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Sino-Pakistan Ties: Trust, Cooperation, and Consolidation

By Syed Rifaat Hussain*
Sino-Pakistan Ties: Trust, Cooperation and Consolidation

China and Pakistan's "all weather friendship" appears to be somewhat of an enigma to IR theorists. Realists argue, that faced with a common enemy, threatened states enter into an alliance and when the threat dissipates, their alliance is more than likely to atrophy. As Stephen M. Walt observes, "Common to the various versions of [realist] theory is the prediction that weaker states will form alliances to oppose stronger powers." (p. 276).

Judged by this realist logic, the Pakistan-China entente cordiale, which was forged in the early 1960s based on their shared hostility towards neighboring India, should have come undone with diminished Indian threat and following steady improvement in Sino-Indian ties since the early 1980s. Contrary to this expectation, rather than showing any visible strains, Pakistan and China continue to broaden the scope of their bilateral ties and deepen its foundations.

Social constructivists explain friendly ties between countries by invoking such commonalities as identity, culture, values and religion. None of these fully apply to Pakistan-China strategic cooperation as the two countries belong to distinct cultural and civilization zones. Similarly, regime type cannot account for the durability of Sino-Pak ties as the relationship has remained solid across different regime changes in Pakistan and periodic upheavals in domestic politics of China. What then explains the longevity of Sino-Pakistan friendship? I offer two reasons apart from the usual realist explanation couched in the familiar language of balance-of-power theory, namely, that the "enemy of my enemy is my friend." Firstly, a high degree of mutual trustworthiness at the leadership level which in turn has generated good will at the level of the masses; secondly, China's appreciation of and help in mitigating the security dilemmas faced by Pakistan on account of the latter's ongoing strategic competition with India. Taken together these two factors – mutual trust and strategic sympathy for Pakistan's security dilemmas - better explain the longevity of Sino-Pakistan ties captured by such rhetorical phrases as "all weather friendship" which is "time tested" and is "taller than Himalayas" and "deeper than oceans and sweeter than honey." Interestingly, the weak presence and gradual erosion of these two factors caused the demise of Pakistan's formal alliance with the United States. The paper is divided into two broad sections. In the early part of the first section, the role of trust as a factor is explored in promoting strategic cooperation between Pakistan and China. In the latter part of the first section the dynamics of Sino-Pakistan security cooperation are highlighted. The first section offers a detailed historical account of developments in Sino-Pakistan tie and juxtaposes these trends in the ebb and flow of Pak-US ties. The second section of the paper discusses China's rise as a global power and its likely impact on the future trajectory of its bilateral ties with Pakistan.

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1 Realism posits that interstate relations are based on motivations for power. Beyond power, realists stress the analytic centrality of states, their interest in survival, the primacy of material capabilities, and rationality. Realists point to four factors in alliance formation: the level of external threat faced by the allies, the military capabilities of the allied states, and the extent to which policy goals are shared by the allies, and the availability of substitute allies. See Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance formation: The Case of Southwest Asia", International Organization, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Spring, 1980), pp. 275-316


3 As observed by William J. Barnds, "Since China and Pakistan are such different societies their co-operation can hardly be based upon ideological affinity or mutual attraction..." William J. Barnds, "China's relations with Pakistan: Durability Amongst Continuity", China Quarterly, No. 63 (September 1975), p. 363.
I

1. The Trust Factor:

In his influential work, Trust and Mistrust in International Relations, Andrew H. Kydd, defines trust "as a belief that the other side is trustworthy, that is, willing to reciprocate cooperation, and mistrust as a belief that the other side is untrustworthy, or prefers to exploit one's cooperation." He further observes that states that trust each other sufficiently can cooperate; states that do not may end up in conflict. As a result, states constantly make inferences about each other's motivations. In a similar vein, Aarron E. Hoffman defines trust as an "actor's willingness to place its interests under the control of others based on the belief that those actors will honor their obligation to avoid using their discretion in a harmful manner." These two definitions capture the essence of trust in interstate relations and underscore its centrality in explaining why states with a high degree of trust between each other would cooperate in an anarchic world. Trust has four noteworthy features. First, trust involves an attitude, a positive disposition toward others. Second, it is marked by an expectation that the trustees will honor their obligations, and third, trustees will act in a manner consistent with their past reputation of being trustworthy. Fourth, cooperation without trust is like being in a loveless embrace that does not last very long. Andrew Kydd suggests the role of "costly signaling" defined as "making small but significant gestures that serve to prove that one is trustworthy" as a critical factor in the development of trust between states. States that emit costly signals will be trusted more than those that engage in mere 'cheap talk.' In condition of anarchy, states are reluctant to trust one another's motives initially, but through interaction and efforts at cooperation, can update their beliefs about one another's trustworthiness.

The early history of Pakistan-China interaction is critical in understanding the forging of high degree of trust between the two countries. At the time of the birth of Pakistan in August 1947, China was in the final throes of a bloody civil war between Maoist Red Army and Kuomintang forces. After the victory of the Communist forces in October 1949, the new government was empowered to "negotiate and establish diplomatic relations on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty," with powers "which severe relations with the Kuomintang reactionaries and adopt a friendly attitude toward the People's Republic of China." Invitations were sent to foreign powers to recognize the new regime. Welcoming the inevitable shift in power, Dawn, the Pakistan national daily, wrote "as Asia gains in political importance Pakistan will also share it." The paper said, "Pakistan would naturally try to establish early diplomatic relations with China." On January 4, 1950 Pakistan became the first Muslim country to recognize the new Chinese government. In September that year, Pakistan, rejecting the Western claim that China's "love of peace" and regard for the UN Charter were "insufficient," supported a resolution seeking to replace the delegation of Nationalist China with that of People's Republic of China. In June 1950 North Korea backed by China and Soviet Union attacked South Korea, in a bid to unify the country. The failure of this move and subsequent involvement of China in the Korean War resulted in American belief that they faced "a coordinated campaign of militant Communist expansion," and "came to regard the Soviet Union and China as more dangerous, opportunistic, and unpredictable than previously reckoned."

Desperate for external aid and in search of a powerful patron due to its multiple conflicts with neigh-

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5 Andrew H. Kydd, op., p. 4
7 Ibid.
boring India, Pakistan turned toward the United States which needed regional allies “to build up positions of strength in areas such as the Middle East that were of crucial strategic value.” Pakistan signed a mutual security agreement with the U.S. in May 1954 and became the most “allied ally” of the U.S. a year later when it joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in September 1954 and the Baghdad Pact in February 1955. China understood the Pakistani security pressures which had forced it to abandon non-alignment in favor of alignment with the West. This is clearly reflected in the conversation held at Bandung, Indonesia, between Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Bogra and his Chinese counterpart Prime Minister Chou En Lai. Addressing its Political Committee, Premier Chou En Lai, disclosed that Mohammed Ali told him:

“Although Pakistan was party to a military treaty, Pakistan was not against China. Pakistan had no fear that China would commit aggression against her. As a result we achieved a mutual understanding. …The Prime Minister further assured that if the United States should take aggressive action under the military treaty or if the United States launched a global war Pakistan would not be involved in it. He said Pakistan would not be involved in it just as it was not involved in the Korean War. I am grateful to him for this explanation, because through these explanations we achieve a mutual understanding. This creates agreement and harmony amongst us in understanding each other on collective peace and cooperation”.

During their two private meetings at Bandung, Pakistani Premier Bogra explained to his Chinese counterpart, Chou, the reasons for which Pakistan had joined SEATO. These included “fear of India”, “her state of defenseless” and the “necessity of strengthening her relative military position even if this must be done through American assistance.” The connection between Pakistan’s fear of India and her alliance with the United States was well understood by the Chinese Premier. By holding out an assurance of Pakistan’s benign intent towards China and his country’s policy of neutrality in the escalating Sino-American hostility, Pakistani Premier Bogra was able to win the confidence and trust of the Chinese leadership at the highest level.

The understanding reached between the two Prime Ministers at Bandung opened the door for further cooperation. Cultural contacts between Pakistan and China rapidly expanded and these exchanges improved the “the general tone of Sino-Pakistan relations.” Speaking at Pakistan Day reception in Beijing on August 14, 1955, Premier Chou En Lai declared that “in years to come our good neighborly relations will be further promoted and our cultural and economic intercourse will become more and more frequent.” In 1956 Prime Minister Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Prime Minister Chou En Lai exchanged state visits and stressed that “despite different political systems and divergent views on certain international problems, the two countries had no important conflicts of interest and should increase their friendly ties.” It was against this backdrop of friendly gestures and mutual desire to promote friendly ties that the Sino-Pakistan border agreement of 1963 was negotiated firmly setting the two countries on the path to strategic cooperation.

In September 1959, the Government of Pakistan noticed Chinese maps showing parts of Hunza as Chinese territory. Worried that armed patrolling of this undemarcated area could easily provoke a violent clash between Pakistani and Chinese troops just as it had led to armed clashes between the troops of India and China in Longju, in the east,
and at the Kongka Pass in Ladakh, Pakistan proposed border talks in October 1959 and sent a note to China to hold formal talks. The Chinese asked for the parameters of such negotiations. Pakistan replied by identifying three elements: the ground situation, customary law and practices, and mutual accommodation. China replied positively on 27 February 1962. An announcement was made on 3 May 1962 in which both sides affirmed that “the boundary between China’s Sinkiang and the contiguous areas, the defence of which is under the actual control of Pakistan, has never been formally delimited and demarcated in history. With a view to ensuring tranquility along the border and the growth of good-neighborly relations between the two countries, they have agreed to conduct negotiations so as to attain an agreed understanding of the location and alignment of this boundary and to sign on this basis an agreement of a provisional nature.” Maps were exchanged in July 1962 and talks began in Peking in October 1962.

Soon thereafter it was declared that “Upon reaching agreed views on the procedural matters concerning the talks, the representatives of the two parties exchanged plain topographical maps, which were checked technically by map experts of both parties and on which an agreed understanding was attained. Following that, the two parties exchanged maps depicting the boundary line and held formal meetings as well as friendly consultations in a spirit of equality, co-operation, mutual understanding and mutual agreement. And now an agreement in principle has been reached on the location and alignment of the boundary actually existing between the two countries.” The Boundary Agreement was signed in Peking on March 2, 1963.

The Agreement provided for the appointment of a Boundary Commission, setting up of boundary pillars and drawing up of protocols. Article 6 of the Agreement states that “The two parties have agreed that after the settlement of the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India, the sovereign authority concerned will reopen negotiations with the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the boundary, as described in Article Two of the present agreement, so as to sign a formal boundary treaty to replace the present agreement, provided that in the event of that sovereign authority being Pakistan, the provisions of the present agreement and of the aforesaid protocol shall be maintained in the formal boundary treaty to be signed between the People’s Republic of China and Pakistan.” The Agreement further envisaged that, “sovereign authority” competent to sign a boundary agreement will emerge only after the settlement of the Kashmir dispute. But that authority, if it were to be India, could do no more than “reopen negotiations” with China “so as to sign a formal Boundary Treaty to replace the present Agreement.”

The spirit of accommodation and generosity displayed by the top Chinese leadership while concluding the Boundary Agreement is recalled by veteran Pakistani diplomat Abdul Sattar in the following words:

“Pakistan remembers with gratitude an extraordinary gesture by Premier Zhou Enlai: after the alignment was agreed, the Pakistan government belatedly realized that some grazing lands along the Mustagh River in the Shimshal Pass on the other side of the watershed were historically used by inhabitants of Hunza. It then appealed for an exception to the watershed principle to save hardship to the poor people. Zhou generously agreed to the amendment of the boundary so that an area of 750 square miles remained on the Pakistan side.”

China, in addition to displaying spirit of accommodation during boundary negotiations, was motivated by several other considerations. One was to reinforce her credentials as a peace-loving nation. China had concluded similar agreements with Pakistan in 1963.

17 Riaz Mohammed Khan, “Pakistan-China Relations: An Overview,” Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2011), p. 11
19 For the text of the Boundary Agreement see “The Peoples Republic of China-Pakistan: Agreement on the Boundary Between China’s Sinkiang and the Contiguous Areas, Peking, March 2, 1963,” American Journal of International Law, Vol. 57, No. 3 (July, 1963), PP. 713-716
20 Ibid; The Boundary Agreement provoked protest from India. Refusing to accept the legitimacy of the Boundary Agreement, New Delhi called the Agreement “illegal” and “invalid” and accused Pakistan of illegally ceding 5,180 km. of “Indian territory” in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir to China. This remains the Indian position to date.
Burma and Nepal and the boundary agreement with Pakistan would furnish yet another proof of her desire for quiet borders and her peaceful intentions. Two, the Chinese wanted to show the world that their difficulties with India arose largely from the latter’s intransigence. It is significant to note that Chinese signed a boundary agreement with Outer Mongolia, an ally of the Soviet Union, on the same day they signed the agreement in principle with Pakistan, an ally of the West. Three, by signing the Boundary Agreement with Pakistan, China was successfully removing a potential source of discord between the two neighbors.

The Boundary Agreement was followed by an Air Travel Agreement in August 1963 under which Pakistan became the first non-Communist country whose national carrier was granted landing rights in China. This was followed by several agreements related to trade and cultural exchanges. Welcoming the first PIA flight to Shanghai International Airport on April 29, 1964, the Chinese Foreign Minister remarked: “We would like to point out that those who tried to isolate and blockade China have failed.”

This growing amity between Pakistan and China coincided with a visible cooling trend in Pakistan’s relations with Washington. In the wake of the Sino-India war of 1962 in which India suffered massive defeat, the United States shipped arms to India without advance notification to Pakistan and ignored Pakistani apprehensions that these arms would be used against Pakistan. To make things worse, the U.S. urged President Ayub Khan to make a “positive gesture of sympathy and restraint” toward India and advised Pakistan to put its “border talks with China on hold.” Ayub did not take advantage of India’s vulnerability in its war with China but was disappointed that Pakistani inaction had not been rewarded with a serious negotiation leading to the settlement of the Kashmir dispute. The several rounds of Butto-Swaran Singh talks supported by the US and the British diplomats failed to produce any agreement on Kashmir as India accused Pakistan of “unlawfully ceding two thousand square miles of ‘Indian territory’ to China. Convinced that the only remaining solution was a military one, Pakistan decided to launch Operation Gibraltar which became the “casus belli” for a full-scale war between the two countries in September 1965.

Following the war the U.S. decided to terminate its arms supply relationship with both India and Pakistan causing “anger, bitterness and disillusionment with the United States.” A series of widespread anti-American demonstrations in Pakistan, including the stoning of the U.S. embassy, the burning of USIS library, and mob attacks on the U.S. consulate in Lahore, provided stark testimony to the depth of anti-American sentiment in Pakistan. The US prestige and credibility in Pakistan had reached its lowest ebb.

Even before the September 1965 India-Pakistan War, Pakistan’s friendship with China had emerged as a bitter bone of contention between Washington and Rawalpindi. The Sino-Indian war rang alarm bells in Washington. To help India “defend itself better should the Chinese Communists renew their attack at an early date”, Washington announced an Anglo-American emergency military aid package for India amounting to $120 million in December 1962. Overriding Pakistani pleas to link the supply of American military assistance to India to the settlement of the Kashmir issue, Kennedy sent a message to Ayub Khan which said the

22 Anwar Hussain Syed, China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale, op.cit. p. 91.
24 Gripped with panic by the instant meltdown of his army, a desperate Nehru sent two letters to Kennedy calling for American military help. On November 19, describing India’s predicament as “really desperate” he requested the “immediate dispatch of twelve squadrons of all-weather U.S fighter aircraft and the prompt installation of a sophisticated radar network.” In addition, he asked that U.S. personnel not only operate the requested radar stations but also pilot the fighter jets.” Robert J McMahon, The Cold War on the periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 292
25 During Ayub Khan’s visit to Washington in July 1961, President Kennedy assured the Pakistani President that “if a Sino-Soviet conflict ever erupted and India asked the United States for military aid, he would first consult with Ayub before making any commitments.” Ibid. p. 332.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid. p. 296
United States believed that the Chinese aggression posed “as grave an ultimate threat to Pakistan as to India”, therefore “the supply of arms to India should not be made contingent on a Kashmir settlement.”\footnote{Ibid. p. 308.} Pakistan refused to go along with such “disingenuous” logic. Pakistan’s unwillingness to cave in to mounting American pressures that “Pakistan should be very careful in dealing with the Chicom” lest it “jeopardize the relations with the Western world”\footnote{Ibid. p. 296.} and cause a “very unfortunate reaction” in the United States, only widened the crisis of confidence between the two allies.

The Pakistan-US ties became sharply acerbic during the Johnson administration. Viewing China as an “outlaw” state which had become a “near-demonic force” whose “aggressive, adventuristic and unpredictable” behavior needed to be contained”, not courted, President Johnson decided to withdraw his invitation to the Pakistani President as a punishment for “greeting Mao, Zhou and their compatriots with open arms” and for “pledging lasting friendship and fruitful cooperation”\footnote{Ibid. p. 321.} between Pakistan and China. In his explanatory letter addressed to President Ayub on April 14, 1965, Johnson said that Ayub’s proposed visit would “focus public attention on the differences between Pakistan and United States policy toward communist China and might ‘gravely affect’ continued legislative support for Pakistan’s development and defense efforts”. Under the circumstances, Johnson concluded, “a postponement of the visit appeared the wisest course of action.”\footnote{Ibid. p. 322.} Ayub expressed anger over the abrupt cancellation of the visit. Inflexible and unforgiving, Robert Komer, a top NSC official, defended the U.S. decision and said: “Ayub got the signal, though we need to remind him”, and he would be forced to “reflect on the moral that Uncle Sam should not be just regarded as a cornucopia of goodies regardless of what they do or say.”\footnote{Ibid. p. 324.}

During the 1965 War, Pakistan’s evolving trust in China was further consolidated. As the war escalated following an Indian attack across the international border on September 6, 1965, Beijing issued a strong condemnation of Indian aggression and hinted at a more active role of the PRC in defending Pakistan. The statement said:

“The Indian Government’s armed attack on Pakistan is an act of naked aggression…and constitutes a grave threat to peace in this part of Asia. The Chinese government sternly condemns India for its criminal aggression, expresses firm support for Pakistan for its just struggle against aggression and solemnly warns the Indian Government that it must bear full responsibility for all the consequences of its criminal and extended aggression.”

Over the course of September, China issued several notes to New Delhi, condemning Indian military provocations along the Sino-Indian border, thereby raising the level of tensions. In a Beijing 16 September note, the Indians were told to dismantle within three days, the 56 military installations that were built on Chinese territory in Tibet, and to return the four hostages and livestock taken from the area, or else “bear full responsibility for all the grave consequences arising there from.”\footnote{R. Bates Gill, Chinese Arms Transfers: Purposes, Patterns, and Prospects in the New World Order (London: Praeger, 1992) p. 145} The ultimatum was extended shortly thereafter for an additional three days. It was withdrawn when India and Pakistan accepted UN-sponsored cease-fire agreement on 22 September. By issuing its intervention threat China proved beyond doubt: (1) its interest in defending Pakistan; (2) its willingness to stand up to Indian power which was being supported by both the Soviets and the Americans; (3) its long-range claim to interests in the South Asian region.\footnote{Ibid.}

Following the Chinese ultimatum, the American Ambassador, on instructions from Washington, met President Ayub and after lecturing about the risks he was running bluntly told him that Pakistan faced a critical choice: “if it should directly or indirectly encourage Chinese entry into the conflict, Pakistan would alienate itself from the West, perhaps permanently. This was not a threat, but a reality”.\footnote{Robert J McMahon., op. cit., 332.} Faced with this intense American pres-
sure Ayub on September 22 reluctantly acceded to the American-backed UN cease-fire proposal.

In sharp contrast to unqualified Chinese support for Pakistan, American bullying tactics infuriated Pakistan. Pakistan justifiably felt betrayed by Washington. During a “stiff” meeting with the American Ambassador on September 29, Ayub “upbraided the United States for its revocation of solemn pledges regarding defense support; decried the lack of cooperation by the United States and the lack of appreciation for Pakistani efforts to moderate Chinese policies toward Vietnam; and accused the United States of bullying a friendly nation.” Pakistan, in earnest launched its quest for “friends not masters”. China offered itself as solid anchor, and Pakistani leadership embraced that opportunity with unmitigated enthusiasm.

2. Chinese Strategic Sympathy for Pakistan:

China’s own experience of foreign invasions, national humiliation and encounters with colonialism leading to the forcible “opening of China” and loss of territory at the end of the nineteenth century made it extremely sensitive to the security challenges facing post-colonial states, especially small and weak states like Pakistan. Unlike Stalin who had described the creation of Pakistan as “primitive” and attacked its founding fathers as “running dogs” of British imperialism, China under Mao never expressed such verbal criticism and rather displayed a remarkable understanding of the security compulsions, namely, Pakistani fears of a larger and hostile India, which had led Pakistan to become the most “allied ally” of its arch-enemy, the United States. Strategic sympathy may be defined as a feeling of empathy for weak states who are struggling to survive in an anarchical world dominated by brute use of force by strong against the weak. Security dilemmas are inherent in anarchical systems where there is no central authority to provide security to small and weak states. In such systems, states typically seek security through forming alliance with others (external balancing), by aligning themselves with stronger powers (bandwagoning) or arms racing (arms build up). None of these are cost-free strategies and in pursuing them, the state has to carefully weigh the balance of costs and benefits associated with each. Weak states typically are vulnerable as they can be used as expendable commodities in great power competition for survival and domination. As Thucydides reminded us a long time ago: “The strong do as they can and the weak suffer what they must.”

This strategic sympathy for Pakistan as a small developing state, whose two wings were separated by one thousand miles of hostile Indian territory, was reinforced by general Chinese policy of seeking solidarity and building alliances with the developing world. As part of its effort to build Afro-Asian solidarity, at Bandung, the Chinese leadership articulated the concept of Pancheel - the five principles of peaceful coexistence - as a guiding framework for its foreign policy towards the developing world. This led to a brief period of “Hindi-Chini bhai bhai” (“brotherly relations). However, the Chi-
inese soon discovered the emptiness of this slogan through their negotiating experience with India during the settlement of their border dispute with India in the Himalayas. Not only were the Indians unwilling to accept any adjustment of the boundaries inherited from the British, but they also engaged in "cartographic imperialism" by tempering with old maps on the direct orders of Prime Minister Nehru in 1954. Nehru's pursuit of "Forward Policy" provoked the Sino-Indian war in 1962 and led to the unraveling of "Hindi-Chini bhai bhai" phase in their relations.

These early experiences of China in dealing with its intransigent neighbor India echoed well with Beijing when Pakistani leaders sought Chinese help in countering the perceived Indian threat to their security.

The security policy of a country is both a function of its threat perceptions and the capabilities required to cope with perceived challenges. Pakistani threat perceptions have emanated from what former foreign minister Abdul Sattar has aptly characterized as the "crucible of objective realities" manifested in "threats to its existence [from a hostile India] and the tyranny of imbalance of power." Apart from having to deal with a hostile India in the east, Pakistan also had to contend with the reality of an "irredentist" Afghanistan in the west. These vulnerabilities created a convulsive security environment for Pakistan in which "strategic options open to Pakistan never were extremely attractive…increasingly risky and limited in number."

Thus, born as a "garrison state", Pakistan did not have national resources to raise a sufficient level of military forces that would be capable of defending both the wings that were separated by hostile India in between. The American military assistance, furnished to Pakistan after the Korean War, was barely enough to defend the country. Pakistan's war stamina was less than three weeks when India and Pakistan went to war with each other in September 1965.

The American decision to cut off all American military assistance to India and Pakistan during the war affected the latter disproportionately, as over 80% of all Pakistan military support came from the United States, Pakistan soon realized the grave mistake it had made by putting all its security eggs in the American basket.

It was this historical context of Pakistan's crippling single-source dependency on the U.S. and shifting American strategic priorities in South Asia in which, according to NSC aide Robert Komer under Kennedy, "if we must choose between Pakistan and India, the latter is far more important", that compelled Pakistan to search for new allies.

China offered itself as a crucial strategic counterweight to a much larger and overbearing India with which Pakistan had already fought a war over Kashmir. China had its own reasons to seek Pakistan's cooperation. The 1960s began with a Sino-Soviet split over ideological and strategic differences, and it erupted into the open in 1963, marking the beginning of the Coldest War in Asia. The American decision to ship arms to India also raised fears in China of U.S. intention to militarily contain China. Hemmed in by these military and diplomatic pressures, China fully reached out to Pakistan. In Pakistan China saw both "defensive" and "offensive" possibilities. Defensively, a friendly Pakistan "could serve to impede Soviet, American and Indian actions hostile" to China. "Offensively", closer ties with Pakistan "would provide China an entrée into the Islamic world, would serve to improve China's image as a beneficent patron of Third World nation and, over the long term, would open the door for greater Chinese influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean."

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43 New Delhi began implementing a "forward policy" in November 1961 which involved sending small contingents of lightly-armed Indian troops into the disputed areas of both Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, in the hopes that the presence of Indian troops would compel the PLA to withdraw. This policy backfired disastrously when PLA troops attacked them.
45 Robert McMahon, op. cit., p. 283
46 R. Bates Gill, op. cit., p. 143. Pakistan has played a key role in shaping positive image of China in the Muslim world. For example, after July 2009 Xinjiang riots which resulted in at least 193 deaths due to Beijing’s "strike hard" policy, Islamabad deployed its diplomatic skills to prevent the issue being included on the agenda of the Organisation of Islamic Conference annual meeting, thus sparing China a damaged image in the eyed of the Muslim states. See "Pakistan saved China from embarrassment on Xinjiang violence: Chinese Ambassador," Daily Times, 5 September, 2009.
Following the exchange of bilateral visits at the highest level of leadership in 1964 and 1965, the two countries agreed to have across-the-board agreement on several issues including a call "for PRC seating in the United Nations, support for Afro-Asian solidarity against imperialism and colonialism, consensus on nuclear disarmament and the continuation of friendly cooperation between China and Pakistan." Most people will stand unswervingly on their side and give them resolute support and assistance. " For full text of Liu Shao-chi's speech against foreign aggression in defence of its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the 650 million Chinese people will be proud to stand by Pakistan. When Pakistan's tank force, one-third of it air force, and nearly two-thirds of its interceptor-bombers. One of the key motivations behind this surge in Chinese weapon transfers to Pakistan was to bolster Pakistan's capacity for self-defence which had suffered due to American arms embargo. The other factor influencing these Chinese decisions was the intensifying Sino-Soviet rivalry in Asia. Following Moscow's brutal suppression of Prague spring in 1968 and the enunciation of the Brezhnev doctrine under which Moscow arrogated to itself the right to militarily intervene in other socialist countries, Moscow launched its Asian Collective Security Plan in 1969 to contain China. Pakistan objected to the Plan on the grounds that it was anti-Chinese alliance as it excluded China. A Pakistani official statement stated that Pakistan would "never join any security arrangement in Asia which may involve here in the Sino-Soviet confrontation." The Soviet and Chinese troops clashed in 1969 along the river Ussuri provoking fears of nuclear war. Taking advantage of Sino-Soviet split and eager to get out of the Vietnam War, the Nixon administration decided to normalize relations with China. On August 1, 1969, Nixon visited Pakistan and held talks with Pakistani President Yahya Kahn. During a strictly confidential, one-to-one talk on August 1, 1969 Nixon stated that: “the US would welcome accommodation with Communist China and would appreciate it if President Yahya would let Chou Enlai know this." The two Presidents also discussed China's view of the world. Yahya told Nixon that China felt "surrounded by hostile forces – India, Soviet Union and the United States in Southeast Asia," and thus suggested a “dialogue with China to bring China back into the community of nations." Nixon agreed that "Asia can not move forward if a nation as large as China remains isolated." Nixon stated further that the US should "not" participate in "any arrangements designed to isolate China." Yahya also arranged a briefing meeting between Kissinger and Air Marshal Sher Ali Khan, who had visited China in July. When

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asked by Kissinger if there was any perceptible change in the Chinese external behavior, the Marshal explained that Zhou insisted that the Soviets were “deliberately provoking” China by trying to extend their territory beyond recognized boundaries. Thus, the Pakistani official confirmed that Beijing feared the Soviets might try a “preemptive attack on China.” In November 1969, Yahya delivered Nixon’s messages to Zhou. Pakistan continued to play the crucial role of “intermediary” in delivering secret messages between Washington and Beijing, especially from October 1970 to June 1971 till Kissinger secretly went to Beijing in July 1971 using Pakistan as a bridge.

Pakistan’s decision to act as a “bridge” in the United States historic opening to China in 1971 invited Moscow’s wrath. To punish Pakistan for its crucial role in bringing China and United State closer, Moscow decided to throw its strategic weight behind India, Pakistan’s arch enemy. This resulted in Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Peace in August 1971 at a time when the Pakistan army was fighting a war for the survival of the country in East Pakistan against the forces of secession led by Awami League which was being fully backed by India. As the East Pakistan crisis deepened, Zulfiqar Ali Butto, former Pakistani Foreign Minister, traveled to China in November 1971 seeking military assurances. He told his Chinese hosts:

“...In order to intimidate us, India has placed in battle position its armed forces, including heavy armor and artillery and aircraft on the borders of both wings of Pakistan. These feverish military activities lead to one conclusion only: That is, India is planning to achieve its objective against Pakistan through armed conflict.”

Aware of the presence of nearly 40 divisions of Soviet troops on China’s borders and the security clauses contained in The Indo-Soviet Treaty, Acting Foreign Minister Chi Pengfei was non-committal. Reiterating Peking’s established position he said:

“Our Pakistani friends may rest assured that should Pakistan be subjected to foreign aggression, the Chinese government and people will, as always, resolutely support the Pakistani people in their struggle to defend their state sovereignty and national independence. The Chinese Government and people are greatly concerned over the present tension in the Subcontinent. We maintain that the internal affairs of any country must be handled by its own people. The East Pakistan question is the internal affair of Pakistan and a reasonable settlement should be sought by the Pakistani people themselves, and it is absolutely impermissible for any foreign country to carry out interference and subversion under any pretext.”

With the outbreak of the third Indo-Pakistan war in 1971, the Chinese issued statements of outrage condemning the Indians and fully supporting Pakistan. Chinese diplomatic and political support could not help avert Pakistan’s military defeat and the dismemberment of the country. But after the creation of Bangladesh, China used its first veto in the Security Council to block the entry of Bangladesh into the UN until the vexed issue of Pakistani “war crimes” in East Pakistan was resolved to the satisfaction of the truncated “new” Pakistan. The decision to veto Bangladesh entry into the world body was a difficult one for China because of its long-standing opposition to veto and its well-known sympathies with the Bangladeshis. But more importantly, it “defined the extent to which China could go to stand by Pakistan in a situation of crisis.” China also voiced its support for the Simla Agreement (1972) which normalized relations between India and Pakistan and New Delhi Agreement (1973) which led to the release of over 93,000 Pakistani security personnel who had been taken as prisoners of war by India following Pakistan’s military defeat in 1971. After the East-Pakistan military debacle and the birth of Bangladesh in 1971, China took it upon itself to totally rehabilitate the Pakistani armed forces – “from personnel equipment to munitions factories to major conventional systems, as well as nuclear technology – virtually free of charge or under extremely convenient terms.”

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59 Ibid.
60 Ibid. p. 96
61 The Soviet pique was reflected in Gromyko’s comment on Pakistan’s role as a ‘dirty broker’ following Kissinger’s secret trip to Beijing in July 1971. Cited in Riaz Mohammed Khan, op.cit. p. 12.
63 Ibid. p. 23
64 Riaz Mohammed Khan, op.cit. p. 12.
Between 1971 and 1978, China assisted Pakistan in building two defense-related mega projects, first, the Heavy Rebuild Factory for T–59 tanks, and second, the F–6 Aircraft Rebuild Factory.66

After India detonated its first nuclear device in May 1974, Beijing responded by offering China’s “firm and resolute support in Pakistan’s just struggle in defense of its national independence and sovereignty against foreign aggression and interference, including that against nuclear threat and nuclear blackmail.”67 In 1976, Pakistan Prime Minister gained “China’s acquiescence in helping Pakistan develop a nuclear weapon, including the provision of uranium for a Pakistani enrichment facility.”68

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 raised alarm bells in China. Beijing interpreted the move as a “spring board for southward leap towards the India Ocean,” which had endangered the security of both “Pakistan and Iran.” Chinese analysts raised special concerns about Soviet designs on Baluchistan. Describing Baluchistan as the “gateway from Central Asia to the Sea”, rich in natural resources and strategically placed at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, a Chinese analyst declared:

“Because of its strategic position and rich resources Baluchistan has ever been coveted by the imperialists. Tsarist Russia, in particular, had tried on many occasions to carve a passage south through the Baluchistan area in Afghanistan and Iran to reach the Indian Ocean and secure warm-water harbours on the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. To make the old tsar’s dream come true, the new tsars are trying by every means to …bring the Baluchistan under their influence.”

The seriousness with which Beijing viewed Moscow’s military intervention in Afghanistan was reflected in the government statement issued on 30 December 1979. The toughly worded official statement “vigorously condemned” Moscow’s “wanton violation” of all norms of international behavior and warned that its “hegemonistic action” posed a “grave threat to peace and security in Asia and whole world.” The statement called the Soviet invasion “a grave step for a southward thrust to the Indian Ocean” and it warned that Moscow’s extension of the Brezhnev doctrine of “limited sovereignty” to non aligned and Islamic countries with which it had signed treaties of friendship and cooperation was an ominous portent. The statement “firmly demanded” the cessation of Soviet intervention and aggression in Afghanistan, and the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces.70

To contain the Soviet threat, Beijing developed wide-ranging cooperation with Pakistan and formed a quasi alliance with the United States to jointly roll-back Soviet military advance into Afghanistan. China, through Pakistan, “provided covert military supplies worth U.S. $ 200 million to the Afghan resistance and agreed to provide the U.S. with facilities to monitor Soviet activities in its Xinjiang province.”71 According to one military analyst:

“At an estimated $100 million a year, the Chinese delivered small arms, assault rifles, mines, antitank and anti-aircraft guns, rocket launchers, and 107-mm rockets by ship to Karachi. Xinjiang was also used as a base for training Afghan Mujahideen to fight the Soviet Union. With some 300 advisers already at training facilities in Pakistan, in February 1985 the PLA opened additional training camps near Kashgar and Khotan in Xinjiang where Afghan rebels were introduced to the use of Chinese weapons, explosives, combat tactics, propaganda techniques, and espionage.”72

As part of this trilateral strategic cooperation directed against the USSR, Beijing also provided critical help to Pakistan to strengthen its deterrent capability against India. Taking advantage of its role in the Afghan war as a front-line state, Pakistan intensified its search for nuclear weapons capability. The lifting of the U.S. anti-proliferation

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67Ibid. p. 150
68Ibid.
69“Moscow covets Baluchistan”, Peking Review (10 March 1980), p. 27
70Cited in Robert G. Sutter, Chinese Foreign Policy: Developments After Mao (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1986), P.114.
sanctions against Islamabad gave Pakistan the necessary breathing space to pursue this quest. The U.S. turned a blind eye to this Pakistani effort because Washington needed Islamabad’s cooperation to push back the Soviets from Afghanistan. In 1981, President Zia sent Lieutenant-General Syed Zamin Naqvi and Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan to Beijing to “request bomb-grade fissile material and bomb designs.” China obliged and sent “Chinese CHIC-4 weapon design along with fifty kilograms of HEU to Pakistan.”73 Two years later, American intelligence agencies reported that the Chinese had transferred to Pakistan the complete nuclear weapon design, along with enough weapon-grade uranium for two potential nuclear weapons.

In September 1986, China and Pakistan signed a bilateral agreement governing their joint cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. This agreement raised concerns that China was being active in developing Pakistan as a nuclear power. Following this agreement, Chinese scientists began “assisting their Pakistani counterparts with the enrichment of weapons-grade uranium.”74 The withdrawal of Soviet military forces from Afghanistan in February 1989 led to the waning of American interest in South Asia and despite the imposition of American anti-proliferation sanctions against Pakistan, Sino-Pakistan cooperation in missile and nuclear fields continued unabated.

In 1989, China and Pakistan signed a military cooperation agreement, which envisaged, inter alia, “the purchase of military goods, mutual research and cooperation along with the manufacturing of arms and the transfer of technology.”75 During the same year, “China provided a very small 27kW (kilowatt) research reactor, PARR-2.”76

In 1992 China gave the M-11 missile to Pakistan. Chinese experts also provided extensive training to Pakistani technicians to become self-reliant for future production of these missiles.77 More important than these missile transfers was the Chinese decision to set up “turn-key missile factory” at Fatehjung which enabled Pakistan to continue to produce M-11 series missile but also “provided Pakistan with tremendous know-how and potential means to develop and produce larger, more capable systems in future”. As a result “Pakistan now has an infrastructure as well as training facility to bring a new generation of missile scientists into the art of solid propellant production.”78

In return for Chinese help, Islamabad let the Chinese have the American Tomahawk missile (TLAMS) when some of them fell on the Pakistani side of the border during the failed American attempt to kill Osama bin Laden in Khost in August 1998. It is widely believed that Pakistani missile Babur – a subsonic missile that can carry both nuclear and conventional warhead – is a derivative of the lost TLAMS, which was jointly reverse-engineered by Chinese and Pakistani scientists.79

During President Musharraf’s visit to Beijing in February 2006, China committed to delivering the first small batch of JF-17 Thunder Aircraft to Pakistan by 2007. On 23 May 2006, Pakistan and China signed a defence deal worth US$600 million, which included the construction of four F22P frigates for the Pakistan Navy, the upgrading of the Karachi dockyard and the transfer of technology for the indigenous production of a modern surface fleet. In November 2006, Pakistan Air Force signed a memorandum of understanding with a Chinese Electronic Technology Corporation, to jointly develop aircraft equipped with long-range early weapons radars.80

The nuclear deal signed between India and the U.S on 26 March 2006 was viewed with alarm by both

73Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. p. 188. Confirming this transaction, Dr Khan in a letter written to his wife in 2004 revealed: “The Chinese gave us the drawing of the nuclear weapon, gave us 50 kg of enriched uranium, gave us 10 tons of UF6(natural) and 5 tons of UF6 (3%). According to Khan’ account the nuclear material acquired from China was kept in Cold storage until 1985. After developing its own when Pakistan wanted to return the borrowed material, China responded that the “HEU loaned was now to be considered as a gift….in gratitude” for Pakistan’s help with Chinese centrifuges.” Cited in Ibid. p. 188
74Aparna Panday, op. cit. p. 126.
77Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. p. 239
78Ibid. p. 242
79Ibid.
Beijing and Islamabad and an agreement to “further deepen cooperation in peaceful application of nuclear power” was signed in February 2006.  

In November 2009, Beijing announced US$1.4 billion sale of 36 J-10/B multirole fighters produced by the Chengdu Aircraft Corporation, to Pakistan. The sale marked China’s support for the modernization of Pakistan’s conventional-deterrence capability against India. In April 2010, China announced the sale of two nuclear reactors to Pakistan, Chasma-3 and 4 as part of its “strategic assurance” to Islamabad that “the China–Pakistan partnership is a structural axis of regional politics that will shoulder important responsibilities for regional stability in a post-NATO Afghanistan.” A deal for two more Chinese reactors – at 1,000MWe, three times larger than the others – was finalised in 2013. The new reactors are being built in Karachi and they are “a first step toward fulfillment of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission’s plans for a dramatic expansion of the nation’s nuclear-energy infrastructure.”

According to 2013 SIPRI report, over 50% of Pakistan’ total arms report came from China and only 28% came from the U.S. Pakistan receives arms from China at concessional rates and Beijing wants Islamabad to attain a measure of self-reliance in the defense sector. Over the years, it has helped Pakistan in building ordnance factories and most defence deals have entailed direct transfer of technology from China. In particular, China’s help has included supply of spare parts, setting up of local overhauling facilities, license production, training facilities and joint ventures. The provision of large amounts of military hardware and technology from China has accrued to Pakistan “free of charge, or at cost, or under similar highly favorable terms of repayment”, and are “not motivated by profit, but represent and improve upon the advanced extent of strategic and political cooperation the two countries enjoy.”

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83 Mark Fitzpatrick, op. cit. p. 12
85 Shahzad Akhtar, op.cit. p. 78
86 R. Bates Gill, op.cit, p. 159.
II

China's Rise and its Implications for Pakistan

Having experienced stupendous economic growth, modernization and social development over the past several decades, China is fast emerging as a powerful country. Led by "fifth-generation of leaders", President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, China is not only asserting itself in the global political arena but is also seeking deeper engagement in the global political economy in pursuit of its goal of "comprehensive national power." Taking economic growth as the basis of measuring a nation's power, this notion entails the belief that China's position in the international comparative ranking is moving up and that this is an irreversible trend. The basic goal of China's foreign policy, then, is to accelerate this trend by maximizing coordination and cooperation between states, especially the major powers and to minimize contradiction and friction among them. China's ascent to a global influential has evoked both envy and fear among its neighbors and peers. To allay these apprehensions, Chinese scholars have adduced the notion of China's "peaceful rise" aimed at creating a harmonious society internally as well as internationally. In recognition of this ongoing power transition, the US has announced that it would be pivoting towards Asia-Pacific region. Other countries are adjusting and adapting to this process of change as well. How would China's rise as a global player affect its relations with Pakistan which, as documented in the first section of the paper, have been characterized by close bilateral strategic cooperation? Judged by the long history of their cordial bilateral relations, shared regional and strategic outlooks, absence of territorial disputes, high degree of mutual trust, it can be predicted that the dynamics of Sino-Pakistan entente cordiale would not be fundamentally altered in the foreseeable future. Islamabad views China's stupendous economic growth and its force modernization as additive assets to its own vulnerabilities.

As a rising power, China views Pakistan as a dependable ally whose military strength is deemed vital for checking India's growing military ambitions and to counter its new doctrine of "two-front war" against China and Pakistan. More importantly, Pakistan does not share the "cauldron of anxiety" felt so strongly in Washington and New Delhi over the rise of China. Speaking to a delegation of Gansu Association for International Friendly Contact (GAIFC) at Pakistan-China Institute in Islamabad, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed categorically stated that "Pakistan always welcomed the peaceful rise of China since it is a source of strength and security for the small and medium-sized countries in Asia, particularly neighbors like Pakistan." Pakistan finds itself in total agreement with the three cardinal principles of China's Grand Strategy, namely, "maintaining China's basic system

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87According to Zheng Bijian, China's peaceful rise is spread over an extended period of fifty years and it entails three distinct stages of development. According to him, "In the first stage-2000 to 2010-total GDP is to be doubled. In the second stage, ending in 2020, total GDP is to be doubled again, at which point China's per capita GDP is expected to reach $3,000. In the third, from 2020 to 2050, China will continue to advance until it becomes a prosperous, democratic, and civilized. By that time, China will have shaken off underdevelopment and will be on a par with the middle rung of advanced nations. It can then claim to have succeeded in achieving a "peaceful rise." Zheng Bijian, "China's "Peaceful Rise" to Great Power Status," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 84, No. 5 (Sept-Oct., 2005), pp. 23-24.
89Rajat Pandit, "Army reworks war doctrine for Pakistan, China," Time of India, 30 December, 2009.
88Jeffrey W. Logo, "What China will want: The Future of Intentions of a Rising Power," Perspectives on Politics, Vol. 5 No. 3 (September 2007), p. 515. The debate over China threat theory reflects this anxiety. Reflecting the views of those who support the China threat theory John J. Mearsheimer argues that regardless of China's domestic political situation and engagement with the global capitalist order, the country will seek regional hegemony in East Asia as it becomes more powerful. He notes that "China and the United States are destined to be adversaries as China's power grows". In his view, China's international ascent to power represents a clear and present "threat" to continued US dominance and to the liberal order. G. John Ikenberry, by contrast, sees China as being constrained by the Western-centered liberal order in which it is becoming increasingly embedded: "The rise of China does not have to trigger a wrenching hegemonic transition", he contends, rather “[t]he capitalist democratic world is a powerful constituency for the preservation—and, indeed, extension— of the existing international order." For this dichotomous debate see Christopher A. McNally, "Sino-capitalism: China's Re-emergence and the International Political Economy," World Politics, No. 64, No. 4 (October 2010), pp. 741-776.
90The News, March 29, 2014
and national security”, “national sovereignty and territorial integrity”, and “continued development of the economy and society.” To promote these core interests, China’s grand strategy emphasizes three objectives: maintenance of peaceful and stable environment, avoidance of confrontational relationship with most states, especially with China’s neighbors, maximizing its autonomy in the international system to minimize limits of unipolarity. To achieve peace and development, China has on many occasions called for the establishment of a new international political and economic order of peace, stability, justice and rationality, based on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and on the recognition of the diversity of world and differences between states. In his speech to the Pakistani Parliament on April 10th, 1999, Li Peng, Chairman Standing Committee of China’s National Peoples Congress stated:

“China has all along pursued an independent foreign policy of peace and established and developed relations with other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. Adhering to principles and upholding justice, China has taken part in international affairs with a strong sense of responsibility and made a positive contribution to world peace and development.”

Almost a decade later President Hu Jintao repeated the same formulation in an interview to the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post. He said:

“China has been committed to the independent foreign policy of peace and has developed friendship and cooperation with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. We stand for equality and mutual respect between countries. Like other countries in the world, China must uphold its own sovereignty, territorial integrity and development interests. At the same time, we are willing to properly handle differences and disagreements in state-to-state relations in accordance with the basic norms governing international relations and the principle of mutual understanding, mutual accommodation, dialogue and consultation.”

These principles were codified in a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Good-Neighborly Relations during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabo’s visit to Islamabad in April 2005 which offered a solid basis for their continued cooperation. The Treaty committed both nations to enhance their mutual cooperation “in accordance with the universally recognized principles and norms of international law and on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Under the Treaty “both nations agreed not to join any alliance or bloc which infringes upon the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other, nor will either allow its territory to be used by a third country to jeopardize the state sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other party to the pact.” They further agreed to enhance their cooperation in “fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism, as well as organized crime, illegal immigration and trafficking in drugs and weapons.”

Prime Minister Wen Jiabo’s visit to Islamabad occurred against the background of escalating wave of violence in Chinese province of Xinjiang which has a 5,500 long kilometer border with Pakistan. Chinese authorities have blamed the occurrence of violence on banned East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) which has links with Al-Qaeda. ETIM, a separatist group, shifted its base to Afghanistan following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and then moved into Tribal areas of Pakistan as a result of American-Nato-led ISAF military campaign against the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan in late 2001. In December 2003 ETIM leaders Hasan Mahsum was reported killed in Pakistan. China’s mounting security concerns relating to ETIM and subversive activities of other insurgent groups working in Xinjiang necessitated insertion of article V in the Treaty which committed them to “crackdown on terrorism, separatism

and extremism.”
During his visit to Islamabad from 17 to 19 December 2010, Prime Minister of China, Wen Jiabao, praised Pakistan’s efforts to fight terrorism and stated that: ‘Pakistan has given great sacrifices and made great efforts in the fight against terrorism... This is a well-known fact. He urged the international community “to respect and support Pakistan.” His comments were meant to defend Pakistan in the face of mounting US criticism that Islamabad was not doing enough to fight terrorism. Privately, China has been urging Islamabad to ensure that the militant groups operating from the tribal regions of FATA do not play any role in fomenting trouble in the predominantly Muslim Chinese province of Xinjiang. There have been a number of violent attacks on Chinese workers in Pakistan, particularly in the insurgency-infested area of Baluchistan. In May 2004, three Chinese engineers were killed in a car bomb blast in Gwadar. From 2004 to 2010, there were four separate terrorist attacks on the Chinese workers engaged in the development projects in different parts of Pakistan. In these attacks 12 Chinese lost their lives. In July 2007, Chinese massage workers were arrested by women-wing of the militant squad of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) from a Beauty Parlor in Islamabad. They were set free after President Hu Jintao made a personal call to General Pervez Musharraf demanding their immediate release. It attests to the strength of Pakistan-China relations that such acts of violence have not discouraged nearly 12,000 Chinese workers from doing their work in Pakistan. On its part, Pakistan has enhanced its efforts to provide greater protection and security to the Chinese workers by offering “army-backed” security to Chinese firms doing business in Pakistan.

China and Pakistan are acutely aware of the need to further expand the base of their bilateral ties and work towards evolving a cooperative security framework which is capable of addressing Pakistan’s security dilemmas as well as creating a conducive environment for China’s peaceful ascent. China firmly believes that by helping Pakistan’s quest for the “absolute weapon” it has created a “level playing field” condition that is a sine qua non for lasting peace in South Asia. It is no coincidence that contrary to Western sense of nuclear alarmism about Pakistan, Beijing has viewed this development with a great sense of equanimity as evidenced by Beijing’s continued support for Pakistan’s nuclear and missile programmes.

As China continues its economic march towards becoming the largest economy of the world by 2050, it would need assured access to the world energy markets. This search for reliable access to energy resources has made Pakistan central to China’s grand strategy in South Asia.

Over the years, China has steadily expanded its economic ties with Pakistan, as it has helped finance over two hundred projects in the country, (as illustrated in Appendix Map. 1) including the expansion of and improvement of the Karakoram Highway, the Thar coal project, the Bhisha Dam, and the Gwadar deep sea port construction on the coast of Pakistan’s Baluchistan province. The construction of the Gwadar port project started in March 2002 and was completed in two phases in 2007. China provided US$248 in financial assistance during the first phase and bulk of the estimated cost of US$840 during the second phase. Several hundred Chinese workers remained involved in the work on this mega project. After its completion, the Gwadar Port was run by Singapore Port Authority. In 2013, Pakistan decided to terminate this contract and handed the control over to China. Gwader is strategically located at the entrance of the Persian Gulf about 390 nautical miles east of the Gulf of Hormuz, the key world oil supply route, and about 234 nautical miles west of Karachi. It is about 320 kms from Cape al-Hadd in Oman and situated in close proximity to the Iranian ports of Chahbahar and Bander Abbas. Given its strategic location and the ancillary network of roads surrounding it, Gwadar is supposed to connect the Pakistan economy via the Karakoram Highway with Xinjiang. As observed by Ziad Haider, “It is meant to transform Pakistan into a vibrant hub of commercial activity among the energy rich Gulf and Central Asian states, Afghanistan and China and to provide the Pakistan Navy

with strategic depth along its coastline as a naval base. The port will also enable China to diversify its crude oil import routes and extend its presence in the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{100}

China has been promoting a transnational network of roads, railways and ports as a public good which can benefit every one (as illustrated in appendix Map. 2). Behind this advocacy lies a vested Chinese interest: without connectivity China will not be able to sustain its export-led growth and its emergence as the biggest trading state. Equally impressive has been the progress it has made “in unlocking its hinterland to neighboring countries.”\textsuperscript{101} For example, in its land-locked Western region, China has announced plan to transform the cities of Kashgar and Urumqi into major trade hubs between the eastern and Western parts of the Eurasian continent.\textsuperscript{102}

South Asia, despite its tremendous economic growth rates, remains a segmented region and lacks trans-border connectivity. China’s interest in helping the region overcome this crippling handicap should be taken seriously. It is significant to note that during his first visit to the region, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang offered a “handshake across Himalayas” by emphasizing that “there is enough space in the world for the development of India and China,” and that “both countries view each other as partners for mutual benefit and not as rivals or competitors.”\textsuperscript{103} Speaking to the news media Chinese Premier said: “World peace and regional stability cannot be a reality without strategic mutual trust between India and China. And likewise, the development and prosperity of the world cannot be a reality without the cooperation and simultaneous development of China and India,” he said. While in Pakistan he offered Chinese help in resolving Pakistan’s energy crisis and in their joint statement both countries committed themselves to “tap the potential of trade, logistics” and agreed to “enhance interconnectivity and jointly develop a long-term plan for China-Pakistan economic corridor.”\textsuperscript{104} With the return to power of PML-N, led by Mian Nawaz Sharif, following May 2103 national elections a new dynamism is being seen in Pakistan-China economic cooperation. In an effort to build Pakistan-China economic corridor, several agreements have been signed between the two countries to construct road and railway links between Xinjiang and the Gwadar port in Baluchistan. In a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of the Boao Forum for Asia annual conference in April, 2014, Chinese Premier Li said the two countries have agreed to make the building of the corridor the focus of bilateral practical cooperation, and the consensus is conducive to forging a China-Pakistan “community of shared destiny.”\textsuperscript{105} In his key note address to the Boao Conference Pakistani Prime Minister called for a collective approach and coordinated effort for economic prosperity. He urged the regional countries to focus on “greater regional connectivity particularly through roads, rails and sea lanes.”\textsuperscript{106} This would help in promoting mutual relations which in turn would help in the development of the region. China’s future political stability and sustainable development depends on continuous economic growth fueled by readily available and affordable energy supplies. China’s advocacy of Pakistan-China economic corridor must be seen in the context of Beijing continuing search for access to global energy resources by investing in and deepening political relationships with energy producing states and the countries on the transit route. In the last decade China has assisted in the construction of deep-sea ports in Pakistan (Gwadar), Bangladesh (Chittagong), Sri Lanka (Hambantota) and a border-land port in Nepal. This so called ‘string of pearls’ strategy (as illustrated in Appendix Map. 3) with Gwadar port situated at the edge of Arabian Sea bordering Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf, while Chittagong located in Bay of Bengal and Hambantota in Indian Ocean, will help China overcome its ‘Malaccan Dilemma.’ China envisions connecting these sea-ports with its different provinces through rail and road net-


\textsuperscript{102}Autonomous Region of Xinjiang will become not only a gateway to our Central Asian neighbors, but also to South Asia, Russia, and even Europe,” claimed one Chinese scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences recently. Quoted in Ibid. p. 642.


\textsuperscript{104}Text of the Joint statement issued on 24 May, 2013. Partially reported in Dawn, May 24, 2013

\textsuperscript{105}Mohammed Arif, “Chinese ready to start work on Pak-China Economic Corridor in 2015: Chinese Premier,” The Daily News, April 11, 2014

\textsuperscript{106}Dr. Noor ul Haq, “Pak-China Corridor,” Frontier Post, April, 18, 2014
works, for supplying energy to its economy.

**Conclusion:**
This paper has tried to argue that one of the key reasons why Pak-China entente cordiale forged in the early 1960s has stood like a “solid rock” across passage of time and has withstood changes in the international, regional and domestic environments’ is the high degree of mutual trust between the two countries. This trust in turn has allowed both Beijing and Islamabad to align their respective national interests closely and pursue policies of strategic assurance towards each other. Pakistan has adjusted itself to the reality of improved Sino-India ties while Beijing has assured Pakistani leaders, civilians and military alike, of its continued support in dealing with threats to its security.
APPENDIX
Maps

Map 1; China-Pakistan Economic Corridor:

Map 2; Proposed High speed railway track:
Map. 3 China's string of pearls


Figures

Fig 1. Pakistan and China Comparison:

www.unctadstat.unctad.org
Fig 2. Pakistan China Bilateral Trade:

Tables

Table 1. Pakistan’s top 10 export destinations:

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<th>In Billion US Dollars</th>
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<th>2012</th>
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Table 2. Pakistan’s top 10 Import partners:

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Table 3. Pakistan’s top exports to China with respect to China’s Imports from the world (In Million US Dollars):

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<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>1,833.65</td>
<td>18,684.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals</td>
<td>256.94</td>
<td>4,749.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ores, slag and ash</td>
<td>120.85</td>
<td>133,685.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw hides and skins (other than fur skins) and leather</td>
<td>62.02</td>
<td>7,122.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lac, gums, resins, vegetable saps and extracts</td>
<td>50.06</td>
<td>203.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Pakistan top Imports from China (In million US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Imports from China</th>
<th>Imports from world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrical, electronic equipment</td>
<td>1,741</td>
<td>2,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery, nuclear reactors, boilers, etc.</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>3,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic chemicals</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>2,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannmade filaments</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron and steel</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>1,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizers</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastics and articles</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1,501</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5: FDI inflow in Pakistan (Million US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>13,682</td>
<td>25,621</td>
<td>16,473</td>
<td>17,673</td>
<td>19,828</td>
<td>20,916</td>
<td>25,395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNCTAD STATS www.unctadstat.unctad.org

Table 6: FDI in Pakistan (Million US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Greenfield investment</th>
<th>Privatization proceeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>4873.2</td>
<td>266.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>5276.6</td>
<td>133.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>3719.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>2150.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>1573.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>756.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18350.5</td>
<td>399.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Bank of Pakistan http://www.sbp.org.pk

Table 7: Chinese FDI inflow in Pakistan (Million US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>-101.4</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>116.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Bank of Pakistan http://www.sbp.org.pk
Table 8: Direct and Portfolio Investment in Pakistan (Million US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>212.9</td>
<td>(26.3)</td>
<td>186.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>186.6</td>
<td>(29.0)</td>
<td>157.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>(8.2)</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>115.3</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>133.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>(46.4)</td>
<td>(2.4)</td>
<td>(48.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hongkong</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>(119.3)</td>
<td>(54.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>116.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>116.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
