

New Trends in Sino-Pak Defence and Strategic Relations since 9/11: Indian Concern

Zahid Ali Khan

Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan.

Shabir Ahmad

University of Peshawar, Peshawar.

Abstract

Pakistan relations with China remain a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign Policy. Their common views, perceptions, approaches, and policies at the regional and global level made them a durable friends, allies and partners. Their hostility towards India, their support each other in wars against India, and the conclusion of different agreements further strengthened their bilateral mutual relations between these two countries. And above all, China's moral, diplomatic, political, financial, and military support since 1971 proved a great source of consolation and encouragement to Pakistan in the difficult hours. In the changing global scenario since 9/11, witnessed drastic improvement in Sino-Pak military and strategic relations. Exchange of visits by high leaderships and other dignitaries, their growing coordination in Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf and Gwadar, the signing of naval and military agreements, their missiles and nuclear cooperation, provided both the countries with opportunity to counterweight India's growing hegemony and supremacy. On her part, India is trying its best to frustrate the growing Sino- Pak Defence nexus by using a variety of tactics in order to protect and safeguard her interest in the region.

Key Words: Defence, Strategy, Technology, Missile, Weapons, Military, Regional, Global, Partnership, Cooperation, Alliance, Agreement, MoUs, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, USA, Sino, Pak, India.

Introduction

Pakistan and China have long-standing strategic ties, dating back five decades. Friendship and cordiality in Pak-China relations serves as a useful way to contain Indian influence in the region and divert its attention from Pakistan. Friendship with China provides Pakistan with an opportunity to safeguard its security, and territorial integrity visa-vis India. It is pertinent to mentioned that Pakistan is, perhaps, the only non-communist country to be acknowledged by China as a trustworthy friend and ally. The most distinguished feature of the relationship is continuity and durability. It is, therefore, not without reason that it has been called all-weather friendship. As the core objective of Pakistan's foreign policy, to check and suppress India's hegemonic and predominant position in South Asia, Central

Asia, and beyond. China and Pakistan have shared a friendship which has proved of great value in promoting of their long- standing geo-strategic objectives. From China's perspective, Pakistan is the only country which serves its vital geo-political and geo-strategic objectives in the region. From Pakistan's perspective, China is the only country which provides it moral, military, financial and diplomatic support in the time of need. At present, this relationship has matured into strong, stable, and mutually beneficial strategic partnership encompassing the vast areas of cooperation. In the changing scenario, both the countries understand a strong need for missile and nuclear cooperation to face the emerging regional and global challenges, particularly, especially, the conclusion of Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Deal. The Deep sea port of Gawadar, with its strategic locations has been constructed with Chinese assistance and investment. .

This paper discusses the defence and security dimensions of the Sino-Pak relationship which has strongly based on their shared strategic interests and goals. It analyses some of the important political and geo-strategic issues affecting this relationship. The paper also looks at the regional and international dimensions, in particular the relevance of India to Sino-Pak relations. The paper examines the trajectory of Indo-US strategic ties and the downward spiralling of US-Pak relations which triggers its own logic on Sino-Pak security dynamics. The paper is an attempt to study how far the Indian factor played a role in bringing China and Pakistan closer, and whether it led to a strengthening of ties between the two; and what the future impact might be. The paper argues Pakistan would continue to view China as its most strategic ally in counterbalancing India. And finally the paper concludes that notwithstanding some stress and strains in the relationship, Sino-Pak friendship will endure in the foreseeable future.

Historical Background

A motivating factor that compels Pakistan to develop military relations with China was a country's vulnerable defence in the wake of hostile India. Preservation of security and territorial integrity against India has been a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. In order to strengthen its security vis-a-vis India Pakistan joined Western military alliances SEATO and CENTO. But, these alliances did not prove helpful for Pakistan to accomplish its objective. Highlighting the importance of Pakistan's friendship with China Arshad Hussain, the then Foreign Minister of Pakistan said, "It is entirely impossible for Pakistan to preserve its security without friendship with China. (Arif, 1984:278-279) In the Indo-Pak war of 1965, when USA imposed arms embargo on Pakistan, the only country which supported Pakistan military was China (Faruqui, 2003):81).China not only supported Pakistan armaments and military equipments but contributed a great deal by supplying surface to air missiles and Red Arrow anti-tank missiles. (Shikan, 2011) In the words of Bhatti, China also became a reliable source of military hardware during a period that witnessed strong Western restrictions and embargoes on Pakistan (Bhatti, Winter 1999-2000:82)

In addition to this, China always played an important role in the modernisation and development of Pakistan's army, navy and air force. China has not only provided technological support for the construction of military-industrial complex at Kamra but, also financial assistance that helped Pakistan to build defence industries, factories, shipyards, power plants and communication infrastructure. (Jetly & Lodhi, 2010:164). Stephen Cohen a South Asia expert describes that Chinese policy toward Pakistan is driven primarily through its interest to counter Indian military power as the main stumbling block in the way of its grand regional ambitions. (Cohen, 2001:259) In other words, Pak-China partnership serves both Chinese and Pakistani interests by presenting India with a potential two-front theatre in the event of war with either country. (Graver, 2001:188). The military relations between the two countries became more strengthened and intensified after the conclusion of Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of August, 1971. (Burke & Ziring, 1990). Both China and Pakistan expressed their grave concern over the Indian nuclear explosion as threat to the regional peace and security. (Bhatty, Op.Cit) The Indian leaders remarked time and again, that the core objective of India is to develop its nuclear weapons is not directed against Pakistan, but to suppress China's ambitions and desires to become world power. (Lieven, 2002:117) China also assisted Pakistan in building two defence-related mega projects i.e Heavy Rebuild Factory for T-59 tanks, and F-6 Aircraft Rebuild Factory.

More significantly, China has contributed a great deal to the development of Pakistan's nuclear capability to counter India's supremacy and hegemony in the region. (Amin, 2000:78). The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 also has positive implications on Sino-Pak military collaboration. According to an analyst, "the preservation of Pakistan's security was the major feature of China's Afghan policy as manifest from the fact that the securities of two countries are mutually interlinked and indivisible. (Fazal-ur-Rehman, 1998:72)

The most significant development in China-Pakistan military cooperation occurred in 1992 when China supplied Pakistan with 34 short-range ballistic M-11 missiles. (Faruqui, 2001:<http://www.ipripak.org/journal/summer2001/thecomplex.shtml>).

Both Pakistan and China have also steadfastly maintained that all missile technology transfer from China has been within the ambit of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).² Despite these claims, the Clinton administration went ahead and imposed sanctions on China in 1993 for transferring some of the M-11³ missile equipment to Pakistan. (Shirley, Op.Cit:8-9) These missiles can easily target an Indian city on Pak-India border. (Waller, Time, 1997 June 30) Recent sales of conventional weapons to Pakistan include JF-17 aircraft,⁴ JF-17 production facilities, and F-22P⁵ frigates with helicopters, K-8 jet trainers,⁶ T-85 tanks,⁷ F-7 aircraft,⁸ small arms, and ammunition. (Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China, 2009:57).

Sino-Pak Defence and Strategic Relations since 9/11

Since 9/11, Pakistan-China relations have developed a high level of understanding for the expansion of mutually beneficial strategic and defence cooperation. There was a complete understanding and a convergence of views between the two countries have raised the level of frequency of their high level exchanges and shared identical views on all major issues and developments that took place at the global and regional levels.(Fazal-ur-Rehman, 2002:59) Pakistan-China defence cooperation has always been the most important component of their overall bilateral relations since 9/11. The exchange of high-level visits of the armed forces of the two countries further improved their bilateral military-to-military and strategic relations between the two countries.

In order to enhance naval cooperation, both the countries conducted a joint maritime search-and-rescue exercise near Shanghai in October 2003. That was the first time for the navy of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to conduct an exercise with a foreign country. In April 2005, Pakistan and China signed a landmark treaty for friendship and cooperation. (The People's Daily, 2005, April 6) In the words of Suleman Bashir, Pakistani ambassador to China, "the most important aspect of the treaty was the clear and the categorical assurances by China to defend Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence. Under the treaty of Friendship China Dockyard in Shanghai will build four F-22P frigates for the Pakistan Navy (Noor-ul-Haq (Ed), 2005, at <http://ipripak.org/factfiles/ff-60.shtml>)

Defence production-related cooperation has also expanded in recent years between the two countries. Pakistan and China have jointly developed JF-17 Thunder—a multi-role fighter aircraft. Pakistan is also seeking to buy 36 J-10 aircraft, which would make Pakistan the first recipient of one of the most advanced weapon systems in China's arsenal. The addition of 36 J-10 aircraft would enable Pakistan Air Force (PAF) to raise two fighter squadrons and further sharpen its combativeness. The sale of the J-10 aircraft signals the depth of Pakistan-China strategic partnership.

China's Support in the Development of Pakistan Missiles Program

China proved a major source of support to Pakistan in the terms of missile technology. During mid-90s, China apparently transferred an entire production line of M-11 and M-9 to National Development Complex (NDC), a subsidiary of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). China also helped Pakistan to develop 750 km range solid-fuelled Shaheen-I ballistic missile. Both the countries have signed an agreement Pakistan and China have also signed an agreement under which China gave her commitment to provide four submarines for Pakistan's Navy. Beijing has facilitated the transfer of North Korean Taepodong & Nodong ballistic missiles to Pakistan. (Sakhuja, 2010:05:45) Pakistan will buy Chinese missiles and flight systems to equip its 250 JF-17

Thunder jet fighters. During an interview to the Global Times Newspaper Rao Qamar Suleman, Ex-Air Chief Marshal of the Pakistan Air Force said that 'Pakistan will buy four Chinese surface-to-air missiles, in order to improve its armed forces. Moreover, the joint manufactured of medium-tech JF-17, is the current development in Sino-Pak military and strategic relations.' (The Express Tribunes, 2010, November 18). The manufacture of FAC (M) is yet another landmark in Pak-China defense relations. These projects will undoubtedly open new avenues of military cooperation between the two countries. The Missile would not only improve Pakistan's disabilities but contribute a great deal to balance the power equation in the region. (News Daily, 2011 September, 21). China State Shipbuilding Company (CSOC), Xingang Shipyard gave full support & commitment in launching of these Missiles. Pakistan fully endorsed the services rendered by Chinese engineers and technicians for construction of First Fast Attack Craft Missile. Pakistan is also exploring the ways and means of acquiring high-altitude anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems from China in response to the growing Indian advanced missile program. China will supply Pakistan HQ-9/FD2000 missile. It is a sophisticated anti-missile system capable of targeting aircraft, air-launched cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles. (Asian Defence, 2009, April 3)

The Strategic Significance of Gwadar in Sino –Pak Naval Cooperation

Gwadar port is situated in the South-Western Arabian sea coast in the Gwadar district of Baluchistan. Gwadar has acquired the status of center piece as a gateway of Strait of Hormuz, a World key oil supply route. The port has a potential to become a strong Sino-Pak military base to check and monitor India's hegemonic and subversive designs in Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf and the future of any Indo-US strategic cooperation. When completed will be a great strategic asset for Pakistan as an alternative port as the Karachi Port has been under a continuous threat of blockade by India in the past. On the other hand, Gwadar port being 470 km away from Karachi is less vulnerable to any such Indian threat. (The Nation, 2002, April 15)

Gwadar Port has become a milestone in Pak-China military and strategic cooperation. Gwadar port will help Pakistan to end its feeling of isolation that it has been facing since independence.

Gwadar provides both China and Pakistan to safeguard their securities vis-à-vis India. Both China and Pakistan are strongly against India pre-dominant position and its role as the master of Indian Ocean. Sino-Pak strategic cooperation in Gwadar will ultimately reduce Indian hegemony and supremacy in the region. The port of Gwadar is also a part of the China's "String of Pearls Strategy."

Pakistan needs the active support and cooperation of China. The port will be complemented with a modern air defence unit, a garrison, and a first-rate international airport capable of handling airbus service. Thus, Gwadar Port serves an ideal place from the point of view of Pak-China naval collaboration to check

South Asian Studies 30 (2)

and monitor Indian expansionist designs in the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. Pak-Chinese strategic partnership is a remarkable development in this regard, by which China has committed to provide Pakistan military hardware including rushed deliveries of J-10B (known as FC-20s in Pakistani colours) and JF-17 fighters, J-11Bs, a Chinese version of the famed Sukhumi Su-27 Flanker fighter aircrafts. Pakistan also received a good number of Chinese naval assets including Type 054A based frigates and Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) capable submarines. Recently, Pakistan has signed a \$600-million defence deal with China, which includes construction of four F-22P frigates for the Pakistani Navy, upgrading of the Gwadar and Karachi dockyard and transfer of technology for indigenous production of modern surface fleet. (The Tribune, 2006, May, 24). Though Pakistan's naval capability alone does not pose any challenge to India, the joint Sino-Pak naval collaboration, indeed, would be a formidable force to counter Indian influence in Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. (Times of India, 2010 January 28).

Sino-Pak Defence and Strategic Relations under Shanghai Cooperation organization

Sino-Pak strategic and military relations were further improved under the framework of Shanghai cooperation Organization, when for the first time China offered Pakistan for joint military exercises against terrorism. (India Daily, 2005, August 26). China always supported Pakistani efforts to become the permanent member of the organization. Under the banner of SCO, there is a complete understanding between the two countries on regional and global issues i.e. war against International terrorism, the situation in South-Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia. Both are trying to promote and to safeguard their interest in Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan and the continuous presence of NATO is detrimental to the geo-political and geo-strategic objectives of both the countries. Their ultimate objective is the maintenance of complete peace and stability in Afghanistan and to stop the expansion of NATO forces eastwards and westward, and to reduce the rising influence of India (common adversary of China & Pakistan) in the affairs of Afghanistan, Central Asia, and South Asia. The first and the foremost strategic objective is to ensure the stability of the Chinese North-western frontier that shares 3500 km joint border with CARs. While the geo-strategic objective of Pakistan is to ensure the security of 2640 km North-western frontier with Afghanistan, with an object to stop The Strategic coordination between the two countries under the framework of SCO would make them strongest and strengthen in the wake of growing threats at the regional and international level, especially, after the conclusion of Indo-US civilian nuclear deal. India considered Pakistan along with China as a bitter adversaries, and desire to sabotage Pak-China friendship. Chinese policy toward Pakistan is driven primarily by its interest in countering Indian power in the region, and diverting the attention of Indian military force away from

China. South Asia expert Stephen Cohen describes China as pursuing a classic balance of power by supporting Pakistan in a relationship that mirrors the one between the U.S. and Israel. (Cohen, 2001:259) Their close partnership in SCO serves their interests by dividing India into two-front theatre in the event of war with either country. (Garver, 2001:188)

One of the objectives of its SCO member countries is conducting joint anti-terrorism for once and all. Pakistan is strongly supporting Chinese efforts to root out the germs of separatism and extremism in the China's Eastern province of Xingjian. Pak--China joint military exercise under SCO is another example of their mutual support, and mutual trust and cooperation as their ultimate objective is to suppress the evils of terrorism, sectarianism and extremism once for all. (Asia Times, 2009, August 13). For the first time Chinese naval ships conducted a second joint maritime search-and-rescue exercise with the Pakistan Navy in Nov, 2003. Pakistan and China have a common interest in the security of the sea lanes of communication, and strongly support a multilateral framework of SCO as a vehicle for bringing a complete regional peace and security. As a result of their common interests, on 23 May 2006 Pakistan signed a \$600 million defence deal with China, which includes the provision of four F-22P frigates for the Pakistani Navy. The signing of the frigate deal opened a new chapter of naval collaboration and coordination between these two countries. (The Tribune, 2006, May 24)

Sino-Pak Nuclear Relations

The nuclear cooperation between the two countries became more strengthened & intensified after the conclusion of Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Deal of 2008. The Indo- US Deal is a clear manifestation of the US' ultimate desire is to recognize India as the leading power in the region, despite of the fact, that Pakistan is a close partner of US in the war against global terrorism, and major non-NATO ally. India emerged as major beneficiary of the deal. The deal accomplished India's geo-political and geo-strategic objectives, it's nuclear and missile predominance, and its ambitious and evil designs in the region. The deal turns out to be unfair and discriminatory in the sense that it has bestowed India with all the benefits of a nuclear weapons state without any international obligations. The qualitative and quantitative improvement of India's nuclear arsenal placed Pakistan in severe awkward position in the region. As a result, Pakistan explores a number of options that would preserve and safeguard its security interests in the region. The first option of Pakistan is to acquire the same nuclear and missile capability in order to counter-force India and to save itself from utter humiliation and defeat in the face of major conflict. The main concern for Pakistan is the Indian intention to convert its civilian nuclear program into clandestine nuclear arms, which will have serious security implications for Pakistan. Moreover, the deal will compel Pakistan to pursue a qualitative approach to increase its deterrence¹⁰ stability. Since 9/11, US changed its policy towards China from form friendship to competition. The ultimate objective of President Bush was to make India a major regional power of

South-Asia to contain China and not directed against Pakistan. Unlike US, India's main intention is to sabotage nuclear and missile capabilities of Pakistan.

The above scenario alarms the bells of insecurity for other regional countries, especially, for Pakistan and China. Both China and Pakistan has a grave concern over the Indo-US nuclear deal. Thus, the qualitative improvement of India's nuclear arsenal would affect the fragile deterrence stability in South Asia. The nuclear deal will further enhance Indian capability to have pre-emptive attack against Pakistan and China. The prime objective of India is to neutralize retaliatory nuclear strikes by its adversaries (China and Pakistan). Thus the more effective option for Pakistan is to sign a similar deal with China in order to counterweight the growing influence of Indo-US Civilian nuclear deal. In this regard, Pakistan turned towards China, the only country which can provide support to Pakistan in the time of trouble. The relationship between the two countries is termed as "higher than Himalayas and deeper than Oceans". (Dumbaugh, 2010:1-2)

China is the sole supporter of Pakistan in the time of crisis. China is the only country which has not only provided Pakistan with high-tech equipments, but also transfer nuclear technology, and helped Pakistan in creating its own indigenous defence industries. China is continuously supporting Pakistan in developing nuclear technology. In order to meet its energy crisis China has built two nuclear reactors in Pakistan, Chasma 3 and Chashma 4. (Bukhari, 2011:2). These reactors have constructed under the Sino-Pak nuclear cooperation agreements signed in 1991 and 2003 respectively. These reactors have supplied by the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) and operated by Pakistan's Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). Both reactors are in operation and strictly under IAEA safeguards.

Another agreement was signed between the two countries on September 30, 2009, according to which CNNC will supply fuel to these two reactors with a capacity 320MW each at a cost of US\$1.7 billion. Thus, China will not only supply fuel to the reactors fuel but also finance their construction. Another deal was signed between Pakistan's Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and the Chinese Zhongyuan Engineering Corporation (ZEC) in March 2010 during the visit of President Zardari to China. According to this deal China promised to construct another one-gig watt nuclear reactor in Pakistan are now doing the rounds. (Kulkani, 2010, December 29) This deal is the direct response of the Indo-U.S. nuclear agreement. Moreover, the frequent visits by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani greatly facilitate the conclusion of deal. Under deal Pakistan would be provided a loan, technology and installation facilities. Another development in their strategic relations took place in September 2010, when China announced its intention to sell two additional plutonium-producing heavy water reactors to Pakistan. China would provide 82 percent of the total \$1.912 billion financing to Pakistan as a 20-year soft loan, with an eight-year grace period. (Dyer & Bokhari, *Financial Times*, 2010, September 23)

Another important development in the context of nuclear cooperation are the signing of three loan agreements. Under the first loan agreement, Pakistan would be provided \$104 million with an annual interest rate of 1 percent, the second preferential buyer credit agreement will provide Pakistan get \$1 billion with an annual interest rate of 2 percent, while by the third buyers credit agreement Pakistan will get \$474 million with an annual interest rate of 6 percent. (Chaudhry, Daily Times, 2010, March 30) Under deal all exports from China to Pakistan would follow NSG guidelines as stipulated in 2003 agreement. (Hibbs, 2011, June 23, at www.armscontrolwonk.com (Hibbs, 2011, June 23, at www.armscontrolwonk.com). Another significance of deal is that it does not violate the nonproliferation obligations of Pakistan because of its non the military nature objectives and program. (Schneidmiller, 2011, March 9). More recently, China expressed its commitment to extent a loan of \$ 6.5 billion for the construction of nuclear power projects in Karachi. In this regard, China National Nuclear Cooperation (CNNC) promised to finance the projects with two reactors of 1,100 megawatts of each. Each of the two will be more larger than the combined power of all operating reactors in Pakistan. (The Nation, 2014, January 2014)

Pak-China Space Cooperation

Pak-China cooperation in space technology lasted for two decade. The first agreement to enhance cooperation in Space technology was signed between the two countries in 1991. China has contributed a great deal to support Pakistan in the development of RAKSAT-IR, an upgraded version of PAKSAT-1. A landmark in the manufacture of RAKSAT-IR (Pakistan's communication Satellite) was signed in October 2008. Beside this, the defence organisations of the two countries have reiterated their efforts to continue their cooperation in space technology. China has successfully launched RAKSAT-IR on August 11, 2011, from its Xichang Launch Center in Sichuan Province. The satellite, have 15-year-long life cycle, covers televised information broadcast, relays signals and transmits cyber data (to televisions and radio channels, Internet and cable networks) from across three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa. It was manufactured by the China Great Wall Industry Cooperation (CGWIC) – a defence enterprise – in coordination with the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), in July, 2011. "Pakistan would work closely with China for the further up gradation of the satellite, in addition initiate other joint venture in the space sector.

The letter 'R' in 'PAKSAT-1R' is the abbreviation of 'Replacement' since PAKSAT-1R stands as the replacement of previous satellite PAKSAT-1. The PAKSAT-1R is known as geostationary communication satellite because its rotation period around its orbit is same as that of the earth's, is one year. The satellite has in-built monitoring features controlled through the Satellite Ground Station (SGS) that Pakistan set up with China's help. The satellite can broadcast

hundreds of television programmes to the people of Pakistani at the same time. (Shaheen, the Nation, 20 12 August 12)

It will also provide strategic advantages to Pakistan's armed forces. But most important, Pakistani scientists gained first-hand experience by working alongside Chinese counterparts. Sino-Pakistani space cooperation seeking to cover climate science, clean-energy technologies, clean-water technologies, cyber-security, and other sciences across the board. The prime objective of Pakistan space program is to further research in space science and related fields, to enhance indigenous capabilities in space technology, and to promote the peaceful application of space science and technology for the socio-economic development of the country.

In the words of Ghulam Ali, eminent scholar of Chengchi University, Sino-Pak space cooperation is timely and mutually beneficial to both the countries. China is looking for markets for its growing space expertise, and Pakistan needs assistance with soft loans, training if its Scientists, and how-know in space sciences. This cooperation adds a new dimension to already robust relations which are more friendly and close than ever before. (Ali, 2011).

Indian Concern

The gradual improvement in Sino-Pak defense and strategic relations since 9/11 has negative security implications for India. New Delhi watches these developments with great concern. From very start, India is strongly against any cordiality and goodwill in Sino-Pak relations for its own disadvantage. India is trying its best to sabotage Sino-Pak relations through its evil diplomacy. Furthermore, the close nexus between China and Pakistan in nuclear and missile technology serves as a strong bulwark to its long standing geo-political and geo-strategic in the region. In the words of Indian defense minister to state: "The nexus between China and Pakistan in the military sphere remains an area of great concern. We have to carry out continuous evaluation of Chinese military capabilities and shape our responses accordingly. At the same time, we need to be vigilant at all times"(Indian Express, 2009, November 27). New Delhi is also concerned about the close degree of military cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad on nuclear cooperation, including the transfer of technology and joint development of military equipment. China is extending strategic help to Pakistan in every way. China is not only providing arms but is also helping upgrade Pakistan's tank, weapons, UAV, ammunition etc.

The latest Sino-Pak military exercise near the Indian border province of Rajasthan adversely affected India. "China is believed to be once again trying to put pressure on India through the Pakistani border adjoining Rajasthan." Several Indian press reports claimed Chinese troop presence in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. (Time of India, 2011 November 5). China's support to Pakistan on Kashmir placed India in very awkward position. China active support to Pakistan on Kashmir has shattered India's over-ambitious designs and objectives. China's greater involvement in roads and infrastructure projects in Pakistan Administered

Kashmir and its huge financial support to Pakistan in the construction of Bunji Hydro-electric project and its planning to build a railway track that connects Gwadar through Abbottabad and Khunjab pass to Chinese city Kasgar is really a great strategic setback to India.

India's high military officials are continuously writing articles regarding India and Pakistan. In one of his article published in the Times of India in December 2009, General Deepak Kapoor, the Indian army chief observed that India should prepare for 'two-war front,' in event of war with Pakistan or China. By this statement he argued that a war between India and Pakistan is not actually a war between these two countries but, a war between three countries as referring Chinese involvement in this war. He gave the example of two Indo-Pak wars of 1965 1971 in which India was engaged in two war fronts. In these wars China had conducted a huge military deployment along Indo-Chinese border with an object to prevent the Indian troops on its western border with Pakistan. (The Times of India, 2009, December 31)

Indian politicians are greatly perturbed about the growing Sino-Pak military and strategic relation and its grave implication for India, especially in Pak- China coordination and joint venture at Gwadar. China has invested over \$200 million to help build the deep-sea Gwadar port in Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast, with a view to open energy and trade corridor from the Gulf, across Pakistan to Western China. Pakistan desires to build a naval base in Gwadar in Balochistan province with the active financial support of China. Moreover , the decision of China to set up up military bases either in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) or in the Provincially Administered Northern Areas (PATA) bordering China's Xinjiang province in order to enable its military force to effectively counter the Muslim separatists movement in its trouble-stricken Eastern Province Xinjiang" (India Today, 2011, October 26). More important, the stationing of Chinese troops Gilgit-Baltistan region brings China closer to its border with a long term security implications for India. (The *Economic Times*, 2011, November 10)

Pakistan plans to buy two atomic power plants with a combined capacity of 2,000 MW from China. The plants will be installed at the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant complex to address the country's energy crisis. The China National Nuclear Corporation and Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission will reportedly enter into an agreement for a joint study to finalize design modifications for the new plants. (Peiris, 2011:<http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2011/11/paki-n28.html>)

India is strictly watching the construction of Gwadar Port in its backyard. In an interview with the Jans's Defense weekly, Indian Naval Chief Admiral Madhavendra Sing stated that India is strictly observing Chinese activity on the Makran coast, along which Gwadar is located and expressed concern about the Chinese Navy's close interaction with neighbouring countries including Pakistan that could seriously endanger vital Indian shipping routes in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. (Times of India, 2003, 21 May 21)

India's drive for a truly blue-water navy centred on aircraft carriers, powerful anti-ship and offensive weapons systems, a large number of difficult-to-detect

submarines to project itself as a great maritime power, to bring Pakistan's naval force under its subjugation, and a counter to Chinese naval expansion into the Indian Ocean and the Arabian. It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan's naval capability alone does not pose any challenge to India. The joint Sino-Pak naval collaboration, indeed, would be a formidable force to counter Indian influence and domination in Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. (Dasgupta, Times of India, 2010, January 28) The Indian Ocean assumes a great strategic importance in international politics. Its close geographical proximity with Persian Gulf and enormous oil and gas resources are the key factors which enabled India to strengthen and expand its naval force. (Jaspal, 2003:54-5)

One of the primary objectives of China is to preserve its stability in the Indian Ocean for the continuous flow of maritime traffic: freedom of navigation, security of sea-lanes of communications and business transactions free from foreign influence and interference. (Zhengjia, bid: 179)

India is also trying its best to expand its naval force in the Indian Ocean to suppress and contain China's growing naval hegemony in Malacca Straits. (Jaspal, 2001:54) India has a grave concern over China-Pak Civilian Nuclear deal. New Dehli strongly objected that the deal would be the complete violation of international protocol regarding the trading of nuclear equipment and materials. (Khan, 2011:32) This deal is another sign of China's growing assertiveness in international affairs and its intentions to keep India at bay. (Blank, Asia Times, 2010, June 16) Therefore, India must closely monitor the development in this regard and channelize its diplomatic efforts to ensure that required safeguards are followed. India, as of now, has expressed its displeasure of the Chinese move in a very calculated and balanced way keeping in mind the importance of India China relations. India has cautioned China that if it went ahead to conclude a nuclear deal with Pakistan, the relations between India and China will be affected. India views that China's strategy has been to contain India by strengthening Pakistan. China has continued to provide Pakistan not only with bombs but with latest missile technologies which would invariably enhance Pakistan's offensive capabilities against India. (<http://www.aerospaceindia.or/Issue%20Briefs/2010/16%20July%202010%20-20Sino-Pak%20Nuclear%20Nexus%20and%20India%E2%80%99s%20Concerns.pdf>).

Conclusion

In a comprehensive review of Sino-Pak relations no matter what changes took place in the world, the relations between these two countries would be continued and maintained. The traditional friendship between China and Pakistan will probably continue to exist in the same spirit as in the past. Of course, it was India's hostility towards these countries that gave a fundamental common interest. More important, it was in Pakistan's national interest to seek Chinese friendship and in China's interest to support Pakistan. The relationship has not only the test of the time but also grown into strategic partnership. Their common perception

towards India, their history of hostility and confrontation with India; and their mutual interest in manoeuvring to balance or contain India's power and influence in the region enabled these two countries to develop a strong defence and strategic relations. More significantly, their common security concerns ultimately help these countries to face the emerging regional and global challenges.

Military relations have long been the most important and vibrant component of China-Pakistan relations. Bilateral military cooperation is "unusually strong" and ranges from naval cooperation, to past nuclear assistance, to arms sales, to combined military and anti-terror exercises. These examples of cooperation underscore the high degree of institutional trust that has arisen between the two militaries. PLA personnel have worked for years to build an impressive network of connections with Pakistan's military establishment. As a result, Pakistan has a significant level of confidential communications and military-to-military trust with China.

China-Pakistan threat requires a comprehensive, multi pronged approach. Today, the extent of Chinese defence collaboration with Pakistan can be gauged from the fact that the Chinese are willing to transfer technology with no strings attached. They have provided weapons manufacturing factories, tanks and heavy weapons as well as aircrafts and radar rebuild factories, fast patrol boats, as well as frigates building capability to Pakistan. Sino-Pak relations have endured unrelentingly in the area of defence co-operation, as high level military exchanges continued through the year, and subsequent deals were signed between the two countries. Both countries should further the spirit of seeking common ground, while shelving differences and promoting frankness and mutual trust. There are several areas where Pakistan can avail Chinese knowledge and expertise, such as nuclear, missiles, and defence technology.

More important, Gwadar Port serves an ideal place from the point of view of Pak-China strategic and naval collaboration to check and monitor Indian expansionist designs and to undermine the India's supremacy and domination in Arabian sea, Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf region. Pak-China growing coordination in the development of Gwadar port will end Pakistan's feeling of isolation that it has been facing since independence. Gwadar Port provides both Pakistan and China to strengthen its security vis-à-vis India. As it said that 'the security of Pakistan is adequately established by developing relations with China to counter India's hegemonic aspirations in the region'.

India also expressed its deep apprehension over the growing Sino-Pak defence collaboration, especially, in the nuclear field. India viewed close Sino-Pak nuclear relations as a deliberate attempt to contain India and to deny its leadership role at the regional and global affairs. India believes that China's containment strategy involves its strategic alliance with Pakistan and a growing military built-up in the Indian ocean and Arabian Sea. India accused China for continued transfer of its nuclear and missiles technology to Pakistan and made the latter wholly sully responsible for creating a nuclear proliferation in South-Asian region. Moreover, the launching of Paksat-1R (Pak-China Joint Space Satellite) would

South Asian Studies 30 (2)

'revolutionize' Pakistan's broadband internet system, digital television broadcasting and rural telephony, as well as spur the economy, strengthen its education and health sector, and help increase disaster preparedness.

Pakistan has two principal advantages of the deal. First, the China deal is designed to meet Pakistan's energy requirements of 160,000 MW by 2030, of which 8800 MW will be met by nuclear power generation. The second argument is a political one and it justifies the deal on grounds of 'equal treatment' with India. China's equity argument alleges that the Indo-US Nuclear Deal destabilized the Indo-Pak equation; it is now providing Pakistan an equal opportunity that could stabilize the South Asian situation. Besides, China has a longstanding commitment to develop Pakistan's nuclear energy infrastructure, while leveraging its own position vis-à-vis the US.

It seems logical to conclude that the India factor might well have played a role in strengthening Sino-Pakistan relations, though other forces were also of immense importance in bringing the two countries closer to each other. China's relations with Pakistan will continue to flourish, and, China will be in a better position to exhort India to moderate its policy towards Pakistan. In essence, Chinese support to Pakistan is a constant factor in as much as the core Pakistani and Chinese interests are concerned. China must continue to strengthen Pakistani state's resilience and its revival so as to play once again, a dynamic role at the cross roads of regions.

In future, their relations are likely to continue to progress, independent of the Indian factor. And that is the reason why, despite their divergent socio-political systems and ideologies, Sino-Pakistan relations are considered a "unique example in modern history".

Notes

1. SEATO and CENTO were formulated by the US to secure the Asian region from the threat of communism. Pakistan aligned itself with the US and favoured American policies designed to frustrate the objectives of the Soviet Union. Pakistan was primarily interested in preserving its security in the face of Indian aggression. Both economic and military aid tempted Pakistan to join these military alliances since India was better off militarily and financially. References.
2. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is an informal and voluntary partnership between 34 countries to prevent the proliferation of missile and unmanned aerial vehicle technology capable of carrying a 500 kg payload at least 300 km.
3. It is a series of intermediate and intercontinental ballistic missiles operated by the People's Republic of China.
4. It is a light-weight, single-engine, multi-role combat aircraft developed jointly by the Pakistan Air Force, the Pakistan Aeronautical

- Complex (PAC) and the Chengdu Aircraft Industries Corporation (CAC) of China. JF-17 can carry a variety of missiles and bombs, including air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles.
5. The F-22P is a general purpose frigate being built by Pakistan and China for the Pakistan Navy (PN). The first ship, PNS Zulfiqar, was handed over to the PN on 30 July 2009, the second, PNS Shamsheer, on 23 January 2010, the third frigate, PNS Saif was commissioned on 15 Sep 2011 & the fourth and last frigate of F-22P series, PNS Aslat was inducted on 17 April 2013.
 6. The Hongdu JL-8 (Nanchang JL-8), also known as the Karakorum-8, is a two-seat intermediate jet [trainer](#) and light attack aircraft designed in the [People's Republic of China](#) by [China Nanchang Aircraft Manufacturing Corporation](#). The JL-8 trainer was proposed as a joint cooperation effort between the governments of [Pakistan](#) and the [People's Republic of China](#) in 1986. The name was changed on the suggestion of Pakistan's then President General Zia ul Haq to Karakorum-8 to represent the friendship between the two countries. Work on the design started in 1987 at Nanchang Aircraft Manufacturing Company (NAMC) at Nanchang, Jiangshi Province in South Central China.
 7. The TR-85 is a [main battle tank](#) designed for the [armed forces](#) of [Romania](#). The TR-85 tank was developed from 1978 to 1985 and produced from 1986 until 1990. A modernization program was initiated in March 1994 in order to upgrade the TR-85 tanks to [NATO](#) standards.
 8. The Chengdu Jian-7 is a People's Republic of China license-built version of the Soviet Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21. Though production ceased in 2013, it continues to serve, mostly as an interceptor, in several air forces, including China's.
 9. The String of Pearls refers to the [Chinese sea lines of communication](#) which extend from the [Chinese mainland](#) to [Port Sudan](#). The sea lines run through several major [choke points](#) such as the [Strait of Mandeb](#), the [Strait of Malacca](#), the [Strait of Hormuz](#) and the [Lombok Strait](#), as well as other strategic maritime centres in [Pakistan](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Bangladesh](#), the [Maldives](#) and [Somalia](#). The term describes the manifestation of China's rising geopolitical influence through efforts to increase access to ports and airfields. It put India at a military disadvantage, and that India's lack of a [grand strategy](#) lets China develop relationships with the other countries in the region.

References

- Ahmad, Rashid. (2002 April 15). Gwadar Project: Economic and Strategic Dimension. *The Nation*.
- Ali, Glulam. China-Pakistan Space Technology Cooperation. East Asia Forum, Weekly Digest, September 9th, 2011
- Amin, Shahid M. (2000). Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

South Asian Studies 30 (2)

- Arif, K. (1984). *Pakistan's foreign Policy: Indian Perspectives* Lahore: Vanguard Book Ltd.
- Asian Defence*. (2009, April 3).
- Bhatty, Maqbool Ahmad. (Winter 1999-2000) Pak-China Relations in the 21st Century. *Regional Studies*, Vol. XVIII (1).
- Blank, Stephen. (2010 June 16). China puts down marker in nuclear power race. *Asia Times*.
- Bukhari, Syed Shahid Hussain and Attiq-ur-Rehman. (2011 March). Pakistan-China Nuclear Deal & International Fictions. *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol.1 (3).
- Burke, S. M. and Ziring, Lawrence. (1990). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*. Karachi: Oxford University Press
- Chaudhry, Sajid. (2010 March 30). Pakistan in 'Civil Nuclear Deal' with China. *Daily Times*.
- Cheema, Pervaiz Iqbal. The China Threat: A View from Pakistan' in Herbery Yee and Ian Storey (Eds). *The China Threat: Perceptions, Myths and Reality*. New York: Routledge Curzon.
- Cohen, Stephen P. (2001). *India: Emerging Power*. Washington D.C: Brookings Institution.
- Daily Times*, 2007 January 24.
- Dasgupta, Saibal. (2010, January 28). China mulls setting up military base in Pakistan. *Times of India*.
- Dumbaugh, Kerry B. (2010). Exploring China-Pakistan Relationship. *Roundtable Report*, China Studies, Institute for Public Research, Alexandria: Centre for Naval Analysis.
- Dyer, Geoff and Bokhari. (2010 September 23). Farhan. China-Pakistan reactor deal to Open fresh US rift. *Financial Times*,
- Faruqui, Ahmad. (2001 Summar). The Complex Dynamics of Pakistan's Relationship with China. IPRI at <http://www.ipripak.org/journal/summer2001/thecomplex.shtml> (May 14, 2009).
- Faruqui, Ahmad. (2003). *Rethinking National Security of Pakistan: The Price of Strategic Myopia*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing.
- Fazal-ur-Rehman. (1998 Winter & Spring). Pakistan's Relations with China. *Strategic Studies*, vol. XIX & XX (1 4).
- Fazal-ur-Rehman. (2002 Summar). Pakistan-China Relations In the Changing Geo-Strategic Environment. *Strategic Studies*, Vol. XXII (2).
- Garver, John W. (2001). *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Indian Express*. (2009, November 27).
- India Today*. (2011, October 26).
- Jaspal, Zafar Nawaz. (2001, January). India's Missile Capabilities: Regional Implications. *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 54(1).
- Jaspal, Zafar Nawaz. (2003 Winter). India's Look-East Policy: New Challenges for Pakistan", *IPRI Journal*, Vol. III (1).
- Jetly, Rajshree & Lodhi, Iftikhar (2010). Pakistan-China Relations in the 21st Century: Retrospect and Prospect', in Tan Tai Yong ed., *South Asia: Societies in Political & Economic Transition*. New Delhi, Manohar Publishers.
- Khan, Raja Mohammad. (2011). Prospects for Sino-Pak Relationship. *Margalla Paper Vol. VX* (11).
- Khan, Sabahat. (2008 October, 20). The Impact of Future Asian Naval Policy on the Gulf. *The Daily Star*.
- Kulkani, Tanvi. (2010, December, 29). Sino-Pak Nuclear Engagement-1: The Big Deal. *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, No.3301.
- Lieven, Anatol. (2002, January-February). The Pressures on Pakistan. *Foreign Affairs*, (Washington). Vol.81 (1).

- Mackerras, Colin. (2009 August 13). Pivot of Asia Sees China-Pakistan Manoeuvres. *Asia Times*.
- Mark, Hibbs. (2011 June 23). Moving forward on China, Pakistan, and the NSG. *Arms Control Wonk*. www.armscontrolwonk.com.
- Nandan, Devki. (2010, July 16). Sino-Pak Nuclear Nexus and India's Concerns', National defence Aerospace Power. *Issue Brief*. Available at <http://www.aerospaceindia.org/Issue%20Briefs/2010/16%20July%202010%20-Sin-o-Pak%20Nuclear%20Nexus%20and%20India%E2%80%99s%20Concerns.pdf>
- News Daily. 2011 September, 21.
- Noor ul Haq (Ed). (2005). China-Pakistan Relations. *Fact Files*, IPRI, accessible at <http://ipripak.org/factfiles/ff60.shtml>.
- Pakistan & China finalise defence deal. (2006, May 24). *The Tribune*.
- Pakistan Profile," Nuclear Threat Initiative, January 2009, at http://www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/Pakistan/index.html (May 14, 2009).
- Pakistan to Arms Jet with Chinese Missiles, (2010, November 18). *The Express Tribunes*.
- Peiris, Vilani. (2011, November 8). Joint military exercise highlights growing Pakistan-China relations", <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2011/11/pakistan28.html>
- Sakhuja, Vijay. (2010, May 13). Missile Developments in China, India and Pakistan: A Burgeoning Missile Race. *China Brief* Vol. 10(10),
- Salik, Naeem. (2009). The Genesis of South Asian Nuclear Deterrence: Pakistan's Perspective. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schneidmiller, Chris. (2011 March 9). IAEA Board Sets Plan for Monitoring New Pakistani Nuclear Reactors. *Global Security Newswire*.
- India-China-Russia massive joint military exercise in 2006. (2005 August 26). *India*
- Shaheen, Sikander. (2012, August 12). Pak-China vow continued cooperation for Space projects. *The Nation*.
- Shikan, Baktar. (2011, December 30). The Stockholm Institute of Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), SIPRI Arms transfer database data, Transfers of major Conventional weapons from China to Pakistan [http://www.sipri.org/data/Bases/arms transfer](http://www.sipri.org/data/Bases/arms%20transfer)
- Shirley Kan, A. China and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Missiles. *Policy Issues' Op.cit.*
- The Nation*, 1997, November 2.
- The Nation*, 2014, January 2014
- The Economic Times* November 10, 2011.
- The People Daily*. (2005, April 6).
- The Tribune*, 2006, May 24.
- Time of India*. (2011, November 5).
- Times of India* (2003 May, 21).
- Times of India*. (2009, December 31).
- Waller, Douglas. (1997, June 30). The Secret Missile Deal. *Time*.

Biographical Note

Zahid Ali Khan is Chairman & Professor in the Department of Political Science, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Pakistan.

Shabir Ahmad is Assistant Professor, Area Study Centre for China, Russia, & Middle-East, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan.