CPEC: Security Threats and Measures

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Abstract

China Pakistan Economic Corridor is term as potential game changer by policy makers and political analysts that will change the regional economic and strategic shape. It has great economic, strategic and trade prospects for Pakistan and the region but this is not without challenges. The security is main threat to CPEC that has internal and external factors. Special Security Division for CPEC is a good initiative to counter the security threat but keeping in mind the gravity of the security issue a well-coordinated policy is needed that include all the concerned institutions, participation of locals, cultural exchange programmers and capacity development of intelligence agencies.

Keywords: Security, Intelligence Network, Economic Measures, Social Exchange.

Introduction

China Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC has promised a number of economic geo strategic and trade prospects for not only Pakistan and China but for the whole region but the security threats posing to CPEC will not allow reaping the benefits it promise. The security threats are not limited to the issues related to physical security of the man power and assets but also include to pre-empting and foiling the hostile plans of sabotage and subversion by terrorist and their foreign supporters.

Government and security institutions have to identify the challenges pertaining to the successful completion of CPEC and take steps to tackle these problems. Security issues include insurgency in Baluchistan, Propaganda against CPEC, foreign hand in sabotage activities; regional security issues specially the situation in Afghanistan, terrorist activities and extremism in the country.

Chinese high officials have raised concern over the security situation especially after the events of targeting and kidnapping of Chinese officials in Balochistan. The government decision to re-route the

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Corridor also signals that security is the main hurdle to the realization of CPEC. Though the government has taken certain concrete measure like the establishment of Special Security Division to provide better security to workers and projects of CPEC but threats likely to persist in future unless a well-coordinated and malty prong security policy is worked out by Pakistan having local support, capacity building of intelligence agencies and number of bold foreign policy initiatives.

Research Objectives

- 1) To highlight the issue of security of CPEC
- 2) Asses and analyze the issues related to CPEC
- 3) Give suggestions for the solution of threats to the CPEC

Literature Review

In this paper" fighting fire with water: evaluating a CPEC-based human Security approach to fostering stability in Balochistan" Omar Alam has maintained that CPEC provide a great opportunity to the state of Pakistan to curb Baloch insurgency by implementing a nonmilitary approach. Frequently invoked Insurgency in Balochistan is a great hurdle that can undermine CPEC, an ambitious initiative. Through development of projects in Balochistan under CPEC the nationalist of Balochistan can be brought in the main stream of national politics and the threat to CPEC can be can be avert. People of most affected areas can sustain long term security. Through a process of dialogue and communication, goodwill can be created for human security. By empowering the people of these areas, they can be made responsible for long term security.

M Nawaz Khan in his newspaper article "CPEC- a game changer" expressed his hope that CPEC will be a game changer and its major beneficiaries will include Pakistan, China and Gulf countries.¹ The corridor after it is materialized will serve as a primary gateway for trade between China and the Middle East and Africa. In particular, oil from the Middle East could be offloaded at Gwadar and transported to China through Balochistan province in Pakistan. The writer observed that many foreign countries and their intelligence agencies are extending their support to the militants to sabotage multibillion-dollar CPEC project. Juxtapose to it, India has already voiced its unfair reservations against the CPEC, which China out-rightly rejects. Islamabad has voiced its concern that hostile Indian spy agency RAW has been whipping up terrorism in Pakistan on the bases of evidences regarding RAW's involvement in Karachi and Balochistan's terrorist incidents.

Moreover, Indian Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar publicly outlined the strategy of waging proxy wars in Pakistan through sponsoring terrorism to counter terrorism as a state policy while offering the double financial budget to the terrorist groups who are involved in terrorist actives. India is constantly using Afghanistan's land to destabilize Pakistan. In this context, there is a need that international community should take notice on these irresponsible statements coming from Delhi and RAW's involvement in terrorist activities against Islamabad.

Saima Parveen and Jehanzeb Khalil (2015) in the paper "Gwadar-Kashgar Economic Corridor: Challenges and Imperatives for Pakistan and China" discussed the challenges that are posed to the corridor. These challenges include the security problems and situation in Balochistan. The paper highlighted the geostrategic importance of Gwadar port. Gwadar is located at a position which region and stakeholders.

Methodology

For collecting and analyzing data related to security threat pose to CPEC and to address questions like how security situation in Pakistan can impede the development and success of CPEC and why a comprehensive security policy is necessary we have relied on different sources, along with interviews of the people related to security. The data about the conditions of areas through which the CPEC will pass, the security situation in Baluchistan and KPK and the role of foreign agencies to destabilize Pakistan and to target CPEC, have been collected highly relying on journals, books and certain websites

Discussion

Security is one of the primary obstacles to the full implementation and success of CPEC. It requires research and analysis of great magnitude to assess kids and levels of security threats and would be areas that can be the targets of terrorists to hamper the progress on CPEC. The academic research could provide better understanding of the problem and can suggest the practical and viable ways to resolve the issue.

Kinds of Security Threats

The sabotage activities are of two kinds 1) to kill the Chinese officials or labors working there on CPEC (Twenty two (22) labors were killed by the bike riders in Gwadar on May 13, 2017 (2017 May 14) or to carry out activities in different parts of the country specially Baluchistan, the Province where Gwadar is situated. In Mastung a suicide attack claim 22

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lives and many injured including the deputy chairman Senate Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haderi) Mastung district of Balochistan on Friday May 12, 2017 10 labors were killed by motorcycle riders on 13th May 2017.² The timing of these activities is important as well. These were carried out when prime minister was on his visit to China to attend OBOR conference. On May 24, unknown persons kidnapped some Chinese from Quetta who were students of Urdu language course in Jinnah Town Quetta a person Muhammad Zahir got injured but save a Chinese woman The Balochistan Government spokesman or representative Sarwar Kakar told the media.³ The tendency and speed of these events have been increased with the pace of work on CPEC. Now the question is who is carrying out these activities and why?

There are two types of terrorist, those who are carrying out these activities to pressurize the government to negotiate or announce package of incentives for the locals or disenchanted people and those who are busy in their business to please their God fathers abroad for monetary gains. The network of RAW and afghan secret agency NDS has been exposed by Pakistan Kulbhushan Jadhav confessed that he was running a network of terrorism in Balochistan to undermine CPEC. Whatever is the case but a commonality is that the poverty-stricken people are their prey, Balochistan is one of the most poor and backward area of the country where people are living substandard lives.

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According to the plan the routes of CPEC will run through certain areas near North West frontiers where Taliban and other terrorist outfits could attack the workers and disrupt the transportation of goods. Security forces of Pakistan carried out operation to root out terrorism that could delay or derail CPEC. Pakistan military claimed to have eradicated Eat Turkistan Islamic movement in October 2015 but the threat from other groups is still there.

These groups have remained engage in killing and kidnapping of Chinese and their plans hinted that they could expand to target more of them working in different projects and other Chinese interests. Economic progress promised by CPEC means something extra for a state facing the conflicts on the basis of sects, political affiliation and menaces of terrorism and militancy.⁴ Massarrat Abid and Ayesha Ashfaq

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in their paper while analyzing the opportunities and challenges of CPEC have mention the names of outfits that pose security threats stretches from Xinxing in China to Gwadar in Pakistan. These include East Turkistan Islamic moment (ETIM) Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Daesh (ISIS), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and militant wings of some political parties. Their objective might be to use attacks on Chinese interests as a mean to deal with the state of Pakistan.⁵ In the words of Director Pakistan Institute of Strategic Studies Amir Rana, "China's main worry seems to be the overall security of the corridor in the near future.", militants in Diamer, Baloch insurgents, political issues, nationalist and separatists groups link directly to the corridor security.⁶

In order to address the Chinese concerns about the security Pakistan has made efforts to provide security to Chinese officials and interests. The establishment of special security division of 15000 men is an important initiative of the Pakistan in this regard. This SSD will comprise of nine Army battalion and six wings of paramilitary forces (Rangers, Levies, police, scouts and the Frontier Corps). The SSD is in the command of a major-general-rank officer.⁷

Foreign Hand in Undermining CPEC

To threaten the Pak-Chinese plans of developing the CPEC the above mention groups have been assisted by the foreign agencies like American CIA, Israeli Mossad and Indian RAW.⁸

In a seminar organize by Pakistan institute for peace studies PIPS Islamabad, on 1st March 2017 on the topic "Changing Regional Scenario and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)". The participants were convinced that under the changing regional scenario Pakistan is confronted with the problems like rivalry, insecurity and differences and the situation will deteriorate further under the new American administration with Donald Trump as president. Despite these difficulties but with reorientation of policies Pakistan has the potential to achieve CPEC and it will in turn help it out to bridge the divides. Hu Shiseng, a scholar of China institute of Contemporary international Relations (CICAR) reminded that India has repeatedly mention that CPEC is running through its route. India's stance that Gilgit (Where Khujarab is located a point where CPEC connects China and Pakistan) Biltistan is a part of Kashmir and Pakistani controlled Kashmir is a disputed territory, has been out rightly rejected by China. But some were of the opinion that CPEC does not sit well in the strategic calculations of India which could be one of major cause of its concern over CPEC.⁹

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Pakistan Security Report 2016

Pakistan security report 2016 has been prepared and published by Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS).¹⁰ According to the report 28% reduction in terrorism was recorded in the country 908 individuals were killed in 441 militant attacks. Report term Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Jamat-ul-Ahrar, and Lashkr-e-Jhangvi poses great threat to the security of Pakistan. 95 operations were conducted by the security forces across the country and 1419 alleged terrorist were arrested. The performance of NACTA was not as impressive due to its role as subinstitute of interior ministry. The drone attacks have been reduced to three. The number is far less comparative to The US bombings in Iraq and Syria where it is 2400. However, there is a significant decline in militant attacks in 2016 but the terrorist organizations are still a potent threat to the security. Some of these outfits are widening their scope spreading their Ideology and evolving within the new spaces. The state is require to move beyond the hard approaches.

The report mention Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as majorly responsible for instability in the country which carried 106 attacks in 2016 followed by Jamat-ul-Alharar with 66 attacks.¹¹ While defense is limited to geography the security is a multi-faceted spectrum strengthening from physical human to social and ideological domains Security is composite phenomenon that need a platform that include all institutions connected with the law enforcement, intelligence and military. Political consensus and strategic convergence provide the bases and foundations for the capacity and capability development.¹²

National Action Plan

On16th of December 2014 terrorist attack Army Public School and left 144 students and staff members killed. It provoked a massive protest all over the country and on 24th of December Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a televised address to the nation announce 20 point National Action Plan (NAP) is a comprehensive strategy, to defeat terrorism, an existential threat to Pakistan. But the lack of political will resulted in failure of the plan in producing the tangible results. The lack of interest on part of political leadership in monitoring the ongoing progress on NAP was evident from the fact that the meeting of political and military brass was convened after 19 month of the announcement of NAP.¹³

One of the 20 points of NAP was reconciliation process in Baluchistan. Former Chief Minister Abdul Malik Baloch met with dissident Baloch leaders in Europe but the initiative did not produce any tangible progress due to the stand of dissident leaders that they would The Dialogue 22 Volume XIV Number 01

only speak to military leaders as the political leadership, in their opinion, lack authority and mandate. Apart from lack of political will, other factors responsible for the low profile of NAP include absence of a coherent and coordinated strategy to tackle terrorism.¹⁴

Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad

On February 22, Inter services Public Relations, The Army's media wing, announced that Pakistan Army launched "Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad" ('elimination of discord') across the country aiming at" indiscriminately eliminating the "residual/latent threat of terrorism", consolidating the gains made in other military operations, and further ensuring the security of Pakistan's borders." The operation include an effort of conducting Broad Spectrum Security / Counter-Terrorism (CT) operations by Rangers in Punjab, along with continuation of ongoing operations across the country and focus on more effective border security management. The additional cardinals of the effort include the countrywide de-weaponisation and explosive control. The hallmark of the operation will be the pursuance of National Action Plan.

In the notification of the operation Rad-ul-Fasad It was announced that it is the continuation of National Action Plan (NAP). Under National action Plan (NAP) measures like establishment of military courts, Intelligence-based operations across the country and curtailing terror financing were initiated but it faced severe criticism in the country for its apparently half-hearted implementation.¹⁵ These operations have successfully improve the law and order situation in the country but need more concerted coherent and well-coordinated efforts to improve security situation and control militants, especially in the back drop of foreign supported terrorist activities to undermine CPEC.

Regional Situation and Pak Afghan Relations

Regional scenario presents an alarming picture for Pakistan and CPEC. The tension is on rise between Pakistan and Afghanistan .The suicide attacks in Kabul that claim lives of 90 people and in which 490 people were injured followed by another suicide attack in the funeral meeting in Kabul and then in Herat resulted in worsening the relations between the two neighboring countries.

Tensions along Afghanistan's disputed border with Pakistan, the Pakistani Army claimed to have retaliated against an attack by Afghan security, killing up to 50 Afghan personnel and injuring another 100. Afghan troops began firing on a Pakistani census team without provocation, forcing Frontier Corps troops to respond.¹⁶

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Afghan president did not participate in ECO conference held in Islamabad in Feb 2017and He spit venom against Pakistan in Heart of Asia Conference. In the meeting of National Security Committee held on June 7, 2017 chaired by PM Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan rejected Afghanistan allegation about involvement of Pakistan in terrorist attacks in Kabul in June 2017 that claim 90 and injured 450 then in Herat Afghan government accused Haqani network supported by Pakistan for these attacks. Pakistan rejected Afghan accusations as baseless and suggested t that afghan should consider their own policies system and internal situation.¹⁷

On the Pak India border severe cross firing become the norm of the day and unabated violations of the ceasefire along the line of control (LoC) is a norm of the day from Indian side. The incident of Uri and Indian claim of surgical strike and the current border situation speak of another likely war between the two nuclear states. Ahsanullah Ihsan, former spokesman of TTP, in his interview to Geo TV unfold that the RAW and NDS nexus is operating to destabilize Pakistan and their main aim is to create rift between Punjabis and Pashtuns.¹⁸

The Afghan government is fully supporting India in her effort of destabilizing Pakistan and jeopardize CPEC in this back drop it is concluded that the current regional scenario is not supporting the construction and success of CPEC. For its materialization Pakistan has to devise a more realistic, proactive foreign policy to transform the regional situation in its favor. Needless to say that Afghan government is supported by the US and it is to please the US. Afghan government is lining up with India despite the facts that hundreds and thousands of Afghans are still living in camps in Pakistan as refugees and Pakistan had paid heavy price for the independence and peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan has to take a clear-cut stand against Afghan government and the foreign troops supporting Afghan administration that has its writ only on 57% of the country mostly in urban areas. Pakistan should work through effective foreign policy to counterbalance new regional threats.

Pakistan is confronted with three front conflict scenario created by India-Iran- Afghanistan strategic alliance.¹⁹ The relations between Pakistan and Iran are also not remain very friendly owing to Pakistan induction into the KSA sponsored multinational counter terrorism network, despite efforts made by PM Nawaz Sharif and army chief Raheel Shrif who visited Iran.²⁰ The Iranian Army Chief Maj. Gen. Mohammad Baqeri was reported to vow that Iran would hit the hideouts of terrorist who carry out cross-border attacks, if Pakistan does not confront them.²¹ This statement has been viewed with great concern in

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Pakistan and Iranian ambassador to Pakistan was called in Foreign office for registering a protest against Iranian military Chief statement.⁴

The regional security mechanism is the dire need of the time keeping it in mind that security is a multifaceted spectrum contrast to defense which is geography specific. The security phenomenon is composite and has various domains including physical human social and ideological. Therefore, a platform for greater military convergence and political consensus with enhanced intelligence sharing under multinational composite security force mechanism is vital or regional security that will lead to the possibility of regional connectivity through OBOR and CPEC for prosperity of the people of the region.²³

External Factors

Where there are internal challenges to CPEC there are many external challenges to this mega project. When view through the lens of international politics the ground reality we come across is that US is not in favor of CPEC as the US want to contain china and stable Pakistan with nuclear facility does not place anywhere in her international order equation.

India never hide its design against Pakistan and categorically held stance that as Pakistan controlled Kashmir as a disputed territory and CPEC will pass through its areas so the CPEC is illegal. Pakistan has substantial evidences that India is involved in supporting the insurgents in Baluchistan. Kulbhushan Jadhav an in-service Indian Naval Officer was arrested by intelligence agencies who confessed that his mission was to carryout sabotage activities in Baluchistan and to target CPEC. His statement endorse Pakistan claim that India is behind the insurgency in Baluchistan.

The US drone attack in Balochistan in which Mulla Akhtar Mansoor was killed, also viewed as an attempt to impede the CPEC in the serious circles like Southern command. After the drone the US ambassador to Pakistan was called on by the Army Chief and conveyed a strong message to stop drones in Pakistan. India is financially supporting the Chabahar port to operate this before the operationalization of Gwadar to undermine the CPEC and this collaboration between India and Iran will result in providing an alternate route to India for her access to CARs. India Iran Afghanistan nexus is trying hard to impede CPEC. An economically stable Pakistan will never lean to Indian hegemonic design in South Asia that is why India is openly opposing the CPEC.

Although the US have not openly opposed the CPEC but this plan does not fit in her china containment policy. In pacific ocean the US The Dialogue 25 Volume XIV Number 01

and china are trying hard to gain control and supremacy. The CPEC is part of Chinese One Belt or Silk Route Policy, which will ultimately harm the US, interests in the region. All above-mentioned developments in International Politics revealed that there are great external threats to CPEC and need to be addressed by Pakistan carefully and cautiously through diplomatic means in a way to protect CPEC and national security without making any compromise or at the cost of peace full relations with her neighbors.²⁴

Conclusion

There are great prospects of economic progress for Pakistan through CPEC along with the social, strategic and political gains but these are not without challenges. CPEC can pave the way for regional economic and trade connectivity and can lead to the integration OF South, Central and East Asia. The frequently changing international and regional scenario demand timely completion of CPEC to enable Pakistan and China to reap the benefits promised by CPEC as flag ship project of OBOR and successful CPEC will usher a new era of progress in Pakistan and the whole region. Security issue poses great threat to not only CPEC but the brighter future and integrity of Pakistan. The solution of this challenge is lying in the sincere efforts of all stakeholders to be on the same page. Realizing the gravity of the problem and the situation a strong and publically supported government with effective security measures at domestic level and effective foreign policy initiative can control and improve security situation.

Recommendations

A special headquarter of CPEC security cell in Islamabad should be established with staff specially trained in intelligence gathering and transfer of knowledge to security forces concerned for a brisk and timely action against perceived threat to CPEC official in any part of the country. The circle of socio-cultural exchanges is to be widened. Chinese language course in government colleges should be started as these poor students cannot afford private institution for this purpose.

The issue of governance should be addressed. A transparent, well-organized and accountable mechanism with check and balances and efficient hard worker and competent persons on merit in executive can manage the issue. To improve security situation National Action Plan need to be executed in its letter and spirit. The Chinese should be taken in confidence about the security measures and financial assistance from PRC will reduce the burden. All other countries like Russia interested in

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joining CPEC should be engaged in agreement for providing some percentage for security expenditures. All the concerned department and agencies for CPEC security should present their progress report on fortnightly bases in their meeting to CPEC security committee comprising of all the interior ministers and secretaries. Media can play a vital role in making awareness in public and neutralizing the propaganda.

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