Regional and Global Scenario and Pak-China Relations

Syed Ali Abbas

Pak-China relations have been well defined, elaborated, and examined in several works on Pakistan's Foreign policy ever since Pakistan's recognition of China in 1950. This relationship grown over the years, with mutual confidence and trust in each other, has covered political, economic, and defence needs of Pakistan on the one hand, and Chinese entry into the Security Council and her opening to the international commercial activity, initially with the assistance of Pakistan, thereafter, her fast developing economy, on the other. It has helped both the countries to come closer and closer, meeting successfully the challenges to time.

And yet the present scenario of regional and global environment poses a different situation. How Pak-China relationships can possibly fit in, or could play a positive role in the forthcoming crisis, is examined in the following lines. In fact this theme needs a comprehensive study, which may not be possible at present for situation in the region, however visible, is yet speculative and its analysis where ever available, are just hypothetical.
China's growth as an economic and global power within three decades after 1970's is remarkable and alarming to the West. Added to this, is yet another factor which has multiplied the ambiguity in its understanding. According to Emilian Kavalski, the West seems slightly reluctant to recognize achievement of an Asian country, in her spiral economic regional and a global power, irrespective of the parameters the West had set in" approaches underpinned by the strong normative emphasis on democratisation and human rights which according to them China does not possess. Kavalski argues that the Chinese pervasiveness in regionalization, therefore, draws attention to that fact: “for the first time in a very long time there is need to engage the politics of regionalization as a process driven by a non-Western actor and underpinned by a non-Western understanding of International Relations.” R. Pottman and D.D. Field, inquisitively asking the Chinese position in the World Affairs, confirm what G. Chau stated that “International law (is still) regarded as a tool owned and used by the West to exploit the rest, including China.”

Kavalski, commenting upon the Western strategists, laments how the Western power structure, for the last 200 years, have played the ‘great game’ upon their whims against the third world people – a victim of their agencies, especially global agencies, or, as “the recipient of their gaze/ rule/aid as scripted by the templates of colonialism, cold war bipolarity, and democratization.” Beijing's increasing economic and political clout well demonstrates that a non-Western actor is equally skilled and willing to engage in the global playground.

Earlier, Japan also took quite a rapid stride in economic buildup and strength but after the World War-II she became politically a U.S. satellite. China is different. She was initially being encircled after Mao's revolution by the West and the Soviet Russia, earning a border dispute, like India at NEFA, tried to intimidate China, but she remained undaunted, concentrating upon her built up, both economically as well as a nuclear power. Yongjim Zhang observes that the “emerging global economic
order affected mutual perceptions between China and the USA and consequently their mutual engagement in fundamental ways... for the USA, China no longer represents a willful disruptive force committed to a different economic order. With unfading economic transformation, it is increasingly viewed as market opportunity and an engine of growth for regional and global economy.  

And yet the West, more particularly the USA, is concerned about the unfamiliarity and opaqueness of China's policy and decision making, her quick but steady progress and spiral rise, notwithstanding occasional domestic upsets and socio-political changes, including softening communist cults, but without Western temperament of greed and aggrandizement, exploiting the resources of the third world countries. Anthony Lane, an American journalist, visiting Beijing in 2008, during the World Olympics, was amazed questing “what (disciplined) kind of a society is it, that can afford to make patterns out of its own people?” But Andre Gunter Frank urges the need to reorient conventional conception of global life which was the requirement to have a better understanding of decisive ideologies, diatribes, reflecting exceptional diversities in intellectual complexions of the West and the East.

Declaring the undercurrents of China's foreign policy and the functional spirit behind her economic activity, Chinese Primer Li Peng in 1993, proclaimed that the active development of beneficial and friendly relations with neighboring states, in striving for a peaceful and tranquil surrounding environment is an important aspect of our country's Foreign Affairs work. This is confirmed by the Western critic, that prosperous neighborhood is the key feature of China's policy.

On the contrary, the globalization process, supported by the electronic media, and the international economic activity, was given a new dimension with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the new world order announced by the solo super
power. Incidentally, two developments, immediately thereafter, one in the war torn Afghanistan, where from Soviet Russia had to retreat and finally withered and broken down, leaving Afghan warlords to fight for the throne of their country with one another, till the rise of the Taliban and their gradually holding the land. Secondly, Iraq's adventure first against Iran and later against Kuwait provided an opportunity to the U.S.A., ostensibly, to punish Iraq in fact to have an access to the oil rich country, and beyond, the immense economic resources of Central Asia. The first U.S.A. adventure was to support Iraq secretly, fighting Iran after the Khumaini's Revolution. Iraq, encouraged by the U.S., later on attacked Kuwait, a Western protégé, receiving the wrath of the U.S. President. This was followed by another adventure by his son, George Bush accusing Saddam of preparing nuclear weapons and thus causing huge disaster with carpet bombing all over, killing Saddam and Iraqis in millions, capturing the most cherished economic reserves of Iraq, exploiting them fully, before withdrawing from the country. Whether or not Al-Qaeda was the off shoot of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and her supportive ventures to defend Israel, her protégé in the region, is debatable.

The slogan of Islamic fundamentalism was raised much before Al-Qaeda and anti Muslim slaughter began with the break up of former Yugoslavia, of President Titu. His death signaled the Christian's wrath against the Chechen Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the old Turkish Muslim pockets in Eastern Europe, and it continued until they were all killed or they left their homes for shelter elsewhere. It happened when Soviet Russia was yet alive. Her indifference towards the Muslim massacre was because Yugoslavia, under Titu, refused to remain under Soviet influence when during the post cold war era, the whole of Eastern Europe acknowledged Soviet's supremacy over their states. Infact the Christian wrath upon the Muslims and the ensuing annihilation, had different reasons, which had recently been revealed by Andrew Shroyck, an Israeli Professor of Anthropology, editing some 18 contributions on Islamophobia and Islamophelia. Without going into the details of the two terminologies except
noting what Shryock stated himself, that fast spread of Islam in the West (i.e. Europe, England and the U.S.A.), has roused hostile feelings in Christianity besides among the Jews in Israel. Shryo, himself a Jew from Israel, is presently a Professor at Michigan University.\textsuperscript{17} It may not be wholly true but most probably the Al-Qaeda, Muslim terrorist movement, which later on appeared and became active in the courtiers supporting the West, was a reaction of the Muslim killings in Eastern Europe, West Asia and Afghanistan.

But the global policy of the solo super power in West and Central Asia did not succeed despite the European support with NATO forces. The Taliban are holding a large part of the country leaving Karzai only to Kabul and its vicinity, thus, denying the U.S. any access to the Central Asian region which coveted most the U.S. think tank for exploitation, ever since the demise of the Soviet Union. Now, when the U.S. president Obama has already announced withdrawal of the U.S. troops by 2013, alike their withdrawal from Iraq,\textsuperscript{17b} it might create a vacuum in the region, attracting many a regional powers to make room for themselves, single handed or with the collaboration of the friendly states. There are four regional powers at stake i.e. India, Pakistan, Iran and China besides the U.S.A., E.U. and Russia at some distance, but involved directly or indirectly in the race. It may not be possible in this brief analysis to discuss in detail the status of each one of the states or their inter-relationship for a possible coordination, but a note on some concern of the E.U. in Central Asia, with Chinese collaboration may be of some interest, before the discussion of the stake interest of neighboring countries. E.U.’s contribution against terrorism with NATO forces active in Afghanistan along with U.S. troops, has already been noted earlier. But the E.U.’s interest in Central Asia is briefly examined by David Scott.\textsuperscript{18} He observes: “Central Asia is an important region for China because of Xianjzang and Tibet. It is also in the immediate neighborhood of China and therefore interest her.” Scott claims that E.U. and China are concerned about the regional stability of Central Asia, especially by the threats posed by the rise
of Islamic Fundamentalism and the prospects of destabilization, spreading from Central Asia towards China and Westwards towards Caucasus, the Middle East and ultimately Europe. Scott did not mention any specific contact with the Central Asian states, either of China or the European Union, for any move to counter the probable terrorism in any state of the Central Asian region. Nevertheless, J. Garvor, suggests Chinese interest in opening transportation links westwards to Europe via Central Asia. She initially joined the Transportation Corridor Europe, Caucasus, Asia (TRACECA), a project initiated, in 1993, funded under the TACIS Program. But China was interested in an alternative route, though she also declared some interest in TRACECA. This project, though initiated in 1998 is yet in initial stages. Another study on E.U. interest in Central Asia by Yannis suggests expansion of trade through Black Sea into Caucasus and onward to other Central Asian states, but that, too, being not much of success. There are only stray incidents of such interest in Central Asia by neighboring or distant states. An extensive activity in the region is subject to peace in Afghanistan and the beginning of the economic activity of the countries in the close vicinity, that too with common border and with active collaboration of Afghanistan.

Abdul Sattar, foreign secretary, and later on Minister of foreign affairs under Pervaiz Musharraf, in his Pakistan's Foreign Policy, has observed about Pakistanis: "People of Pakistan place great emphasis on personal security as much on inter state relations as inter personal one, a reflection no doubt of the nation's culture that invests dosti with characteristics of Ishq and expects a friend to be constant, faithful, selfless and sacrificing. Those who are knowledgeable of international relations know that such expectations ignore history." Doubtlessly interstate relationship do move on mutual understanding receiving bilateral recognition on issues of national, political and economic interest, but they are not lasting if only one sided. It is here that the difference lies in Pakistan relationship with the U.S.A. and China, her two distant partners in her economic and defence potentials.
With one (the U.S.A.), Pakistan’s sincerity was exemplary in the beginning, following Pakistan’s alliance with the West, in the mid fifties of the 20th century. But Pakistan was left alone in crises of 1965 and 1971 wars, because U.S. global policy in the region had shifted from Russia to China, and India becoming the darling child of the U.S.A., more so after the Sino Indian War at NEFA, when India was flooded with all sorts of military hardware by the U.S.A. and her allied in Europe, including Israel, with offer of nuclear umbrella. Pakistan’s protest was totally ignored. This U.S. conduct was repeated again during the 1980s when the economic and military aid during the Afghan Jihad was suspended after the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan under Presler Amendment. There are signals of U.S. growing estrangement today when Al-Quaida is out of the region and Pakistan may no longer remain the front line state against terrorism.

On the contrary, what Pakistan did for China, was only ethical and a gesture of mutual friendship. China’s permanent seat in the Security Council was destined and could not be avoided. The border agreement with China or mediating between the U.S.A. and China for developing a better understanding between the two, was not a big obligation. But what Pakistan has received in return reveals that Chinese are more sincere and devoted people. It is not anti-India collaboration as DM Jain puts it, for Sino-Indian relationship have developed fairly satisfactory since 1980, but not at the cost of Pakistan’s friendship.

Haris Regeeb Azeemi, of Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi has listed China’s contribution to Pakistan’s economic and military build up quoting from China and the missile technology in Central Region; Nuclear threat Initiative, Database Report; and also Pakistan China relations (IPOS special report No. 26 June 2006; and China’s Nuclear Exports and Assistance to Pakistan, Centre for non-Proliferation Study Report.

Very briefly, China has helped Pakistan building up at Taxila T.69 tanks, T-69 II BP.Ms (BOYEVEYANA MACHINE
PEKHTEY). Infantry fighting vehicle, T-85 II MBT and M-113, armored personnel carrier. At Kamra China’s assistance helped Pakistan building F-6 fighters, super seven fighters known as FC-1 and also JF-17 Thunder air crafts, besides Karakoram-8, training fighters. China also gave Pakistan four frigates which were added to Pakistan Navy recently. China’s sale of M-11 missiles to Pakistan resulted some U.S. sanctions against her, which China ignored and fulfilled her commitments. Pakistan has since then improved her delivery system, both short and long range, with perfection and accuracy in targeting.29

This was besides China’s comprehensive nuclear cooperation agreement for civil needs.30 The U.S. refused such an agreement with Pakistan, as she concluded with India. But China came to assist Pakistan not only with a nuclear power plant for producing energy but also providing enough tritium gas for running them and also in other needs.31

Muntazir Ali of Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi,32 inspired by Indian obsession of a global power in her achievements, as claimed by Indian and pro-Indian Western authors,33 doubt China’s stabilizing role in South Asia, which create some alignments but its could not be done without U.S.A.’s active involvement in the region.34 Whether or not it is China or the U.S. to play a role in creating such probable strategic agreements, is not clear, though as Munatazir suggests “Most scholars theorize this transformation in terms of the global war against terrorism, ripening U.S. India strategic partnership, Sino-Indian rapprochement and India’s emergence as a major power.”35

Pakistan’s contribution to the war against terrorism is too well known and need not be explained. She has suffered more than any country, engaged in the war, including U.S.A. and still she is upset, both economically as well as in creating a conducive environment at home after the war engagement expenses and its offshoots on the law and order situation within the country. On the contrary India’s contribution in the war against terrorism has
unusually been a big question mark, except that she suffered some terrorist attacks: on the Parliament building Delhi or the Mumbai Tajmahal. These attacks were not committed by Al-Qaeda against which the war of terror was declared by George Bush following the 9/11. On the contrary, these attacks were conducted by the Kashmiri Mujahidins, organized under different names, indeed with their offices in Pakistan, since Pakistan is also an abode of the Kashmiris living in the country. Whenever Indian forces launch any persecutive, inhuman, heinous, criminal movement against the Kashmiris in occupied region with killings, raping and burning Muslim houses and shops. The wrath of the Kashmiri Muslims living in Pakistan is natural, who become non-state actors to play on their revenge against India. But they have nothing to do with Al-Qaeda, the International Terrorist movement. Indian strategy had been just to associate, the reaction of Kashmiri Muslims in India, to the terrorist movement in Afghanistan. But U.S. stakes in India, both economic and strategic, desire India's role in Afghanistan’s restructure and rebuild program, besides, administrative and peacekeeping efforts, which hitherto, U.S. troops had been looking after. India is most willing to do the same provided Pakistan may allow a passage.

Lowell Dittner, an American visiting professor in India (Delhi University) examined the role of India, Pakistan, China and the U.S.A. in the world of economic globalization and political fragmentation. Dittner’s presumption on U.S. sustainable role in the region, with her possession of Afghanistan seems outdated. Dittner published this book in 2005 and Happiman Jacob in 2007. Since then, U.S. position in the region is not that stable which appeared then. Obama’s announcement of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan shows well of the U.S receding interest in the region to meet the regional challenges particularly of filling in the political vacuum in the war torn Afghanistan.

Among the neighboring countries, India and China are the two contestants which could fill in the gap and should be in the run. The U.S.A. has for long been boosting up India and preparing
her to put on her shoes in the region. But unfortunately India is not capable to accomplish U.S. mission, identical to her ambitions, to play an effective role in Afghanistan without the active cooperation of Pakistan, having a large border with Afghanistan, the gateway to Central Asia.

Pakistan is as such involved in the struggle but indirectly. India’s recent offer of recommencing talks between the two countries (India and Pakistan) without pre-conditions as usual, perhaps under U.S. advice, including exchange of views on Kashmir dispute, including recently the two Prime Ministers talks at Mohali; (World Cup Semi-final), may be the bait for preparing Pakistan for India’s more active role in Afghanistan. India is already engaged in the reconstruction of Afghanistan holding 60% of the contracts through the U.S.A. and the Karzai’s government, though all the logistic facilities to Afghanistan, U.S. and NATO troops are being provided by Pakistan.

With the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a sustained efforts of both the U.S. and the Indian scholars to underrate Chinese spiral rise during the last decades of the 20th century. What William H. Overholt and Amitabh Mattoo suggest that “most observers are in awe over China’s economic achievements and social progress, gloomy scenarios have also been discussed... China’s rise has been driven by ‘capital technology’ and resources acquired through peaceful means. The other side of the coin is that economic growth alone does not provide a full picture of the country’s development.”. It is added that “China still faces a formidable development challenges: a population that is projected to reach 1.5 billion in 2030, coupled with scarcity of natural resources, especially energy, raw materials and water to provide for such a large population”. They conclude finally that “China must maintain a cooperative partnership with Washington”, which could avoid a possible clash between the U.S. and China for global pre-eminence.
On the contrary, China has closely watched the development in the region, supporting the war against terrorism, condemning foreign interference without actively engaging herself in the Afghan crisis. She even did not prevent Pakistan supporting U.S. in war against Al-Qaeda. But will China remain indifferent as a silent spectator on Afghanistan after U.S. withdrawal? May perhaps be a different question. Is China's direct involvement in Afghanistan to counter India possible? Or is there a chance of Sino-Indian collaboration on the issue? This is at present only a hypothetical consideration, for China's policy on the issue is undeclared, more because of being premature. But one presumption, though very remote, is that China might boost up Pakistan to play an active role in the region. Whether or not China possesses the resources to vast financial needs and liabilities involved in such engagements, Harris Raqueeb Azeemi reckon her as the third largest economy in the world after U.S.A. and European Union, surpassing Japan i.e. $4.5 trillion against Japan's $4.47 trillion reserves in 2010. Chinese policy towards her neighbors whether in South Asia, South East Asia or Central Asia has been very positive of both economic and political understanding. Some stray incidents did create short-lived tensions in the regions for some Muslims unrest in Xianjzang, China's border province in Central Asia, and her possession of Tibet, irritating India. But the dust was soon settled. India, too, had realized after 1962, that she could not scare China with whatever military preparation she could make. It was in India's interest to grow trade and commerce between the two countries, to defuse tension. But she continued to play up saying: "the U.S. will remain the only global hegemonic power for decades to come and so will Chinese fears that the U.S. might attempt a containment system to check China's capacity to manage the strategic neighborhood".

And yet there is another power in the region which most of Western critics evade mentioning, obviously because of unfriendly postures against her. Iran is not only an emerging nuclear power of the region but most influential too, for her
persistent resistance against all negative tactics of the Western powers, including the USA and the European Union. She has sustained and developed her nuclear programme against all odds. Ahmed Nezadi has emerged as the most powerful and popular head of the state in the region. Iran has also sustained her interest in Afghanistan’s northern area, where a substantial number of Iranians have lived for centuries as much in other Central Asian States, close to the border of Iran. How may Iran feel to meet the challenges of the region, is nor fully known as Iran, too, had kept silent on the issue, more so because of her domestic pre-engagements.

Muntazir, discussing the role of China in the South Asian region, examines some possible collaboration: as four emerging strategic triangles: US, India and Pakistan, US, India and China, US, Pakistan and China, and China, India and Pakistan. He suggests that his conclusion (of the Paper) will be based upon them. However, he does highlight the Indian perspective in the conclusion, borrowed from Amitabh Mattoo, Kapil Kak and other co-editors: India and Pakistan – A Pathway Ahead, without a mention of the ground realities against them. The main issue, which needs an immediate attention, is Afghanistan and its future after the withdrawal of the US forces form the region. There is perhaps, no indication in the drawn conclusion by the author on the projected regional issues. Except showing that India was the emerging global power.

As such India is projected perhaps, the only country which with the US support, seems to be active. Dittner considers India’s capacity and compatibility in the region more than any other regional power except China. He suggests a quadrangle of the stake holders in the region, all nuclear powers, with USA on the top and Pakistan at the bottom. China and India are placed on the sides, as equally great powers. The USA being a super power, Pakistan stands at the lowest. Discussing the possibilities of the regional powers, holding the region in close coordination with one another, Dittner suggests two triangle of nuclear powers: “one
regional, with remote chances to grow, for unsettled disputes so long, i.e. Pakistan, India and China, and the other a global triangle with one Super Power i.e. the USA and others the Asian giants India and China.

These thoughts, however speculative at present, speaks well of the respective US policy in the region in which Pakistan stands very low or have absolutely no place. Iran too, is ignored altogether despite her close vicinity, and her ethnic links in Afghanistan and Central Asia. US think tanks have blurred looks under their bias for a country threatening their supremacy in West Asia, challenging their protégé, Israel, in her neighborhood, whereas most of the states in the region stands yeoman to the USA. As earlier stated, that Iran, under Ahmed Nazadi has successfully resisted US economic sanctions against her and probably she has the caliber and capacity to meet the future challenges in the days to come.

Pakistan is a different issue. Here, the governments, civil or military, democratic or autocratic, have not looked beyond themselves, at the cost of country’s build up and people’s immense sufferings. They are totally oblivious of the forthcoming situation in the region, for they have only to engage themselves on personal issues, even above party politics, and national interests. This is not the story of the present, but all these 63 years have passed in their self seeking and aggrandizement. Unfortunately we have a short memory. We just failed to learn lessons from the past tragic incidents, such as on the 16 December 1971. We are still blind to parochial tendencies developing within country, besides the unrest in tribal belt. If Pakistan’s leadership wakes up and realizes Pakistan’s position in the region, the earlier the better, it might bring the country to the forefront of regional leadership with Iran and China, by passing the USA and India. This triangle, if matured may have a better and closer link with the region and also better chances and prospects to play an active role, than the countries which have no direct links with Afghanistan and Central Asia.
Another difficulty which may appear on the geo-political map of the region, particularly of Afghanistan, has been her unfriendly relationship with Pakistan since the latter’s birth. Durand Line is now a dead issue and with the readchristening of the frontier provinces as Khyber Pakhtunkhaw, the other issue is also solved. A.N.P., the ruling party in that province, is in a better position to square up or help squaring up the differences or misunderstandings if any, which existed before, more because of India’s exploiting anti-Pakistan feelings in Afghanistan on Pakhtoon issue. Irrespective of India’s interest in Afghanistan, Afghans interest in India could be negotiated as soon as the US interest in Afghanistan fades out to create a vacuum. Pakistan think tank on strategic issues must prepare now for the future possibilities of her active and positive role in the region.

There is an opportunity for Pakistan to grow a tension free environment in Pak-Afghan relations. The construction of Gwadar port, which is partially accomplished and the highway leading to Central Asian states could boost up not only her trading activities within Pakistan but it may also help in making a regional hub for commercial traffic influencing the geo-strategic environment of the region and making available the vast resources of Central Asia for the outside world markets through the Gwader port. Carrie Liu Currier and Manochehr Dorraj have well elaborated China’s growing strategic and trade links with the Middle Eastern countries Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain. Initially the trading activity of these countries with China was only marginal, but by 2005, the Chinese trade increased in these areas over 70% of the total Chinese trade around the globe. Dorraj and Currie have examined in some details how China has become the top purchaser of Iranian oil, and by 2004, she surpassed Japan as the world No. 2 oil importer. She was importing almost 90% of her domestic energy consumption from the Middle Eastern countries, which reflects the causes of her interest in the Gwader port and the highway leading to Central Asian States and China. Pakistan’s serious efforts in the final completion of this project, with the help
of China, could go a long way in ensuring her a bright future. It is certain that such developments could also solve Balochistan issue and her economic deprivation allowing Pakistan to play a positive role in the region, equally beneficial to Afghanistan, Central Asian States and China.

Let me conclude with a statement and insist upon more closer cooperation between Pakistan and China, including the development of Gawader port and Northern highway, which shall have more positive impact on the changing global and regional economic, strategic, and security paradigm. It could successfully counter India as world power with US help, and their high motives and ambitions to exploit the regional resources for themselves. China is indeed a regional Super Power with immense economic and other resources. Her support to Pakistan could easily grow in all segments of political and economic activity of the region, countering any third power with no direct links. This is possible only if the government agencies realize the situation and mould themselves to meet the challenges of time.

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