Pakistan-China Relations: Thinking through an Indian lens

Pervaiz Ali Mahesar, Ali Khan Ghumro, Ghulam Mujtaba Khuskh, Abdul Hameed Mahesar

1Department of Strategic and International Studies, University of Malaya, 2Department of Strategic and International Studies, University of Malaya, 3Department of Rural Sociology, University of Sindh Agriculture.Pakistan, 4Department of Criminology, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan.

Abstract

The rise of China and her development paradigm has drawn the attention of the world community and academics. The role and importance of Pakistan in this geometry of relations with Dragon in the South Asian region can not be denied. The objective of this article is to critically analyse the symmetry of Pakistan-China relations through an Indian lens. This study employed the qualitative method in which secondary sources of data are taken. This data is analysed thematically in this paper. It concludes that factors like: uneven development in Pakistan, slow pace of trade and investment by China in Pakistan, deepening Sino-Indian military ties could cast aspersions on Pakistan’s political disputes with India in the long run. Therefore, this study suggests that the Chinese neutrality, win-win relations and complementary economic ties can further cement Pak-China friendship.

Key terms: Development, Geometry of relations, Symmetry, Dragon, Win-Win situation, Complementary

1.1 Introduction

“To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill”.

(Sun Tsu, The Art of War) CIRR, XXI(73) 2015 p.89

The spectacular economic rise and pragmatic policies of China have, invariably, boosted its image, credibility and confidence among the powerful comity of nations in the world. Its own model of development has magnetized and magnified interaction among many countries, like South to South, South East, South West etc. After passing of the period of self induced isolation and ideological tendencies in its foreign relations, China has radically transformed, as a key role player, in the present global system. Given the economic transformation in China, it has given its idea about the form of governance based on the very foundations of the “Chinese Socialism Market”. (China Daily, November 8, 2012). China, in order to seek sustainable economic growth, needs more partners. In contrast to “Washington Consensus”, (CID, Harvard, 2003), China has developed its own concept with the name of “Beijing Consensus”, which entails: innovation,
diversification and self determination. The Chinese foreign policy has been adjusted in such a way that could entice, embrace and attract developing as well as developed countries (Joshua Cooper Ramo. March, 2004).

The role of China is gradually increasing at the world stage. Within three decades, it has rapidly changed from an agrarian state with the world’s second largest economy. The Chinese state behaviour is visible from its foreign policy that it propounded in 1950’s. The main features of its foreign policy are: it seeks for mutual respect territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. (Xhao Kejin. Sept. 9. 2013). Given these developments and changing political, social and economic dynamics of China, Pakistan recognized China in 1950’s. For many decades, the cardinal principle in Pakistan’s foreign policy has been its relations with China in the region. Pakistan, however, recognized the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) in 1950. Their diplomatic ties began in 1951 (Farukh, et al., 2013).

Not only this, but also, Pakistan remained a staunch ally of China even at the times of Chinese isolation period that ranges from: 1960 to 1970. Most of the experts in Pakistan; about Pakistan and China relations believe that the strengthening ties between Pakistan and China were due to: India-China war on the border of 1962 US-India defence ties; Sino-Russian rift in relations, Chinese Conflict with Japan over Island issue; Indian builds up of Blue Navy in the Indian Ocean, Indian ties with South East Asian countries and Indian encirclement through the US, and Japan. Given this changing security scenario in the region, China engaged with Pakistan diplomatically, militarily, and economically.

Contrary to the analysts in Pakistan on China, after the Cold War period, the relationship between Pakistan and China changed dramatically over the years. This was due to Chinese changing economic outlook in the region and the world at large. Apparently, Pakistan and China relationship characterized as: “higher than the Himalaya, deeper than the ocean, and sweeter than honey”. There happens to be a mindset among Pakistani politicians that Pakistan was in dire need of one or the other ‘protector’. This hype was common in the earlier period of Pakistan. It is said that no country could be independent economically. But it should not be taken as subjugation and subservience. One may not deny the fact that economic interests underline the contours of geopolitical relations.

Notwithstanding, it has been observed that China has less economic but more political complementary relationship with Pakistan. Contrary to Pakistan, the Chinese relations with India is more competitive in economic terms. This uneven partnership, cooperation and friendship are also visible in economic investment of China either in India or Pakistan. It is said that Chinese trade with Pakistan is 10$ billion dollars. Similarly, China has about 60$ billion dollars trade and investment in India. It is safe to say that Chinese relations with Pakistan are geopolitical rather than economic.

Pakistan’s renowned economist, Kaiser Bengali, in his article on Dawn News, with a title: “National Road to Development”, dated: 13th August, 2012, said: Constant hand holding either by China or USA should not be considered by Pakistan”. In fact, Pak-USA relations have been portrayed as ‘roller coaster’, dysfunctional marriage and existential threat. This concise and critical analysis portray that Pakistan should
not remain parasite. Tariq Fatemi- ambassador of Pakistan and noted writer was quoted by Stephen P. Cohen in his latest book on *The Future of Pakistan*, said “Pakistan should be confident of its own abilities and remain optimistic about its future given its size, location and the qualities of its people”. It has to explore and develop, improve inward so that it would remain no more dependent on foreign powers.

However, the Pak-China relations, are summarized by critics as under: Chinese neutrality over Kashmir; increasing Sino-India economic and military ties; issue of extremism and terrorism in Chinese province-Xinjiang; the Chinese more export into Pakistan rather than imports from Pakistan. Yet, to the utter failure of an understanding of the time-tested friendship between China and Pakistan, it cannot be denied that the former has lived up to the expectations of the people in Pakistan.

According to Bethany Allen (quotes from the Pew Research Center, in July, 2014, reported) that 78% respondents view China positively in Pakistan (Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, April.22, 2015). Keeping in view the broad spectrum of views, this study is aimed at critically analysing Pakistan’s relations with Dragon. This study also sheds light on relations from an Indian perspective. In order to achieve this objective, the qualitative method in which secondary sources of data are taken. This data is analysed thematically in this paper.

1.2 Material and Methods

This study is concerned with Pakistan and China relations. The relations between two countries are critically analysed in this paper. Therefore, the epistemology of this study is qualitative method. Moreover, besides the qualitative research method, the researcher analysed data thematically in order to understand perspectives on China and Pakistan relations. In addition to this, the research employed the data from secondary source for instance: Books, research articles, journals, and Newspapers. This study analysed the relations critically so that relations between the two countries be realistically explored and understood. In this way, countries can revisit their relations and trade and investment ties from different perspectives. The research anticipates that this study will, not only help researchers or professional of political science and international relations students, but also it would be of enormous advantage for policy makers on the both sides.

Thematic Analysis

1.3 Pakistan- A part of ‘Asia Pivot’ strategy

Pakistan is considered as a “Pivot of Asia” (Ghulam, Waheed, Ch. (1947-1966, p 54). It holds great geopolitical importance in the region. It is situated at the cross-roads of South, Central and East Asia. The geopolitical standing of Pakistan has always attracted the attention of the major powers towards her. Keeping in view this importance, Pakistan’s geopolitical importance cannot be ignored in such a grand equation. The Pak-China friendship is unique and precious from different accounts. First, China is neighbour to Pakistan, second, it has always withstood with Pakistan in the trying times. Its unhindered support and investment in multiple fields, for instance: economic, defence, political and social, is praiseworthy. “They have signed not only Border agreement (1963) but also FTA agreement” (Bir, Singh, Udhay, 2006. P 38). Therefore, it is safe to say that the friendship between Pakistan and China is remarkable, unparalleled, exemplary and dynamic. The former National Security Adviser of America, Henry Kissinger’s meeting was arranged by
Pakistani channels in 1971. Since 1980’s, China has been supporting Pakistan: diplomatically, technologically, economically and militarily. There are three factors which are attributed to have culminated into strengthening Pak-China relations. Those factors are mentioned as under: India-China war in 1962, Indo-USSR relations, India-US ties etc.

It is important to note that within a short span of time, the turning point in relations was due to the Chinese construction of Karakoram Highway (K.K.H), Gwadar port, establishment of Chashma Nuclear Reactors and construction of various dams in Pakistan, reflects commitment, sincerity and cordiality of Pak-China friendship. China has withstood with Pakistan in testing times. There have been wars between Pakistan and India in: 1965, 1971. Obviously, it was China not the US which helped Pakistan in difficult times. The frequent exchange of visits of both states to each other has given “the big stimulus to strengthen ties between Pakistan and China. It also helped both states to come closer to each other. This closeness reflects a strong and deep understanding” (Rasul Bux Rais, 1977. P 32).

Economically speaking, Pak-China bilateral trade has been increasing rapidly. For example: the trade has increased from 1 billion dollars to 15 billion dollars in 2015. The Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Pakistan. He concluded economic deals with Pakistan and that is worth of 35 billion dollars in total. Masood Khan- the former foreign minister of Pakistan: “Approximately 120 Chinese companies are working in Pakistan. China has invested in Pakistan’s infrastructure, energy, agriculture, banking, railways, space, commercial and health projects Heavy engineering, IT, Mining, and defence industry.” “China is a time tested friend of Pakistan in the region and building projects worth $20 billion in the country. Moreover, the work is underway on different projects that are to the tune of 14-billion dollars” (Raja Aqeel and A. Rasheed, 2011). The rising China is focusing on the various projects and sectors in Pakistan.

Similarly, the Prime Minister of China-Wen Jiabao, while addressing the parliament of Pakistan in 11th December 2010, had said that “the steadfastness of the pine tree is shown in the frigid winter; the strength of the horse is tested in a long journey”. Pakistan and China no doubt enjoy the friendly and cordial relations. Throughout the decades of their “all weather and time tested friendship”, they almost have lived up to their expectations. The Chinese help, encouragement and support: security, economic, technological, human, infrastructure development, etc. have all along been worthy of praise (Wen Jiabao, December, 19, 2010).

1.4 The Gwadar Deep Sea Port-A Game Changer in the region

The Gwadar deep sea port is situated in Pakistan’s Baluchistan. It is being considered as the 3rd deepest sea port in the world. The strategic and economic importance of the port has attracted the attention of the great powers of the region. Moreover, it holds a centre stage in fishing and industrialization purpose for the indigenous people of Baluchistan. No doubt, it is capable to carry out and handle international shipping vessels, and entails big potential to transfer oil from one place to another. It links itself with the strategic choke point of the Gulf of Oman, Straits of Hormuz, Central Asian countries (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan), Afghanistan and Middle East (The News, Dec.07. 2015).

There are three major stakeholders of this deep sea port: P.S.A (Port of Singapore Authority), N.L.C (National Logistic Cell), and A.K.D (Group of Karachi). Pakistan had made contract with PSA in order to
manage the Gawadar port for about 40 years. Notwithstanding, the management of the port could remain even a decade for one reason or the other.

MAP: 01

Map of Gawadar Deep Sea Port

![Map of Gawadar Deep Sea Port](http://www.gda.gov.pk/pages/asiaregion.html)

The regional players are taking keen interest in the development of the Gawadar deep sea port. China— the emerging economic power is too much interested in developing this port. China is investing 80% on development of the port. Even it is ready to take risks in this part of the volatile region. In 2002, Gawadar port was inaugurated by China. The development of the Gawadar port is considered to be instrumental in the Pak-China friendship. According to analysts, Indians believe that China is having the similar interest like developing the String of Pearls Policy in the region. The Indian Express, while quoting Wang Shida, a profound scholar at the Beijing-based ICIR (Institute of Contemporary International Relations), said that that the Gawadar port is expected to be instrumental in the development of economies on both the sides.

It offers win-win advantages for China and Pakistan. Thus, he believes that Pakistan will reap fruits of the Chinese mega project and act like a catalyst for exports from Pakistan. For China, the expert said, that it will enable China to import oil from the Middle East in cheaper terms (Indian Express. November 12, 2015).

Broadly speaking, the Chinese interests and objectives are to extend its networking either through railway or roads in South Asian region. They intend to import oil and timber through this port. It will also be beneficial for the Chinese to import and export not only from Afghanistan but also from Central Asian countries. Chinese engineers are going to develop an airport in the vicinity of Gawadar and Dry port near the Pakistan-China border. The port of Karachi and other sources of supply like Gulf Sea, by Chinese are going to be risky, costly and lengthy. While comparing Pakistan’s Gawader port with Iraninan Chahbahar port,
Pakistani expert, Abdul Qayyum Kundi, opined that the port of Gawader invariably offers more strategic and economic dividends to China than Chahbahar (Mian Abrar. February 6, 2016).

In addition to that, the Chinese fear for its supplies pass through the Straits of Malacca and this part of the region is under the American influence. However, the Gawadar provides China with easy access, safer, cheaper and shorter route to the West of China. After the development of the Gawadar port, China will be able to influence in the Middle East. Similarly, with the rise of China and development of a deep sea port, Pakistan will reap its fruits. Pakistan will remain to be the hub of economic activities in this region. For Pakistan lacks technology and strategy to explore and attract foreign direct investment, the Chinese cooperation and partnership will leave a great impact, not only on Pakistan economy, but also image and stability. They both can fight and neutralize the forces of anti-development in this region.

1.5 Chinese Investments in Pakistan’s Energy Sector

Since the last few decades, Pakistan is passing through multiple crises. Among these crises, the energy sector is still looming large. The routine business in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi-economic hub of Pakistan, is halted and jolted due to insecurity and mismanagement. The previous governments have failed to attract the attention of the investors in uplifting the energy sector. In order to bring it out of the economic brinkmanship and breakdown, Pakistan has been looking towards other neighbours like China, with whom it has time tested friendship.

The Chinese government has extended her cooperation in the field of energy sector. In order to materialize these things, China has developed many dams in Pakistan. Some dams are being designed, some others are under construction and still few are at the operational stage. These mega projects have been undertaken with the help and cooperation of China. A few names are given as under.

Table: 01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Project</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Nature of project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kot Addu power company (Kapco).</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Oil- and Natural Gas-fired thermal stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hub Power Company</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Oil-fired thermal station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bin Qasim Power Plant</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Oil- and Natural Gas-fired thermal station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamshoro Power Company</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Oil- and Natural Gas-fired thermal stations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hydro Power Projects in Pakistan are under way. Approximately, there are 48 dams which are proposed. Moreover, there are 16 dams which are said to have been working in Pakistan and some others around sixteen are under construction and still few dams feasibility reports have been prepared. The construction of various dams in Pakistan has been on the part of China. China is a time tested friend of Pakistan. It is said that China will try its level best to bring Pakistan out of the current energy crisis. Therefore, construction of multiple dams is in that connection.

1.6 Pak-China Defence Cooperation

Pakistan was carved out on the 14th of August, 1947. It was fraught with problems of multidimensional nature. For instance: refugee, distribution of resources, water, administrative, infrastructure, etc. After getting independence from the unwilling hands of the British-Hindu complex, it tries to resuscitate from the depth of poverty, ignorance, mismanagement and an abyss. Indian congress believed that the nascent state of Pakistan cannot survive even a decade. Nonetheless, with meagre resources Pakistan managed to survive.

Obviously, the colonial masters had left many issues unresolved in South Asian region. Geographically, Pakistan is surrounded by India, Iran, Afghanistan, and China. For decades, the foreign policy of Pakistan has either been Indo-centric or American-centric. India has been considered as Pakistan’s enemy. It has fought four wars with India: (1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999.) Indian hegemonic designs and its belligerent
attitude have rendered many emerging states to think of alliances with one or the other country in the region. There have been various factors which have resulted in the closer defence cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Louise Merrington of Australian university wrote in his article, “the India-US-China-Pakistan Strategic Quadrilateral”, on 11th April, 2012. He noted following factors that have shaped Pak-China defence cooperation: India as a regional policeman; end of the Cold War and realignments in the region; Indian rising influence in South Asia and South East Asia with the help and encouragement of America and Japan; the policy of containment or encirclement of China through America. The former ambassador of Pakistan, Masood Khan, while talking to a delegation of training officers of Pakistan Air Force War College, on 29th April, 2012, was of the view that Pakistan and China are having defence cooperation on four dimensions.

These dimensions range from security, region, exchange of officers to military exchanges and exercises besides visits to each other’s country. However, military and technological exchanges between Pakistan and China have been considered by the USA as a violation of the MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) and NSG (Nuclear Supplier Group) rules. The development of Missiles like M-II and M-9 are termed by India and Americans as a violation of international law and standards. Nonetheless, Pakistan and China are of the view that Pakistan has developed its nuclear prior to the existence of NSG. Therefore, the development of Missile technology in no way violates NSG rules and regulation. Pak-China defence ties were strengthened after 1962, Indo-US nuclear deal in 2008. America intends to contain the rise of China through India, whereas, China does the same thing through Pakistan for Indians. The interests of USA-India-China overlap and intersect in South Asia and South East Asia. It is said that competition or rivalry among these powers will help further cement Pak-China relationship.

It has been the desire of Pakistan to maintain nukes at deterrence level. In this connection, China came to the help of Pakistan. It inked a nuclear comprehensive agreement in 1986. With the changing geopolitics in the region, in 1989, Chinese Prime Minister-Li-Peng and in 1996, Jiang Zemin- Chinese president visited Pakistan. They assured Pakistan to cooperate in the establishment of power plant. Not only China-Pakistan collaboration, but also other countries have participated in the different projects. In connection to this, at least two Chashma Nuclear Power Plant is currently at operational level, and CHASNUPP-3-4 is under construction. The following table shows that either indigenous or Chinese cooperation in developing nuclear technology in the country like Pakistan.
Table: 02

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft/ Missile</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F-16 A/B</td>
<td>925 Km</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>35 Planes in inventory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirage 5</td>
<td>1300 km</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>50 Planes inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-1</td>
<td>80-100 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/China</td>
<td>In service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-2 (Abdali)</td>
<td>180 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/China</td>
<td>In service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-3 (Ghaznavi)</td>
<td>300 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/China</td>
<td>In service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-4 (Shaheen-1)</td>
<td>600-800 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/China</td>
<td>In service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-5 (Ghauri-1)</td>
<td>1300-1500 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/ DPRK</td>
<td>In service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-5 (Ghauri-2)</td>
<td>2000 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/ DPRK</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-6 (Shaheen-2)</td>
<td>2000-2500 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/ China</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-7 (Babur)</td>
<td>500-700 Km</td>
<td>Indigenous/ China</td>
<td>In service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatf-8 (Ra’ad)</td>
<td>300 Km</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>Tested in 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Peter Lavoy, Pakistan’s Nuclear Posture: Security and Survivability”, Centre for Contemporary Conflict, 2007, pp.8-9

China and other countries have helped Pakistan to develop its missile capability from time to time. With the active participation and collaboration of China, Pakistan has been successful in manufacturing JF-17 Thunder Aircraft, K8-Train Aircraft, Al-Khalid Tank, F-22 Naval Frigates, HRF (Heavy Rebuild Factory) in Taxila, PAC (Pakistan Aeronautic Complex at Kamra) KKH (Karakoram Highway) last but not the least Gawadar port. This Chinese cooperation is a thing to be praised. This amply portrays that Pakistan and China enjoy better relations. In spite of Chinese active support to Pakistan in all spheres of life, still there is a trust deficit between their relationships. It is so because Pakistan has remained in the Western camp since its inception. Therefore, this factor, in fact, derives a wedge between Pakistan and China. The rising ties between India and China in economic field also leave a big question for Pakistan. The following analysis will further suggest that China and India, despite of 1962 war have developed their trade and investment to a great extent.

1.7 India-China Rising Trade Relations: Indian Lens

After the end of the Cold War, security, political and economic dynamics of South Asian region changed from 1990-96 and from 2000 to 2011, India-China political economic and technological exchanges have witnessed a great leap forward. However, strengthening India-China relations are created mistrust in Pak-China friendship. India also perceives Pakistan a security threat. It also considers Pakistan a major hurdle in the CBMs between China and India. India-China trade reached to 50-billion dollars in 2010. Recently, the Chinese trade delegation visited India. They signed trade deals worth billions of dollars.
According to the report, at least 48 deals were inked. According to an economic survey, “the bilateral trade between India and China- two Asian competitors began their trade process in 1991. In this year, trade ratio was reached to 262 million dollars. And since then, the unprecedented economic development in both states has enhanced the level of trade amounting to 60 billion dollars in the last year. It is expected that this trade ratio will rise further to 100 billion dollars in 2015” (Rabia Yasmeen, 2011).

1.8 China-India Military Ties-Pakistan’s concern

No doubt, China has defence relations with Pakistan, but former’s military exercise and exchanges with India could be a concern for Pakistan in the long run. In 1993, there have been reciprocal visits between India and China. After these exchanges (1993, 1994 and 1995), both sides underlined the need to strengthen political, economic and defence ties. They reached to an understanding that through dialogue and diplomacy, they can resolve all outstanding problems including border. It was reported in the ‘Economic Times’, in April, 04, 2011: ‘Military to military exchanges paves the way for strong commitment. And this understanding with her immediate neighbour will be result oriented. They, in recent meetings have also made a commitment that the issue of visa, which sparked a hue and cry in an Indian media, would be solved in an atmosphere of trust and harmony’.

In addition to the rising trade and investment in each other country, joint military exercises in the Indian Ocean and defence ties raising certain questions on the part of Pakistan. “In 2004, India’s the-then Army chief, Gen. N.C Vig, received warm welcome in China. Both the parties agreed to deepen defence ties. This shows return back of normal relations between the neighbouring giants and former foes” (Executive Intelligence Review, 2005). This visit was reciprocated with Chinese counterpart, Liang Guanglie and Defence Minister, Cao Guangchuan. Cao told the Indian General that: “China would like to set up its cooperation with India in the defence and security sector” Reports Xinhua, the news agency of China. Military exercises between India and China could be seen with concern in Pakistan.

However, “India and China resumed military exchanges that were halted in July-2010, after Beijing refused to provide a visa to a top Indian Commander who intended to visit China” (Vivek Raghuvanshi, 2011.). “Eight member Indian military delegations arrived in Beijing, for a six day visit. The head of the delegation was the head of a counterinsurgency into deployed in the Indian held Kashmir” (Edward Wong, 2011). The Economic Times reported on April-27, 2011, that it was a “new breakthrough and development momentum that have emerged in Sino-Indian military ties”.

1.9 Kashmir Enigma:The Dragon’s Policy

The early 1970s saw numerous changes in geopolitical dynamics of Sino-Pak relations. Among the major changes, change of leadership in China was prominent. The policies and approaches of the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping were largely aimed at economic development. They gave top priority to the economic development. The desire for development rendered them to keep themselves away from the spirit of nationalism and nationalistic tendencies.
They opened up the doors of their economy to the outside world. Moreover, their focus was to normalize relations with other countries, specifically what they called it as near to or adjacent to the Chinese border. In the wake of this development, relations between China and Pakistan also subjected to these sweeping changes. The most important factors behind this change were: (a) The Republic of China, given the geopolitical changes, adopted neutrality not only towards the South Asian region but also towards India-Pakistan disputes. (b) China’s support and stand on certain issues: like Kashmir, also decreased. It only maintained that Kashmir issue has to resolve peacefully and in a friendly manner. (c) On many other issues, between India and China, China tone down, its support. It was obvious from the event of the Kargil crisis of 1999, and Indo-Pak military standoff in 2001-2, in which China remained almost neutral. (d) The changing Chinese attitude left an overwhelming impact upon the defence cooperation between Pakistan and China. It also abandoned support for Pakistan during its missile and nuclear program. However, open cooperation is going on even today. e) China started normalizing its relations with Pakistan’s nuclear rival India since 1988.

It is believed that after the Cold War era, China has adopted a policy of neutrality over South Asian problems. Chinese changing foreign policy, increasing economic and military ties with India reflects Chinese changing attitude. Chinese current trade with India is 15-billion dollars and it is expected to rise to 100-billion dollars. “In spite of these military and economic ties between India and China doesn’t reflect the complete change of latter’s policy towards Pakistan” (Khokhar Amna Yousaf, 2011)26.

The Chinese changing foreign policy was due to political and geo-economic and security changing in the region. “China’s decision to reach a rapprochement with India was, in no sense, an indication of its change of stance on the disputed territories rather that it was the by-product of the changing international political environment, this changing situation ushered in the new pattern of working between nation states. The debt crisis, changing global ideological climate of the unipolar world demanded the developing countries to engage with the outside world” (Memon Amman, 2008)27.

The Chinese foreign policy change was mainly due to the end of the Cold War and the simultaneous disintegration of the USSR. It created a huge gap or vacuum. And this vacuum was filled by China. It followed the non-confrontationist and non-violent policy towards its neighbours. However, closer relations between India and China obviously show that strengthening ties between two powers were changing geopolitically, economically and security dynamics of the region.

“Beijing has traditionally supported Pakistan against India, but now in the Post Cold War era, the Chinese have distanced themselves somewhat from Pakistan, in order to cultivate better relations with India,” maintained Michael Yahuda, professor International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science. The conflict over the border between China and India resulted in the former’s emphasis on the Kashmir’s right to self-determination, according to the wishes of the people of Kashmir. It was crystal clear from Zhou Enlai’s interview: “We were on friendly terms with India; we took an attitude of non-involvement in the Kashmir issue. We have always cherished the hope that India and Pakistan would settle the Kashmir issue and other problems in a friendly manner, with Pakistan. Despite, friendly terms with Pakistan, we have not given up our desire for friendship with India” (Ahmed Ishtiaq)28.
“The era of 1990’s have seen the fact that the Kashmir’s movement of self-determination has been subject to certain ill-forces, like: extremism, religious militancy etc. The Nine-Eleven acts changed the entire climate of the region. However, the changing scenario was not favourable to the people of Kashmir. Their right of self-determination was put into a cold storage. The legitimate freedom struggle of Kashmiri’s got great set back and blow” (Shingling Lin, 2011). While giving interviews to the Indian journalist, in 1980, Deng Xiaoping had said: “Kashmir is a bilateral problem between Pakistan and India and it should be solved by both states in an amicable manner.” The issue of Jammu and Kashmir has got a wide currency in the national and international level. It is the disputed part of the land. India as well as Pakistan has fought four wars. Almost 62 years have elapsed; Kashmir has been a bone of contention between both of the nuclear rival of Asia. This disputed territory has been since long time a nuclear flash point in the South Asian region. There are different versions of Kashmir problem.

Map.02

30**The Economist.**

China, before the Cold War, supported Pakistan’s stand on Kashmir. But as the time went on, it maintained its policy of neutrality after the Post Cold War era. Now the Chinese leadership holds that Kashmir is a disputed territory between India and Pakistan, therefore they themselves have to solve it in a cordial manner. Keeping in view these developments, China is now very cautious about its future relationship with India and Pakistan. These developments aside, it is also believed that China is not going to shun its Pakistani card any time soon. It has made various agreements with Pakistan that is worth billions of dollars. Huge
developments in energy, security, strategic ports and overall economic infrastructure of Pakistan are clear manifestations of Chinese commitments with Pakistan in future.

The India and China aspire to regional and global supremacy. Their ambitious policies and different approaches at the regional and international level is a manifestation of their cooperative and competitive nature of the relationship. It is said that even if Sino-Indian relations blossom, flourish and improve, will not deter the former to have friendship with Pakistan. Many a times, China has expressed her intention. And it is analysed as follows:
a) The rise of China is expected to force India to maintain peace with Pakistan.
b) China has, time and again, expressed that its ties with India, in no way, fracture its relations with Pakistan.
c) The absence of both political or territorial disputes and the Chinese strict adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence will further strengthen Pak-China friendship.
d) The major factor behind Pak-China friendship is common thinking and understanding of the regional and global level.
e) “Pakistan-China military structures suggest that they want continuous and long term friendship” (Fazal-ur-Rehman, 1998).

1.10 Conclusion
The relations between Pakistan and China are unparalleled and exemplary. Indeed, both the countries have withstood the challenges at national, regional and global level. In this context, the rise of China at global stage; its own paradigm for development; and the new ways for interacting with regional and global powers on win-win or equal footing, have earned her a great respect and credibility among the comity of nations. Pakistan, being the neighbour of China, has the privilege to attain/reap the dividends from the emerging giant in terms of trade and investment in the region. The frequent exchange of visits between Pakistan and China leadership, inevitably, reinforces further the mutual trust and cooperation at multidimensional level. This cooperation ranges from technology, industry to political, economic, social, cultural, educational, diplomatic and military. The off-late landmark agreement CPEC (China, Pakistan Economic Corridor) was one of the watershed between two countries. This trade corridor will open up the new opportunities for the people of Pakistan in the long run and also benefit China.

Nevertheless, these developments between both the neighbours aside, the critics of Pakistan and China relations like, Dr. Qaiser Bengali-a renowned economist, expressed the highs and lows in Pak-China relations. He pointed out that China is increasing its military cooperation with India. For decades, India has been considered, Pakistan’s old rival in the region. The increasing defence ties between India and Pakistan could affect the later’s effective campaign on internationalizing Kasmir issue. Ironically, Pakistan and India has fought four wars in the past. Pakistan expects its time tested friend, China, to be cautious over its India policy.

This paper analysed Pakistan-China relations through the Indian lens. It highlighted the Chinese relations with India: military and economic cooperation. This article pointed out that the Pakistan-China friendship could be affected, provided the Chinese keep up their policy of defence cooperation with India. On the whole, this phenomenon might lead to Cold War/power imbalance in the South Asian region. This article thematically and critically analysed relations between Pakistan and China. It further noted that the current
political crisis in Pakistan can hamper the Chinese trade and investment process in the future in Pakistan. Thus, this paper suggests that consistence in the Chinese investment process; the policy of neutrality; win-win based relations and complementary economic ties can be pivotal in cementing Pak-China relations and could counter their common threats in the larger interests of peace and prosperity of the South Asian region.

Note: This article has been taken from my M. Phil thesis, which is already submitted in Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC). I have refined, modified and rewritten this paper so that it could meet out the requirements of this Journal. Therefore, this is not a funded project. Thanks. (Author).

References:


   http://fpc.org.uk/publications/TheBeijingConsensus


7Speech by H.E. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.


Kasuri Khurshid Pakistan was unaffected by Sino-Indian Ties. (April, 11, 2004). China Central T.V.


