



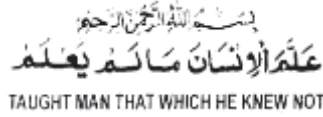
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E9 QUARTERLY

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Editorial Note

The third issue of volume 2, 2023 of E9 Quarterly in hand contains twelve INSIGHTS written during the third quarter of 2023. These INSIGHTS discuss economic, political and security challenges faced to Pakistan while highlighting the importance of strategic alignment, domestic institutions, and economic reforms. Pakistan must strengthen its institutions and implement economic reforms to achieve sustained growth. This issue covers the significance of combat drone and anti-drone technologies, and small combat teams as stay behind parties for Pakistan in future warfare, recommending Pakistan to seek collaboration with militarily advanced friendly countries like Turkey, China, Russia, and the US in terms of R&D on government-to-government level or through public-private ventures to pursue combat drone and anti-drone technologies drive.

Besides this, US-China rivalry in Africa for geopolitical influence and its implications for the world peace, Sino-India Border Disputes in the backdrop of India's strategic partnership with the US, allowing New Delhi to leverage its position internationally and India's Strategic Juggling among US, China, and Russia to avert confrontation with China and Russia exercising her strategic autonomy and delivering on the US desired outcomes of countering China have also been touched upon in this issue.

This issue further entails Pakistan's realignment of its geoeconomics to meet the geopolitical challenges as presently, Pakistan's geopolitical interests are more aligned with China but its geoeconomic interests are still anchored with the US-led West, the rise of cyber nationalism-exploring different approaches to cyber nationalism to counter anti-state narratives, the progress of CPEC projects, highlighting the need for continued commitment and collaboration among all parties involved in the CPEC project to ensure its success, Science Diplomacy to employ international scientific collaboration to achieve foreign policy objectives like peace, stability, and sustainable development for building stronger

ties with other nations, exploring the origin of Junagadh dispute between Pakistan and India, which has largely faded from public discourse and its implications under international law and the Africa's potential as an economic partner for Pakistan, highlighting the continent's vast resources and deepening economic integration exploring Pakistan's African policy initiatives, including "Look Africa" policy and "Engage Africa Initiative," which aim to increase political, economic and commercial ties with African countries.

This issue further explores Pakistan's prospects in Global Halal Meat Market. It highlights that global Halal meat market occupies a share of US\$ 2,221.3 billion, and this is projected to reach US\$ 4,177.3 billion by 2028. Pakistan ranks 19th in the list having a market share of only 0.4%. Owing to the country's close geographical proximity to the Middle East, vast and fertile cultivable land and Muslim identity, Pakistan has a great potential to enhance its share in global halal meat market. In addition to beef, it must tap avenues in seafood, ostrich, mutton, and poultry farming to enhance its export turnover. The sector will not only diversify its economic outreach but also add to the country's overall food security.

Finally, the issue concludes with discussion over the importance of Wakhan as a gateway to strategic opportunities. To get the maximum benefits from this hidden gem, all the countries, including Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, and Central Asian States, must pledge to build cooperation and invest in infrastructure with proper framework. Whenever the route is operational, it will certainly boost trade and transform the whole region. Wakhan Corridor if developed would not only increase economic cooperation but also reinforce the relations and facilitate smooth trade and transit on lower cost.

We hope that this publication will assist readers in keeping up to date with the current strategic landscape and find the analyses informative. We welcome contributions in the form of short pieces of writing offering insight on national security matters.

Significance of Anti-Drone Technology and Small Combat Teams for Pakistan

Marium Akhtar

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses the future and significance of combat drone and anti-drone technologies, and small combat teams as stay behind parties for Pakistan in future warfare. It highlights various options available to Pakistan in terms of combat drone and anti-drone technologies. It further explores that Pakistan may seek collaboration with militarily advanced friendly countries like Turkey, China, Russia, and the US in terms of R&D on government-to-government level or through public-private ventures to pursue combat drone and anti-drone technologies drive.

Keywords: Modern Warfare, Technologies, Tactics, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Drones, Kinetic Operations.

Modern warfare is constantly evolving and adapting to new technologies and tactics. The rise of combat unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones has brought a true revolution in military domain with altered war strategy resulting in increased target engagement, low casualty rate and increased effectiveness in limited as well as expanded kinetic operations. The recent conflicts, like the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the Russia-Ukraine war, demonstrate the cruciality of drones and anti-drone systems for future warfare. In both scenarios, drones have been used to gather intelligence, conduct surveillance, and even carry out attacks. A vital lesson we can derive from these wars is improving our operational strategy through advancements in anti-drone technology. Although advancement and sophistication of drone technology for warfare cannot be ignored, as they are costly, our focus should be on improving strategies for

detecting, intercepting, and targeting enemy drones as they become more advanced.

Between the two domains of anti-drone technology (hard-kill and soft-kill), utilizing hard kill techniques such as conventional anti-aircraft guns against drones are impractical due to high expense of conventional anti-aircraft weapons. Soft kill employs techniques that can malfunction navigation systems onboard a drone and entails jamming and spoofing. It is preferred, cost-effective, and widely used way of countering drones.

Globally, militaries are equipped with different anti-drone technologies capable of both hard and soft kills. For example, the US possesses several anti-drone systems, including GhostEye Radars, DEDrone (Counter-Drone Defense Solutions & Systems), National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMSTM), Stinger Missile, Iron Dome System, SkyHunter Missile, Coyote® unmanned aircraft system, and High-Energy Lasers, among others.¹ Israel's drone dome system developed by Rafael Systems is a multi-sensor multi-effector counter UAV system.²



Similarly, Britain's anti-drone system, called the Anti-UAV Defense System (AUDS) is a joint venture of different British companies.³ Germany's Modular Counter-UAS System (MUAS) is a portable system that combines radar, optics, and electronic warfare capabilities.⁴

In Pakistan-India context, India recently declared that it would equip the Border Security Force (BSF) with anti-drone systems close to the Line of Control (LoC). It has chosen the Israeli anti-drone Smash 2000 Plus system, which can detect drones and any UAV from a distance and target them within 10 seconds.⁵ Regarding Pakistan's counter-drone system, both soft-kill and hard-kill options are being developed indigenously and are in the phase of Research and Development (R&D). Pakistan started developing its EW capabilities after 2019 when an Indian drone was shot down near LoC using the Air Defense System, which highlighted the need to develop advanced detection systems. In fact, Pakistan Navy has successfully developed its first EW system RIBAT.⁶

Investing in electronic warfare capabilities is one way to disrupt the communication links between combat drones and their operators. R&D, indigenization and procurement of anti-drone technology should be the focus of our defense forces and are already being pursued in Pakistan, but the process needs to speed up for better security in the wake of the enemy's recent offensive misadventures. One of the biggest hurdles remains government's lack of investment in R&D. Civil-military collaboration is crucial for this process, as government cannot finance these projects alone. Venture Capitalists (VC) are investors who have limited partnership to invest funds and can be game changers in this domain. In this regard, governance issues and unnecessary hurdles should be eliminated for overall national security.

Civil installations and infrastructure are as important as military installations and equipment. Critical public infrastructure like airports, universities, government department buildings, stadiums and military installations are all protected by anti-drone equipment worldwide.⁷ Hence more research and investment are needed to incorporate jamming systems and spoofing devices into traditional air defense systems, which would help disrupt the navigation and communication systems of enemy combat drones.

On the operational side, Pakistan Army should evaluate the concept of small combat teams as stay-behind parties during kinetic operations equipped with essential technology weapons like offensive combat

drones combined with ISR to create disruptions behind enemy lines. This formation would be a force multiplier and especially beneficial for mountainous areas with rough and rugged terrain where small combat teams can track, target and attack enemy.

Apart from others, a drone deployment technique called the **Lie Torpid Technique** (meaning sleep through the cold) can also be evaluated as a combat strategy involving the clandestine placing / dropping of remotely controlled dormant / hibernating camouflaged combat drones at different strategic locations inside enemy territory. This idea relates to the **Upward Falling Payloads** concept developed by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in 2013 and used by the US Navy.⁸ The idea includes several Pods to hold naval drones on the ocean floor for extended periods of time. The pods are released remotely and float to the surface to open and release the drone inside if a threat feels close by. The goal is to pre-deploy the assets years in advance and then trigger their release for immediate impacts at times in the future that we choose, allowing for the timely deployment of unmanned distributed systems to far-off areas.⁹ This technique can be used for harassment and nuisance in times of need and utility by conventional forces in case of limited war situations in border areas and beyond.

Furthermore, the local drone manufacturing industry needs to be incentivized, and the private sector should be encouraged to invest more in this sector. Collaboration and outreach with militarily advanced friendly countries like Turkey, China, Russia, and the US may be built. Moreover, increased engagement with neighbours facing sanctions like Iran should not be ruled out, and alternative ways should be explored to navigate these sanctions for R&D collaboration, especially in anti-drone technology.

Drone and anti-drone technologies would be central to the future warfare, thanks to the incorporation of robotics and artificial intelligence into every aspect of military operations. It is speculated that future battles will be fought without or with minimum physical intervention of soldiers. Consequently, strengthening the conventional military may be a low-hanging fruit for resource-stricken countries like Pakistan. Hence, our focus should be to develop Electronic Warfare

Capabilities like anti-drone technologies by surpassing the challenges Pakistan faces in its R&D domain.

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About Insight and Author

This INSIGHT was first published on the ISSRA website in July 2023. It can be accessed at <https://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/pub/insight/2023/Significance-of-Anti-drone-Technology/Significance%20of%20Anti-drone%20Technology.pdf>. The writer is a Research Associate at NDU and can be reached at mariam.akhtar@gmail.com

US-China Rivalry in Africa

Muhammad Qasim

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses US-China rivalry in Africa and its implications. It highlights that the rivalry between the US and China in Africa is a contest for geopolitical influence. China's ambitious BRI serves as an instrument to expand its sphere of influence and secure access to Africa's resources. In response, the US, seeks to counter it through its strategy of disruption to protect its strategic interests in Africa. Consequently, African nations are caught in the middle. Thus, making the African continent likely decisive battleground in determining the future course of international politics.

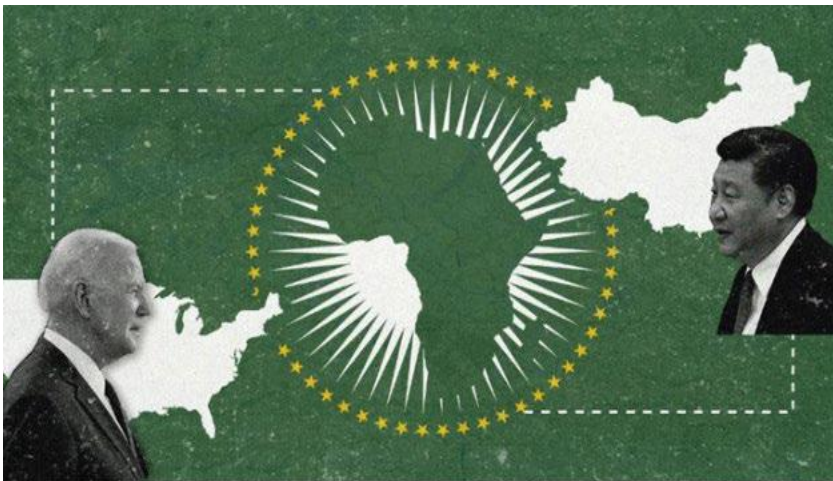
Keywords: Power Politics, Economic Interests, Strategic Maneuvers, Development, Prosperity, Civilizations, Colonization.

The US-China rivalry in Africa has garnered global attention, revealing a complex web of power politics, economic interests and strategic maneuvers. Both the nations claim to prioritize Africa's development and prosperity. Critical analysis of their actions exposes underlying motives and questionable practices. This insight aims to dissect the US-China rivalry in Africa, shedding light on the implications and potential pitfalls of this geopolitical game.

Africa has been part of ancient civilization, known for its trade and has been a place of intervention and colonization by foreign powers like the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Britain, and France from 15th to 20th century. The colonizers actively engaged in extracting minerals, transatlantic slave trade and took millions of Africans from their homes as slaves to North America. The colonization of several powers over hundreds of years has brought changes to the continent's infrastructure, governance systems and enforced racial hierarchies.¹

African continent, with the world's second-largest population after Asia,² has a vast economic potential and is rich in mineral resources like gold, diamonds, copper, cobalt and oil reserves.³ Africa has thus long been a place of interest for major powers that colonized various countries, intervened militarily with the dominant intention to extract their mineral resources and subsequently use them in the global markets to strengthen their economies.

The African continent is increasingly becoming an arena for great power competition between the US and China.⁴ According to some experts, it is starting to look like a new Cold War,⁵ but rather than the fight for alliances in ideology, the competing states are looking towards developing relations which would help them in future. Their competition is mainly in the economic sphere rather than the military. At a time when the US and Russia are locked in a battle of wills in Ukraine on the one hand and the US-China standoff on the other, global diplomacy to win over allies has heightened.⁶ Both the US and China are looking to win over nonaligned countries in places like Africa.



In December 2022, the US hosted Africa Summit in Washington to "unlock the potential of the decisive decade"⁷ after a long gap of eight years. The first such summit was held in 2014. President Biden pledged a \$55 billion support package as a US commitment to invest in food security, health, education and infrastructure⁸ to advance priorities and

support of the US-African who have joined hands through the African Union's Agenda 2063.⁹ According to Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken, "Africa is a major geopolitical force. It has shaped our past, it is shaping our present, and it will shape our future."¹⁰ The visit of US Vice President Kamala Harris to African countries in March 2023 has set the ground for the US to solidify its Strategy for Africa.¹¹

The military presence of the US in Africa is in its bases in Djibouti, Kenya, Niger, Egypt and Cameroon. The role of its military in the region is to fight against terrorism, train African partners in responding to crises and protect US interests. The bases also have the mission of sharing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data with allied and partner nations.¹²

UN missions in Africa increased in 1990s due to end of the Cold War and decline in superpower rivalry. There was a perceived opportunity for the US to address African conflicts and humanitarian crises. Since then UN has maintained its peacekeeping operations, of which the US is the largest financial contributor. The UN has 14 peacekeeping missions worldwide; seven are in Africa.¹³

Under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has invested in infrastructural projects in various African countries such as Algeria, Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya and Mozambique. It has reignited the US and the West's interest in Africa. Since 2000, China has hosted the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which is seen as a crucial tool for furthering China's diplomatic and economic objectives. China has mainly invested in the development of infrastructure, as well as resource extraction by Chinese mining and energy firms.¹⁴ According to a study by the Centre for Global Development (CGDev), Chinese development banks lend far more to Africa than the US, Germany, France and Japan combined.¹⁵ Concurrently, US Congress has been funding a Countering Chinese Influence Fund since 2019 to challenge China's influence in Africa and elsewhere.¹⁶

With an investment of \$155 billion over the previous 20 years, China has remained one of the leading financiers of infrastructure projects in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, Beijing has gained considerable influence

and contacts with several African nations. It has prompted some observers to see BRI, launched in 2013, as a vehicle for "Chinese geopolitical expansion."¹⁷

According to China's official (BRI) website, 42 African countries have signed MOUs for rail, roads, energy and infrastructural development projects with China. One of the major projects is the Chechell Beltway project that strategically connects Algeria with Niger, Nigeria and Chad, thereby accessing a combined market of 275 million people and these landlocked markets to Algerian seaports. China is also working on the Addis Ababa to Djibouti railway line in Ethiopia. The construction of Port

The African continent can prove to be a decisive battleground in determining the future course of global politics.

of Doraleh, near Djibouti, is another project under BRI that offers sea access to and from Ethiopia, Africa's fastest-growing economy and the continent's second most populous country.¹⁸ Opening Ethiopia up to trade is integral to China's African strategy.¹⁹ Other projects included in BRI are the East Africa Rail Corridors, the Mombassa-Nairobi Railway in Kenya and the construction of Africa's longest bridge in Mozambique.²⁰

China is Africa's largest trading partner, hitting \$254 billion in 2021.²¹ It also remains the largest lender to African countries and is the largest provider of foreign direct investment, supporting hundreds of thousands of African jobs.²² For the US, the trade in goods and services with Africa in 2021 stood at \$83.6 billion.²³ According to an analysis in Nikkei Asia, after displacing the US as Africa's leading trading partner in 2009, China will likely import \$300 billion worth of African goods between 2022 and 2024.²⁴

China has pledged military cooperation with African partners and provided \$60 million in military support as part of the FOCAC plan for 2016–18. The Chinese base at Djibouti has a dock capable of accommodating aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines.²⁵ In the FOCAC plan of 2019–2021, 50 programs were to be established to improve security coordination between China and African nations. China has already invested \$10 billion in international security, with a significant amount spent on Africa. The Chinese security support in

Africa ranges from regular military and civilian police to private security companies.²⁶

US commentators often describe China's investments in Asia, Central Asia and Africa as a debt trap by China. The US has repeatedly accused China of a deliberate strategy to loan 'unmanageable sums' to bring countries under its sphere of influence.²⁷ On the contrary, China considers itself a promising partner for Africa that has built gradual relations and brought about development and stability through progressive economic measures to benefit both. It can be argued that the US interest in Africa is spurred by China's increasing presence and is driven by its desire to counter China's influence.

On the brighter side, the US-China rivalry could bring prosperity, security and development in the region to benefit all, especially the people of Africa. For observers, the African continent can be a decisive battleground determining the future course of global politics, with China emerging as the strongman.

For Pakistan, the opportunity lies in increased economic activity via trade through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). The sectors in Pakistan that can collaborate and benefit immensely are the textile, agriculture and pharmaceutical industries.²⁸

To sum up, the rivalry between the US and China in Africa is a contest for geopolitical influence. China's ambitious BRI serves as an instrument to expand its sphere of influence and secure access to Africa's resources. Through extensive investments in infrastructure projects, China positions itself as a formidable player, extending its economic reach and solidifying diplomatic ties across the continent. In response, the US, recognizing China's growing influence, seeks to counter it through its strategy of disruption to protect its strategic interests in Africa.²⁹ Through military partnerships, security cooperation and initiatives like Prosper Africa, the US endeavors to counterbalance China's economic sway and preserve its geopolitical advantage. Consequently, African nations are caught in the middle, subject to a tug-of-war between these global powers. Thus, the African continent can be a decisive battleground in determining the future course of international politics.

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Sino-India Border Disputes: An Appraisal

Fatima Saleem

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses Sino-India Border Disputes in the backdrop of India's strategic partnership with the US allowing New Delhi to leverage its position internationally. It highlights that Sino-India border tensions are bound to hold greater geopolitical and economic ramifications for New Delhi. The coming years will test India's resolve in the matter and pose a formidable challenge when making tough diplomatic and economic decisions. It further explores that the Sino-India border dispute presents numerous challenges as well as opportunities for Pakistan in the geopolitical, diplomatic and security domains.

Keywords: *Strategic Partnership, Diplomatic Decisions, Geopolitical Domain, Confrontation, Dispute.*

As China and India continue to gain economic and military prowess, analysts express concerns that a miscalculation along the disputed Sino-India border could escalate to a full-scale war. Geographically, the ill-defined 3,440 km long border is in treacherous terrains of the Himalayas. Almost the entire length is contended. Being the de facto border, the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has often been the cause of major confrontations between the two countries.

The core border dispute between the two countries can be categorized into three regions: Aksai Chin, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. In the Western part of the border is the Aksai Chin territory, which is claimed by India but is under the occupation of China. While the dispute over the Sikkim region is almost settled, the surrounding states of Bhutan and Nepal have often been termed as potential flashpoints. Moving eastwards, the territory of Arunachal Pradesh is claimed by China but controlled by India.

The disagreement stems from India’s unilaterally making the region part of their territory.



China stands firm on the stance that the area has historically been part of Southern Tibet and that Beijing never partook in any agreement signed during the India-Tibet negotiations in 1912, thus wholly rejecting the British-drawn McMahon line. It is worth mentioning that due to its size and population, the state of Arunachal Pradesh holds the utmost significance in the Sino-India border dispute. The table summarizes the disputes that have occurred till now.

Ser	Year	Region	Event
1.	1962	Aksai Chin	Sino-India War
2.	1967	Northeast Sikkim State	Nathu La and Cho La Clashes
3.	1975	Arunachal Pradesh	Tulung La Ambush
4.	1987	Thag La Ridge, Arunachal Pradesh	Sumdorong Chu Valley Clashes
5.	2013	Northern Ladakh	Daulat Beg Oldi Incursion
6.	2014	Leh, Ladakh	Demchok Construction
7.	2015	Ladakh	Burste Region Incident
8.	2017	Doklam	Doklam Standoff
9.	2020	Ladakh	Galwan River Valley Brawls

In view of changing international dynamics, the US has designated India as its strategic partner to counter growing Chinese influence in the region. Because of this, it has been made an integral member of QUAD. In addition, India's admission to the NSG and the US renaming its security architecture from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific indicate a larger Indian role in the region.¹ India's embodiment of a counterweight to China has made it a major recipient of US arms, with sales reaching almost USD 20 billion.² It is bound to inculcate a bloated sense of superiority in New Delhi, thus posing a risk of war between the two. Current statistics suggest that China is overwhelmingly superior to India in conventional and nuclear capabilities; therefore, the world's second most populous country is in no position to counter China's force for force.

Geopolitically, in recent months, there has been a favourable diplomatic tilt in Moscow's relations with China in which the Russia-Ukraine war has played the role of a catalyst. It became evident after the imposition of severe sanctions on Russia when Kremlin began exploring stronger ties with China. Therefore, in the long run, Moscow's growing reliance on Beijing for diplomatic, strategic and economic reasons can cause India to worry, especially when Asian giants (China and India) are competing for Russian crude to sell in the refined form to the European Union. Reports indicate that both countries were the biggest importers of Urals, and that too at a price slightly above the Western cap of USD 60 per barrel.³ Therefore, given the triangle of conflicting interests, China, at any stage, may use its growing influence over Moscow to forestall the export of Russian crude to India, which will impact its emerging oil market. China can, therefore, use this relation to compel India to pursue a softer approach in the disputed border region and gain major concessions.

As the probability of a limited conflict and minor skirmishes will remain high, the possibility of a full-scale war between the two ascending powers is debatable. Both nations share deep trade ties, worth USD 136.26 billion annually.⁴ These deep economic linkages are projected to grow and can open doors of commonalities that may help averting a full-scale war. Owing to deep economic linkages and emerging domestic

challenges, the likelihood of a conflict between the two countries remains low in the medium term.

From 2009 onwards, India formally fortified its two-front war strategy.⁵ Even though experts have questioned its sustainability as well as Pakistan being its sole target. The very existence of two-front war strategy indicates that the policymakers in New Delhi are fully aware of the possibility of a large-scale conflict with China. Moreover, India's deepening strategic collaboration with the US in the realm of defence, technology and development can provide it with an exaggerated sense of superiority, which, along with the growing Hindu nationalism, can prompt it to make a pre-emptive move to appease the audience at home.

Recent reports suggest that Indian oil refineries have started purchasing Russian oil in Chinese Yuan, with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited also expected to join.⁶ Despite sharing strategic ties with the US, the move suggests that New Delhi's diplomatic moves are precisely planned to guard its interests fiercely. One can, therefore, predict that in case of a US-China conflict, it is unlikely that India will bandwagon the US and ignite the border dispute with China unless the benefits outweigh the costs.

Whichever scenario unfolds, the Sino-India border dispute will continue to expose Indian vulnerabilities to the Chinese. The cultural and territorial integration of the Tibetan region into the Chinese territory is central to the dispute. Therefore, the eastern boundary, the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, poses serious concerns for New Delhi due to its proximity to the strategic Siliguri corridor and because Beijing enjoys infrastructural, logistic and military advantages. It is worth mentioning that the Tibetan region is significant for its vast glacial reserves and abundant freshwater resources. Being upstream, China exerts control over the waters flowing into the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Yangtze and Mekong rivers.⁷ According to Aquastat (FAO, UN), 718 billion cubic meters of water is estimated to flow out of the Tibetan plateau annually, out of which 48.33% flows directly into India.⁸ It gives Beijing an unparalleled advantage to "weaponize" water in its favour by blocking the hydrological flow to India through dams

and diversions, making water downstream unfit for consumption and flooding the region through water fluctuations.⁹

The burgeoning US-China competition and India's strategic partnership with the US has allowed New Delhi to leverage its position internationally. One can, therefore, conclude that regardless of how the situation at the border unfolds, Sino-India border tensions are bound to hold greater geopolitical and economic ramifications for New Delhi. The coming years will test India's resolve in the matter and pose a formidable challenge when making tough diplomatic and economic decisions. The Sino-India border dispute presents numerous challenges and opportunities for Pakistan in the geopolitical, diplomatic and security domains. Therefore, Pakistan must keep a close eye on the latest international developments to take advantage of the environment to further its national interest.

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India's Strategic Juggling Among US, China and Russia

Dr Muhammad Shabbir and Qurat Ul Ain

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses India's Strategic Juggling among US, China, and Russia. It highlights that India would like to exert its 'strategic autonomy' and may refuse to give a cold shoulder to Russia or confront China; however, the US would ultimately pressurize India to do so. It would be a complex scenario as Modi is already under pressure, and there are more fault lines in India which can be exploited by the US if India does not deliver the desired outcomes to counter China.

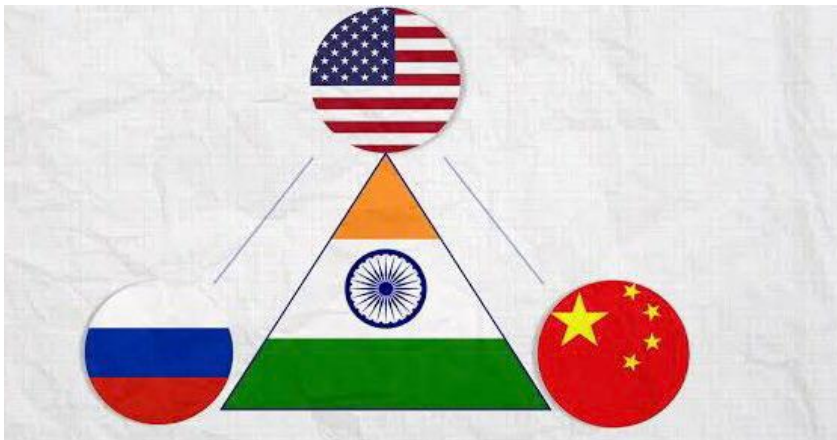
Keywords: Strategic Autonomy, Economic Priorities, Geopolitical Positioning, Mismatched Priorities, Primakov Doctrine, Geographical Proximity, Multipolar Worldview, Regional Stability, Economic Cooperation, Cultural Connections.

India strives to maintain a delicate balance between major global powers such as the US, China and Russia in ever-evolving international relations. To recall, since its independence in 1947, India joined the Non-Aligned Movement, a group of nations that did not align with either the US or USSR during the Cold War. Presently, Prime Minister Modi has advocated a reversed version of the policy, choosing partnerships in each camp based on which he thinks India's interests will be served.¹ Most significantly, India has strengthened security ties with the US while purchasing cheap Russian crude oil and military equipment.² As the world order transforms significantly, India's role becomes increasingly vital and complex. While the West views India as a potential ally and partner, it remains unclear whether India perceives the West as a strategic need, particularly the US. This insight explores

India's positioning in major power politics and its implications for the emerging world order.

The US views India as a key player in maintaining stability and preserving its interests in the Indian Ocean region. Contrarily, while India acknowledges the potential benefits of collaborating with the US, it does not necessarily view the US as an essential strategic need. India's foreign policy has long been characterized by its commitment to strategic autonomy and non-alignment.³

India's relationship with China is characterized by a complex interplay of cooperation and competition. While both nations have sought to enhance economic ties and engage in diplomatic negotiations, issues such as border disputes and regional rivalries, have also strained their relationship. India remains cautious of China's assertiveness in the region and seeks to counterbalance its influence with the support of the US-led West. Interestingly, ties between India and China are tense, but the trade between the two nations is still higher than that between India and the US. The bilateral trade between China and India in 2022 was \$135.98 billion, whereas the bilateral trade between India and the US stood at \$ 119.42 billion.⁴



On the other hand, India's historical ties with Russia significantly shape its foreign policy outlook. India and Russia share a long-standing partnership that dates back to the Cold War era. The relationship

between the two countries extends beyond mere political and cultural interests and includes strong strategic and defence ties. Russia has been a leading supplier of military equipment to India, and the two nations continue to collaborate in various sectors, including energy, space exploration, etc. The defence relationship between Russia and India has grown into one of the strongest in the world over the years. Russia is currently the second-largest arms exporter in the world, and India is its most important and devoted buyer. India's arsenal contains more than 60% Russian-made items.⁵

While the US and other Western powers seek to forge closer ties with India, a sense of unease exists between India and the West. This perception stems from a combination of factors, including India's commitment to so-called strategic autonomy, economic priorities and unique geopolitical positioning. It can lead to divergent positions on issues such as trade, Ukraine conflict, Iran, climate change and regional conflicts, creating a sense of mismatched priorities between India and the West.

On the economic front, the US and other Western nations have made significant investments in India; however, the reverse is not always true. Furthermore, India's cultural and historical contexts differ significantly from those of Western countries. While the factors mentioned above contribute to a sense of mismatched priorities and perspectives, they do not necessarily overshadow the potential for collaboration and partnership between India and the West.

On the other hand, while India does maintain important partnerships with the US and other Western countries, the Primakov Doctrine suggests that the alignment between India, Russia and China is rooted in geographical proximity, shared interests and a multipolar worldview.⁶ India's alignment with Russia and China is based on

The fact remains that the strong partnership with India is US' strategic compulsion but not vice versa. Indians comprehend this fully and exploit US strategic weakness to the fullest. Latest US-India joint statement is a testament to a one-sided love affair where US seems to go to lengths to please India without much in return, but for how long?

recognizing their mutual benefits, regional stability, economic cooperation and cultural connections.

The US-China rivalry and escalating hostilities over Ukraine, Taiwan, the South China Sea and the East China Sea have also brought China and Russia closer. China and Russia have been regularly engaged in joint military exercises and exchanged advanced military equipment and high-level technology exchanges. Due to the Sino-Russian alliance, India is in a difficult situation since China can increase military pressure on the disputed border with India. India depends on Russian military supplies, even though Russia is China's coalition partner. Despite tensions, India and China have managed to share some common ground in certain key venues, gaining more relevance in an increasingly multipolar international order. These include the nine-state Shanghai Cooperation Organization bloc and the informal coalition known as BRICS. Second, a consistent supply of weaponry and spare parts from Russia is necessary for India's military forces to function smoothly. On the other hand, once regarded as essential to India's 'strategic autonomy', the Russian alliance is now the biggest obstacle to the country's ability to act independently.⁷

In such scenarios, India cannot give the cold shoulder to Russia or confront China; however, the US would ultimately pressurize India to do so. India would like to exert its 'strategic autonomy' and may give a cold shoulder to the US. It would be a complex scenario as Modi is already under pressure, and there are more fault lines in India which can be exploited by the US. If India does not deliver the desired outcomes to counter China, how the US would respond remains unclear. The US may reassess its approach and explore alternative strategies.

One possible course of action for the US could be to exploit internal fault lines within India, particularly issues related to minority communities and human rights violations, including the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. By highlighting perceived injustices and inequalities, the US could undermine social cohesion and stability, thereby creating an environment conducive to its interests.

Another conceivable action is an attempt to instigate a change of government or leadership in India. The US has a history of supporting regime changes in various countries, either through covert operations or diplomatic pressures. If the US perceives that the Indian government is not aligning with its objectives, it could employ various means to undermine the ruling administration and promote a change in leadership. It could involve supporting opposition groups, funding dissenting voices, or leveraging international pressure to isolate and weaken the current Indian government. However, it is crucial to emphasize that these potential actions are speculative and should be viewed within the context of the evolving dynamics of international relations.

To sum up, India's positioning between the US, China and Russia in the emerging world order is a delicate balance of strategic calculations and national interests. The fact remains that the strong partnership with India is the US' strategic compulsion but not vice versa. Indians comprehend this fully and exploit US strategic weakness to the fullest. The latest US- India joint statement is a testament to a one-sided love affair where the US seems to go to lengths to please India without much in return. In all of the scenarios, there are numerous opportunities but more challenges for Pakistan, which is falling victim to US-China rivalry due to in-house mismanagement of political affairs and hazy strategic foresight by its leadership.

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Need for Realignment of Geo-Economics of Pakistan to Meet the Geo-Political Challenges

Namra Naseer

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses that Pakistan needs to realign its geoeconomics to meet the geopolitical challenges. Presently, Pakistan's geopolitical interests are more aligned with China, but its geoeconomic interests are still anchored with the US-led West. It highlights that while maintaining economic and technological ties with the West, Pakistan should seek project-based collaboration with other partners, including but not limited to Russia, China, and countries in Pakistan's Western neighbourhood, Southeast Asia, and Africa regions to mitigate effects of issues like growing political and economic instability, internal law and order problems (terrorism), issues related to FATF, IMF, etc.

Keywords: Geoeconomic Interest, Geopolitical Goals, Diverse Geoeconomic Options, Economic Diversification, National Security, Cold War.

States have a natural tendency to align their geoeconomic and geopolitical interests. Such an alignment is convenient and straightforward for some countries, as their geoeconomic and geopolitical goals are aligned with other countries that share broader objectives. The UK, for example, is a traditional ally and partner of the US and its geoeconomic and geopolitical interests have remained aligned with the US. For other countries, however, this alignment is not natural, and they pursue different strategies to diversify their

geoeconomics, giving them more geopolitical space to maneuver. India, Türkiye, Iran, and Saudi Arabia are all examples of countries adopting this approach.

Diversifying geo-economic options gives countries more flexibility in pursuing their geopolitical goals. It can be an asset and position in a world where geopolitical competition is becoming increasingly complex. Countries can use economic diversification to achieve various objectives such as economic development, protecting national security and advancing their geopolitical interests. To illustrate this argument further, let us observe the trends (given below) in trade relations of India, Türkiye, Iran, and Saudi Arabia with all major economic players, i.e., US, UK, EU, China, and Russia, from pre-and post-Cold War period and current period.

During the Cold War, India had stated its non-aligned status, though there was a noticeable tilt towards the Soviets. However, the posturing helped India diversify its economy and sought diplomatic and economic relations with different countries. In the post-Cold War, India's trade relations with the West, especially the US, grew immensely. At the same time, India retained its ties with Russia and strengthened its trade with China. This balanced approach early on allowed India greater geopolitical freedom and autonomy than it practices today.

In the case of Türkiye, the historical positioning towards NATO countries during the Cold War has now evolved into a more balanced approach, fostering growing trade relations with China and Russia in the post-Cold War era. Türkiye now maintains significant trade partnerships with the US, UK, EU, China, and Russia, which reflects its flexible approach and openness to diverse economic ties.

When we observe Iran's example, the country's trade relations with the US and Western countries suffered a great deal due to sanctions. However, Iran found new momentum with China due to China's increasing economic influence and willingness to engage. Interestingly, Iran also still maintains trade relations with the EU.

Country	Time Period	US	UK	EU	China	Russia
India	Pre-Cold War ¹	\$1.5 bn	\$2.2 bn	\$3.6 bn	\$0.3 bn	\$1.8 bn
	Post-Cold War ²	\$20.7 bn	\$10.2 bn	\$17.2 bn	\$5.3 bn	\$5.2 bn
	2020-2022 ³	\$150.6 bn	\$28.3 bn	\$117.3 bn	\$135.98 bn	\$39.8 bn
Turkiye ⁴	Pre-Cold War	\$1.3 bn	\$1.1 bn	\$2.6 bn	\$0.2 bn	\$1.2 bn
	Post-Cold War	\$10.1 bn	\$6.3 bn	\$14.2 bn	\$3.1 bn	\$6.4 bn
	2020-2022	\$30.2 bn	\$15.1 bn	\$51.2 bn	\$38.1 bn	\$28.1 bn
Iran ⁵	Pre-Cold War	\$5.5 bn	\$1.2 bn	\$5.3 bn	\$0.2 bn	\$1.5 bn
	Post-Cold War	\$0.0 bn	\$0.8 bn	\$1.9 bn	\$1.7 bn	\$1.9 bn
	2020-2022	\$0.0 bn	\$0.3bn	\$2.0 bn	\$24.4 bn	\$12.0 bn
Saudi Arabia ⁶	Pre-Cold War	\$1.6 bn	\$1.7 bn	\$3.0 bn	\$0.3 bn	\$0.2 bn
	Post-Cold War	\$17.7 bn	\$10.3 bn	\$23.3 bn	\$4.9 bn	\$2.4 bn
	2020-2022	\$37.3 bn	\$16.2 bn	\$48.1 bn	\$28.7 bn	\$10.7 bn

The latest example is Saudi Arabia, which has gradually shifted its economic focus from the Western world to China and Russia, leading to a significant boost in trade potential with all these countries. China stands as Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner, followed by the US, EU, and Russia.

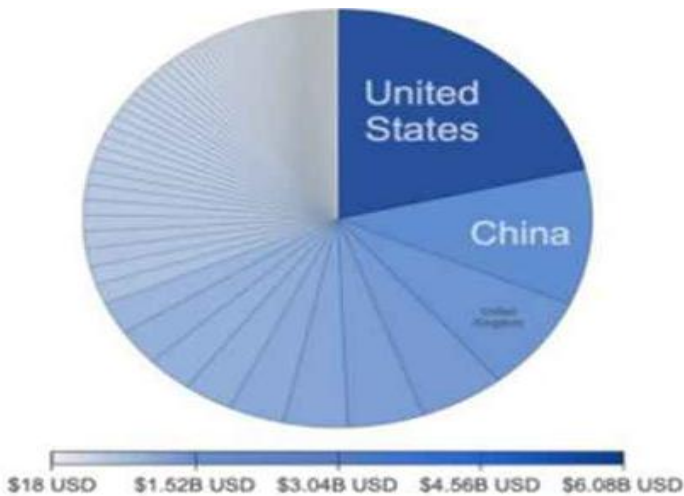


Figure-1: Pakistan Exports by Country in U.S. dollars, according to the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade.

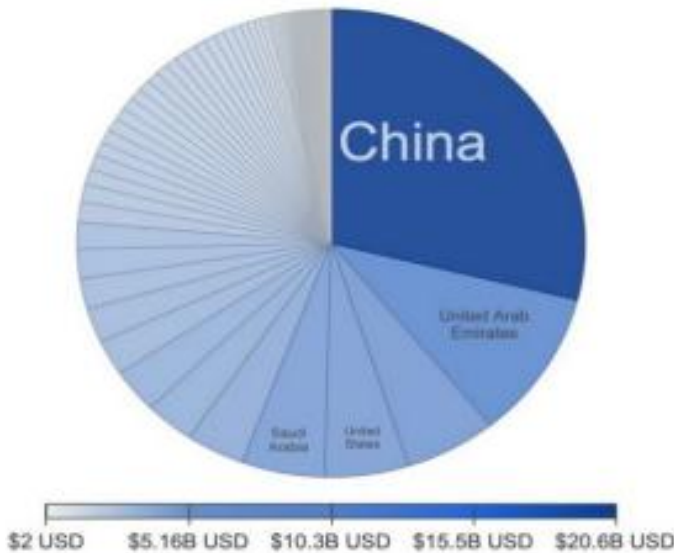


Figure-2: Pakistan Imports by Country in U.S. dollars, according to the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade.

The trend in all these countries has been acknowledging China's economic rise and seeking more geopolitical space to secure their national interest vis-à-vis the ensuing great power competition between the US and China. These countries not only find themselves in a favourable position but also have more economic and diplomatic autonomy in their relations with other countries.

For greater geopolitical liberty of action, it is essential to maintain a diverse geoeconomic posture.

For Pakistan, however, during the Cold War, there was no conflict in aligning geoeconomic and geopolitical interests as Pakistan was in close cooperation with the US and its allies. It was also true for some years post-Cold war. However, for the past two decades, Pakistan's geoeconomic alignment with the West seems intact, while its geopolitical alignment has significantly shifted towards China. The table shows pre- and post-Cold War and current data for Pakistan's trade with the US, UK, EU, China, Russia, Gulf countries, Africa, and others:⁷

Country	Pre-Cold War	Post-Cold War	Current (2020-2022)
US	\$1.2 bn	\$5.6 bn	\$12.4 bn
UK	\$0.9 bn	\$3.0 bn	\$5.2 bn
EU	\$1.8 bn	\$6.8 bn	\$12.7 bn
China	\$0.2 bn	\$2.5 bn	\$21.8 bn (in deficit)
Russia	\$0.3 bn	\$1.8 bn	\$7.4 bn
Gulf Countries	\$0.01 bn	\$0.7 bn	\$1.3 bn
Africa	\$0.05 bn	\$0.2 bn	\$0.3 bn
Others	\$0.2 bn	\$0.4 bn	\$0.5 bn

Let us also observe the trend in exports and imports of Pakistan:

With a bilateral trade volume of \$12 billion and a share of 21%, the US continues to be Pakistan's largest trading partner and export destination, while China has a share of 11%, UK 7.3% and Germany 5.4%.⁸ Regarding the imports list, China is at the top with a share of 29%, followed by the UAE 10%, the US 5.5%, and Saudi Arabia 5.4%.⁹

Furthermore, remittances from Pakistanis living abroad have frequently covered a major portion of Pakistan's trade gap. Pakistan receives \$2.2 to \$2.8 billion every month. The top five countries sending remittances are Saudi Arabia (\$570.5 Mn), UAE (\$427 Mn), and the UK (\$278.8 Mn), followed by the GCC countries (\$258.3 Mn) and the US (\$253.1 Mn). Saudi Arabia houses the highest number of Pakistani diaspora, followed by the UK and the UAE.¹⁰ It is important to consider that Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have also traditionally remained allied to the West.

For greater geopolitical liberty of action, it is essential to maintain a diverse geoeconomic posture. Presently, Pakistan's geopolitical interests are more aligned with China, but its geoeconomic interests are still anchored with the US-led West. This lopsided strategic equation adversely affects Pakistan's space to maneuver in the geopolitical arena. Hence, we see issues like growing political and economic instability in

the country, internal law and order problems (terrorism), issues related to FATF, IMF, etc. Pakistan must bring a balance and re-align its geoeconomic interests where its geopolitical interests rest.

Trends in Pakistan's trade and economic ties show an overreliance on the US and Western markets and limited economic activity and investment with other potential partners. The low volume of Pakistan-China bilateral trade, despite the geopolitical closeness, with the trade balance grossly in favour of China, also does not reflect their strong diplomatic and strategic relations, indicating an untapped trade potential in both countries.¹¹ Even with CPEC, its geostrategic and geopolitical dimension surpasses its economic advantages for Pakistan.¹² This misalignment has had negative consequences for Pakistan's economy and diplomatic sovereignty.

It is important to approach the contemporary geopolitical environment shaped by great power competition from a perspective of opportunity rather than fear. By reassessing its reliance on Western markets, strengthening ties with emerging economies, and strategically aligning itself with the multipolar world order, Pakistan can unlock its untapped potential for sustained economic growth and stability. A comprehensive foreign policy that harmonizes its geopolitical and geoeconomic objectives will enable Pakistan to navigate the era of great power competition successfully.

Moving forward, Pakistan needs to focus on improving its business environment to attract and facilitate Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) for sustainable economic growth. A new economic paradigm and cooperation model may be adopted that strongly emphasizes regional development and integration, technological innovation, human capital development and entrepreneurship.¹³ While maintaining economic and technological ties with the West, Pakistan should seek project-based collaborations with other partners, including but not limited to Russia, China, and countries in Pakistan's Western neighbourhood, Southeast Asia, and Africa regions.

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Rise of Cyber Nationalism and Narrative Formulation in the Digital Age

Rida Bilal

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses the rise of cyber nationalism and the interdependent relationship between cyber and nationalism. It explores different approaches to cyber nationalism and highlights how countries counter anti-state narratives.

Keywords: Digitization, Component of Communication, Digital Technology, Cyber, Digital Realm, Nationalism, Algorithm, Golden Shield Project, Deep Packet Inspection Technology, Meta Platforms.

The advent of the cyber age has removed physical borders replacing digitization as an important element in the realm of communication. With major technological advancements, the relevance of cyber has grown over time, not only in terms of narrative formulation but has eventually become part of governmental policymaking.¹ The state and governments are replacing the traditional ways of promoting patriotic and nationalist ideas with the use of the internet and digital technologies as it covers more target audiences.

Cyber refers to the digital realm, including the internet and social media, while nationalism refers to the belief in the importance of one's nation and the promotion of its interests and values. In the context of cyber nationalism, the internet and social media are used to promote nationalist ideologies and mobilize supporters. The relationship between cyber and nationalism is interdependent, complex, and dynamic, with each influencing the other. Cyber nationalism is an example of how new technologies can be used to promote traditional forms of nationalism, and how nationalism can adapt to the digital age.

There are several approaches to cyber nationalism such as online activism, cyber warfare, cyber sub-nationalism, information warfare, digital borders and censorship, and digital sovereignty.² The most pragmatic approach adopted by both western and non-western countries is primarily based on the development of a great firewall to restrict the freedom of the press. It is pertinent to analyze the changing trend of digital sovereignty both in western and non-western countries as most non-western regimes embrace such controlled and censored structures to reinforce their power. However, the western regimes are the flag bearers of liberal democratic order promoting individual freedom. In this regard, two non-western countries China and Russia, and two western countries USA and France are taken as case studies to explain how the concept of cyber nationalism is being utilized in two different regimes. Where western countries utilize certain algorithms and technical and scientific means to counter anti-state narratives, non-western countries make use of lawfare to control media.

The Chinese model of cyber nationalism has evolved. Chinese nationalists and the Chinese Communist Party have given rise to cyber nationalism through its censorship system of restricting the media and controlling information on social media. For restricting the flow of narratives, websites such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and certain Google services are either blocked or restricted in times of controversy as they are considered potentially dangerous by the government. Micro-blogging services have also been restricted, particularly over the issue of corruption. Although China has “88% of the world’s internet users”,³ even then, ‘Reporters without Borders’ ranked China 176 out of 180 countries in the worldwide index of “press freedom”.⁴ The censorship mechanism is swift when it comes to mentioning “violent incidents related to Tibet, China’s Xinjiang Autonomous Region, and the Falun Gong spiritual movement”. To censor and monitor the country’s media, a great number of individuals have been employed by the Chinese government. According to the Beijing News, “over two million workers are responsible for reviewing internet posts using keyword searches and providing reports for decision-makers”.⁵ A central element of Chinese censorship is the “Golden Shield Project” and “Deep Packet Inspection technology”. The Golden Shield Project, known as the Great Firewall,

combines keyword filtering and blocking access to specific websites. Whereas the Deep Packet Inspection technology is extensively used to detect and block access based on keywords.

In Russia's case, there were “99 million social media users”, almost “67.8% of the total population” in 2021.⁶ With the continuation of the Ukrainian war, social media became a platform for public debate, propaganda, and disinformation. Kremlin has responded with measures to squeeze the free flow of information for the Russians through social media. For restricting the flow of extremist narratives and activities, the Meta (Facebook and Instagram) has been banned while carving out an exception for the WhatsApp messaging service. It has become difficult for people to upload new material on Twitter and Tiktok after the passing of a law criminalizing “false information”.⁷ The “Sovereign Internet Law” enforced in November 2019, to ensure that the “Russian internet”, the “Runet”, can function independently of the global internet, which explains the freedom of access to foreign social networks in Russia.

In Western countries, cyber is not regulated typically through censorship mechanisms, rather indirect mechanisms are used. For instance, licensing to control the access to media channels, promoting certain content through broadcasting, and promoting self-regulation by content providers.

France is one of the largest media markets in Europe. Within the concept of democracy, total freedom of the press is a critical component. However, this freedom is under question as France has adopted controversial laws to restrict the freedom of expression through social and digital media. According to the report of “Reporters without Borders”, France was ranked 26th in its ranking of freedom of the press in year 2022.⁸ The situation is upsetting since it doesn't resemble the democratic principles which France claims to embody. The domination of the media by elites directed by a conflict of interests attempts at legislation and restrictive regulations against journalists in France, and draft bills on “global security” suggest a threat to freedom of expression.⁹

Moreover, the United States relies heavily on the internet and is ranked number 1 among 10 countries that face critical cyber breaches.¹⁰

Social media platforms are used by individuals in the USA to successfully plan and finance narratives and to mobilize the masses by sharing fake news and promoting hate speech. The United States under the Trump administration outlined the National Cyber Security Policy to not only tackle the rising cyber threats but also to promote nationalism across the country by utilizing the platform of social media.¹¹ The initiatives taken by the US to promote cyber nationalism include government-sponsored cyber operations, protectionist policies, and economic nationalism. The US carried out government-sponsored cyber operations such as Olympic Games and Stuxnet to attain digital sovereignty.¹² Moreover, cyberspaces such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google have been scrutinized under congressional hearings to control propaganda, disinformation, and biased political allegations toward political opponents.

It is pertinent to connect the concept of cyber nationalism with the domestic environment. In the case of Pakistan, social media platforms have witnessed a surge in their usage for political engagements, acquiring news, and shaping the political narrative among the masses. In recent years, online platforms have provided space to individuals and political parties to express their politicized agenda of nationalism which has contributed to the emergence of cyber sub-nationalism in Pakistan. According to the survey of March 2022, Twitter saw a spike from about “7.97% in February 2022 to 20.56% in March 2022”.¹³ It is estimated that about “36% of the total 220 million population is connected to the internet and about 70 million retain an online presence on social media as of January 2022”. Undoubtedly, the advent of digital and social media has empowered individuals by giving them a voice, but it has also permitted spread of fake news, misinformation and harmful content due to the absence of strict monitoring, social media laws, and ineffective mechanisms of regulation. In particular, fake news spread on social media through “bot accounts” have targeted institutions in an attempt to spread propaganda. Furthermore, when the interaction is received by such accounts, the social media algorithm generates more of the same information for users, resulting in a vicious loop of giving traction to fake news and forming inaccurate public opinion. Consequently, political polarization has increased in society as the users are tuned to their preferred echo chambers.

The wave of cyber nationalism has already engulfed Western and non-Western countries, but for Pakistan, the concept is evolving and leading to xenophobia, isolationism, and extremism in society. Pakistan should base its policy formulation considering its strategic and demographic standings. The policymakers should realize that it needs to hop on the train of technological prowess before it is too late, and the repercussions fall on the general public who are already shrouded with misinformation, disinformation, and fake news which has snatched the ability to think.

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A Decade of CPEC - An Appraisal

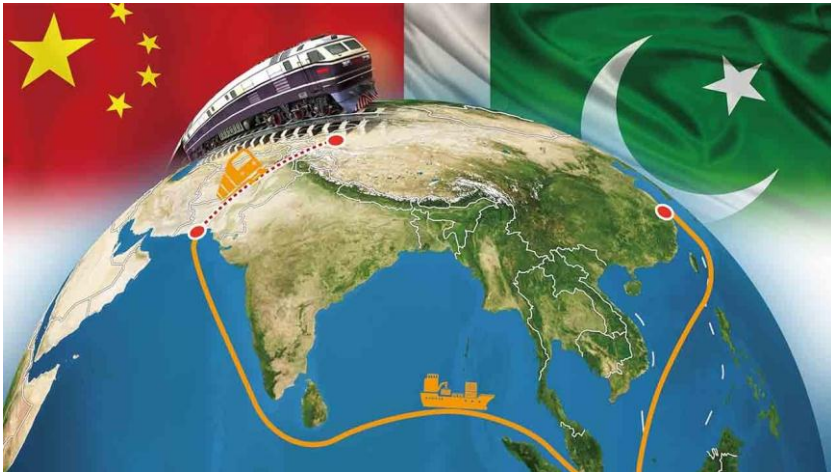
Hadiqa Mir

Abstract

This Insight reports on the progress of CPEC projects. It highlights the need for continued commitment and collaboration among all parties involved in the CPEC project to ensure its success.

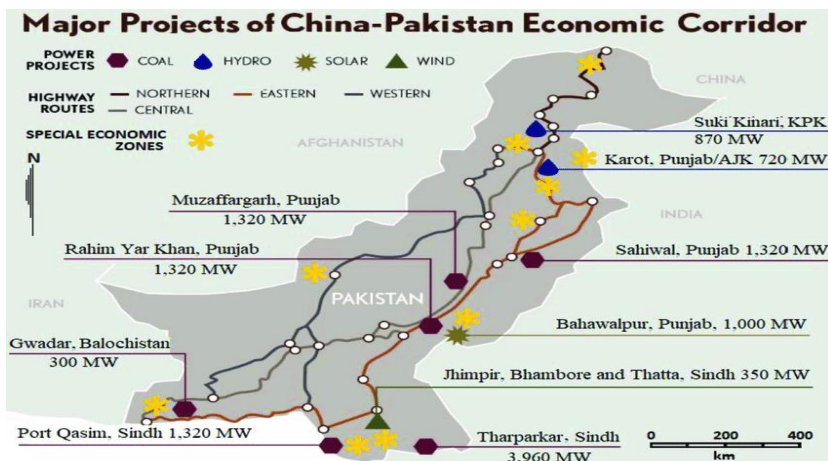
Keywords: Malacca Dilemma, Early Harvest Projects, Vocational and Technical Education, Capacity Building, Poverty Alleviation, Disaster Management.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a geo-strategically significant project for both China and Pakistan. It will enable China to get out of the Malacca dilemma and provide an alternative trade route to China. For Pakistan, CPEC is a ray of hope in the prevailing tough economic and geopolitical environment, where it has limited foreign policy options.



The estimated cost of CPEC is \$62 billion from 2015 to 2030. Domains of CPEC projects include investment in the energy sector, transportation infrastructure, i.e., roads and railways, development of Gwadar Port and city, Fiber Optics infrastructure and establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and industrial parks.¹

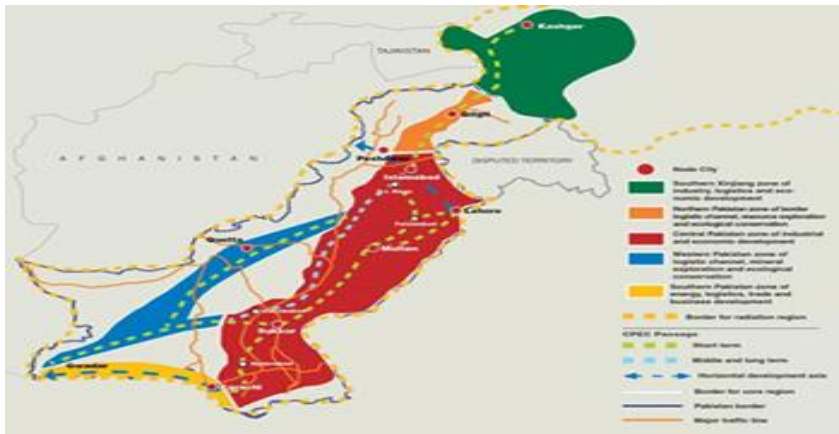
Year 2023 marks the completion of a decade since the start of the project. The subsequent visits of the Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives of Pakistan, Prof Ahsan Iqbal, and Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng signify the importance of CPEC for both states. The infrastructure and energy generation projects have been completed, and the outcomes are visible; however, it is only through constant evaluation that we can analyse hurdles and find ways to complete projects in time. Twenty-seven projects, totalling \$19 billion, have already been finished, while 63 more projects with a cost of \$35.2 billion are expected to be completed by 2030.²



CPEC projects were divided into the short, medium, and long term. The short-term projects were further divided into two phases. The Early Harvest Projects (EHPs) to be finished in 2018 were part of Phase I.³ Phase II involved building essential infrastructure for energy projects, which was scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020 or early 2021. Phase-III projects with completion by the year 2025 included medium-term initiatives. The projects of this phase included the establishment of

industrial parks and SEZs. In addition, the Long-Term Plan (LTP) is a conceptual framework for the CPEC project.

It is a national plan approved by both Chinese and Pakistani governments that provides macro guidance for implementing various projects. Development of railway infrastructure and operationalizing other long-term projects would be the main goals of CPEC Phase-IV. This phase is anticipated to be completed by 2030.⁴



Since the inception of the project, CPEC has been one of the most popular and well-supported projects in the history of Pakistan. The stakeholders of the project tried to utilize all available resources to ensure timely completion of this mega project. The energy projects, including coal, wind, hydro and solar power, were planned to be completed by 2018 as part of EHPs and phase-I projects to fulfil the domestic and industrial

"CPEC has been one of the most popular and well-supported projects in the history of Pakistan. The stakeholders of the project tried to utilize all available resources to ensure timely completion of this mega project."

energy needs of Pakistan. So far, 14 projects have been completed in the energy sector. Sahiwal Coal-fired Project (1320 MW), Coal-fired Power Plant at Port Qasim (1320 MW), China Hub Coal Power Project (1320 MW), Engro Thar Coal Power Project (660 MW), Quaid-e-Azam Solar

Park (1000 MW), Hydro China Dawood Wind Farm (50 MW), UEP Wind Farm (100MW), Sachal Wind Farm (50 MW), Three Gorges; Second and Third Wind Power Project (100 MW), Matiari to Lahore ±660 KV HVDC Transmission Line Project, HUBCO Thar Coal Power Project (330 MW), Karot Hydropower Project (720 MW), SSRL Thar Coal Block-I 7.8 mtpa and Power Plant (1320 MW) and HUBCO Thal Nova Thar Coal Power Project (330 MW).⁵

Under the CPEC projects, two projects are still in progress, while five more are being considered. The unfinished projects include Suki Kinari Hydropower Project (884 MW) and Coal-Fired Power Project at Gwadar (300 MW). Under-consideration projects include Kohala Hydropower Project (1124 MW), Azad Pattan Hydropower Project (700.7 MW), Thar Mine Mouth Oracle Power Plant and Surface Mine (1320 MW), Cacho Wind Power Project (50 MW) and Western Energy (Pvt.) Ltd. Wind Power Project (50 MW).⁶

In the transport and infrastructure sector, six projects were completed under CPEC including Havelian-Thakot Section of KKH Phase II, Multan-Sukkur Section of Peshawar-Karachi Motorway, Pilot Project of Digital Terrestrial Multimedia Broadcast (DTMB), Lahore Orange Line Metro Train, Khunjrab to Rawalpindi - Cross Border Optical Fiber Cable, and Motorway from Hakla to D.I. Khan. All the projects were completed as EHPs except for the Orange Line project, which was completed in 2020. Moreover, five other projects are in the construction phase, i.e., Zhob-Quetta Road (N-50), Nokundi-Mashkhel Road, Khuzdar-Basima Road (N-30), M-8 Hoshab to Awaran Road Section and Shandur-Chitral Road (KKH Alternate Route). In addition, eight projects are in the pipeline, whereas the final five will be long-term projects.⁷

Another major area of cooperation under CPEC Phase-III is the construction of SEZs to expedite and facilitate industrial cooperation and boost economic activities between China and Pakistan. Four SEZs are under construction, including Allama Iqbal Industrial City, Boston SEZ, Rashakai SEZ, and Dhabeji SEZ. The work on these SEZs started in 2019, 2020, 2020 and 2023, respectively and is still in process. Besides that, there are various projects under consideration, including the Industrial Zone in Mirpur, Industrial Park on Pakistan Steel Mill Land,

ICT Model Industrial Zone, Moqpondass SEZ and Mohmand Marble City.⁸

In addition to the completed projects, there are many under-construction projects in Gwadar as part of CPEC. These projects are New Gwadar International Airport, health facilities including Pak-China Friendship Hospital, Desalination Plants of 1.2 million gallons per day (MGD) and 5 MGD. Apart from that, there are several projects under consideration as well, including a Landfill Project, fishermen's making industry on Gwadar West Bay, Gwadar Smart Environment Sanitation System, construction of breakwaters, fish landing jetty and dredging of berthing areas and channels.

The Pakistan Vocational and Technical Education Capacity Building Project, Pakistan Vocational Schools Equipment Upgrading and Renovation Project, Poverty Alleviation Training, and Emergency Relief Supplies for Increasing National Disaster Management Authority Disaster Preparedness Capacity are the completed projects in the Social and Economic Development sector under CPEC. In addition, there are 11 projects under construction, and ten are under consideration as well.⁹

CPEC projects have received equal priority from each government despite differences of opinion regarding the agreement's terms and conditions. The prompt completion of projects illustrates the importance that all stakeholders gave to the project; however, some projects experienced delays due to technical or budgetary issues. For instance, SEZ near Faisalabad and two hydroelectric projects in Azad Kashmir (Kohala Hydropower Project and Azad Pattan Hydropower Project) seem to be progressing slowly. The disagreement over the parameters of the agreement was the cause of this delay. Furthermore, the most expensive project under CPEC, Main Line-1 (ML-1), which will modernise the railway from Peshawar to Karachi, costing \$6.8 billion, was held by China as it was reluctant to work at the one percent interest rate demanded by Islamabad.¹⁰ In this regard, the CPEC Authority Ordinance was passed in 2019 by the government to create the CPEC Authority and ensure the speed of work and progress on CPEC projects. The authority has a great deal of autonomy as well as enormous financial and managerial capabilities.

In the 11th JCC Meeting held in April 2023, "Both sides showed satisfaction on the efficient execution of various CPEC projects and concurred that all outstanding matters would be amicably resolved in the spirit of traditional cooperation, mutual understanding, complete trust and brotherhood. Furthermore, the progress on four priority SEZs was declared adequate and concurred to quicken the pace of advancement in order to draw the relocation of high-quality enterprises. Both parties expressed their appreciation for the signing of the Framework Agreement for Industrial Cooperation and agreed to hold bi-annual meetings to monitor its implementation."

Now, we have entered phase-III of CPEC, i.e., completion of SEZs, and work is going on at a good pace. Minor differences between parties, political instability and uncertainty might have impacted the pace of projects; however, there is no doubt that there is political will and consensus on the usefulness of CPEC. There may be differences in terms and conditions of agreements, but everyone acknowledges that CPEC is the only opportunity in the prevailing geopolitical environment that can ensure Pakistan's economic development and prosperity. The aforementioned evaluation of CPEC projects validates the argument that all stakeholders and successive governments have contributed to this mega-national cause that can alter the economic condition of Pakistan and increase the geostrategic and geopolitical significance of the country.

"all stakeholders and successive governments have contributed to this mega-national cause that can alter the economic condition of Pakistan and increase the geostrategic and geopolitical significance of the country".

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Science Diplomacy: Prospects for Pakistan

Haider Ali Khan

Abstract

This INSIGHT highlights that Science diplomacy employs international scientific collaboration to achieve foreign policy objectives like peace, stability, and sustainable development. Utilizing science diplomacy can help build stronger ties with other nations.

Keywords: Science Diplomacy, Sustainable Development, Exchange Programs, Geographical Interconnectedness, Satellite Communication.

The term "science diplomacy" elucidates the use of scientific collaboration to broaden the foreign policy imperatives of a nation. It seeks to advance peace, stability, and sustainable development through international cooperation in research and technology. A range of activities, including cooperative scientific research initiatives, exchange programs for students and scientists, dissemination of scientific knowledge and data and planning scientific conferences and workshops, are a part of the venture.

Pakistan has been a beneficiary of the geopolitical interconnectedness of Science and Technology (S&T), and it has improved many sectors of S&T, such as space technology and satellite communication, renewable energy, nuclear technology, cyber security, health, and agriculture. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the above-mentioned areas have helped Pakistan improve its scientific capabilities and also enabled it to transfer valuable knowledge.

The genesis of science diplomacy allows for multilateral collaboration in the field of S&T among nations as it allows for large-scale scientific

developments requiring cooperation between nations globally. Pakistan has made bilateral agreements with scientifically advanced nations and has carried out significant bilateral S&T initiatives, such as founding the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), established in 1955 to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The ambitious project came to fruition as a result of collaboration between scientists from Pakistan and the US.¹



Another noteworthy bilateral S&T initiative is the "Pakistan-US Science and Technology Agreement," signed between Pakistan and the US in 2003. The US Department of State became the co-sponsor of the agreement, and the programme awards US and Pakistani scientists for collaborative efforts in scientific development.² Islamabad also collaborates with Beijing on S&T initiatives. Both nations recently launched "China-Pakistan Science and Technology Cooperation Centre" in Beijing to boost S&T collaboration. The centre will focus on cooperation in Artificial Intelligence (AI), big data, cloud computing, robotics, and biotechnology.³

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan (MoFA) launched the "Science Diplomacy Initiative" (SDI) under the Science Diplomacy Division in 2016 to promote scientific cooperation between Pakistan and international stakeholders such as research institutes, international

organisations, MNCs and universities. Hence, SDI focuses on improving cooperation in various fields, including research and development, renewable energy, agriculture, health, and climate change, all of which are part of the UN's SDG. SDI has introduced several programmes to achieve its objectives, such as establishing partnerships and collaborations with international S&T institutes and Research and Development (R&D) organisations in other countries and facilitating the exchange of scientific knowledge and expertise through joint research projects, workshops, and seminars.

Having a rich legacy in R&D, Pakistan has made considerable contributions to the furtherance of S&T. Several research institutes have been established across Pakistan, and the most notable among them are the Pakistan Council for Science and Technology (PCST), Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH). The institutes mentioned above are liable to facilitate the creation of scientific infrastructure and the commencement of scientific research.

It is worth noting that many esteemed universities in Pakistan are actively contributing to the advancement of R&D. Institutes such as the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Punjab University's Centre for High Energy Physics (CHEP), COMSATS University's Department of Computer Science, Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIAS), Institute of Space Technology (IST) and National Centre for Bioinformatics (NCB) at Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) are some prime examples. Their collective effort is instrumental in driving progress in S&T and promoting growth in this field.

"Science Diplomacy is not a mere concept; it is a viable solution to bridge the gaps between nations by synergizing the power of knowledge of nations with the instrument of international collaboration."

Moreover, it is crucial to note that successive governments have established robust connections with other nations to promote science and technology initiatives. These efforts have resulted in the establishment of institutions like the Pakistan Academy of Sciences

(PAS) and the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), which can play a pivotal role in science diplomacy. PSF, a government-funded organisation, collaborates with institutes from various countries specialising in science, technology, and innovation.

A handful of sectors related to S&T in Pakistan have made some progress in Pakistan in recent years. For instance, the IT industry has seen a progress of 49 percent in FY-21 as compared to FY-20, as Pakistan's IT exports jumped from \$890 million to \$1.29 billion. The Aerospace programme has also seen progress. Pakistan's Aerospace agency SUPARCO successfully sent PAKSAT-1R, PRSS-1, and PakTES-1A in 2011 and 2018, respectively. Pakistani satellites are specialised in remote sensing, earth observation and communication. Pakistan is keen on exploring new avenues related to aerospace for sustainable development.

A stellar example of Pakistan's determination to expand its space programme is the third International Conference on Space 2022, organised by SUPARCO, the principal space agency of Pakistan. Representatives from as many as 16 countries participated in the conference, including South Korea, China, Turkey, Azerbaijan, UAE, Italy, Canada, and many more. It is a remarkable example of Pakistan's resolve to leverage multilateral scientific cooperation to achieve its national aspirations.

Despite ongoing initiatives, the buildup of science diplomacy in Pakistan as a tool of foreign policy and diplomacy faces numerous challenges. Pakistan has limited engagements in science diplomacy due to numerous factors, including the worsening economic situation, rising debt, and lack of government investment in science and research.⁴ Pakistan spends notably less on S&T compared to other developing nations. The latest data available regarding government's expenditure on R&D in 2019 stands at 0.2% of the country's GDP, which is extremely low compared to nations from the developing world.⁵ Whereas neighbouring China and India have an R&D share of 2.56% and 0.8% in their GDP, respectively. India annually spends \$65.2 billion, which is significantly higher than Pakistan. Hence, India leads the South Asian region in S&T and successfully uses it as a tool of diplomacy.

Another major impediment Pakistan faces is the brain drain of skilled experts from STEM fields. The number of skilled professionals leaving Pakistan for better employment opportunities has increased significantly. For example, in 2022, 765,000 people left the country, and 92,000 were skilled professionals such as doctors, engineers and IT experts. The brain drain of the skilled workforce must be capped by providing appealing employment opportunities to skilled professionals and investing more in R&D infrastructure.

To sum up, Pakistan has made valuable contributions to developing S&T globally; hence, Pakistan's endowment to global R&D cannot be disregarded. Pakistan needs to seek science diplomacy as a reliable foreign policy and soft power instrument. Science diplomacy can be instrumental in building a softer, more progressive, and positive image of Pakistan. Pakistan can, therefore, utilise the effectiveness of science diplomacy to build greater ties with nations in the region and beyond. The foundation of the Science Diplomacy division by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a big step in the right direction and can act as a liaison between Pakistan's technology institutes and international stakeholders.

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Reviving the Junagadh Dispute

Mohib Wazir

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses the Junagadh dispute between Pakistan and India, which has largely faded from public discourse. It explores the origin of the dispute and examines its implications under international law.

Keywords: Diplomatic Relations, Territorial Disputes, Siachen Glacier, Bilateral Dialogue, Princely State, Colonial Rule.

Since their independence, Pakistan and India's diplomatic relations have remained strained due to numerous territorial disputes. It has heavily influenced their foreign and security policies towards each other. Kashmir has remained the main point of contention, capturing widespread international attention and scrutiny. Other disputed territories like Siachen Glacier and Sir Creek have also maintained a consistent presence in bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India over the past three decades. Most recently, these disputes were explicitly included in the Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue agenda agreed upon between the two nations in 2015. However, the dispute over Junagadh has largely faded from public discourse despite Pakistan's robust legal position under international law.

In a noteworthy development, Pakistan issued a new political map in 2020 that designates Junagadh and Manavadar as Pakistani territory, signalling an intent to bring this dispute back into focus. This Insight explores the origin of the Junagadh dispute and examines its implications under international law.

Origin of the Dispute

Junagadh was classified as a 'princely state' during British colonial rule in the 19th century. It was placed under British suzerainty in 1807, with Nawab of Junagadh retaining control over most of the territory's affairs. At the time of independence, Junagadh had the option of either remaining independent or acceding either to the territory of Pakistan or India under the Indian Independence Act of 1947. On September 14, 1947, Nawab Mahabat Khan of Junagadh signed an Instrument of Accession (IoA) declaring that Junagadh would be part of the Dominion of Pakistan.¹ It was formally accepted a day later by Muhammad Ali Jinnah.²

After Nawab's request for accession was granted, the two states of Mangrol and Babariawad declared their independence from the suzerainty of Junagadh.³ In response, Nawab's forces militarily occupied the two states, escalating the tense situation.⁴ A group of Junagadhis, led by Samaldas Gandhi, formed a government-in-exile, the *Aarzi Hukumat* (temporary government).⁵ Soon after, the Indian government dispersed troops in and around Junagadh on September 17, 1947, without the consent of the Junagadh administration.⁶ Owing to surmounting pressure from Indian forces, the Dewan (Prime Minister) of Junagadh, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, relinquished control over Junagadh to India on November 7 and invited India to intervene "in order to avoid bloodshed, hardship, loss of life and property and to preserve the dynasty."⁷ When informed of India's decision to take control over Junagadh's administration, Liaquat Ali Khan responded, "Your action in taking over state administration and sending Indian troops to state without any authority from Pakistan Government and indeed without our knowledge, is a clear violation of Pakistan territory and breach of International law."⁸ The use of Indian military force to pressure the Junagadh administration to relinquish administrative control over the territory thus constituted a violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

Just over three months later, India conducted a plebiscite on February 20, 1948, leading to the annexation of Junagadh. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru informed Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan of an intention to hold a referendum to finalize Junagadh's status. However, Khan disagreed, arguing that it violates international law. Pakistan's

consent to the plebiscite was not sought. Sir Walter Monckton, the legal adviser of Mangrol, had informed Mountbatten months before the plebiscite that Pakistan's recognition of a plebiscite was a necessary precondition.⁹ It can be likened to similarly illegal plebiscites in Russian-occupied Crimea, where over 90% 'voted' for annexation to Russia. Conducting a plebiscite without the consent of the state that owns territorial sovereignty provides a basis for its illegality. Pakistan has not accepted the plebiscite results, claiming the territory as unlawfully occupied by India.

Demographics and Geography of Junagadh

Before evaluating the legal validity of IoA, it is important to consider Junagadh's demographics and geography. A Muslim ruler governed Junagadh, which had a predominantly Hindu population and had no physical contiguity with Pakistan but could be accessed by sea and air. Its accession with Pakistan was considered a folly by some due to its situation as a small state completely encircled by India's dominion and its Hindu majority,¹⁰ and Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India, also "recommended the princely states consider their accession either to India or Pakistan by the communal allegiance of the people and geographical contiguity."¹¹



However, these considerations were recommendations based on political and administrative pragmatism, not legally binding requirements.¹² **Mountbatten, along with India's former Defence Minister Gopaldaswami Ayyangar, also held the same view that "Junagadh's geographical contiguity could not have 'any standing in law', that is, it was 'strictly and legally correct' for it to have joined Pakistan."**¹³ Thus, the propositions concerning geographical contiguity and demographic composition were merely advisory in nature and did not represent mandatory legal prerequisites.

While the circumstances cannot be deemed ideal, it would be incorrect to label Junagadh's accession to Pakistan as wholly impractical. The Veraval Port, located in Junagadh, provided the princely state with the potential to establish a simple maritime connection with Pakistan, as "the ships from Karachi covered the distance of 300 knots in six hours."¹⁴ Ian Copland supports this perspective of Junagadh's accession to Pakistan as not completely devoid of practicality in the following words: "Even tiny Junagadh, which, unlike Hyderabad, probably lacked the financial and economic resources to lead an independent existence, could, with a seacoast facing the Arabian sea, conceivably have survived as a part of Pakistan; after all, nearby Diu and Goa lasted as outposts of a much more distant state - Portugal - until 1961."¹⁵

Legal Status of the Instrument of Accession

From an international law perspective, Nawab Mahabat Khan had the legal capacity to enter into IoA on behalf of Junagadh. As a princely state, Junagadh operated with a considerable degree of autonomy only limited by the British Crown. The Independence of India Act of 1947 differentiates between 'dominions' and 'Indian States', with the former referring to India and Pakistan. Under section 7(1)(b) of the Act, British suzerainty over princely states ended with the independence of India and Pakistan, making them independent autonomous states. Consequently, it allowed these states to either operate independently or to accede to either Pakistan or India under section 2(3) of the Act, subject to the consent of the dominion being acceded to.

In Junagadh's case, Nawab had acted under the legal capacity and authority granted to him by the Independence of India Act of 1947 and had validly executed the IoA. Thus, as reflected by the Ministry of Law at the time, it was clear that "Junagadh's accession to Pakistan had not been nullified by referendum, and the state had not acceded to India yet. However, New Delhi went ahead because "it was almost likely that the referendum will be in [New Delhi's] favour."¹⁶ Nevertheless, this amounted to a unilateral decision that violated the sovereignty of Pakistan based on the IoA.

Internationally, the Kashmir dispute overshadowed the issue of Junagadh. UN Security Council Resolution 47/1948 called for a plebiscite in Kashmir to decide its accession to India or Pakistan.¹⁷ Ayyanger had advised M.K. Vellodi, India's representative to the UNSC at the time, on "the need" as far as possible to avoid being drawn into legalistic arguments as regards the validity of Junagadh's accession to Pakistan for its impact on Kashmir."¹⁸ It shows that Indian leaders were fully cognizant of their illegal actions and did not want to bring up the issue of Junagadh's accession to the UNSC.

Overshadowed by the more high-profile Kashmir conflict, the Junagadh dispute has been relegated to the margins of Pakistan's foreign policy agenda, receiving scant attention and resources. It has led to its political neglect, diminishing its prominence in diplomatic dialogues and international legal debates.

The issuance of a new political map by Pakistan in 2020, which significantly features Junagadh and Manavadar, is a positive development since maps under international law are recognized to be the most formal evidence of a State's intent and nature of claim over territory. Pakistan's state practice should reflect its territorial claim by continuing to confer the status of 'Sovereign in Exile' upon the Nawab of Junagadh.

Besides the addition of Junagadh to the new political map, September 15 should be notified as "Junagadh Day" by the government, and steps should be taken to include Junagadh's history and legal status in the academic curriculum to create awareness regarding the issue.

With the death of Muhammad Jahangir Khanji in July 2023, it is imperative for Pakistan to promptly issue an official declaration acknowledging his successor as the legitimate heir to Junagadh State. The new Nawab should be extended invitations for all significant State ceremonies, particularly those organized outside of Pakistan, to enhance global awareness of Nawab's status as Sovereign in Exile and India's continued territorial violation.

In conclusion, **Junagadh's legal status is that it is part of Pakistan. The IoA remains as the authoritative legal source to determine the status of Junagadh's sovereignty. Subsequent Indian actions constitute violations of various principles of international law, including the central UN Charter principle of respecting territorial integrity and political independence of states.** Using coercion to unlawfully annex territory without due process reflects the unfortunate reality of realpolitik and weak enforcement mechanisms. Together, these factors obstruct the enforcement of this vital international law principle aimed at safeguarding states against unlawful territorial aggression and facilitating peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In light of evolving geopolitical dynamics, it becomes imperative for Pakistan to adopt a consistent legal approach to documenting its territorial claims, whether they pertain to mainland disputes, glaciers, or maritime boundaries. The political map in 2020 was a positive step, but a more comprehensive legislative instrument could provide a stronger basis for Pakistan's claim under international law. India's unilateral measures in Jammu and Kashmir, enacted through the Reorganization Act of 2019, underscore the critical importance of solidifying territorial claims through both legislative and executive actions. Moreover, China's recent move to rename locations in Arunachal Pradesh in April 2023 is a timely reminder that India's actions have had repercussions, prompting other states to reassert their territorial claims. These developments collectively highlight the need for Pakistan to take the documentation of its territorial claims thoughtfully, particularly as state practices evolve in a complex and interconnected international landscape.

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Africa: An Emerging Continent

Ms Ayesha Afgun

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses Africa's potential as an economic partner for Pakistan, highlighting the continent's vast resources and deepening economic integration. It explores Pakistan's African policy initiatives, including "Look Africa" policy and "Engage Africa Initiative," which aim to increase political, economic and commercial ties with African countries.

Keywords: Emerging Continent, Major Powers, Middle Powers, Natural Global Biodiversity, Policy Initiatives.

The resource-rich Africa, dubbed as the continent of the future, has been the centre of attention of major and middle powers for quite some time. Africa is the second largest continent, home to 54 sovereign countries and boasting a combined GDP of over \$3 trillion. Africa hosts almost 25% of the natural global biodiversity and 30% of the world's mineral resources. The African Development Bank has projected GDP growth in Africa to average 4% in 2023 and 2024, which is higher than the global averages of 2.7% and 3.2%, respectively.¹ Besides, Africa's deepening economic integration and accelerated development through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement has created vast opportunities for Africa and its international partners. Thus, the African continent's lucrative economic prospects are self-evident.²

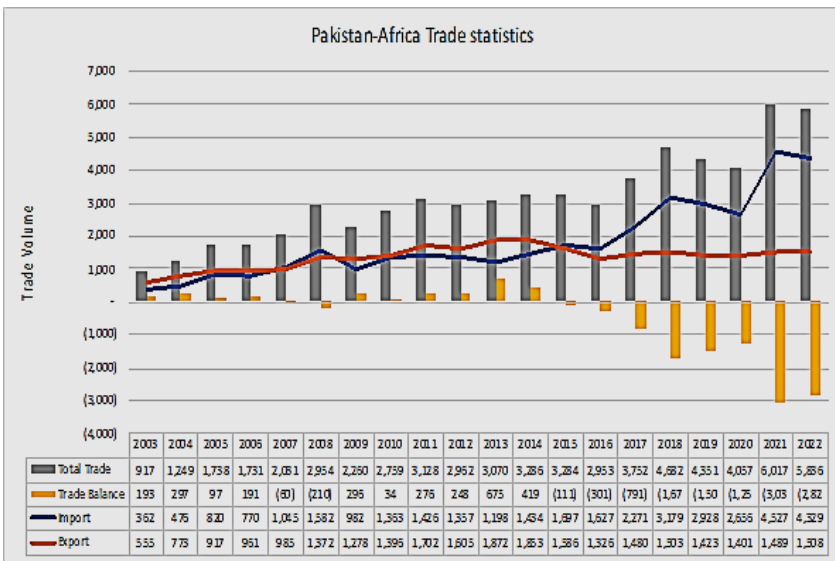
Pakistan has so far initiated three policy initiatives: two by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and one by the Ministry of Commerce (MoC), respectively. MoFA proposed the first policy for Africa in 2014, known as the "Look Africa" policy, which underscored the importance of consolidating Pakistan's ties with key African countries. However, it remained largely on paper and could not bear substantive outcomes.

Later, in 2017, MoC initiated the "Look Africa" policy to capitalise on Africa's economic opportunities and increase Pakistan's economic footprint in Africa.³ It targets three major trading blocs: the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the East African Community (EAC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It prioritises 10 African countries – Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Tanzania, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Senegal – comprising 72% of the total GDP of Africa. It entails six new commercial sections in Algeria, Tanzania, Egypt, Sudan, Senegal and Ethiopia, respectively. It initiates granting accreditations, appointing Trade Development Officers (TDOs), providing special facilitation to delegations to/ from Africa, and initiating negotiations on bilateral/ multilateral trade agreements for market access in Africa, formation of Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on trade, establishment of an Africa Cell in Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Karachi.⁴



Moreover, the policy stipulates organising a series of Pakistan-Africa Trade and Development Conferences (PATDC). The first such conference took place in Nairobi in January 2020, inaugurated by the Kenyan President, and attended by delegations from 26 countries of Africa, including Kenyan trade minister and senior Kenyan and East African community officials. The second PATDC was held in Lagos in November

2021, attended by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Nigerian business community,⁵ while the third conference was held in Johannesburg in 2022 with heavy participation from the South African Customs Union (SACU) and South African Development Community (SADC).⁶



Source: ITC World Trade Map

Later, in 2019, MoFA also introduced the "Engage Africa Initiative". This comprehensive initiative aims to pragmatically engage Africa through a targeted approach to increase political, diplomatic, social and people-to-people and government-to-government contacts. The policy attempts to address the gaps and lay the foundation of a renewed mechanism for greater cooperation, engagement and economic ties between Pakistan and Africa.⁷ Under this initiative, Pakistan has opened five new resident missions in Africa: Djibouti, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Rwanda and Uganda, thereby raising the number to nineteen missions in the African continent. Other steps include appointing eleven Honorary Counsels, with a total number reaching thirty-eight, six bilateral political consultations, thirteen Joint Economic Commissions, and three Visa Exemption Agreements with four similar initiatives in the pipeline.⁸

For years, Pakistan has looked towards its traditional partners (Europe, China, the US and the Middle East) for its market expansion and trade. However, with African policy initiatives, Pakistan has attempted to navigate promising prospects of economic dividends that Africa offers. To yield favourable results from both African policies, Pakistan needs to synchronise its policy initiatives to boost political, economic and commercial ties with various African countries.

"Policy formulation regarding Africa has been done; however, implementing the policy is still challenging. There is a need to strategize the implementation by establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in various phases"

The graph provides an overview of import/ export, total trade, and trade balance statistics between Pakistan and Africa. Historically, trade between Pakistan and Africa has remained low, hovering around \$2-3 billion annually for many years.⁹ However, it crossed \$4 billion since 2018 after introducing the "Look Africa policy". The trade volume has reached nearly \$6 billion in 2022, as shown in the graph below, but its full potential is still to be realised. Imports between Pakistan and Africa have grown but are not directly proportional to the export growth. Pakistan's exports to Africa remain limited to cereals, made-up textile articles, cotton, rice, pharmaceuticals, beverages, apparel and clothing accessories, to name a few.¹⁰ The recently established AfCFTA provides a business-friendly and cooperative environment that facilitates trade and easy accessibility to African markets, services, and produce by eliminating trade barriers and gaining preferential access to its market of over 1.2 billion.

No doubt, the Look Africa policy and Engage Africa initiatives are steps in the right direction; however, the engagement level does not reflect the vigorous efforts required to take Pakistan's ties with African countries to new levels.

Recommendations

- Policy formulation regarding Africa has been done; however, implementing the policy is still challenging. There is a need to

strategise the implementation by establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in various phases.

- To enhance people-to-people interaction with locals and create awareness about Pakistan's culture and landscape, annual cultural shows in countries where we have diplomatic missions should be planned.

Engaging with Africa purposefully and proactively is a strategic imperative for Pakistan. While geopolitical factors continue to play their role, Pakistan's shift to geo-economics provides a solid base for deeper and stronger commercial connectivity with Africa. Pakistan and Africa can access each other's markets and reap greater economic and security benefits and prosperity for the people of the African continent and South Asia. Despite opportunities, Africa still remains an untapped market for Pakistani goods. The policymakers should make full use of the opportunity to forge deeper ties with the continent.

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The Global Halal Meat Market: Prospects for Pakistan

Fatima Saleem

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses Pakistan's prospects in Global Halal Meat Market. It highlights that global Halal meat market occupies a share of US\$ 2,221.3 billion, and this is projected to reach US\$ 4,177.3 billion by 2028. Pakistan ranks 19th in the list having a market share of only 0.4%. Due to the country's close geographical proximity to the Middle East, vast and fertile cultivable land and Muslim identity, Pakistan has a great potential to enhance its share in global halal meat market. In addition to beef, it must tap avenues in seafood, ostrich, mutton and poultry farming to enhance its export turnover. The sector will not only diversify its economic outreach but also add to the country's overall food security.

Keywords: Global Halal Meat Market, Geographical Proximity, Meat Industry, Pre-slaughter, Post-slaughter, Foot and Mouth Disease, Peste des Petitis Ruminants, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, Abattoirs.

He [Allah] has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. – Quran

The term Halal refers to food, especially meat, that is prepared keeping in view the Islamic dietary practices. As per reports, in 2022, the global Halal meat market occupies a share of US\$ 2,221.3 billion, and this is projected to reach US\$ 4,177.3 billion by 2028.¹ Due to the country's close geographical proximity to the Middle East, the Halal meat industry presents a major opportunity for exports and the country's overall economic security but is unfortunately marred by challenges. Non-Muslim countries, Brazil, Australia and India are the top exporters of global Halal meat. Pakistan, despite being a Muslim country ranks 19th in the list having a market share of only 0.4%.² Despite necessary steps, the sector still lags, and much of its potential remains unexplored.³ Figures suggest that the majority of Pakistan's

Halal meat is exported to UAE, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Kuwait, with beef holding a share of more than 80%. In a bid to explore the economic prospects, the government has reentered the Malaysian meat market as part of its pivot to geo-economics policy.

The challenges to our bovine meat industry can be broadly divided into two phases, i.e., pre-slaughter and post-slaughter phases. In the pre-slaughter phase, the yield of meat per animal remains low. The difference in the volume of meat between the animals from Pakistan and that from Brazil, the US and Australia is a staggering 35%. This is largely because cattle and buffaloes are still sold and purchased in the market with the intention to produce milk and not obtain meat. Prevalent diseases in livestock like Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Peste des Petitis Ruminants (PPR) and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) are present in Pakistan due to which our meat often faces ban by other countries.⁴



In the post-slaughter phase, the lack of modern meat processing units poses a major impediment as traditional slaughterhouses still continue to function. The country's largest and most technologically advanced unit has been installed by Fauji Meat Limited near Port Qasim, Karachi (functioning at 40% of its capacity). As per reports, there are 37 modern registered abattoirs in Pakistan, with 21 in the North and 16 in the South

of the country, all operating much under capacity.⁵ The distance between these abattoirs and rural areas is great, which proves to be counterproductive for the farmers, so they opt not to use these facilities. The traditional slaughterhouses are not equipped with freezers; as a result of which, Pakistan has been unable to meet the demands of the local and international community, due to which countries like China, the US and Indonesia have banned our meat.⁶ To make matters worse, our beef industry faces a price challenge with Indian meat, which has a higher market capacity, low internal consumption and an established framework to support exports. The lack of regulatory prices and aforementioned challenges combined lead to low or zero incentives for the farmers to rear cattle for meat output, thus affecting the country's overall meat exports. One can therefore conclude that the poor performance of the country's meat industry can be attributed to the irregular functioning of the industry.

The stakeholders have been long complaining about the government not being supportive enough towards them. To address these challenges, the government approved its first ever policy in 2022 for the development of the livestock industry with the aim to increase halal meat exports. The policy is yet to be implemented and focuses on allocating more funds for research in the sector, establishing modern laboratory systems, developing model meat production farms and prioritizing livestock trade.⁷

Given the state of the country's economy, it has become significant that the government diversifies its economic outreach. For this, the Halal meat market presents a tremendous opening. Pakistan can also tap avenues in seafood, ostrich, mutton and poultry farming to enhance its export turnover.

Whilst it would be unfair to expect the government to micromanage all the challenges the Halal meat industry faces, however, certain steps must be taken by the authorities to regulate its functioning. These are:

- To enhance the yield of the meat, the government already has 46446 calves registered under its feedlot fattening program.⁸ In this, the cattle are reared / fattened for 90-100 days with a low-

grain feed until it reaches a desired weight for slaughtering. Electronic and print media channels must be fully utilized for wider dissemination and awareness of the concept.

- Periodic mass vaccination drives in collaboration with private companies should be carried out to control disease in livestock.
- To encourage private investors, there is a need to designate special Halal meat zones which are exempted from tax for at least ten years.
- To ensure the traceability of disease in animals, a record of its health covering animal identification, movement and disease control must be maintained.
- It is worth mentioning that the niche of frozen bovine meat is expanding. In 2021, it was the world's 140th most traded product, holding a total share of \$32.8B.⁹ This is because frozen beef is less expensive and has a greater shelf life, thus making it a more viable investment. The country's modern processing units need to be equipped with blast freezers and to ensure its implementation, tax subsidies of up to 3% must be granted to units equipped with freezers.
- In addition, technologically advanced abattoirs need to be installed at central locations so that the travel costs of farmers can be curtailed and these plants become easily accessible to those hailing from far-flung areas.
- In order to compete internationally, the herding capacity of farms should be increased, and for this, there is a need to designate the vast desert plains of Cholistan and Thar to interested individuals/corporate companies for the rearing of improved breeds of cattle.

There lies a massive economic opening in the shape of Halal meat exports. Pakistan can capitalize on its status as a "Muslim country" to build greater credibility to market its products around the globe. In addition to beef, it must tap avenues in seafood, ostrich, mutton and

poultry farming to enhance its export turnover. The sector will not only diversify our economic outreach but also add to the country's overall food security.

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Wakhan Corridor: A Gateway to Strategic Opportunities

Afaq Ahmad

Abstract

This INSIGHT discusses the importance of Wakhan as a gateway to strategic opportunities. To get the maximum benefits from this hidden gem, all the countries, including Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, and Central Asian States, must pledge to build cooperation and invest in infrastructure with proper framework. Whenever the route is operational, it will certainly boost trade and transform the whole region. Wakhan Corridor if developed would not only increase economic cooperation but also reinforce the relations and facilitate smooth trade and transit on lower cost.

Keywords: Strategic Linchpin of Eurasia, Regional Integration, Economic Cooperation, Regional Connectivity, Bam-E-Dunya.

Present at the junction of famous ancient trade routes and center of contemporary geopolitical interest, Wakhan Corridor is long acknowledged as a “strategic linchpin” of Eurasia. The Corridor is a narrow strategic strip to the North-East of Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. The Afghan panhandle connects with Pakistan to its South, to its North lies Tajikistan, while it connects with the economic giant China in the East. The length of the Corridor comes to 300 km, while its width ranges from 16-70 km. The longest border it shares with Pakistan is 300 kilometers along the mountainous region of the Hindu Kush in the Chitral District.¹ The region is characterized by high snowy peaks, rigid and rocky terrains, deep valleys, glaciers, lakes, and hot springs. The famous river of Central Asia, the Oxus River or Amu-Darya, which empties into the Aral Sea, starts from this very place. This strategic strip is the meeting point of the world’s four mountainous ranges, also known

as Bam-E-Dunya in the Persian Language (Roof of the World), i.e., Hindu Kush and Karakoram to its South and South-East, and Kun-Lun and Tien Shen to its North and North-East.

Historical Importance

Historically, Wakhan Corridor has remained a key link road in connecting China, Tibet, Persia, Central Asia, and Indian Subcontinent. The ancient Silk Route passed via this strategic strip and remained in use by merchants as well as travellers. The famous route was not only important for carrying merchandise but also played a key role in the diffusion of ideas and cultural exchange between the eastern and western parts of the region. Nazif Shahrani, in his work, explains that until the collapse of the Mughal Empire in India, Wakhan was one of the main routes for traders and merchants between India, China, and major cities like Samarqand and Bukhara in modern-day Central Asia.² In addition, in the past, there have been several military invasions and raids on Chitral via the Wakhan Corridor. Interestingly, the region has also served as a buffer zone or “no man’s land” between Czarist Russia and British India in the Great Game of the 19th Century.



In 1895, under the Pamir Boundary Commission, the corridor was given the status of a buffer zone, and its administrative affairs were entrusted to Amir Abdur Rehman Khan of Afghanistan, for which he received an annual subsidy of 500 pounds from British India.³ The Amir reluctantly accepted this offer, and the people of Wakhan and the Pamir region had

to suffer in the best interests of their giant neighbours who had been termed as the “The Bear” and “The Wolf” by the Afghan Amir.

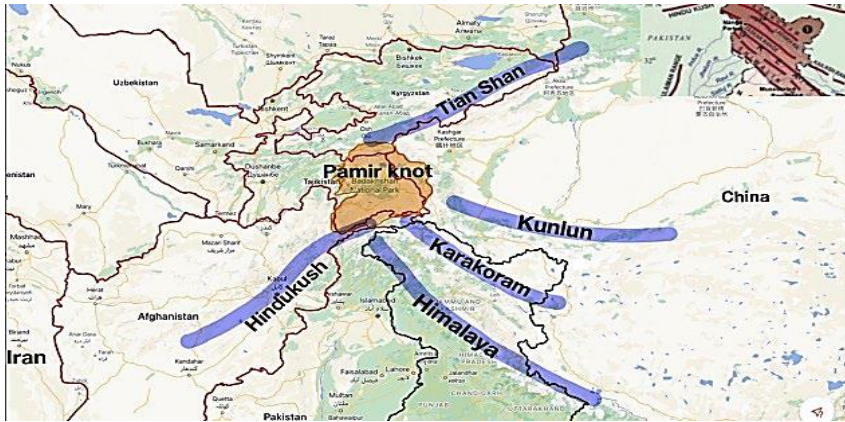
Population

The population of the Wakhan Corridor is approximately 13,000 inhabitants; however, due to the complex physical characteristics and remoteness of the region, the figure may not be completely accurate.⁴ The area of Wakhan is the abode of many tribes with a rich cultural heritage who speak different languages. The Wakhan is home to Wakhis, Sariqulis (Chinese Wakhi), and Kirgiz communities. The Wakhi and Sariquli follow the Ismaili sect, while the Kirgiz adhere to the Sunni sect of Islam. All these communities are living nomadic life due to harsh climatic conditions and share festivals and other cultural events together. The people of the region suffer from a lack of education, poverty, ill health, food insecurity, and opium addiction.⁵ Due to the non-availability of roads and other infrastructures, the people of Wakhan are dependent on Yaks, Horses, and Donkeys for transportation.

Geostrategic Significance

The Wakhan Corridor has great strategic potential in present times. The region not only offers a route for regional connectivity and trade but is also rich with natural resources and home to the world's largest water reserves. In addition, the panhandle is in a region where the Sino-Indian rifts on Aksai-Chin and Pakistan-India dispute over Siachin keep on simmering. Likewise, the wonder of the World, the Karakoram Highway (KKH), which connects Pakistan with China and Jammu & Kashmir territory, a cause of continuous tension between Pakistan and India, is also situated in the proximity of the Wakhan Corridor, which further increases its geo-strategic importance.

The Wakhan Corridor can play a significant role as a gateway for regional integration and connectivity. The Corridor provides a shorter route for the landlocked Central Asian States to access the Indian Ocean through which they can gain easy access to the diverse consumer markets of South Asia as well as the Mediterranean region.



Reliance only on the existing route, which involves crossing multiple states with various transit and custom regulations, only increases cost and adds to complexities. The use of Wakhan Corridor as an alternate route to the international market can play a pivotal role in the reduction of cost as well as the timely transportation of goods. Moreover, the route, if constructed, would be connected to the CPEC project and the KKH, which would provide a much cheaper and smooth trade route for Pakistan and other regional countries to access the rich mineral resources of Central Asian States.

This will open the doors of opportunities for Central Asia as well as for Pakistan. It will strengthen Pakistan's position to join the China-Eurasian economic corridor, thus converting the buffer land into a land of regional integration, connectivity, and prosperity. Some efforts were made previously to make this corridor functional. According to a report, during the tenure of Burhan Uddin Rabbani (Afghan President 1992-96), a trilateral agreement was signed among Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan to functionalize the corridor by connecting Pakistan and Tajikistan via Dorah Pass. Though the agreement failed because of instability in Afghanistan, however Pakistan and Tajikistan have worked on this by building infrastructure and independently approaching the Afghan Panhandle.⁶ The Mega Project of Lawari Tunnel, which was completed in 2017, can be viewed as a major development in this regard.

Significance for Local Communities

The opening of this corridor will bring a positive change in the lives of the people of Wakhan Corridor and those living in the vicinity, such as Chitral. The inhabitants of this part of the world almost share a common culture, history, and traditions. Due to physical complexities and poor infrastructural development, most people depend on livestock for their bread and butter. Building infrastructure will have positive impacts on the people as it will ease access to local markets and getting access to education, which the people of this region are lacking.

Interestingly, in the past, there was a proper mule track present between Chitral and Wakhan Corridor via Broghul Pass, which connects Afghanistan, Turkistan, India, Tibet, and Laddakh. The Borghul Pass served as a popular trade route that helped the local people to fulfill their necessities. According to a report, the merchandise then consisted of carpets and copper pottery brought from the north, while cloth, tea, and sugar were transported from the south. This route was also used in the transportation of Opium and Hashish. According to British Records, only in 1902, about 2000 kg of chars (Hashish) was imported to British India in October and November via Broghul Pass.⁷ If today, the Broghul Pass becomes functional with proper infrastructure, it will undoubtedly play a significant role in uplifting the living standards of the people of Wakhan as well as Chitral.



Wakhan and BRI

Furthermore, the giant project of the Belt and Road Initiative of China cannot be taken into isolation. China has been heavily investing in the development of the CPEC as part of its Belt & Road Initiative. China, with an ambition for economic prosperity and interdependence, stands as the largest foreign investor in Afghanistan. After it opened for foreign investors back in 2007, three Chinese state-owned mining companies invested in the Afghanistan mining sector and signed a contract with the Afghan Ministry of Mining and Petroleum. In addition, China is also investing in the exploration of hydrocarbon deposits of Afghanistan in the Amu-Darya Basin in Sari Pul and Faryab Province of Afghanistan.⁸ Seeing so much interest of the Chinese government, one can easily anticipate that China would go for building trade routes along the ancient Wakhjir Pass, which was used previously by merchants and travellers. The development of the Wakhjir pass would provide shorter and easier access to Afghan Markets. Moreover, China is also concerned about the extremist elements in the Xinjiang region. By investing in infrastructural development, these serious concerns are likely to be reduced, and the region would be developed with massive Chinese investments.



Challenges

The Wakhan Corridor is a hidden gem which has great potential to be a turning point in regional development and economic prosperity. Nonetheless, there are many challenges associated with it. Firstly, the terrain is very complicated and requires a huge investment. Secondly, India remains the biggest challenge. India always opposes the CPEC project. India considers that the opening of the Wakhan Corridor will unite Afghanistan with Pakistan and China. India's concern might be that the opening of the Wakhjir Pass, along with the already-opened Khunjarab Pass, will afford China superiority by increasing its geostrategic dominance in the region. India is constantly busy in feeding propaganda to malign the soft image of Pakistan and China among the common Afghan Population. Former Indian Army Chief Vijay Singh termed the role of China in the region as "an outflanking move". He further added that "India risks' losing the influence it has on Afghanistan because of Pakistan-China nexus that is getting stronger and is seen in evidence here".⁹ India has been actively involved in sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan by using Afghan soil. Kulbushan Jadav was one of the serving Indian Naval commanders who were involved in terrorist activities across Pakistan. Furthermore, RAW is also actively involved in terrorist activities inside Pakistan, especially in the tribal areas. India understands the importance of the strategic strip. It has renovated its Airbase (Farkhor Airbase) in Tajikistan to keep a watchful eye on the moves of Pakistan and China in the region. This base could be used by the Indians to provide support to the Indian RAW agents operating in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the Afghan Panhandle holds great significance due to its historical importance as part of the ancient silk route and its cultural, economic, and environmental characteristics. It shows its pivotal role in the intermingling of different cultures and the exchange of new ideas. Moreover, being home to one of the world's largest water reserves, the strip boasts remarkable biodiversity and plays a key role in the preservation of precious flora and fauna of the ecosystem.

Furthermore, China's BRI project underscores the geostrategic significance of the corridor. As a key artery connecting China with the Central Asian States and Afghanistan, the Wakhan Corridor can act as a bridge of smoother connectivity and strengthen regional trade. Economic activities need to be strengthened, and many more initiatives should be undertaken focusing on regional integration and economic cooperation to make the Wakhan Corridor a gateway of regional connectivity.

To get the maximum benefits from this hidden gem, all the countries, including Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, and Central Asian States, must pledge to build cooperation and invest in infrastructural development with proper frameworks. Whenever the route is operational, it will certainly boost trade and transform the whole region. Corridors like Wakhan, if developed in the best interest of the region, would not only increase economic cooperation but also reinforce the relations and facilitate smooth trade and transit with lower costs.

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About Insight and Author

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