
Pakistan-China Relations: US Factor in Changing Dynamics of Global Politics

_____ Mirwais Kasi*

_____ Amjad Abbas Khan**, Kaleem Ullah Bareach***

Abstract

As in International Politics there are no permanent friends and enemies, the only permanent thing is National interest which relies on regional and international conditions. It is the national Interests, which shapes the external policy of any state. The significance of this research paper is that it helps in understanding the importance of national interests in influencing the foreign policies of states, as Pakistan and China have different history, language, cultures and ideology yet they emerged as reliable and strong allies of each other. The national interests set their goals and directions as a result, Pakistan-China friendship evolved as an incomparable phenomenon which sustained not only during changes of governments, but also during the ups and downs in regional and international changing situations. Pakistan-China relations are flourishing and to understand its potential implications it must be considered in a wider context outside the realm of South Asia and even Central Asia. Keeping in view the future of Pakistan-China relations its significance and relevance in international politics are expanding and it seems to play dynamic role in the Gulf and African regions. Pakistan-China relations became so much multi-dimensional even US cannot ignore its worth in international politics. This article mainly examines how

in anarchic order Pakistan-China stabilizes their position and has increased their significance and relevance for even a state like US. This article articulates how and why Pakistan-China relations became an irritant factor for US in various phases of global politics, likewise it also explores how it even appears as the convenient factor for US.

Pakistan-China Relations:

Pakistan was among the first Islamic countries that recognized the independence of the People's Republic of China in 1950. The two countries officially established their diplomatic relations on May 21, 1951, but despite that both state relations were not cordial because of inconsistent policies towards each other. Furthermore, China also saw Pakistan with suspensions during the initial phase of the cold war, especially when it slanted towards the western block and later joint SEATO and CENTO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and Central Treaty Organization) however the Bandung conference of 1955 offered the opportunity to the leaders of the both states to interact.¹ By then the leaders of Pakistan and China visited each other's state to strengthen commercial and diplomatic relations. A landmark between Pakistan-China relations came when in 1963 the boundary line between the two countries was demarcated through peaceful means, since then both states flourished an all-weather alliance that is centered on brotherhood, equality, and inclusive collaboration. The two states have carried out multi-dimensional collaboration in numerous fields and despite the unbalanced and insecure international and regional circumstances their bilateral friendship remained solid and vibrant.²

China supported Pakistan's stance on Kashmir issue, similarly during the Pakistan-India war of 1965 China even supplied military aid to Pakistan along with diplomatic assistance which gave depth and meaning to this alliance. During the 1971 Pakistan-India war, China once again supported Pakistan stance she not only extended its diplomatic support to Pakistan but supplied weapons to her as well. Later on desire of Pakistan, it

used the veto power in order to block the entry of Bangladesh into United Nations. On the other hand Pakistan offered itself as a reliable ally to China and it was because of Pakistan, China eased its tensions with US as a result, it got membership in the United Nations and became a permanent member of United Nations Security Council. Both states on the basis of self-interests shared similar views of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, regional hegemony, third world countries representation in UN General Assembly and Afghan crisis and its solution. The two sides have been coordinating with each other in nuclear, diplomatic, Hi-tech sector and counter terrorism arenas. The Pakistan-China alliance offers opportunities that may lead towards prosperity, peace, security and regional and International balance.

Pakistan-China relations have appeared as time-tested in the real sense. The world has been constantly changing in many ways since states established their diplomatic relationship, conversely in Pakistan-China relations, nothing has transformed.³ Pakistan is strategically very important abode for China as it serves as a gateway for China to access Middle East and Indian Ocean. While for Pakistan, China is solid and reliable source of its defense, economic and requirements. Their bilateral ties seem to continue an enduring feature on the global political map. This exceptional closeness became possible only on the basis of long-term and constant goodwill which both states have extended towards each other.

The development of Gwadar port has become a landmark of Pakistan-China relations in the 21st century, the Gwadar project came about as a result of Pakistan-China agreement in March 2002. The completion of phase one in 2005 brought new commercial advantages for both China and Pakistan, in addition from Military dimensions, it assured opening of China towards the Indian Ocean and strengthened Pakistan's naval defense mechanism for the reason that in the event of war with India. On March 15th, 2008 Gwadar port began its cargo handling, however the port was officially inaugurated by the government of Pakistan on December 21, 2008. Strategically, Pakistan and China are set

to advance towards developing major measures for setting Gwadar Port as an economic corridor in the whole region.

Pakistan-China Relations and US:

Pakistan-China relations with the United States of America saw many ups and downs and it's difficult to describe the nature of relationship between Pakistan-US and US-China.

In term relationship of between US-China “the year 1949 proved pivotal in changing the dynamics of post-World War II international relations. In October 1949, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) replaced the Republic of China (ROC) after the Chinese Communists won a nationwide victory in the civil war and drove the Nationalist government in Taiwan. The collapse of the Nationalist shocked the American public, which had idealized China more as a democratic state, however, it emerged as a Communist state which has around a quarter of the population of the world.⁴

The Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong On June 1949 openly announced that if China emerges as independent state it would extend its support towards the USSR in global politics. One of the major reasons of such announcement was that during Chinese civil war US supported the Chinese Nationalists against the communist group of Mao. When the communists got control of mainland of China, U.S.A even then refused to cut off their relations with the Nationalists who established their government in Taiwan.⁵ Thus China took US as a major threat to its existence as a result China leaned more towards the USSR to offset the American threat. “On February 14, 1950” China and USSR signed treaty of friendship and through that treaty they reached to an understanding that both would support each other in case of aggression from US and Japan.⁶

The Korean War 1950-1953 further escalated the tensions and mistrusts between U.S.A and China it upset the chances of a stabilization of the China-US relationship. China and US forces confronted each other for three years in deadly war at Korean peninsula. The U.S.A took China as a major threat to its interests

in Asian since Chinese entry in the Korean War in October 1950.⁷ US became more concerned with the security of Japan not only because of China role in the Korean war, but it also observed the close collaborations between China and Soviet Union during this phase, Soviet Union extended its air support and supplied military hardware along with economic aid to China. U.S.A took rigid lines against China because of all such developments and since 1950 it toughened the economic embargo against the China and at the same time US stated its firm support to the Nationalist government in Taiwan. Interestingly, US also blocked the Chinese membership in the United Nations and it attempted to fully isolate China in regional and international politics. The China-US hostilities towards each other intensified the germs of the Cold War in the whole region in different shapes.⁸

One of the major side effects of the Korean War 1950-1953 was US extended its military support towards Taiwan, throughout the 1950s US continued its commitment of assuring the defence of which shattered the Chinese dream of re-unification of Taiwan with its mainland.⁹ In 1964 US and Taiwan signed a Mutual Defense Treaty and after that agreement Taiwan issue became the bone of contention between China and US and.¹⁰ Additionally, "US constructed an off-shore line of military alliances along China's eastern and southern borders. These included the US alliances with Japan and South Korea. With its allies, the United States formed the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization-SEATO that also included Thailand, the Philippines, and South Vietnam, and the ANZUS Treaty that linked Australia, New Zealand, and the United States."¹¹ Similarly, "the US maintained military bases and in some cases stationed significant numbers of troops in many of these countries, especially Japan and South Korea. Washington encouraged its allies to refrain entering into diplomatic relations with Beijing. The US prohibited even Americans from visiting China. The US cut off trade and orchestrated an international embargo of China."¹² Later, the US support to India in the 1962 war against China further widened the gap between China and U.S.A.

On the other hand Pakistan-US relationship flourished soon after independence of Pakistan and it rooted itself in the Cold War. US wanted to contain Soviet expansion and Pakistan sought security assistance against Indian threat, this prompted the two countries to become allies of each other for sake of their own interests.¹³ By mid 1950s the two states further came closer when “Pakistan-US signed a mutual Defense agreement in 1954 and in addition Pakistan aligned itself with the West by joining two regional defense pacts i.e. SEATO-South East Asia Treaty Organization and the Baghdad Pact, which later became CENTO-Central Treaty Organization.”¹⁴ As a result military and economic cooperation between the two countries expanded and Pakistan became the second biggest receiver of economic and military assistance from U.S.A receiving roughly around \$2 billion from the from 1953 to 1961.¹⁵ However, in later years Pakistan-US relations suffered because of because of U.S.A support to India in the war against China, Pakistan-China collaborations, Pakistan-USSR rapprochement and India-Pakistan 1965 war.

During late 1960s indications about the US and People’s Republic of China rapprochement and both states were taking serious measures in this regard. The mounting escalations in Vietnam War forced the official of US for modifying their approach towards communist world and to work for improving its e relations with Communist governments in Asia with the great faiths that such moves would minimize the ratio of future wars.¹⁶ US also hoped that it would dent alignments among the Communist states which would also diplomatically isolate North Vietnam and at the same time it would stabilize US position against the Soviet Union.¹⁷ In the same way China-Soviet split also convinced the Chinese leadership to modify their approach towards US and thus China started a desire for a rapprochement with the US. “Nixon signaled his interest in improved relations by easing the travel and trade restrictions against China that dated from the Korean War in the early 1950s. Although the China-US Ambassadorial Talks, which began in 1955 and continued intermittently over the years that followed, had reached a hiatus,

the two sides agreed to reopen them in 1969. Of greater significance, Nixon established a secret channel to the PRC's leadership through Pakistani President Yahya Khan."¹⁸ Richard Nixon already revived a Pakistan-US relation that is why Islamabad played a key role in brokering the U.S.A opening to China. According to US President Nixon's view, "Yahya Khan was an attractive intermediary since he had good relations with the leaders of both the United States and the China, and he also provided a means to circumvent the US Department of State, which might oppose or publicize his initiative."¹⁹ Interestingly, "by late 1970, the pace of rapprochement was accelerating. Through the Pakistani channel, the Chinese government expressed interest in high level discussions with the United States aimed at improving relations. Nixon removed the last remaining restrictions preventing Americans from traveling to mainland China."²⁰

During 1971 the Assistant to the American President for National Security Affairs, Mr. Henry Kissinger, traveled to Beijing twice for discussing the patterns which would work for normalization of relations between the two sides in a more acceptable manner. Among the two, the initial trip to China by Henry Kissinger was conducted in great secrecy which was publicized before the American public during President Nixon's speech. The second trip of Henry Kissinger to the China took place in October 1971, and through that visit US gave signal to China for modifying its policy in regard of its vote on the issue of Chinese membership in the United Nations. Initially US advocated that the UN seat delegations from both China and Taiwan"²¹ but, "that scheme failed and, instead, the member states of the United Nations voted to seat the China delegation in place of the Taiwan delegation. Although the United States unsuccessfully opposed Taiwan's expulsion from the General Assembly, it supported Communist China's entrance and assumption of a seat on the Security Council; this contributed to a major diplomatic triumph for the People's Republic of China."

The relations between Pakistan and China with US remained cordial in 1970s and early 1980s, in later years Pakistan-China nuclear collaborations once again created misconceptions between US in terms of its relations with Pakistan and China. Although US remained less critical towards nuclear collaborations between Pakistan and China during the Afghan war, however, with Soviet Union disintegration when China was left as the major communist poles of the world,²² US became more critical towards nuclear collaborations between Pakistan and China and even took the missile collaborations between them as annoying factor. The subject turned out to be more severe when "Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998 in response to earlier nuclear tests in May 11 and 28, 1998 by India." Critics cited Pakistan's nuclear weapons test as a proof of Pakistan-China nuclear collaboration and demanded for questioning China for nuclear proliferation. On various occasions US even imposed various sanctions on Pakistan and China, the gap between Pakistan-China and US further increased when US started to support India in the region mainly in context of Rising India against Chinese might. Similarly, Pakistan support to the Taliban in Afghanistan, allegations in China in assisting North Korea, Iran and Libya and transferring Missile technology and even nuclear know-how to Iran and North Korea in particular, and Japan-China divergence made U.S.A unfriendly in her approach towards Pakistan-China.²³

9/11 Impact on US, Pakistan and China's Relations

After September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks the United States of America sought International support in countering terrorism and in this regard US expected support from China and Pakistan in particular.²⁴ China itself became a victim of violent terrorist attacks in the 1990s by ethnic Uighur separatists, in the Xinjiang. Chinese government got more concern when reports came that Some Uighur activists received training in Afghanistan. With the 9/11 terrorist attacks like all peaceful countries, China was sympathetic towards US and put itself in a position where it could support US.²⁵ Chinese rule Jiang Zemin through a message to

American President Bush, not only condemned the 9/11 terrorist attacks but also offered condolences for the loss of human lives during the attacks. On September 12, Jiang Zemin through a phone call to the President Bush assured its cooperation with the United States of America to fight against the terrorism. At the Security Council of United Nations on the same day, the China voted with the others for Resolution 1368 to fight against terrorism.²⁶ “On September 20, Beijing said that it offered unconditional support in fighting terrorism. On September 20-21, visiting Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan promised cooperation, and Secretary of State Colin Powell indicated that discussions covered intelligence-sharing but no military cooperation. China counterterrorism experts attended a productive initial meeting on September 25, 2001, in Washington. On September 28, 2001, China voted with all others in the UNSC for Resolution 1373, reaffirming the need to combat terrorism.”²⁷

China’s time-honored relation with Islamic Republic of Pakistan was a significant factor in regard of considering the importance of Chinese support by the US, particularly with anxieties about the viability of Pakistani administration. Various elements took the stand that Pakistan’s collaboration with the US must come after Chinese consent, pointing to a China representatives’ meeting with former President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf on September 18, 2001²⁸ and convince him to support US in the fight against terrorism and take a U-turn towards the Taliban. However, even Pakistan also condemned the 9/11 terrorist attacks and decided to support US in the fight against terrorism as front line state by providing bases to US allowing NATO to utilize Pakistani route towards Afghanistan and fighting directly against terrorists at home, in return US extended its financial, military and intelligence support to Pakistan.

Terrorist threats brought the three countries on same lines where they sought options for countering terrorism for regional and International security and stability. Although the scale of China and US collaborations in counter terrorism remained limited, however Chinese attitude and tone in regard of

countering terrorists somehow reduced the level of hostility and rigidity between China and US.²⁹

India-US Nuclear Deal and Pakistan-China Nuclear Deal

India and US feel the need each other in the current changing regional and global scenario than ever before. They share identical views on the global fight against terrorism, extremism and WMD-weapons of mass destruction. Similarly in post 9/11 era some major regional and global developments made them an stable allies, furthermore their joint commitment for supporting democracy, and their aspiration for developing close collaboration in various arena such as nuclear sector, military zone, economic sector, and diplomatic fields led these two states towards vanishing their past suspicions and differences and working together for dynamic future association.³⁰ The emerging Indian economy with it huge market and business potential along with Indian advancement in nuclear and missile technology sectors became a new source for attraction for US towards India which provided a fresh outlook to the US -India relations in the 21st century.³¹ The development of the US -India strategic partnership provided an impetus for the conclusion of US-India nuclear covenant³² which was signed between the two governments in 2008 it also got cleared by the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

According to the India-US civilian nuclear deal, India approved to isolate its Military based nuclear program and civilian nuclear program. Likewise, India also agreed for putting two-thirds of its reactors and sixty five percent of its generating power under international safeguards for verification, in return US will supply nuclear fuel and technology to India. It became a significant development for India because it can fulfill its energy requirements in order to prosper in the economic sector. This deal also reduces Indian dependence on the oil of the Persian Gulf region and other oil rich states.³³

The India-US civilian nuclear deal will also assist India in stabilizing its hegemonic role in the region. While for US this deal full filled its aspirations and goals in finding a reliable ally in the

shape of India in order to achieve its Geo- strategic objectives in South Asian, Indian Ocean, Gulf region, Central Asian region and to counterbalance the rising influence of China in the region. Nuclear relations between India and US will obviously disturb the Balance of power concept in terms of conventional and non-conventional weapons between Pakistan and India. The India-US civilian nuclear indirectly transformed Indian nuclear technology from unlawful and illegal status into legitimized nuclear power. Although Pakistan time and again uttered its desire time before US for signing a similar type nuclear deal and extend a legitimate status to the nuclear technology of Pakistan, however but the US has not positively responded to Pakistan in this regard.³⁴

Like Pakistan, China is also breathing fire over the US-India nuclear deal. China seeks to prevent significant developments in regard of US-India nuclear collaborations, because any Indian progress in this sector will bring her closer to UN Security Council Permanent membership, which will erode China's regional power and global influence. Surprisingly, when because of nuclear agreement between the US-India the NSG (nuclear suppliers group) exemption for India came into force Chinese didn't strongly objected. China intents could have been based on policy to support the claims for compensating Pakistan. On the other hand *Pakistan has also created a solid case for the transfer of civil nuclear technology for its energy requirements*, Pakistan expressed its aspiration before US administration for signing the identical nuclear deal, but US has not paid any response. This whole situation compelled Pak-China to explore the options to counter US-India nuclear deal, which could assure their security interests in the region. As a result the situation paved the way for Pakistan-China in deepening their nuclear ties and in 2010 they signed a nuclear agreement aiming to supply nuclear reactors to Pakistan. The Pakistan-China nuclear agreement primarily appears to have been for restoring balance of power. For US any nuclear collaboration between Pakistan-China is intolerable as a result, it became the divergent factor between US in terms of its relations with Pakistan and China.

Relevance and Significance of Pakistan-China Relations for US

China geo-strategic and economic influence has increased since last three decades, the US-China relations extended that focus a comprehensive series of regional and global issues.³⁵ China economy currently became the second largest global economy, US thus seriously seeks Chinese coordination deal with global challenges in re-balancing the global. US expect that China will support in restraining the nuclear ambition of Iran and North Korea and it will play a dynamic role in managing the Syrian crisis,³⁶ Iraq, Egypt and Afghanistan. "US also seek to encourage China to contribute to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific, including in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea and the East China Sea."³⁷ Similarly US seek China's cooperation in addressing climate change, counter Terrorism and promotion of human rights.

Over the years China-US economic relations have generated with greater and both states has been exploring the advantages out of their economic ties. During 2009 China because of its huge population became the third biggest market for US exports.³⁸ US enterprises have gradually invested "over \$62.2 billion in 58,000 projects in China" and reaped bumper harvests. Their incomes in China amounted nearly around "\$8 billion" in 2008 alone.³⁹

Similarly, China has been backing up the American determinations of tackling the crisis, which aroused because of the outbreak of the global financial crunch. At the same time China has increased imports from the US that is why Numerous US companies became more secure, comfortable in the economic markets of China and they take Chinese economic zone as a shelter against the International financial crisis.

The two countries economic convergence in recent years has been expended and from strategic competitors they are becoming economic partners. U.S. goods and private services trade with China totaled \$579 billion in 2012. Exports totaled \$141 billion; Imports totaled \$439 billion. The US goods and services trade deficit with China was \$298 billion in 2012.⁴⁰ China is currently

United States 2nd largest goods trading partner with \$562 billion in total (two ways) goods trade during 2013. Goods exports totaled \$122 billion; Goods imports totaled \$440 billion. The US goods trade deficit with China was \$318 billion in 2013.⁴¹

While, Pakistan relevance for US has always been there since its birth in August 1947.⁴² Pakistan's alignment with US during the cold war period, its role of the brokering relationship between US-China and its role of front line state in the war against terrorism makes Pakistan a significant country for US. Similarly the geo-strategic location of Pakistan also attracts US because it can serve as a gateway for Central Asian republics and may offer a route from energy efficient states to energy deficient states. In addition the history narrates that US always required the support of Pakistan during the time of crisis, whether that was during the cold war period or that has been during a period of war against terrorism in shape of partnership.

For US even Pakistan-China relations have an importance which is deeper than the ocean and higher than a mountain, at the time of crisis or situational requirements US tried to convince Pakistan-China through one another e.g. US took the assistance of Pakistan in brokering relationship with China during the cold war. So despite of many diverging elements, considering US relations with Pakistan and China, the significance of Pakistan-China and their bilateral relations significance for US cannot be ruled out completely. The economic partnership between US and China and Pakistan-US partnership during times of crisis and geo-strategic importance of Pakistan will always mark Pakistan-China partnership significant and relevant for US

Conclusion

Pakistan-China relations with the United States of America saw many ups and downs and it's difficult to describe the nature of relationship between Pakistan-US and US-China. During the cold war Pakistan-US were allies of each other against the communist bloc, however Pakistan-China collaborations which began in late 1950's became an irritant factor between Pakistan and US, but

later because of Pakistan, US and China came closer towards each other and a period of honeymoon started between all these actors which continued till the disintegration of U.S.S.R. The period of 1990's saw strained relations of US with Pakistan and China the main divergent factors were Chinese assistance to Pakistan in missile and nuclear sectors. However, after 9/11 event Pakistan became US ally in the war against terror without compromising its close links with China and on the other hand China emerged as one of the biggest economic partners of US, while both continued to be strategic adversaries of each other and their interests' clashes in different shapes.

In changing dynamics of global affairs there are certain divergent factors between US and Pakistan-China which may not allow them for cultivation of smooth ties. Some of the divergent elements are: CPEC appears to be an irritant development for US, Conflicting approach regarding peace and stability process in Afghanistan, US-India collaborations and their hegemonic tendencies in Indian Ocean irritate Pakistan and China and Gwadar port development and Chinese role in this regard bother US. Despite of many diverging elements, considering US relations with Pakistan and China, the significance of Pakistan-China and their bilateral relations significance for US cannot be ruled out completely. The economic partnership between US and China and then, Pakistan-US partnership during times of crisis and geo-strategic importance of Pakistan always marked Pakistan-China partnership significant and relevant for US. The United States have also been seeking Pakistan and China for playing a vital role in achieving peace and stability in the Afghanistan and in addressing climate change, counter Terrorism, non-proliferation and promotion of human rights. US seeks Chinese support in particularly in Asia-Pacific, including in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea and the East China Sea. Similarly the geo strategic location of Pakistan also attracts US because it can serve as a gateway for Central Asian republics and may offer a route from energy efficient states to energy deficient states, Chinese role in the development of the ports, roads and railway network facilities

make Pakistan-China relations relevant and significant for US as well.

Pakistan-China must also project itself as option of opportunities and advantages for US. In this regard the economic role of China in US and Pakistan role in the war against terror cards must be fully utilized. Pakistan-China must also play an effective role for stable Afghanistan and for that they must put their concerns and interests before US. Any such understanding or even coordination between Pakistan-China and US will lead towards stable Afghanistan which will open new avenues for Pakistan and China. Stable Afghanistan will definitely assure easy access to most of Central Asian states towards more open world via the ports of Pakistan. Once Central Asian states start utilizing Pakistan-China friendship routes towards the open world, it will also indirectly force India to quit its aggressive approach towards Pakistan as she will start seeking access towards Gulf Region and Central Asian States via Pakistan. This will decrease the tensions between Pakistan-China with India and Chinese economic partnership with India will further level the ground for assuring peace in the whole region and will minimize the risk of divergence between regional nuclear powers.

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- * Mirwais Kasi, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Balochistan, Quetta.
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