prosperous South Asian region

Introduction

At present, there are various cross-regional, economic and security cooperation mechanisms in the Asian region, including the American-led alliances, SAARC, SCO and ASEAN-centered security dialogue and cooperation mechanism, special mechanisms such as the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. These mechanisms range from the legacy of the cold war to incoherence between sub regions and, more importantly, inconsistencies in security concepts (Hillman, 2021). With the inception of Idea of OBOR (one Belt one road initiative) as a background of the rapid development of project like CPEC as an economic cooperation, the security construction in the Asian region is relatively lagging behind, and it is difficult to respond to complex and diversified security challenges in a timely and effective manner, and it is imperative to gradually build an Asian security architecture that is future-oriented, reflects regional realities and meets the interests and needs of all parties (Zhang, 2018).

The construction of a new security architecture in the Asian region should have five characteristics:

1. It should be guided by the new security concept, it advocates a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept.
2. It must be based on the international rule of law and rules, abides by the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations and abides by the norms governing international and regional relations that have been jointly agreed upon by all countries.
3. It must be a partnership building as the link, we should jointly build an Asian regional partnership of equal treatment, mutual trust and inclusiveness, mutual benefit and mutual benefit, and mutual consultation and mutual understanding.

4. It also be a composite, multi-level and diversified network as the framework, strengthen the coordination, upgrading and improvement of existing mechanisms.
5. It must take common development as the foothold to achieve inclusive and mutually beneficial development.

It must be clear for the international community and to surrounding regions of BRI that the cooperation will be taken an only option, to ensure the security of the Asian region. All arrangement must be through dialogue and consultation to ensure the security of the Asian region. There are number of regional forums to enhance the economic and security cooperation in Asia and region around the BRI.

Literature Review

Affairs in Asia are handled by the Asian people, and all parties in the region should jointly establish a regional security architecture that conforms to Asian characteristics as provided (Bashir et al. 2021). The attempts of some extraterritorial powers to dominate Asian affairs deserve the high vigilance of regional countries. The "Indo-Pacific" concept proposed by the United States has obvious geopolitical calculations behind it. Its strong push of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" is to engage in division and confrontation, impact the Asian regional cooperation structure, and damage the overall and long-term interests of regional countries. (Clarke, 2019) explains that the United States' attempt to provoke a "new Cold War" has cast a shadow over regional peace and stability. Faced with the complex situation, the Asian region needs to continue to play the role of the stabiliser and glue of the regional order, to be a force for promoting regional cooperation, to build a bridge of communication between all parties, to enhance mutual strategic trust, and to prevent the regional situation from turning into geopolitics as much as possible, coerced by competition (Yaseen, et. al. 2017). The United States pushes forward with the "QUAD strategy" and engages in the "Indo-Pacific version of NATO". It is playing a trick on geopolitical games and engaging in division and confrontation. The US led the establishment of the US-Japan-India-Australia "Quadilateral mechanism" and the US-UK-Australia trilateral security partnership, which impacted the BRI regional cooperation structure, increased the pressure on the regional security structure, caused a chain reaction to the regional situation, and damaged the security of regional countries for overall and long-term benefits (Shah, et. al 2020) & Muzaffar, et. al. 2018)

Material and Method

The current study is an effort to systematically examining the incapacitating effects of American policies in the region of Asia and beyond to counter the Chinese BRI, in which CPEC is a flagship project. This study has also shed light on the overall functioning of the Asia-Pacific strategy that is designed to counter China but has serious implications for Pakistan as CPEC is a very important project for China that can influence the region. This work is divided into different parts. An introduction to this work is provided in the first section that is followed by a literature review, results and discussion, and at the end of the study, a conclusion to the work is provided. This is qualitative research in which an analytical method is used. The secondary sources, i.e., articles, online data, books, and research papers, are used as basic data to discuss and provide the results.

Results and Discussion

South Asian Region

Pakistan believes that in the face of the new situation, South Asian countries have a more important position and a more prominent role in the world structure. Peace and prosperity in South Asia is not only about the destiny of the region, but also about the future

of the world. The South Asian concept should not be diluted, and South Asian cooperation should not be disturbed. We must take history as a mirror, forge ahead with determination, and join hands to build a South Asian community with a shared future, so as to create new glories of South Asian cooperation. One is to unswervingly maintain peace and stability. It is necessary to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, abandon the Cold War mentality, resist unilateralism, and unequivocally reject any attempt to introduce confrontation between military blocs and camps into the Asian environment. Pakistan must adhere to the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security; pay attention to the reasonable security concerns of all countries; and not base our own security on the insecurity of other countries. Pakistan must insist on peacefully resolving disputes through dialogue and consultation, support all efforts that are conducive to the peaceful resolution of crises, and oppose all words and deeds that exaggerate tension and provoke confrontation in the region. The second is to make concerted efforts to promote economic development.

Pakistan and India should work together to deal with the impact of the epidemic, accelerate regional integration and development, and promote the establishment of an open South Asian economy featuring equal consultation, common participation, and universal benefit. It is necessary to maintain the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization as the core, maintain the stability and smoothness of the global industrial and supply chains, build an open world economy, and create more "South Asian opportunities" for the recovery and growth of the world economy. The third is to complement each other's advantages to achieve win-win cooperation. Asia's countries have outstanding diversity and resource endowments, with huge potential for cooperation. It is necessary to strengthen the alignment of development policies, give full play to their respective advantages, deepen practical cooperation in poverty reduction, food security, anti-epidemic, green development, digital economy, and other fields, form a multiplier synergy, and make Asia's contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Asia-Pacific Region

Japan and China are the two linear players in the Indo-Pacific. Tokyo is a close ally of Washington and has defence ties with the United States. However, the United States sees China's expanding economy as a threat to its regional and international interests. Through trade tariffs, former US President Donald Trump sought to block China's exports and boost local industry in order to create jobs in the country. China's average growth rate has been more than six percent. During the Cold War, Russia's economy was 40 times larger than the US economy, but it was never a threat to the United States. But the recent downturn in China's economy will have far-reaching consequences for the United States. China is now expanding its ties with the world and has a large consumer market in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, as well as exploring other markets in central Africa. The United States has also recently criticised a major trade deal between China and Iran. Iran has signed a \$400 billion development agreement with China (Young, 2018). Some people are calling it the CPEC Plus project. It will be interesting to observe that now Iran will balance its relations with China and India as India is constructing Chahbahar port while China is working on Gwadar port, which is a close ally of Pakistan (Khetran, 2018). It is also interesting to note that despite the border dispute between China and India and the deaths of Indian soldiers, trade relations between the two countries have not been affected. Analysts say US sanctions have brought Iran closer to China. Following the trade agreement, China will buy cheap oil from Iran and invest in Iran's infrastructure, transportation, and communications sectors.

The two countries will also cooperate in the fields of defence and intelligence. According to defence analysts, China will not be a part of any dispute between Iran and its Arab allies because China has trade agreements with Arab countries like Iran. Following the agreement with China, Iran is now in a better position to negotiate a nuclear deal with the United States, as Iran has previously suffered from global isolation. These agreements will strengthen Iran's economy in the years to come. Iran has made similar agreements with the Russian Federation in the past. In addition, Iran supports the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria and the goals of Palestine in the Middle East. It is a major player not only in the Persian Gulf but also in the Middle East. The Biden administration is more interested in renewing the previous nuclear deal with Iran than Trump. On the other hand, a change in US policy in the Middle East can also be felt. The Biden administration is unwilling to compromise on human rights and media freedom, and the CIA recently released a report on the assassination of journalist Jamal Kashugi (Bodetti, 2019). Second, the Biden administration supports a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. During the Obama administration, Joe Biden met with Mahmoud Abbas and supported a two-state solution. There is a good chance that Biden will force the two countries to abide by the Oslo Accords.

In the regional context of South Asia, the recent visit of the Russian Foreign Minister to Pakistan and the growing relations between the two countries point to new dimensions in the region and clear changes in Pakistan's foreign policy. Russia has also welcomed the recent implementation of the ceasefire agreement between Pakistan and India. Russia recognises the geo-strategic and geopolitical importance of Pakistan, and Pakistan can play a positive and constructive role in international peace and stability in the region. On the other hand, Pakistan, which is closely monitoring the changes taking place in Afghanistan after Biden's announcement of the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, Regional players cannot fill American space without Pakistan's help. China is also shaping its foreign policy accordingly by observing the new quad group. Of course, a trade or cold war between the United States and China is not in the world's interest. The new Cold War will start a new arms race that could be dangerous not only for the Indo-Pacific region but for the whole world.

Challenges from Iran

The prospect of a slowdown in global conflict seems to have faded because the United States is unwilling to back down from its global goals. As a result, the big game between the world's big ones will continue, and the process of creating, raising, dragging, and dropping the small players will not be any less intense. The big players are the US, NATO, Quad, Russia, and China, while the smaller players are like Pakistan, which is swinging like a pendulum due to decision making and economic weakness. One day, when the pressure comes, they will be seen standing with China. Just a few months ago, it seemed that Pakistan was now on the path of an independent foreign policy and out of the realm of American wars and orders (Amirthan, 2016). In this context, the Chinese Foreign Minister, during his visit to Iran, praised Iran and made a meaningful statement. The phrase was admirable in that Iran did not change its foreign policy with a single telephone call. The sentence was very poignant and immediately led to a telephone call from the US authorities to General Musharraf in which Pakistan was asked threateningly whether you were with us or with the terrorists.

After hearing the answer that is with you, the United States changed the direction of Pakistan's entire foreign policy with constant pressure and threats. The Chinese foreign minister's rhetoric in Iran came as a surprise to Pakistan as it seemed that Pakistan was moving forward with one page, shaking off all its fears. Perhaps the informed Chinese officials were aware of the ongoing Pakistani politics and the state. He was aware of the conflict and knew that Pakistan would change its course on a post, albeit not over the phone.

The Chinese Foreign Minister's statement, which seemed unnecessary at the time, came true a few months later. Now the evidence suggests that the global conflict is intensifying rather than diminishing and that the effects of this conflict are certain to be transmitted to the bridegroom and his bride (Raza, 2019). Today, many regional countries, including Pakistan, are paying the price for these effects. America believes that China is a long-term threat compared to Russia. Russia is an immediate threat to the global system, but China poses a more serious threat to the global system. China is a country that wants to use its economic, technical, military, and diplomatic resources to achieve its goal of advancing the international system in line with its ideology. China has the potential to destroy international security. The foundations of the international system are currently under serious threat. Before invading Ukraine, Russia had signed a number of security agreements with China. The United States wants to use every means at its disposal to counter China.

The US Secretary of State has said that China is still in the realm of "villain" in US future policy. If you look at the hieroglyphic image on the canvas of the US China Center's global policy, you can see that Narendra Modi is central to challenging and stopping China at its doorstep and confronting it in a practical battle. The USA is keeping China in its orbit and the role of India and Pakistan is the most important to keeping China in its orbit. 2021: India's role is important in keeping China confined to its orbit and Pakistan's role is important for China to move out of this orbit and move towards the world stage ("US lays strategy to counter China, strengthens ties with India, allies," 2021). These are two opposite characters. The United States strives to minimise this contradiction between the roles of Pakistan and India and to ensure that Pakistan maintains trade and energy relations with China but that it repents of its partnership with China's geostrategic interests. This tension is clearly reflected in the political system of Pakistan, and in the future, this tension will also be reflected in the political struggle of Pakistan. This clearly means that political stability in Pakistan is unlikely. The Pakistani state is once again in a state of confusion.

Pakistan's Strategy

BRI is a world-class infrastructure development plan under which the Chinese government is investing heavily in about 70 countries. there was no way for Pakistan to give up any of its benefits as it had burned its fingers in the (Western) alliance more than once in the past. Indian efforts to reduce China's strategic influence in the region would fail. The Western powers view the CPEC as a symbol of China's political ambitions, which is why the CPEC is viewed with suspicion by both the United States and Europe. Seen as a step towards expansion, however, China has largely overcome this fear. (Ishfaq, 2019). Many Western think tanks and commentators have described CPEC as an economic trap that has already led to high levels of public debt and disproportionately Chinese influence in the country's economy. The question that is rapidly circulating in the world political circles is whether the world is going to be divided into two blocks. The US bloc and the Chinese bloc. Obviously the biggest reason for this is that China today has expanded its investment in most parts of the world and is expanding further, especially trade with most countries in Africa, South America and Asia. And investment agreements have been reached.

China's rapid policy makes it clear that China wants to take control of world trade and the economy. He has acquired technology from institutions and is using all the tactics for further China has used its investment and trade policy to build military bases in the Indian Ocean and African countries, while the South China Sea already has China's largest modern naval and air base in the Pacific Ocean, which is further enhanced by the construction of artificial islands. Expanding The United States, of course, is deeply concerned about China's policies. Former US President Donald Trump was taking a significant lead in this regard. The US president raised tariffs on a number of key products, prompting strong protests from China, but Chinese investment did not decline. In the

current context, in the opinion of most American and foreign observers, the world is on a dangerous path.

The two great powers of the world seem to be moving towards confrontation. In this regard, the four countries cite the United States, Japan, Australia, and India as examples of a comprehensive agreement that is a defense agreement set up to block China's path. Although the United States and others have made it clear that China is not a target in WWII, trade is a broader bilateral cooperation agreement. Similarly, the Chinese bloc, which includes North Korea, Pakistan, and some African and South Asian countries, is based on a comprehensive agreement, not a confrontation. If there is a conflict between the United States and China, then these countries will inevitably side with China. North Korea, however, will only support China. Because both Pakistan and China have long been good friends, they are bound by a peaceful bilateral agreement, not a defense agreement. However, nowadays there is a rift between the United States and India, so there is some coldness between the United States and Pakistan. However, Pakistan must reconsider its foreign policy and keep a balance. (Alam, 2021). The nature and method of doing so is still a matter of debate in India. The United States is an important partner in the heart of India, but the United States is shifting from the world to its own, and it is uncertain how it will deal with China. The United States certainly no longer owns the international economic or political system. Pakistan and Afghanistan are equally important challenges for us, especially in the context of the withdrawal of US troops. Pakistan has tried to attack India to overcome its internal weakness and has made itself effective for external patrons. An atomic bomb for Saudi Arabia, access to the Indian Ocean and paving the way for China in Afghanistan means it has a strategic advantage and has promised the United States a clear way out of Afghanistan. However, the reality is that if India allows this to happen, cross-border terrorism from India in Pakistan and its backers could derail Pakistan's efforts. Although Pakistan has responded well to terrorism, it is unfortunate that terrorism itself is on the rise around the world (Khalid, 2021).

In Afghanistan, Pakistan has persuaded the United States, Russia, and China that the Taliban should be given a place in the Afghan government and that Pakistan can achieve that. The instability is now spreading to Southeast Asia, from the Rohingya in Myanmar, Philippines and Malaysia to Indonesia. Its contagious effects and the threat of extremism are growing in India. Pakistan is not a strategic threat to India, provided India does not make it possible for Pakistan to exploit the religious gulf in Indian society. In the years when non state actors were most active in creating difficulties in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and other places, India thwarted these efforts with great success. If Pakistan can now create problems for India, it can do so through China, which is a big threat because it is China that will enhance Pakistan's capabilities (Markey, 2020, Rahim et. al. 2018). China and Pakistan should, strengthen their defenses, and pledge their support for the CPEC's long-term future. Despite the challenges, solidarity, cooperation, and common development are still the consensus of all countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

In response to American attempts to form groups and create separatist confrontation in the region, many countries have openly demonstrated their strong willingness to maintain independent and balanced diplomacy and maintain regional peace and stability. Malaysia maintains a neutral stance and will not choose sides between China and the United States (Mishra & Wang, 2021). The Vietnamese government reiterated that Vietnam will not join hands with other countries against other countries ("Vietnam will not 'join forces with one country in opposition to another': Foreign spokesperson," 2021). Whereas in response to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the international community has acted. China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, and other countries have provided food, medicine, winter materials, and other assistance to Afghanistan (O'Connor, 2021). International and regional organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization

of Islamic Cooperation have also taken steps to provide support for assistance to Afghanistan. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution making it clear that humanitarian assistance and other activities in support of basic humanitarian needs in Afghanistan do not violate the security council's sanctions resolution.

Conclusion

The "Indo-Pacific" concept proposed by the United States has obvious geopolitical calculations behind it. Its strong push of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" is to engage in division and confrontation, impact the BRI and CPEC regional cooperation structures, and damage the overall and long-term interests of regional countries. The South Asian region can become a peaceful and prosperous region after the BRI, and BRI centrality in the regional structure has played an important role. Through the process of community building and economic integration, there is a need to form a moderate security culture and unique diplomatic concept, playing an irreplaceable role in building an open and inclusive regional security architecture. The "Indo-Pacific" concept proposed by the United States has obvious geopolitical calculations behind it. In recent years, the United States has stepped up its "Indo-Pacific strategy," trying to reshape the regional geopolitical pattern by uniting allies and strengthening "small circles," which has brought serious risks to regional security and stability. Although the US claims to "support the Indian government against China", its real purpose is to maintain its global hegemony. In such a situation, Pakistan should not wait for American blessings but work for new security arrangements. Pakistan's hope is to continue to maintain strategic independence, play a unique role in regional cooperation and regional security, and play a role in promoting regional development and prosperity rather than be a pawn in geopolitical competition.

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