

GWADAR VS CHABAHAR REGIONAL COOPERATION AND STRATEGIC COMPETITION.

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ABSTRACT.

Economic interests lead to strategic competition among states. Foreign policies are largely driven by this consideration. This paper will shed light on the prospects of CPEC and its alignment with ports of Gwadar and Cahaba. The future venues and rivalries emerging out of this competition in the light of historical background and a possible way forward. Further, hurdles coming in the away of bilateral relations and disturbance of Balance of power economic and otherwise will also be discussed at length. New alliances are coming forth in the region, Pakistan with China and Iran with India to further economic gains and regional integration. Research and analysis will further highlight the grey and red areas in the regional stability and bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan.

Key words .CPEC. Balance of power. Alliances. Strategic stability. Economic integration. Trade corridor. Port of Gwader. Port of Chahbahar. SREB. (silk road economic belt)

INTRODUCTION

The port of chabahar in Iran and Gwadar in Pakistan on the coast of makran are separated from each other barely by about 70kms. Infrastructure development taking place at these ports in south Asia is driven by competition for geographic control to secure resources and markets and the fear of strategic encirclement. Port Gwadar in Pakistan and chabahar in Iran have, respectively, solidified strategic alliances between china and Pakistan and between India and Iran. These projects are perceived to create an

uncertain balance of region power at a time when the US is reducing its military presence in the region.

Eastern and Western blocks

Before the defeat of the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan and prior to the disintegration of the eastern power block, the eastern and western blocks were involved in such rivalries. It has been said that zulfikerali Bhutto, a former prime minister of Pakistan, had gotten very close to signing an agreement in the late 1970s, according to which Pakistan was to allow the former soviet union to build a naval base in Gwadar port. In reaction to this move, the US planned to build a naval base near the port city of chabahar, however, the plan was aborted following the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran. During its occupation of Afghanistan, the USSR had envisioned connecting the two ports of Gwadar and chabahar through a road and rail network to central Asia in order to facilitate military movements. Following the collapse of eastern power bloc and subsequent power void, actors involved in the rivalry over makran coast become more varied. At present, India and china have changed the nature of their rivalry from “military” to “economic and trade” and are accordingly proposing to have their presence in the port cities of chabahar and Gwadar.

Gwadar Port: active Economic and Trade Hub.

China and Pakistan perceive the Gwadar port as an active economic and trade hub similar to Hong Kong and Singapore and are planning to turn it into a free trade port. It's contended that if it comes about, it will not only take Balochistan out of its current state of isolation and put it on path of development, but also will give impetus to the development of bigger geographical regions extending from China's Muslim dominated Xinyang

province to Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan. China's \$ 46 Billion project currently under implementation. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) includes various roads and rail projects a part form the Makran highway that that will connect Karachi to Gwadar and Karakoram region to Kahgar , the capital city of Chin's Xinjiang province. Parallax to this highway, a rail road and gas pipeline are to facilitate chin's access to energy resources in the person gulf and enable it to conduct trade through Gwadar port which would be connected to Afgisntan and central Asia through the west /chawa, international border between Pakistan and Afghisntan.

India Iran Similar objective (as those of CPEC)

Iran and India joined to implement a multipurpose project with similar objective case those of (CPEC) at Chabahar port, about 70 KM away from Gwadar on Iranian cost which will use rail and road networks to connect Chabahar to sustain and Baluchistan's capital city of Zahedan, there, it will be connected to Iran's national rail road network in the city of Birjand and then continue to Central Asia.

The some railroad will give out a branch in the city of Zabol to enter Afghanistan, further making its way into central Asia, Indian Prime Minister NarendraModi , Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani met in May 2016 in Tehran.

If both Gwadar port and Chabahar projects rhyme synergic ally, they have the potential to fuel all out human, economic, trade and cultural development across entire South Asia and Central Asia, sweeping through Iran and Afghanistan as well. The region otherwise gripped with poverty is prove to growth of radical religious or ethnic currents which oppose any system of government.

The entire region and the ports of Chabahar and Gwadar can look forward to an era of all around development. If, however, instead of developing partnerships the rivalries intensify ethnic strife in the geographical region has the potential to exacerbate such rivalries. In such a scenario, there will be a cold winter ahead for all players.

The significance of Pak China Economic Corridor

For the China the most promising reward for developing the Economic Corridor with Pakistan is considerable reduction in the distance of China from Persian Gulf before the Development of Economic Corridor with

Pakistan China was having the problem of long travel of 12,900 KM from Beijing to Persian Gulf CPEC is expected to reduce this distance to, 500 KM only time of Transit will be reduced form 45 days to 10 days only, according to CPEC china less developed western part Kashgar is going to be attached to warm water of Arabian Seas be the way of Gwadar city of Balochistan Province of Pakistan hence China is developing Kashgar to a special Economic Zone, which is crucial for development of western china. CPEC is playing an important role in connecting China to Europe through Central Asia by Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB).

By adopting the kasgagarGwadar can save around 56 million per day for meeting 50% of its current level of oil importing thus contributing nearly s2 billion annually, As this series of project is group to create hundreds of thousands of job opportunities government of Pakistan affords no excuse in timely completion of CPEC as a result of CPEC GDP of Pakistan is expected to outreach 6% due to an addition of 20% in growth rate of GDP , Chinses investment in Pakistan several projects has significant positive impact on the overall Economy , the sectors which are supposed to get as considerable level of impotent are supposed to get a considerable level of impotent are energy in power generation steel and cement .

PROJECTS OF CPEC

Many development projects signed between Government of Peoples Republic of China and Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan on April, 21st during Chinses President visit to Pakistan with reference to time CPEC projects are categorized into three phases short term projects also called early harvest projects are intended to be completed till 2017, medium terms projects are intended to be completed by 2025, and long term projects will be completed by 2030. Early harvest projects included up grading of the Karakorum High way to Islamabad Karachi and Lahore motorway ,establishment of new Gwadar Airport Hospital and vocational training institute , development of dry port construction of east bay express way in Gwadar and development of special Economic Zone on CPEC. The CPEC is not limited to early harvest projects only various development projects of Pakistan and China.

- 1. Transport Infrastructures**
- 2. Gwadar projects**
- 3. Energy**
- 1. Transport Infrastructure.**

Transport network from Kashghar of Xinjian China to Gwadar Pakistan have been the most prominent project among others .the route is proposed as KashgharKhungerab Islamabad Lahore Multan Sukkar Karachi and Gwadar. Highways and railways includes construction of KKH Phase. II kohat to Havalian (\$ 45 M), Karachi Lahore Motorway and upgradation of ML 1. For improving Pakistan access to International networks of compunction, a project of fiber optic cable is designed from border of China to Rawalpandi . For this project 85 % of total financing (\$44 M) is provided by China and it's expected to be completed in three years period.

2. Gwadar Projects.

In CPEC special attention is given on the development of Gwadar seaport such as exchange of feasibility study of Gwadar hospital, provision of Chinese government concessional loan for Gwadar port East Bay Express way project (CUS \$ 4 M) and Gwadar International airport project(US \$ 1.5 M).

3, Energy

Pakistan and Chinese government have put energy projects on prioritized basis to evacuate the energy crisis in Pakistan. A framework agreement for categorizing the power and energy projects took place n 8th November, 2014. the first category includes fourteen projects of 10,400 MW to be completed till 2017-18, and is named privatized projects second category includes seven projects of 6,645 MW to be completed beyond 2018, and is named actively promoted however there is combination of three types of power and energy projects hydroelectric Suki Kinray Hydropower project, Thar block II Sindh Cool mining project Thar Block II coal-Fired Power Projects , Facilitation agreement for Dawood wind power project , a special framework for agreement of CPEC:s energy cooperation , Thar coalfield block I coal power project, Sahiwal Power project, agreement Hubco coal fired power project and facilitation agreement for salt rang coal fired power project.

Economics Dimensions of CPEC

CPEC can be regarded as a subset of China's master plan for once belt once road through which China is interested to develop network of infrastructure and oil pipelines towards Central Asia, this network can also increase Chinas Influence in the region on the other hand for Pakistan the most critical factor and need of the hours generation and disbursement of Chabahar energy. Hence, CPEC is considerably important for both the states.

CPEC is based on the philosophical background of mutual coordination for a common vision of progress there for it opens new horizons of progress for china too, railways roads and ports infrastructure projects constitute 22 % of total investment of CPEC. Connection of Kashgar City Xinjian Province of China to Gwadar to reduce Chinas Distance from oil providing Persian Gulf countries.

Strategic Importance of Chabahar Port.

The trilateral cooperation agreement signed among Iran India and Afghanistan has interpreted as a regional game changer agreement is not only Economically but also Strategically important for the parties the agreement is an alternative to China Pakistan Economic Corridor into the project that will link Pakistan Gwadar port to china's Xinjian Uyghur autonomous region, India will counter Chines influence in the region and will have batter access to energy rich Central Asian States through Afghanistan. However Afghanistan will know more have to provide its access to the sea over Pakistan and thus it will develop the policies independent form Pakistan. Russia can allay with rapidly growing Economy like India form which it does not perceive threat in order to balance the growing influence of China in Central Asia.

Iran however can increase its share in energy market and it will be more power full in its regional competition with Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. In domestic politics, Iran aimed at controlling the Belukha nationalists moment through the investment in Sistani Balochistan province and trade route from this area to Afghanistan. Three states with engage in cooperation against treats like Terrorism, drugs trafficking and cybercrimes with the help of the trilateral consultation mechanism.

Conclusion

The growing compaction among China India Pakistan and Iran in Gwadar and in the Iranian Port of Chabahar caught the regional and world attention Gwadar port has become a milestone in Pakistan China Economic and Strategic cooperation, Pakistan China growing coordination in the development of Gwadar port will and Pakistan feeling of isolation that it has been facing since independence conceived as a gateway from China and Central Asia to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea, the port spite many

challenge and hurdles has a potential to become the world's largest deep sea port. Gwadar offers a two ways outlet to markets of East and West North and South.

Chines huge technical and financial support for the construction of the port accomplished, Pakistan long standing geo strategic and economic objectives in the Indian Ocean Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, no doubt the port has opened the door foreign investors traders and businessman which will bring the area of economic program and prosperity for both countries, the port has a tremendous economic impetus to Pakistan for several reasons.

It is located about 250 miles from the straits of Hormuz the world oil rich reign the strategic location of the port makes it as an important regional shipping hub providing the landlocked central Asian republics Afghanistan send the Chinese Xingjian region as access to the Arabian sea and more important it will reduce the distances 500 KM between Pakistan send central Asia which will greatly facilitate the transfer of central Asia vast energy resources to world markets through Pakistan with significant profits in transit fees.

Move significantly Gwadar port provides both Pakistan and China to strengthen its security visa a visa India as it said that the recruit of Pakistan is adequately established by developing relations with China to counter India hegemonic as operation in the region thus Gwadar port serves an ideal place form the point of view of Pakistan China vagal collaboration to check and monitor Indian expansionist designs in the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf the port will also help both china and Pakistan to promote trade with Gulf States possessing 63% of world's oil . Resets Gulf Region and Central Asian States contain of the largest oil and gas resources of the world. Pakistan can only avail this opportunity due active chines support if there plain to connect in the port to western China is built the shortest route of oil imports from Middle East to China can realized, the port will also give a great boosts to developing China vast western areas at present Persian gulf is badly exposed to world due to in stability in the region and in case of blockage of gulf in the war of confect in Gwadar port is likely to assume more significance.

Gwadar port is facing challenges in competitions with regard to newly developed Iranian port Chabahar by India geographically Iran is in a more advantages positon in the Persian Gulf Afghanistan and Central Asia , Iran shares direct border with Central Asian Countries while Pakistan has to pass

through wakhkan corridor in Afghanistan to reach the nearest state of central Asia peace and stability in Afghanistan becomes imperative for Pakistan further Economic and Trade relations with the Central Asia .

Chabahar is the part of the Indian station infrastructure, it is however viewed with suspicion to sabotage, Pakistan further strategy of expanding its influences in central Asia and beyond Chabahar provides India with an easy access to Afghanistan and Central Asia trough Indian Ocean. India ultimate desire is to connect Chabahar with Central Asian States through roads and a network of Railway system to by-pass Pakistan and to reduce the dependency of Central Asian Countries on the Pakistan port of Gwadar, Iran is already enjoying close socio cultural and economic relations with the Central Asian states, Iran is working on many projects in Tajikistan including the Anzob Tunnel and constructed a bridge over it and that connects Chabahar with Khojent route.

Hence both Chabahar and Mumbai are perhaps the best train shipping points the countries of Central Asia are likely to benefits from both Chabahr and Gwadar has for the competition between the both ports, it will not be a winner take all outcome but rather one port earning the greater share or trade and winner in this regard is likely to be CPEC at east in the near further, CPEC is more stable than

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