



US-CHINA STRATEGIC RIVALRY IN SOUTH ASIA: NEW CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Concentrating on the consequences of the growing rivalry between the United States, China, and Russia is particularly important in the already fragmented South Asian security environment, where the United States has invested in economic and security cooperation with India in order to counter China's rise. This demonstrates that Pakistan has established a close tie with China. The rapid escalation of US-China rivalry is intensifying, and the bilateral nature of the conflict has put Pakistan in a particularly precarious position. The aim of this research article is to highlight Pakistan's perspective and foreign policy in light of the developing animosity between the United States and China, as well as to evaluate what strategic alternatives Pakistan has for sitting in the middle of a big power conflict.

Keywords: US, China, Geo-strategy, South Asia, Pakistan



INTRODUCTION:

Strategic stability activities in South Asia are confronted with enormous obstacles. The rivalry relationships between Pakistan and India, as well as the US's external influence, are eroding can be used in many contexts and classified into two different categories: internal issues and external influences and pressures. Internal issues occur primarily as a result of the animosity between nuclear relations and nuclear competition on the most fundamental lines between India and Pakistan. However, the outside pressure and influence of the United States have a direct effect on the movements of strategic stability in South Asia, and this makes the internal dynamics of the country more difficult.(Sciences, 2016)

It was considered that there were inherent risks of nuclear weapons would compel India and Pakistan to improve the quality of strategic stability in order to maintain South Asia safe and peaceful. However, rising internal and external threats to stability in the strategic domain have made South Asia unpredictable, with the possibility of a minor 'confrontation between India and Pakistan leading to a full-fledged nuclear war.

The first decade of the twenty-first century saw significant shifts in South Asia's internal and external environments. These changes have the potential to have a significant impact on the political future of the entire region. South Asia has risen to such prominence in world events during the last decade that it has gained centuries. In the context of the global war on terror, the US-India Strategic Partnership, and India's development as a key player in China-India relations, most analysts see this shift as ideological. The strategy, drivers, and geographical activity of China are first discussed in this article. After that, the changing character of China's engagement in the South Asian region is examined in regard to its relations with India, Pakistan, and the United States.

Pakistani authorities are attempting to keep their options open while waiting for the US administration's attitude to China and other countries of Asia. This ambiguity comes at a crucial time for Pakistan's economy, which is likely to stay on edge for the foreseeable future. The COVID-19 outbreak has already had a negative impact on the country's development. Pakistan has been placed on the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) "grey List" until at least June 2022, raising concerns of new economic hurdles.

Literature Review:

Islam, M. T. (may ,2020) describes in study that The South Asian region has a great deal of value because of its Strategic position, political movement, economic volatility, and historical culture are all factors that must be considered. South Asia has a lot of regional



security dynamics and complexity, even though it has a lot of similar history, culture, social practises, and colonial history. The Indian–Pakistan conflict and rivalry was the focus of the region's security problems because of territorial and nonterritorial disputes. However, the study says that India is the most important player in this region because it has more resources than its neighbours. However, the relationship between India and its neighbours is strained, which has a negative effect on regional geopolitics. As a result, the strategic security of the region has become more complicated because many actors from both the state and non-state spheres live and work in the region. In addition, the South Asian region has been getting a lot of attention because India and Pakistan both have nuclear power. This has changed the security situation in this region. The rise of China is also a big problem in South Asia's security. The United States, Russia, and China, as well as the global partnership and other regional and international institutions, have also played a role in making the world less interested in this part of the world. It's also important to note that 1.88 billion people in this region face a lot of other problems that aren't related to traditional security. These problems include climate change, poverty, human and drug trafficking, illegal arms, religious extremism, and more. Though South Asia is very worried about traditional security threats, non-traditional threats should be looked at very closely because they can be very destructive.

Mahrukh Khan (2017) expressed in research paper that India and the United States have become more interested in each other over the last few years. Then, things changed when Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of India in 2016. This is when things changed. The relationship between the United States and India has grown stronger over the last decade, not only in the areas of defence and counter-terrorism, but also in the areas of cyber and home security. Further talks about how the US strategic partnership with India came to be. It has been a success for both parties. In this research paper, for the most part, talks about how the US and India are becoming more and more similar in their strategic goals. The paper also gives a quick look at how the US-Indian strategic partnership could grow under the Trump administration. It looks at whether it could be a strategic liability or a partnership for India. CPEC, which connects China and Pakistan, has made the US more dependent on India. It also talks about how India can be a global partner and an ally at different strategic levels.

Chunhao Lou (2012) express in his paper that, The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is becoming more important in the world, with the United States, India, and China, the three most important stakeholder groups in the region, all playing important roles. People should pay most attention to how the three countries think about the IOR and how they might fight for control of the seas there in the future. It's true, though, that competition doesn't mean fights. Because the three countries face similar security threats and have common interests



in the IOR, it is important for them to compete to a reasonable extent while working together to get things done. Because of their interdependence and common security issues, the future will be one of dynamic and manageable competition, not conflict and rivalry. This is because the future will be one of dynamic and manageable competition, not conflict and rivalry.

Pakistan's Perspective on the US-China Rivalry

Pakistan's strategic thinkers are well aware of the United States and China's ties, as well as the potential impact on Pakistan's relations with both countries. However, opinions range on how the US-China rivalry will affect Islamabad's relations with the US and what it signifies for regional strategic stability. Pakistan has always had significant ties with both the United States and China, on the basis of security, political, and financial factors. Pakistan's current relations with the US include Pakistan's continuous support in Afghanistan. While military and financial backing has dwindled, the United States remains Pakistan's largest export market and the preferred destination for the country's elite. China, on the other hand, has become Pakistan's top military supplier and has launched exceptional economic cooperation through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is valued at \$ 62 billion.(Shah, 2017) Pakistani strategists also look to China to provide an unambiguous rival to India and to assist energise the Kashmir problem internationally, something the US does not do. . This argument says that Pakistani decision makers should be careful when they deal with bilateral relationships with both countries that are important to Pakistan. They should not avoid them completely. Pakistan wants to reclaim role as a bridge state, remembering how it helped US-China relations during Nixon's time as president. A number of policymakers have raised the prospect that Pakistan may serve as a "neutral player" in order to assist ease tensions between the two great powers and combine in order to develop regional prosperity, Chinese and American interests must be aligned (including Afghanistan) , to transform into a "melting pot" In the process, Pakistan will stand to benefit from the increased security and economic opportunities that come with maintaining a constructive engagement with the two big global powers, without having to rely on either of them to an excessive degree.

Imran Khan's Foreign Policy:

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has stated that Pakistan's foreign policy is based on its relations with China, acknowledging that his country's foreign policy is completely reliant on the Chinese government. ANI, & @bsindia. (2022, February 7)



In February 2022, Imran Khan met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing. According to the joint statement issued following the meeting, the leaders of the two nations discussed topics related to regional relations, the global political environment, as well as all other aspects of bilateral relations. As part of his Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) speech, Prime Minister Imran Khan stated that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has played a vital role in Pakistan's socioeconomic development. Additionally, the leaders highlighted that Pakistan and China have long-standing strategic ties and a strong friendship with deep roots that is both time-tested and unbreakably bound. According to the statement, Pakistan stressed that their foreign policy is based on their connections with China, and that their deep friendship with China has the backing of the Pakistani people. Islamabad has expressed support for China on issues such as the One China Policy and the South China Sea, which the West views as an arbitrary policy enforced by Beijing in order to rein in its expansionist impulses. Pakistan reaffirmed its "commitment to the One China policy" and China's support for Taiwan, the South China Sea, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet, among other things. Beijing reiterated its commitment to the safeguarding of the sovereign rights, independence and security of Pakistan along with its economic growth and prosperity. ANI, & @bsindia. (2022, February 7)

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has claimed that his country wants to help bring the US and China closer together because "another cold war" would be damaging to everyone concerned. The interview was conducted with the China Global Television Network during his historic visit to Beijing to attend the inauguration ceremony of the 2022 Winter Olympics, was the channel through which he aired these opinions. During the interview, the Prime Minister was questioned about relations between Pakistan and China with reference to the United States, to which he responded that the world does not want a "second cold war." The globe should not be split into two sections, neither of which will benefit, in order to avoid a situation in which the world is split in two. People benefit when countries work together," he remarked. "In truth, everyone is in peril," he added. The Pakistani representative responded by saying that the country wants to play the same role it did in the 1970s, when it was "very important" to bring the two countries together. "Dr. Henry Kissinger's historic visit to Islamabad in 1971 was coordinated by Pakistan," he claimed, referring to the former US Secretary of State's visit to Islamabad in 1971 and subsequent visit to Beijing. (Reporter, 2021)

Therefore, we hope to play that role," the Prime Minister stated, pointing out that Pakistan "has strong connections with the United States and an iron brother relationship with China. (Reporter, 2021)

Regional Implications of Pakistan-China Relations:



When asked about the regional implications of Pakistan-China relations, the Prime Minister stated that "stability" has now arrived in the "strong relations." A series of new financial agreements between China and Pakistan signal to a shift in the region's political alignment, with ramifications for South Asia's neighbours, the United States, and Pakistan's future economic destiny. During their discussion, the US-led diplomatic boycott of the Olympic Games was announced to protest allegations of human rights violations in Xinjiang, which China denies.

The purpose of the high-level meeting, according to analysts, was to demonstrate support for Beijing during this period of diplomatic aggressiveness.

Since the establishment of the first trade agreement between Pakistan and China in 1963, the two countries' economic ties have grown stronger, as demonstrated by the establishment of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2013, which is a consolidation of China-funded infrastructure projects aimed at upgrading Pakistan's infrastructure and improving its economy. CPEC is a component of China's Belt and Road initiative. Chinese-Pakistani economic relations are not confined to trade and the CPEC alone, as China is one of Pakistan's top lenders, providing for more than a quarter of Pakistan's total credit. (Siddiqi, A. (2022, February 16)

The Joint Statement between China and Pakistan, according to some analysts, is a symbolic confirmation of the increasing alliance between the two countries, but it will have little impact on bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States. Because the US alleges that Pakistan hides and finances terrorist groups, and because Pakistan is frustrated with US drone operations and its infringement of sovereignty, visual ties between the two countries have deteriorated at the same time. (ali, 2020)

US-India Relations in Perspective of Pakistan:

Over the last decade and a half, India and the United States have grown their mutual interests. However, immediately after Narendra Modi was sworn in as India's Prime Minister in 2016, a significant shift in relations occurred. The United States and India have strong ties with each other, which began in the late 1990s and have remained strong ever since, have become increasingly important in the fields of defence and counter-terrorism cooperation, but also in cyber and homeland security. The visit to India by former US President Bill Clinton in 2000 marked the beginning of a new era in bilateral relations between the two countries. The bilateral ties were established after the two nations signed a civil nuclear accord, paving the path for the US to expand its new strategic engagement with India. The President of the United States, Barack Obama, re-established a strategic



alliance with India in 2009, designating it a Global Strategic Partnership to face and overcome global issues. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India visited the United States in 2009.(Khan, 2017)

Barack Obama refers to India as a "defining 21st Century Partnership" that will be essential for the advancement of American strategic objectives in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. Relationships between the two countries have improved and become more solid under Modi's administration. In light of the rivalry between Russia, China, and Pakistan, the Modi government's foreign policy on US-India national interests is seen as a significant step forward.

In his address to the United States Congress in 2017, Prime Minister Modi emphasised the beginning of a new chapter in bilateral strategic relations between India and the United States. Strong linkages, he asserted, may serve as a foundation for peace, prosperity, and stability from Asia to Africa, as well as from the Indian to the Pacific oceans.

This rising strategic collaboration is not only of a geopolitical nature, but it is also based on common interests in a wide range of fields between the two countries as well. Defense, space programmes, technology, civilian nuclear cooperation, and other fields fall into this category. India's principal goal in strengthening its strategic ties with the United States is to eventually regard itself as a regional superpower. Additionally, the United States hopes to see Indian growth surpass that of China. (Madan & Chaos, 2017)

Cooperation in the defence sector is also an important aspect of this strategic collaboration. India has clearly been pushing itself to develop in South Asia and to compete with China, not only economically but militarily, over the previous decade. Several agreements, including those that strengthened Indo-US strategic and security relations, were inked in order to boost defence cooperation, for example. A unified perspective on Afghanistan and global terrorism, as well as joint patrols of the Indian Ocean and improved integration of both naval forces, are all on the horizon.

The success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is threatened not just by India but also by the United States, underscores the urgent necessity for strong connections between the two countries. The project's accomplishment confirms India's long-held apprehension of China increasing its maritime activity by massively investing in Pakistan's Gwadar port. Any defence agreements reached between the US and India have resulted in the CPEC project, which is being referred to as a "major issue" for the United States government. Both India and the United States have expressed concern about China's growth, while China's rising tide has rung alarm bells in many Asian countries.



Additionally, the CPEC project is expected to boost the economy of Pakistan, which is regarded a new challenge for India, which has failed to single out Pakistan in the context of terrorism and extremism on a number of international forums. (Madan & Chaos, 2017)

At the same time, the CPEC will give China direct access to the Indian Ocean's hot waters, indicating that the US is concerned about the developing links between Pakistan and China in the Greater Asia-Pacific area.

The formation of the Indo-US Strategic Partnership is one of the most significant geopolitical events that have occurred since the end of the Cold War. Although the United States and Pakistan have had a close relationship for decades, the United States' approach towards Pakistan has been one of denial and sanctions. The United States, on the other hand, not only assisted India in its economic development, but also in its strategic development. India has also managed to overcome its suspicion of the United States, although Pakistan continues to struggle. Another important factor contributing to the development of Indo-US ties is the ongoing engagement between the two nations, not only at the level of the government, but also at various other levels, such as the level of academia and think tanks.

Coexistence of US-China in South Asia:

United States interests in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region are diverse; with some being of high priority and others being of significant importance. China's expanding results revealed the presence both types. Washington wants to avoid conflicts that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons, whether between India and Pakistan or between India and China. The freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean is likewise regarded as critical by US authorities in ensuring open global activities. US policymakers have indicated interest in establishing a "free and open Indo-Pacific" - a regional political, security, and economic framework that is not dominated by any single country, including China. Furthermore, the US has identified a number of critical interests in South Asia. In addition to supporting local peace and stability efforts, such as the peaceful resolution of regional disputes, they also want to end Afghanistan's decades-long war and political crises after coalition forces withdrawal. Washington also wants to foster long-term, economic growth, commerce, human development, and human rights are all based on the market, as well as assist regional states in achieving energy security. Preventing and minimising climate change's consequences. (Shambaugh, 2018)

A number of significant changes are taking place in Washington's strategic landscape. Relations between the United States and China have visibly deteriorated in recent years, as



a result of a new US policy that was developed in response to increased Chinese insistence both in Asia and beyond, on its long-term ambitions. Bilateral tensions will make it more difficult for China and the US to work together on regional issues, and will push US policymakers pay even more attention to China's role and presence in South Asia. This means that even though the U.S. and China seem to have a lot in common with each other when it comes to things like strategic stability and terrorist elimination in South Asia, the two countries are actually competing against each other instead of working together. A large part of this difference stems from differing assessments of the same concerns. The Chinese government considers Pakistan, for example, to be a vital component of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and a strategy of countering the rise of India. It rejects the mindset of the United States and India, which seeks to sanction Pakistan for its support for extremists in the area. In order to legitimise Islamabad's actions, Beijing underlines Pakistan's comparative vulnerability against India. There are also concerns about China's non-sustainable debt and as well as its goal to acquire strategic access to the Indian Ocean Territory and India's north. The United States is also concerned about China's involvement with smaller South Asian governments. (Bo, 2020)

Reviewing US Policy in South Asia:

The significance of South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, beyond local and regional concerns, cannot be emphasised. The region will be a major focal point in global politics, with a critical relationship for the US-China conflict all over the world, especially in Asia and the developing world. South Asia is home to over a quarter of the world's population and nearly half of Asia's. Despite the fact that the COVID-19 outbreak has pushed the regional economy, the region is made up of strong emerging markets with high growth rates and the ability to compete with East Asia as a low-cost manufacturing centre. Indian Maritime transports 80% of global maritime trade and 40% of oil shipments at sea. The Indian Ocean stretches from Africa to the Middle East, as well as South and Southeast Asia and Australia, with key sea-point positions on both its eastern and western shores. The US Grand Command is in charge of important sites on worldwide operations, including the international waters, and is at the forefront of their strategic vision. As a result, the Indian Ocean's strategic relevance is critical in shaping the direction of world politics, even if it is briefly considered below the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic oceans for the sake of US national security. To be held in the region. It will be hard for the United States to keep its strategy for Southeast Asia the same over the next few years because of concerns about China and the combined trends in the region. First, Washington will set up a new balance with the two biggest countries in the region, India and Pakistan, so that they can work together better. With regard to diplomatic, security, economic, and public-to-public



problems, the United States will continue to maintain close connections with India. (Ayres, 2021)

The United States, on the other hand, is likely to recognise Pakistan's shared route to China and to give options to cooperation at a reasonable cost in order to identify ways to rebuild relations between the two countries. The need to shift strategic focus in comparison to bigger countries gives the US even more reason to get involved. It might also give China some of the responsibility for security. Keep an eye on China's growing influence in Afghanistan and the smaller South Asian countries. This will make the smaller South Asian countries more enthusiastic and want to do business with them.

Third, the United States will use a lot of different power tools to deal with South Asia instead of just maritime problems. It will be important for US policy to use more non-military tools of foreign policy to deal with China's efforts in diplomacy, trade, finance, technology, and development. The other US military will need to be less burdened by this and focus on its core tasks. Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), for example, is a project that focuses on development, commerce and finance, political influence, and security cooperation. Washington will have to think of ways to fight back against these efforts to weaken US power. Another thing to note is that the war in Afghanistan has had an effect on national security for the past 20 years. The withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan adds even more to the depth of deep involvement on issues affecting the Indian Ocean and South Asia's coast. China's expanding commercial and military involvement in the Indian Ocean is responsible for the bulk of this expansion, as well as the U.S. adopting an Indo-Pacific strategy that takes into account India's connection to the Pacific Ocean. (Ahmad & Gardner, 2021)

China Responds to Rising US Strategic Competition

In Beijing, there seems to be a growing consensus that US-China relations will be tense for a while. Other people think that China has time and speed in its favour when it comes to moving closer to the centre of the world stage. In order to reach their country's goals, Chinese leaders say they will have to get rid of stuff that stand in their way. To do so, China plans to use a three-pronged strategy in the short term: establish a hostile foreign environment so that domestic interests can be focused; reducing China's reliance on the United States while simultaneously boosting China's reliance on the rest of the world; In addition, China's influence in other countries is expanding. At the same time, China's activities are provoking strong reactions both within and outside the country.



Understanding China's view of US-China ties, as well as China's response to quick changes in their international environment - and, most importantly, China's response to rapid changes in their international environment is significant. China's activities now directly affect the lives of Americans and people all around the world, due to its growing economic strength geopolitical significance.

This evaluation of China's familiarity with the US held until late January 2020, when the two sides completed discussions on a "Phase-1" trade agreement. The bilateral dynamic quickly changed in the weeks that followed. Faced with the personal and financial losses caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, President Trump abandoned Chinese President Xi Jinping as his friend and declared China to be his enemy and the source of many Americans' sufferings. And China has responded in such, pointing to its propaganda cannons as a response to America's public health crisis and the seriousness of the resulting social, economic, and political challenges. Relations between China and the United States have deteriorated dramatically in recent years. It all boils down to US policymakers' terrible misunderstanding of China. What has happened is that the United States has tried to repress China and start a new Cold War. This has not only hurt the people of both countries, but it has also had a deleterious effect on the world. China has a steady and consistent policy toward the United States. ("TRENDS Research and Advisory - US-China Strategic Competition in the Asia-Pacific," n.d.)

China's Strategic Goal in South Asia:

In the international order, the rise of China as a possible rival to the United States-led Western supremacy is a sign that great power wars are back for the first time in decades. By 2030, China, the world's second-largest economy, will have surpassed the United States as the world's largest economy, it's based on official estimates. In cutting-edge technologies like quantum research, 5G communications, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and space, China is also leapfrogging ahead of the rest of the world. China's growth as a global economic, scientific, and military force has alarmed the United States and some of its allies. The US and China are becoming more and more wary of each other's moves in the South and East China Seas, as well as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) goal to bring a lot of Eurasia into its economy.

China's President, Xi Jinping, stated in his 19th Party Congress speech in October 2017, "China will deepen relations with its neighbours in accordance with the principles of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness, as well as the policy of forging friendship and partnership with its neighbours."



South Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, have grown closer to Beijing in political, economic, and security matters as China's neighbours. All of these examples demonstrate that China is not only appealing to the good in the hearts of its South Asian neighbours' people. Instead, Beijing has developed a geostrategic strategy to the region that aims to protect its national interests while also promoting international cooperation. As a result, South Asian countries must consider the long-term consequences of China's increasing presence and activities in their own regions. This brief examines the issues that various South Asian countries have in their relations with China and demonstrates that Beijing offers to support them across the board through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Beijing's Large Infrastructure Development and Investment Program. In South Asia, strong scepticism of this economic component of China's strategy persists, as it has the potential to support Beijing's broader geopolitical aims, including a geostrategic siege of India. It is particularly vital to consider what the repercussions of this expanding US-China rivalry would be in the already fragmented South Asian security environment, where the US has invested in India to compete with China, while Pakistan has developed deeper connections with the Chinese government.

The rapid escalation of US-China hostility is worsening, and the bilateral nature of the conflict has put Pakistan in a particularly precarious position. Avoiding putting all of Pakistan's eggs in one basket and rejecting pressure from China to join China in the ensuing strategic rivalry are both in the country's national interest. Relations between the United States and China may become more complicated as Pakistan seeks to maintain relations with both countries in order to maintain Pakistan's growing economic and security cooperation with China, as well as its efforts to cooperate with the United States and the international community on these issues. Furthermore, the intense competition between the United States and China offers larger concerns to regional stability in South Asia, with the possibility for higher tensions between combat zones, increased nuclear weapon flows, and stability targets in Afghanistan and elsewhere. This includes harmful consequences on the environment. Pakistani officials are trying to keep their options open while they wait for the new administration to decide how to deal with China and the rest of the world. This uncertainty comes at a very important time for Pakistan's economy, which will be on pins and needles for a long time. (“TRENDS Research and Advisory - US-China Strategic Competition in the Asia-Pacific,” n.d.)

CONCLUSION:

Despite having a long and increasing connection with China, Pakistan is heavily reliant on US military weapons and the US export market. Strong economic relations with the United



States, which go beyond the traditional carrot-and-stick patterns of aid and coercion, can undoubtedly help Pakistan's policy alternatives. However, in the lack of present political will in the United States, it would be up to Pakistani policymakers to considerably improve bilateral relations with Pakistan in order to find potential chances for bilateral collaboration with the United States, such as connections with China. South Asia is one of the world's least integrated areas, with a population of 1.3 billion people. Several international organisations, including the United States and multilateral institutions like as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), have endorsed efforts to restore the "ancient silk route."

Pakistani strategists also look on China for continued support in confronting non-rival India and to help drive the Kashmir problem internationally, which the US does not provide. Islamabad's economic dependence on China is growing because of its strong military and defence ties to China, which is part of China's planned "Belt and Road" project. As the ex- prime minister, Imran Khan has said that his country and China are close friends. He also said that his government would do everything it could to keep this promise. . The rivalry between the United States and China not only affects Pakistan's relations with other significant regional players, but it also creates possibilities and challenges within Pakistan itself. In Islamabad, the rising coordination between India and the United States in the Indo-Pacific area to counter China's influence has gotten no attention, nor has it proved ineffectual for Pakistan. The deepening enmity between the US and China, which is bolstering both sides' contemporary weapons and intelligence capacities, could exacerbate the long-awaited Pakistan-confrontation while also jeopardising US-China collaboration to address the impending catastrophe. There has been a lot of tension between India, China, and Pakistan on the Himalayan border since Narendra Modi took away Kashmir and Ladakh's sovereignty in August of 2019. In eastern Ladakh, there are still a lot of connections between China and India. This gives Pakistan a chance to strengthen its cross-border attacks against India with China by getting a better position on the Line of Control. Indians are increasingly concerned about the possibility of being confronted with war on both their Chinese and Pakistani borders at the same time. These threats might destabilise already fractured Indo-Pakistan relations in an unforeseen way.

The ongoing border dispute between India and China has given rise to opportunities for the United States to work more closely with New Delhi. Regional players are eagerly monitoring the Gwadar port in Pakistan. Since 2013, Pakistan has been conducting joint naval exercises with China in the Arabian Sea, despite no convincing evidence of a change in Gwadar's naval or dual-use port. The development of a Chinese maritime presence in Gwadar may increase tensions between Pakistan and several Gulf states that host a strong



US military and naval force. In Afghanistan, in particular, the US-China rivalry does not appear to strain Pakistan's regional ties. With respect to the greater US-China rivalry, Pakistan's role in Afghanistan is governed by how it perceives itself as a threat to India. Despite their fierce rivalry, the US and China are likely to concur on the future stability of Afghanistan. On the other hand, evidence suggests that China has negotiated an arrangement with the Taliban to defend its economic interests in Afghanistan. However, the CPEC is quickly becoming one of the most important challenges of today's fight for great power. The US opposed to China's presence and investment in Gwadar, a vital deep sea port near the Arabian Gulf that connects not just western China but also Russia and Central Asian states via Afghanistan.



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