

# CPEC: Sculpting a Common Destiny



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***Water is the softest thing, yet it can penetrate mountains and earth  
This shows clearly the principle of softness overcoming hardness***

— Lao Tzu

Beyond the known trail of time and space, humans carry an urge to master the mystery of destiny backed by an untamed desire to achieve power, either for better or for worse. If power is then shared amongst states to build a community of commonality, grounded on “inclusiveness”, we could speak of a “community of shared destiny”. To this end, China’s current pursuit of sustained regional and global influence through extended cooperation is an open secret.

In 2007, the phrase, “community of common destiny” was coined by Hu Jintao — the former president of China — to strengthen relations with Taiwan. The same doctrine was then rejuvenated by incumbent President Xi Jinping in 2013 with the aim of advancing cooperation in international affairs. Implementation of this novel concept has undoubtedly shaken the Western tactic of state relations, ie, “win or lose” or “zero sum game” which have been straining the tied strings of peace among states for far too long.

In ancient times, the “Silk Route” had harmonised diverse cultures, languages, and aspirations of different countries and people. Countries along this route were rich in research and knowledge which flourished, transcended and echoed across the continents. For instance, Ibn Sina’s *The Canon of Medicine* was translated into Latin and then taught in Europe for more than 500 years. Ibn Sina was born in 980 at Afshana near Bukhara along the same Silk Route.

This legacy of knowledge sharing, inclusiveness, peace, and cooperation were ethos of the Chinese history. While holding such practices, China rarely endeavoured to conquer and colonise the world. History is replete with examples of powerful nations invading smaller dominions and exploiting their resources with subordinating strategies to harbour influence by mutiny and pillage.

Down the centuries, while passing through Western imperialism and crude colonialism, humanity has and still is suffering from the recent onslaught of global radicalism and extremism, again by the repressive policies of the Western hegemony under the guise of fabricated and franchised terrorism. It was then post 9/11 that further drove impetus to transitional uncertainties, ideological muddles, and conceptual reorientation along with the migration of extremist ideologies beyond boundaries; including maniacal pursuit for economic accentuation, altogether, resulted in a multi-polar world order for states to redefine their security and survival in today’s world. All these raging infernos bred vulnerabilities and mistrust amongst nation states all over the world.

In the face of such global unrest, China’s “One Belt, One Road” network under the realm of a community of shared destiny is destined to integrate people round the world without posing any threats to their security and existence. This quintessential initiative is also promoting the cause of “South-South Cooperation” which brings budding opportunities to the developing states to seek economic independence and rid themselves of the perennial ruling hands of the US, the World Bank, the IMF and the likes.

Historically, since the 1960s, China has been helping Pakistan by establishing defence and other industries and now with CPEC, it is estimated that the latter will become the 16<sup>th</sup> largest promising economy by 2050. Sino-Pak cooperation will bring equitable development in the socio-economic sector on a par with other developed countries.

Conversely, the US has never sincerely tried to empower Pakistan; rather the former always strayed off the latter at turbulent times. Consequently, Pak-US functional relations have always stayed under the clouds of mistrust. Nevertheless, positively, the daunting days of “do more” hefty obligations are now over, because of knowing and recognising the worth of China’s longstanding brotherly relations.

Unquestionably, CPEC will be yielding multi-folded benefits not only to Pakistan but to the entire region, yet it is constantly challenged by the emerging geo-strategic and geo-political swings at regional and global levels. Hence, both global and regional players are busy in hatching conspiracies to contradict China's unconscious global influence along with Pakistan's rise in South Asia.

The US, which sees China as a global competitor, is trying its sinister strategies to obfuscate the latter's progress, especially in the South China Sea, but China's powerful military muscles are ever ready to defy any external aggression in the maritime debacles. CPEC will open the corridors of options for China to consolidate its influence from this route and stay connected to the rest of the world without relying alone on the Strait of Malacca. It is also estimated that the One Belt, One Road initiative would establish close land and maritime connections between 66-plus countries across Asia and Europe.

Similarly, both Indo-US strategic partners are wary of the fact that CPEC is currently "going great guns" and by the time it is complete the economic trajectory of Eurasian, Central Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern states will be changed for good. Moreover, of late, both Indo-US strategic partners seem reluctant to partake in a summit organised by Chinese President Xi Jinping on a "New Silk Road" which is scheduled in Beijing on May 14-15.

In this day and age, state relations are measured by economic worth and CPEC is setting an example to the rest of the states to seek speedy growth based on equity and equality without compromising a state's freedom.

Whereas India is bent upon its hegemonic posture and not waking up to the reality: considering its acrimonious actions against CPEC and attempting to sow internal discord inside Pakistan's territorial boundaries would only exacerbate the lingering hostilities with its neighbours and may throw the whole region into disarray. Despite the tantalising regional and global impediments, it is an opportune time for both China and Pakistan to push harder for accomplishing all CPEC-related goals and ensuring the creation of a community of common destiny.