

## Achilles' Heel or Scientific Breakthrough? Rethinking Concerns Over CPEC

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### ABSTRACT

Pakistan and China have agreed upon for a mega project One Belt One Road in which is a corridor where Economic prosperity is expected for both countries. This project will link border of Pakistan and China with different other projects of energy and railways with 2000 Kilometer long road. It is considered that this project will be game for changing not only the fate of both associated countries but also for geographically neighbor countries. It will help to improve the trade, economy, resolve energy crises, oil availability, and improving infrastructure as well. But this study establishes to evaluate the challenges with it that can help to policy makers to enjoy more positive results of CPEC in future.

**KEYWORDS:** Local industry and CPEC, Maintenance challenge, Safety challenge, Pakistan and China.

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### INTRODUCTION

There are almost 70 years that Pakistan came into being and made good relation with China, with the collaboration of the leaders of earlier generation, which is getting stronger day by day with the passage of time. According to the latest survey conducted in Pakistan it is come to know that China is becoming popular in Pakistan everywhere especially in most populous regions (Frankenstein and Gill, 1996). Political and military relationship between China and Pakistan are very strong and spreading positive vibes. Since early years of friendship, Pakistan is paying special attention to the China as compare to any other neighbor country. As Pakistan own state channel Pakistan Television (PTV) always play Pak-China song on every 1<sup>st</sup> October with amalgamation of the language of Urdu and Chinese language. This kind of gesture is only for the China as a token of love from Pakistan. Pakistan and China has very strong relationship in the form of trade and economic cooperation over a long time. In the trade relationship Pakistan has strong ties with china in the form of import and exports. China and Pakistan has developed trade relationship in the form of signing MOU since 1963 with flexible terms of trade agreement (Ranjan, 2015). Both countries are progressing and securing market access of each other by signing Free Trade Agreement (Ahmed et al.) on November 2006 which is kept on revising and upgrading them. With the collaboration of China and Pakistan a project with the name of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been introduced whose purpose is to connect regions with each other (Stoopman et al.). The project of CPEC is not only beneficent for China and Pakistan but it has also a remarkable significant impact on the neighbor border connected countries for example: Iran, Afghanistan, India, Central Asian Republic, and the region (Ali et al.). CPEC will help to augment by this geographical link by road, rail and air transportation, aimed at connecting people, knowledge sharing, exchange of regional culture, norms, trade, increasing business, producing opportunities, energy. In short it's a comprehensive model which will help both countries to enjoy the fruits at macro level. Generally it is considered that CPEC is a journey towards economic development and will help to grow other countries with synergy (Aslam, 2016). The basic motive behind this project is to spread peace, development and progress all around the linked areas. It is considered that CPEC is a new horizon towards progress around the world. A new model of success is supposed to be introduced through this way.

It is hope for better future of the region in the form of trade, growth, competition and progress. After having a thorough examining of the final draft of the project (CPEC) our current Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif agrees that this project will be fortune changer for the country (Irshad, 2015). As far as China's point of view concerned they are considering this project as a dream which is come in true now. China and Pakistan has set an example for the rest of the world that, a state can be helpful for the other state by joining hands, in the form of mutual projects to strengthen each other. With the help of China and Pakistan economic corridor project, the bridge has been built between South Asia and East Asia. So to become a power country neighbor support is essentials. The initiative of this mega project has been taken in May 2013 by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and China by linking of the borders of Kashgar and Xinjiang with port of Gwadar in Pakistan from North to South. This Economic corridor is famous with the title of Economic Belt and Silk Road in running Century (Ali et al.). This project made possibility for the connection of South Asia with Indian Ocean. It was dream of the both Countries to construct China and Pakistan Economic corridor for smooth trade and open new horizons of the progress. Economic corridor is a broad concept to deal with, as it become a hot issue to be discuss in the rest of the world. The Major Objective behind this project to get in shape all linked networks of highways, railways, airlines, fiber-optic cables, and oil-gas pipelines (Ahmed et al., 2016). This project is also included of the connection of Indian Ocean- and included energy projects of Coal and hydropower projects- and economic park projects in which textile, home appliances as well. With the passage of time this corridor will expand its fabrication to add more fruits in the form of projects.

## GEOGRAPHICAL EXISTENCE OF CPAC IN PAKISTAN

Basically this project is based majorly in Pakistan, which will start from Gwadar and will pass through from all four provinces that are Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khabar pukhtunkhwa then reached to the border of China. Pakistan is making Plan to extend this project in the form of geography for the Western, eastern and central alignment(Rehman and Jacobson). Western alignment is most important which is only possible after the completion of eastern alignment. Because it will connect IRAN and Afghanistan border wise later as well.



## CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN:

Though this project is appreciated in Pakistan and China but some constraints are attached with it, which can be faced by Pakistan and China as well. There are certain internal and external challenges faced by both associated countries(Sial, 2014). There are some challenges attached for the completion of this corridor in administrative, political and security point of view. This corridor is considered as the great challenge in the form of construction and strategic point of view especially for Pakistan for the location in region wise(Wolf, 2016b). Moreover this project highlighted the importance of Pakistan in all around the world which ultimately cause for the enemies by making strategies against Pakistan to flop the idea of CPEC. There are few countries which are not happy with the collation of both countries such as INDIA, ISRAEL and United States. Especially, for India, CEPEC is like bone for them which cannot be swallowing by them easily. They are very active now a day to make new plans to stop this project instead of appreciating or making collation with these two countries. RAW has opened a special office in Delhi for working 24/7 with special budget allocation to stop the project of CPEC(Singh, 2015). This project has created so many enemies of Pakistan which were not concerned earlier about the growth of Pakistan. China is investing a lot of money and time in this project and they are filling the gap on which America quit to invest after the incident of 9/11 terrorist attack. Earlier America was interested for economic support and financial support to improve security and remove terrorism in the country but USA was not willing to improve or build infrastructure in the Pakistan. Moreover China has its own strategy to build relationship with Pakistan on the basis of Political, Economic, Social and Military assistance to strengthen and progress together. Though Pakistan improved a lot through CPEC opportunities but till present USA portray in their media considered Pakistan as failed state which is still suffering the issue of terrorism and at developing stage. USA still market Pakistan as political instable and dangerous country for investing anything for the prosperity purpose. As most of the NGO`s, think tanks and policy makers are thinking all the time to interrupt this project and it cause to generate negative issues as compare to positivity for the country and region. These resistance and oppositions are not only faced by the enemy countries but also from the different political parties from within the Pakistan as well to stop this project promptly. Even some famous political parties do not like this activity of one belt one road, as they raised very serious objections for the growth of the country. These objections are raised by the lower developed provinces of Pakistan as they complaining about the equal growth of the all provinces. Because they are assuming that only few people and developed province will get all the advantages of this mega project of the country. Indeed there are a lot of internal and external challenges are and will be facing to Pakistan and China. Following are the major issues and challenges facing by Pakistan.

### **CPEC AND PRODUCTIVITY OF LOCAL INDUSTRY:**

There are so many threats attached with the project of CPAC. The major threat which is attached with this project is allocation of resources in all respective provinces, as this is the biggest reservation from less developed provinces, if they consider again as an orphan child. So if external issues cater in respective manner then it will satisfy internal issues as well (Irshad, 2016). The other challenge can be faced by the people of Pakistan is generation of power plants and electricity, fuel can destroy the competency of other already running projects (Ramay, 2016). Another threat is attached with this project is lack of ability of taking transparent decision making, and fair allocation of capital in productive sector of the country (Ali et al.). Challenges need to address on the spot to make this project successful. There should be surety of the allocation of generated money on remote areas of Pakistan. There are many challenges are attached with this project especially Pakistan will face being host country, but this can be reduced through educating people that how they can convert their challenges into opportunities. Here the question arises that are we able to transform these challenges into opportunities? The answer is yes but need to take few wise steps to cash this project. For instance this trade corridor is near to complete but along with this if oil pipelines and railway links establish with it, then this project will be more beneficial for the Pakistani community. The local industry of Pakistan seems to be suffered after in action of this project, as china will be more cost effecting as compare to Pakistani products because of reduction in fares and time (Haq and Farooq). For the assurance of getting benefits from this project to work on other projects are very necessary to deal with to secure the industry of oil, gas and textile as well.

### **MAINTENANCE CHALLENGES**

The foremost challenge is to maintain 1300 km long highway throughout the functional year, which will be both financial and regional challenge to Pakistan. This highway connects both borders of Pakistan and China from KaraKoram and Khunjerab which was a long time taking project (Dong). This project was very challenging in constructing point of view as almost 892 labors lost their lives while construction. As all the location of this project is facing heavy land sliding cause of producing artificial Lake 30 KM long in the border area of Pakistan and China. 'Given the emerging strategic alignments, CPEC may have already become the target of an economic war' (Gao, 2013). It took long time to build this Silk Road but some fears are attached with it, because of its geological instability and bare mountains that are contains of loose rocks. Moreover this area is popular for the heavy snow that is threatening for particular that season and will create hazards for the traffic. The only solution of this challenge is to convert this road in it tunneling but again it will be costing and time taking. Engineers are thinking of it for this miracle.

### **SAFETY CHALLENGES:**

Challenges that will be faced by Pakistan are the safety in the form of route of this corridor, which is attached with the Gwadar Port which is alarming ultimately. Province of Balochistan, the place for the hostile forces, openly against in the construction of CPEC which will affect the inflow of foreign aid in the Pakistan. Balochistan is the unstable province of Pakistan since 1947, and it is still struggling for the separation from the Pakistan (Wolf, 2016a). In addition of it border of Afghanistan is attached with the west border of Balochistan which is again an alarming situation for this project. Because Afghanistan is also an unstable estate for the terrorism point of view will ultimately cause for the worst situation. While constructing stage this is not only threat for Pakistan but also for Chinese labors and technicians as well. Therefore Government of Pakistan has requested for the special security for the officials and Chinese personnel in the construction area of CPEC (MEHMOOD-UL-HASSAN, 2016). Pakistan has established special security forces of infantry battalions and six civilian armed forces wings to be headed by major general of Pakistan army. Pakistan Government also designed a force under the supervision of brigadier of Pakistani Army for the region of Gwadar and the Province of Balochistan. Above all security plans were taken in the action of a sad incident, when three Chinese engineers were killed by some unknown rebels. Moreover some sever security challenges are associated with Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan's northwest, and Border of Afghanistan which is attached with Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa. The rout of CPEC will pass through Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa, because of FATA and Balochistan some threats are attached with it in long run (Masood et al., 2016). China is well aware about all above shared fears and threats and they are constantly pressurizing to vanish all obstacles and threats to get fruitful results of this project. The Success of this project is not assured by the policy makers and think tanks of both countries if the security issues are not addressed by the Government of both countries. Another responsibility will be on the shoulders of Pakistan, in response of this project investment from China, is develop and produce professional and capacity building to meet all concerned deadlines of power station, roads and railways (Haq and Farooq). If Pakistan is not able to meet above challenges then it will revel negative impact of CPEC on China and associated bodies and they might be thinking to start their projects somewhere else, for example Arabian Sea and Iran.

**CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

If we really want to see this project successful in Pakistan then all the political parties should stand together and work hard to bring major and positive changes nationwide. The basic challenge is political instability in the Pakistan which needs to be resolved instantly to get the positive results. Government support to make this project effective is very necessary to enjoy benefits at commercial and economic level for making better environment in country. Political Parties can only unite when Government involve them in all projects and planning of CPEC. Government should discuss all challenges and benefits faced by this project to all the provinces.

Government need to be very active regarding this project as they should provide full assistance to the foreign workers of the CPEC project. Security is the sensitive issue to deal to make this project very successful. So extra security plans need to introduce. Any small negligence can fail our project and invite terrorists to create hurdles to fail this project, so Government need to be very responsible if we want success this project. China Pakistan economic corridor is game changer project for both Pakistan and China, it is 2000 KM long road link between Kashgar and Gwadar port with Arabian Sea which will change the geographically and geopolitically as well. After the completion of this mega project So many opportunities can be awaited for us as oil will import in cheap prices by linking Gulf and will transport to China by passing Balochistan and the Karakoram.

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