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China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A Paradigm Shift in Power Politics

ABSTRACT

Pakistan and China has long history of deep rooted and time-tested friendship. The changes of power in both states do not affect their relations. Since the beginning of CPEC which is a mega project of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) strategy and is a great step in cementing Pak-China nexus, is also seen and surmised by the world powers as a paradigm shift in the power politics that might lead towards new polarizations. World powers are showing varied attitudes towards CPEC and are keenly observing new developments. Chinese influence has accelerated in the neighboring countries because it at present is the second largest economy in the world. Pakistan is the only neighbor of China with which it enjoys friendly relations. China's strong political, social, economic, cultural and defense relations with Pakistan paves the way for strengthening its economy by getting access to the Middle Eastern, African and Central Asian markets through Gwadar Port. The project is seen as a stepping stone for the promotion of peace and stability in Asia which may open more avenues to bring the world together by solving regional issues. Besides, the resistance of world powers for undermining the growing and cementing China-Pakistan relation through CPEC is also disclosed by focusing the major question that how CPEC is strengthening the relations between China and Pakistan and what paradigm shift will take place in the power politics of the region and of the world?

Keywords: CPEC, OBOR, Sino-Pakistan Nexus, Cementing, Power Politics, Asian Politics and the US, Polarization

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Introduction

Diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan were established in May 1951 because Pakistan was the first Muslim state which recognized People's Republic of China in 1950. Nevertheless, relations between both these states developed slowly because of Pakistan's joining of United States of America's (USA) sponsored defense treaties of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and South-East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). However, the Bandung Conference of 1955 brought the two countries nearer when the then Pakistani Prime Minister, Mohammad Ali Bogra, clarified it to his Chinese counterpart; Zhou Enlai that Pakistan's membership of CENTO and SEATO is not directed against China. Since then, both the states enjoy strong political, diplomatic, defense, economic and social ties which are based on mutual understanding, faith and equality (Mazari S. M., 2016).

After the disintegration of Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in 1991, the world swiftly became unipolar with United States of America (USA) as the sole power in the world. The emergence of China as a competing economic power is somehow helping to maintain the balance of power in the world by adopting a "good-neighbor policy" (Wang Y.-K., 2010). The launching of CPEC by China is a step in the right direction for turning the nature of politics from a unipolar world to a multipolar world with all partner states enjoying equal benefits of trade and commerce because it will not be dominated by a single country or a region as it involves major economic and geostrategic units but will be guided by shared development through a complex connectivity, using the landmass of Pakistan. Thus, after the commencement of CPEC projects, the primacy of Pakistan for CPEC was realized by the Chinese authorities and the Pakistan-China relations entered into a new arena and found a miraculous boost in further cementing of its ties.

Nevertheless, China and Pakistan nexus can be viewed through both positive and negative lenses. From positive perspective, the growing cultural exchanges and people to people interaction will deepen Pak-China economic ties. It will help in curbing poverty, terrorism and extremism by providing jobs and engaging deprived people into many healthy activities. But on the negative side, Pakistan's export of goods, industrial growth, technological advancement, and local trade with indigenous stuffs will be dormant (Chance, 2016).

Alongside the positive gestures and intentions, some apprehensions are also connected with the CPEC projects in the form of a threat from the adjacent neighboring states and the pressure from world powers is indirectly impacting it. Such counter politics can create massive political, economic, diplomatic and military hurdles for China to promote Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which also might cause of the destabilization of Pakistan's economy. The fast pace development of economy and the long term investment across the globe gives influencing gesture of China to the world, and give signal of great power intervention, particularly, with the US that China does not accept a single world power in the form of the US to control the world. Besides, China-Pakistan relations at present are inseparable and if Pakistan along with other influencing countries do not draw a line to manipulate the upcoming challenges, they will get stuck in a new whirl, the emergence of a multipolar world will be inevitable as China's policy since 1982 is geared to move in that direction (Chaudhry, *The China Pakistan Economic Corridor*, 2017).

On the other hand, USA remained ambivalent and confused by the constant and fast growing economy of China, it has therefore, with the support of its allies formed a strategy to counter this looming threat of China's BRI. China, nevertheless, wants to expand its relations with the whole world to accomplish its OBOR strategy which according to some commentators is a 'Marshal Plan'(Ferdinand, 2016) while according to Chinese policy makers, it will not only pave the way for getting access to international markets but will be a response to power strategic rebalance (Xiguang, 2016).

Unflinching ties and Political Understanding

A cursory glance over the past history of Pak-China relations depicts that they are time-tested reliable friends. They as all-weather friends support each other during trouble times. They have mutual understanding in political, defense, economic and other spheres of life. No political changes or interests can affect their relationship because it has not been executed overnight but has been developed through an evolutionary process (Jahangir, Jan-Jun 2015). Now the relations are highly acknowledged by the people of both sides and expressed through similes and metaphors as "higher than mountains, deeper than the ocean, stronger than steel, dearer than eyesight and sweeter than honey" (Tharoor, 2015). Chinese President, Xi Jinping said that Pak-China

relation has developed like a tree which will grow tall and strong (Tharoor, 2015). And once an American delegate criticized additional support of China to Pakistan, the Chinese diplomat responded with an ironic gesture and said that "Pakistan is our Israel" (Deen, 2010). Historically, China also provided moral and material support to Pakistan on occasions like its war with India in 1965, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and war against terrorism after the tragedy of 9/11. On the other hand, Pakistan also supported China on many occasions such as, China's permanent membership of United Nations Organization (UNO); its war against India in 1962; the establishment of its relations with USA in the 1970s; and above all Tibet and Taiwan issues (Jahangir, Jan-Jun 2015).

Geopolitically, Pakistan and China are playing pivotal roles in Asia and has established unflinching military ties to counter regional and external influences in the area. Both the states are firmly standing with each other to face all the possible challenges. Andrew Small (2015) asserts that both states have secret connection with each other and all the deals and cooperation were kept secret in order to avoid criticism. He also coined a term of "Cooperation in Shadows" for such secret relations (Ramay, 2016). They have started several projects to enhance defense relations, such as JF-17 thunder fighter aircrafts which is a joint effort of the engineers of both the countries, indigenously produced in Pakistan and nuclear cooperation which dates back to the period of 1980s (Bukhari, 2011). The armies of both China and Pakistan also schedule joint military exercises in order to consolidate military relations.

Besides, China also provide economic and technical aid to Pakistan for establishing industries such as Taxila Industrial Complex and its affiliated plants, setting up of the heavy tools factory at Landhi in Karachi, sports Complex at Islamabad, 300 megawatt Nuclear Power Plant at Chashma (Punjab) and a number of other hydropower projects (Ashraf, 2016).

The Launching of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

China while working on the One Belt One Road (OBOR) vision of the Chinese President Xi Jinping has set out a multidimensional mega project. It is a regional connectivity strategy that comprises six corridors. It aims to improve infrastructural development to accelerate the movement of goods and people to promote trade and economic

activities (Xiguang, 2016). China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of the six economic corridors proposed under the OBOR. CPEC is a collection of projects that are currently going on throughout Pakistan. CPEC not only benefits China to have access to the Arabian Sea with the shortest way but also assists Pakistan to upgrade its transportation, communication, industrialization and regional connection. The total appraisal of the proposed project was \$46 billion which has reached to \$62 billion. Under this project a long road network of 3,218 kilometers will be built, thus connecting the Xinjiang Province of China with the Gwadar Port of Pakistan. It will enter through Khanjrab border at Gilgit-Baltistan and will be bifurcated in eastern and western routes of Punjab and Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa Provinces and will then reach Sindh and Balochistan Provinces (Ullah, 2019).

It is through this strategy that China is directly getting access to the Middle East countries, African countries and even Europe (Mi, 2017). On the one hand, it opens new business market for China through the shortest travel distance. It also provides a safe side route to import oil from the Gulf States. So, it draws a vivid picture of the CPEC project that it is not only a trade or infrastructural initiative but a means to expand China's role in power politics. China wants to get hold of all neighboring countries through flexible friendly relations to avoid impending threat of the world powers (Mi, 2017).

CPEC has multi-dimensional pros and cons for Pakistan which has far-flung repercussions in the years to come. It can strengthen its economy alongside with an opportunity to restore its glory because it contains energy projects, transport up-gradation, economic free zone within Pakistan and better infrastructure networks. It creates job opportunities to alleviate poverty. In addition to that Pakistan is facing energy crisis that has bitterly affected her economic growth. Industries have miserably flopped due to the chronic shortage of power and investors were not interested in investing money to promote trade which owed to the shortfall of electricity. The huge amount of \$46 billion in infrastructure might change the destiny of Pakistan. A special attention is being given to Balochistan because it remained backward on account of political inactiveness, lack of education and feudal structure. CPEC will compensate the past negligence and make ways to upgrade the living standard of the people of that province (Fatima A. M., 2016). The largest amount of CPEC deals with energy sector. Approximately, \$33 billion of the proposed \$62 billion will be spent on energy projects while \$11 billion

will be spent on transportation development (Maini, 2016). Furthermore, CPEC is not only a project between the two countries to increase trade but an opportunity to make long term integration with the whole regions. It might help in boosting Pakistan's soft image in those countries for whom Pakistan is going to be a gateway through Gwadar Port.

For Pakistan, the looming thread of the gigantic project of the CPEC is that its economical status is not up to the mark which is consecutively flagging since two decades. So, Pakistani investors and business tycoons express their concern that Chinese goods have already flooded Pakistani markets; it will further destroy the local industries. Besides, the damaging of the atmosphere and the displacement of people from their homes could affect the lives of the locals. Another thread is posed by the local and international proxies to destabilize the project which will put the country's peace and security at stake. Thus, the growing influence of China in Pakistan can debilitate her foreign policy and national integrity.

Politics in the Indian Ocean

In the contemporary international political arena, China and Pakistan appeared to be the two major allies who not only share power but are creating a common ground to stabilize their respective economies, defense mechanisms and even socio-political positions to manipulate internal and external threats. If this game changer and highly valued CPEC is accomplished, it can change the course of the entire regional politics because Indian Ocean has emerged as the nucleus of this global game as "more than half of the global container traffic, 1/3 of all maritime traffic including 80% of Chinese crude oil import, 60% of Japan's energy supplies and 2/3 of South Korean energy supplies crosses it..., and 75% of Indian energy supplies crosses the Indian Ocean,"(Ahmad, 2017).

India as a neighboring state of both Pakistan and China is showing hostile attitude and has expressed its concern over huge the investment of China on CPEC. India is bewildered and confused over the Chinese growing influence in the Indian Ocean. It is of the view that CPEC runs through Gilgit-Baltistan which is a disputed territory between herself and Pakistan. Moreover, India is investing in Iran's port of Chahbahar to fail China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Chahbahar lies at 72 kilometers distance in the west of Gwadar Port. India is scared of the growing nexus between Pakistan and China and believes that Chahbahar Port has the

capacity to lessen Chinese hegemony in the Arabian Sea, thus help India to take continued advantages from the trade with the oil-rich Gulf States. It is through this port, India can promote her trade with Afghanistan and the Central Asian Countries (Hussain M. , 2017).

The Indian Ocean enhances Pakistan's worth and value in geo-strategical context. It serves as a magnet for superpowers. World's 80% trade passes through this Ocean. Because of its importance, a distinguished naval strategist, Alfred Mahan has outlined the importance of Indian Ocean in these words that "whosoever controls the Indian Ocean dominated Asia" (Scott, 2006).The presence of China in Gwadar Port to expand its trade with the oil-rich Gulf States is unbearable to some actors especially to India and the US. Both have shown their resentments and are created problems through different tactics (Ahmad, 2017).

China's Leading Role in Asia

Economy is life-vein of a state. It determines country's capability of handling the untoward situation. Gone are the days when people used to subjugate each other through heavy machine guns. Now, economy is used as a soft but heavy weapon to overcome a state. In this context China is the only country in Asia that has sustained its economy since 1970 and maintained an average around 10% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth ((Shurong, 2017).

Chinese leaders have adopted a neutral policy on international issues and are focusing on economic relations with the world in order to retain its economic supremacy. During the rule of President Hu Jintao, China expanded its ties with Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. President Xi Jinping continued the same efforts and introduced a policy of constructive engagement which resulted in an OBOR strategy to connect the world through the new Silk Route that consist roads, railway network, and maritime routes for creating more avenues to promote trade in Asia. According to experts, OBOR is not only a trade or economic development project but is also a plan to increase China's role in the world by superseding its competitors, a vivid evidence of which is the Asian Infrastructure and Development Bank (AIDB) and the establishment of naval bases in different states (Ramay, 2016, p. 3).

America and India as allies fear that China is fashioning or making a String of Pearls to expand its naval bases in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh,

Myanmar, Maldives and Pakistan to protect and monitor the important sea ports, that is why both the US and India are violently opposed to Chinese strategy. The term 'String of Pearl' has been coined by the US consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton in 2004 (Marantidou, 2014). China's claimed ownership over South China Sea which the United Nations Organization (UNO) had invalidated and thus remained an unresolved issue. The US on the other hand provides strong support to Philippine (L.Shirk, 2017). On the other side China is more willing to disseminate its conventional Silk Road along with Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and Central Asian countries in order to promote trade. Through these strategies, China has spread its web in all spheres and has become a leading figure in Asia (Zhuangzhi, 2007).

In the context of current economic scenario, Pakistan and China are enjoying the benefits of the common economic interests. After the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2006, China has emerged as second largest market for Pakistani imports and fourth largest market for its exports. The continuous and sustainable strategic and diplomatic nexus solidified trade cooperation (Memoona Nilofar, Wang Song Jiang and Muhammad Ishtiaque, 2014). CPEC has now mobilized the dynamic bilateral economic partnership between China and Pakistan.

Nuclear Power Race

After the Second World War, the world has started to acquire nuclear arsenals either for maintaining hegemony or for the balance of power. In South Asia, India took the lead in the initiation of arms race as China which fought a war against India in 1962 had acquired nuclear capability in 1964. Since then nuclear proliferation and nuclear arms race has taken momentum and has become more complex and dangerous in the eyes of many observers. After the end of the Cold War, Pak-US relationship reached to the lowest ebb and US had imposed sanctions on Pakistan's foreign aid after expressing deep concerns over its nuclear development program. Besides, in a dramatic move Washington signed a defense agreement with Delhi in 1995, despite the fact that India and Soviet Union were close allies. In a nutshell, the US administration manipulated its relationship with Pakistan as a proxy against Russia. The sudden changes in the political scenario gave a new dimension of policy shifting in power politics (Mustafa, 2017). China started the support of Pakistan and provided it with military hardware, technology and scientific

expertise along with the installation of the Aeronautical Complex, heavy industries at Taxila, ordinance factories and navy missile factories. Furthermore, China also supplied 34 short-range ballistic M-11 missiles, F-22 helicopters, K-8 jet trainers, T-85 tanks and above all JF-17 aircrafts to Pakistan (Ashraf, 2016).

The unending nuclear arms race in South Asia has brought the world at the bank of uncertainty. When it comes to the two conventional rivals, Pakistan and India, it depicts a horrifying picture. Both are atomic powers and both have fought several major wars against each other. The narratives of both states are poles apart and their foreign policies revolve around different orbits. Both US and China as key players can play a decisive role in mitigating tension and in the resolution of issues between both Pakistan and India.

Convergence in the policies of Pakistan and China

Foreign policy of a country is designed and based on national interest and security. John F. Kennedy once said that “domestic policy can only defeat us but foreign policy can kill us” (Danial S Morey and Austin P. Trantham, 2015). No doubt the policies of both Pakistan and China reflect the prioritization of the principle of national interest but still one can find special provisions in the policies of both states that value mutual interest over national interest. The way for close ties between Pakistan and China was paved by the Sino-Indian war of 1962 which helped to serve not only their national interests but also their mutual interest of dealing with their common enemy, India. The geostrategic factor also supports them to formulate convergent policy in order to establish a longstanding partnership in the region. For instance, during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1970s when Pakistan was a frontline state, China still supplied arms to the Afghan resistance forces through Pakistan (Hussain Z. , 2017).

After the incident of 9/11, Pakistan joined the US war against terrorism and China not only strategically assisted the war but had also supported Pakistan’s narrative. Despite the fact that Pakistan made a rapprochement between US and China in the 1970s, once again Pakistan may be resilient to shift the political policies of the two major world players through CPEC (Khan, 2017). This approach will help Pakistan to expand its bilateral relations with China and the US in all walks of life including military and economic cooperation (Parveen, 2014).

Kashmir is a deep rooted territorial dispute between Pakistan and India over which three major wars and several border tensions and skirmishes have taken place. Some analysts are of the opinion that the violation of Line of Control (LoC) time and again, increased border tensions, advancement in nuclear arms, and interference of intelligence can become a nuclear flash point between the conventional rival India and Pakistan (Jacob, 2017). China on the other hand also shares its border with Kashmir and has territorial conflict with India. Moreover, India as the emerging staunch competitor of China in the South Asian region is compelling it to support Pakistan in order to balance India. This favorable Chinese sentiment is giving edge to both Pakistan and Kashmir on different world forums (Parveen, 2014, p. 15).

Power Politics and the World Behavioral Pattern

A country's power is determined by its population strength, territory, economic and military strength with advanced technology, political stability and strategic culture (Wijk, 2015). It is a general notion that great powers keep looking for opportunities against their rivals to destabilize and demoralize them. They want to gain more and more power to sustain their hegemony over rivals. Two patterns of behavior directly disturb world power politics: (a) trust deficit, and (b) power maximization.

Trust Deficit

Great powers fear each other and feel incredulous. They also do not believe on one another and perceive all other great powers as potential enemies, thus anticipating a potential danger which leads to wars and massive mass killings. This approach and lack of trust depicts a horrifying picture of oppression (Mearsheimer, 2001). For instance, an evaluation under these dynamics will demonstrate that America is considering China as an impending threat to its supremacy. Quite to its contrary, Beijing has adopted a policy friendship towards all including Washington. China though became a strategic partner of US in the war against terror but the US is considering it as a strategic competitor rather than a strategic partner (Sadaf Farooq, 2018).

Besides, USA is also relying on Pakistan to achieve its strategic goals in the region. The relations have seen many ups and downs throughout

history. Pakistan is of the view that it has paid heavy price and has lost thousands of lives in the war against terrorism but still it is asked to 'do more' and is dealt in a humiliating manner by the American government. Trump administrations has criticized Islamabad for providing safe heaven to militants and not taking sufficient action against terrorist networks and banned organizations. In his tweet, Trump accused Pakistan and said that "they had given them nothing but lies and deceit" (BBC, 2018). This type of constant harsh behavior creates vacuums in relations and provokes the other to vary the paradigm of their policies. Particularly, the under developed countries can easily be trapped by the key players and compel them to take shelter in their umbrellas.

Power Maximization

Power politics is a discourse in which every country or state makes an effort to maximize its power. They pay full attention and concentration to boost up economic, diplomatic, and military relation with all states to shift the balance of power in their favor through their revisionist intentions and the use of force (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 1). They move ahead with zero-sum game -a game in which the gains of some player must equal the losses of other. So, Washington feel threatened over the rising Chinese influence in Asian countries and has therefore adopted whimsical policies in South Asia and has expanded its relations with Asian states including Japan, South Korea and India by starting military exercises in order to counter China's hegemony in the region (Robinson, 2015). Conversely, China is also countering American strategic designs by fashioning close relations with the neighboring states, especially Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and even with Philippines, with which it has disputes over the South Chinese Sea (Akram, 2018).

Since Xi Jinping has assumed power as a president of China in 2013, concrete steps have been taken to strengthen his grip on the party and on the army. He allocated more funds for defense and has launched the mega OBOR project to stimulate Chinese economy. Social analysts consider OBOR as a geostrategic project for counterweighing American initiatives of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) which was established for strengthening economic cooperation with Asian states excluding China (Wijk, 2015, p. 189).

China is keen to promote its industry in Europe along with getting access to European technology and fumbling more ways to supply

Chinese goods to the European market. The policy which China has opted, gives indication of strategic agenda. This "increasing dependence on China is narrowing the scope of the European Union's foreign and security policy. The real geopolitical struggle is thus not between Europe and China, but between the United States and China" (Wijk, 2015, p. 159).

Strategic Stability through Defensive and Offensive Lenses

Strategic stability refers to the security perspectives and the policy of a nation to secure its region from exogenous threats. As soon as India felt threatened from the growing Pak-China nexus, it abruptly changed its strategic dimension towards USA and Afghanistan. It also started propaganda against the growing influence of China-Pakistan in Asia. India adopted an offensive strategy against Pakistan but a defensive one against China. In order to counter Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean, India has started multilateral maritime policy. The defense budget is approximately 50 percent of its total budget, half of which is allocated for Air Force, 19 percent for Navy, 6 percent for Defense, Research and Development Organization while the rest is allocated for ordinance factories. Secondly, Indian Navy carries naval exercise annually in collaboration with US, Japan, Singapore and Australia. India and USA has conducted more than 50 joint military exercises since 2010 (Buchanan, 2012).

Apart from that India is offensively involved in destroying Pakistan's image in the world. It has established relations with the Afghan government in order to destabilize Pakistan. It provided support to the Baloch insurgents for hampering the CPEC project. A clear Indian terrorist tendency can be seen in the form of Kulbhushan Yadav, an Indian spy who was arrested by the Pakistani authorities on 3 March 2016. He confessed that his job was to carry out criminal activities in Pakistan to demoralize it (Transcript of RAW Agent Kulbhushan;s Confessional Statement, 2016).

A major challenge for both Islamabad and Beijing is to implement the CPEC program in a smooth way to get a sustainable economic growth. The underlying issue is to negotiate with the neighboring India with which both has boundary line issues. India is skeptical about CPEC and opposed while saying that it passes through disputed territory which India claims to be its own. Apart from that Kashmir issue is still unresolved between India and Pakistan, and China is unequivocally supporting Pakistan's narrative in all international forums. So, both the

countries should watch through defensive lenses to remove strategic instability in the ongoing CPEC projects so as to get maximum benefit from their long term investments.

How Pakistan looks the US-China Contention

Historically, Pakistan has deep-rooted ties with both the US and China in respect of national security, political interest and economic stability. The rising competition between the two major economic giants poses alarming risk for regional stability in the entire Asiatic horizon and particularly in Pakistan. At present, Pakistan's relation with the US is seen through the prism of cooperation in Afghanistan. Despite the Pakistan-China nexus, the various US-Aid projects are going on in Pakistan in various sectors, such as agriculture, education, and skilled developments. America also provides for the largest export market to Pakistani goods. On the contrary, China is contributing unprecedented economic cooperation through CPEC and is Pakistan's largest suppliers of arms. China is consistently and openly supporting Pakistan's narrative on Kashmir issue on various international forums against the interests of India (Fatima M. A., 2016).

However, Pakistan is not in a position to resist any power players due to its poor economy, and uneven political policies and challenges. Now, the uncertainty of political scenario has placed the country on a "grey list" of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and there is possibility of put into the "black list". In future, it is not ease to come out of FATF's black list until choose close ties with world key players. If Pakistan gets more economic support from China, this will make the country more dependent on it. Pakistan more dependence on China is the potential threat to the world powers to be a facilitator of Chinese power projections in the central Asia, Middle East Asia and the South Asia (Ali, 2020).

Pakistan has historic ties with the US and China. So, she can create conducive atmosphere to bridge the gaps between the two leading powers. Pakistan should vary its conventional narrative and not endorse China as "all weather friend" and the US "a fair weather friend". Instead of that Pakistan should expand bilateral relations with both the states according to the national interest of the country.

Conclusion

The emerging Pak-China nexus has brought them more closely with each other. It draws a luminous picture for future showing that both Pakistan and China has the caliber to face any untoward and catastrophic situation. The game changer CPEC is changing the political landscape of the world and is pushing the power politics towards a new polarization which is being led by China. A slight mistake of these states can cast the world towards a new war. Now the responsibility is on the shoulder of US which as a leading power can play its role to tackle this handy situation in a positive way because power has both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect is dependent on will, encouragement and incentives while the negative aspect is to accomplish the task through force.

Pakistan remained a frontline ally of the US during the last forty years but trust deficit and humiliating postures have created misunderstandings between them which need immediate action to remove the trust deficit and address the grievances. Likewise, the US should acknowledge the rising power of China in the Asiatic horizon and work with it as a strategic ally rather than a strategic rival. Both the US and China should come forward with positive steps to rebuild trust and confidence of all countries or states with which they had grudges. It would definitely serve as a key to promote peace and tranquility across the world because the world cannot withstand another cold war era as it would have dire consequences for the political and economic stability of the world at large.

Optimistically, Pakistan should play a dynamic role as a bridge to reduce the escalating tensions between Washington and Beijing. If Pakistan shows flexibility and allows the US and other neighboring countries to get involved in the CPEC projects, it will help to mitigate the rising competition between the two leading global powers. Furthermore, Pakistan should remain impartial and adopt a cautious approach to establish bilateral relations with both the US and China instead of showing a tilt only towards the later. Any drastic shift by Pakistan would lead towards unsustainable and diminishing sovereignty inside the country while antagonist relations on world stage between the various states with conflicting interests as it occupies a more central position in world affairs than it held in the past. It can help in normalizing China's stance towards the US and thus can serve as a bridge between the two.

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