

The CPEC narrative



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With the advent of fast-forward information technology and intelligence, hegemonic states are busy innovating ways to extend their power by increasing their influence over weaker states.

More or less all states seek to win over others in pursuit of their strategic, political and economic objectives. The exercise of soft power, the imposition of sanctions, control over cyberspace and the development of methods of biological and psychological warfare, some of which are almost invisible, are combined with traditional instruments, altering the dynamics and indicators of international political conflicts and struggles.

Like old wine in new bottles, the terms 'hybrid wars' or 'perception management' or '5th generation warfare' are not entirely novel war stratagems. Strategic war studies suggest that hybrid or furtive wars are engineered through a blend of direct and indirect, oppressive and defensive, implicit and explicit means. The purpose is to destabilize and weaken a state from the inside out and to impede its progress through overt and covert tactics. The ultimate aim is to successfully implement a strategy that weakens contenders, causes

them to collapse and results in a change in their ruling elites, a change of course and a change in their international relationships and partnerships.

Pakistan as a pivot to Central Asia, Eurasia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and beyond is a thorn in the flesh of its nemesis which is incapable of envisioning that Pakistan can paddle along a path of success. The most concentrated element of the current hybrid war against Pakistan is the fate changer concept – the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This project can truly help turn around Pakistan's ailing economy and open a pathway to successful economic development. It does indeed offer the prospects of an exponential uplift in Pakistan's development trajectory. So why have we seen so much opposition to CPEC from near and far?

The traditional US-Pakistan partnership can be epitomized as part of needs-based ties in which Pakistan remained subject to horrendous US-determined strategic and political compulsions that led to an evident downward spiral. The cost of partnership with the US was too heavy, resulting in a crumbling of trust at every testing time. Even in the case of CPEC, thus far, American diplomats, strategists and political commentators have quite frequently made anti-CPEC comments with or without knowing the real face of CPEC as an economic portfolio.

For instance, Alice Wells, the US Secretary of State on a recent official visit to Pakistan called CPEC a “debt trap” in an uncalled-for talk about this subject. The same anti-CPEC rhetoric in a speech given in Washington in November last year also created a lot of distress in both Pakistan and China. Within no time, both Islamabad and Beijing resoundingly denounced this poor attempt to malign CPEC.

It is important for us Pakistanis to comprehend the underlying horrific objectives which are at play in seeking to corner Pakistan economically through the FATF, and to keep the country locked into its current depressed situation through the schemes of IFI hitmen like the IMF, the World Bank, etc. Interestingly, the US government has never been in the least concerned about the ‘real’ debt trap economy imposed by their mentored IFIs and the sweet poisonous impacts it has had on Pakistan's development.

At the same time, Pakistan's next-door neighbour has been trying tooth and nail to destabilize Pakistan through multipronged schemes. For example, vicious attempts have been made to isolate Pakistan diplomatically, politically, strategically and, above all, economically. Fortunately, Pakistan has been able to counter the surreal whims of India on all fronts through successful foreign policy practices. The rest of the current disarray in the inner and outer ‘Shining India’ has been explicitly executed by the terrorist, fascist and jingoistic leadership of so-called secular India.

Furthermore, Indian economists and strategists are busy with a committed sense of falsehood while acting as anti-CPEC advocates around the world. Ridiculously, they have always found flimsy grounds to oppose it, as if boosting the economy of Pakistan is of the gravest concern to them. Gladly, the more the roots of CPEC are deepened successfully, the more India's hybrid war is diluted into nothingness.

Simultaneously, India's efforts to frustrate CPEC have been quashed by Pakistan. To date, Pakistan has achieved unprecedented success in rebutting and debunking these groundless narratives.

It is an irrefutable reality that in this day and age, state relations are measured, swayed and then strengthened on the basis of economic worth. CPEC has come a long way with recipes for mending Pakistan's economy and putting it on a path towards independent, long-standing and sustainable development without the attachment of strategic or political strings. That is why Indo-US heads are panicking and employing novel ideas to diminish and delegitimize this colossal economic giant which has been speaking volumes since its inception.

To sum up, the best countermeasure in the face of the slanderous accusations made against CPEC is to keep on disseminating the true narrative by investing in savvy minds that can strategize, steer, strengthen and construct perceptions in light of the actual facts, especially through the media. If envious states can twist the reality against Pakistan, there is no reason whatsoever why Pakistan cannot deconstruct and thwart such narratives and provide rational accounts of the real situation.

An all-inclusive media strategy communicated persistently in multiple languages to inform the national, regional and global populace is one of the most practical and workable responses in the struggle to defeat hybrid wars against a global pivot state like Pakistan.