

Muhammad Naeem Qazi*
Muhammad Abrar Ahmad**
Muhammad Saleem****
Rao Shahid Mahmood Khan*****
Muhammad Ahmed Qadri*****

Internal and External Security Challenges to CPEC

Abstract

Pakistan and China are facing many challenges to economic corridor projects. Western Region of China, Xinjiang and Balochistan are confronting with the insurgency and territorial problems to form extreme weather in China and Pakistan. Development Projects which involve construction, railway and highways that are linked to connect the strategically important Gwadar port and China Overseas Port forming in the Southwest of Pakistan which is till Kashgar, about 2500 kilometres away from Xinjiang. China had accepted that they will invest up to US\$ 33 billion on projects of energy and upto US\$ 11 billion in development of infrastructure and also connect a linkage between Gwadar to Kashgar. It is the corridor that completely holds many potential like goods that are supplied from Gwadar Xinjiang and also port of Chinese at Shanghai. The distance will be reduced to one-third on construction of Gawadar-Xinjiang route till kashgar

Key Words: security challenges, CPC, security threat, Gawadar port, TTP

1. Introduction

The infrastructure development such as railways and roads projects will change the destiny of people with improved economic condition. Most backward areas of Pakistan abounding in rich resource are strategically important and will be further facilitated due to connectivity with the Arabian Sea. However, railways and roads construction for connectivity with Northern and Southern areas will be very challenging task, especially its linkage and then continuously maintaining it for sustainability through Balochistan, where ongoing insurgency has affected this corridor will remain challenge for security and political forces. India voiced its objections, since the linkage will run through disputed territory that is why geographical challenge is one major threat. It looks apparently that there is financial constraint also but more than that there is a geographical constraint

* **Muhammad Naeem Qazi**, PhD Scholar, qazi_br@yahoo.com

** **Dr. Muhammad Abrar Ahmad**, Assistant Professor, Dept. of History and Arts, University of Education, Lower Mall Campus, Lahore

**** **Muhammad Saleem**, Phd Scholar, Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab Lahore

***** **Rao Shahid Mahmood Khan**, Assistant Professor, Media Studies, Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

***** **Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ahmed Qadri**, Ex- Dean, University of Karachi.

including dangerous weather and difficult terrain. The signed project is formed on the basis of eight memorandums of understanding that signed in month of November and it is between Pakistan and China, and the six years will be required to complete. But the safety which is given to the foreign workers is necessary in the country because terrorism is major issue. Engineers had been killed here and it is necessary for the government to give protection to the Chinese people. These are great risks and dangerous factors that affect the progress and implementation of CPEC projects. Pakistan political situation and constraints related to economic activities are also the reason which has affect on the CPEC projects. There is a requirement to check Pakistan's internal challenges and forces which are present externally, and creating challenges for Pakistan's security and in other fields.

2. Security Related Threats

Pakistan is facing terrorist attack in various part of the country; similarly, Chinese province Xinjiang is also facing threats. There are about security various challenges and disputes. This Corridor will improve trade and economic activities for which security of this project is crucial for Pakistan. The growing militancy in Pakistan may threaten start of different projects which are designed for this Economic Corridor. To overcome militant groups and their fighters which are present across borders of both countries is a security threat. Definitely, China expects assistance from Pakistan for providing safe environment in this way. The behaviour of national and militants foreign in Pakistan tribal areas created pressure on the local government in maintaining law and order situation that affects bilateral relations of both the countries. They have attacked on the citizens of China and the people working on different project and engineers too. The militants' of the Uighur are directly linked with the militants in FATA. It is also dangerous for the China if militants attack on Pakistan and create security problems. Recently, the leader of terrorists group attacked people working in Pakistan and they also threatened that they will kill or kidnap the owners of companies which are working in Pakistan. Baloch groups of insurgent do not want to have development of mega projects in Balochistan. Therefore, they are also against the Gwadar Port. The militant-criminal have nexus in all these activities which are security challenge to workforce of China . These tragedies of abducting and killing of Chinese people have increased across the areas.

3. Geographical problems and Security Threats in Pakistan

It is the difficult and diverse situation for Pakistan related to instability created by the Taliban, security problems and also the security threats. The tribal areas and the KPK is threat for the government due to terrorist attacks and their presence in these areas. They are creating the religious problems, law and order situations and the religious threats in cities like Karachi in Pakistan. The life of the people of Pakistan is not secure from these militants. These terrorist are attacking security agencies and innocent citizens. This security situation, terrorism and incidents of violence have affected construction process of CPEC. Security situation needs controlling and monitoring so that it is not increased and reduced also. Construction of CPEC projects along the Eastern Alignment; likely to, face threats related to security.

4. Gwadar and Makran Coastal Highway

In Balochistan, the Baloch are insecure and Gwadar is also having serious threats related to security. Baloch insurgents can very easily attack and target the CPEC-linked installations and infrastructure. It is generally reported that insurgents have attempted to kidnap Chinese workers and engineers, working on this projects. Makran Coastal Highway which is 653 Kilometres long is extended to the east to link Gwadar to Karachi. Construction of many parts of the projects has started from Karachi running through the city areas. Militants attacked these areas and created problems for project areas. The militants also targeted the security forces people, government servant and leaders who are politically strong. Baloch civilians, especially labours working on gas and oil pipelines were attacked many times. They also attacked on the railway tracks, power stations and property belongs to government etc. It is also noted that different religious terrorists groups are carrying out militant activities in Awaran, Lasbela and Gwadar. All of these districts have immediate connection with the projects. Activities related to kidnapping are mostly done by the Baloch militants.

Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch, the leader of BLF contain the young generation of the Baloch. Mostly people belonging to middle class or the poor Baloch children have joint BLF. Mr. Javed Mengal has concentration of persons in the areas belonging to the south-western districts of Balochistan. The group carried out terrorist attacks and blast like at the Lahore Railway Station during August 2012 (PIPS, 2013), whereas, in different parts of Gwadar, the BLA and BRA actively carried out militant attacks. These terrorist attacks are major threats to the corridor. The situation of security in Gwadar and its coastal areas is very challenging, the Baloch insurgents have control in these areas and they do not allow to non-Baloch to work here. Many attacks were reported during 2011 and 2013 regarding Chinese workers in these areas. Further, it is mentioned that people who smuggled the drugs, involved in trafficking belong to criminal groups. People who work for the Taliban and the criminal people have created serious security problems and have the ability to increase the level of threat in these areas. It is necessary to take the steps to overcome these militants' attacks and threat situation in the Gwadar region.

5. Violence in Balochistan: A Conspiracy against CPEC

The government of Pakistan in year 2013 given contract of Gwadar port to China whereas USA pressurised Pakistan to find out alternatives. The arrangement to construct and connect pipelines of gas Pakistan with Iran will also be completed. Iran has already made good progress according to the agreement in 2013. Gwadar would form Chinese naval base as double. Many clarifications related to this have been given by Pakistan and china that the construction of this port is only for the economic purpose, but India is still opposing the construction of port of Gwadar, as it would provide Chinese to threat Indian Ocean. It is further stated that foreign minister of India has also met with her Chinese counterpart and totally opposed this CPEC corridor due to issue of Kashmir. The Indian government invested in Iran's Chabahar port as substitute of Gwadar which is about 72 km from Gwadar. The Iran, India, and Afghanistan have signed trade agreement in May, 2016 with this agreement; India will get land permission to Central Asian from Chabahar which is passing from Pakistan. The route which is considered closest to India will allow move of Indian transport in Pakistani region as an alternate route. To control

this alarming situation, it will be an enormous challenge for the Pakistani government. The Balochistan is facing the militants as well as separatist movements which are the [main concern to Chinese](#). They want to increase violence activities in more drastic ways to scare Chinese from implementing such mega projects. India's involvement in such terrorists, militant activities have proved that it wants CPEC Project a failure. The government of Pakistan also noticed that Baloch people involved in these activities have received training in camps formed in Afghanistan by government of India and they entered Balochistan from the tribal area. Afghan soil is used by the terrorists against their neighbour countries. India has established many consulates in Afghanistan and through Indian Embassy, they are funding to destabilise Pakistan and create security problems. India is making lot of investment in Iran so that the importance of Gwadar is undermined; investment in Chabhar Port by India is one such example which is about 72 Kms away from Gwadar Port. Many other hostile activities by India are also planned through Iran. Capturing of Indian Spy Kulbhushan Jadhav by Pakistani Intelligence also proved Indian connection of operating against Pakistan through Iran as the spy had many visa entries from Iran to Pakistan.

6. The Balochistan and US

The U.S. Congress [had expressed serious concerns](#) related to human rights in Balochistan, which is putting pressure on Pakistan by USA. USA is giving more space to India in the region to have checks on China and to contain her for making progress in South Asia. It is also propagated by India and USA that Baloch human rights are restricted by Pakistan (Shahid, 2016). It can be concluded that many areas of Balochistan are facing terrorist threats in general and particularly Gwadar and its coasted areas, which are major challenges to the CPEC projects.

7. Karachi and Interior of Sindh

Karachi is under threats of many sort and interior parts of Sindh are also facing same situation. The presence of terrorists, extremists and other criminal people in Karachi, the attack chances on Chinese workers related to CPEC Projects will remain there. The highway on the Gwadar-Kashgar route, tracks of railway and the motorways, protection will always remain constant challenge from security point of view. The number of militant attacks in Hyderabad is about 31 with low intensity which is done by nationalist of Sindhi and organizations which are banned. People who are attacked by the militants belong to armed forces, laws agencies, religious scholars, workers who are working in different areas. The vehicles which are related to NATO goods supply are also under terrorist threat. The terrorists groups are performing different types of the sectarian violence but the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is the only group that is involved in different types of blasts and terrorist attacks on security forces. Recently, operations by the security agencies and the government in Karachi were not able to eliminate the groups of militants, however their activities have been reduced and law and order situation in Karachi is much better now. It is important for the Government to continuously engage these militant groups till they are completely eliminated. Government should also take measures to take control of religious and ethnic violence so that militant and terrorists groups should not increase their terrorist activities in the

curb of this ethnic and religious violence. Askari Wings and militant groups being kept for the personal security of political leaders and political parties should also be accounted for by the Government Security agencies so that the personal security wings should not settle their personal enmity from one another and create further problems for our security of country.

8. Punjab and Rawalpindi-Islamabad

Comparatively, level of danger along with threat of security is low in different parts of Punjab with regard to the CPEC project and the corridor. It is necessary for the government to completely eliminate the support given to TTP in Punjab to overcome the different attacks in Punjab. In last eight years Punjab main cities and capital city Islamabad have faced different security threats causing death to people. The support of TTP in country belonging to Deobandi Madrassas and LeJ. These groups have helped militant attacks. But strong action taken by the law enforcement agencies has almost eliminated TTP threats. So the level of threat is low in the areas of Punjab and CPEC projects are comparatively progressing well in Punjab. The Eastern Alignment of the CPEC is considered safe as compared to different parts of Punjab. It is difficult for the militants to attack and move freely in areas of Punjab. Southern Punjab which includes the cities like Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur and Multan regions contain the CPEC alignment towards the Indus east part. The West part of the Indus river is not secure. The areas like D.G. Khan are the hub of the extremist and the criminal people. These districts are also the entry point of different terrorists and the militants. Mostly kidnapping activities are taking place in these areas.

9. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and AJK

From 2007-2014, the total number of terrorist attacks recorded was 4,732 of which only 52 attacks were recorded in these areas. It shows that CPEC is secure in this area militants threat are comparatively low in these areas. It is also difficult to establish Mansehra local groups having any link with the TTP. Due to this weak linkage the threat is lower for the personnel who work for the CPEC. There is general idea by most of the people that Abbottabad and district like Haripur had remained mostly separated from Taliban due to many reasons but Taliban tried to enter these areas but achieved less success as only 20 soldiers were killed in KPK (The News, 2016) The CPEC project will also be linked to Muzaffarabad to generate different types of the economic activities in this area. Muzaffarabad is considered as the peaceful area. It is also mentioned that from 2007 to 2014 only three attacks were launched in which 10 were killed and 81 were injured. It can be easily concluded that AJK is the secured area as compared to other areas of the Pakistan.

10. Diamer and Gilgit

The areas of the Gilgit and Diamer have different levels of violence related to sectarian in past few years. The high levels of attacks took in these areas. Most of the attacks were against foreigners and the people who belong to the forces. The support of the militant in this area is absent so this area is considered to be the secure area than other CPEC areas but the religious and sectarian threat is possible in this area. The sectarian attack can take at any time. The CPEC will run through

different areas of the Gilgit after passing through the KPK and different parts of Kashmir. The TTP will try to impose threat in this area with the help of Chinese Uighur militants. However, most sectarian attacks were reported in this region. The study has shown only 74 attacks in Gilgit-Baltistan in between 2007-2014. The most affected area was Diamer and Gilgit. TTP had association with militants located in this area. They launched dangerous attack in the area and it was launched due to the attack of US drone. In this attack the Chief of TTP, Waliur Rehman Mehsud, was killed (Khan, 2013). Diamer attacks have linkage with TTP. On August 6, 2013, a TTP terrorist shot dead three security force high officials in Chilas City. On July 4, 2014, another militant attack was launched in Diamer district by the terrorists. They took away the different types of guns; telephone sets uniforms, three pistols and other things which belong to forces. This attack was also linked with TTP.

11. Reason of Delays in completion of Infrastructure

In order to make transit route operational it is necessary that all the important parts of projects are completed in time. Time and financial cost is very important factor for completion of a project. Private sector and ownership by public and private ownership by public and private owners is very important factor to avoid delays in completion of basic infrastructure part of CPEC Projects.

12. Support from the Opposition Parties and Support of Armed forces

It is necessary that all major political parties to be in place. The CPEC pass through all provinces so it is necessary to get support from all the provinces as its infrastructure will give benefit to all the provinces and also gave the projects of energy. Pakistan armed forces have announced full security support to CPEC projects despite their involvement in so many other issues of security in the country, especially security situation on the Eastern and Western border is keeping our security forces extremely committed.

13. Political and Geographical Tension

The second largest economy of the world, remained balance in dealing with the Kashmir issue where as India and Pakistan stand points have many dimensions to resolve this challenging situation. During 4th annual India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) in New Delhi, China could put pressure more (Chandra, 2016). On September 4, 2016, Xi Jinping, the Chinese President shake hands with Narendra Modi, the Indian Prime Minister on the occasion of G-20 Summit in Hangzhou city of China. This indicates that China may give attention to reduce tensions in the disputed area. China has good relation with Pakistan but also has big economic interests in the Indian markets. China will try to defuse tension between India and Pakistan Both India and Pakistan nuclear powers always have tension and cross border firing on Kashmir borders and line of control . especially after Indian lockdown of Kashmir for more than ten months and implementing article 370 and 35 a which are changing status of Kashmir and making it the part of India has severely affected the security situations

India and China are strong countries with large economic interests. Modi wrong policies are creating problems for all neighbouring countries including Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. India has border issues with all these countries and

also with Pakistan and China. Modi growing interests for economic activities with China are considered very important but on the other hand tension due to borders disputes and Indian siding with USA for containment of China in South Asia region is not liked by Chinese. Indian abolishing Kashmir Special Status of Article 370 and 35 a by resolution through assembly has ignited the entire valley on August 5, 2019. China and Pakistan immediately condemned this Indian action, Pakistan moved a resolution to security council with the support of China and Security Council asked India to stop human rights violation and do not impose curfew inside Kashmir. Turkey and Iran supported Pakistan and asked India to stop illegal activities in the conflicted area. United Nations, UK, USA, Russia and Saudi Arabia also showed concern over Indian atrocities in Kashmir.

14. Other Challenges for Pakistan

Government of Pakistan have to face further challenges during the implementation of CPEC Projects. Challenges can be in form of as external and internal (Shoukat et al., 2016). Internally, it is viewed that many political parties have raised objections on the implementation of this corridor, similarly it has been politicized and implementation has become a great challenge for the present government. As far as external environment is concerned, India, US and many other countries are against this project due to their own interest; this situation has also posed many challenges for the implementation of this corridor (Express Tribune Newspaper, 2017).

15. Balochistan

It is the largest province area-wise and has a great importance for Pakistan due to its location. After the completion of CPEC, it is hoped by establishing linkages of the port Gwadar to Kashgar, both countries will get lots of economic benefits. Balochistan has decades due to separatist movements in the whole area. The Baloch insurgents oppose Balochistan specially Gwadar port's development that is why they (Express Tribune Newspaper, 2015). These insurgents do not like to see development in Balochistan as a trade and economic hub until they become independent state. They have apprehension that if the development of Balochistan province takes place, the Gwadar will become a thriving port and outsiders would have an easy access to these areas. The province's demographic balance may affect Baloch in Balochistan Ethno-sectarian factor is also causing insurgency . Also, the disagreement over CPEC had exacerbated the already tense situation. If we see a background of the earlier Balochistan related mega projects, the CPEC (Dawn Newspaper, 2015) is likely to become progressively more controversial (Iqbal, 2015). It is fact that China Pakistan Economic Corridor is in the great interest for both countries obviously for region and rest of the World, because it is perceived that the economic and strategic merits and demerits it have for them. Whatever the case may be, CPEC has importance for Pakistan; the Baloch insurgents have targeted the security forces and workers to slow down or stop the progress. (Waqar, 2015). The China government has shown interest to work on eastern route considering it security-wise better area (Dawn, 2015).

Different parties in the Assembly will process a resolution against the project because they have opinion that FATA (now part of KPK) and KPK had been ignored (Jawad, 2013). Government of Pakistan has always tried good relationship

with neighbouring states (Rayyan, 2016). Connectivity related to region is basic and necessary reason of the policy related to foreign and that is the reason why government maintaining good relationship with the other neighbouring countries. Pakistan basic objective is to maintain good relationship with China and it is the basic and integral part of policy. China is the basic and regional partner which helps in making the good and smooth relationship with other countries. The CPEC is targeted to increase the cooperation regionally, economic growth improvement, trade variety increase and also invest on the communication, projects related to the energy and transportation projects also.

The objectives of the economic and political can be achieved with the help of CPEC projects and development due to this project. It will be helpful in making the project strong by cooperating with each other. After the project is completed, will facilitate trade with the Africa, China and other states. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police did not agree to provide the security to authority (Baber, 2016). They have shown an inability to provide security cover to the engineers which are working on CPEC Projects. The KPK authority and police informed that the KPK government has serious issues that are why they will not give security to all the foreigners working on the project. They asked that army to provide security to them. They rejected the request of federal government to provide the security.

It is fact that Pakistan and China are confronting different types of issues. The CPEC will give a lot of economic and strategic benefits. Provincial government has shown serious concerns on CPEC Projects due to many shortcomings. If the security is not provided to the workers it will create the serious type of problems and the message given to the CPEC projects will be negative. If we say that Pakistan and China has strong friendship it is necessary for us to behave and perform such like which shows that their friendship, than it is necessary to cooperate with China to make friendship more strong. Chinese government has also stressed that the government should try to resolve the issues so all the parties be willingly support CPEC Projects.

16. Conclusion

Although there are numerous internal and external security challenges, yet the same can be addressed and minimized by taking proactive steps and by making good policies. Internally Pakistan has to be more united and its people should support its armed forces to eliminate terrorist threats in the country. On political front, all political parties have to pay attention to resolve ethnic, religion and other political issues more sensibly and with pragmatic approach. Externally, Pakistan and China should take measures to project Pakistan-China Stance stronger. China and Russia alliance is very good for the region and will put a check on USA and India's containment policy. By reducing internal and external security challenges, CPEC projects will be completed in time which will provide economic benefits to Pakistan, China and the entire region. Even other continents including Middle East, Central Asian Republics and European Countries will also be benefitted due to trade through Gwadar.

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