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**FORECASTING LINEAR DYNAMICS OF SINO-PAK RELATIONS (2023-2038)**

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**Abstract**

The relations between China and Pakistan have frequently been compared to the Himalayas in height, the Indian Ocean in depth, and even the relationship between brothers in terms of sweetness. The relationship between China and Pakistan has often been referred to by its leaders as an "all-weather friendship." However, in the final analysis relations between and among states are determined by respective national interests, or, to put it another way, by reason rather than passion. The framework of national interest must therefore be used in any analysis of Sino-Pak relations. In order to forecast where Sino-Pak relations will be in the next 10years, the article gives an overview of Sino-Pak relations using a linear paradigm. The article has two sections. The first section charts out the trajectory of incumbent relations and its foreshadowing ties between the two countries in the third term of President Xi Jinping. The second sections more closely focuses on the trajectory of relations over 10 year period.

**Keywords:** National Interests, Linear Paradigm, Sino-Pak relations, President Xi Jinping

**Introduction**

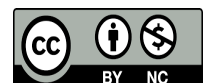
The seeds of future stellar relations between China and Pakistan were planted when Pakistan instantaneously granted diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, as the latter came into existence. The Cold War was just unfolding, and the capitalist bloc flatly refused to recognize the newly formed Communist regime in China. As a result, not only did the two countries establish formal diplomatic ties in 1951, but Islamabad also served as a bridge between the capitalist United States and Maoist China in the 1960s and 1970s. The relationships continued to grow and eventually culminated in a new chapter with the launch of the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in 2013—a new era of considerable economic

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cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad (CPEC). Nonetheless, there appeared cracks in China-Pakistan relations when now-deposed Prime Minister Imran Khan (18 August 2018–April 2022), shortly after taking office, began revisiting contracts for CPEC with Chinese companies awarded by his predecessor Nawaz Sharif (Shah, 2018). According to the Khan administration, CPEC contracts awarded to Chinese firms were more favorable to Beijing and not aligned with Pakistan's priorities. As a result, during PM Khan's tenure, government work on \$62 billion CPEC projects slowed, to the unease of China and its corporations. However, when Prime Minister Khan visited China in February 2022, there was some mending of relations, particularly in the aftermath of the Afghan Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan, which was preceded by the complete withdrawal of US forces after 20 years in Afghanistan.

There are currently significant changes on the international and domestic fronts of both China and Pakistan that are having and will have profound consequences on bilateral relations between Beijing and Islamabad over the next 10 years. The United States and China's growing economic and strategic competition, Russia's conflict with West-backed Ukraine, the US exit from Afghanistan, and the slowing global economic activity are among the significant international developments. The vital changes in the domestic realm include President Xi's winning third term, slowing of GDP growth in China, extraordinary stagflation in Pakistan, and severe political instability in the latter country. In the context of these developments, the article relies on linear paradigm to forecast five to 10 years of relations between the two states. There are two propositions in linearity. The first, changes in system output are proportional to changes in input, and the second, system outputs corresponding to the sum of two inputs are equal to the sum of the outputs arising from the individual inputs (Jervis, 1998, p. 35). Problems can be divided into smaller components using linear system, which may lead to the generation of multiple distinct solutions. Based on the historical context, current conditions, and developments at the international and regional levels, the aforementioned aspects are examined in a linear paradigm. Nonlinear paradigm, on the other hand, take a different stance. In all nonlinear systems, the relationship between cause and effect does not appear proportional and determinate but rather vague and, at best, difficult to discern (Kiel & Elliott, 1997, p. 2).

## **Pakistan and China's Bilateral Relations at the Moment**

The state of China-Pakistan relations in late 2022 and early 2023 had been better than it was, say, a few years ago or under the former Prime Minister Imran Khan's administration. However, most diplomatic sources, journalists monitoring diplomatic activities in Islamabad, and top Pakistani officials believe that the best word to describe the two sides' current relations as "cold." Despite the fact that the incumbent PM, Shahbaz Sharif, the PML-N's leader and former Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab province, developed strong ties with China. Yet, relations with China and political and economic stability at home in later 2022 and early next year had not been on the right track. The significant factor is that the 13-party coalition in power in Pakistan has razor-thin margin of one vote in the National Assembly. While ousted Prime Minister Khan has been on the rampage against the government, relentlessly calling for fresh elections to be held right away.

With the carefree political statements of a few ministers of the Khan administration, Khan's suspicion of the CPEC as PML-N personal motivation, and Chinese companies' concerns about unpaid debts and threats to halt work on their CPEC-related projects, ties between China and Pakistan became cold. Companies involved in power projects, as well as highway and motorway construction, are among those included in this category. However, some Chinese enterprises are the subject of criticism from Pakistani officials as well. Another major issue for China in its relations with Pakistan is the terrorists' attacks on Chinese officials and employees in Pakistan. However, China and Pakistan cannot afford to maintain even a modicum of a cold relations for long since their interests have been so compatible.. A host of factors will play a role and interact to shape China-Pakistan relations over the next five to 10 years. These factors include inter-alia CPEC, Afghanistan, terrorism and bilateral trade, among others.

The CPEC will remain at the center of bilateral relations at least until China completes a rail and road network connecting its western region, Xinjiang, to the Indian Ocean, crisscrossing Pakistan and stretching over 2000 kilometers. Reportedly, 21 CPEC projects totaling \$15.7 billion are said to have been finished by end of 2023. The cost of these completed projects ranges from \$9.6 billion for 10 power projects with a combined capacity of more than 5000 megawatts and a high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line to \$5.8 billion for five infrastructure

projects, \$300 million for two projects related to the Gwadar Port and Free Zone, and \$140 million for four socioeconomic development projects. On the other side, there were a total of 31 ongoing projects valued about \$9.3 billion. More significantly, there were 36 projects totaling \$28.4 billion in planned.

### **India as a Factor in Sino-Pakistani Relations**

China values Pakistan's assistance in its conflict with India. Despite both countries' claims to the contrary, Beijing has been granted a 40-year lease to construct and run the Gwadar Port. So it does have strategic reasons for doing so. The seaport is situated in a prime spot between the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. China aspires to establish a long-term strategic presence in Gwadar. Chinese analysts view Gwadar as a top choice for establishing a new overseas strategic strongpoint, owing to its prime geographic location and strong Sino-Pakistani ties (Kardon et al., 2020, p. 2). This would not only guarantee continuous oil supplies to China from Middle Eastern markets via the CPEC route in Pakistan, but it could also be used to blockade Indian oil imports from the Middle East with the help of the Pakistan Navy in time of need. While on the other hand, China's military-strategic support is critical for Pakistan in containing archrival India. The rivalry between China and India is important in Pakistan's strategic calculations for maintaining a power balance in South Asia. For Beijing, Pakistan serves as a buffer against India. And for Islamabad, China is a key source of arms and other support to strengthen Pakistani capacities to counter India (Dominguez, 2022). Prima facie, long-standing territorial issues- Depsang Plains, Arunachal Pradesh or South Tibet region, Kaurik, Tashigang-Shipki La, and Barahoti- and India's growing defense ties with Beijing's strategic rival, the United States, pose substantial obstacles to China and India's efforts to improve their relations. However, a rational approach can strategize ways out of problems if the benefits outweigh the costs and rivals face a greater combined threat.

There are significant reasons for Beijing and New Delhi to strengthen their bilateral ties while putting their territorial issues on hold, notwithstanding Pakistani strategists' deeply held view that China may never quit Pakistan. While efforts to normalize relations between China and India during the Wuhan summit in 2018 were unsuccessful, the development showed that both countries firmly believed that their friendship would gain more from the resolution of their bilateral problems. There are numerous variables to consider, which can put their relations on a normal trajectory. Firstly, due to their substantial \$US 103 bilateral commerce, China and India are compelled to prevent their relations from being jeopardized by their long-standing territorial

disputes. In today's forums like the BRICS, the BASIC climate grouping, the SCO, the Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank (AIIB), and the Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral framework, there are growing India-China international contacts. Both countries are engaged through a range of comprehensive bilateral dialogue mechanisms—such as the Financial Dialogue, Defense and Security Dialogues, Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED), Working Mechanism for Consultation on India–China Border Affairs, and Special Representatives (SRs) dialogue. Second, although India's relations with the United States may be significant, Washington might not be able to force India to use itself as a pawn in order to checkmate China due to India's size. That means India never committed itself to the American-led alliance in the Indo-Pacific aimed at China. As a result, it proceeds with caution and limits its role to the partnership rather than being a devoted ally to the US cause of China's containment, especially when it comes to strategic matters aimed at China. It upholds the doctrines of strategic autonomy and pluralism in foreign policy. This perspective was reinforced by Modi's 2018 speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue, where he stated that "India does not see the Indo-Pacific as a strategy or as a club of limited members. And by no means do we consider it directed against any country. Competition is normal. But, contests must not turn into conflicts; differences must not be allowed to become disputes (IISS, 2018) (Ungku & Kim, 2018)." Third, it's crucial to recognize that, in addition to economic considerations, Muslim extremist groups pose a threat to the region that China and India must jointly combat. China has also been dealing with a separatist insurgency in its own sole Muslim-dominated area, Xinjiang, while India has faced a protracted insurgency from Kashmiri Mujahideen organizations in Kashmir, the country's only Muslim-dominated region. India has rhetorically denounced Chinese "atrocities" committed against its Uyghur Muslim population in Xinjiang, but it has not allowed for action or discussion by international organizations. For instance, India abstained from voting on a motion crafted by Western nations at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to host a discussion on the human rights situation in Xinjiang in October of last year. Importantly, the UNHRC's 48-member council's vote, which saw 17 countries vote in support of Beijing, 19 voting against, and 11 abstaining, was made possible by India's abstention and Pakistan's vote in favor of Beijing (Farge, 2022). Finally, the Chinese factor does not play an active role in India's domestic politics. Both China and India have no fundamental ideological conflict, given the way Pakistan and India are involved in an ideological conflict in terms of religion. On the other hand, Pakistan's

former Army Chief, General Qamar Bajwa, engaged in backdoor diplomacy with India to restore relations (Times of India, 2023).

### **Afghanistan as a Factor in Sino-Pakistani Relations**

As Pakistan has significant influence over the Afghan Taliban, Islamabad has played a crucial role in protecting Chinese interests in Afghanistan. These Chinese interests include denying Chinese Islamist separatist groups like the ETIM safe havens, which the Taliban did provide during their first tenure in power (1996-2001). Due to the Taliban's apparent willingness to regard Pakistan's archrival India on par with Islamabad and China (Ramachandran, 2022), and Pakistan's apparently diminished influence over them, Beijing and Islamabad may devise a new strategy -a soft approach- to outmaneuver Delhi in Afghanistan. In this regard, Beijing and Islamabad both had offered the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, but Ashraf Ghani's administration turned it down because of pressure from the United States and India. The Taliban takeover, however, creates a situation that is generally favorable for the project. It is significant to note that the Afghan Taliban have supported the expansion of CPEC into Afghanistan. As a result, the addition of Afghanistan to CPEC has the potential to fundamentally alter the future relationship between the three nations.

### **Sino-Pak Relations in the Next Five Years**

#### ***Economic Relations***

The large Chinese debt that Pakistan incurred over the past ten years and its repayment will have the most impact on the trajectory of relations between China and Pakistan in the short term. Twenty-three (23) percent of Pakistan's \$131 billion in total external debt, or close to \$30 billion, is owed to China (Mangi, 2022). Practically speaking, there is no way to eliminate or reduce the amount of the outstanding debt. Pakistan's only choice is to ask for a rollover or postponement of the loan instalment payment. During PM Shahbaz's early November visit, according to Pakistan's Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, China pledged to refinance \$3.3 billion in commercial bank loans, rollover \$4 billion in sovereign loans, and raise currency swaps by roughly \$1.45 billion. The final figure came to \$8.75 billion. To settle the bilateral debt that is due for the fiscal year 2022–2023, Pakistan is looking for a new loan from China. The repayment of existing debts and the contracting of new Chinese loans will be critical factors in Beijing-Islamabad relations over the next five years. An essential component of their bilateral relations has been the expansion of trade between China

and Pakistan. Notably, bilateral trade for the 2020–2021 fiscal year stayed close to US \$17 billion. Pakistan should be concerned because its exports to China accounted for only US\$3.03 billion of the total bilateral trade during 2021, leaving Pakistan with a significantly negative trade balance. This situation has drawn criticism from economists and business executives in Pakistan. As a result, given Pakistan's dire economic circumstances, this situation cannot continue for long.

### ***Defense Cooperation***

Another crucial area of collaboration between China and Pakistan is the defense sector. In this particular area, Pakistan has grown more reliant on Beijing. This might be inferred from the fact that China continued to be Pakistan's primary defense equipment supplier between 2010 and 2019. Between 2010 and 2019, China supplied 70 percent of Pakistan's arms imports, worth over \$5 billion (Haqqani & Ahmad, 2022). Pakistan received a staggering 47 percent of China's total international arms exports between 2017 and 2021. JF-17 Thunder aircraft, J-10 fighter jets, and VT-4 tanks are a few milestones of Sino-Pak cooperation in the defense sector.

### **Sino-Pak Relations: Strategic Projections Over the Next 15 Years**

In the next fifteen years, relations between China and Pakistan, two extremely close friends, will be of considerable interest and significance. A number of issues will affect and shape their bilateral relations throughout this period. In this section, the possible nature of the future relationship between China and Pakistan is explored and analyzed, and a number of issues are covered in detail as a policy feed for decision-makers and strategists. It is significant to note that current Chinese President Xi Jinping, who has already secured a third term in office, will have a significant influence on the tone and tenor of factors that determine the objectives and strategies of Beijing and Islamabad in their bilateral relations over the next fifteen years.

### ***State Sponsored Terrorism: A Challenge for Territorial Integrity***

The one of the vital keys to China-Pakistan relations over the next fifteen years will be how the two nations cooperate to help the other in resolving significant territorial and security threats to each nation's sovereignty and integrity. Terrorism and extremism, particularly those committed in the name of religion, have both posed an existential danger to the Pakistani state and society for almost 20 years. Threats to the state's integrity include militant ethnic separatism in Baluchistan and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the largest terrorist organization in Pakistan, taking a

Pashtun nationalist stance. Likewise, the separatist in the predominantly Muslim Xinjiang area poses a serious threat to Chinese unity. The deep-seated ideological disarray in Chinese society, which has led to widespread discontent with the state's ideology, is also a significant security challenge. Indian sponsored terrorism is a common threat for China and Pakistan due to its eyeing of Pakistani and Chinese land and Beijing's and Islamabad's reciprocal irredentist claims on Indian territory. Most likely, both nations would work together to discuss the threats posed by India, notably Delhi's clandestine assistance for Chinese and Pakistani separatists and saboteurs, as well as India's rising defense budget and military skill.

Although growing economic ties between China and its archrival India would prevent both countries from embarking on military adventures against each other. Pakistan and India are fierce rivals. The one-on-one rivalry between Pakistan and China with regard to India has been a major factor in preserving the alliance between Beijing and Islamabad. Due to Delhi's subordinate role in US efforts to stop China from becoming a major power, this would continue over the following fifteen years. What "great power status" actually entails, however, is up for debate because many academics believe that China has already attained this position.

### *US as a Factor*

In addition to India, US will play a significant role in China-Pakistan relations during the following fifteen years. Despite being the world's two largest trading partners, there is no doubt that China and the United States are strategic rivals. The US and China's relations has changed from a cooperation to a virtual rivalry since Xi Jinping took office in 2012. Given Xi's highly nationalist agenda, relations with Washington are likely to remain strained. This would be a difficult circumstance for Pakistan, one that she would prefer to avoid. Because, on the one hand, China is a "all-weather friend" of Islamabad and, on the other, the US is the country's largest strategic partner, and Washington's economic assistance directly and loan facilities through international financial institutions (IFIs), particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), are crucial for Islamabad and will remain so.

The Pakistani economy is quite weak, and there are serious cross-border threats from India as well as terrorist and militant threats from domestic groups. If Islamabad and Delhi do not eventually decide to come to an agreement by resolving their territorial and political differences and establishing extensive economic and trade relations, these conditions will persist for the next



fifteen years. In this case, Pakistan would require unwavering backing from both Beijing and Washington to fend off internal and external economic and security dangers, as well as those posed by India. As a result, Pakistan would need to carefully balance its relations with both China and the US. For Islamabad, this would be a very tightrope to walk rather than a piece of cake. In order to create their China policy, Pakistani strategists would need to research the main points of contention between China and the US. In other words, Pakistan's China policy has to be conditioned by its relationship with Washington anyway.

### ***Pakistan in the Battle of Democracy vs. Autocracy***

The main points of contention and disagreement between China and the US are what Washington refers to as Beijing's "predatory industrial programs," disputed territorial claims in the South China Sea, President Xi's friendship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which endures in spite of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China's rejection of Washington's support for Taiwan as an independent state, considering it a violation of the "one-China" policy, and US support for the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. To the dismay of Washington, Pakistan does not recognize Taiwan's statehood because of its unwavering commitment on the One-China policy. Pakistan will need to speak out more forcefully in favor of Beijing as relations between China and the US are expected to deteriorate over the issue of Taiwan. Islamabad's backing for China in the Taiwan dispute may not be crucial, but it is nevertheless significant.

Pakistan's ties with Russia have greatly deepened and developed during the past ten years. Since his ouster in April following a no-confidence vote in the National Assembly, former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan had accused Washington of plotting to topple his government while it was developing economic ties with Moscow and, in this regard, travelling to Russia on the eve of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Even if Mr. Khan recently claimed that he did not know with certainty what contribution Washington made to the overthrow of his government and placed the full blame on former Army Chief Gen. Bajwa. However, Washington could never permit Pakistan to establish closer ties with Moscow. However, there would be numerous incentives for Pakistan to join the China-Russia partnership if President Xi were to maintain the expansion of Beijing's connections with Russia for Islamabad. Beijing would also like to include Islamabad in its

expanding relations with Moscow. This would mark the beginning of a new era of regional collaboration to deal with its major problems, namely economic integration and counterterrorism.

### ***The Nature of Sino-US Bilateral Relations as a Factor***

As was previously mentioned, China and the US are essentially strategic rivals. China views the United States as a significant obstacle to halting Beijing's ascent to great power status. China has undoubtedly been working toward becoming a big power, and she has every right to do so. At the same time, it makes sense for Washington to prevent China from achieving that position, because states operate in a realist paradigm in world politics dictated by a zero-sum game. It indicates that the relationships between two rival or adversarial states are set up so that one state's benefit is the loss of the other state, and vice versa. Chinese intellectual and policy circles believe that the US state and society are in a "state of decline," and there is a historical opportunity to capitalize on the power vacuum created by the Chinese perception of the US's decline to achieve the agenda of great power status.

The US, for its part, has a strategy to contain China by leveraging its dominance in the economy, military, and technology. Growing ties between Xi and Putin's Russia are intended to challenge US and Western hegemony, and their shared authoritarian and individualized leadership brings them one step closer to doing so. To fight US hegemony, notably Washington's involvement in South Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the larger Asia-Pacific area, Beijing would like Islamabad to be a partner of Beijing. In this context, Pakistan's role for China has become highly crucial. Notably, Pakistan contributed significantly to the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s, which signaled the beginning of the collapse of the USSR.

### ***Naval Race in Indian Ocean***

In March 2009, an article entitled "Center Stage for the 21st Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean" grabbed the main pages of Foreign Affairs magazine. In the article, Robert D. Kaplan contends that the Indian Ocean region, with its heterogeneous nature and central point for trade and energy seaways, will dominate 21st-century geopolitics. Only three decades ago, the region was the forgotten Cinderella of Asia, riddled with civil wars and rogue regimes, and it served as a staging ground for Cold War proxies. However, the renewed interest in naval arm buildup propels Gawadar Port to the forefront of the strategic debate over the Indian Ocean region's significance. It has economic and strategic importance for the involved stakeholders. In the coming

fifteen years, the development of Gwadar Seaport as a major trading hub by a Chinese company will play a significant role in China-Pakistan ties. The expansion of Pakistan's Gwadar deep seaport, whose operational management has been transferred to China for 40 years, may be seen as a major source of economic development in Pakistan.

It will not be wrong to say that in regional states, India maintains a relatively powerful navy. India enhanced its bilateral and trilateral engagements with regional and extra-regional stakeholders to foment a powerful naval alliance, with India at the center. India entered into an informal strategic alliance with Australia, Japan, and the US under the umbrella of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad). It initiated a security dialogue with France and Australia for an alliance, "Paris-New Delhi-Canberra"(Gupta, 2020). Pakistan requires Beijing's assistance to achieve the desired balance. In this regard, Pakistan unquestionably intends to use the development of Gwadar seaport as a military facility to impose a naval blockade on Indian oil imports through the sea from the Middle East and Persian Gulf during times of war, which is understandable given the growing military and naval power of India. Beijing also has implicit plans to use Gwadar, which is strategically important due to its location at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, South Asia, and the Greater Middle East, to impose a naval blockade on India, particularly if Delhi chokes China's supply lines through the Strait of Malacca, a narrow waterway in the Indian Ocean. In the case of a crisis or war, India's navy might cut off Chinese oil and supplies by basing in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands at the mouth of the strait thanks to the country's natural position in the Indian Ocean.

### ***Global Security Initiative and Global Development Initiative***

Pakistan's significance for China in the next five to fifteen years would be significant in the context of Xi's most recent diplomatic projects, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Development Initiative, which are likely to continue after the completion of Xi's third term, and who knows, he may be elected to additional terms as Chinese head of state. Whether Xi would remain in office after five years or not, Chinese policy toward Washington would remain in place. Beijing has launched both the Global Security Initiative and the Global Development Initiative to replace the US-led dominant liberal order norms and rules with a system more favorable to non-democratic states like China, with the goal of increasing China's global power status. China would

attempt to enlist more and more nations in its cause. Pakistan's contribution is highly important in this regard. Anti-American sentiment is pervasive across society in Pakistan. The Pakistani public, on the other hand, is overwhelmingly pro-China. Chinese strategists are aware of this and hence have a positive opinion of Pakistan. In fact, widespread anti-American sentiment in Pakistan has and will continue to hold a unique place in Chinese policy circles.

### ***Uyghurs in Xinjiang***

The issue of the Uyghur Muslim minority population in the Xinjiang region is a crucial one that hold potential to affect China's relations with Pakistan during the next fifteen years. The issue of Muslims and their rights around the world is very emotive in Pakistani society. In fact, Washington's historical assistance for Jews and their Israeli state at the expense of Palestinian Muslim rights and respect is largely responsible for Pakistan's anti-Americanism. The decision-makers in American foreign policy and the international relations intelligentsia are also aware of Pakistan's passionate commitment to Islam and Muslims and will attempt to use these feelings to provoke anti-Chinese feelings in Pakistan.

### ***Another CPEC***

The United States and the European Union also designed mega infrastructure projects such as Build Back Better World. The critical goal of these projects is to entice poorer countries to support the Western cause of China containment. China must maintain investment peace with its peer competitor. In this backdrop, another round of major Chinese investment in Pakistani infrastructure projects will play a significant role in China-Pakistan ties during the course of the next fifteen years. Owing to the fact that investments made as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would likely be completed over the following five years once all projects had reached their maturity. As Pakistan would anticipate growing Chinese investment, the CPEC has evolved into a barometer for the volume of Chinese investment in that country. Islamabad would fall into a virtual debt trap if these investments led to rising Chinese loans for Pakistan, which would not be beneficial for bilateral relations.

### **Conclusion**

While China-Pakistan relations have historically been exceptionally friendly and there have almost been no issue in the bilateral ties, the advent of the CPEC in China in the beginning further cemented their relations but lately also become a source of tension in their ties. The causes of this

tension primarily include non-payment by Pakistani authorities to Chinese companies and contractors and security of Chinese workers in Pakistan. These are such problems that could be easily addressed. As the relations between China and Pakistan remain cold at the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023 in the next five to 15 years various factors would play their role in determine their bilateral relations. These factors include the CPEC, both countries respective relations with India and Afghanistan and their impact on their bilateral ties, China-US struggle for great power status and compulsion of Pakistan to balance her relations with the US. These factors would largely impact China-Pakistan relations over the next five to 15 years but growing their mutual ties is the only option for both countries as the key prerequisite of their respective national interest. ,

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