

China-Pakistan Relationship: Historical Perspective

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Abstract

Pakistan and China are all weather friends as both the governments have opposite Camps and ideologies which never affect their friendship. Both the countries have their Diplomatic, economic and Geographical interests from each other. These factors give birth to the relationship which is known as Sino-Pak relationship. So the main aim and ambition of this research paper is to discuss these factors to develop the proper concept of the all weather relationships.

Key words: Economic, Political and Diplomatic Relations.

Introduction:

China and Pakistan were two differing camps since the early fifties, but their conflicting cold war spots did not result in mutually hostile ties. Thus Pakistan was the first Muslim country to recognise the People's Republic of China closely following the footsteps of India. Pakistan-China relationship is usually narrated by Pakistanis and Chinese as lifter than the Himalayas and intensive than the Indian Ocean. Both the countries are dependent on each other and in this way their relationship has not changed and has always seemed to be eternal.

It is said that China-Pakistan relationship refuses explanation on the disagreement between the two countries. One was a military Marxist state and acknowledged foe of the United States. The other was a Vigorous US ally and a member of the anti-China military alliance. Despite their deep-rooted differences the two countries came together and formed a strong bond of mutual understanding with each other. A consolidation of sagemess and conformance of interests without any doubt China and Pakistan came close to each other. Oppositions characterize the

China Pakistan relations with the recognition of some similarities between them which also created compatibility in their relationship as much as mutual benefits which accrued to them. For Pakistan, her exclusive concern was India but for China it was primarily the US and secondly India. Pakistan perceived China as a dominant and ruling power in Asia that would serve to subvert or cripple Indian prominence in the subcontinent.

From Pakistan's standpoint, friendly China not only protects it from India. But also ensures an authentic or genuine partner. Even conscious of its inferior status with India in the South Asian power hierarchy' the Pakistan's drive for power congruity became a primary objective of its foreign policy. Impotent to challenge India on its own, Pakistan strived to secure political, military, diplomatic and economic support by forming an alliance with an extra-regional power, Viz, the United states.

In 1960's when US was exposed, Pakistan became fully aware that its relation with US cannot be relied upon and thus, Pakistan extended its hand of friendship to China with an intention to counter India. For China and Pakistan their antipathy towards India served as a base for their mutual friendship. Thus, China's friendship acted not only as a psychological support for Pakistan, but also provided diplomatic support at the UN and other world forms especially on the issue of Kashmir. More importantly, a generous Chinese military and economic aid was to prove vital for Pakistan in the wake of the 1965 US embargo.

China always grants her necessary drive to develop friendly relations with Pakistan. China has never in a position to absolve Pakistan from its alliance, as per Indians they have their close friends but they are attracted with US ally, this is the reason China want a close friend in South Asia whom they will be trusted.

Security Concerns of Pakistan

Pakistan emerged as a separate country in time of crisis and immediately after partition it was engulfed in communal riots and many more political, social and economic problems and there was a huge influx of refugees from India. When Pakistan was surrounded

by an ocean of problems, nothing occupied minds of its leaders except the fact to form an alliance and stabilize the newly formed nation.

Against this somewhat and lifeless political atmosphere, the eyes of the Pakistan's leaders naturally turned towards the outside powers which could really help them in overcoming the various difficulties, the country had been encountering. Leadership was very much conscious of the innate weakness of their country. Therefore, from the very beginning they remained in a constant search for getting outside source to overcome its weakness and Protect it from the external aggression of any strong country especially India this was the basic concern Pakistan to move towards Chinese alliance.

Geography: A Concern of China Pakistan Relationship

Pakistan is located in the Indian sub- continent and the Indian Ocean, and 1971 it was having two wings-west Pakistan and East Pakistan. The shattered shape of this nation has always remained a security problem for Pakistan and thus became one of the reasons of forming its relations to extra-regional powers. It is separated from the Soviet Union by a small strip of Afghan territory. Gilgit-Hunza- Baltistan areas of Kashmir under Pakistani occupation are adjacent to Chinese sinking. East Pakistan was surrounded by India on three sides and its southern boundary touches the Bay of Bengal. On account of location and nature of topography, East Pakistan was vulnerable to an external threat and its security was a great concern to Pakistan, West Pakistan was also divided into three distinct regions topographically, the mountains region, the plateau of Baluchistan and the plain of the Indus River. There are two main ranges the Hindu Kush which runs into Afghanistan in the west and the Karakorum, which runs through Kashmir, into Tibet in the East. The North West frontier province consists of the Suleiman range. Across this range there are a number of passes like Khyber, the Touchi, and the Gomal through which Invaders have repeatedly fought to gain entrance into the lush green plains of India.¹

In the Gilgit Hunza-Baltistan Region Mountains extend from Kilik pass to the Karakorum pass enrooted from Leh to Yarkand. Across this range there a number of passes and most of this region is inaccessible, except the Shimshal pass, the Khunjerab pass and the Mintaka pass, which lead into the valley of the Hunza river, where Laden ponies could be used in the past for transportation.² with the construction of highways connecting this region

with Chinese Sinkiang, facilities for vehicular transport and communication between China and Pakistan have been created. Almost all the rivers which follow in Pakistan originate from Indian Territory. West Pakistan is exposed to external threat because of its location and since it is not broad enough so, any powerful enemy can cut it into pieces in a single blow by making rapid thrusts from the western to eastern frontier's.³ The geographical location of Pakistan is its greatest weakness as it shares its boundary line with powerful nations like India, Afghanistan, and Iran and has thus proved great security problem for it.⁴

President Ayub Khan wrote in his political autobiography:

“East Pakistan is surrounded by three sides by India, we have only one way to it that is sea, India has no fear if he want to control it .West Pakistan is trapped in between three very big powers with soviet Union at the top, I know of no other small country which has been the, somewhat doubtful difference of having three such mighty neighbours.”⁵

After Partition There were many gloomy forecasts about the economic instability of the newly born state. To many it's early fall down was a foregone conclusion, at least on economic grounds. In undivided India Muslims lagged behind in many aspects of life- in administration, trade and commerce, banking education and in political leadership. As Pakistan born out of a divided India, got itself a divided geography which was not only a great source of weakness for her defence but also of many politico-economic irritation and problems between the two wings.⁶The fact that West Pakistan was separated by East Pakistan by 1100 miles of Indian Territory, Afghanistan still continues to condemn the validity of the Durand Line, lays claim to a big portion of Pakistani territory and has fanned and supported the Pakhtunistan idea in more than one-way. In all this, it was having a Pakistan's defence system was very weak as Bangladesh was far way from Pakistani air base and very close to Indian base, except Quetta, lies within 150 miles of Indian soil and apart from the rivers of the Punjab there are no natural obstacles to an advance of the Indian army towards Lahore and Peshawar.⁷Pakistan has to depend a lot on friendly relations with other countries. From her very inception Pakistan seemed to have suffered ⁸ from a self presumed threat of big India as “potentially a great nation and a big power.” Might have contributed to some extent, to small Pakistan's fear complex of India.⁹.Pakistan believed that India wanted to see Pakistan “Strangled” at birth.¹⁰ and to achieve that end she began to adopt one after another all possible sorts of pressure tactics.

River system which is natural barrier between India and Pakistan are also a tension between two countries. Dispute was created between two countries on the basis of distribution of water of these rivers of both wings. Ayub Khan observed that; now this location is a source of strength, if we could establish normal and mutually acceptable relations with countries hemming us in.¹¹ Leaders of Pakistan suggested to their Govt¹²

Pakistan has 2400 miles long boundary with India, along with LOC, and International border, in this way china has certain inherent conflicts with India, Pakistan has done all efforts to establish close friendship with china .The Pakistani decision makers appear to be fully conscious of kautilya's dictum that "enemy of your enemy is your friend". Pakistan's strategic location as a concern of attraction of big powers. Its location at the head of the Persian Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea attracts the USA and China never want presence of USA in its nearby. Even the former Soviet Union appears to be aware of Pakistan's geographical importance.

From this geographical analysis, it becomes clear that geography location of Pakistan had acted as a limit on Pakistan's foreign policy with reference to India. But is not a serious threat as India.

Economic Concern: A Backbone of China-Pakistan Relationship

It was only after partition of Indian sub-continent, that negative forecasts regarding economic instability of Pakistan were spreading like fire and it was evident that Pakistan was a weak nation from both economic and military point of view. Despite being economically weak Pakistan has to provide security to 7 million refugees from India.¹³ Keeping in view the weak conditions of Pakistan the 2 superpowers first America and then Soviet union come forward for its rescue, but the royal class of Pakistan being loyal to British refused any foreign aid from them, ¹⁴well aware of their problems and knowing the fact that Pakistan was completely dependent on foreign aid, its leaders refused to take any help because of its loyalty towards British govt.¹⁵ Thus, it is evident that everything as politically manipulated. Despite, the fact that china at that time was not in a condition to provide economic aid to Pakistan but being a super power it prompted many communist countries to provide aid to Pakistan. Thus, leading a helping hand of friendship and support to Pakistan.¹⁶

Pakistan's Attitude towards China

There are different elements that build up relations among Pakistan and China. Like Pakistan, China also was a creating nation and the two nations were having some basic issues in the field of Agriculture and industrialization. Pakistan was confronting the issue of water logging, saltiness and floods. Pakistan knew the endeavours of Chinese to beat those Problems and the advantage they could take from their endeavours. After some time when remote guide to Pakistan began declining and Pakistan had not demonstrated any enthusiasm for building up enterprises, around then it was china which acted the hero and endeavoured to keep up the offset of exchange with Pakistan. Advance in the early long periods of its independence.¹⁷ Pakistan's Leadership for certain reasons turned into a partner of the western square. In any case Pakistan was first Muslim nation to stretch out acknowledgment to the People's Republic of china on January 04 1950.

One of the reasons to have good relations with China was the fact that the people's Republic of China would occupy the Chinese seat in the United nations and as a permanent member of UN security council, with the right to veto.¹⁸ Well aware of the fact of importance of position of China in whole world and it being a permanent member of UN security council, with the right to veto, Pakistan tried to maintain its relations with China and as a result it received voting right on UN resolution. Pakistan maintains its trade relations with China as it was in need of international market and needed buyers for raw jute, cotton and coal. The heavy purchase's of Pakistan's raw materials and coal from China at a critical stage left behind highest impression on China that led China to act like a good friend with Pakistan.

Rise of Political Relations between China and Pakistan

The Pakistan rulers were prompted by the rise of the emergence of the people's Republic of China and its recognition, they were having the lack of information about the new government of China-Pakistan, like the British, viewed the Chinese revolution in 1949. Even though engineered by the communist, as a successful nationalist struggle to overthrow foreign burden than merely a manifestation of the world wide communist design.¹⁹

The big guns of Pakistan who were making their policies regarding the nation started selling the idea that Pakistan should have a good relation to its neighbour country china in the interest of its national security though they have different ideologies and subscribed by the

two states. Pakistan's headache was somehow to win dependable friends in its first against India from political point of view Pakistan found China important in diverse ways; firstly, in the light of the discussion of Pakistani nationalism, Pakistani elite and the Indian factor, it is clear that Pakistani policy makers see political challenge mainly from India. They have a threat to their national identity from India. In order to overcome its identity crisis Pakistan seeks to undermine India's political influence by organising anti-Indian campaigns. Finding that China is interested in undermining India's political influence in the Afro Asian world, Pakistani leaders think that China can serve as a counterweight against India. They also find China useful and important vis-a-vis Afghanistan. Since Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have not always been friendly, so their objective became to eliminate a possibility of Sino Afghan complicity on one side, and to seek China's neutrality in Pak-Afghan affairs on the other. Pakistan's relations with China would give it a tremendous bargaining power with the USA. Edified personal responsibility was clearly the guideline inspiration for Pakistan's choice to set up flexible relations with the legislature of China.²⁰

The main pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy is to maintain good relations with China. Pakistan's president Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq visited China in 1986 to improve diplomatic relations; Pakistan and Cuba are those countries whom offer crucial support to PRC after Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. China and Pakistan share close military relations, while China helps Pakistan with militaries cooperation, and provide joint producing armaments ranging from fighter jets to guided missile frigates.

According to China's custom statistics the bilateral trade volume forth calendar year 2017 crossed the US\$20 billion mark for the first time. In 2017 China's exports to Pakistan grew by 5.9% to reach US\$18.25 billion whereas Pakistan's exports to China fell by 4.1% to US \$1.83 billion. Chinese and Pakistani economic cooperation reached its high peak, Chinese most expansive investment in the Pakistan is in the deep-water port at Gwadar, and both countries have free trade agreement.

Pakistan is not only best friend to China, but served as a main bridge to the Islamic world, and also played a positive role in bridging the communication gap between the PRC and the west by facilitating U.S president Richard Nixon's historic 1972 visit to China but also The relations between China and Pakistan have been described by Pakistan's ambassador to China as higher than the mountains, deeper than the ocean, stronger than steel, dearer than

eyesight, sweeter than honey, and so on. According to Stockholm international peace research institute, Pakistan is China's biggest arms buyer, counting for nearly 47% of Chinese arms exports.²¹ according to a 2014 BBC World services poll, 75% of Pakistan's view China's influence positively without 15% expressing a negative view. In the Asia-Pacific region, Chinese people hold the third most positive opinions of Pakistan's influence in the world, behind Indonesia and Pakistan itself.²²

China Pakistan Diplomatic Relations

When the Republic of China lost power in the 1949 after that in 21th may 1951 diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan started²³ while initially ambivalent towards the idea of communist country on its borders, Pakistan hoped that China would serve as a counterweight to Indian influence. India had recognized China a year before, and Indian Prime Minister Nehru Ji also hoped for closer relations with the Chinese. In 1956, Pakistani prime minister Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy and Chinese premier Zhou Enlai signing the treaty of friendship between China and Pakistan, making closer bilateral ties. With escalating border tensions leading to the 1962 Sino-Indian war, China and Pakistan aligned each other in a joint effort to counter India and the Soviet Union as both have border disputes with India. One year after China's border war with India, Pakistan ceded the trans-Karakoram tract to China to end border disputes and improve diplomatic relations.

China and Pakistan established their all-Wealth diplomatic relations there have been frequent exchanges between the two countries "leadership and people for example, Former Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai received warm welcomes in all of his four visits to Pakistan. When Zhou died in 1976, then Pakistan's Ambassador to China rushed to the Chinese ministry affairs at 8am in the Morning without appointment. Upon arriving at the ministry, the ambassador cried due to his grief in front of Chinese diplomats. In 2004, a road in Pakistani capital Islamabad leading to the diplomatic enclave was named "Zhou Enlai Road". It is the first road in Pakistan that is named after Foreign leaders on 27th may 1976, then Chinese leader Mao Zedong, aged 83, received his last foreign guest Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto despite his illness.²⁴ On may 2013, Chinese premier Li Keqiang's airplane was escorted by Six JF-17 thunder jets, jointly developed by the two countries, as it entered Pakistani airspace.²⁵ The premier was also received by both Pakistani president XI

Jinping visited Pakistan as his first foreign visit of the year, also the first by a Chinese President in nine years. Before the arrival he published the article praising the friendship on Pakistani newspapers like Daily Jung. The Chinese president compared visiting Pakistan with visiting his brother's home.²⁶ Like previous Visit by Premier Li, The airplane was escorted by 8 JF 17 thunder jets. It was given a grand welcome upon his arrival at Noor khan airbase, a 21-gun salute and guard of honour was presented to him.²⁷

China Pakistan Military Concerns

There are strong military ties between China and Pakistan.²⁸ This alliance between two neighbours Asian Nations is significant geo-politically. The strong military ties primarily aim to counter regional Indian and American influence, and was also to repel Soviet influence in the area. In recent years this relationship has strengthened through ongoing military projects and agreements between Pakistan and China.

Since 1962, China has been a steady source of military equipments to the Pakistani Army, helping establish ammunition factories, providing technological assistance and modernizing existing facilities.²⁹

Hongdu JL-8 produced by both Pakistan and China. Most recently, the Chinese Chengdu J-10B fighter was compared to its closest American counterpart, the Lockheed Martin F-16c Block 52/60, the most advanced F-16, for orders on either aircrafts for the Pakistani Air force, resulting in the win of the Chinese Chengdu J10-B. Accordingly, the Chengdu J10-b had more advanced technology such as its radar and OLS targeting system, and its new generation stealthy features, such as its DSI intake gave it an edge over the Lockheed Martin F-16.

China and Pakistan are involved in several projects to enhance military and weaponry systems, which include the joint development of the JF-17 Thunder fighter aircrafts,³⁰ K-8 Karakorum advance training aircraft, a tailor made training aircraft for the Pakistani Air Force based on the Chinese domestic Hongdu L-15, space technology, Awacs systems, AL-Khalid tanks, which china granted licence production and tailor made modifications based on the initial Chinese type 90 and/or MBT-2000. The Chinese has designed tailor made advanced weapons for Pakistan, making it a strong military in the Asian region. The armies have a schedule for organising joint military exercises.³¹

China is the largest investor in Pakistan's Gwadar Deep sea port, which is strategically located at the mouth of the strait of Hormuz.⁴³ It, is viewed warily by both America and India as a possible launch pad for the Chinese navy, giving them the ability to launch Submarines and Warships in the Indian Ocean. China has recently pledged to invest nearly \$43 billion US dollars.

In 2008, Pakistan had purchased military equipment from China for an improved quality of defence arsenal and force to fight the constant attack from foreign militants. This relationship still continues nine years later when Pakistan army imported Chinese- built Low to Medium Altitude Air Defence system (LOMADS) LY-80 for its air defence system.

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