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CPEC: The Security Challenges for India

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Abstract

CPEC is a huge economic investment made by China. Its main objective is the economic development of Pakistan, which includes strengthening its road, rail, and air transport system. Apart from this, the ports of Pakistan and China also have to be connected. If this project is completed with its definite plan then it will be a huge victory for China. But along with the economic prosperity of China and Pakistan, it is also a security issue that can affect the security system of the whole world. In this article, the future security challenges to India due to CPEC have been studied. Therefore, the paper attempts to answer the following questions: What is India's security related challenges regarding CPEC? What is India's strategy to counter these challenges?

Keywords: 1.China-Pakistan Economic Corridor2.Gwadar port3.India4.Pakistan occupied Kashmir5.Security

Introduction:

CPEC, on paper, is an economic development framework but in reality it is much more than that. Through this project, China wants to develop its economic infrastructure all over the world. ¹

China dreams of becoming a world power. It can be compared with the American Marshall Plan started for the economic aid of Europe after the Second World War, in which the economic aid of Europe was talked about, but more than that America's interests were hidden in it. America's biggest interest in the Marshall Plan was to stop communism in Europe. If the amount given under this plan is studied, then countries that fought on the side of Nazi Germany and remained neutral (eg, Switzerland) got less money and those who fought on the US side received more money. Apart from this, 5 percent of the total amount received under the Marshall Plan went to the American intelligence agency CIA, which helped in fulfilling American interests.²

CPEC is also a project to fulfill the diplomatic interests of China more than the economic development of Pakistan. India has a big challenge before China. China wants to encircle India by land, water and air. And in this he is also getting the support of Pakistan. One of the reasons why China supports Pakistan in this project more than its economic development is also to degrade India. China is trying to build its economic relations with countries like Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Iran, Iraq, which have good relations with India.

The most recent example of this is the change in relations between India, Nepal and China. Nepal has always been a traditional friend of India, but after China's intervention and due to its lucrative policies,

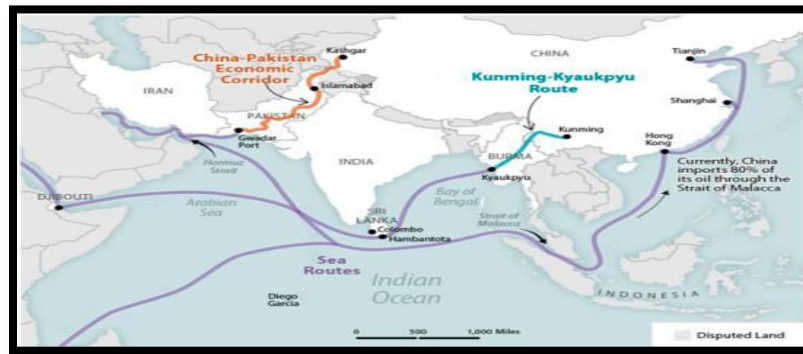
there was tension on the border between India and Nepal. For the first time after a long history, an Indian soldier died in the Nepal India border dispute.

The geopolitical dimensions of CPEC

The establishment of CPEC is primarily economic from the Chinese standpoint, but the opponents argue that it has geopolitical implications. Dr. Jeremy Garlick, a China expert, shares this viewpoint as well. The major geo-economic issues, according to Dr. Jeremy Garlick, are Pakistan's weak infrastructure and low financial resources, which means that this project will be highly costly for China; moreover, there is no assurance that Pakistan will be able to repay these loans on time. All of this underscores the uncertainty of the project's first economic advantages.³

However, in order to break even in profit during the early phases of operation, the corridor would have to maximize its role as a catalyst for regional economic integration.

However, when seen through the perspective of geopolitics, it is clear that China and Pakistan's participation in the Indian Ocean via the CPEC serves a variety of geopolitical objectives for both countries.



Indo-Pacific Energy and Trade Routes. Source: South China Morning Post (2017).

Security challenges for India. The main countries associated with the CPEC project are China and Pakistan. India has been at war with these two countries and at present, India has serious border disputes with both countries. There are concerns related to India's security. The CPEC, which connects northwestern China with the Gwadar sea port in Pakistan, passes through the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and is a matter of concern for India as it is a disputed area. It is also called POK i.e. Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. ⁴

In the name of security of this project, China will deploy its army on the ports so that they can surround India from 2 sides. Pakistan is allowing China to form CPEC, due to which Pakistan will get the support of Chinese army and they will be able to encircle the disputed areas of Kashmir and will place the matter more firmly on the agenda of international policy. Terrorist attacks on India by Pakistani terrorists will also increase and they will also get recognition because China will have to obey Pakistan to fulfill its economic interests and China is also a permanent member of the Security Council.

This corridor passes through Pakistani territory, which means that Pakistan has the power to reject this project, which can cost China a lot. So China will have to go according to Pakistan and whatever Pakistan will say or do, China will have to go in favor of Pakistan. Since China is supporting Pakistan, so in case of India these two countries i.e. China and Pakistan will act as a force in the fight against India. China is slowly starting to encircle India from both the water and land side. The biggest indication of this is the presence of Chinese navy in Pakistan in the name of security of the corridor. Ever since the construction of the corridor has started, the presence of the Chinese army has also started in the area.

The People's Liberation Army has also deployed around 30,000 soldiers in Pakistan by the local name. These army personnel will set up a security wing in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and will be deployed

around projects made by Chinese companies. Also in 2017, Chinese soldiers marched in a parade in Islamabad on the occasion of Pakistan Day. This was the first time that the Chinese army took part in a parade outside its country.⁵

Naval officials of Pakistan have also accepted that Chinese naval ships will be deployed in Gwadar in collaboration with Pakistan Navy to protect the port and trade under this corridor. China is continuously exporting arms to Pakistan. About half of the weapons manufactured in China are imported by Pakistan. China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIS) President Hu Wenming has confirmed in a press conference that China has supplied eight modified diesel-attack submarines to the Pakistani Navy. The Chairman also announced that CSIC would also set up a training center in Karachi for the same purpose.⁶ Thus these activities of China are a serious security threat to India as China is encircling India in the Indian Ocean. Naval ships have also been supplied by China to Chinese ports in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Sri Lanka's armed forces have also received varieties of patrol ships and aircraft from China. China is also developing Sri Lanka's Hambantota port. Now, China is planning to build its second naval base in Gwadar port after Djibouti in 2017.

According to a report published in the South China Morning Post, quoting Pakistan Army Lieutenant General Bilal Akbar's meeting with Chinese General Li Zuocheng, China will set up a military naval base at Gwadar Port near Jiwani Peninsula, which will be located in Chabahar Port of India. It is only 72 kilometers away from it. These are threats to India's investment in Iran. Because India has invested US \$ 500 million in Chabahar Port of Iran. Along with this, it is also a threat to the security of India because it is at only 400 nautical distance from the western border of Gujarat state of India. According to China's claim, this is only commercial base, but the presence of Chinese army on it is going to increase India's concern.⁷

Threat to India's sovereignty

Sovereignty is the supreme authority within a territory. No outside power can exercise this right. If an external power tries to do this, then it is considered a threat to the sovereignty of that country. The corridor between China and Pakistan is not only passing through the border of India but is also becoming a threat to the sovereignty of India. This has raised various security concerns for India. The CPEC enters Gilgit-Baltistan through the Khujerab Pass and is claimed by India as it is part of the Jammu and Kashmir which was handed over to India by Maharaja Hari Singh in October 1947 by documenting its accession with India.

Due to CPEC, China will be allowed to use Pakistan's sea routes and by using CPEC network and Gwadar port, China will increase naval capability in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea for its military purposes, which will threaten India's maritime borders. It is like encroachment on India's maritime border which is a threat to the sovereignty of India.

India's stand on CPEC

Responding to media queries related to India's stand on China's China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson said that India has opposed China's project from the beginning. Because India believes The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project is a threat to India's sovereignty and security. This project passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which India considers as its part and it is under consideration in the United Nations. There hasn't been any further movement. He went on to say that the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an affront to India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁸

A proposal that undermines a country's sovereignty and territorial integrity will never be approved by that country. Connectivity projects, according to India, should be founded on generally accepted and other recognised international principles, transparency and equality, the rule of law, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

India is adamantly opposed to any move taken by foreign nations to alter the status quo in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. We demand that the parties involved stop acting in this manner, said the spokesperson.⁹ India has been opposing CPEC since the beginning, mainly because of India's security and sovereignty concerns.

Conclusion

The corridor has brought India's two most vehement common enemies together on one stage. China's infrastructure development in the disputed region between India and Pakistan is a breach of India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. During the Pakistan Day parade in Islamabad, the Chinese soldiers can be seen in the corridor. Military troops from China are stationed in Pakistan.

The deployment of Chinese naval ships along India's western border, the building of a naval station at Gwadar, and a training facility in Karachi, as well as the delivery of eight submarines, poses a serious security danger to India. This is a hint that India has to rethink its approach against the east and north sides of a two-front battle while also defending its maritime boundaries. Apart from security, India may also have to face economic losses. Because when China's economic corridor is developed, it will work for the cost and time taken in transportation. This can weaken India's trade relations with Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka.

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