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ABSTRACT

This article examines the evolution and significance of Pakistan-China defense cooperation during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government from 2018 to 2022. It examines the deepening strategic, military, and technical ties between the two countries. Their joint efforts in air, land, and naval defense as well as nuclear cooperation. The analysis covers joint military exercises, defense agreements, technical exchanges, and the strategic importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Despite these strong ties, the article identifies several challenges, including changing geopolitical dynamics, economic constraints, regional instability, and internal political instability in Pakistan. It also expresses concern about the growing dependence on China and the response of India and the United States. The article concludes with recommendations to enhance defense cooperation through multilateral diplomacy, better security strategies, and balancing regional alliances to maintain strategic autonomy and stability.

Keywords: CPEC, Military, Pak. China. Defense cooperation, PTI Government, Regional Peace, Security

Introduction

Since inception of Pak- China diplomatic ties in 1951, both countries have enjoyed "all weather iron brothers" and mutually beneficially relations. Pakistan is one of the countries who recognize the people Republic of China in 1950. Both countries started bilateral relationships and remained ally even in tough time of China 1960s and early 1970s during China's International isolation. With the passage of time their relations strengthen and deepen. In the post 9/11 period, both countries started fight against terrorism and extremism with strategic and defence cooperation. They support each other for Regional peace and security (Muzaffar, Yaseen, & Ishfaq, 2016). China is Pakistan's only neighbour who has conflict-free relations with Pakistan. Over a period of more than 7 decades, China gave Pakistan economic and military assistance. China is Pakistan's largest defence supplier. It supplies scientific experts, equipments and technology to Pakistan. JF-17 is one of the joint production of both countries. Pak-China do join military exercises for security and peace. Both countries are promoting bilateral relations by signing defence agreements for securing mutual interests, fighting against their common enemy India and Supporting economic vision (Muzaffar & Khan, 2021).

During the tenure of Pakistan tehreek-e- Insaaf, he PTI government emphasised on strengthening ties with China to solve the growing regional and security challenges. This article analysis Pak - China defence cooperation during the PTI government (2018 - 2022) by examining high level diplomatic exchanges, defense industry partnerships, joint military exercises regional security concerns, technological collaboration. This article also points out the challenges for defense cooperation and recommends solutions for it.

Literature Review

Pak-China relations and cooperation are very important for regional peace, progress and prosperity. There are a few researchers about Park-China relationships. It is essential here to discuss the literature and researches contain the subject matter.

Pakistan and China both have proudly relations which include defence cooperation, fraternal diplomatic ties and political understanding over the many years. Both countries are cooperated and close strategic friends. Pak- China both are promoting their bilateral relations by signing defence agreements for promoting defence cooperation and economy. With the growing threats of terrorism in the region, both countries are increasing military cooperation. Their friendship greatly works for strengthening their defense ties and diplomatic relations. (Malik, 2016).

Since their diplomatic recognition in 1951, Pakistan and China have maintained a robust, complex relationship that has developed into a profound strategic alliance founded on shared security, economic interests, and mutual trust. The two nations are connected by their close vicinity, and China's regional influence is increased by Pakistan's advantageous location. Their cooperation has remained robust in spite of regional obstacles such as Afghanistan's instability and border conflicts with India. Counterterrorism activities are one of the main areas of cooperation, with both nations collaborating to fight terrorism and stabilise Afghanistan. Their connection is further strengthened by China's expanding economic might, especially through programs like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). A significant infrastructure project, CPEC is viewed as a game-changer for Pakistan's economy, providing a remedy for energy scarcity and generating long-term economic gains while strengthening Pakistan-China defense and strategic ties in the context of global dynamics. (Lashari, 2016).

China and Pakistan's military collaboration has a big impact on regional and international geopolitics. Peace and stability in South Asia have been greatly aided by their strategic alliance, which is characterised by common interests and collaboration in the fields of defence technology and the maritime industry. Their military relationship is complicated and dynamic, as this analysis demonstrates, underscoring its significance for regional security as well as global dynamics. (Javid, Ali, 2024).

The growing number of Pak-China defence agreements and military exercises are the sign of deepening their relationships and partnerships. Recently, Pakistan used Chinese product combat Drone which solved many security and monitoring problems of Pakistan specially on the Indian border. Both countries do joint military exercises for safeguarding mutual interest, regional security and peace. These exercises deepen their defense relations and also enable them to go through thick and thin together. (Rajagopalan, 2021).

Since the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is crucial to the region's economic growth, South Asia has drawn attention from all over the world in the twenty-first century. Since the 1950s, Pakistan and China have developed a stronger relationship built on trust and cooperation, especially through military, political, and economic cooperation, including counterterrorism initiatives. CPEC has given China a safe way to import oil while also boosting connectivity and assisting Pakistan's industrial growth. The security of CPEC and Xinjiang is threatened by the instability in the Pakistan-Afghanistan region, especially in Balochistan. Notwithstanding the additional difficulties brought up by the expanding Indo-US strategic relationship, continued China-Pakistan cooperation seeks to resolve these issues and promote regional stability. (Mushtaq, 2019).

China has emerged as an all weather iron brother of Pakistan. Pak- China relationships are based on mutual cooperations and interests like economic, defence, political and technological. JF-17 aircraft is a production of both countries cooperation.

China is supporting Pakistan at every platform. China is the closest diplomatic ally of Pakistan. They both are working for mutual benefits of both countries. (Kosar, 2021).

Pakistan has become more dependent on China for defence cooperation in recent years as a result of economic difficulties and tense ties with the US. Thanks to technological transfers like the joint manufacturing of JF-17 Thunder aircraft and military technologies, weaponry, and equipment like fighter jets, missiles, and tanks, China has emerged as Pakistan's top defence partner. Pakistan has benefited greatly from this relationship in resolving regional security issues and fending off threats from Afghanistan and India. China's support includes space and nuclear capabilities, which will improve Pakistan's military independence and stability in the area. As their collaboration has grown over time, a solid and strategic defence partnership has been established. (Hashmi, Jamil, Ahmad, 2019).

Pakistan and China have close diplomatic relations and strategic partnerships. They supported each other in difficult situations. China supported Pakistan on issues at regional and international level. Pakistan is also supported China during China's international isolation. Both countries are time-tested and have brotherly relationships. They both are working with each other to promote mutual interests, security and bilateral defense Cooperation. (Yousaf, 2020).

According to youngsuk lee (2020) CPEC is an economic tie between Pakistan and China. It's an economical project that strengthens trade of both countries and also boosts economic growth within both countries. Through this project both countries will promote their trade and Secure economy, increase foreign investment, develop agriculture sector and modernise industrial infrastructure. This project will strengthen both countries relations, reduce Pakistan dependency on the west, create jobs and improve both countries economic conditions. (lee ,2020).

Pakistan has experienced military control since gaining independence in 1947, with civilian administrations frequently being unstable and short-lived. The military's influence grew, especially during Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988) and Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008), and it still has an impact on national politics today. Given the regional concerns with India, Pakistan's strategic alliance with China has been crucial throughout these times. A major military and political ally since the 1970s, China has contributed significantly in the form of economic cooperation, military training, and sophisticated weapons. The long-lasting partnership, known as "all-weather friendship," has broadened bilateral connections in several domains and improved Pakistan's defence and security capabilities. (Muzzamil, Wasimuddin, 2022).

Although all above mentioned studies cover Pak- China relationships on different levels. Yet these studies still have the absence of the reasons and challenges for Pakistan China relations specially in the matter of Defence cooperation. This study explores the area where and why defence cooperation is needed. This study also deals with the factors that show the importance of defence cooperation. Its major purpose is to highlight the purpose of Pakistan and China defense Cooperations (Muzaffar, Yaseen & Ishfaq, 2016).

Material and Methods

The research method used for this article is a qualitative research method. The data gathered for this article from different sources like scholarly articles, government reports, media publications, defence papers etc. These sources helped in analysing the Pak- China defence cooperation during PTI government and also helped in understanding the challenges and factors for strengthening Pak- China relations.

Evolution of Pak-China Defense cooperation

Pak China has enjoyed their "all weather brother relations" for decades. Pakistan was the first Islamic country to accord recognition to the People's Republic of China. Pak-China diplomatic relations started in 1951 but their trustful interaction started in the 1960s and it got stronger after the Sino- India war in 1962. During the 1965 war, China supported Pakistan against India, issued warnings to India and provided military equipments including tanks and aircrafts. In 1970, Pakistan also pledged an important role in normalizing sino-American relations. Aftermath of 1971 Indo- Pak war, China showed its friendship to Pakistan by exercising veto power against Bangladesh application for membership of UN. When India became a nuclear power in 1974 China supported Pakistan for becoming nuclear power by providing nuclear related products and services researchers and Technical equipment for Uranium enrichment and nuclear power reactors (Yaseen, Afridi, & Muzaffar, 2017).

China also assisted Pakistan in the development of its ballistic missiles program. China also helped in constructing the Chashma - 1 a 325 MW nuclear power plant in Pakistan. The pak- China partnership is built on a strong footing of military and defence cooperation. China always helped Pakistan to build a robust defense mechanism by providing defence and Technical production assistance. In 1990, Pak- China both agreed jointly to design and manufacture main Battle tanks and produced its Al- Khalid model suitable for defence needs. Both countries also signed the "Thunder programme" contract to jointly develop and produce the JF-17 jet fighters. In 2015, both countries signed on the agreement of CPEC which is a beneficiary project for the both countries. Pakistan and China both are promoting their bilateral relations and friendship by signing agreements, promoting defense cooperation, doing military exercises and providing equipment for securing mutual interests and Supporting each other. (Ebrahimkhani, 2021).

Pak- China defense cooperation during PTI govt

Defence and security is one of the core areas of cooperation between Pakistan and China. A large number of defence cooperation projects is an important feature of the bilateral relations. JF-17 Thunder and jet trainer aircraft, Karakoram 8 for Pakistan Air Force, Frigates, Al-Zarrar Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) for Pakistan Army, Submarines for Pakistan Navy, and, Al-Khalid Main Battle Tank (MBT) for pak military etc are joint production of Pak -China. Both countries are fighting and supporting each other against terrorism. Pak-China has long term agreements on defense cooperation, security and regional peace. They are aiming for deepening their relations and defense cooperation by doing joint military excercises and trainings, sharing researchers and technology, joint production of equipments and working for CPEC etc. During the tenure of PTI govt (2018-2022) , under the leadership of Imran Khan, Pakistan foreign policy emphasis the need for regional peace and security. The PTI govt consider China a strong partner in the region for trade and defense. The PTI government focused on strong ties with China on economic and defence cooperation.

Defense Cooperation between Ground Forces

China and Pakistan have strong defence cooperation since it benefits both nations. The following are the key elements of China-Pakistan defence cooperation:

In order to meet its defence demands and obtain weapons and technology, Pakistan consistently looks to China, particularly during the Indo-Pak conflicts when it was subject to military sanctions from the US and other Western nations.

Beijing's primary goal in supplying Pakistan with military hardware is to strengthen and independent Pakistan while simultaneously increasing its reliance on China. Thus, by

creating its own heavy industry, Taxila, for weapons and ammunition, spare parts, licence manufacturing, and joint fighter jet production, such aid assisted Pakistan in strengthening its military capabilities.

Pakistan's defence industry has grown stronger and its defence posture has improved as a result of China's ongoing arms sales. Other defence suppliers have been enticed to sell their defence technology to Pakistan as a result of China's ongoing assistance in the defence industry.

Since relations between Pakistan and China have been so cordial from the start, there is a certain amount of confidence, particularly in the military area. Both nations would rather keep all information pertaining to their agreements confidential and only divulge information when it is suitable (Yaseen, Muzaffar & Shahbaz, 2023).

Pakistan benefits more from defence cooperation with China because of its lack of financial, technological, scientific, and local skills.

Air Defense Cooperation

China and Pakistan have established strong defence cooperation, particularly in air defence and Aerospace Technology. The Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) was built with Chinese assistance. Henyang F-6 (now decommissioned), FT-6 jet trainer aircraft, F-7 fighter aircraft, Nanchang A-5, and Shenyang FT-5 jet trainer aircraft are among the fighter and training aircraft that PAC manufactures and assembles. Additionally, PAC manufactures electronics, avionics, and ground-based radar systems. PAC includes an industry (a factory that manufactures aircraft). JF-17 Thunder and K-8 advanced trainer aircraft were produced by AMF and Chengdu Aircraft Industry (CAI) in China. J-10 fighters, super-7 fighters, and Karakorum-8 training and fighter aircraft are also collaborative production projects. For the Pakistani air force, China also constructed airborne and warning systems. China and Pakistan are weather friends.

The defence cooperation between China and Pakistan improved during the leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf government (2018–2022). Chengdu Aircraft Industry Corporation (CAIC) and Aircraft Manufacturing Factory (AMF) collaborate to produce the JF-17 Thunder Fighter. The PTI administration persisted in working with China to produce JF 17 Thunder aircraft. Additionally, during the PTI government, the JF-17 Thunder Block III was introduced and put into service. These planes helped air bases like Masroor, Sargodha, and Peshawar improve its operational capability. During the PTI administration, PAC (Pakistan Aerospace Technology) continued to produce electronics, avionics, and ground-based radar systems. China's Jiuquan Satellite Centre launches Pakistan's Remote Sensing Satellite-1 (PRSS-1), allowing Pakistan to join the esteemed Space. (Altaf, 2022). China and Pakistan conducted combined air exercises called Shaheen-IX during the PTI government in 2020. The ninth in a series of joint air exercises, Shaheen-IX is held annually in both nations to further and deepen their defence cooperation. China and Pakistan worked together to build additional air bases in the PTI government in order to secure the CPEC and its routes. The Pakistan Army (PA) declared the introduction of the Chinese HQ-9/P long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system on October 14, 2021. The HQ-9/P joined the PA's "Comprehensive Layered Integrated Air Defence" (CLIAD) system, according to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the tri-services' media arm. According to the ISPR, the HQ-9/P has a "single short kill probability" and a range of "over 100 kilometres" (Quwa). Both nations are emphasising their growing defence and technical cooperation.

China-Pakistan Naval Cooperation

When Pakistan's Navy Chief, Muzaffar Hassan, travelled to China in 1971 amidst the East Pakistani internal conflict, Pakistan-China naval cooperation got underway. China helped Pakistan through this difficult time by providing naval supplies and aid, especially small fuel ships. Both nations started talking about arms sales and technology transfer in 1985, which resulted in the 1992 acquisition of four Jiangwei-II frigates of Chinese origin. China contributed experience and technology to the development of eight sophisticated F-22P warships, which were constructed at a cost of \$1.4 billion, further extending this collaboration. By strengthening Pakistan's naval force, these warships—including the cutting-edge Type 054AP frigates with air defence and anti-submarine capabilities—will help maintain regional security and the balance of power in the Indian Ocean.

The Pakistan Navy (PN) and the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) conducted combined maritime drills in the Northern Arabian Sea under the code name Sea Guardian, led by the PTI government. These cooperative exercises are strengthening the friendship between the two nations' naval armies, fostering bilateral defence cooperation, and assisting in reacting to threats to maritime security. AMAN is a set of international exercises designed to foster peace, security, stability, and cooperation in the region. AMAN-19 and AMAN-21 took place in February 2019 and February 2021, respectively, under the PTI administration. Pakistan began receiving Type-054A/P frigates, which were created by China to meet naval requirements, under the leadership of the PTI. (Reuters, 2023).

Delivery Timeline of the Type 054A/P Frigate

November 2019: CSTC cut the steel for the first two ships.

March 2020: CSTC laid the keel of the second ship.

August 2020: CSTC launches the first ship – PNS Tughril – for sea trials.

January 2021: CSTC launches the second ship – PNS Taimur – for sea trials.

November 2021: The PN commissions the lead ship (PNS Tughril).

June 2022: The PN commissions the second ship (PNS Taimur). (Quwa, 2024)

Nuclear Cooperation

Since the start of their diplomatic ties, China has consistently backed Pakistan. By supplying resources and equipment during the period when western exports were restricted, China assisted Pakistan in obtaining "Nuclear State" designation. China provided Pakistan with professionals and facilities. Pakistan was able to successfully develop his first nuclear reactor using plutonium thanks to this support. China provided support to Pakistan for the uranium enrichment facility's expansion. Additionally, China and Pakistan inked agreements for the construction of the Chashma-3 and Chashma-4 nuclear power plants. Hualong-1 Technology is another reasonably priced alternative Pakistan is using to address the problem of power shortages.

One of the primary pillars of Pakistan and China's strategic partnership under the PTI administration (2018–2022) was their nuclear defence cooperation. China provided Pakistan's nuclear program with material and technical help, with the goal of strengthening Pakistan's nuclear deterrence capabilities. Despite pressure from international powers, the two nations continued to closely coordinate on nuclear security and non-proliferation matters. Pakistan was able to expand its nuclear arsenal, including advancements in missile systems and other relevant defence technologies, thanks to China's help, especially in the

areas of nuclear technology and research. The nuclear defence element remained significant as the PTI government sought to improve relations with China in a number of areas. This helped to balance the larger geopolitical dynamics involving the United States and other superpowers while bolstering Pakistan's strategic deterrence against regional threats, especially from India (Ain, Muzaffar & Yaseen, 2024).

Both countries did joint naval exercises in the Arabian sea and Indian Ocean for the protection of trade routes and regional stability.

Cooperation for security of CPEC

The China- Pakistan economic Corridor (CPEC) 60 billion dollar project that connects China's Province Xinjiang to Pakistan's Gwadar port. It is a transformative economic project that not Only brings prosperity and wealth to the participants but also brings security risk and regional rivalries. Under the leadership of the PTI, Both countries China and Pakistan did Joint exercises for promoting peace and stability in the region and protecting CPEC. Both countries worked closely to ensure the security of CPEC. Prime Imran Khan visited China several times during his tenure and he emphasized on defense cooperation with China on issues related to the security of the CPEC (Rahim, Khan, & Muzaffar, 2018).

Regional Security and Strategic Alignment

China and Pakistan both have to deal with regional security issues, chiefly because of their fragile relationship with India. The PTI government persisted in giving the defence alliance with China top priority in order to balance India's developing military might and strategic connections with Western nations, especially the US.

Kashmir Issue

In the larger diplomatic framework, especially with regard to the Kashmir issue, Pakistan-China defence cooperation also played a factor under the PTI administration. Particularly after Article 370 was repealed in 2019, both nations voiced their adamant opposition to India's actions in Jammu and Kashmir. A key component of Pakistan and China's defence cooperation was their strategic alignment on Kashmir, with China offering Pakistan military and diplomatic backing internationally (Masood & Muzaffar, 2019).

Afghanistan and U.S. Withdrawal

Another problems to the regional security situation was introduced by the situation in Afghanistan, especially after the U.S. withdrawal in 2021. Because both countries were worried about the possibility of instability in Afghanistan and how it would affect their security, Pakistan and China collaborated extensively on this topic. Pakistan asked China for help in handling the post-withdrawal situation, especially in regards to regional stability and counterterrorism (Nawab, Yaseen & Muzaffar, 2021).

Challenges

Shifting geopolitical Dynamics

During the PTI administration, shifting geopolitical conditions posed a serious obstacle to defence cooperation between China and Pakistan. A complex environment has resulted from the escalating tensions between the US and China, particularly in the areas of trade and technology. Pakistan has had to manage its significant relationship with the United States while preserving strong defence links with China, which has complicated its defence engagement with China and increased the danger of conflicts with India. Due to the

rivalry between the big countries, Pakistan has not been able to fully fortify its defence alliance with China.

Economic Constraints and Budgetary Issues

During the PTI administration, Pakistan's defence cooperation with China was severely constrained by economic factors. Pakistan's defence budget was under pressure due to issues like a balance of payments problem, high inflation, and growing debt. As a result, there were insufficient funds for defence cooperation, which caused defence agreements to be delayed and curtailed purchases of China's cutting-edge military hardware.

Impact of Afghanistan's Instability

Afghanistan's instability poses a serious threat to Pakistan-China defence cooperation. The Taliban's 2021 comeback and the US pullout from Afghanistan have sparked worries about regional security. China and Pakistan are both worried about the possibility of further instability and terrorism occurring across their borders. Because of this, even if counterterrorism cooperation has increased, military resources and attention have been diverted to Afghanistan, making it more difficult for both nations to concentrate entirely on their larger defence partnership.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Security Issues

An important obstacle to defence cooperation between China and Pakistan has been the increasing security risks linked to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Pakistan has had to commit substantial military resources to the defence of the CPEC due to frequent militant attacks on its facilities, especially in Balochistan. This has limited the possibility of further military collaboration with China by taking focus and funding away from other important defence goals.

Strategic Divergence in Military Priorities

Another problem is that China and Pakistan have different military priorities. Despite having similar interests in counterterrorism and regional security, the two nations' overarching strategic goals occasionally vary. Pakistan's main security concerns have been India and domestic insurgencies, whereas China, with its expanding military aspirations worldwide, has concentrated more on its naval presence in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. The development of their defence partnership beyond certain collaborative initiatives and arms agreements has occasionally been hampered by this divergence in military aims (Ghani, Ahmed & Muzaffar, 2017).

Impact of PTI's Internal Political Instability

Another issue impeding defence cooperation with China was Pakistan's internal political instability under the PTI. In addition to opposition rallies and a fractured political landscape, the PTI government experienced severe internal political instability that frequently diverged from long-term foreign and defence policy goals. The continuity and execution of defence agreements and projects with China were impacted by the disparity in Pakistan's defence priorities brought about by this instability. It was frequently difficult for both nations to carry out previously agreed-upon defence cooperation efforts due to political instability.

U.S. and Indian Responses to Growing China-Pakistan Defense Ties

The US and Indian response was a major obstacle to defence cooperation between China and Pakistan. India was more wary of their developing ties because of China's backing of Pakistan's military modernisation. The US, particularly during the Trump administration, was concerned about China's increasing sway over Pakistan, which was making it more difficult for Pakistan to maintain strategic balance and obtain US military support.

China's Non-Interference Principle

China's role in resolving Pakistan's internal security issues has been constrained by its policy of non-interference in domestic matters. Although Pakistan has asked China to participate in counter-insurgency operations, the extent of their military cooperation has been constrained by China's unwillingness to become engaged in internal security issues, particularly in regions that require direct military support.

Security Concerns in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea

Pakistan-China defence cooperation has been hindered by security concerns in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. Pakistan has had to manage tensions with India while balancing its naval strategy with China's expanding influence. Pakistan is in a precarious situation with regard to defence cooperation as a result of China's expanding naval presence in the area.

Growing Pakistani Dependency on China

Concerns about losing strategic autonomy in defence decisions have been highlighted by Pakistan's increasing reliance on China, particularly for technology and weapons. This reliance may restrict Pakistan's strategic flexibility and its capacity to diversify its defence alliances.

Conclusion

Defence and security is one of the core areas of cooperation between Pakistan and China. A large number of defence cooperation projects is an important feature of the bilateral relations. JF-17 Thunder and jet trainer aircraft, Karakoram 8 for Pakistan Air Force, Frigates, Al-Zarrar Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) for Pakistan Army, Submarines for Pakistan Navy, and, Al-Khalid Main Battle Tank (MBT) for pak military etc are joint production of Pak -China. Both countries are fighting and supporting each other against terrorism. Pak-China has long term agreements on defense cooperation, security and regional peace. They are aiming for deepening their relations and defense cooperation by doing joint military exercises and trainings, sharing researchers and technology, joint production of equipments and working for CPEC etc. During the tenure of PTI govt (2018-2022), under the leadership of Imran Khan, Pakistan foreign policy emphasis the need for regional peace and security. The PTI govt consider China a strong partner in the region for trade and defense. The PTI government focused on strong ties with China on economic and defence cooperation.

Recommendations

In order to manage tensions with the United States and India and to enhance defence cooperation with China, Pakistan should pursue a balanced foreign policy by fortifying ties with both countries through multilateral institutions like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

To lessen the immediate budgetary load, Pakistan could prioritise defence spending through budget changes, look for foreign cooperation, and land long-term defence contracts.

China and Pakistan should work together to secure Afghanistan's borders and combat terrorism. They should also share resources and intelligence to improve defence cooperation and combat regional instability.

In order to safeguard infrastructure and concentrate on wider defence cooperation, Pakistan should work with China to improve counter-insurgency capabilities and fortify local security along CPEC routes.

To better coordinate their defence objectives and deepen their partnership, Pakistan and China should engage in more strategic communication, cooperative military drills, and intelligence exchanges.

To maintain defence cooperation with China while political stability is maintained, Pakistan should set up a bilateral committee on defence and foreign policy.

Pakistan should engage in transparent negotiations with the United States and India, emphasizing the defensive nature of its relationship with China and regional security concerns, to overcome foreign objections.

To improve military cooperation without going too far, Pakistan can pursue regional alliances and cooperative intelligence or counterterrorism projects with China in line with its non-interference stance.

To ease tensions with India and improve regional security, Pakistan should work with China on an open naval security strategy and participate in cooperation drills and multilateral talks.

To improve strategic autonomy and lessen over-reliance, Pakistan should continue to maintain connections with China while expanding its defence alliances with nations like the US, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

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