SECURITY THREATS AND CHALLENGES TO PAK CHINA ECONOMIC CORRIDOR / ONE BELT OF ROAD

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ABSTRACT

OBOR i.e One Belt One Road or China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is actually a game changer, a strategic balance of power between USA and China. In recent times, the establishments of such corridor are establishing new political and economic blocks on the globe. The fine example in this regard is recently much discussed OBOR/CPEC which is going to connect the middle East and South Asia to Europe and Central Asia and to Africa as well. Amid all hopes and interests there are many security concerns and threats. Pakistan's security situation, regionalism and security environment, Terrorism and militancy, Uyghur issue, ISIS, India-Afghanistan and Iran nexus and the discontentment of USA. Policy towards Pakistan and Russian's strong desire to be a part of the project is also a matter of great concern for Americans and Indians as well. The role of non state actors in the region, the Gulboshan and other Indian sponsored networks working in the disturbed areas are the challenges along with political fragmentation, social and religious cleavages hindrances. All these security threats and Challenges will be discussed and analyse within this article.

KEYWORDS:

CPEC, OBOR, Threats and Challenges, Peace and Stability, Potential Dangers, Infrastructure, Development,

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan is situated on a very important Geo Strategic location. Being the developing country and lot of external and internal issues which are not only hampering its national integration but also weakening its economic conditions as well. The warm ties of India with USA. The Iran, Afghan and India means are further weakening Pakistan's position in South Asia and Central Asian States. The only ray of hope is CPEC/One

Belt One Road OBOR and a game changer by which Pakistan will be able to increase its importance on strategic and economic fronts. The One Belt One Road will also be a bridge and linkage between Asian European and African countries. The CPEC / OBOR will not only enhance Pakistan's economy and the other countries of the region. This global project of china is actually a restoration of the great ancient and medieval Silk Roads. (Kazi, 2007). It will also link Pakistan to Sea routes via Gwadar Deep Sea Port to China i.e. a Maritime Silk Route which will be very economical in expenditures and will provide a linkage to china through Gwadar to Indian Ocean, the oil rich Middle East particularly the Gulf States and Africa, Mediterranean via Red Sea (Kazi, 2017). The economic and strategic ties between the both trusted friends is always going on an upward direction with mark-able trust, and ultimately become a major cause in initiation of CPEC. This remarkable project will bring a revolution in the field of economics and industry in Pakistan and will open the door for China towards the world The 46 Billion Dollars Chinese investment will boast the economy, infrastructure and energy hungry Pakistan. This project will bring Pakistan on the road to success in 21st century. This multi-dimensional project has opened Pakistan's is rebalancing options from geopolitics to geo economics (Ajaz, 2018, March 12). Though many countries are interested in the project but for Pakistan and China the project is a win-win position but full of challenges, lot of hurdles, i.e. internal and external threats towards successful completion. The Chinese investments are huge and thus expecting Pakistan to meet the time limit. Corruption, political instability, weak infrastructure, terrorism, militancy and the vulnerable situation of Baluchistan. This CPEC should not be controversial like Kalabagh and the provinces too be agree on all of CPEC project (Ahmar, 2014).

Despite all goodness and connectivity of 60 plus countries across the three continents i.e. Asia, Europe and Africa. The opponents of CPEC i.e. India, USA, Afghanistan and Iran do not want to see this project a successful one. These countries have been hatching conspiracies at the regional and international level to create obstacles and even to sabotage the one Belt One Road Project. In this regard, the fifth column is also working in creating mistrust in the various factions of Pakistani Society and various

provincial and central governments in Pakistan. The cunning treacherous tricks are going on against this project which is a game changer of fate changer project for Pakistan (Jaspal, 2017, March 16). In spite of all its geo strategic and geo political significance, the CPEC is full of challenges and threats for both the countries. The CPEC project completely surrounded by regional security threats both internal and external and Pakistan's political challenges for its smooth execution (Ali, 2015). In this research article I would try to address all challenges, threats and apprehensions. That seek to undermine its beneficial impact for all countries particularly Pakistan and China. The security threats can be categorized into external and internal threats.

THE INTERNAL SECURITY THREATS AND CHALLENGES:

The great and scaring responsibility for the successful completion of OBOR is the security challenges and threats. Pakistan is a victim of the terrorism and extremism. In Pakistan various religious groups are always lock their horn over minor religious differences Pakistani nation is divided on the basis of sectarian, caste and creed, lasting differences between haves and have not has also worsen the situation. All these internal security threats have undermined Pakistan's socio economic system as well as socio political instability. Pakistan has been facing many threats and challenges since it came into existence but the security scene after 9/11 incident has been changed all together. Now new security threats and challenges have been emerged both traditional and non traditional and traditional like separatist movement, extremism and terrorism, sectarian violence, political and economic instability, feudalism and its rivalry, poor law and order situation and political unrest are the challenges which can be harmful to CPEC. (Mairaj-Ul-Hamid, 2015, November 14).

Various religious terrorist elements are also posing a hurdle in the successful completion of CPEC. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Is the largest and deadliest religious militant group which is engaging a large size of Pakistani process on its western border. The group claims that it is the only representative group of Taliban. But there some lonely affiliated group are also there. All these Taliban groups only focusing on combating

Pakistan Army and all symbols of the State of Pakistan. The various factions which are operating in various parts of Pakistan and are involved in attacking and abducting foreign national particularly the Chinese national in Pakistan. Approximately 2200 people have been killed since 2015 in Taliban and other religious terrorist organization's gruesome attacks. (South Asian Terrorism Portal, 2018, March 14). But due to Pakistan Army Zarb-e-Azab operation about 70% decline in terrorist activities have been seen in Pakistan. (Khan, 2015). Being the front line state on war of terrorism Pakistan has lost USD 18.8 billion to terrorism since 9/11. (Rana, 2017, September 6). Nationalist and sub-nationalists groups and parties are also raising their objections about the routes of CPEC and are in the opinion that the federal government is not resolving the serious issues about this project. Pakistan's instable political system and political unrest also a significant hurdle to the implementation. The nationalists groups talk about the economic factor. The Chinese companies working on CPEC have also great concern for tax and power tariffs. (Abid, & Ashfaq, 2015). The sectarian strife and violence is also a source of concern for Chinese since 2001, half of the main cities and districts in Pakistan has to experience sectarian attacks Laskar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah Muhammad are the two main banned organization that can be potential danger to various CPEC projects in Pakistan. The feudal and tribal rivalries and their armed clashes have also raise concerns for CPEC. These rivalries and armed clashes between serious tribal, fuddle also worsen the law and order situation of Pakistan and have created a political turmoil and unrest in Pakistan.

The complex security situation of Baluchistan is major security challenge towards the implementation of the CPEC. The insurgency and unrest in Baluchistan is also great security concern for CPEC. The socio-economic and security index are very disturbing, Baluchistan in facing an acute shortage of irrigation and drinking water, the 70 percent of the people of Baluchistan are living in poverty. The situation in the field of education is also very alarming. Approximately 2 million children in Baluchistan have not yet seen the school. A recent survey shows that more than 5000 government schools have only one room. The health conditions are also very alarming. The maternal death rate is at the highest in

Baluchistan. A sizeable portion of people is suffering from hepatitis B and C. Approximately 2000 people have been killed in terrorist attacks, tribal and feudal clashes and sectarian violence since 2003.

The massive corruption, unemployment, poverty, mismanagement of resources, nepotism and Baloch Sardar System in Baluchistan can easily be manipulated, by various non state actors in Baluchistan. The central point of the CPEC is Gwadar is also situated in Baluchistan. The most crucial security challenge for successful implementation of the OBOR is the insurgency, militancy, violent extremists, Baloch Separatis groups, Taliban (TTP). Involvement of Indian State actors in Baluchistan and the rumors about the emergence of ISIS in Baluchistan are posing grave security challenges and a matter of great concerns for both China and Pakistan. Furthermore, the Baloch Leaders are taking this project of CPEC as in justice to Baluchs and Baluchistan Baluch people are also fearing that they would be in minority due to influx of mega projects. Some off the nationalist Baluch Leaders have even demanded a census or referendum for the future of Baluchistan. The Baluch insurgents have been involved in killing and kidnapping of workers both Chinese and others working for Chinese companies on the mining projects. In recent time it has been learnt from reliable sources that the Baluch miscreants are trying to target the management of Chinese companies. (Ahmed, 2015, July 14). The insurgency is decreasing and dying in Baluchistan and security has also been improving, for the last two years. The Pakistan army's effort in this regards is commendable as well as the welfare development projects undertaken by army and federal government have helped a lot in easing the security situation in Baluchistan, but even then these violent groups are still a potent menace. These miscreants groups are openly admitting that they will target CPEC. The Chinese government statement shows their great concerns over Allah Nazar Baloch's statement, the Leader of BLF, who threatened to target Chinese nationals and CPEC project etc. Even the moderate Baluch Leadership is showing their apprehensions about multibillion CPEC uplift schemes and term them as a conspiracy against Baluchistan. They argue that they do not have access to hospitals and laments that the CPEC would convert the Baluchis in Baluchistan into a minority in their own homeland.

They believe the CPEC is a plot against Baluch people that would expel them from their native soil and the development would only create jobs and opportunities for the people of other provinces and the influence of other nations into Baluchistan would make them a minority. They think that their resources are being explored and want a complete ownership of all the resources of Baluchistan. (Nawaiwaqt Group, 2017, February 26). As we know that most of the Baluch leadership are feudals and despots. Their viewpoint can be different as of the local laymen populace. The CPEC is being seen with passage of time as an Omen of Peace and prosperity in the province. But their experiences of REKO Dig and Sandak Copper, Gold project show that things have not changed for them even in Chaghi where these project are situated. The demoralization concern seems to be valid to some extents. They also believe that the Baluch are too poor in Gwadar and its adjacent areas that they would not have enough capital to invest in various projects and peoples of other provinces will rush into Gwadar and will push the locals of Gwadar into subaltern rank and it will be very difficult for them to compete them.

The Pakhtoon nationalist leaders have raised objection and are blaming federal government that changes have been made in the original route. Even the present KPK Govt. has raised its concerns about the changing of original route, i.e. Kashghar Gwadar route and announced that these changes would raise doubts and division on the issue. (Kasi, 2015). Different small parties have also raised objections about the issue of change in the original plan and consider it as injustice for the Pakhtoon and people of the province which has been the most effected province due to high rate of terrorism. (Bureau Report, 2015). The Federal Government denied all these allegations and the Chinese government too tried to allay the fears and also interacted with the political parties of the provinces that were making the allegations. (Falak, 2015, June 2). The Nationalist of Sindh particularly Sindh ethnic nationalist groups and Sindhu Desh revolutionaries also played blame game and gave negative statement against the Multi Billion Dollar China Pakistan Economic Corridor which, also passes through Sindh province. But over all there is a political

consensus and realization generally in all political parties about the successful competition of the project.

THE EXTERNAL SECURITY THREATS AND CHALLENGES:

The world powers are viewing the Pak China Economic Corridor with keen interest and looking their own interest. In this project. The think tanks all over the world and in all major capitals are deliberating about this project. Three major powers, the USA, India and Japan are not easy with this project. The solo super power, USA is considering CPEC as early indication of the imminent end of its world wide hegemonic rule. At the financial front Japan is in tension that with the successful completion of CPEC, her edge that Japan had over China in financial markets all over the world would vanish because the trade distances amongst china and its trading partner countries would be decreased approximately 9000 km. (Jahangir World Times, 2017, March 8). The US and Japan have joint their hands in getting china to bog down in the south china sea. Since the launch of US Marshal Plan after World War II, the CPEC venture is the largest infrastructure project in the field of development as compared to size.

The CPEC / OBOR project also surpasses the Marshal plan which is going to involve around 1.3 trillion USD and approximately 900 infrastructure projects after successful completion. This Chinese project would involve more than 60 countries comprising two third of the world population, three forth of world's power reserves and approximately half of the world's GDP. US sees Chinese One Belt One Road (OBOR) / CPEC as a potential danger and views it as Chinese counter measure towards all Pivot to South East Asia in particular and in whole Asia as general to US Strategy. This USA Asian Strategy was meant to counter Chinese rise and the level US considering China a threat on financial side as well and a challenge to its hegemonial design in the region. The Chinese tremendous progress in the fields of economics, industry and technology, have worried the American. The increased capabilities of Chinese Army, the Chinese missile programs and other military advancements, all are the factors which have US at a very weak position. The recent advancements of Chinese Navy due to

CPEC, also poses a big challenge for US in Blue waters. In an era of the politics of energy security, the United States of America is viewing OBOR/CPEC as a challenge to its authority mineral resources rich areas of the Persian gulf, the Central Asian States, the South China Sea and its adjacent areas and in the Middle East. The strategic and Economic advancement of China is making USA at the perplexed situation rather very vulnerable situation for USA and its allies. That's why USA has accepted Indian position on CPEC. (Khaliq, 2017, October 11). Ironically USA has warned that CPEC would allow terrorist organization more targets for attack. (News Desk, 2017, May 12). Despite all apprehensions the USA is left out of this project as other important states like Russia is longing for participating in the project thus making it more authenticated and viable in the region. Now US is failed to contain and create any danger to Chinese across the Indian oceans and rest of the world. That is the reason US is providing a considerable support to Baluch separatists, terrorist and other separatist who are having their hideout in Afghanistan under the protection of US and India. These mis-creates and rouge group are posing a great security threats to CPEC future.

The Chinese internal security in the region of the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous Region (XUAR) is not favorable to CPEC. The Uyghur Muslims and the Han Chinese are always ready to lock their horns. The Uyghur claim that the Chinese are systematically suppressing their religious, cultural and linguistic region. The XUAR Region has been a potential target for these rouges and terrorists. The joining of hands of East Turkestan terrorist force with the terrorist of Pakistan, under the favourable support of US and India based in Afghanistan. The Chinese authorities has started an operation to crack down on these terrorist groups of East Turkestan in the Xinjiang Province inside China. The XUAR has been considered as the very soft belly due to less developed and ethnic clashes in the region. The east Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is a representation of three evils i.e. terrorism, separation and centrism. In Short, the ETIM remains the keenest opponent and saboteurs of Chinese infrastructure development due to CPEC.

The CPEC / One Belt One Road project has made India like an old tiger who has a thorn in its paws with internal infection, India has created road blocks in CPEC through terrorists and subversive activities of its supported terrorist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan, India has established a special office in its capital New Delhi under command of Mr. RajIndar Khanna who is directly answerable to PM and his national security adviser Ajeet Deol. More than 300 Million USD has been spared to harm CPEC by all means. A sudden and sleep rise in the terrorist activities in GB, AJK, Baluchistan, Sindh and other parts of Pakistan are the signs of Indian desperate acts to disrupt the CPEC. Indians are also supporting various NGOs and think tanks which are trying to mislead the masses and international community. They are airing misgivings and arousing a fear psychosis. The cultural blockade, the sports blockade, the blockades at all level are all extensions of Indian policy of destruction and sabotaging the project. The recent abrupt and sudden statements of Asfandiyar, MQM leader's anti Pakistan Slogans and Achakzai's anti state anti establishment and the activation of various liberals against CPEC and giving impression of unrest in Pakistan with doubts, lack of political stability, baseless objections about the route change, disturbance in GB, Baluchistan and Security situation all can carry the potentials to delay the implementation. (Muhammad R., 2016, September 9).

The recent Indian cold shoulder response to the great and generous offer of Pakistan to join CPEC and her complete refusal and absence from OBOR forum raised alarms and concerns for Pakistan and China that India would go to any extent to sabotage the CPEC. (Aamir, 2017, December 21). On the eve of inauguration of the project in 2015, India raised great concerns and officially protested with china. The Indian PM Narendra Modi vehemently criticized the project and said that CPEC through GB and AJK is unacceptable as it is a disputed territory occupied by Pakistan. (Web Desk, 2015, June 1). India is building Chabahar Port. India, and Iran have signed different accords to counter CPEC. India is trying to bring Iran, Afghanistan and to some extent USA on one platform and thus trying to establish a nexus against CPEC. PM Modi during his visit to Iran signed different agreements to invest 850 Million USD in Chabahar Port Just to bypass Gwadar and to have access to Central Asian States, Europe

and to Middle East. (Flak, 2014). By building Chabahar Port Indian influence will rise in the region and it will enhance Indian support to insurgent elements in Pakistan and Afghanistan Chabahar port has also geostrategic importance and can be a second alternate to Gwadar. The Indian huge involvement in the region is just to decrease the importance of CPEC.

It is very strange to know that some of the Gulf States are viewing CPEC with suspicion and don't want to see CPEC a successful project. It is because if CPEC becomes successful and attains its full strengths and potential then Gwadar city and port along with free trade zone will become an absolute rival of Dubai Port. Dubai being the largest port at the west of the port of Singapore and establishing of a Gwadar port in the region would certainly diminish the importance of Dubai Port and would also affect the revenues of other ports in the Persian Gulf as well. Dubai port and other ports in the vicinity would also lose the status of business attraction. In short Gwadar port is going to become an attractive destination of central Asian States, African and European countries as well and Dubai port would lose its importance as trading hub. Moreover, UAE does not want to see CPEC successful one as her relation with Pakistan are not warm as compared to past. The main reason behind that is that despite investing a lot in Pakistan UAE could not receive the desired response from Pakistan in which she wanted from Pakistan to send it troops against Iran in Yemen issue. The Gulf states are uneasy and on a state of unrest over the presence of Chinese Navy in the region. In future China would get more crude oil and energy from Iran which would also be a main cause of strengthening Iran's Economy and thus ultimately making Iran's Army a strong armed force

CONCLUSION:

Pakistan and China have strong bilateral relations and historical ties since their independence. The friendship of Pakistan and China is supposed "Higher than mountain and sweeter than honey". The multi billion dollar CPEC Project and One Belt One Road (OBOR) is called the game changer for the poor economic condition of Pakistan. The Chinese quest for

reducing its trade route to have access to the Arabian Sea have brought China to very close of Pakistan. The increasing economic ties of Pakistan and China would bring peace and stability in both countries troubled regions i.e. Baluchistan and Xinjiang. In this study I analyzed the security challenges and threats and also grievances of Sindh, Baluch, KPK and GB. The political situation and law and order situation was also discussed. Pakistan being the front lien state of the war on terrorism and the most terrorism affected country after 9/11, despite strict security measures the external state actors have helped local miscreants to kill or kidnap foreign workers from different CPEC projects. The Indians despite act of disrupt the CPEC is also a matter of great security concern. Nevertheless despite all threats and security challenges and the dirty game being played out by external actors and using of Afghan Soil to wage a proxy war against Pakistan by Indians, the Gulbushan network. The game seems to be going in Pakistan favour. The Pakistan Army and govt. are on one page and have national consensus in completion of the project as early as possible. Seriously major steps have been taken to safeguard the CPEC project. Pakistan Army despite its complete involvement in CPEC security has established a special task force handle headed by Army General to provide security to Chinese workers and companies working on the corridor. The Pakistan Navy had also establish a task force to protect the corridor and the Gwadar Port against the traditional and non traditional threats. A national consensus is also going on this issue. All most all the parties to some extend have reached on consensus. Now the need in to remove our own internal weaknesses, unresolved and mishandled conflicts, the Baluch grievances are the sour points that can be easily exploited by the external forces be addressed. The CPEC project is a multibillion mega project and it should be introduced to common Cayman of Pakistan through print and digital media and social media as well and there should be a general consensus and awareness about the ultimate benefits of the project.

Other countries' participation like Russia, Germany, and other European Powers would further stabilize the project and make it more important and viable Russian participation would also address many issues and latest technologies and would be shared. We should also get maximum benefit of all types from the recent India Russia cold relations and drifting

of India towards USA. Russians have also established military ties with Pakistan and in future more economic and military project would be started between Pakistan and Russia. Iran and Saud Arabia, Oman and Egypt, all are showing their keen interest in this project. Currently the situation is going towards betterment and the goodtime for Pakistan is about to come. Pakistan and China both the countries are standing together and firmly against the international pressure from USA and India and whatever the situation is Pakistan and China seem to be adamant to build CPEC a successful project and a future hub of economic activities.

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