

SOUNDINGS



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The Evolving Pakistan-China Maritime Economic Relationship in the Indian Ocean

Anwar Saeed

Introduction

Pakistan and China have a multidimensional relationship, providing a good example of peaceful coexistence between two states with differing beliefs, social and political systems. China has supported Pakistan economically, militarily and politically, while Pakistan was China's only reliable free world diplomatic partner during its international isolation. In the context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, this paper argues that the close relationship between the two states is now shaping into a new economic network that creates a framework for interaction on the basis of economic connectivity and regional cooperation. As the 'corridor' connects the economic belt with the 21st century maritime silk road, the node at Gwadar Port will be important to future maritime cooperation between the two states.

In the backdrop of maritime competition emerging in the Indian Ocean region and prevailing non-traditional maritime security threats; this paper outlines the development of the Pakistan-China relationship, the importance of the Indian Ocean to global affairs, relevant maritime security issues and associated responses to protect shipping and trade, as well as the growing naval cooperation between Pakistan and China in the Indian Ocean.

Pakistan-China Bilateral Relations - An Appraisal

Despite differing beliefs systems, culture and ever changing geo-political patterns, Pakistan-China relations have remained an epitome of enduring friendship.¹ This can be demonstrated through a quick historical overview.

On 21 May 1951, Pakistan opened its embassy in Beijing and became the first Muslim country with a diplomatic mission in China.² In 1954, Pakistan joined both SEATO and CENTO and while this initially alarmed the Chinese leadership, Pakistan subsequently advised China that it had joined SEATO for its own security and not to be part of any action directed against China.³ While there were high level visits between the two states, as Pakistan's political and military leadership was still inclined towards the Western bloc; the relationship with China did not flourish.⁴

While the 1950s were focused on the China-India friendship; the 1962 war between China and India over land borders allowed Pakistan to further improve its relations with China.⁵ Sensing the severity of its own border issue with China; in 1963, Pakistan and China signed a border agreement that is commonly believed to have added significant weight to their relationship.⁶ In the mid-1960s, Pakistan and China signed a landmark agreement concerning the development of the Karakoram Highway, which is often referred as the friendship highway. This highway connects the northern areas of Pakistan to Xinjiang province in China and traverses one of the old silk road trading routes.⁷ While the 1960s witnessed a flourishing relationship between the two states; the events of 1971, during which East Pakistan became independent Bangladesh, saw overwhelming Chinese support for Pakistan.⁸

During the Cold War, while Pakistan acted as bridge between the United States and China, it also served as a gateway allowing China to forge relations with the Muslim world.⁹ At the end of Cold War, when Pakistan was abandoned by the United States and the West, China's diplomatic, economic, technological (including civil nuclear) and military support played a critical role in further fostering the relationship. Today, Pakistan considers China as a 'time tested' friend that has never abandoned it nor ever attached any stringent conditions to its support.¹⁰

When contextualising the Pakistan-China friendship, some analysts are of the view that it is based on the common interest of both states to 'contain India'; that China does not want a meaningful bilateral relation with India; and that Pakistan feels threatened from the thaw in the India-China

relationship. It is true that in the formative years of the friendship, differences between China and India allowed Pakistan to grow its relationship with China; and as Pakistan was facing a security threat from its eastern neighbour (India), a simple analogy made India a common enemy of both states. But that cannot be the sole reason for both states drawing closer together.¹¹ Other factors such as the Pakistan-China border agreement, the opening of road and air connections, and Pakistan's disenchantment with its Western allies, especially the United States, also contributed to improved relations.¹²

Although China is a strong supporter of Pakistan, it also has trade and economic relations with India.¹³ The quantum and level of Pakistan-China trade in comparison to that of China-India is a case in point - India-China trade is valued at US\$70 billion, with Pakistan-China trade valued at US\$16 billion.¹⁴ Moreover, a survey conducted in 2011 revealed that 'improvement in China-India bilateral relation is not considered a threat to the existing Pakistan-China friendship'. Rather, it is believed that cordial ties between China and India are in the best interest of the region and China's warming relations with India would remove the trust gap between India and Pakistan and might lead to trilateral trade cooperation in the future.¹⁵

China Pakistan Economic Corridor: Genesis of Future Maritime Economic Coupling

On 20 April 2015, China and Pakistan signed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agreement. The resulting project worth US\$46 billion comprises a 3000km network of roads, railway lines, energy pipelines and fibre optic cables that will connect Kashgar in China's Xinjiang province with Gwadar, a deep sea port in Pakistan's Baluchistan province.¹⁶ Both countries see this project as a 'game changer' and a way of 'regional economic connectivity' to revive the ancient trade and transportation routes (both land and sea).¹⁷

An economic corridor can be described as a territorial or sea-based transportation grid which is used regularly for the movement of goods, services and people from one state to another. It connects economic activity along a clearly identified geography and provides a connection between economic nodes or hubs where considerable economic resources are concentrated.¹⁸ On a regional scale, an economic corridor involves the availability of economic resources and economic activity in different regions that have active land or sea based connectivity for movement of goods, energy and services. Such economic linkages create new economic opportunities for the people of the connected regions.

China announced its 'one belt, one road' policy in 2013 aiming to create land routes and maritime openings for building trade linkages and connections regionally and globally; CPEC is a part of that policy.¹⁹ The corridor is significant as it connects the 'economic belt' with the 21st century maritime silk road. It provides an important land route between China, Pakistan, the Gulf region, the Middle East and beyond. From Pakistan's perspective, the CPEC project strengthens the existing road links (such as the aforementioned Karakoram Highway), trade, investment and economic ties between the two states, and opens new opportunities for economic and infrastructure development. China's overwhelming investment in CPEC and Pakistan's willingness to adopt it is no surprise. CPEC and developments in Gwadar and Kashgar can be seen as implementing China's 'Go West' and Pakistan's 'Go East' policies.²⁰

Development of Gwadar Port is crucial for the economic prosperity of Pakistan, as foreign direct investment has sharply fallen, 41 per cent Pakistanis are living below the poverty line, economic losses due to the war on terror are estimated to be in the order of US\$35 billion, and the industrial sector is operating at 50 per cent capacity due to electricity shortages.²¹ For Pakistan, the economic returns from Gwadar stem from its proximity to the Strait of Hormuz as a key shipping point and trade hub, once road, rail and air links connect it to the rest of Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and Central Asia. Pakistan wants to use Gwadar Port for trade and energy transportation to China, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Moreover, with the development of rail, road and air connection between Gwadar and surrounding areas, all trade from and to China and Central Asia is most likely to adopt the shortest available route via Gwadar multiplying the trade benefits for Pakistan.

Arguably, Gwadar would generate considerable revenue and create employment opportunities, especially for the local populace. This in turn will bring peace and stability to this under-developed province of Pakistan.²²

In 2013, China Overseas Port Holdings Limited took over the operational control of Gwadar Port.²³ China's interest in CPEC, especially Gwadar Port, is a combined result of its unprecedented economic growth, prospects of economic development in western China, increasing dependence on imported energy and consequent security issues. In 1993, China became a net oil importing country and the degree of dependence on imported energy has risen each year.²⁴ According to the US Energy Information Administration, China is the world's second-largest consumer of oil and moved from being the second largest net importer of oil to the largest in 2014.²⁵ By 2020, China is projected to import nearly 73 million barrels of crude oil each day.²⁶ By 2035, between 70 to 80 per cent of China's imported crude will likely come from the Middle East.²⁷ In 2012, China's trade with Gulf Council for Cooperation countries was US\$155 billion and continues to rise.²⁸ China plans to diversify, secure and increase its energy supplies. China's plan to build an oil refinery at Gwadar and an oil pipeline from Gwadar to Xinjiang will supply Persian Gulf and African oil to western China. The total length of the proposed gas pipeline from Gwadar to Xinjiang is 2500km while the distance from Xinjiang to eastern ports of Shanghai and Beijing through inland China is 4500km. The distance from Shanghai Port to Gwadar and the Persian Gulf via the Indian Ocean is 10,000km.

It is evident that trade and energy movements from the Persian Gulf and east African states via Gwadar overland to China will reduce the transit distance from 14500km to 2500km. Being a shorter route it is not only cost effective, but also addresses China's concerns over the maritime route through the Malacca Strait. Currently, Chinese oil tankers on average take 20 days to reach the Persian Gulf. However, after the completion of CPEC, tankers from the Gulf will reach Gwadar within 48 hours.²⁹

As a project of such enormous potential is bound to influence the future relationship of both states, CPEC with its focus on Gwadar has also given impetus to maritime cooperation between them. Both states wish to enhance bilateral cooperation in the fields of maritime security, search and rescue, disaster relief at sea, maritime scientific research, environmental protection, and the blue economy. In 2013, they signed two memorandums of understanding on 'Maritime Cooperation' and 'Cooperation in the field of Marine Science and Technology'. In 2015, they also signed the *Protocol on the Establishment of China-Pakistan Joint Marine Research Centre between State Oceanic Administration of China and the Ministry of Science and Technology of Pakistan*. The mandate of the research centre is to examine the growing non-traditional threats to maritime security and to propose measures to safeguard the security of international sea lanes. In order to ensure meaningful progress on all maritime cooperation related issues, a special dialogue forum was also initiated.³⁰

During the Cold War, Chinese naval support to the Pakistan Navy was limited to providing corvettes and small craft, such as fast patrol boats. However in recent years, Chinese support has expanded from equipment, logistics and training support to include technology transfer. Joint in-country construction of the F-22P frigate; Azmat and Jalalat class fast attack craft (missile), and corvettes for the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (akin to a coastguard) are examples. The recently concluded agreement concerning Yuan class submarines for the Pakistan Navy will lift this cooperation to new heights. During the recent visit of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) chief to Pakistan, both navies agreed to enhance the scope of existing bilateral maritime exercises in order to improve interoperability.³¹

The Indian Ocean Perspective

There are many reasons for the Indian Ocean's strategic importance, but the most compelling is its centrality to global trade. The Indian Ocean connects the Middle East, east Africa and East Asia with Europe and the Americas. This ocean hosts international maritime traffic that includes half of the world's containerised cargo, one third of its bulk cargo and two thirds of its oil shipments. Its

waters carry large volumes of petroleum and associated products from the oilfields of the Persian Gulf and Indonesia, and contain an estimated 40 per cent of the world's offshore oil production. The Indian Ocean contains 80 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves and 17 per cent of natural gas. Forty per cent of global seaborne trade moves across the ocean, one-fifth of which comprises oil and gas. Each day, over 25 million barrels of oil transits the Strait of Hormuz to key importers like the United States, China, France, India and Japan.³²

Since times immemorial, the Indian Ocean region had been an oasis of peace and prosperity due to an overt and mutual dependence on trade. At the dawn of 16th century, colonial powers such as the Portuguese, Dutch, French and the British, transformed it into an arena for securing their trade interests and gaining influence over the region. The strategic importance of the region gained further traction with the discovery of oil in Iran in 1908.³³ In the wake of World War II, when territorial occupation became unsustainable for Britain, it passed the baton on to a reliable partner, the United States. During the Cold War, strategic ocean theatres centred largely on the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and, as such, the Indian Ocean was not considered a major theatre for potential superpower confrontation.³⁴ However, it remained vital for securing the exports of crude oil from the Persian Gulf amid major interstate conflict between Iran and Iraq during the 1980s.

Today, however, the picture has altered significantly. The economic growth of two home grown Asian powers, China and India, coupled with their resource and energy requirements, and their power struggle for regional dominion has recalibrated the Indian Ocean's global strategic importance.³⁵

While global energy demand from 2000 to 2010 grew by 26 per cent, it is forecast to grow by 45 per cent in 2035. Almost half of the growth in demand will come from China and India.³⁶ China's demand for crude oil doubled between 1995 and 2005 and will double again in the coming 15 years or so. More than 85 per cent of the oil and oil products bound for China transit the Indian Ocean and Malacca Strait. In the coming decade, India will become the world's 4th largest energy consumer, after the United States, China, and Japan. While India is dependent on oil for roughly 33 per cent of its energy needs, 65 per cent is imported and 90 per cent of its oil imports transit the Persian Gulf. As both states are reliant on energy imports, they are competing to maintain and develop alternate sources of energy. Keeping in perspective this energy competition and the fact that commercial shipping must traverse the same oceanic routes to reach Indian and Chinese ports, mutual fears persist that the bodies of water stretching from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea could be held hostage in the event of crisis or conflict.³⁷ Moreover, the United States' rebalance to the Pacific is also a contributing factor elevating Chinese concern over Indian Ocean security.

Coupled with recent economic progress and increasing Indian confidence, New Delhi has started couching its appraisal of India's maritime environment in geopolitical terms.³⁸ In 2004, India published its first maritime doctrine. While akin to any other maritime doctrine, it described India's maritime strategy as a function of economic development and prosperity, and the explanation of geographical contours (such as chokepoints) is worth noting.³⁹ India's political, defence and trade dialogue with Vietnam, Myanmar, Iran, Qatar, Maldives, Seychelles, South Africa and Australia reflect its expanding interests. India is enlarging its navy in the same spirit. With its 155 warships, the Indian Navy is already one of the world's largest, and plans to add three nuclear powered submarines and three aircraft carriers to its fleet.⁴⁰

Parallel to Indian's geopolitical manoeuvres, China has set its own course. As China's economic, political and technological prowess is ahead of India, there has been a commensurate growth in its profile in the Indian Ocean. China is acquiring bases along the crucial chokepoints in the Indian Ocean, not only to serve its economic interests but also to enhance its strategic presence in the region. According to China's Defence White Paper, the PLAN will be aiming at gradual extension of strategic depth for offshore defensive operations and enhancing its capabilities for integrated maritime operations and nuclear counter attacks. The PLAN is now considered the 3rd largest navy in the world. Its increasingly sophisticated submarine fleet will eventually be one of the worlds

largest. Since launching counter-piracy operations in 2009, PLAN warships along with their submarines undertake port visits in the Indian Ocean. While China's sponsored ports at Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Kayupka (Myanmar), Gwadar (Pakistan), and Chittagong (Bangladesh) are claimed as maritime trading hubs; India is sceptical of Chinese intentions and sees them as a maritime containment threat. Moreover, China's unflinching attitude concerning maritime disputes in the South China Sea and its exponentially rising naval build-up also raises concerns in New Delhi.⁴¹

Predicting the contours of the power struggle between India and China through the prism of Pakistan-China bilateralism, strategists often draw parallels with the Cold War. Mirror-imaging the foreseeable aims and motives of China in the Indian Ocean, they correlate them to the prevailing situation in the South China Sea.⁴² The reality is rather different. Contrary to practices in the Cold War, where alliance formulation and partnership were solely based on security networking; the Indian Ocean region is currently witnessing the parallel emergence of two different networks: a security network sponsored by the United States, and an economic network promoted by China.⁴³ In the past, Pakistan-China bilateral relations might have based on security networking; however, currently it is solely knitted with the threads of economics and trade. In the context of mirror-imaging, it is imperative to understand that the environment in the Indian Ocean is totally different to that of the South China Sea. China's willingness to cooperate and collaborate in the global maritime partnership in the Indian Ocean demonstrates that China desires a stable maritime environment in the Indian Ocean for its diverse commercial and economic projects.

Maritime Security Initiatives Affecting Shipping and Trade

The concept of maritime security is not only vast but multidimensional, ranging from traditional security issues like state sovereignty matters, territorial disputes, threats from conventional forces in the form of deliberate attacks on shipping, to more non-traditional issues like piracy, terrorism, drug and people smuggling. It also encompasses environmental and nature (sustainability) associated crimes, such as pollution, illegal fishing etc.⁴⁴

In order to simplify the task of defending maritime activity under the naval term 'good order at sea', maritime security can be divided into two segments such as the 'home game' and the 'away game'.⁴⁵ While the home game entails the conduct of maritime security operations close to one's own coast, the away game is a matter of extending the defence line. Due to obvious advantages, the away game is always considered the preferred option. However, it cannot be done alone and requires maritime partnership with other navies and coastguards.⁴⁶

Following the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the maritime domain came under intense international scrutiny. This was due to perceived vulnerabilities in the maritime transportation system and their possible exploitation by terrorists or other non-state actors. Apart from that, piracy, and the trafficking of people and contraband using the medium of sea and its possible link to terrorism also surfaced as a distinct possibility.⁴⁷ A range of initiatives, legal regimes and coalition naval forces were institutionalised to minimise maritime domain related susceptibilities.

There are a range of initiatives that are specifically institutionalised to protect the shipping industry from maritime terrorism, to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the unregulated delivery of radioactive material. These initiatives include but are not limited to:

- Given the volume of containerised cargo entering US ports and its associated security concerns, in January 2002 the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched the Container Security Initiative (CSI). The initiative targets and examines high risk cargo before it is embarked on board a vessel bound for the United States. It further seeks to protect sea lanes and systems between overseas points of origin and the United States. It was first put into operation in those international ports that were shipping the highest volume of containers to the United States. Its extent was subsequently enlarged to include other strategic ports as well. Initially, the world's top 20 ports ferrying two-

thirds of the container volume to the United States were brought under CSI. To fulfil its objectives, US customs agents are permanently stationed in participating foreign ports where they use x-ray, metal and radiation detectors besides other devices before the cargo is shipped to US ports. Currently 58 ports are CSI-compliant that includes four in China and one in Pakistan.⁴⁸

- The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) was launched in 2003, aiming to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, their related material and delivery systems.⁴⁹ A multinational initiative consistent with United Security Council Resolution 1540, the PSI is based on the voluntary participation of states led by the United States.⁵⁰ According to the US State Department it is an endeavour that seeks to take on board all states that have a stake in the non-proliferation and have the ability, readiness and some capacity to stop the flow of such items at sea, in air or on land.⁵¹ The initiative currently has over 105 member states. Notably, due to their differing opinions regarding PSI; Pakistan, India, China and Iran are not part of it.
- The Megaport Initiative (MPI), created in 2003, is sponsored by the US Department of Energy as a layered multi-agency approach to systematically enhance detection capabilities for special nuclear and other radioactive materials in containerised cargo transiting the global maritime shipping network. The goal of this initiative is to scan as much container traffic as possible (including imports, exports, and trans-shipped containers) regardless of their destination as opposed to the DHS-sponsored initiatives (CSI and SFI), which are specifically for US bound containers. Currently 33 ports around the world (including Pakistan and China) are MPI-compliant.⁵²
- The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, negotiated in 2002 and coming into force in 2004, is an amendment to the *International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974* on the minimum security arrangements for ships and ports. It prescribes responsibilities for governments, shipping companies, shipboard personnel, and port/facility personnel to detect security threats and take preventative measures against security incidents affecting ships or port facilities used in international trade. Compliance with the ISPS Code is mandatory for all 162 contracting parties to SOLAS.⁵³
- The Secure Freight Initiative (SFI) is a DHS-sponsored program launched in 2007 that uses non-intrusive inspection methods and radiation detection technology to assess and identify high risk US-bound maritime shipments. It also gathers data to measure trade activity for risk management and protection of US international trade. Pakistan's Port Qasim is amongst the first three ports that adopted the initiative (the other two ports are Southampton in the United Kingdom and Puerto Cortez in Honduras).⁵⁴

While many of the abovementioned initiatives have an impact on states in the Indian Ocean, there are also a range of regional initiatives that are focused on political and maritime cooperation.

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), launched in March 1997, is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean, launched in March 1997; it comprises 21 member states and 7 dialogue partners. While its objectives focus more on sustainable regional economic growth and cooperation, the Perth Communiqué 2013 adopted under the chairmanship of Australia calls for work on maritime security and alignment with IONS initiatives.⁵⁵ While India and China are part of IORA as permanent member and observer respectively, Pakistan's request for membership has repeatedly been denied.
- Formally launched in 2008 by the Indian Navy, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is regional maritime security initiative which provides a mechanism for navies and maritime forces to interact on matters of common interest and to pursue cooperative engagement and initiatives. It includes 23 permanent members (nations that permanently hold territory that abut or lie within the Indian Ocean) and 7 observer nations including China.⁵⁶

- In 2002, under the auspices of the US Navy, a coalition of multinational navies was formed on a voluntary basis as Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). CMF works on the principles of 'collective and collaborative security', thereby promoting partnership for security, stability and prosperity in the maritime domain. Its main focus areas are on defeating terrorism, preventing piracy, encouraging regional cooperation, and promoting a safe maritime environment. Currently 31 navies from around the world are members. It comprises three combined task forces: CTF 150 (maritime security and counter-terrorism), CTF 151 (counter-piracy) and CTF 152 (Arabian Gulf security and cooperation). Its area of operations includes the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Horn of Africa, Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.⁵⁷ CMF Headquarters is co-located at the Headquarters US Navy Central Command in Bahrain. The contribution from each state varies depending on their respective abilities to provide necessary assets and these many range from the provision of a liaison officer to CMF, deployment of warships or support vessels to the task forces, and land-basing of maritime reconnaissance aircraft. The Pakistan Navy joined CMF in 2004, making its contributions to CTF 150 and 151 through round the clock participation of warships with embarked helicopters, surveillance sorties by fixed wing and land based rotary aircraft, at sea participation in practical seizure operations, command of task forces and provisioning of sizeable number of officers for manning of staff posts at CMF Headquarters.
- In 2008, the European Union launched Operation ATLANTA. It is a counter-piracy operation being conducted under the banner of European Union Naval Forces, with the aim of protecting Somalia-bound vessels and shipments belonging to the World Food Program, and to the African Union Mission in Somalia. In addition, it also monitors fishing activity on the regional seaboard.⁵⁸
- In August 2009, in order to supplement the earlier efforts against piracy off the Horn of Africa and the Gulf Aden, NATO launched the counter-piracy Operation OCEAN SHIELD, which includes both NATO and non-NATO member states.⁵⁹

Pakistan-China Relations: Improving Indian Ocean Maritime Security

CPEC is the main focus of recent relations between Pakistan and China. The corridor, while affording an opportunity for China and Pakistan to improve their interaction with Central Asia, west Asia and the Middle East, will equally contribute to the socio-economic development of other countries that become part of these arrangements.⁶⁰ It thus can be argued that the integration of regional economies is likely to create shared interests among these states. Moreover, the notion of safety and security of these shared interests would provide the basis for maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean.⁶¹ In the larger context of shared economic interests, Pakistan and China also support the recent deal between Iran and India wherein India is investing US\$500 million to develop Chabahar Port. It is believed that working together; both ports can link the economies of Central Asian region with Indian Ocean.⁶²

For Pakistan, Gwadar stands as its nodal point for CPEC. Seaward security of the port and associated sea lanes especially against non-traditional threats is considered a major vulnerability. The area is plagued with incidents of piracy, drug trafficking, gun running and maritime terrorism. These illegal activities not only translate in the shape of increased risk and insurance charges but are also direct threats to seafarers. Realising the importance of a collective and collaborative approach towards maritime security, the Pakistan Navy is an active partner in international naval coalitions and other initiatives. Moreover, it has also developed its own initiatives such as the AMAN series of biennial multinational naval exercises, the annual International Maritime Conference, institutionalisation of Coastal Command and the Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC).⁶³ However, the increased economic and commercial stakes in the region will necessitate additional maritime security efforts notably from the Pakistan Navy and the PLAN.

The AMAN series of exercises is preceded by the International Maritime Conference, and are centred on information sharing, identifying areas of common interest for participating navies and a

shared understanding on maritime security operations, counter-terrorism operations, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. Thus far four exercises have been held, with 33 countries participating in the 2013 exercise. The peacetime role of Coastal Command is to ensure maritime security in Pakistan's ports and harbours; comprising units of marines, special forces, and naval bases, along the Makran coast and creeks. The JMICC was created by the Pakistan Navy in 2008 to improve maritime situation awareness (that is, actionable intelligence, and recognised maritime and common operating pictures) for the effective conduct of operations against identifiable threats in the wider Indian Ocean region. It coordinates the efforts of various government ministries and other agencies to protect Pakistan's national maritime interests in coastal waters, exclusive economic zones, and beyond.⁶⁴

Realising the importance of maritime security for the overall success of CPEC, the Pakistan government is committed to enhancing the operational capacity of both the Pakistan Navy and associated Maritime Security Agency. In this context; apart from concluding a high level submarine construction project with China; in 2015, both countries also signed a contract for the joint construction of six corvettes for the Maritime Security Agency. While four of these corvettes will be built in China, two corvettes will be concurrently built in Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works in Pakistan.⁶⁵ Availability of these all-weather offshore patrol vessels will augment the ongoing maritime security efforts being undertaken by the Pakistan Navy.

The Pakistan Navy and PLAN have long interacted at the bilateral level. This interaction spans a range of activities such as exercises, port calls, training visits, courses, maritime security dialogues and joint shipbuilding projects. In 2003, the Pakistan Navy became the first foreign navy to conduct a naval exercise with the PLAN. Ever since, bilateral naval exercises have always remained a permanent feature of their respective naval calendars. Realising the importance of 'multilateralism' in a global maritime partnership; in 2007, Pakistan expanded its bilateral collaboration to the multilateral level and invited the PLAN to participate in Exercise AMAN 2007. This can be marked as the first participation of PLAN warships in any multinational naval activity. At present, the PLAN participates in other multinational exercises such as RIMPAC and collaborating through international initiatives such as Shared Awareness and De-confliction against piracy off the Gulf of Aden. Moreover, China's participation as an observer and dialogue partner in IONS and IORA respectively are also indicative of China's cooperative role in maritime security of Indian Ocean.

The majority of global maritime security initiatives and naval coalitions in the Indian Ocean have been put in place by extra-regional countries, which are major users of the Indian Ocean. The adoption of these initiatives and coalitions by regional and extra-regional countries alike not only demonstrates their willingness to protect the global commons but also describes the efficacy and just-in-time requirement of such initiatives. For the increased requirements of maritime security; while all the initiatives related to the protection of shipping and its cargo (containerised or other) will likely be adopted as is, other initiatives can also serve as a framework for future development of maritime security activities.

Conclusion

On the premise of shared interests, CPEC, being the genesis of the Pakistan-China maritime coupling, is bound to promote maritime security initiatives in the Indian Ocean. As both countries realise that the success of CPEC is directly related to the meaningful security of Gwadar Port and its associated sea lanes, they also support the multilateral approach to deal with maritime security issues. The Pakistan Navy with its substantial experience of participating in multinational naval coalitions will not only stand well in its role, it can also be instrumental in introducing the same to the PLAN.

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- ¹ Umbreen Javaid and Asifa Jahangir, 'Pakistan-China Strategic Relationship: A Glorious Journey of 55 Years', JRSP, vol 52, no 1, 2015, pp.157-183, http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/history/PDF-FILES/9-%20PC%20Umbreen%20Javaid_52-1-15.pdf; and Qandeel Siddique, *Deeper than the Indian. Ocean? An Analysis of Pakistan-China Relations*, SISA Report No 16-2014, Centre for International and Strategic Analysis, Oslo, February 2014, http://strategiskanalyse.no/Publikasjoner%202014/2014-02-27_SISA16_Sino-Pak_QS.pdf.
- ² Embassy of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Beijing, China, 'Pakistan-China Relations', www.pakbj.org.pk/Bilateral_Relations.
- ³ The South East Asia Treaty Organization comprising Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, The Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom and the United States was created in 1954 to counter communism in Southeast Asia; it was disbanded in 1977. The Central Treaty Organization comprising Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom was created in 1954 to conaton the Soviet Union in the Middle East and was disbanded in 1070. For information on the Pakistan-China relationship during this period see Rizwan Zeb, 'Pakistan-China Relations: Where they Go from Here', UNISCI Discussion Papers, no 29, May 2012, <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/UNIS/article/viewFile/40659/38981>.
- ⁴ Shahzad Akhtar, 'Sino-Pakistani Relations: An Assessment', Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, http://issii.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/1299824823_90636169.pdf.
- ⁵ Apart from the issue of granting asylum to the Dalai Lama by India, which irritated China, the cause of the war was a dispute over the sovereignty of the widely separated Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh border regions between China and India.
- ⁶ Pakistan gave 5180km² of land in northern Kashmir and Ladakh to China and in return China handed over 1942km² to Pakistan. See Bruce Riedel and Pavneet Singh, *US-China Relations: Seeking Strategic Convergence in Pakistan*, Policy Paper Number 18, The Brookings Institution, January 2010, www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2010/1/12%20us%20china%20relations%20riedel/0112_us_china_relations_riedel.pdf.
- ⁷ Construction of Karakoram Highway began in 1966 and was completed 20 years later. It is considered vital for commercial and strategic purposes. For more see Riedel & Singh, *US-China Relations: Seeking Strategic Convergence in Pakistan*.
- ⁸ On 25 August 1972, China vetoed the Bangladesh application for recognition as an independent country in the United Nations; see United Nations, *Security Council Official Records*, 1660th meeting, 25 August 1972, New York, [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.1660\(OR\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.1660(OR)).
- ⁹ In 1971, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Pakistan, with Pakistan facilitating Kissinger's secret visit to China. This laid the foundation for a subsequent visit by President Nixon and the opening up of China to the world. For more see 'Getting to Beijing: Henry Kissinger's Secret 1971 Trip', USC US-China Institute, 21 July 2011, <http://china.usc.edu/getting-beijing-henry-kissingers-secret-1971-trip>.
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