



THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY OF GILGIT - BALTISTAN IS THE KEY TO CPEC

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Abstract

China and Pakistan enjoy diplomatic, trade and cultural ties, and are regarded as iron brothers. The two countries have a special strategic partnership, free trade agreement, and unwavering friendship. A deep and trustworthy relationship has been maintained throughout history. Although geopolitical challenges are certainly competitive, the geographical affinity of northern Pakistan and the border settlements of early 1960 have made significant contributions to both countries. The territorial dispute between India and Pakistan over the fate of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan has hindered the successful implementation of the goals of CPEC. The local opinions of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are of strategic value to both sides and have not been well studied from the local political and economic perspectives, which is the key to establishing links with the CPEC project. This article examines the views of local community on this major initiative and further explores the strategic and political roles of Pakistan and China in international relations.

Key Words: Diplomatic Relations, Pak-China Border, Kashmir issue, Gilgit Baltistan

Introduction

Pakistan and China celebrated 2022 as the Year of Friendship, which marked 72 years of diplomatic relations. The Relations between Pakistan-China friendship which has been declared by the leadership



of both countries. “Higher than the mountains, deeper than the seas and sweeter than honey” for a long time is a unique friendship because both countries are neighbors as well as strategic allies (Hussain, march 2023). In the international system in which we live the relation of two states base on their national interest, but Pakistan-China relations are not like that because it is based on love, believes as many ancient trade and cultural connections silk road (Javaid U. &., 2015). Both countries have good geostrategic and realistic diplomatic relation as initially grow during President General Ayyub Khan government in Pakistan and the calculations are what need for decision makers on both sides’ leadership. Therefore, it is undeniable that the bilateral relationship is a unique perhaps the relationship between Israel and America is just such a relationship. Parallel at the same time, are we given its smooth continuity as will Islamabad and Beijing ever decide to separate or did the warmth in the relationship. Today, Pakistan-China diplomatic relation has become a stable and strong Friends in Asia, but no one knows how this friendship started and grow up. In 1949, China launched a revolution under the supervision of great leadership of Mao Zedong, and Communist China was founded in 1949.

When the Communist Chinese government was recognized in 1951, Pakistan was among the first nations to reestablish diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. Pakistan was the first nation in the Islamic world to break diplomatic ties with the Republic of China. They established fresh diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China and broke off ties with the Republic of China (Javaid U. &., 2015).. In early 1950 the Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China were not cordial because at that time the world dipolar one was Russia supper power, and another was United State. After get independence British in 1947 Pakistan ancient trade and cultural ties compel to continue diplomatic relation with China. In 1956 Pakistan's Prime Minister Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy signed the Treaty of Friendship between Pakistan and China. During 1958 and 1962, Pakistan-China relations remained uncertain and mysterious, on which there is no comment able. In 1963 Foreign minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto visited China and signed the Pak-China Border Agreement, thus resolving the border dispute and brightening the prospects of Pak-China friendship (Waqas, 2020).

Beginning of Diplomatic Tie

Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, the Prime Minister of Pakistan signed a friendship agreement of Pakistan and China in 1956. He was a nationalist ideological leader and connected with the people. Despite this agreement, China remained neutral in the Cold War between Pakistan and India. Between 1958 and 1962, Pakistan-China relations remained uncertain and mysterious, which are not even commented upon today. Farhat Mehmood writes in his book, *History of Pak-US Relations*, that General Ayub Khan started efforts to stabilize Pak-US relations with great struggle after the military takeover in 1958 and in 1959 signed a security agreement with the US and brought it to Pakistan. Military bases were given. China protested the deal and expressed fears that the deal was being made to encircle China. According to Farhat Mehmood, Pakistan was supporting the American plan to divide China into two parts. General Ayub Khan offered India a joint defense treaty in late 1959, further fueling China's concerns. China was under the impression that America was trying to organize



and unite both Pakistan and India against China.

New Direction of Foreign Policy

In 1960 and 61, Pakistan began to review its foreign policy. Despite being Washington's closest ally, Pakistan felt that the US had not dealt fairly with the Kashmir issue, which, along with Pakistan's security needs, was two of its most important foreign policy concerns gave birth to It also became clear that Pakistan's position was becoming more unstable after John Kennedy took over the US presidency in 1960. The Democratic Party had already demonstrated a pro-Indian bias, and Kennedy questioned the importance of multilateralism. But worse was yet to come for Pakistan. During and after the Sino-Indian border dispute, large quantities of arms from the United States began to flow into India, upsetting the military balance in the subcontinent. Washington insisted that the weapons were meant to keep India in line against China. Pakistan did not believe that India posed a threat to China and had no assurance that these weapons would not be used against Pakistan. Therefore, this attitude of united states and India make Pakistan and China closed to each other as a strategic Partners in the region.

It was a circumstance that had a significant impact on how Pakistan viewed its position as a Western ally and its relations with China as well. In 1961, Pakistan government had submitted application in United Nation to re-voting for China seat this act showing that Pakistan has more relations with China compared to Washington's stance. Pakistan government was clearly decided that they not be compromised relation with China for west alliance. Despite this, Pakistan and China do not yet have a formal alliance. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a former foreign minister of Pakistan, spoke before the National Assembly in July the year 1963., "India's attack on Pakistan involves the territorial integrity and security of the largest statin Asia. I do not want it at this stage." I would like to elaborate more Enough said on this matter.an attack on Pakistan would involve the national interest of another state.

This development was not liked in the light of Washington. Pakistan's perception changed and the latter reacted by deferring a \$4.3 million loan to Pakistan in August 1963 Later, in December 1963, US Under Secretary of State George Ball travelled to Pakistan and is said to have attempted to persuade President Ayub that China was the true role model. India and Pakistan should work together on defense issues for the subcontinent, and friendship between China and Pakistan is against the spirit of the Pakistan-US partnership. The president, Ayub, disagreed. In addition, Pakistan made it plain that, despite the pressure, it is not prepared to compromise on the tense relations. Pakistan's position gave the impression to the Chinese that Former China Pakistan was ready to stand firm on its commitment to friendship. Therefore, when Chou Enlai visited Pakistan in February 1963, China abandoned its neutral position on Kashmir for the first time, and supported Pakistan's position on the plebiscite. The Chou-Ayub Joint Declaration of 23 February 1964 expressed the hope that the Kashmir issue would be "settled according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people as India and Pakistan. have done to them. A position of neutrality, merely bilateral." Emphasis was placed on solving the problem through dialogue. Pakistan's position gave the impression to China. In July 1964, the PRC gave Pakistan an interest-free loan of \$60 million. Between March and September 1965, Chou En Lai



visited Pakistan on three occasions, and several high-level delegations were exchanged between the two countries. In March 1965, President Ayub Khan and Mr. Bhutto visited China. The joint declaration on this occasion reaffirmed Pakistan's support for PRC representation in the United Nations and opposed the two-China policy. In April 1965, an agreement was signed between the two countries to provide a monthly sea transport service.

During the Run-of-Kutch conflict in April 1965, China supported Pakistan was against India, but it was during the Indo-Pak War of September 1965 that China thanks the Pakistani people and received great good will on September 7, 1965, the day India demarcated the international border between itself and Pakistan. Crossed, Beijing announced: The Chinese government issued a stern warning while also firmly denouncing India's criminal action, supporting Pakistan in its just fight against aggression. The Indian government is accountable for the effects of its violent and opportunistic assault. Indian aggression against any of its neighbors is a matter of concern to all its neighbors. India raised concerns about Indian violations on the China-Sikkim border and alerted its forces on that border. Chinese pressure along India's northern border helped Pakistani forces in large numbers. China's stand during the conflict prevented India from attacking East Pakistan.

In the first week of January 1966, Pakistani and Indian leaders met in Tashkent under the auspices of the Soviet Union to resolve their differences. The results of this effort came out in the Tashkent Declaration of January 10, 1966. Although the Chinese supported Indian-Pakistani reconciliation efforts, they viewed the Soviet role as mediator, along with the United States, as an attempt to alienate Pakistan. by its friendship with China and its attempt to isolate the latter. Pakistan's subsequent clarifications and actions reassured Beijing that the former had not taken the Tashkent exercise for granted. Efforts to reach an understanding with India, particularly regarding the Kashmir dispute. Again, in the post-Tashkent period, the Soviet Union a more conciliatory policy towards Pakistan and some Russian military equipment followed. But if Moscow thought that relations between Pakistan and China would soften, it was mistaken. In fact, when the Soviet Union launched its scheme for collective security in Asia, known as the Brezhnev Doctrine, Pakistan rejected it, the latter on the other hand, against Chinese interest. During this time many new agreements were signed those mentioned earlier. In January 1966, China agreed to supply electrical equipment worth Rs.10 lakh to East Pakistan. In June, an agreement was signed to promote scientific and cultural exchanges. A trade protocol was signed in July 1966 and in August China supplied East Pakistan with 100,000 tons of rice. Another agreement on sea transport was reached in October 1966. But most importantly for Pakistan's industrial development China and Pakistan signed a contract in June 1966 to construct a complex for massive machinery in Taxila. China was to provide machinery and technical expertise. In December 1968, China undertook to provide aid worth billions of rupees to Pakistan. 200 million loans on very favorable terms.

However, China's main support in the economic sector has been to Pakistan After the Indo-Pak War of 1965, his willingness to supply Pakistan with a substantial amount of military equipment was crucial. At the start of hostilities, the US cut off arms supplies to India and Pakistan. America was



Pakistan's main source of military equipment. India, on the other hand, continued to acquire arms from the Soviet Union, in addition to the huge stockpiles it had accumulated because of the US influx after the 1962 Indo-Indian border war. In these circumstances, the importance of China's supply of arms to Pakistan cannot be overestimated. Chinese goods began arriving in Pakistan via Xinjiang in October 1965 and the Pakistani public got their first glimpse of Chinese T-29 tanks and MiG-19s on Republic Day in March 1966. Since then, the PRC has been a major supplier of military equipment to Pakistan. In March 1966, the Chinese president, Liu Dao-chi, visited Pakistan, followed by Chou En-lai in June. Of course, the events of 1965 proved that Pakistan had made no mistake in relying on China. As external forces and pressures to endure Sino-Pakistani friendship were largely eliminated (largely due to the Sino-American detente with US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's visit to China in 1971, which Pakistan (facilitated by). Earlier in November 1970, President Yahya visited China, and an agreement on economic and technical cooperation was signed. The 1970s also started very well for Pakistan, as general elections were held for the first time that year in the country. But the promise of this beginning could not be fulfilled. By the end of 1971, Pakistan had to lose its eastern part.

During this period PRC fully supported Pakistan. Position In early April 1971, Cho En Lai sent a note to General Yahya, He said: "The Chinese government and people should always support such. The issue of protection of the government and people of Pakistan sovereignty and independence of the country." The Chinese accused India of blatant interference in Pakistan's internal affairs, later, the Chinese accused the Indians of open aggression against East Pakistan. Encouraged by the Soviet Union. When Mr Butto visited China November 1971, Chinese Foreign Minister reiterates PRC support for Pakistan's plight. But actions cannot match words. During the Indo-Pak War of December 1971, a protest notes to India, claiming a violation of the Sino-Sikkim border on 16 December 1971. The situation is quite different because of the existence of the Indo-Soviet Agreement of August 1971 which stands on China and stands with it, along with some other reservations, should China intervene on Pakistan's side. China did what it could to support Pakistan in the United Nations and helped dismemberment after the war to bring the peace.

Border Agreement and importance of Gilgit Baltistan

The Early Years (1950–1969) The first Islamic country to accept China was Pakistan, which opened an ambassadorial connection with China in 1951. However, after Pakistan joined the US, the Western alliance's SEATO and CENTO, relations between Pakistan and China gradually deteriorate because this alliance was against to communist block especially China and USSR. Due to these allies' opposition to the Communist block, particularly the USSR and China, diplomatic relations steadily deteriorated. However, diplomatic relations gradually deteriorated after Pakistan joined the US, SEATO (Southeast Asian Territory Organisation), and CENTO (Central East North Territory Organisation) because these alliances were opposed to the Communist bloc, particularly the USSR and China. According to Dobell (1964), Pakistan had the chance to allay Chinese concerns and present justifications for joining SEATO and CENTO during the Bandung Conference (1955). (Dobell, 1964). Premier of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Bogra used this opportunity to personally reassure



Premier of China Zhou Enlai. Mr. Bogra said that we have no negative plans for China and that we are a part of SEATO and CENTO because of our concern for India. The Chinese government recognized this stance. Hussain Suhrawardy and Zhou Enlai, the then premier of Pakistan and China, visited one other's states in October and December 1956, respectively. However, after the 1957 visit to the US by Pakistani prime minister Suhrawardy, relations between the two nations began to deteriorate in 1959. According to Akhtar (2009), a further development was an official meeting in Karachi by Taiwanese Hajjis, who met with Pakistani religious officials. Regarding this, China accused Pakistan of supporting US interests at the expense of the one-China policy.¹¹ In the meantime, in September 1959, border clashes broke out along Gilgit Baltistan's (Hunza) border (Cheema, 1986).

Chinese MIG aircraft have entered Pakistani airspace illegally. President Ayyub Khan vowed to defend India collectively against China and sent Gilgit scouts from Hunza to the Xinjiang border in November 1959. Due to boundary disputes on both sides, which subsequently escalated into war, Indo-China relations were beginning to turn hostile at the beginning of the 1960s. India was granting the Dalai Lama and his supporter's political sanctuary while also becoming indirectly involved in the Tibet problem. The changing scenario of regional politics pushed China to shift its foreign policy concerning Pakistan and South Asia. The United States supported India diplomatically and economically in its conflict with China. This is a chance for Pakistan and the People's Republic of China to develop a strong connection. According to Retzlaff (1963), India had identified and labeled China as a threat to the region, but Pakistan had diplomatically fought for China to say that it posed no threat. The US and USSR were completely committed to India's fight against China when the conflict between the Sino-Indian frontiers broke out in 1962. According to Bhatti, an agreement between China and Pakistan to separate their border between the western section of China (Xinjiang region) and Pakistan's administered Gilgit-Baltistan was struck in March 1963. (Khan R. M., 2011). India expressed their strong disapproval of this deal and their concern that "there was no common border between China-Pakistan." According to Chen (2007), the conflict between Pakistan and India officially started September 6, 1965. China sides with Pakistan and directly warns India to destroy the border posts if it wants to avoid an attack from China within three days. Pakistan complied with the UN's request for a ceasefire at that point after it had been made. Pakistan played a crucial role as a bridge between US-China relations and helped to break China's isolation at the end of the 1960s. Due to the USSR's (USSR) diminished influence in power struggles, the US modified its foreign policy towards China (Shanglin, 2001).

The 1963 Pak-China Border Agreement is unquestionably considered as a major turning point for several reasons. Prior to the Border Agreement, China had a rather ambivalent position regarding the Kashmir dispute. Following the accord, the Chinese publicly backed Pakistan's position on Kashmir. The Bandung Conference's ten guiding principles, which included the right to self-determination, were all referenced in the accord's preamble. Both Ayub and Chou said that the Kashmir issue would be resolved according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people as agreed by India and Pakistan in the joint declaration of 23 February 1964 (Zeb, 2012). The announcement was crucial for two reasons in



particular: Enlisting the backing of the West against India's stubbornness on the Kashmir dispute was one of the main factors persuading Pakistani decision-makers to join the Western-sponsored security alliance system. The events that followed the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1962, and in particular the provision of US military aid to India without prior meetings with Pakistan, gave rise to views of "American desperation" and heightened a pre-existing sense of unease. . Pakistanis, who widely believed that equipment supplied by the West would eventually be used against Pakistan (Khan M. M., 2017). The way the aid was rushed to India was interpreted by many observers not only as the panic-stricken attitude of the Americans but also as the confirmation of already circulating belief of Americans' preference for India over Pakistan and their hidden desire to woo India. Feeling somewhat upset over American attitude, the announcement provided some satisfaction to the Pakistanis that the major power of Asia has now endorsed Pakistan's stand on Kashmir. While the American attitude over Kashmir was reflecting somewhat 'fed up' attitude, the Chinese latest stance did provide encouragement to the Pakistanis belief in their own stand on Kashmir. The other factor which needs to be mentioned here and which made their stand truly remarkable and appreciable was that China's new stand on Kashmir could have been employed against China by those who were then advocating a plebiscite solution of the Taiwan Issue. Despite being cognizant of such an eventuality, the Chinese still opted to support Pakistan's viewpoint over Kashmir dispute (Garver, 2004).

As was to be expected, India not only vehemently opposed the Pak-China Boundary Agreement and claimed that Pakistan had ceded a sizable portion of its land to China, but also claimed that these two countries' acts amounted to interference with India's sovereignty over Kashmir. This is the key point that harmed the Indians the most. The accord had accomplished the goal of putting the Chinese's insistence that Kashmir did not belong to India firmly and publicly on record (Yasmeen, 2019). Contrary to what the Indians wanted the rest of the world to think, it was a contested region and not a natural extension of India. Although it was made clear that the border negotiations could be resumed after the Kashmir dispute was resolved, the signing of even a provisional agreement questioned India's repeated claims that Kashmir belonged to it. This is because the boundary negotiations did not address the issue of ownership of Kashmir. Ironically India even lodged a protest the border agreement with the United Nations accusing Pakistan as violating Security Council Resolutions of 17 January and 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949, the very resolutions which India also accepted but never allowed them to be implemented. For obvious reasons the Pakistani response was studded with exemplifications of how India defied the above-mentioned UN resolutions as well as emphasizing the Article 6 of the Agreement that permitted the renegotiations of border agreement once the issue relating to the sovereign authority over Kashmir was resolved (Wagner, 2016).

Another aspect of the agreement was that it demonstrated that even the complicated international disputes could be resolved peacefully through negotiations provided the parties involved were sincerely engaged towards the resolution of the dispute. What the agreement highlighted was that the Kashmir dispute defied the solution for 15 years primarily because one of the parties involved was not sincerely interested in its resolution. Instead, it employed negatively orientated tactics to further complicate and delay the settlement of the dispute (Bukhari, 2014).



The Kashmir Issue and Subsequent Unclear Status of Gilgit Baltistan

In the past, Gilgit-Baltistan was an integral part of Jammu and Kashmir, a kingdom ruled by the Hindu Dogra dynasty (Bansal, 2013). It is one of the two territories left over from the old Dogra Empire, which was occupied by Pakistan in the late 1940s as Mahad (independent) Jammu and Kashmir. After the partition of British India in 1947, there was a revolt among the Muslim population. Major William Brown, the British officer commanding the Scouts at that time, chose to support the rebels and announced the accession to Pakistan on 4 November 1947 (Cloughley, 1999). In fact, the Maharaja of Kashmir, who was considered the supreme authority at the time, was the symbol of the military coup (Brown, 2014). Thus, the accession to Pakistan lacks legitimacy (Singh S. , *Those Troubled Peaks. Greater Chinese presence in Gilgit Baltistan lends it geo-strategic significance*, 2015). Large-scale violent fighting between opposing factions that support independence from Pakistan, India, and Ha Azadi, as well as pre-emptive support from pro-Pakistani forces from nearby areas (such as Swat) took place at this time. However, 'accession' left behind a legacy of legal and constitutional uncertainty, which the Government of Pakistan has maintained to this day (Singh P. , 2016). In short, it can be said that Gilgit-Baltistan's relationship with the state of Pakistan is unclear, and its legal status is also unclear (Chandran, 2016). Furthermore, Gilgit-Baltistan is not recognized as part of Pakistan in its constitution.

As a result, the population of Gilgit-Baltistan enjoys both satisfactory representation in Parliament and citizenship rights (Hong, 2012). The national leadership has now concluded that they need to engage in some "political development" to counter the rapidly growing anti-Pakistan sentiment. Islamabad responded by passing the Gilgit-Baltistan in Empowerment and Self-Government Order (GBESGO) in 2009, renaming the region from the Northern Territory to Gilgit-Baltistan (Kreutzmann, 2015) but also making it more looking like a 'quasi-formal' Pakistani province (Puri, 2009). It was possible to create a new Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly because of this legal structure (GBLA). However, because all the authority remains with the Gilgit-Baltistan Council, which is presided over by the Prime Minister, it continues to be a powerless institution. As a result, it will still have not complete authority in GB Assembly (Wolf, 2016). As a result, Gilgit-Baltistan is forbidden from participating in any significant decision-making bodies or entities, particularly those that deal with the CPEC project.

As a result, critics say that GBESGO was "designed to give the impression of independent self-governance" and that it is simply an attempt to appease both the international community and the GB opposition (Singh S. , *Those Troubled Peaks. Greater Chinese presence in Gilgit Baltistan lends it geo-strategic significance*, 2015). However, recent events, especially the CPEC chief, may force Pakistan politically to explore the protection of Gilgit-Baltistan, especially in light of the way forward that its capital wants a court decision for. Brother for your illegal gains related to projects related to PEC from that area. One possible choice is to formally include Gilgit-Baltistan as Pakistan's fifth province. Government officials in Pakistan may claim that Gilgit-Baltistan was never part of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and, as a result, whatever legal obligations were imposed by the former Maharajah on India's behalf (specifically the Accession Treaty) do not apply to Gilgit-



Baltistan (the "Gilgit Agency Dispute") so that 'officially' a rogue Gilgit-Baltistan can gain legal status) (Ali, 2015).

As a result, Islamabad may view the incorporation of Gilgit-Baltistan into Pakistan as appropriate and consistent with the rules established by the former British colonial rulers to carry out the transfer of authority and the partition of British India. However, there is a drawback to this political move from Pakistan's position. If Islamabad formally annexes Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan would be relinquishing its claim to the respective territories as well as its normative justification for opposing India's inclusion of Jammu & Kashmir (the Indian-administrated portion of Kashmir). Pakistan therefore needs to tread carefully while granting Gilgit-Baltistan specific constitutional classifications and, consequently, political rights, while also avoiding the appearance of constitutional integration of this region as a result. The former would be a breach of the UN resolutions, which were only partially adopted on 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949, that called for the adoption of a free and impartial referendum procedure to decide the state of Jammu's future status. According to the wishes of the people of Kashmir (Akram, 2015). These UN resolutions are extremely important to Pakistan because, at least theoretically, they preserve the possibility that the people of Kashmir could choose to support Pakistan. This is primarily the reason Pakistan, unlike India, has held off on annexing Gilgit-Baltistan.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project and its Impacts on Gilgit-Baltistan

Today, it appears that Gilgit-Baltistan has managed to participate in intellectual discussions and debates on worldwide forums in addition to receiving an increasing amount of media attention (Khan E. M., 2017). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's (CPEC) implementation is the main driving force behind this process. A network of roads, railways, oil pipelines, electrical power grids, fibre optic cables, and special economic zones will be established to link the Chinese trading hub of Kashgar in Xinjiang province with the Pakistani port city of Gwadar in the Baluchistan province, which is located close to the strategically significant Straits of Hormuz (Znews, 2016). The CPEC's designers are encountering significant difficulties in Gilgit-Baltistan, much as they have in other regions, particularly Baluchistan (Asif, 2019). This is picking up steam because Gilgit-Baltistan, like the Gwadar port in Baluchistan, is crucial for the CPEC's smooth operation both in the short and long terms. In more literal terms, Gilgit-Baltistan serves as the only land link between Pakistan and China, and as such, the majority of communication networks, as well as all roads, pipelines, and other infrastructure, must pass through this mountainous region. The region's location in the centre of China's western Xinjiang Province, the Wakhan Corridor in Afghanistan, Pakistan's Kashmir under Pakistani control, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and India's Jammu and Kashmir also give it great geostrategic significance. In a nutshell, the CPEC project cannot be implemented without Gilgit-Baltistan (Zaheer, 2022). Therefore, it will be crucial for the central authority to provide complete control over this region that is becoming more unrest. Since the CPEC touches every aspect of governance, the economy, and daily life in the region, the control issue is particularly essential at this time. As a result, it is important to identify some of the difficulties. Firstly, there are major problems in Pakistan's centre-region relations in general and regarding Gilgit-Baltistan in particular. In addition to the constant threat of terrorist attacks and insurgencies, the development programme must address



the growth of local protest movements. The lack of contact between the Gilgit-Baltistan region and the central government in Pakistan's capital, as well as the ensuing information and transparency gap, are the main grievances of the local populace (Jabeen, 2020). As a result, there is uncertainty and secrecy surrounding the entire CPEC project. In Islamabad, there is also a lack of awareness of and sensitivity to the concerns of the local populace (Nation, 2016). As a result, the CPEC is further escalating the already bad trends stated above and cementing the perception that Gilgit-Baltistan is being taken advantage of and ignored by the central government (Chaudhuri, 2012). The impoverishment of the population in the region is made worse by the striking regional asymmetries in CPEC planning, relating to the projects and money allocations, which favour the Punjab province (Muhammad, 2016)

Second, as was already noted, it is crucial to emphasize that Gilgit-Baltistan is a disputed region because of the Kashmir conflict. Pakistan is unwilling to grant the locals any meaningful political rights. As a result, Gilgit-Baltistan is not allowed to participate in any significant decision-making organisations, particularly those that deal with the CPEC project. (Siddiq, 2017). This will show itself in the expansion of Pakistani security resources and personnel. Chinese military activity in the area will also increase. The local populace will thereafter notice an increase in the visibility of security forces in public areas. Another reason for the increase in security in Gilgit-Baltistan is the high chance that militant Islamists will choose the CPEC as a potential target for their Jihad against China. This is in addition to the repression of local resistance against the CPEC (Bhattacharjee, 2015).

Third, Beijing's treatment of the Muslim minority in its western Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has drawn the attention of global terrorist groups like the Islamic State and Al Qaeda. The Pakistani military will step up operations in the area in conjunction with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) to combat the dual threats of escalating local demonstrations and rising Jihadist activities against CPEC. (Naqvi, 2016). They started cooperative border patrols, which can be interpreted as a step in this direction. Given past interactions with Pakistani security forces in Gilgit-Baltistan and other regions like Baluchistan or FATA, it is likely that the situation for political rights will deteriorate while instances of torture, enforced disappearances, and "kill and dump" cases will rise. Gilgit-Baltistan will also continue to suffer abuses carried out by the federal government to keep control over the region (Standard, 2016).

Fourth, it appears (at least initially) that the CPEC is solidifying Gilgit-Baltistan's poor economic trends. In addition to the central government's ongoing exploitation of natural resources without paying Gilgit-Baltistan due royalties, the CPEC creates significant distortions of fair and free economic competition. According to indications, local business owners and labourers lose out on all (big) building projects in favour of Chinese corporations or military-owned businesses (MILBUS) in Pakistan. For instance, Islamabad issued licences to Chinese companies without seeking their approval, particularly for mining (T, 2016). Furthermore, there is a real risk that rich investors will buy up all the rare important land. The so-called "land grabbing" in this situation refers to the forcible acquisition of local peoples' land by the government and military without any apparent indication of



compensation or rehabilitation for those who are subsequently displaced. This practice has further alienated the local populace. The aforementioned issues are important because there are no actual intentions to make big investments in Gilgit-Baltistan, neither from CPEC nor from other development initiatives to boost the local economy, such as foraying into the critical (dry) fruit growing industry, at this time. The already established local companies, however, are being shifted and relocated outside of Gilgit-Baltistan, for example, the Sost dry port in GB is being transferred to Havelian in the Hazara region of KP. As a result, at least 10,000 employments would disappear. (Khawaja, 2021). In addition to the intention to expand the Lake Attabad region, the CPEC is hindering rather than enhancing the tourist industry due to unfavourable environmental issues. In light of this, it is also necessary to point out that the CPEC would result in widespread environmental deterioration because it will destroy a lot of valuable land and pollute the air and water (Nigar, 2018). Fifth, it is undeniable that Gilgit-Baltistan will soon face major demographic restructuring, which will have a significant negative impact on the native population and make them a minority in their own area. The following developments will force this phenomenon: a Pakistan internal migration, whereby people from other provinces like Punjab will be relocated to Gilgit-Baltistan to take over businesses and administrative jobs; an external migration of Chinese labourers; and finally, an enforced displacement of locals. In this situation, the anticipated increase in terrorist activity coupled with heightened sectarian violence will compel locals, especially minorities, to evacuate the region. It is crucial to recognise that Pakistan's society has experienced a striking rise in intolerance and radicalism over the past few decades (Mishra, 2019). Therefore, there is a real risk that minorities could be utilized by a "foreign hand," such as India, as "scapegoats" for possible CPEC failures. The Pakistani government has already made a few statements accusing New Delhi of recent and impending anti-CPEC demonstrations and the sabotage of this development initiative. (Times, 2018).

Conclusion

Gilgit Baltistan is very important area for both China and Pakistan due to its strategically location and its proximity to central Asian region. Gilgit Baltistan is very rich in natural resources like minerals, precious stone, and water resources. Here are some of the reasons. The Economic Importance of Gilgit-Baltistan is rich in natural resources, including minerals, precious stones, and water resources. The region is also home to the world's second highest peak, K2, which attracts many climbers and tourists. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through Gilgit-Baltistan, forming an important part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and an important economic hub for Pakistan. The Strategic Importance Gilgit-Baltistan is strategically located between China, Pakistan, and India. It provides China with a direct land link to the Arabian Sea, which is crucial for Chinese energy imports and exports. The region also provides Pakistan with a buffer against India and a gateway to Central Asia and beyond. The Security Importance of Gilgit-Baltistan is strategically important for both China and Pakistan from a security perspective. The region borders Afghanistan and India, both of which are considered volatile and unstable. The region is also home to several militant groups that pose a threat to both countries. The roles of nations or states in international politics, especially in geopolitics, are significantly influenced by their geographical location. Throughout world history, many countries have engaged in conflict over strategically important



regions. Due to its geographic location, GB's geopolitics have significance to the region. There is a connection between Southeast Asia (China), South Asia (Pakistan and India), and Central Asia (Afghanistan and Tajikistan) in terms of Asia. Without the UK, neither country would have any extra border connections, hence the UK's geopolitical position is crucial for the relationship between China and Pakistan. Both states reached a border deal with China in March 1963. However, India and the US objected, claiming that Pakistan lacked the power to do so because Great Britain did not yet have a constitution. When Sino-Pak signed the CPEC deal, the strategic significance of GB was highlighted in international media. The CPEC is a multifaceted initiative to connect China and Pakistan through cross-border fibre optics, oil and gas pipelines, and road and railway infrastructure. The CPEC adds several fresh perspectives to the Sino-Pak relationship and will alter both countries' economic standing, which will have an impact on both direct and indirect aspects of world politics. The status of GB is up for debate, and this is the main problem that is impeding CPEC. In terms of local and regional issues, the GB constitutional stance is problematic. The people of GB have strongly demanded a constitutional status decision on the domestic front. The people of Gilgit Baltistan demand full province status or an AJK-type fully autonomous state. Without GB's assistance, China and Pakistan cannot finish the economic corridor. The issue will become more prominent on a global scale if the people of GB respond negatively towards CPEC. Members of the GB legislature, local authorities, and youth representatives who participated in the research interviews all expressed respect for China and a willingness to support CPEC. However, the GB is having issues with constitutional rights. Furthermore, the Federation of Pakistan neglected to include this vital region in the CPEC development programs. The newly formed committee with representatives from all parties known as the "Awami Action Committee (AAC)" has requested that the Sino-Pak governments include Gilgit Baltistan as a third party on the CPEC. According to the committee, it will be positive for domestic and foreign stakeholders. India raises concerns on a global scale with the assistance of the US that the GB is a disputed area and Sino-Pak doesn't have the right to create any joint ventures until the Kashmir problem is resolved. According to UN resolutions, if the governments of China and Pakistan concurred and added GB as a third party, then all international conspiracies would be void due to GB's representation. However, the GB issue hides several barriers for CPEC, which could lead to several problems in the future from the US, EU, and India. Given the current circumstances and the ongoing constitutional crisis in Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan may find it challenging to soon benefit from the CPEC's advantageous geopolitical location.



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