

Sino-Pakistan Entente: Implication for India

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Abstract

This paper attempts to analyse the alliances, cooperation and friendship between Sino-Pakistan countries and also try to express the impact of these all on India. The study also reveals how these two countries of Pakistan and china in the starting were against each other, under and after which circumstances both move towards friendship. The paper also focuses on the strategic policies and agreements and how both the countries work collectively. This paper through the secondary sources expresses the mutual interest of both the countries. The author also concentrates on alliances, agreements and strategic policies of India to counter Sino-Pakistan entente. The study concludes by observation that which factor brought both the countries on the way of friendship, and how long both have capabilities to maintain this friendship.

Keywords: Sino-Pakistan friendship, hostility of India, Implication for India

Introduction

The paper of 'Sino-Pakistan entente: implication for India, express the friendship of Pakistan and china's hostility towards India-Pakistan. It intends to explore threat perceptions of Pakistani leaders and the strategy they developed to cope with such security threats. It presents a synoptic view of Pakistan's perception of threat from India, and promotion of alliance with China against this perceived threat. The paper attempts to take an overview the obvious culmination of such perceived threats had been certain measures taken by Pakistan to match India in military capabilities through strategic alliances. Pakistan's defence policy had been formulated on the perception of threat from India. The acquisition of arms, the up gradation of sophisticated arsenals, increase in fund allocation in defence have all been its tangible tactics to neutralise India's military superiority. Pakistan also resorted to an active alliance with China in order to increase its competency. In other words, Pakistan, in order to safeguard its position vis-a-vis India, was seeking a patron who would support it against India and ensure its security against a perceived threat from India.

This paper aims to cover the nature and changing dimension of Pakistan's perception of threat from India, and its alignment with China. The paper analyses why India was perceived as a threat in Pakistan's view with a historical retrospect dealing with the earlier period since Independence.

The second part takes into account the response of Pakistan in terms of global and regional alliances. The third section deals with the actions taken by Pakistan with special reference to China.

Sino-Pakistan Entente

Sino-Pakistan relations got their first major intake of substantive content, in November 1962 when Pakistan foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's statement. He said: "The motive force in the alliance was to counteract India's assiduous and planned tactics to isolate Pakistan in order to finally strangle her."¹

The worsening Sino-Indian relations facilitated a Sino-Pakistan rapprochement, which according to India a kind of hostility toward India by these countries. China accepted the Pakistani proposal of 1961, which set to demarcate the boundary between Pakistan occupied Kashmir (pok) and china's Xingjian and the contagious areas the defence of which was under the actual control Pakistan. The agreement was said to be temporary and china would renegotiate the above border with relevant sovereign authority after the resolution of Kashmir dispute³. In august 1963, agreement on aviation transport was signed. After that agreement Pakistan president stated that in the event India threatened Pakistan with war then china could be relied upon for support. To quote "We assume that other Asiatic powers, especially China would take notice." China cultivated Pakistan for several reasons whereas India featured as a secondary concern unlike the US that was her primary one. In Chinese

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foreign policy consideration, Pakistani support was beneficial to effectively deal with the encirclement policy of the US. For strengthening politico-strategic terms against the US China felt that Pakistan would be a strong pillar. As far as India mattered, she was secondary concern whereas for China, the Indo-Pakistan divergence over Kashmir was synonymous with the possibility to be able to open up a second front against India.⁴

Considering alliances between Sino-Pakistan symbolises their mutual interest, Bhutto addressed this issue to state:

“India is an adversary of Pakistan and has a dispute with China... it is in China’s national interest to support Pakistan and it is in Pakistan national interest to develop friendly relations with China. Of all the countries that have received military assistance from the US to combat communism, Pakistan alone has a fundamental common interest with one of the most powerful communist states. This is a unique position, a freak in the global permutations.”

Pakistan alliance with China indicated her interest to the western powers, primarily the US to reduce military aid to India. Alliance of both the countries also strengthens the Pakistan’s security against the East Asian colossus as well as the problem of India at bay.

Sino-Pakistan relationship considered important in the context of Sino-soviet rift that led to closer Indo-soviet relations. This is because China was alarmed by the cordiality in Indo-soviet relations which featured in her priorities to formalise the friendship with Pakistan. Thus Indo-soviet relations that were cemented due to the India-China conflict also conditioned the China-Pakistan combine.

The implication was quite clear for India when the Sino-Pakistan strategic axis took shape in March 1963 and both the countries signed Border agreement. This agreement enabled China to promote Pakistan against her. The Sino-Pakistan relationship also heightens the hostility between China and India. As the result, the convergence of two hostile neighbours caused considerable concern to India.

The agreement signed in 1963 required Pakistan to cede 130,000 square miles in Kashmir to China. As this territory was situated near Sinkiang and Soviet forces were stationed close by it gave Chinese forces some strategic superiority in the region. Indian prime minister expressed on Sino-Pakistan entente when premier Chou En Lai visited Pakistan. On 20 February 1964 he told in Rajya Sabha that the two countries were likely to scheme against India whom both perceived as enemy. Indian delegate to the Security Council stated during the debate over Kashmir after Pakistan acquired additional armaments through her alignment with US spearheaded SEATO and CENTO alliances.

“Pakistan has achieved (the largest tightrope walk ever seen in international affairs) with extraordinary skill by keeping one foot in SEATO and CENTO and the other in the Chinese camp. She is getting closer into the Chinese embrace and the latest incident of this touching affection

between these two countries is what happened at Djakarta where Pakistan, China and few other countries ganged up to deny the USSR a place in the Asian world and refused Malaysia admittance to the Afro Asian conference as an Asian country.⁵

As a result the deterioration in India-China relations started simultaneously with Pakistan-China ties. Therefore the Pakistan-China strategic axis emerged as a new threat in terms of military co-ordination that would affect India’s security interests.⁶

Implication for India

The roots of the Sino-Pak entente go back to the 1960s in the shared target, India. As explained by Hussain Haqqani, “For China, Pakistan is a low-cost secondary deterrent to India ... for Pakistan, China is a high-value guarantor of security against India”.⁷ Wirsing says, “The most important strategic interest shared by China and Pakistan is the containment of India”.⁸ Tarique Niazi explains it further, “Of all these nations, Pakistan’s strategic significance is, nevertheless, priceless for China. Although a smaller nation, Pakistan rivals India in unconventional weapons. It has long denied India access to western and Central Asian nations, while, at the same time, literally paving the highway – Karakoram – for Beijing’s direct access to Eurasia. Above all, it has tied down 500,000 to 700,000 Indian troops in the Kashmir Valley for the past 15 years. By keeping hundreds of thousands of Indian troops engaged in Kashmir, Pakistan indirectly helps ease India’s challenge to China’s defences on their disputed border. More importantly, Pakistan emboldens the region’s smaller economies to stand up to India and seek Chinese patronage, which hurts India’s stature in the region”.⁹

There is no doubt that Sino-Pak strategic cooperation is obviously targeted against India ...be it conventional weapons, nuclear weapons or the Karakoram Highway. That China is also sitting on territory claimed by India in Jammu and Kashmir is well known, as is the fact that it switches its position depending on its convenience: treating it as a bilateral dispute left from history or maintaining a pro-Pakistan posture. The same is true about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, their latest joint venture.

Apart from the two-front pressure of the duo, China is benefitting directly from the 1963 agreement, which has led to its involvement in several infrastructural projects, including upgrading the Karakoram Highway, building the 165-km Jaglot-Skardu and 135-km Thakot-Sazin roads, and several hydropower projects (Dasu hydropower project, Phandar hydropower project, Bashu hydropower project, Harpo hydropower project, Yulbo hydropower project) in Gilgit-Baltistan; raising the Mangla Dam reservoir by 60 ft, building the Neelum-Jhelum hydroelectric power project, commissioning the Kohala power project for generating 1,050 MW of electricity; and building the Diamir-Bhasha dam on the Indus.

The entente is also going to be a major concern post-American withdrawal from Afghanistan, where the Chinese interests range from economic (it has already bagged the Aynak copper mine project) to regional security, including its terror concern in Xinjiang, which explains China's facilitating the Afghanistan Taliban dialogue: an issue of concern for India vis-à-vis its interests in Afghanistan.

The implications of the CPEC are even more than obvious: as the project enhances the presence of both countries in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea where it can have decisive control over the Strait of Hormuz through Gwadar port, it adversely impacts India's growing economic and military power. Notwithstanding China's claims of the project being commercial in nature, its potential for intelligence gathering and forward deployment of its naval assets in the Gwadar and Karachi ports cannot but be a cause of strategic concern in New Delhi. Besides, the corridor will run through Gilgit-Baltistan. During his China visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had told the Chinese that the corridor was "unacceptable" to India. India flagged up its concerns regarding Chinese activities in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) during Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to New Delhi in May this year.¹⁰ Answering a query on projects between China and Pakistan in the Lok Sabha in December 2014, Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj had said: "The government has seen reports with regard to China and Pakistan being involved in infrastructure building activities in POK, including construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Government has conveyed its concerns to China about their activities in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, and asked them to cease such activities". "The Indian government also lodged a protest (by) calling the Chinese Ambassador... (and also) through our Ambassador (in Beijing)".¹¹

Also, following the CPEC related investment announcement, India followed up on a 12-year-old MoU with Iran by signing a new agreement to construct the Chabahar port. India has yet to come up with a comprehensive well debated response to the CPEC. On the other hand, while the government did take up the issue with the Chinese as stated above, Indian High Commissioner TCA Raghavan, addressing a meeting of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KPCCI), said that India is not worried over the \$46 billion economic corridor between Pakistan and China as an economically strong Pakistan would bring regional stability.¹²

Conclusion

After analysing the lots of literature on Pakistan china we conclude with the observation that Pakistan was not in position to counter India to maintain its capability against India and to maintain hostile relations with India she made china her friend. China also has threat perception of Indian hegemony in the region to save and maintain

hegemonic domination in china made china-Pakistan axis a kind of alliance to counter India. China's friendship with Pakistan can also be understood in this context. Cooperation with Pakistan did effectively balance the Indian threat and prevented India from focussing on China. China embarked on an enduring strategic relationship with Pakistan. It used the elements of its own national power: political, economic, military, nuclear cooperation to influence Pakistan. The underlying feature of Pakistan's foreign policy has been commitment to its security especially its perceived threat from India. This case study supports the balance of threat theory. It illustrates that India by possessing the power coupled with its geographic proximity, offensive powers and aggressive intentions posed a threat to Pakistan. The Sino-Pak intimacy is informal in the sense that it is not sanctioned or governed by any formal treaty of friendship or alliance. China's choice of Pakistan as a friend and ally could be seen as part of a policy which began at Bandung in 1955 and matured through 1962 - the year of Sino-Indian tensions, which was to reach its peak in 1965. Pakistan is likely to remain China's ally in most scenarios. At the same time, Chinese trade with India continues to grow. But possibilities of this rapprochement between China and India is limited, hence it serves Pakistan's interests.

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