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Deciphering Pakistan Navy’s Role in CPEC Security: A Comprehensive Security Approach

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary geo-political and geo-economics potentialities creates new horizons for the bilateral relations between states. These potential arrangements require security as a pre-requisite, both traditional and non-traditional domain. Pakistan Navy is dealing with these security threats from a comprehensive security approach. Through Task Force-88 and Task Force-150 as well as the Force Protection Battalion (FPB) for the security of CPEC from foreign actors, it has made enormous efforts to protect the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) from new challenges and threats. This demonstrates that the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and the Pakistan Navy might accomplish compressive security through joint efforts. The protection and defence of sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) and the maritime-based economy are also enshrined in Pakistan's maritime doctrine. The Pakistan Navy's active engagement in Pakistan's security sector has also opened doors for the improvement of bilateral ties between various countries through the AMAN Exercises, a global collaboration of 45 nations to combat rising security threats.

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Introduction

“CPEC is a game changer and it would bring economic revolution for the region” (The News, 2017) stated by General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Pakistan’s former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) while speaking at a function on CPEC logistics. CPEC has the potential to act as an active game changer in the South Asian politics, because of its strategic location. CPEC is very much associated with the strategic implications, because it carries both opportunities and vulnerabilities as well. When it comes to the strategic implications of CPEC a three model approach best defines the CPEC in an organized manner. These are: friendship, strategic

completion and exporting China's development. (Schwemlein, 2019, p. 7) The CPEC faces many difficulties despite being a game-changer on the big chessboard of South Asia. These challenges are both in the traditional and non-traditional security domain. Pakistan is facing multiple threats in context of easy and swift implementation of CPEC. The potential threats that could hamper the execution of CPEC is the India's support to proxies and other non-state actors in Baluchistan to sabotage the CPEC (Ali et al., 2019, p. 67). Moreover, apart from this threat of piracy, terrorism, smuggling can also cause prospective damage to the CPEC project.

In order to address the looming threats to CPEC a comprehensive security strategy is required where, the Pakistan Navy (PN) can play a very active and conducive role. This paper aims to clarify the function of PN in reducing CPEC's traditional and non-traditional security vulnerabilities. In order to explain it from a theoretical perspective and highlight the importance of the strategic location of CPEC. The Sir Halford Mackinder's "*Heartland Theory*"¹(Glassner & Farher, 2003, p. 274-75) along with Nicholas Spykman's "*Rimland Theory*" (Ibid, 275) is employed to bring out the strategic importance of CPEC and Gwadar Port and how this strategic location can act as a game changer² (Saleem Gillani, 2020) in the regional and international sphere. This paper comes to the conclusion that since CPEC is the centerpiece project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it is crucial for both the Pakistan Navy and the PLAN to participate and develop a "*Comprehensive Security Strategy*"³(Buzan, 1991, p. 433) for the future security of CPEC project, because it has a domino impact on both the economic and strategic interests of China and Pakistan respectively.

1. Theoretical Framework: Heartland Vs Rimland Discourse in Geopolitics

As Collin S. Gray mentioned in his book *Strategy for Chaos*, "Geography is the Mother of all strategies" (Gray, 2004, p. 21) The efficacy of the CPEC project also rests upon its strategic geographic location. In order to develop a theoretical construct, it is imperative to explain the Heartland and Rimland Theory. Central Asia is considered as the heartland according to Halford Mackinder, it is of vivacious importance due to the easy cross border movement amongst Middle East, South Asia, Caucasus and East Asian region. The heartland theory's perspective gives importance to the landmass and explores the importance of geopolitics for power acquisition. According to Mackinder "*Who controls the heartland (Central Asia) will control the world*". (Mackinder, 1951, p. 12) The first version of the Heartland Theory in the year 1904 was centered towards the

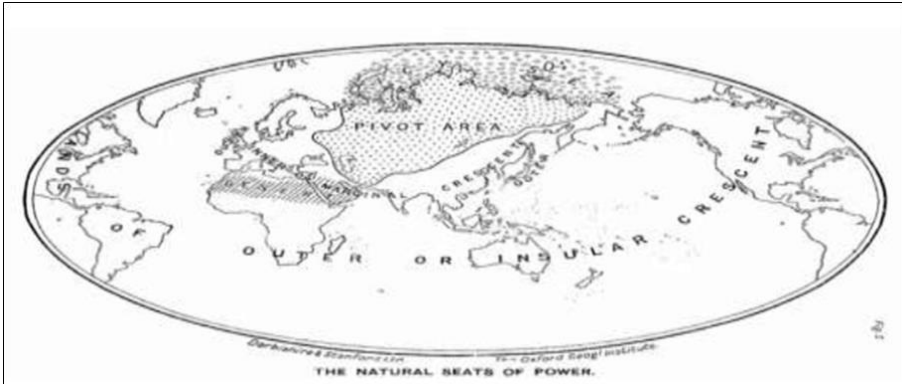
¹ According to Heartland Theory, "who controls the heartland will control the world islands, who control the world Islands will control the world."

² For both China and Pakistan, CPEC is crucial from a geopolitical and financial standpoint. It will connect China with the Central Asian and South Asian markets, changing the geopolitical landscape for Pakistan and its interests in the area. The travel period by ship from China to the Arabian Gulf is 13,000 km (45 days). This distance will be cut in half by CPEC, to 2500 km (an 80% reduction). A 78 percent reduction in shipping time will result in a delivery period of under 10 days. Security specialists think that the US Navy may close the Strait of Malacca during a future conflict in Asia, endangering China's possible trade routes. With CPEC as a backup route, China's shipping time to connect with Europe will be shortened.

³ Comprehensive Security Strategy goes beyond the traditional realist and state centric approach towards security. It includes the non-traditional (human, economic, cyber and environmental) dimension as well.

Deciphering Pakistan Navy's Role in CPEC Security: A Comprehensive Security Approach

“pivot area”. Mackinder further bifurcated the pivot area into three dimensional geopolitical structure of the entire world. First tier is composed of Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. The second tier, which he refers to as the "inner marginal crescent," includes the regions Mackinder assigned to East Asia (China), the Middle East, South Asia, and Europe. The outer insular crescent, or third tier, is made up of island countries like Australia and Britain, Japan, Canada and the United States.



Source: Halford J. Mackinder, —The Geographical Pivot of History, *The Geographical Journal*, 23:4 (April, 1904), 421.

Rimland Theory: Counter Discourse on the Heartland Theory

Prior to Mackinder and Nicholas J Spykaman, Alfered T. Mahan has remained the dominant actor in the discourse of geopolitics and sea power. Mahan tended to lean more towards maritime power. He suggests overusing sea power in his important work "The Influence of Sea Power on History" from 1890. The central focus of his dictum was on the oceanic powers, “Whoever rules the waves, rules the world”. (Down, et al 1983, p. 208) His point of analysis was that British hegemony in the world is based upon its control over the sea, through its smart and sophisticated naval power. He advocated that United States having control over the oceanic strategic locations would help the US to achieve the status of global power. In contrast to Mahan, Nicholas Spykman has an alternate view, he did not like to talk about the mastery over the oceans rather emphasized to control the areas that are adjacent to the oceans. Like his predecessors, his point of reference was also centered towards the oceanic powers i.e. Great Britain and the USA should build their strengths on the rims of the continental world. When Spykman's

Rimland idea was put forth in 1943, he changed the dimension suggested by Mackinder while maintaining Eurasia as the globe's geographic centre. Spykman summarized his contribution to the literature —“Who controls the Rimland dominates Eurasia; who controls Eurasia controls the destinies of the world must be the Old World's catchphrase for the interplay



of power politics”.(Spykman, 1994, p. 43)

Source: *Introduction to Political Geography* by Marc Ira Glassner & Chuk Farher

2. Application of Heartland and Rimland Theory on CPEC

In South Asia, Pakistan is associated with the Rimland theory, because it establishes the noteworthy part of the Rimland, and it is adjacent to the *Heartland* i.e. pivot of Asia. It is important to mention here about China’s geographical location that incorporates both the parameters of “*Heartland and Rimland*”. (Ismailov & Papava, 2010, p. 72-74) The most important factor is that China's rims lack the mobility and market access necessary to function as strategic assets in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The conflictual regional situation is a result of the Malacca issue and the growing US-India military presence in the Indian Ocean. The Rimland theory is based on the concept of cooperation between the Heartland (China) and the Rimland (Pakistan) in the context of application to the CPEC. The strategic cooperation between Pakistan and China is a most promising way out to address the regional conundrums such as the Malacca Dilemma, connecting Strait of Hormuz and Bab ul Mandab and security of Chinese maritime footprints at the Horn of Africa. (Elahi, 2015, p. 36) This research study proposes, Heartland and Rimland Strategic Interplay (HRSI) through CPEC and Gwadar Port will help to develop a comprehensive security strategy compatible with the interests of both China and Pakistan based on Cooperative Framework Model. Under the Cooperative Framework Model, it is the time when both Heartland and Rimland Theories need to assimilated and studied under a singular framework to galvanize the role of Gwadar as a critical node of the CPEC. Naval Cooperation between both countries is directly proportional for gaining the mutual interests. The cooperative model for China and Pakistan in mathematical terms can be written as:

$$(PLAN + PN) \quad \propto \quad (\text{Rise of China} + \text{Economic Development in Pakistan})$$

Cooperation ←————→ Outcome

The comprehensive security strategy is based on the security cooperation between the PLAN and PN versus the military and non-military challenges emanating from the adversarial players in the region.

3. Role of Pakistan Navy in Enhancing Strategic Importance of CPEC

China views Pakistan as a pivotal country in its efforts to ascend towards a global powerhouse. China's reliance on the CPEC project is instrumental in establishing a network that encompasses ports, railway lines, and roads connecting the abundant natural resources of Middle Eastern oil and gas to the bustling mega cities in East Asia. The strategic location of the CPEC coastline is essential for China to expand its naval might since it enables an extension from the Indian Ocean that connects the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. (Small, 2015, p. 1) "CPEC is regarded as the most important project in the BRI in terms of strategic value, mainly due to its ability to link the BRI's maritime connections via the Gwadar Port located in southern Pakistan. The Maritime Silk Route (MSR) and the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), which are regarded as the modern-day iterations of the old Silk Road, are connected economically via the CPEC region." (Lei, 2015) "China's substantial \$46 billion investment in the region makes CPEC as game changer in South Asia. This investment aims to establish a connection between Pakistan's southern region, particularly Gwadar Port, and China's western province of Xinjiang, extending to its northern province. The establishment of a 2500-mile-long energy and communication corridor is anticipated to have a profoundly revolutionary effect on the area." (Ali, 2016, p. 3-7) As discussed overleaf maritime security is critical for the progress and prowess of the state. The majority of global trade passes through marine routes and is reliant on safe maritime routes, making maritime trade of utmost significance throughout history. There is a significant contribution of PN for security of this strategic region. To attain this end PN initiated its objective of setting a Special Taskforce-88, which is the first initiative of PN to fulfil the grand objective of maritime and CPEC security. (The CPEC Bulletin, 2017) The Article II of United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) adheres that state's sovereignty is not confined to land, but it extends to the territorial waters as well. Therefore, good maritime security is essential to the CPEC's success; without secure seas, the project will fail. To tackle SLOCs coming from the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz as well as the conventional and atypical security threats in the Gwadar region, PLAN and PN must build a thorough security plan. Piracy and human trafficking are significant issues in the Indian Ocean, in addition to the growing instability threat posed by Indian forces in the area. The security of the Gwadar Port, the security of SLOCs, and vessel security are three strategically significant areas that PN is working on with the aid of PLAN. ("CPEC and Pakistan's Maritime security," 2020) Pakistan's Maritime Doctrine 2018 adheres to protect the SLOCs and maritime economy both at the regional and international level. Maritime Doctrine of Pakistan takes its viewpoint from the Pakistan's Navy Vision statement:

"Pakistan Navy is envisioned to be a multidimensional force with the ability of combat readiness synergized with professionally competent and motivated human resource infused with staunch faith in ALLAH SWT and the national cause of integrity and solidarity, that subsidizes to the national security, credible deterrence and maritime economy; securing the maritime interests of Pakistan, while blistering influence at the regional and global level."
(Operational Plans Division Naval Headquarter, 2018, p. 23)

PN is focusing on the security of maritime arena of CPEC through joint naval exercises with the PLAN. Through Chinese investment, the joint venture between CPEC and Gwadar Port will support Pakistan's sustainable growth, and it will serve as a focal point for international discussion. Gwadar Port is very helpful for effectively monitoring the SLOCs flowing from Persian Gul and the Strait of Hormuz. Gwadar Port has the potential to house all commercial and security paraphernalia essentially required for the overall security of CPEC. An appropriate response shall be generated against both the traditional and nontraditional threats in collaboration with PLAN operating from its base from Djibouti or a task force operating at sea. The security of SLOCs in and around Gwadar can thus be ensured.

4. CPEC: Driver of Pak-China Naval Collaboration

China, a worldwide challenger and developing force, has strengthened its naval presence since 1995, and in the next fifteen (15) years, it is anticipated to quadruple. (Kaplan, 2009, p. 19) To strengthen its presence in the Indian Ocean and safeguard the vital SLOCs, China must reduce its reliance on the Strait of Malacca and increase its investment in CPEC. PLAN and PN have expanded role in the safety and security of CPEC in maritime domain and thus needs to be equipped and geared accordingly. Both navies are fully cognizant of the fact and are chalking out plans to shoulder this strategic responsibility. (Panneerselvam, 2017, p. 39) Out of all the BRI corridors, CPEC is the only bilateral corridor that represents the "all-weather friendship" between China and Pakistan symbolically. The cooperative naval actions, such as naval drills and naval cooperation between the Pakistan Navy and PLAN in the IOR and the Arabian Sea, are directly related to the development of CPEC. In the year 2015 both China and Pakistan signed agreements related to CPEC titled as "*All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership*" (Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs., 2015) naval engagement between Pakistan and China. This led to Pakistan procuring more naval equipment from China for its naval upgradation. (Panneerselvam, 2017, p. 43). The upshot is, CPEC will augment the Chinese presence in the IOR adding to the strategic benefit of both Pakistan and China in the long run.

Pakistan-China naval cooperation is dependent upon the modernization of PN's naval ships and surface combatants. In the next decade Pakistan is planning to induct Chinese Type 054A/P frigates and also a destroyer along with F-22 frigate for controlling the sea. For its anti-access/area denial (A2AD) strategy, the Pakistan Navy intends to utilize Chinese 039A attack submarines with air independent propulsions that can transport both torpedoes and anti-ship cruise missiles. It was anticipated that Pakistan will receive four these submarines by 2023 and will build four more in the year 2028. It was delayed initially because of Covid-19 and later on due to export control decision, such as Germany declines to provide diesel engines to China, because of its military use. It is also stated that Pakistan will receive a submarine every six months in the beginning of 2024. C-802 anti-ship cruise missile which are equipped with solid rocket booster for extended range and are able to be launched from ship land and aircraft are also in the procurement list of Pakistan Navy and Air force. The ultimate question is how Pakistan Navy will purchase this modernization equipment from China. The easy answer to this question is that financial funding will be generated from interest free loans and military financing from China. Since 2015, Pakistan is receiving around

Deciphering Pakistan Navy's Role in CPEC Security: A Comprehensive Security Approach

\$225 million in shape of Chinese military aid to Pakistan. This military aid which Pakistan receives is also because of the CPEC project. (Lalwani, 2023, p. 11)

In terms of naval cooperation both PN & PLAN held "Sea Guardians-2" exercise in Shanghai waters in the mid of July 2022. The joint naval exercise was held to counter and neutralize the maritime security threats which were threat to the major SLOCs. Drills against missiles, aircraft, and submarines were also included in this exercise. The presence of the guided missile frigate Taimur, which is thought to be China's most technologically advanced vessel built for PN, in these exercises demonstrates China's assistance for the modernization and training of Pakistan's naval forces. China has recently given Pakistan's naval modernization more attention. The \$5 billion USD deal signed in 2016 between China and Pakistan is primarily focused upon the procurement of 8 Yuan Class type-041 diesel submarines from China by 2028. China's interest towards naval modernization of Pakistan is clear indication towards the successful implementation and development of CPEC project. (Lalwani, 2023, p. 13)

Politics of CPEC and Pakistan Navy

CPEC is surrounded by multi layered politics where the regional and international players are involved having convergence and divergence of interests. BRI which is an economic project is now turned into a geopolitical competition between the major powers. BRI of China and US Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) is regarded as two initiatives countering each other. Contrary to this, United States and European joint initiative of Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is also under consideration. Beijing is also engaged in several other projects to secure its share in the international market countering the US moves. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its expansion to South Asia, as well as the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), are the multilateral frameworks that China has offered in an effort to pique international interest, secure its economic and strategic interests in Asia's core, and maintain a prestigious position. The project initiated by China titled "*Made in China 2025*" which is developed to meet new demands of emerging markets. (Kenedy, 2015)

Since there are multiple players involved in the CPEC, henceforth the strategy adopted by PN is a multipronged strategy to deal with the existing challenges. The foremost among them is the Gwadar port security. To satisfy the demands for security and to demonstrate its involvement in collaborative maritime security and maritime domain awareness, PN is undertaking security patrols and coastal exercises with the fleets of regional and international players. PN has also deployed a Force Protection Battalion (FPB) with resources and equipment both on shore and land to guarantee the security of Chinese people and the Gwadar Port. It will further exacerbate with the increase in trade and its related activities. (Shaikat, 2016) PN is considered as the lifeline of the CPEC project. The survival of CPEC project and China – Pakistan strategic interests is dependent upon the active role of PN.

5. Traditional Security Threats to CPEC

The traditional security threats to the CPEC since its initiation in 2013 is a well-documented fact. In the spectrum of traditional security threats role of regional

and extra-regional actors, India and United States cannot be brushed aside. The United States perceives CPEC and BRI as a threat to its supremacy and lop-sided unipolar global order. At the regional level India feels to be the most negatively affected nation vis-à-vis CPEC. According to Indian strategic circles across the board, CPEC implications on India are multi-dimensional ranging from military, political, economic and societal. China and Pakistan have repeatedly offered India to become part of CPEC (Naqvi, 2017) and be a partner for sustainable regional peace and economic prosperity on sustainable footings. The Indian policymakers are not yet ready to join CPEC, because of their historical grievances and misplaced perceptions against both China and Pakistan.

In order to counter the influence of China and Pakistan, India has developed a two-pronged strategy. First, it has built a sizable naval base at Karwar, which is south of Goa and serves as the western springboard of the Indian Ocean. Second, it has invested in the Chabahar Port, which provides access to Afghanistan via the Indian Ocean. (Shah, 2015). To materialize this aggressive posture, India is utilizing all possible means in particular its intelligence setup operating offshore. Pakistan's former Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal stated, "Kulbushan Jadhav's presence and his activities in Baluchistan are testimony that India is trying to sabotage CPEC. (Press Trust of India, 2017) In Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) a special desk is created for undermining the implementation of CPEC project. The RAW chief is directly supervising this venture who is in direct contact with the Indian Prime Minister. The sum of Indian perception pertaining to CPEC is based on an understanding that Chinese will gain an upper hand in the Arabian Sea because of monitoring and control on the Strait of Hormuz. This entails Indian efforts to intensify the work on Chabahar Port to counter the Chinese influence and progress of Gwadar Port in the region.

In addition, India is attempting to destabilize Pakistan's coastal regions, including Sindh because to the presence of fissiparous inclinations among some of the public and local authorities there and Baluchistan due to the region's abundance of oil and gas resources. Due to the convergence of interests of the three players, Iran is also interested in the CPEC and wants to connect the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline with China. (Bhutta, 2015) Iran accepts both Chabahar and Gwadar because they advance its objectives. Chabahar provides access to Afghanistan and Central Asia for import and export as well as transit to the nearby regions. To address the standard security concerns going forward The Pakistani Army has created the Special Security Division, which includes 12000 soldiers, to ensure the security of the CPEC projects. (Gishkori, 2015) The Chinese and Pakistani Navy ships will safeguard the maritime component of CPEC from external threats. The Special Task Force "TF-88" launched by PN in 2016 is to make sure and enhance the security measures. China has also provided four ships to Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) for this purpose. (Gaddy, 2017)

In nutshell, traditional security threats to CPEC are India centric in collusion with extra regional forces operating in and around Strait of Hormuz to safeguard their own interests. India is the only country which is reluctant to join the BRI project because of its staunch rivalry with Pakistan and China. Second, India believes that the CPEC and BRI could undermine its plans for hegemony in South Asia. Thirdly, according to Indian policymakers, China's expansion and presence in the

area under the BRI will isolate India in the IOR.

6. Nontraditional Security Threats

In the nontraditional security domain human is the referent object of security. The CPEC is also under threat in the nontraditional domain. As PN plays an active role in curbing the military threats to CPEC. The nontraditional security threats such as terrorism, piracy and smuggling are also challenging the efficacy of CPEC. In this paper three important variable posing threat to CPEC security enlisted as: terrorism, piracy and human trafficking. The AMAN Exercises of 2021 were aimed to contain the non-traditional security threats in the IOR. (Siddiqui, 2021)

i. Terrorism

Terrorism has immensely effected Pakistan's security after 2001 and Global war on Terror (GWOT). Though terrorism and violence has declined in Pakistan after 2016, the attacks frequency was increased in the Balochistan province particularly in 2019. The security officials heading on the coastal highway to Makran were the targets of the most notable attacks by the Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS). (Zahid, 2019) In May 2019 the attack on Pearl Continental Hotel Gwadar by Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) also signaled an intense insecurity scenario for the Chinese investors in Gwadar and CPEC. To ward off existing threats to the life of Chinese engineers from the non-state actors a credible response mechanism by the Pakistan Army and Navy is underway. The Special Task Force "TF-88" to ensure safety and security of CPEC in a comprehensive manner is being operationalized. Additionally, the terrorism at sea has recently been manifested in the shape of attacks on the Saudi and UAE ships by the Yemeni terror groups. ("Terrorist attack' strikes oil tanker at Saudi port in Jeddah," 2020) Thus the dynamics of any such terror attack on the viability of CPEC traffic at sea needs a regular deliberation amongst the guardians of this domain. A small incident of hitting a convey of ships emanating from Gwadar by a small explosive laden boat or use of small improvised floating IED on passing ship will have far reaching effects in terms of security and finances (imposition of war risk surcharge) by the sea farer community. Its need less to mention that only agency, in Pakistan, geared to handle this threat is the Pakistan Navy. Thus, there is need to equip and prepare PN in this regard by all the strategic stake holders.

Pakistan can reap maximum benefit from CPEC because of its unique geo-strategic location by having a strong navy for an effective sea defence at the national and international level. PN can serve as a catalyst for effectively implementing Pakistan's strategic location in order to advance its national interest. Despite serving as the coast's watchdog, the Pakistan Navy also acts as a deterrent in the Indian Ocean, as well as for the CPEC and Gwadar Port.

In order to increase interoperability and counter non-traditional security threats, Pakistan Navy collaborates with regional and international naval forces. The Pakistan Navy has also joined Task Force 150, an international coalition led by the US and designed to combat non-traditional security concerns like terrorism and criminal activity. The recent seventh 2021 AMAN Exercises joined by 45 nations independently taking part in a non-block was recently held in the Karachi Port of

Pakistan. The vessels from Russian Navy and six other countries including aviation and anti-terror units participated in the AMAN Exercise 2021.

Russian Defence Minister observed about the AMAN Exercise 2021: *“exercises held from 12 to 16 February in Arabian Sea is devoted for strengthening the military cooperation between participating nations dedicated to secure the interests of participating countries and maintain peace and stability at sea. It is also aimed towards sharing the experience for countering the maritime piracy in areas of heavy shipping and rescue operation at sea”*. (“Multinational naval exercise ‘Aman-2021’ begins in Arabian Sea,” 2021)

ii. Piracy and Smuggling

Piracy and smuggling are the real and most tangible threats to the security of CPEC project. Since it is situated in such a location where it is more vulnerable to the non-traditional security threats. It includes, smuggling, piracy and human trafficking. “TF-88 is going to be commissioned this week and it will be an additional force multiplier for the safety and security of CPEC,” said Senator Mushahid Hussain, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC. Special Security Division is responsible for the security of its land route, and currently Pakistan Navy's TF-88 is in charge of keeping the centre of the CPEC (Gwadar) safe and secure”. A senior Pakistan Navy official in an interview to DAWN stated *“Ships, aircraft, Fast Attack Crafts, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and surveillance equipment make up TF-88. For the sake of safety and security, the marine force would be stationed around the sea and Gwadar Port. To ensure the maritime security of the CPEC and Gwadar Port, PN is making use of its resources. The challenges of safeguarding the security of the CPEC and the port of Gwadar in both conventional and nontraditional regions are well known to us”*. (“Special force set up to guard Gwadar port’s sea lanes,” 2016)

In an interview with Defence News the former Pakistan Naval Chief Adm. Zafar Mahmood Abbasi stated that “India is the potential threat to the maritime security of Pakistan and will go to every extent to sabotage CPEC project and threatens the security of Gwadar Port, along with India being a traditional threat, non-traditional security threats including maritime terrorism, human smuggling and drug trafficking are also registered as the major concerns for PN. PN is dedicated to upholding its internal security responsibilities and expediting its civil power tasks. The underutilization of our marine potential and the slow development of maritime culture in Pakistan are two barriers to achieving our maritime potential. PN is developing numerous strategies and taking initiatives to raise awareness in the civil sector by involving various sectors of civil society, including the intelligentsia, maritime industry, chamber of commerce, media outlets, and universities, in order to highlight the importance of the maritime sector and its importance in the national security discourse.” (Ansari, 2020) The external variables (powers) are trying to disrupt the CPEC, because it is against their interest. The US at the systemic level tries to contain the presence of rising China in South Asia and supports India and the Chabahar Project, despite having rivalry with Iran. It is also believed that the close cooperation and joint naval exercises between the People's Navy (PN) and the PLAN pose risks to India's objectives in South Asia in general and the Indian Ocean in particular through the CPEC.

Conclusion

CPEC is a \$46 billion huge investment from China in Pakistan for building road, rail and sea networks encompassing state-to-state and people-to-people mutually beneficial equation on long-term basis. This is parallel with the multifaceted ramifications ranging from systemic level to a rivalry between US and China to regional quest among India, China and Pakistan. For China CPEC provides multiple benefits, the most important among them is the “Malacca Dilemma” (Storey, 2016), which is the most contending issue in China's foreign policy. In order to fulfil its energy needs, China needs a consistent flow of oil, but because there aren't enough navies in the Strait of Malacca, it can't defend its SLOCs. Singapore is linked to Malaysia, Indonesia, and other nations by the Strait of Malacca, a small body of water. The strong relations between Singapore and Anglo American bloc are the stumbling block towards China's trade and navigation. China's energy requirements are 75% met by Middle Eastern oil supplies. China needs a secure route for the shipping of oil from the Middle East to China. Gwadar offers the quickest and safest route for China's energy needs in this area. Pakistan's geo-strategic location has acted as central factor in the rise of China. Pakistan and China has signed around.

There is an estimated view that CPEC will be completed by 2030. Infrastructure projects totaling \$11.8 billion and \$33.8 billion are among the CPEC's proposed and authorized projects. (Ministry of Planning, Development, & Special Initiatives, 2020) The economic benefits attached with this multi-billion project also requires security from the external actors. Pakistan Navy in this regard is playing a leading role strengthening the coastal and maritime security setup by establishing the Coastal Watch Station and Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC). JMICC is aimed for collected information and data gathering pertaining to the Maritime Security. In the contemporary times, JMICC is coordinating among 35 organizations domestically in Pakistan and international organizations.

Recommendations

Based on the overleaf discussion the following recommendations for policy thinkers and managers are as follows:

1. The most important and the common factor where PN and PLAN can collaborate is the “mutual threat perception” vis-à-vis India. Indian being a common threat can bring both the Chinese and Pakistan's Navy to cooperate and minimize threat posed by the expansionism of Indian Navy at Indian Ocean and Strait of Malacca. It is now essential that China and Pakistan create a more exclusive Naval Cooperation Platform that would reduce the danger posed by the rising Indian Navy.
2. The second tier where both the navies should work is to enhance and strengthen the security of SLOCs both from traditional and nontraditional security threats. The security of SLOCs will assist both the countries to have easy access to major choke points like Strait of Hormuz and Bab-al- Mandab, which are considered as the economic lifeline of the world trade and navigation. The swift way to get easy access to the mentioned choke points is

through enhanced security of Gwadar and CPEC, with joint efforts of both China and Pakistan Navy.

3. The Gwadar Port will make it simple for Pakistan and China to join the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), which is currently at a standstill due to the presence of India. This expanded function of Gwadar Port in establishing connections with the Indian Ocean would persuade the other Indian Ocean Rim Association members to admit China and Pakistan as full members.
4. Since India has acquired sea based deterrence after acquiring Arihant submarine, henceforth it is pertinent for Pakistan also to deter its adversary by acquiring assured second strike capability, rather indigenously or through the support of its ally China to deter Indian hegemonic designs in the IOR.
5. For China to become a major global force, the CPEC project and the Gwadar Port must be completed as soon as possible. In 2017, China built its first naval station in Djibouti, marking the country's first outward military presence for anti-piracy operations. The combined efforts of the Pakistani and Chinese navies could have a variety of effects on their respective navies and national interests.
6. CPEC and Gwadar Port has reinvigorated the importance of sea power. Sea power which Alfred T. Mahan has illustrated in his influential work on sea power. The Influence of Sea Power upon history where he advocates that strong navy is the requirement for a super power status in the world. In this contemporary era again the importance of Sea Power is rejuvenated where the hallmark of powers is again concentrated on the sea power. The rivalry between US and China at the South China Sea in the Pacific, power contestation in the Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, and Black Sea at major choke points are witness to this fact that there is still strong influence of geography on the political and strategic discourse.
7. A conceptual framework may be crafted and implemented for conducting joint maritime patrols translating PN experience of participation in similar arrangements with US in GWOT campaign.
8. PN should engage academia in Pakistan's premier educational institutes and conduct nationwide awareness debates to underscore the importance of maritime domain and threats being posed therein due to "maritime oblivion" within and challenges from outside. In addition to any current arrangements, think tank level policy and strategy forming groups may be constituted with PNWC being the central hub of all intellectual pursuits. In sum, CPEC situates a critical role for the Pakistan's Navy for its successful realization. This in turn requires an inclusive and more vitalized role for Pakistan Navy in an inclusive strategic statecraft.

Deciphering Pakistan Navy's Role in CPEC Security: A Comprehensive Security Approach

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