



Dr. Muhammad Nouman Ashraf Khan¹ & Dr. Mussawar Hussain Bukhari²

¹Assistant Manager, University Printing Press, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan,

E-mail: nouman.ashraf@iub.edu.pk

²Ex-Chairman, Department of Political Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
CPEC, BRI, China, Pakistan, India, US, Strategic, Geopolitical	This study explores the evolving strategic partnership between China and Pakistan in the 21st Century, highlighting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a strategic key factor of their collaboration. In addition to being an economic partnership, the CPEC is a strategic alliance that has changes the geopolitical situation of South Asia as part of China's broader Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The study examines the various aspects of CPEC, including how it effects the economies, politics, and security of both countries. It looks at how to CPEC has improved ties between the two countries, increasing economic integration and creating new opportunities for infrastructure and development in Pakistan. Additionally, the research analyzes the geopolitical ramifications of this collaboration inside the context of reginal dynamics, specifically focusing on India, United States (US), and other superpowers. In this research has been conducted an analytical, qualitative and descriptive approach and using realism theory to examine the data. According to the study's finding, CPEC has improved Sino-Pak ties to unprecedented level, positioning them as a key factor in determining the regional future.
ARTICLE HISTORY Date of Submission: 09-02-2026 Date of Acceptance: 24-03-2026 Date of Publication: 31-03-2026	 2026 Journal of Social Sciences Development
Corresponding Author	Dr. Muhammad Nouman Ashraf Khan
Email:	nouman.ashraf@iub.edu.pk
DOI	https://doi.org/10.53664/jssd.v5i1.242

Introduction

Pakistan-China Relations in the 21st Century

The relationship between Pakistan and China is one of the most enduring and strategic bilateral partnerships in modern international relations. Rooted in mutual trust, shared interests, and geographic proximity, this alliance has significantly evolved over time, adapting to the

challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. In the post-Cold War world, as the global political and economic landscape shifted, Pakistan and China recalibrated their ties to address emerging regional and global dynamics. This period witnessed enhanced cooperation in various domains, including security, economics, technology, and cultural exchange. The hallmark of this relationship has been the strategic alignment to counterbalance regional instability, foster development, and ensure mutual benefits. The cornerstone of their 21st century partnership is the CPEC, a multi-billion-dollar initiative under China's BRI. This project symbolizes the depth of their economic collaboration and underscores the pivotal role of infrastructure, energy, and trade connectivity in their bilateral ties.

One of the most crucial and long lasting bilateral alliances in contemporary international relations is that between China and Pakistan. This alliance, which has its roots in geographical closeness, shared interests, and mutual trust, has changed dramatically over time to meet the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century. Pakistan and China reevaluated their relationship to consider new regional and global dynamics as the political and economic climate changed in the post-cold war era. Cooperation was strengthened during this time in a number of areas, including as technology, economics, security, and cross-cultural interactions.

The strategic alignment to promote development, balance out regional volatility, and guarantee reciprocal benefits has been the defining feature of this partnership. The CPEC, a multibillion-dollar project under China's BRI, is the cornerstone of their collaboration for the 21st century. This project highlights the importance of trade connections, energy, and infrastructure in their bilateral relationship and represents the breadth of their economic cooperation.

Their alliance also still depends heavily on defense cooperation, counterterrorism initiatives, and diplomatic support on global stages. On important topics like China's policy in Tibet and Xinjiang and Pakistan position on Kashmir, both countries have continuously stood behind one another. With a focus on their strategic significance in influencing regional stability and promoting mutual development, this introduction provides the groundwork for comprehending the complex and dynamic nature of China-Pakistan relations in the 21st century. Often referred to as "all-weather" and "iron brother", Pakistan-China ties are a singular example of strategic cooperation in the modern world. This relationship has developed over the years from a conventional bilateral alliance to a comprehensive strategic partnership with multifaceted cooperation. The 21st century has seen a further deepening of China-Pakistan relations in the political, economic, defense, technological, and cultural domains as regional complexity increases and global power dynamics change. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1951 marked the beginning of this partnership's history. Since then, motivated by common objectives in economic growth, geopolitical stability, and regional security, both nations have continuously stood by one another through thick and thin. The significance of this relationship for both countries has been reaffirmed by the shifting dynamics of world politics in the 21st century, which are characterized by growing multipolarity, the strategic rivalry between the US and China, and regional difficulties. The CPEC is one of the most significant developments in China-Pakistan ties this century. A flagship project of China's BRI, the CPEC was introduced in 2015 and has attracted previously unheard of

levels of investment. The corridor, which runs from Pakistan's Gwadar Port to China's western Xinjiang province, intends to improve connectivity, increase regional trade, and improve Pakistan's economic situation. It has profound effect on regional development and geopolitics in addition to infrastructure.

Defense cooperation has continued to be a key component of their alliance on the strategic front. The largest provider of military gear to Pakistan is China, and the two nations work together on a variety of defense technology, such as the joint manufacture of advanced weapon systems like the JF-17 Thunder fighter jet. Their military connections have been further strengthened by their shared objective of preserving regional balance, particularly in light of India's growing power and the larger Indo-Pacific dynamics. Additionally, the collaboration encompasses multilateral forums and diplomacy. Pakistan has backed China on delicate matters like Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, and China has been an outspoken supporter of Pakistan's position on Kashmir. To further common interests, both nations often work together in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the United Nations, and other international fora.

There are difficulties in the connection. The alliance's future course is uncertain due to worries about security risks to CPEC projects, the partnership's economic inequality, and the effects of larger global factors like the rivalry between the US and China. Despite these difficulties, the two countries are nonetheless bound together by a strong sense of trust and a common goal of stability and progress. In this context, the study of Pakistan-China relations in the 21st century provides valuable insights into how strategic alliances evolve to address contemporary challenges and opportunities. This partnership not only shapes regional dynamics in South Asia and Central Asia but also plays a significant role in the broader narrative of global politics and economic development.

The relationship between China and Pakistan, which is characterized by respect for one another, common interests, and strategic foresight, has become an example of interstate cooperation. This bilateral partnership keeps growing as the 21st century goes on, adjusting to the changing geopolitical environment and tackling the urgent issues of economic interdependence, regional tensions, and globalization. The two nations' strong relationship is a result of decades of friendship and cooperation in a variety of disciplines, not just political necessity. Since establishing diplomatic relations in 1951, Pakistan and China have developed a special partnership based on mutual respect and assistance. Their cooperation is underscored by shared objectives such as regional stability, economic growth, counterterrorism, and mutual security. This connection has become even more important for both countries at an era of changing global power dynamics, such as China's ascent to prominence and the redefining of alliances.

China-Pakistan ties have seen a significant economic transition in the 21st century. The cornerstone of this change is the CPEC, a major undertaking of China's expansive BRI. Encompassing massive investments in energy, infrastructure, transportation, and special economic zones, CPEC aims to bolster Pakistan's economic development while enhancing China's trade connectivity with the Middle East, Africa, and beyond. Gwadar Port, a critical component of

CPEC, underscores Pakistan's strategic value in facilitating China's access to the Arabian Sea and its growing influence in maritime trade.

The two nations have maintained strong defense and security cooperation from a strategic standpoint. Given their mutual dedication to defending its territory and regional interests, Pakistan is one of the biggest recipients of Chinese military assistance and technology. The breadth of this collaboration is demonstrated by cooperative military drills, technology transfers, and the creation of innovative defense projects like the JF-17 Thunder fighter jet and sophisticated missile systems. Counterbalancing regional issues is a shared objective of both countries, especially in light of India's ascent and its increasing ties to the US.

China and Pakistan have always backed one another's stances on important topics in their diplomatic interactions. China's fundamental interests, such as its sovereignty over Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet, have been protected by Pakistan. China, on the other hand, has been a strong supporter of Pakistan's position on Kashmir and has counterbalanced pressure on Pakistan by using its clout in international fora like the UN. Additionally, the two nations work closely together in international organizations like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Cultural interactions between individuals have increased recently, and partnerships in technology and education have emerged as a key aspect of their relationship. Thanks to the construction of Confucius Institutes and academic collaborations, thousands of Pakistani students are currently pursuing higher education in China, and Chinese language and culture studies are becoming more and more popular in Pakistan. This long-term collaboration is not without its difficulties, though. Concerns over the alliance's long-term viability have been highlighted by the security of CPEC projects in Pakistan, differences in economic gains, and criticism of Pakistan's increasing economic dependence on China. Furthermore, Pakistan faces strategic difficulties in juggling its foreign policy priorities due to the growing US-China rivalry and its effects on South Asia.

China's and Pakistan partnership remains a pillar of South Asian geopolitics and a major driver of regional stability and growth as they negotiate these issues. The partnership's changing dynamics demonstrate both countries' flexibility and resiliency and provide insightful guidance on strategic alliances in a world that is becoming more linked and competitive. A perspective into the larger geopolitical changes influencing our time can be gained by comprehending the subtleties of China-Pakistan relations in the 21st century.

Methodology & Theoretically Framework

In this research has been conducted an analytical, qualitative and descriptive approach. The study has been conducted utilizing a range of methodologies, explanatory frameworks, and descriptive approach of relevant materials. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the research, a critical evaluation of the various phases in the 21st century Sino-Pak relations in perspective of CPEC, Political and Economic Cooperation's has been conducted. Furthermore, this

research study includes a critical review and a thorough analysis of Sino-Pak relations. The realism theoretical lens offers a convincing framework for examining China-Pakistan relations in the 21st century. Realism, which has its roots in the realist tradition and emphasizes the importance of state sovereignty, national interest, and the struggle for power in anarchic international systems, provides insight into the dynamics and reasons underlying this strategic alliance. Realists contend that in a competitive international setting, governments behave logically to optimize their power and security. According to this viewpoint, Pakistan-China ties are a strategic partnership that was established to protect national interests, balance regional power dynamics, and resolve concerns about mutual security.

The 21st century relationship between China and Pakistan can be viewed realistically as a strategic partnership that aims to achieve power parity, regional stability, and mutual security in a highly competitive and unpredictable global system. This thesis emphasizes how their alliance has remained strategic across time, motivated by the balance of power and national interest.

Discussion:

Political Cooperation:

Based on mutual support, common strategic goals, and a dedication to promoting regional stability, Pakistan and China's bilateral relationship has been based on political collaboration. In order to adapt to the shifting dynamics of regional and international politics in the twenty-first century, this alliance has continuously changed.

Support for Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty:

China and Pakistan have always backed one another's stances on important matters of sovereignty. Following the "One China Policy," Pakistan has continuously supported China's claims to Xinjiang, Taiwan, Tibet, and Hong Kong. China, on the other hand, has backed Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue, calling for a peaceful settlement and rejecting India's unilateral moves to change the region's status (Javaid & Jahangir, 2015).

Collaboration in Multilateral Forums:

Both nations collaborate closely in multilateral settings such as the United Nations (UN), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). China's role in shielding Pakistan from international pressure, particularly on issues like counterterrorism and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), highlights the depth of their political alignment (Small, 2015). Similarly, Pakistan has supported China's leadership initiatives in multilateral platforms, including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Cooperation in Multilateral Forums:

In multilateral organizations like the OIC, the SCO, and the United Nations (UN), both countries work closely together. The extent of their political alignment is demonstrated by China's

assistance in protecting Pakistan from international scrutiny, especially on matters like counterterrorism and the FATF (Small, 2015). China's leadership initiatives in multilateral forums, such as the BRI, have also received backing from Pakistan.

Diplomatic Solutions for Regional Issues:

China and Pakistan have similar goals of preserving South Asian stability, especially in light of the war in Afghanistan and counterterrorism initiatives. Joint efforts to advance regional discourse and stop the spread of extremism demonstrate their political cooperation. China is a crucial political ally for Pakistan in tackling regional security issues, as evidenced by its mediation in enabling Pakistan's interaction with the Taliban after 2021 (Zahid, 2021).

Strategic Alignments during Changes in Global Power:

The political alliance between China and Pakistan has been further cemented by the growing rivalry between the US and China. China provides Pakistan with a trustworthy ally to counterbalance its strained ties with the West. In its plan to offset American influence in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific, China continues to view Pakistan as a vital ally (Wolf, 2020). In a divided world, their political alignment is crucial for influencing regional politics and guaranteeing support for one another.

High-Level Diplomatic Engagements:

The regular high-level meetings and trips between China's and Pakistan's leaders highlight the closeness of their political alliances. These interactions help to strengthen their alliance, promote strategic communication, and deal with urgent regional and bilateral problems. For instance, because both countries see the CPEC as a strategic priority, China's engagement in pushing the project represents both political and economic cooperation (Sial, 2014).

Support for One Another on Sovereignty and Important Issues:

China and Pakistan have a long history of supporting one another's territorial integrity and sovereignty. As internal Chinese affairs, Pakistan backs China's fundamental interests, such as the "One China Policy" pertaining to Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang. In a similar vein, China has continuously backed Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue, calling for a diplomatic settlement and opposing measures that would unilaterally change the status of the area (Javaid & Jahangir, 2015). The strong political trust between the two countries is demonstrated by their unflinching support for one another.

Cooperation in Multilateral Institutions:

In multilateral institutions like the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), SCO, and the UN, both nations actively collaborate. Supported by China, Pakistan became a full member of the SCO in 2017, demonstrating their political cooperation in promoting security and connectivity in

the area. Furthermore, China has shown itself to be a trustworthy political partner of Pakistan by helping it fight back against international criticism, including in the FATF (Small, 2015).

Global Governance Collaborative Projects:

China and Pakistan collaborate to promote changes to international governance frameworks. Both countries stress the value of maintaining multilateralism and opposing unilateral acts that compromise national sovereignty. Their joint efforts to advance sustainable development and South-South cooperation demonstrate their dedication to just global advancement.

Diplomatic Engagements At High Levels:

The depth of China-Pakistan political connections is demonstrated by the frequent high-level visits and strategic discussions. Bilateral discussions between the leaders of the two nations have been held on a regular basis to promote collaboration and discuss common issues. For instance, the establishment of the CPEC and President Xi Jinping's 2015 visit to Pakistan were crucial in strengthening the alliance. In order to ensure policy alignment and establish mutual trust, these diplomatic interactions are crucial (Sial, 2014).

A long-standing alliance based on common interests and assistance in negotiating regional and international complications is reflected in China's and Pakistan political collaboration. The strategic importance of their cooperation in maintaining regional stability and furthering their respective national interests is highlighted by their agreement on important issues.

Economic Cooperation:

A key component of China-Pakistan bilateral relations, especially in the 21st century, economic cooperation is supported by strategic interests and reciprocal economic gains. Through programs like the CPEC and wider trade, investment, and financial cooperation, the partnership has grown considerably.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Cpec):

CPEC, which was introduced in 2015 as a component of China's BRI, is the most revolutionary aspect of their economic cooperation. The goal of the multibillion-dollar CPEC is to improve connectivity between Pakistan's Gwadar Port and China's western Xinjiang region. The expected total cost of this corridor, which includes investments in industrial zones, transportation, energy, and infrastructure, is more than \$60 billion (Wolf, 2020). CPEC presents Pakistan with chances to solve energy scarcity, enhance infrastructure, and stimulate economic expansion. China benefits from increased geopolitical clout in South Asia and abroad as well as guaranteed access to the Arabian Sea.

Trade Relationship:

In recent decades, trade between China and Pakistan has increased dramatically. With bilateral trade reaching more than \$27 billion in 2021, China is Pakistan's biggest commercial partner. By giving Pakistan improved market access to Chinese goods and vice versa, the second phase of the Pakistan-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which went into effect in 2020, has increased trade even more (Javaid, 2021). However, Pakistan is concerned about the need for a more fair-trading partnership because the trade balance is still significantly skewed in China's favor.

Financial Support And Investment:

One of the biggest investors in Pakistan is China, which has made major investments in CPEC's industrial growth, transportation systems, and energy projects. Major infrastructure projects, such as power plants, railways, roads and highways, are carried out by Chinese corporations and are essential to Pakistan's economic modernization (Wolf, 2020). Further demonstrating the strategic depth of their economic relationship, China has also given Pakistan financial support during economic crises, including loans and debt rescheduling.

Collaboration in Energy:

An essential feature of their economic alliance is energy cooperation. In order to alleviate Pakistan's ongoing energy shortages, China has made investments in power generation projects under the CPEC, such as coal-fired plants, hydroelectric dams, and renewable energy facilities. In addition to stabilizing Pakistan's energy sector, these initiatives are anticipated to promote economic growth and industrial expansion (Sial, 2014).

The Development of Gwadar Port:

Gwadar Port is a flagship project under CPEC and represents the strategic dimension of their economic cooperation. The port is being developed as a key logistics and trade hub, giving China a shorter route for its trade and energy imports from the Middle East and Africa. Gwadar offers Pakistan the potential to become a regional economic hub, creating jobs and generating revenue (Small, 2015).

Obstacles to Economic Collaboration:

Although there have been many advantages to the economic relationship, there are drawbacks as well. Concerns about financial sustainability and transparency in CPEC projects are problems for Pakistan. Pakistan's increasing economic reliance on China, according to some, may expose the country to dangers (Wolf, 2020). Concerns have also been made about security risks to CPEC infrastructure and Chinese workers in Pakistan, which calls for cooperation between the two countries to resolve. Growth in Bilateral Trade With a projected \$27.8 billion in bilateral commerce in 2022, China is Pakistan's biggest commercial partner. While importing electronics, machinery, and other manufactured items, Pakistan exports textiles, agricultural products, and raw resources to China.

Free Trade Agreement (Fta) Between China And Pakistan:

With the implementation of the FTA's second phase in 2020, Pakistani goods now have greater access to the Chinese market, including zero-tariff access for more than 300 export goods (Javaid, 2021).

- Both sides are working to diversify and increase Pakistan's export capabilities because, despite the growing amount of trade, the trade imbalance still disproportionately favours China.

Chinese Investments in Pakistan:

China has emerged as the largest foreign investor in Pakistan, focusing on infrastructure, energy, and industry. Beyond CPEC, Chinese companies are involved in various projects, including real estate, telecommunication, and mining. For instance:

- The Thar Coal Project in Sindh, financed by Chinese companies, has significantly contributed to Pakistan's energy self-reliance.
- Chinese firms are investing in urban development projects, such as the Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project in Lahore (Wolf, 2020).

Chinese Investments in Pakistan:

China has emerged as the major foreign investor in Pakistan, focusing on infrastructure, energy, and industrial. Chinese businesses are engaged in a number of projects outside of CPEC, such as mining, telecommunication, and real estate. For example:

- The Chinese-financed Thar Coal Project in Sindh has made a substantial contribution to Pakistan's energy independence.
- Urban development projects, including Lahore's Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project, are being funded by Chinese companies (Wolf, 2020).

Gwadar Port:

An Important Centre of the Economy The focal point of CPEC is Gwadar Port, which is situated in the Baluchistan area of Pakistan. It is a vital hub for trade and energy transit due to its advantageous location close to the Strait of Hormuz. China has made significant investments in the port's growth, including:

- Building infrastructure and port facilities;
- Creating free trade zones to draw in international businesses.

China sees Gwadar as essential for protecting its trade routes and lowering dependency on the Malacca Strait, while Pakistan anticipates significant economic activity and income from the region (Small, 2015).

Obstacles to Economic Collaboration:

The Pakistan-China economic collaboration has obstacles in spite of its advantages:

Debt Sustainability: According to critics, Pakistan's growing debt to China, especially from CPEC projects, may put pressure on its ability to maintain fiscal stability.

Security Concerns: Strong security measures are necessary to protect Chinese citizens employed in Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan, and CPEC infrastructure from threats.

Trade Imbalance: Pakistan's exports to China need to be diversified because the trade deficit is still a major problem (Wolf, 2020). The 21st century relationship between China and Pakistan is an example of a strategic alliance based on common goals and advantages. The alliance's resilience and importance in influencing regional and global dynamics are highlighted by the breadth of their collaboration across political, economic, defense, and cultural facets, notwithstanding its challenges. As both countries negotiate a more complicated global environment going forward, the alliance is certain to grow even more.

Suggestions:

One of the longest-lasting and most strategically important alliances in world geopolitics in the twenty-first century is that between China and Pakistan. The partnership, which has its roots in decades of trust and common strategic goals, has developed into a multifaceted alliance that includes defense, economic, political, and cultural collaboration. Even though Pakistan and China's connection has expanded greatly in a number of ways, there are a number of tactics that might strengthen and expand their alliance even more, benefiting both countries. Here are some important ideas for strengthening this bond:

Trade and Economic Partnership Diversification:

Improve The Balance of Bilateral Trade:

Beyond more conventional goods like textiles and agricultural products, Pakistan should concentrate on expanding the variety of goods it exports to China. Trade in industries like IT, pharmaceuticals, and value-added products has room to grow. Pakistan ought to look into ways to increase its market share in China's quickly expanding consumer markets.

Build Export-Import Infrastructure: Investing in improved trade and logistics infrastructure, such as port facilities, warehouses, and effective transportation networks, would promote more seamless trade exchanges and guarantee that more areas of Pakistan will profit from the CPEC.

CPEC Project Localization: By encouraging Chinese enterprises to use local labor and suppliers for CPEC projects, the local economy would grow, employment would be created, and reliance on foreign businesses would be lessened. Concerns about economic reliance will be allayed by ensuring openness in project implementation and placing a strong emphasis on using local expertise.

Strengthening People-To-People Ties:

Promote Educational And Cultural Exchange:

Encourage Educational and Cultural Exchange: Increasing Confucius Institutes in Pakistani colleges and scholarships for Pakistani students to study in China can help close cultural divides and foster enduring goodwill. Technical skills and vocational training should be the main focus of educational cooperation in order to give Pakistan's workforce the know-how required for emerging businesses.

Promote Tourism:

Promoting travel as a means of fostering interpersonal relationships can be a significant strategy. China's increasing interest in tourism and Pakistan's rich cultural legacy and scenic beauty can promote mutual understanding and personal connections that enhance the partnership's diplomatic and commercial facets.

Promoting Regional Stability And Cooperation:

Cooperation in Afghanistan: China and Pakistan have a shared interest in keeping Afghanistan stable. Supporting an inclusive Afghan administration that can uphold peace and keep the area from turning into a haven for extremism should be the major goal of their collaboration. Collaborative development initiatives could be a tool for promoting peace, particularly in border areas.

Take Part In Regional Connectivity Projects:

China and Pakistan might work together on more extensive regional connectivity projects outside of the CPEC. Building integrated transport and energy corridors with neighbors like Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asian countries will strengthen Pakistan-China ties and open up economic prospects for the entire region.

Handling Issues with Debt Sustainability:

Debt Management Strategies:

Pakistan should prioritize debt management in order to prevent economic over-dependence, even though Chinese investment is essential. To lessen its dependency on a single creditor, Pakistan could bargain for better loan terms or look into ways to diversify its investment sources.

Strengthening Financial Cooperation:

Pakistan should look at financial cooperation methods with China that involve equity-based investments rather than debt-based finance in addition to loans. A more enduring financial relationship may also result from encouraging Chinese businesses to invest in joint ventures in Pakistan.

Encouraging Environmental Cooperation and Sustainability:

Green CPEC

To keep up with global sustainability trends, Pakistan and China should support ecologically friendly projects like solar energy farms and green infrastructure projects as part of the long-term goals of the CPEC. China might assist in the development of disaster-resilient infrastructure, given Pakistan's susceptibility to climate change.

Joint Research in Renewable Energy:

Both countries should invest in joint research initiatives focused on renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydro power. This would not only address Pakistan's energy needs but also contribute to global efforts in reducing carbon emissions.

Enhancing Governance And Transparency:

Transparency in CPEC Initiatives:

Gaining the confidence of international stakeholders and the Pakistani populace depends on CPEC projects being transparent. Concerns regarding corruption or poor management would be allayed by the creation of impartial monitoring bodies and transparent public reporting procedures.

Fortifying The Law And Regulation:

Frameworks:

In order to guarantee clear legal and regulatory frameworks for international commerce and investment, Pakistan should collaborate with China. More Chinese companies will invest in Pakistan if these procedures are made simpler and a stable business climate is maintained.

Conclusion

Shared interests, historical links, and a growing dedication to mutual collaboration have all influenced the development of China-Pakistan relations into a complex and strategic alliance. Bilateral relations between these two countries have been characterized by substantial political, economic, defense, and cultural cooperation throughout the last few decades, especially in the 21st century. The study's main themes are compiled in this conclusion, which also assesses the present status of Pakistan-China relations, identifies obstacles, and makes suggestions for future partnership development. With the help of the CPEC, Pakistan-China relations have developed into a comprehensive cooperation in the 21st century. In addition to strengthening political relations, this program has also increased economic links between the two countries. China has made significant investments in Pakistani energy, transport, and infrastructure projects through CPEC, promoting regional connectivity, trade, and economic growth. This partnership's strategic

character has given China a vital connection to the Middle East, Africa, and Europe while also strengthening Pakistan's standing on the international scene.

In terms of politics, the two nations have similar objectives, particularly in defense cooperation, regional stability, and a shared position on matters like counterterrorism. But even while CPEC has a lot of potential to boost economic growth, there are drawbacks as well, like the requirement for long-term sustainability, the need to manage debt-related risks, and the need to resolve security issues in some areas. In the end, sustained collaboration, flexibility in response to changing international conditions, and a fair handling of both economic possibilities and difficulties will be necessary for the success of CPEC and the larger Pakistan-China relationship. The relationship might be a template for global collaboration in the 21st century if it is handled well.

The 21st century relationship between China and Pakistan is based on mutual trust and common objectives, particularly with regard to security cooperation, geopolitical influence, and economic development. The main tenet of this partnership is CPEC, which stands for both economic cooperation and strategic alignment between two nations seeking to alter the regional and international order.

With both countries fortifying their diplomatic ties, particularly in international fora like the UN and SCO, Pakistan and China's political collaboration has expanded dramatically. Additionally, their alliance provides a check on the influence of other superpowers, particularly the US and India. China gains from Pakistan's advantageous location as a gateway to the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa, while Pakistan's security framework is strengthened by the political and strategic partnership, especially through defense and intelligence cooperation. CPEC has had a revolutionary effect on the economy. With the building of ports, power plants, railroads, and highways, it has significantly improved infrastructure and made Pakistan a crucial component of China's BRI. Through expanded trade, the generation of jobs, and industrial development, the corridor might strengthen Pakistan's economy. The financial advantages are not without difficulties, though. Pakistan needs to address regional development gaps, manage the sustainability of its debt, and make sure that the advantages of CPEC are shared widely among its people. Furthermore, there are worries about how big infrastructure projects may affect the environment, which calls for thorough planning and mitigation techniques.

Regarding security, China's reliance on marine routes that can be susceptible to geopolitical conflicts has decreased thanks to CPEC, which has given it a safer path for trade and energy transit. However, political instability in some regions and threats from insurgent groups continue to raise concerns about the security of CPEC projects in Pakistan. This emphasizes how important it is for both nations to bolster their security forces and guarantee the safety of the workers and infrastructure engaged in these initiatives. Longer term, the China-Pakistan relationship may develop into an economic development model that other nations in the area and beyond may want to follow. CPEC offers Pakistan the chance to become a regional center for manufacturing, trade, and energy, which might change the country's economic structure. In order to achieve the

overall objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative, China views Pakistan as a vital ally in its endeavors to increase its influence and establish new economic lines.

But for this partnership to succeed, it will be necessary to tackle important issues like maintaining political and security stability, guaranteeing fair development in all part of Pakistan, and controlling the long-term effects of CPEC projects on the economy and environment. The future course of the two nations' bilateral relations in the twenty-first century will depend on their capacity to handle these obstacles as they continue to strengthen their alliance. Given that the CPEC remains the mainstay of bilateral collaboration, the future of Pakistan-China relations appears bright. Further economic growth will probably be supported by the CPEC expansion, with possible diversification into industry, technology, and agriculture. Pakistan's infrastructure, energy capacity, and regional connectivity would all be improved by this project, which could turn it into a trading hub that links China with the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. As both countries strengthen their strategic alignment, especially in defense and security cooperation to address shared regional concerns, the collaboration is anticipated to become more robust politically. Pakistan's strategic location will grow in importance as China becomes a more powerful nation, particularly due to its access to the vital Gwadar port. But maintaining the security of CPEC projects is still a top priority, necessitating increased counterterrorism measures and internal security stabilization in Pakistan on all sides.

The long-term viability of the collaboration will also depend on resolving the social and environmental effects of CPEC, like as ecological harm and displacement. Pakistan's position as a regional center for trade and transport is expected to expand as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, but managing the sustainability of its debt and preserving political stability will require careful consideration. Despite these obstacles, if both countries can successfully negotiate the complexity of this developing cooperation, the future of China-Pakistan relations holds enormous promise for regional stability, economic development, and geopolitical influence.

References:

- Hassan, T. U., Khan, A., & Ismail, M. (2023). *Geo-Strategic Significance of Wakhan Corridor for Pakistan. Global International Relations Review, VI*.
- Ismail, M., Hassan, T. U., Haq, A. U., & Mir, W. (2023). *China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A Case study of Strategic Implications for Pakistan. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 20(2), 346-355*.
- Ismail, M. (2022). *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Case Study of Internal Security Challenge Faced by Pakistan. International Journal of Policy Studies, 2(1)*.
- Ismail, M., & Fitriani, R. S. (2022, October). *Future Impact on Pakistan Economy in the 21st Century Shifting of Global Power. In Proceeding of The International Conference on Economics and Business (Vol.1, No. 2, pp. 167-181)*.
- Ismail, M. (2022). *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Case Study of Internal Security Challenge Faced by Pakistan. International Journal of Policy Studies, 2(1)*.

- Ismail, M. (2021). *A project of China-Pakistan economic corridor: A case study of significant and drawbacks for Pakistan*. *Global Economics Review*, VI.
- Ismail, M. (2019). *The Project of CPEC: Benefits and Drawbacks for Gilgit-Baltistan*. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 2(2)
- Javaid, U. (2021). *The China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement and its impact on Pakistan's economy*. *Journal of Economic Studies*, 9(2), 45-60.
- Javaid, U., & Jahangir, A. (2015). *Pakistan-China strategic relationship: A glorious journey of 55 years*. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 52(1), 157-173
- Mehdi, A., Hussain, I., Hussain, A., & Ismail, M. (2024). *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Magpoondas Special Economic Zones Impact on Future Economic of Gilgit-Baltistan*.
- Small, A. (2015). *The China-Pakistan axis: Asia's new geopolitics*. Oxford University Press.
- Sial, S. (2014). *The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: An assessment of potential threats and constraints*. *Conflict and Peace Studies*, 6(2), 1-10.
- Wolf, S. O. (2020). *The China-Pakistan economic corridor of the Belt and Road Initiative: Concept, context and assessment*. Springer.
- Zahid, F. (2021). *Pakistan and China's evolving approach in Afghanistan: Post-U.S. withdrawal dynamics*. *Asian Journal of Peace building*, 9(1), 1-18.