

Roundtable Discussion on China-Pakistan Nexus: Challenges and Response

August , 2016

Welcome

I'd like to personally welcome all delegates. It's an exciting time for all of us as we continue to grow and adapt, remaining always adaptable, motivated and responsive to new ideas. We're meeting during a time of large nation-wide and global change. The field of law, policy and strategy research is an exciting area in which we work. We will continue to meet and bring intellectual people to come together in forums like this, to ensure IIFH remains at the top to strengthen the humanity.

The internal Round Table Discussion on August 2016, necessitated largely by the fact that China-Pakistan axis, which has remained India's Achilles heel for long, has begun to manifest in recent years in ways that are increasingly detrimental not only to India's security but also to the region's security as a whole.

Most noticeably, the nexus manifested itself recently in blocking India's legitimate entry to the NSG (Nuclear Suppliers Group) and in shielding Pakistan-based dreaded terrorist Masood Azhar from coming under U.N. sanctions. While Sino-Pak nexus in the past remained largely confined to proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies and co-development of weapon systems, it is now developing beyond its original India-centric rationale and gaining a more diversified character in addition to its traditional security preoccupation. However, the strategic character of the relationship and its geopolitical agenda remains undiminished.



The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of President Xi Jinping's 'Belt and Road' signature initiative, remains by far the most visible and disturbing component of this nexus till date. The economic corridor, while passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Gilgit-Baltistan--both Indian territories occupied by Pakistan--connects China's economically least developed north-western province of Xingjian to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, located in the volatile province of Balochistan, at the mouth of Persian Gulf just outside the Strait of Hormuz. While CPEC seeks to re-position Pakistan geopolitically, it also provides China access to the Indian Ocean via the Gwadar Port. It is widely believed that Pakistani ports are likely to play an important role in China's emergence as a leading maritime power with major presence in the Indian Ocean Region.

While China claims that the Belt and Road initiative is intended, among other things, to stabilise Pakistan economically, the fact remains that there is varying degree of protests for homelands backed by high to low levels of insurgency at all the important nodes of the CPEC, whether in China or in Pakistan, and the governments of both the countries are perceived violators of human rights in their respective provinces. Baluchistan, a region replete with precious natural resources - hydrocarbon deposits and minerals, in particular, is perceived as a complete sell-out by Pakistan in pursuit of its strategic objectives. What is even more worrisome for India is that nexus between China and Pakistan is likely to have an adverse impact on the international efforts, especially India's, to stabilise Afghanistan.

The discussion held to aimed broadly at evolving policy responses – economic and diplomatic, among others, to contain the rising China-Pakistan nexus. A few of India's leading strategists and policy analysts including Amb Kanwal Sibal, Amb TCA Raghavan, Mr. PC Haldar and Mr. KM Singh, among others, participated in the brainstorming session.

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