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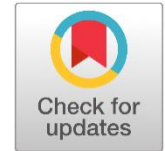
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Strategic Partnership: Opportunities for Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The recent political reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran has provided Pakistan with a multitude of possible benefits and opportunities. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the capacity of Pakistan to emerge as a prominent regional actor. The achievement of this goal will be realized by a comprehensive analysis of the benefits and obstacles associated with a strategic partnership. The main aim of this study is to present a comprehensive and analytical framework for assessing the strategic alliance between China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, and its potential implications for Pakistan and the surrounding area. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor presents itself as a potentially beneficial pathway for promoting cooperation and collaboration within this setting.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The strategic alliance between China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran has exerted a noteworthy influence on Pakistan. Pakistan, a prominent regional actor, stands to derive substantial benefits from this partnership and possesses the capacity to greatly bolster security in the Middle East. The potential ramifications for the regional economy might be substantial as China strengthens its commercial relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran (Hussain, 2012). The expected infusion of substantial Chinese investments in Pakistan's energy and infrastructure sectors is projected to stimulate economic growth and address the issue of unemployment by generating job prospects for individuals requiring work. Furthermore, through the strategic use of its robust diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran, Pakistan possesses the capacity to augment communication and collaboration between these two states (Osiewicz, 2021). Pakistan possesses considerable expertise in acting as a mediator between Saudi Arabia and Iran, a

proficiency that can be utilized to effectively mitigate their enduring conflict. The strategic tripartite collaboration among China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran presents both merits and drawbacks for Pakistan. The potential enhancement of Pakistan's reputation in the Middle East and the strengthening of its trade connections with China might be facilitated through its proactive engagement in fostering regional peace and stability (Lieven, 2011).

In recent years, considerable attention has been devoted to strategic alliance that has emerged between China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. The principal aim of this alliance pertains to fostering economic cooperation, while concurrently exerting notable influence on the political and security dynamics within the region. There is a significant level of curiosity among many individuals over the impact of this collaboration on Pakistan and its possible contribution to fostering peace and stability in the Middle East (Zeev et al, 2004). Due to substantial investments made by China in infrastructure and energy initiatives around the region, Pakistan is presented with a distinctive prospect to position itself as a significant participant in ongoing endeavors aimed at upholding regional stability. By leveraging these investments and fostering strong collaboration with its regional allies, Pakistan ought to play a significant role in promoting strategic cooperation among China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, thereby facilitating positive outcomes (Söderbaum, 2011). Nevertheless, Pakistan has some challenges that need to be addressed to effectively fulfill this crucial role. As an illustration, the nation will be

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required to adeptly negotiate intricate regional dynamics and sustain fragile relationships with a diverse array of stakeholders. In the context of this cooperation, Pakistan must safeguard its national economic and political interests. Our study offers a comprehensive analysis of the potential benefits and drawbacks associated with the changing dynamics of the Middle East, catering to individuals with a keen interest in this subject matter (Vatanka, 2015).

In recent years, there has been significant global coverage of the consequences of Pakistan's strategic partnerships with China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Although the primary focus of the alliance has been on fostering economic cooperation, it is imperative to acknowledge the political and security ramifications associated with it (Abbasi, 2020). Pakistan possesses the capacity to make significant contributions towards the advancement of peace and stability in the Middle East, owing to the considerable investments made by China in infrastructure and energy initiatives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Arab states are now actively seeking new partnerships to reduce their vulnerabilities in a highly unpredictable global environment as a result of the United States' decision to leave the Middle East. The geopolitical divisions between the Eastern and Western regions have undergone a westward movement, specifically from Iran to Saudi Arabia. The recent agreement between Iran and these states holds significant potential for altering the dynamics of the area in favor of increased collaboration (Mansab, 2023). The determination of the relevance of uncertainty may only be ascertained with time. Consequently, Middle Eastern states have transformed their foreign policies, leading to the establishment of novel collaborative partnerships alongside the preservation of pre-existing ones. The fundamental principle of geopolitics for small and medium-sized nations entails diversifying their dependencies on external actors to safeguard their interests and augment their capacity for independent decision-making within a volatile global context. The insurance coverage in question is seen to be rational and reasonable (Said, 2023).

The accord between Iran and Saudi Arabia was facilitated by China. Engaging in this activity presents China with a favorable risk-reward ratio, as the Chinese government does not have a strong commitment to a specific outcome. Enhanced diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran are expected to mitigate the likelihood of regional unrest and tensions (Nawaz, 2023). The aforementioned statement highlights the advantages that both China, the United States, and regional actors can derive from a certain situation or circumstance. China has a discernible interest in cultivating regional relations and promoting stability because it relies on oil imports from Iran and Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the Gulf area holds significant importance for Beijing as a vital source of energy supply. Ultimately, a potential confrontation in the Persian Gulf has the potential to significantly impact China's energy supply and economic interests (Abed, 2023). The United States, as a participant in regional wars, is progressively aligning itself with specific factions, hindering its ability to adopt a conciliatory stance. China has effectively refrained from being entangled in the ongoing conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, thereby

positioning itself to potentially assume a role in facilitating peace negotiations (Koelbl, 2023).

The current inquiry pertains to the durability of the peace agreement established between Iran and Saudi Arabia. China facilitated the Iran-Saudi peace agreement to establish diplomatic and political alliances with other nations. China's historical preference for an inward-looking approach and non-interference in the affairs of other nations has led to the adoption of the concept of a peaceful rise and a policy of non-interference (Harb, 2023). Presently, China is actively pursuing diplomatic, political, and economic collaborations with other countries, thereby assuming a role of mediation to address its global requirements. China has previously engaged in peacekeeping endeavors, indicating that its current role as a peacekeeping nation is not unprecedented. In the case of Libya, China pledged to engage in economic activity and offered its support to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA). Similarly, in Yemen, China called upon the international community to uphold the principle of respecting Yemen's sovereignty. In the year 2017, the individual played a significant role in facilitating a meeting between the Houthis and the United Nations Special Envoy. Additionally, the individual expressed opposition to human rights violations committed in Yemen (Naqvi & Rogers, 2021). China has opted for multilateral settlement processes to address global problems and has assumed the role of a mediator, in contrast to the Western approach of imposing its value systems on indigenous populations (Schober, 2023).

This deal cannot be classified as unilateral due to its inclusion of the interests of all states involved, including Saudi Arabia, which seeks to achieve economic diversification. The arrangement addresses the security concerns of the Kingdom, which had previously provided financial support for proxy battles in the Middle East. The accord provides Iran with a potential avenue for reducing its isolation by reestablishing diplomatic relations and tackling its economic challenges (Asma, 2021). China's involvement in the Middle East is a result of both its energy needs and the BRI project. From a strategic perspective, the main rationale behind China's pursuit of an alternative to the US-led global order is its inclination towards a more multilateral approach to global security. Due to the diminishing influence of the United States in the Middle East and global arena, there is an emerging trend where states are progressively turning to China and Russia to pursue peace agreements and engage in diplomatic dialogues (Ward, 2023). Therefore, it can be inferred that this agreement is a multi-party mediation involving regional actors with vested interests at both the general and state levels. Consequently, it can be argued that this agreement possesses the potential for long-term viability.

The creation of an alliance between Iran, China, and Saudi Arabia presents a higher likelihood of opportunities emerging in Pakistan. These countries' economic ties, energy security, and capacity for cooperation and opposition are just a few of the factors that affect their interdependence. Complex interdependence provides a pragmatic conceptual framework for analyzing these issues and their related difficulties (Lyer, 2023). A more profound understanding of these complex interconnections may perhaps facilitate our awareness of the complexity inherent in this cooperative endeavor and the importance of middle-power diplomacy in fostering stability and peace in the Middle East. Given Pakistan's recent efforts to foster

reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran, it is crucial to undertake a thorough examination of the complex dynamics that characterize the relationship between these two states (Amna, 2023).

This study examines the impacts of the strategic alliance formed by China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran with Pakistan. To maximize the advantages of the strategic alliance, it is imperative to implement proactive steps aimed at promoting peace and stability within the area for the benefit of Pakistan. The situation necessitates a thorough examination and the implementation of measures to address its security concerns, with the provision of assistance in resolving any problems that may arise with neighboring entities (Imtiaz, 2019). Pakistan is highly interested in maximizing the significant investments made by China in infrastructure and energy projects, primarily through the CPEC. The primary aim of the CPEC is to establish a robust commercial and logistical pathway that connects the western regions of China to the Arabian Sea via Pakistan. Widely regarded as a significant and necessary asset is the China-initiated BRI (Daniel et al, 2021). This plan has the potential to enhance Pakistan's economic prospects and foster stronger diplomatic relations with China.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is grounded in the analysis of existing documentation, which constitutes secondary data. The statistics were compiled through the extraction of pertinent information from a multitude of sources and prior research. As a result, supplementary sources such as textbooks, scholarly articles, and other written materials procured from libraries were employed. Additionally, the study utilized internet sites that had relevant data. The aforementioned documents have already been made available to the general public. The author engaged in a process of refinement, interpretation, evaluation, and analysis of the subject matter. The qualitative methodology is employed to conduct empirical research. The utilization of qualitative techniques enables a more profound understanding of the underlying causes and constituents. In addition, the feminist viewpoint on foreign policy is elucidated through the utilization of both explanatory and descriptive methodologies.

The Complex Interdependence Theory

The 'Complex Interdependence Model' was formulated by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye during the latter part of the 1970s. This posed a significant challenge to the prevailing paradigms of conventional and structural realism, which relied on the military and economic capabilities of nation-states to rationalize their actions (Buzan, et al, 1997). Nevertheless, the complexity of interconnectedness highlighted the expansion of transnational actors in the state. In comparison to status and security concerns, the significance of welfare and trade in foreign policy problems has increased, and new international regimes and institutions have emerged to replace traditional military capabilities. To better comprehend why states are willing to form coalitions in the face of anarchy and dependence, many assessments of international politics have turned to the neoliberal concept of complex interdependence (Skidmore, 1999). This theory is frequently credited with foreseeing globalization, as it predicted the increasing significance of IOs and MNCs

before their widespread adoption. Economic interdependence has increased alongside other forms of global interdependence in the modern era of interdependence, according to Keohane and Nye. As a result of their extensive cooperation, China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are economically interdependent (Zhou, 2021). Their efforts to increase trilateral cooperation in numerous sectors through bilateral initiatives show that their strategic, economic, and diplomatic collaboration has demonstrated signs of interdependence since pursuing different strategies. Important aspects of this theory, including "multiple channels," "a minimal role for military force," and "the absence of a hierarchy of issues," are gradually revealed. Numerous regional and extra-regional cooperation exist in the intricate relations (Rana, 2015).

Under the theory of complex interdependence, the strategic partnership between China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, and its impact on Pakistan, can be analyzed in terms of the various factors that contribute to the interdependence between these countries. Illustrative instances encompass economic interdependence, the assurance of energy security, and the prospect of both collaboration and confrontation within these domains (Hussain & Ahmed, 2016). A more comprehensive comprehension of the complex dynamics of this cooperation and its impact on the surrounding region can be achieved by taking into account these variables. This theory also underscores the potential significance of middle-power diplomacy in bolstering peace and stability in the Middle East within the framework of Pakistan's endeavors to facilitate mediation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In summary, this conceptual framework offers a valuable perspective for analyzing the intricate network of interrelationships among these countries (Kulsoom, 2017). To further our comprehension of the strategic partnership and its impact on Pakistan, we conducted a qualitative analysis of the collected data. Individuals with a keen interest in the evolving dynamics of the Middle East were provided with a succinct and easily understandable synopsis of the research's discoveries.

Iran-Saudi Rapprochement and Opportunities for Pakistan

On an exterior level, there are many venues for the Iran-Saudi conflict. Particularly, both states are competing with one another in the Middle Eastern states. Iran has a significant impact on states like Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Bahrain. By using a variety of strategies, Saudi Arabia aims to reduce Iranian influence. Because both states engage in their fight in the Middle East through allies and proxies rather than directly, it is frequently referred to as the "Cold War in the Middle East (Abbas & Jahangaiz, 2020)." Saudi Arabia and Iran were frequently among the competing groups. Saudi Arabia follows Iran wherever it goes in opposition, and vice versa (Abbas & Kazmi, 2021). To keep a vigorous equilibrium in this relationship, Pakistan made the shrewd choice to stay out of the Yemeni catastrophe and not go back to Saudi Arabia. However, Iran condemned the move to join the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC), which is led by Saudi Arabia and excludes Iran and Syria (Sultan, 2018). Pakistan has emphasized that joining this coalition will depend on assurances that the IMCTC won't grow into a front in contradiction of Iran in the Muslim world.

The establishment of reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia is a crucial measure in fostering regional harmony. Since the issuance of the declaration, there has been a notable rise in confidence in its potential to facilitate dialogue between the two states to resolve the multitude of proxy wars. Therefore, the act of reopening their embassies plays a vital role in the process of restoring diplomatic relations. To exert a significant influence on the area, it is imperative for Saudi Arabia and Iran to consistently reassess and modify their approaches. Moreover, this development has the potential to generate avenues for Saudi investment in Iran, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the nation. The potential integration of Iranian oil into the global market has the potential to contribute to the stabilization of energy production and pricing.

To date, China has made an investment of around \$26 billion in the effort, which has already progressed into its second phase. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia were sent invitations to partake in the event; however, their contributions were modest. China and Pakistan, even setting aside their bilateral disagreements, have the potential to derive advantages from their involvement in or financial contributions to several projects under the CPEC (Xiaoxiang & Chengfeng, 2021). Pakistan and Iran possess significant potential for religious and cultural collaboration due to their shared religious, linguistic, and cultural affinities. The population of each nation is believed to have ancestral ties to the Aryan civilization. The spiritual and religious affiliations of the Sufi and Shiite communities have fostered increased proximity between the two nations. The significant impact of Persian culture, poetry, and language on the formation and nurturing of respectful relationships is noteworthy. Both nations have reached a mutual consensus to augment their economic capacity by a maximum of \$5 billion (Anwar, 2023). However, they encounter many internal and external impediments that hinder their ability to achieve this goal, thereby impeding economic and regional collaboration. Iran has the potential to achieve economic stability in the face of persistent international sanctions and political turmoil, enabling Pakistan to address its energy crisis. Pakistan and Iran possess a favorable prospect for substantial enhancement of their economic collaboration within the Central Asian Republics (CARs). This is due to their shared abundance of resources and strategic geographical positioning, which facilitates the connection between South and West Asia with the energy-rich CARs. Energy and trade exemplify instances of economic cooperation between two nations (Kazmi, 2023).

Pakistan can anticipate numerous advantages stemming from the potential reunification of Iran and Saudi Arabia. The advantages encompass ensuring the achievement of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, bolstering security in the region, and promoting greater international solidarity among Muslims supporting the Kashmir cause. Religious strife may be mitigated with the assistance of the reconciliation process in Pakistan, where 20 to 25 percent of the populace is Shia (Khetran, 2018). Pakistan's historical connections to both Riyadh and Tehran, coupled with its heterogeneous populace, might facilitate improved regional communication and harmony between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Economic and Energy Collaboration: A Brief Appraisal

"Regional conflict patterns influence the routes of intervention by global-level powers," as stated by Barry Buzan (Buza et al, 1997). It is expected that a region experiencing internal strife will attract external forces in the form of gravitational attraction. China and Iran were both opposed to American intervention in the Middle East. A stable gas and energy supply is one of the factors influencing China's pursuit of amicable relations with Iran. China is also making preparations to construct a gas pipeline via Pakistan from Western Iran to circumvent the "Malacca Predicament" and shore up its energy vulnerabilities. China is strategically reorienting itself by undertaking the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which seeks to establish fresh maritime and land trade routes. China further suggested the establishment of a high-speed rail link spanning from western China to Iran through Central Asia. A comprehensive strategic alliance was signed between the two parties during President Xi's visit to Tehran (Qaisar & Abbas, 2017). China committed to allocating \$400 billion towards Iran's oil supply for 25 years, contingent upon the latter providing uninterrupted fuel for its robust economy (Times, 2021). The pact might strengthen China's position in the Middle East, which might also jeopardize American efforts to isolate Iran.

Tanchum's analysis from 2015 concluded that "Iran is important to the success of China's transcontinental, infrastructure-focused One Belt, One Road (OBOR) plan in ways that Saudi Arabia is not." The hydrocarbon deposits located in Iran provide significant benefits to China, given its burgeoning energy requirements (Mansab, 2023). A pragmatic energy collaboration between China and Iran is predicated on mutually beneficial, prudent investment. Conversely, work has commenced on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), an undertaking with a specific emphasis on energy and infrastructure. Additionally, Iranian leaders have declared their intent to join the CPEC. During a September 2016 meeting held outside the United Nations General Assembly, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif expressed interest in joining the CPEC. The probability of an "energy nexus" developing among Pakistan, China, and Iran appears to be growing in light of recent occurrences (Abbas, 2016).

Trilateral cooperation enables the massive energy and infrastructure cooperation between China and Pakistan under the CPEC to be linked to Iran. Infrastructure development and energy cooperation, the two pillars of Pakistan-China engagement, are also components of the CPEC. Iran is impacted by both of these factors as a result of its technological advancements in infrastructure construction and its ample energy resources. Iran contributes significantly to these two domains. As a result, it appears that the three states' decision to collaborate economically was wise. Nevertheless, several obstacles prevent their cooperative efforts (Xiaoxiang & Chengfeng, 2021). The most formidable obstacle is the ever-changing political climate that develops globally. Iran has consented to examine potential avenues for involvement in the proposed CPEC, primarily to enhance and modernize railway and road infrastructure to facilitate the transportation of a wider variety of goods.

Gwadar and Chabahar Cooperation: Win-Win Situation

The terminals of Gwadar and Chabahar's geostrategic significance is its most notable attribute. These strategically located ports facilitate the passage of 70% of the world's oil exports through the confluence of the main energy trade routes (Tehsin, 2017). In addition, Chabahar and Gwadar are outposts of the immense mineral wealth of Baluchistan and Iran, respectively. Additionally, monitoring operations in the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean are dependent on these facilities. Communication routes abound in the region, originating from Gwadar and Chabahar. In a vacuum between geopolitics and geo-economics, both terminals are capable of fostering regional expansion. China has initiated the execution of its BRI, wherein CPEC is the principal undertaking, and Gwadar functions as the pivotal node. Geopolitics occasionally taints Iran and Pakistan's diplomatic ties, despite their cordial relationships. At present, Gwadar and Chabahar are associated with contrasting political factions.

Relations between Iran and Western nations, including the United States, have never been amicable, even though Iran is a sovereign nation. The utilization of Chabahar for the advantage of others would not be tolerated, particularly if it placed its relations with China or Pakistan at risk (Haider, 2016). Chabahar and Pakistan would not engage in a hostile rivalry. A move in which Asia has assumed the lead in geostrategic alliances will have profound repercussions for the South Asian region. For connectivity, CARs rely on both land and sea routes. The energy produced in the CARs is exported via the ports of Chabahar and Gwadar. Moreover, by capitalizing on their international influence and longstanding cultural ties with Pakistan and Iran, the Central African Republics can reduce their reliance on Russia. Nonetheless, Afghanistan enters into this equation as a significant factor. The nation's critical contribution to the reconstruction of the Eurasian trading network is exemplified in the 2008 National Development Strategy (Sanderson & Gordon, 2010). Restoring peace in the region is contingent upon Afghanistan's ability to unite all parties in pursuit of a common objective. Restoring peace in the region is contingent upon Afghanistan's ability to unite all parties in pursuit of a common objective. A contemporary "silk road," terminating in Gwadar, will foster development and establish a sustainable, long-term revenue framework, thereby aiding the United States in accomplishing its goals in Afghanistan. Inclusionary and people-oriented development strategies have the potential to mitigate grievances and aid in the eradication of violent extremism.

"Chabahar and Gwadar are sister ports, not competitors," stated Mehdi Hoonerdost, the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan, on May 27, 2016, in front of a filled house at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad (ISSI) (Khetran, 2018). Sartaj Aziz, a former foreign affairs adviser to the prime minister, asserts that Pakistan has strategic intentions to establish a railway and road connection between Chabahar and Gwadar. Both Iran and Pakistan have expressed interest in participating in the CPEC (Tribune, 2017). Therefore, rather than rivalry and competitiveness, both agencies have suggested cooperation. Both of these assertions are placed within the context of bilateral ties, but a geopolitical analysis reveals a rather different scenario in which an Indian spy was caught crossing the border into Pakistan from Iran. To clarify, he said that he had been stationed at Chabahar to damage Gwadar and that this demonstrates the geopolitical

considerations of other nations towards Pakistan's port. In addition to acting as transportation hubs for goods, ports are also important sources of culture, information, and social mores that help to define a state's metropolitan culture. The ports of Gwadar and Chabahar complement one another and have the potential to serve as a hub for international trade and cultural exchange.

The Potential of Peace Pipeline: A New Strategic Partnership

Presidents Ahmadinejad and Zardari inked a new \$7.5 billion draught agreement in March 2009 to provide Iran with natural gas. Even if it was just another attempt to revive a contract that had been in the works for more than ten years, the move had symbolic value. In February 2010, the agreement was completed. In December 2013, Rouhani's administration informed the Pakistanis that the project was off unless Pakistan could find the \$500 million to finance its portion of the pipeline because it felt that Islamabad was in many ways asking for a handout (Ap Report, 2013). The pipeline is not merely opposed by the United States. Iran's main regional adversary Saudi Arabia opposes it, as does a key friend of Pakistan. Additionally, it disregards other hidden conflicts of interest that continue to obstruct Iranian-Pakistani relations and are not the fault of the US or anybody else for that matter (Vatanka, 2015).

A five-year extension has been granted to the gas pipeline project between Pakistan and Iran, which has been significantly postponed. Iran would withdraw its proposal to utilize an arbitration court, and Pakistan would be relieved of any financial obligations related to penalties for project delays, as stipulated in the agreement. According to available data, the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project has been delayed until August 26, 2024. However, as a result of Tehran's economic constraints, completion has not yet occurred. The absence of financial support from international organizations is the main obstacle to the project's completion, which Pakistan estimates will cost \$1.65 billion. Already under construction is a 900-kilometer conduit that will link Iran and Pakistan (Mansab, 2023). Former Petroleum Secretary G.A. Sabri, who finalized the agreement for the IP gas pipeline project, thinks that each succeeding administration in Pakistan has chosen to introduce novel initiatives instead of implementing the plans put forth by previous administrations. The gas pipeline project remained unfinished due to a dearth of motivation and inconsistent policies implemented by the government (Global Village, 2019).

Experts predict that the IP gas project will generate greater profits than TAPI and LNG contracts (Baxter, 2014). Iran may impose a \$18 billion fine on Pakistan if a segment of the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project fails to be completed on its territory by February–March 2024 (PTJ, 2023). Iran has successfully finished its segment of the conduit, which, upon reaching the Pakistani border from the gas field, will connect to the Pakistani segment. 750 million cubic feet of gas per day would be accessible to Pakistan from Iran if the pipeline were to be constructed and come online.

The Future is Asian: Opportunities for Pakistan

The world underwent three phases of globalization, according to "The Future is Asian" by Parag Khanna (Khanna, 2019): Europeanization in the nineteenth century,

Americanization in the twentieth, and Asianization in the twenty-first. Ahead of the advent of European colonialism and American hegemony, Asia swiftly reverted to trade, conflict, and cultural exchange patterns that had persisted for centuries. Asians will determine their destinies, and in the process of advancing the global interests of their group, they will influence ours. At present, the geostrategic, geopolitical, and economic hegemony of Asia dictates the course of global affairs. Aspects in South Asia illustrate the evolving dynamics of the global community.

China and Iran signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2021. The region stands to gain advantages from Iran's enhanced diplomatic relations with Middle Eastern countries, namely the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, owing to China's stance of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. Despite not being a member of the Arab League, Iran maintains friendly diplomatic relations with each member state of the organization. The amicable re-entry of Syria into the League signifies a significant shift in the geopolitical landscape, particularly in light of the endorsement of a peace proposal by Iran, China, and other Arab League members (Lyer, 2023). This development highlights the substantial changes that have occurred over the years. The establishment of a multilateral economic zone spanning from Central Asia to the Middle East has resulted from the China-Iran Partnership and Iranian support for the Chinese-operated Gwadar Port. The United States QUAD and AUKUS projects, which have increased their influence in the Indo-Pacific region, have increased the importance of the CPEC as China's main economic route to the Middle East and Africa (Anwer, 2023)

European media outlets have referred to the expanded diplomatic ties between China, CARs, Iran, Pakistan, UAE, and Saudi Arabia as a significant and noteworthy development. According to the assessment conducted, China's aggressive role as a "deal-initiator" in the Middle East has the potential to bring about a transformative shift in Asia, wherein countries seek to achieve their regional goals through strategic partnerships rather than formal alliances (Mansab, 2023). In a correspondence addressed to the Arab League, President Xi of China commended Saudi Arabia for its significant role in fostering peace and stability within the Middle East region. President Xi also acknowledged Saudi Arabia's unwavering commitment to promoting Arab solidarity and cooperation, despite China's non-participation in the Arab League Summit. The author characterized Saudi Arabia as a prominent actor within a multipolar global landscape. China strategically utilizes the CPEC as a means to efficiently and reliably access the regions of the Middle East and Africa. As a result, Pakistan, a resilient and unwavering partner of China, stands to benefit the most from China's adherence to its designated timeline. According to a report by Arab News in 2023, some Middle Eastern and Gulf nations, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have already conveyed their endorsement of the CPEC (Herb, 2023). These states view the CPEC as a mechanism to promote economic development, facilitate trade, and enhance regional cooperation.

Revival of Organization of Islamic Cooperation:

In light of recent positive diplomatic developments involving Iran and Saudi Arabia, one may be hesitant to be overly sanguine about the future of the OIC. The better communication channels mentioned above may make it

easier for member countries to work together and come to an agreement. This could help the OIC play a bigger role in helping Muslim countries deal with their urgent problems. OIC has done some of what it set out to do—recognize and deal with complex geopolitical factors and different national agendas—to bring the Muslim community together and solve its problems. After thirteen years, Syria has formally become a member of the Arab League, and the Saudi-Iranian agreement has started to reduce Assad's isolation. Syria and Saudi Arabia are approaching the threshold of resuming diplomatic ties as a result of the involvement of Russia (Mansab, 2023).

Palestine and Kashmir endure the two most severe humanitarian crises on a global scale. OIC members are free to propose solutions and engage in dialogue regarding Palestine and Kashmir. Using this arrangement, the United States is capable of applying pressure to Israel. It is widely acknowledged that the American Democratic Party and the Israeli Democratic Party maintain more robust alliances than their current ones (Amna, 2023). Biden's 2021 demand that Israel cease its conflict with Hamas diminished Netanyahu's influence. The existence and security of Israel are imperiled due to an alliance formed between two regional powers, of which one is an adversary. Presently, the Palestinian issue is resurfacing in a significant fashion. This will profoundly affect the mindset of Arab leaders and the fabric of Arab society at large. It would seem that we have entered a time machine. Once more, the Palestinian issue has dominated Middle Eastern politics. The United Nations Security Council was requested by the OIC General Secretariat to implement its resolutions regarding Jammu and Kashmir by 2022. The resolutions reached by the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Islamic Summit regarding Jammu and Kashmir illustrate the enduring backing of the OIC General Secretariat for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination (Asma, 2023). Reiterating its appeal to the international community, the General Secretariat urges the execution of United Nations Security Council resolutions that seek to halt the violence in Jammu and Kashmir. This agreement would have an impact on the OIC members' readiness, particularly Pakistan, to take a proactive stance in the Kashmir dispute.

4. CONCLUSION

Pakistan is particularly susceptible to the consequences of the alliance between China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. The interdependence among these nations is influenced by their economic links, energy security, and the potential for cooperation and conflict. The idea of complex interdependence offers a valuable analytical framework for studying these and related matters. By attaining a more comprehensive comprehension of these intricate interconnections, it is plausible that we could grasp the intricacy of this collaborative endeavor and the significance of middle-power diplomacy in advancing peace and stability in the Middle East. The necessity of doing a comprehensive examination of the complex relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran becomes apparent in light of Pakistan's recent endeavors to enhance contact between the two countries.

This study investigates the strategic alliance formed among China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, as well as its potential implications for Pakistan. To fully realize the advantages of the strategic alliance, it is imperative for

Pakistan to actively foster regional peace and stability. This necessitates the examination and mitigation of its security considerations, as well as facilitating the resolution of conflicts with neighboring entities. Pakistan has the potential to gain significant advantages from China's considerable investments in infrastructure and energy projects, primarily facilitated via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The main aim of the China-Pakistan Commercial Corridor (CPEC) is to establish a comprehensive commercial and logistical pathway that connects the western regions of China with the Arabian Sea through Pakistan. BRI implemented by China is a notable endeavor that has great importance and is widely seen as a valuable resource. This strategy has the potential to yield benefits for both Pakistan's diplomatic relations with China and its economic prospects.

Recommendations

These suggestions, if implemented, could assist Pakistan in nurturing positive relations with other states.

Gas Pipeline

Commencing the reactivation of the Iran-Pakistan gas conduit will foster enhanced energy and commercial collaboration between the two nations. The gas pipeline can fulfill approximately 25% of Pakistan's energy requirements. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$7.50 billion, of which Pakistan is expected to contribute \$1.25 billion. An additional potentiality entails the integration of the conduit into the more extensive China-Pakistan Economic Corridor initiative. Given recent events, it is almost certain that Iran, China, and Pakistan are part of an "energy nexus" that the data support. Notwithstanding the constraints, numerous nations, predominantly China and Russia, have consistently extended offers of aid to Pakistan to finalize the pipeline.

Sanctions waivers

In the aftermath of the re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran, the United States has authorized eight nations to proceed with their hydrocarbon imports from Iran. The aforementioned nations comprise Turkey, China, Italy, Greece, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and India, all of which maintain a strong alliance with one another. The principal oil-consuming nations in Asia have banded together to implore the lifting of sanctions against Iran to maintain oil imports. Proponents assert that a blanket prohibition will further increase the price of crude oil. The exclusions of these eight states demonstrate the market's reliance on Iranian oil and the difficulty of its eradication.

In light of Pakistan's persistent energy crisis, the nation may secure a waiver from the United States to procure crude from Iran at a discounted rate. In light of the commodity's exorbitant global price, Pakistan is compelled to procure oil for its sustenance. To secure affordable oil from Russia and Iran, Pakistan is compelled to rely on waivers, as the United States provisioned waivers to these eight nations as an economic stabilization measure. Regardless of the waiver, the US sanctions campaign would have a significant negative impact on Pakistan. Iranian crude oil is favored due to its affordability and compatibility with a wide range of refinery technological configurations.

Barter Trade

The Pakistani side addresses issues caused by international sanctions with local currency. Iran and Pakistan must use local currency to address the issues resulting from the sanctions.

The Potential of Multilateral Organizations

The elimination of misunderstandings and the adoption of forward-looking perspectives in relations between Tehran and Riyadh will undoubtedly result in enhanced regional stability and security, as well as increased cooperation between Persian Gulf states and the Islamic world in addressing current challenges. Multilateralism is essential in the current era of globalization. In a similar vein, the OIC and SCO may serve the Muslim ummah in a variety of methods so long as it adheres to proper operating procedures.

Win-win Cooperation

Working together could increase the amount of goods that can be sent between the Gwadar and Chabahar terminals. Adding more CPEC partners would also help fight China's dominance. A greater number of jobs will be created, and Pakistan will earn additional revenue as a consequence of business expansion.

Competing Interests

The authors did not declare any competing interest.

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