

SHIFTING TRENDS IN PAKISTAN'S MILITARY COOPERATION: FROM USA TO CHINA

GRANTH VANAİK

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has, since 1947, expanded and diversified its military requirements to a very large extent. The defence expenditure in Pakistan, every year, holds a great share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has been constantly increasing. A very important reason for the surging defence expenditure to about \$11.4 billion¹ comprises the claims that Pakistan has repeatedly made of facing a threat to its survival from India. India rejected the "Two-Nation Theory" and, thus, Pakistan fears a military aggression from India. Pakistan, throughout its history, has been politically unstable and is still struggling to be a nation state, where there has not been a smooth run for democratic rule.² Pakistan Army has a very important role to play in the political scenario, making it one of the most influential organisations in the country. Hence, maintaining the belief that it faces a threat, Pakistan has been continuously depending upon its close allies for achieving the objective of being at par with its adversary in every field.

Sh **Granth Vanaik** was an intern with the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

1. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), "World Military Expenditure Grows to \$1.8 Trillion in 2018," News release, April 29, 2019. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/world-military-expenditure-grows-18-trillion-2018>. Accessed on April 30, 2019.
2. Khaled Ahmed, "Pakistan and Nature of the State: Revisionism, Jihad and Governance," *Criterion Quarterly*, July 16, 2012, <http://www.criterion-quarterly.com/pakistan-and-nature-of-the-state-revisionism-jihad-and-governance/>. Accessed on April 29, 2019.

With the global financial crisis in the year 2007-08, the US economy faced a recession and, hence, there was a drastic shift in the trend, whereby Pakistan started increasingly diversifying its imports of military equipment, to a large extent, from countries such as China, France, Italy, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, etc.

from countries such as China, France, Italy, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, etc.³ Also during this period, Pakistan strategically grew closer to China, which provided it financial and military aid in the form of weapons and technology transfers, including nuclear, thereby becoming the largest supplier of arms to Pakistan (a total value of about \$15.44 billion from 1964-2018). This has made China occupy the privileged position that the US had retained a few years ago in Pakistan.⁴ This growing dependence has also been strengthened with China heavily investing in Pakistan with its China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, bringing it into the ambit of China's grand strategy to revive the ancient Silk Route, under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).⁵

Since the beginning, Pakistan has depended heavily upon the United States of America, which provided it advanced military equipment, financial aid, military training and exercises, besides sharing of intelligence reports. However, the aid was related to the US' own interests in the region and did not satisfy the top elites in Pakistan. With the global financial crisis in the year 2007-08, the US economy faced a recession and, hence, there was a drastic shift in the trend, whereby Pakistan started increasingly diversifying its imports of military equipment, to a large extent,

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3. "Trend Indicator Values of Arms Exports to Pakistan, 1950-2018", SIPRI Database 2018. Accessed on April 24, 2019.
 4. Sushant Sareen, "China and Pakistan's 'Iron Brotherhood': The Economic Dimensions and Their Implications on US Hegemony," *ORF Occasional Paper, Eye on China*, no. 183, February 7, 2019, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/china-and-pakistans-iron-brotherhood-the-economic-dimensions-and-their-implications-on-us-hegemony/>. Accessed on April 30, 2019.
 5. P. K. Singh, "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Connecting the Dots," *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, April-June 2017, CXLVII, no. 608, 2017, <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/china-pakistan-economic-corridor-connecting-the-dots/>. Accessed on April 30, 2019.

This growing strategic nexus between China and Pakistan, much to the dismay of the USA, has deep repercussions not only for India's national security, but also for the whole world. Hence, this paper is an attempt to elucidate the growing military relations between Pakistan and China, in the contemporary times, and the reasons for the deliberate shift away from the US. It will also attempt to evaluate the implications for India.

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY EXPENDITURE SINCE 2009

Pakistan's military has been one of the most dominating forces in the dynamics of the country.⁶ Among the three Services, it is the Pakistan Army that has a major role in the policy and budget formulation, and it consumes a major share of the budget. While the world military expenditure increased from \$1,531 billion in 2009 to \$1,822 billion in 2018, Pakistan's military spending, that ranked 20th in the world in 2018, saw a massive change of about 73 per cent, which is an increase of about \$6.13 billion from 2009.⁷ It was \$5.27 billion in 2009 and increased to \$11.4 billion, growing by about 11 per cent (the same as in 2017). Also, it is a known phenomenon that Pakistan always spends more on its security forces than the official estimates project.⁸ Such an elaborate expenditure is due to a number the factors, for instance, to counter the threat perceptions from India; for the global war on terror sponsored by

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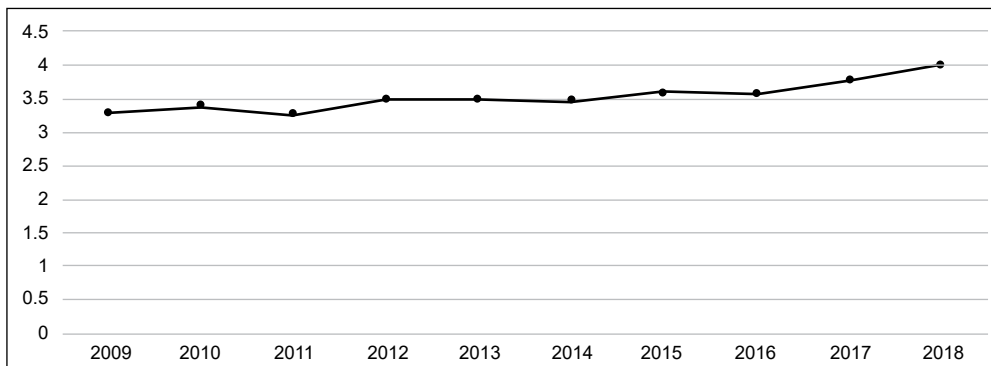
6. Shalini Chawla, "Pakistan Army: An Overview" in *Pakistan's Military and Its Strategy* (New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd., 2009), p. 4.

7. Nan Tian, Aude Fleurant, Alexandra Kuimova, Pieter D. Wezeman, and Siemon T. Wezeman. "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2018," SIPRI, April 2019, https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/fs_1904_milex_2018_0.pdf. Accessed on April 30, 2019.

8. Shane Mason, *Military Budgets in India and Pakistan: Trajectories, Priorities, and Risks*. (Report, Stimson Centre, 2016). http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/Stimson_Military-Budgets-India-Pakistan-Trajectories-Priorities-Risks.pdf. Accessed on May 5, 2019.

the USA, post 9/11 attacks; for the internal security of the country; and to counter militancy, and so on.

Fig 1: Pakistan's Military Spending as share of GDP (%), 2009-18



Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, April 2019.

From 2007 onwards until 2009, there was internal turmoil between the judiciary and the government, the US had accused the country of playing a 'double game' in Afghanistan, and it was facing pressure from the international monetary organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to decrease its defence budget in order to develop economically.⁹ This drastically brought down the share of government spending, from what was 26.1 per cent in 2004, to about 16.9 per cent in 2009, owing to the economic situation and international pressure. It increased at a slow rate, only to reach 18.5 per cent in 2018, despite the diminishing US military and foreign assistance from 2011 onwards. The diminishing aid from the US forced it to diversify its procurement of equipment. This has led to the share of the GDP to be only 4 per cent in 2018, which reveals slow growth from 3.3 per cent in 2009 and a massive fall from 6.7 per cent in 1992, mainly due to diversification and Pakistan's vested interests in using non-

9. Muhammad Nadeem, Mirza, Zafar Jaspal, and Ahmed Ijaz Malik. "Military Spending and Economic Growth in Pakistan," *Research Gate*, January 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292953327_Military_Spending_and_Economic_Growth_in_Pakistan. Accessed on May 5, 2019.

state actors in the region, especially against India and Afghanistan. Post 1992, the share has been decreasing because of the various sanctions that were imposed on Pakistan, like the Pressler Amendment by the US.

Since democratic politics has not been a smooth affair for Pakistan, the military plays a very important role in the international and domestic policy affairs as well. Moreover, as Dr Shalini Chawla has pointed out, the military has the responsibility to not only protect Pakistan, but also to protect its Islamic identity.¹⁰ The army has played a special role in emphasising its nationalism, which is to challenge a nation (India) which is many times bigger, and to somehow defeat it. The military takes over from the civilian leaders whenever it feels that this nationalism needs to be reiterated. Hence, the military's significant role justifies the budgetary amount it gets and is one of the prime reasons for the high military expenditure. The military significantly uses the budget to divert the national resources to fulfil its own interests of modernising the forces.

Another very important factor in Pakistan's increasing defence expenditure is the trend in the Indian military expenditure, which has increased approximately 29 per cent from \$38.72 billion in 2009 to \$66.6 billion in 2018. Nevertheless, the burden of India's military expenditure on the GDP is the lowest since the 1960s, that is, 2.4 per cent in 2018, yet it holds 3.7 per cent share of the total world expenditure¹¹. This has also led Pakistan to increase its expenditure as well.

CHANGING TRENDS IN PAKISTAN'S DEPENDENCE ON THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

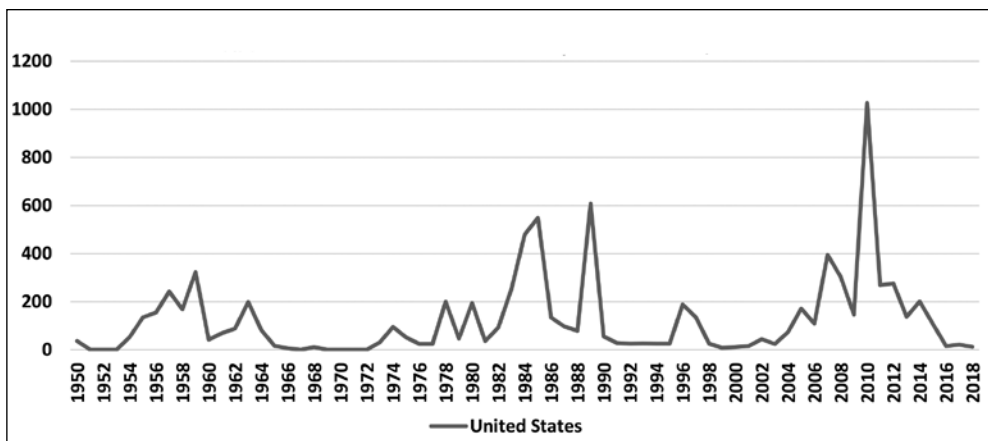
Immediately after independence, Pakistan aligned itself with the US and became the first non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) nation to get technologically advanced military aid. The US aid enabled Pakistan to revamp and restructure its military that followed British conventions and traditions. In the time period from 1950 till 2018, Pakistan received

10. Chawla, n. 6, p. 109.

11. Tian, et.al., n. 7, p. 2.

arms worth about \$8.51 billion (Fig 2) from the United States, though not without a break in between, as the US had not provided any foreign military funds to supply weapons to Pakistan for several years during this time period.

Fig 2: United States Arms Export to Pakistan (in million \$), 1950-2018



Source: "Trend Indicator Values of Arms Exports to Pakistan, 1950-2018", SIPRI Database 2018

Pakistan's strategic dependence has been more on military aid than economic aid from the US. The military support from the US (that was related to the US' geo-strategic interests) has helped the army in Pakistan to emerge as a premium fighting force.¹² As elaborated by Dr Shalini Chawla, Pakistan's alliance with the US can be briefly categorised into three phases or periods:¹³

- First, the period of the 1950s, when Pakistan joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). The alliance was drawn up by the US' commercial interests. Pakistan's adjoining the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz, made it easy for the US to access energy resources and monitor the Soviets' and China's expansion.

12. Ahmed Waqas Waheed, "Pakistan's Dependence and US Patronage: The Politics of 'Limited Influence'," *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 1, April 1, 2017, pp.69-94. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2347797016689220>. Accessed on May 2, 2019.

13. Chawla, n. 6, pp. 35-36.

- Second, the period of alliance in the 1980s, due to the invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union, to support the Communist government, against the constant insurgency in the region. Hence, to counter this, the US led operations in Afghanistan that were coordinated and carried out from Pakistan, in return for the US ignoring the development of nuclear capability by Pakistan.
- Third, with the 9/11 attacks on the American soil in 2001, the US led an initiative of the Global War on Terror (GWoT) and made Pakistan the frontline state in tackling its raids in Afghanistan that were to decimate the Taliban.

During the alliance years, the US funded the Pakistanis heavily and, at the same time, the Pakistanis received mostly “second-hand”¹⁴ equipment for strengthening their military (Refer Table 1).

Table 1: Transfer of Major Arms to Pakistan From United States

During First Stage of Alliance (1950-early 1960s)			
Name Of Weapon	Weapon Description	No. Ordered	Year of Delivery
M- 36 Jackson	Tank	25	1958
M-4 Sherman	Tank	100	1950
F-86 F Sabre	Fighter Aircraft	80	1956-58
AIM-9B Sidewinder	SRAAM	500	1959-63
Canberra B-57 B	Bomber Aircraft	26	1959
F-104A Starfighter	Fighter Aircraft	12	1961-62
C-130B Hercules	Transport Aircraft	4	1963
Tench (Pakistani designation Ghazi)	Submarine	1	1964
During Second Stage of Alliance (1980s)			
Mk-46	ASW Torpedo	100	1978-80
Gearing FRAM-1 (Pakistani designation Tariq)	Destroyer	6	1978-83
F-16A	FGA Aircraft	40 & 14	1983-85 & 2005-08
AH-1S Cobra	Combat Helicopter	20	1984-86
RGM-84 Harpoon	Anti-Ship Missile	20	1987-88

14. “Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders Made for 1950 to 2018”, SIPRI Arms Transfer Database 2018. Accessed on April 30, 2019.

M-109A1 155 MM	Self-Propelled Gun	52	1988-89
Brooke (Pakistani designation Badr)	Frigate	4	1988-89
Garcia (Pakistani designation Saif)	Frigate	4	1988-89

During Third Stage of Alliance (post 2001)			
M-113/ M-113 A2/ M-113 A3	APC	1,050	2000-15
Paveway	Guided Bomb	100	2002
AH-1F Cobra	Combat Helicopter	12	2007
P-3 CUP Orion	Anti-Submarine Warfare Aircraft	7	2007-12
Mi-8 MT/ Mi-17	Transport	10 (6 on 5-year lease)	2009
F-16C Block-50/52	FGA Aircraft	18	2010
JDAM	Guided Bomb	500	2010-11
AIM-120 C AMRAAM	BVRAAM	500	2010-14
Perry	Frigate	1	2011
APG-68	Combat Aircraft Radar	35	2012-14
Scan Eagle	UAV	15	2015

Source: Author's compilation of data from SIPRI Arms Transfer Database 2018.

The US maintained relations with Pakistan for its own goals in South Asia such as curbing Soviet expansion and fighting terrorism. The Pakistanis maintained them for financial assistance and to have a powerful ally by their side in order to deter India. The largest arms export worth \$1.02 billion was given to Pakistan in 2010 to improve the counter-insurgency capabilities required to deal with the militants on the borders with Afghanistan¹⁵. However, the US had been wary about the potential nuclear capability of Pakistan and, hence, imposed sanctions on it in the 1990s. Before this, the US had restricted aid to Pakistan immediately after the end of the two wars in 1965 and 1971 with India. These sanctions forced Pakistan to constantly

15. Susan Cornwell, "Factbox: U.S. Has Allocated \$20 Billion for Pakistan," Reuters, April 21, 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-usa-aid-factbox/factbox-u-s-has-allocated-20-billion-for-pakistan-idUSTRE73K7F420110421>. Accessed on April 30, 2019.

look towards other countries for modernisation and that was when China stepped in as a substitute. The US, in the 21st century, has never been able to (except in 2010) exceed the Chinese aid.

The US is concerned about the double game that Pakistan is playing in Afghanistan since it believes that it is quietly sponsoring the extremist groups from its territories to rebel against the US forces in Afghanistan, while it enjoys the lavish military aid given to it because of the war on terror.¹⁶ The US, post 2010, has concerns about Pakistan's incapability in dealing with extremists groups like the Haqqani and Taliban, and providing safe havens to extremist leaders like Osama bin Laden, Masood Azhar, etc. in its territory. After the raids conducted by the US in Pakistan in May 2011 and the May 2016 drone strikes, it was proved necessary for the US to revisit the military aid in view of the constant encouragement by Pakistan to the extremists.¹⁷ Significantly, in 2016, the relations deteriorated further when the US asked Pakistan to pay \$700 million for the F-16 Block-52 from its own national funds rather than the amount coming out of the Foreign Military Fund (FMF). This forced Pakistan to consider the offer made by Jordan to provide an older version of the aircraft¹⁸.

Since 2009, the US has reduced aid to Pakistan, from what was \$6.92 billion between Financial Year (FY) 2002-13, to only \$23 million in 2018.¹⁹ With the new National Defence Authorisation Act for FY 2019, aid has been slashed down to \$150 million, a significant reduction from the \$700 million that the Pakistani government was authorised through the Coalition Support Fund

16. Mirza, et al., n. 9.

17. Vanda Felbab Brown, "Why Pakistan Supports Terrorist Groups, and Why the US Finds It so Hard to Induce Change," Brookings, January 5, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/05/why-pakistan-supports-terrorist-groups-and-why-the-us-finds-it-so-hard-to-induce-change/>. Accessed on May 7, 2019.

18. Franz Stefan Gady, "US-Pakistan F-16 Deal Is Dead: Islamabad Mulling Jordan F-16 Fighter Jets Instead," *The Diplomat*, June 15, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/us-pakistan-f-16-deal-is-dead-islamabad-mulling-jordan-f-16-fighter-jets-instead/>. Accessed on May 7, 2019.

19. "U.S. Direct Overt U.S. Aid Appropriations for and Military Reimbursements to Pakistan", FY2002-FY2020, Federation of American Scientists Rept. March 12, 2019. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/pakaid.pdf>. Accessed May 7, 2019.

Most of the funds under FMF and CSF, meant for counter-insurgency activities and curbing drug trafficking, etc., were significantly diverted to procure combat weapons. Pakistan spent the money for other purposes, not aligned to the interests of the US, which forced the US to review its aid to Pakistan.

(CSF), in 2018.²⁰ President Trump, in one of his first tweets of 2018, accused Pakistan of lies and deceit, and stated that the US had been foolish to have given Pakistan \$33 billion in the last 15 years, and also went ahead to suspend about \$255 million in military aid to Pakistan till it took action against the terrorist outfits operating in the country.²¹ The two countries have, in the recent past, had fewer joint military drills and training, and only one ship took part in the Aman 2019 multinational naval exercise hosted in February 2019 by Pakistan.

Apart from this, the growing China-Pakistan nexus has also been a major factor. It had raised concerns over the nuclear capabilities that Pakistan was developing with Chinese assistance, especially at Chashma. The subsequent nuclear tests in 1998 created a rift in their relations and forced the US to impose sanctions on Pakistan. The US was apprehensive over the supply of the M-11 from China and sceptical about providing complex and technically advanced weaponry to Pakistan since it could give the Chinese access to it. For instance, in the crash of the Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk in 2011, it is believed that Pakistan allowed Chinese technicians access to the crash site.²² Another case is that of the Tomahawk missiles that landed in 1998 and were reverse engineered by them to produce the Babur cruise missile. What is also necessary to question is: what exactly are the funds being used for by Pakistan? Most of the funds under FMF and

20. "Congress Passes National Defence Authorisation Act 2019 Capping U.S. Aid to Pakistan to \$150 Million," *The Hindu*, August 2, 2018, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/congress-passes-national-defence-authorisation-act-2019-capping-us-aid-to-pakistan-to-150-million/article24578674.ece>. Accessed on May 7, 2019.

21. Sareen, n. 4, p. 2.

22. Mark Mazzetti, "U.S. Aides Believe China Examined Stealth Copter," *The New York Times*, August 15, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/15/world/asia/15copter.html>. Accessed on May 8, 2019.

CSF, meant for counter-insurgency activities and curbing drug trafficking, etc., were significantly diverted to procure combat weapons.²³ Pakistan spent the money for other purposes, not aligned to the interests of the US, which forced the US to review its aid to Pakistan.

Perceptions about the aid have changed in Pakistan too. It accused the US of helping the country only when its own interests were at stake. Apart from this, it didn't care about the Pakistanis. According to Pakistan's own internal calculations, US aid has comprised less than one per cent of the country's budget and can be substituted from other sources.²⁴ Even after the remarks by President Trump, Pakistan appeared unconcerned since it had diversified, and could survive with aid from other sources. It claims that nations like China, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Russia have readily agreed to come to its assistance, whenever required ²⁵. Compared to the US, the Chinese are less interfering in internal matters, and despite Chinese weapons being of lower quality than US weapons, they are easily available, on relaxed repayment terms and at cheaper rates²⁶. China has always come to the aid of the Pakistanis whenever the US has tightened the strings of its military aid.

The Pakistanis are also miffed with the United States because of the latter's growing strategic partnership with India. They feel it is difficult to trust a nation that allies with the enemy and, thus, look up to China for joint development of equipment and technology transfers. Pakistan has

Due to the highly transactional relations between the US and Pakistan, it was necessary for Pakistan to have partnerships with other countries and, specifically, when it was facing sanctions from the West. Such sanctions proved that the US could not be a trusted ally and security guarantor.

23. Hussain Nadim, "Neither Friend nor Foe: Pakistan," Lowy Institute, September 28, 2017, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/documents/Nadim - Pakistan, the United States and the war in Afghanistan_WEB.pdf. Accessed on April 24, 2019.

24. Sareen, n. 4, p. 2

25. Ibid., p. 2.

26. Chawla, n. 6.

grown closer to China post the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2008, COMCASA (Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement) and is worried about the arms that the US is providing to India, such as the advanced AH-64E(I) Apache Guardian combat helicopters, the first of which was delivered on May 10, 2019; and the CBU-97 SFW guided bomb, RGM-84L Harpoon-2 anti-ship missile for its Jaguar fleet, etc.²⁷ This has led Pakistan to look for other options from where it can procure arms, and consider diversification plans.

DIVERSIFICATION OF ARMS IMPORTS FOR PAKISTAN

Due to the highly transactional relations between the US and Pakistan, it was necessary for Pakistan to have partnerships with other countries and, specifically, when it was facing sanctions from the West. Such sanctions proved that the US could not be a trusted ally and security guarantor, primarily when it was also aiding India. Hence, one can note from the statistical trends that the US and UK were the only two prime exporters of arms to Pakistan, immediately after it gained independence, and in the 1950s. The 1960s saw China, Germany, France, Jordan and Indonesia coming in, and also the Soviet Union provided it arms at the end of the decade, but stopped its exports shortly after that. In the 1970s, after the war with India, the exports from the US and UK went down to zero, and China and France took the lead. The 1970s also brought exports from Sweden (1974) and Italy (1975), with US arms picking up slightly because of their growing interests. The 1980s were crucial as exports from Switzerland, the US, China and France were used to modernise, and to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan.

The 1990s saw sanctions from the US, and China significantly increasing its arms exports, with French exports, on the other hand, diminishing. This decade saw the Russians exporting arms, with Ukraine, North Korea and Netherlands supporting with their arms. The first decade of the 21st century, saw a significant amount of exports from China (which overtook

27. n.14.

the US in arms exports), but also a significant rise in exports from the US, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Pakistan started importing from Italy, France (heavily), Ukraine, Sweden, Switzerland and found new partners in Libya and Turkey, which started to build strategic partnerships with Pakistan.

Post 2009, US arms exports reduced significantly, except in 2010. This decade saw Chinese exports reaching new heights, making it a security guarantor, with France reducing exports, in line with Switzerland and Sweden. In the same time period, the UAE and Turkey maintained some exports and Russia had also been significantly picking up with its exports, which had a strong implication for India. By analysing the statistical data, one can conclude that the following top eight countries in arms exports: China, with exports are worth \$15.44 billion; the US, with arms exports worth \$8.51 billion; France is third, with exports worth \$4.28 billion; fourth is the UK, whose exports are worth \$2.22 billion; Ukraine ranks fifth with exports valued at \$1.63 billion; Switzerland is sixth, with exports worth \$895 million; Italy, seventh, has arms exports valued at \$743 million; and, finally, Russia, with arms exports worth \$693 million.

It is evident that exports of arms from China have been increasing even as those from USA have been reducing. France, which is third, has significantly maintained the track record of high exports of arms in one year and, subsequently, reducing the exports in another year. What it reveals is that nations like Italy and Russia have picked up arms exports, which will, going by the trends, obviously see an increase in the future.

**Table 2: Pakistan's Diversified Military Cooperation with Major Countries
(as of May 2019)**

Country	Total Military Aid (1950-2018)	Major Arms Exported (1950-2018)	Other Military Cooperation (deals/transfers/training/exercises/joint operations)
FRANCE	\$4.28 billion	3 Daphne Class submarines, E-14 550 mm torpedo, L 3 550 mm torpedo, Mirage-3E, Mirage-5, R-530 BVRAAM, R-550 Magic-1 SRAAM, 2 Agosta 90B and 1 Agosta-90B MEMSA submarines, SA-316B Alouette-3 helicopters (second-hand), AS-3350/AS-550 Fennec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$200 million deal to modernise submarines at Pakistani Naval Dockyard. • Transfer of technology to develop Agosta submarines at KS&EW. • Took part with Pakistan in joint air and naval exercise, Mission Agapanthe, in 2006 and in, AMAN 2019, in February. • Deal to supply 'civil nuclear technology' in 2009.
UK	\$2.22 billion	O Class (second-hand), EWP, Battle and County destroyers, Leander and Amazon frigates, Sea Fury and Attacker fighter aircraft, Sea King HAS-1 ASW, SA-316B Alouette-3 and Sea King/Commando helicopters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Took part in AMAN 2019. • Pakistan took part in an international military drill in 2018 called Pace Sticking Competition, held in the UK.

Country	Total Military Aid (1950-2018)	Major Arms Exported (1950-2018)	Other Military Cooperation (deals/transfers/training/exercises/joint operations)
ITALY	\$743 million	MG-110 Midget submarines, A244 324 mm ASW Torpedo, Grifo combat aircraft radars, Falco UAV, Aspide BVRAAM/SAM, M-109 A1 155 mm self-propelled guns (second-hand), AW 139 helicopters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2013, signed Strategic Engagement Plan. • Held meetings on side lines of Pakistan-Italy Joint Committee on Defence Systems • Many agreements between Pakistan Ordnance Factory and Italian defence companies. • Took part in AMAN 2019 and on the sidelines of Anadolu Ankasi air exercises respectively with Pakistan in 2019.
RUSSIA	\$693 million	Mi-8/Mi-17 transport helicopters, RD-33 Turbofan for JF-17 Thunders, 2 AK-630 30mm naval guns, 4 Mi-35 'Hind E' combat helicopters (possibly second-hand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan took part in Russian Army War Games in 2015 and in Master of Air Defence Battle in August 2015. • Held joint exercises called "Friendship" since 2016. • Russia took part in AMAN 2019 naval exercise.

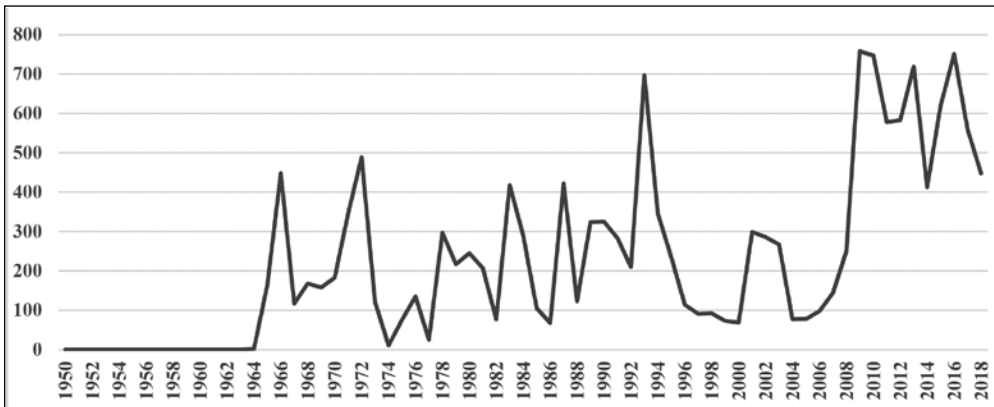
Country	Total Military Aid (1950-2018)	Major Arms Exported (1950-2018)	Other Military Cooperation (deals/transfers/training/exercises/joint operations)
TURKEY	\$259 million	Panther 155 mm towed gun, 4 MilGem frigates, T-37 B trainer aircraft, ASELPOD aircraft EO system, A-129C Mangusta combat helicopter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both agreed to modernise the F-16s fleet of the PAF. • Technology transfer from Turkey to develop 2 MilGem frigates at KS&EW • Deal to together develop UAVs for their forces and also assistance in mid-life upgradation of 1 Agosta-90B submarine • Took part in trilateral military drill, Partnership Shield 2019 with Pakistan and Uzbekistan • Took part with Pakistan Navy in Turgutreis-III in 2019, in AMAN 2019 naval exercise, and in May 2019 with Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk exercise.

Source: Author's compilation of data from SIPRI Arms Database 2018 and news reports available from various sources.

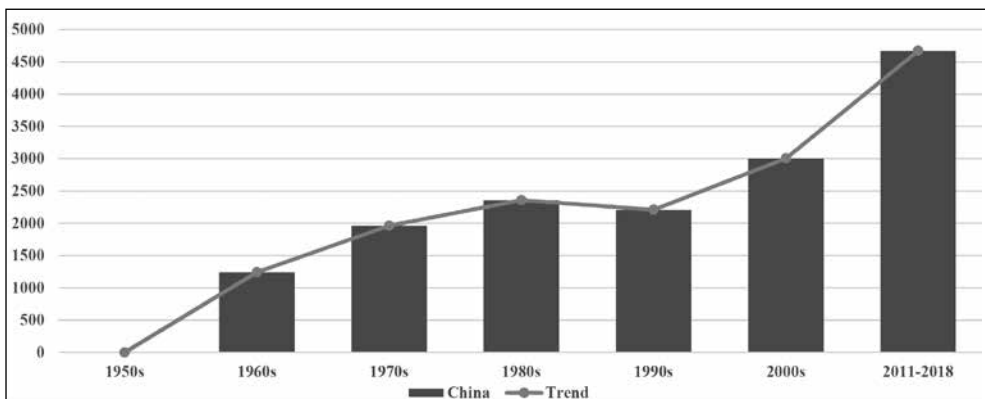
PAKISTAN'S MILITARY DEPENDENCE ON CHINA

China is one of the closest allies that Pakistan has currently and their relations have stood through thick and thin. Gen Xiong Guangkai rightly said that "Pakistan is China's Israel".²⁸ China is currently the largest exporter of arms to Pakistan, with arms worth \$15.44 billion. It has helped Pakistan to domestically produce weapons by transferring technology, and has invested heavily in Pakistan with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and major developmental projects that can be used by the militaries of both countries for their strategic interests.

28. Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* (London; United Kingdom: Hurst & Company, 2015).

Fig 3: China's Arm's Exports to Pakistan (in million \$), 1950-2018

Source: "Trend Indicator Values of Arms Exports to Pakistan, 1950-2018", SIPRI Database 2018.

Fig 4: China's Arms Export per Decade to Pakistan (in million \$), 1950-2018

Source: "Trend Indicator Values of Arms Exports to Pakistan, 1950-2018", SIPRI Database 2018.

In 1950, the two countries formally began their relations that were born out of shared enmity with India: they resolved the boundary issues in 1963, and Pakistan ceded the Shaksgam Valley to China. The military relations were established in 1964 and Pakistan received the first set of arms exports worth \$2 million the same year. In 1965, immediately after the sanctions were imposed by the West, China stepped in to support Pakistan with its weapons in 1965 (worth \$168 million) and 1966 (worth \$448 million), indicating

The 21st century saw China make significant strides in assistance that allowed it to overtake the US and made it Pakistan's most reliable ally. China exported a total of \$3.004 billion worth of weapons. Pakistan shifted completely to China after the global financial crisis in 2007-08 that took the US economy into a recession.

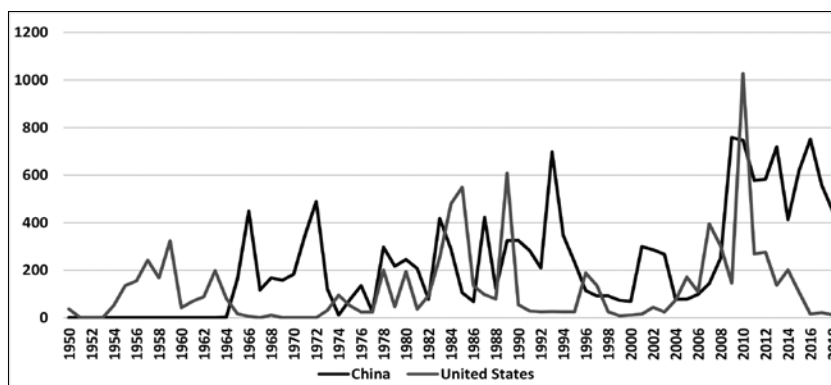
military cooperation that would grow in the future. In the 1960s, Pakistan received arms worth \$1.2 billion and in the 1970s, it received arms worth \$1.96 billion. The 1980s saw a significant increase to \$2.35 billion primarily because of the invasion of Afghanistan, and the rapprochement of China with the USA that brought in aid and protection.²⁹

In the 1990s, Pakistan relied comparatively more on China than the US (Fig. 5), which, by then, had started losing its importance for the country. China in total provided arms

worth \$2.2 billion to satisfy Pakistan's requirements primarily because of two significant developments: (i) Pakistan started developing nuclear technology with Chinese assistance and conducted its first nuclear test in 1998; (ii) Pakistan had a limited war with India in 1999 in Kargil. Pakistan also signed agreements with China to jointly produce some military equipment (Table 4). The 21st century saw China make significant strides in assistance that allowed it to overtake the US and made it Pakistan's most reliable ally. China exported a total of \$3.004 billion worth of weapons. Pakistan shifted completely to China after the global financial crisis in 2007-08 that took the US economy into a recession. Post 2010, China has provided arms worth \$4.6 billion, which is an all-time high. The China-Pakistan alliance broadened and went beyond a military and strategic partnership with the implementation of the CPEC, which is worth \$62 billion.³⁰

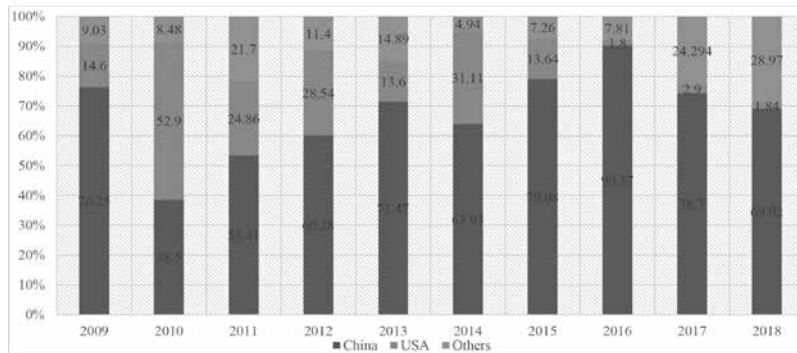
29. Ibid.

30. Shalini Chawla, "Has The Chinese Assistance Made Pakistan Secure?" *Defence and Diplomacy In Pursuit of National Security*, vol. 7, no. 4, July-September 2018, p. 19.

Fig 5: US and China's Arm's Exports to Pakistan (in million \$), 1950-2018

Source: "Trend Indicator Values of Arms Exports to Pakistan, 1950-2018", SIPRI Database 2018.

Pakistan's per centage share of exports in arms post 2009, clearly indicates that China has the highest per centage share with 69.02 per cent (Fig. 6). The share of the US has fallen consistently from 14.6 per cent in 2009 to only 1.84 per cent in 2018, showing the distrust that the Americans have about Pakistan. Pakistan, itself has lowered its procurement of weapons from the US since they are expensive and the repair work on the equipment, especially the F-16s, has to be done outside the country. The US has not transferred technology to Pakistan to enable it to undertake repairs on its own. Hence, the Pakistanis have shifted to China. Moreover, Pakistan had found in China an alliance that was not transactional, unlike with the US. The Chinese military aid subsequently rose and fulfilled Pakistan's dreams of modernisation and power against India.

Fig 6: Per centage Share of Export of Arms to Pakistan (2009-18)

Source: "Trend Indicator Values of Arms Exports to Pakistan, 1950-2018", SIPRI Database 2018.

Chinese exports rose because of the technology transfers and licences they provided to Pakistan to domestically produce arms, ammunition and major conventional weapons like the JF-17 Thunder, Al-Khalid tank, etc. This made Pakistan rely more on China. However, the shift from the US towards China has not been very beneficial, as now, with minimal social connections between the Chinese and Pakistani societies, the population in Pakistan knows little about the Chinese and their intentions, and in such a scenario, the cooperation between the two nations has almost made Pakistan into, what experts term, a 'vassal state' of China, with the latter having a great amount of influence in the security matters, foreign and domestic politics as well as economic matters of Pakistan. Pakistan's growing debt burden towards China has forced it to revisit some of its available options and compelled it to reduce the loans that it was granted, in view of its repayment capacity.

Table 3: Transfer of Major Arms to Pakistan from China (2000-18)

Name of Weapon	Weapon Category	Quantity Ordered	Year of Delivery
Red Arrow-8 (Baktar Shikan)	Anti-tank missile	Not specified (24350 delivered)	1990-2018
F-7 MG	Fighter aircraft	57	2001-2003
K-8 Karakorum-8	Trainer/Combat aircraft	33	2001-2010

Name of Weapon	Weapon Category	Quantity Ordered	Year of Delivery
Type-90-2M/MBT-2000 (Al-Khalid versions)	Tank	530 (340 delivered)	2001-2018
C-802/CSS-N-8	Anti-ship missile	250 (+80 for 6 Type-041 submarines)	2006-2017 (more in future)
JF-17 Thunder/FC-1 (Block-1,2,3 versions)	FGA aircraft	150	2007-2020
AS 565S Panther (Z-9EC Version)	ASW helicopter	6	2009-2010
F-22 (Zulfiqar class)	Frigate	4	2009-2013
PL-12/SD-10	BVRAAM	600 (425 delivered)	2010-2018
LS-3	Guided bomb	750 (650 delivered)	2010-2018
ZDK-03 (designated KE-03)	AEW&C aircraft	4	2011-2014
CM-400AKG	Anti-ship missile	50	2012-2016
Azmat	Corvette	4	2012-2017
CH-3	UAV/UCAV	20	2013-2016
WZ-10	Combat helicopter	3	2015
Wing Loong-1	UAV/UCAV	5	2015
Type-041/Yuan (S-20 version)	Submarine	8	2022-2028 (Planned)
Yu-4 533 mm	AS Torpedo	100 (for 6 Type-041 submarines)	Not Specified
Type-054A/Jiangkai-2	Frigate	4 (option on 2 more)	Not Specified (work on 1 out of 4 started in Jan 2019)

Source: "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders Made for 2000 to 2018", SIPRI Arms Transfer Database 2018.

ANALYSING MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA-PAKISTAN

Table 3 shows the advanced weaponry systems that Pakistan has received from China. These weapons are enhancing the capability of Pakistan by equipping it with technology that is not openly exported among countries. Keeping in mind the escalation of tensions from time to time between India and Pakistan, such weapons are upgrading the strike capability of Pakistan, for instance, the JF-17 Thunders that Pakistan deployed in the aerial dogfight

The induction of 8 Yuan class submarines (a few to be built in Pakistan) and 4 Type-054AP frigates (one of which is already under construction), is believed to strengthen the Pakistan Navy to carry out its surveillance activities in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

with India on February 27, 2019, a day after India had conducted the Balakot air strikes on the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) camps in Pakistan. It is also importing the Wing Loong 1 armed drones for improving its aerial strike capability. Such equipment will enable it to execute a full-scale conventional war and try to outsmart the Indian forces by achieving superiority. Advanced systems like the Al-Khalid II tanks (production started in November 2017), LY-80 (acquisition reported in August 2017) and Babur III sub-sonic cruise missiles would enable its forces to undertake defensive and counter-offensive

operations. Tensions with India have made it necessary for Pakistan to be ever ready and well-equipped. Incidentally, the induction of 8 Yuan class submarines (a few to be built in Pakistan) and 4 Type-054AP frigates (one of which is already under construction), is believed to strengthen the Pakistan Navy to carry out its surveillance activities in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Also, it is the Chinese interests in Gwadar and Jiwhani ports, and developing them for commercial use, that are important to note. The strategic positions of these ports point to their possibility that they will be turned into naval bases for China, given the amount of money it has been pouring in for investments.³¹ Development of these ports and transfer of technology will enhance Pakistan's capability for surveillance, and also help China overcome its Malacca dilemma. These ports will also help Pakistan decongest its bases at Karachi and Ormara and relocate these away from the Indian territory from where they can carry out secret operations, with the Chinese assistance. In 2017, China handed over two maritime patrol vessels to Pakistan for

31. Maj Gen RPS Bhadauria, VSM (Retd.) (Distinguished Fellow, United Services Institution of India, New Delhi), in discussion with the author, May 16, 2019.

joint patrolling rounds along the sea route of the CPEC.³² Hence, the inflow of weapons has been to secure Chinese interests in the region that are aligned with those of Pakistan. Pakistan has not only got the maximum types of arms that are produced in China, but has also developed its own domestic defence industries to produce weapons with Chinese assistance. The Pakistani forces today have a greater number of 'purely Chinese manufactured' or 'manufactured with assistance' equipment forming the backbone of their military arsenal.

In its desire for surplus equipment, Pakistan has repeatedly emphasised the need to boost its domestic manufacturing capability (as mentioned earlier). China has helped Pakistan with almost all its big and small needs (Table 4), despite facing sanctions from the US. China helped Pakistan to develop major production units domestically to facilitate growth in arms, like the Aircraft Manufacturing Factory that manufactured the Karakorum-8 jet trainer; and National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation, etc. China has transferred technology for the Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS&EW) to build naval ships, especially frigates, destroyers and submarines, has assisted in establishing defence production units, often free of cost, for example, Heavy Industries Taxila, which manufactures the Al-Khalid and Al-Zarrar tanks, etc., and has also assisted in developing the Heavy Mechanical Complex Limited. Pakistan has shown considerable interest in procuring the J-31, the fifth generation stealth aircraft from China.

A very important part of the project is the existing Karakorum Highway (KKH). This highway has been advantageous to both countries and they have used it for transshipment of arms. China has exported arms via this region, enhancing its own capabilities to be able to station its forces along the Indian border. Pakistan has also used the same corridor to smuggle some of the unexploded American missiles for reverse engineering.

32. Shalini Chawla, "China-Pakistan Relations: Understanding The Strategic Alliance," in *Asian Defence Review 2017* (New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2017), pp. 1-25.

Pakistan has for a very long time been the hub for nuclear proliferation in the region and has also proliferated the technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea through the illicit network of AQ Khan.

The CPEC will enhance the infrastructure and economic capabilities for Pakistan. Other positive outcomes such as generation of job opportunities and business prospects are hoped for. A very important part of the project is the existing Karakorum Highway (KKH). This highway has been advantageous to both countries and they have used it for transshipment of arms. China has exported arms via this region, enhancing its own capabilities to be able to station its forces along the Indian border. Pakistan has also used the same corridor to smuggle some of the unexploded American missiles for reverse engineering through this highway. The KKH facilitates movement of military supplies for immediate use and can see heavy deployment of troops and armaments in case a war occurs, involving both countries with India.³³

Table 4: Pakistan's Major Domestically Manufactured Defence Products as of May 2019 (with Chinese assistance)

Pakistan Ordnance Factory		
Name of Weapon	Weapon Category	Exporting Regions or Nations
Machine Gun MG 3 (MG1A3)	Infantry Weapon	Exports to countries in Asia, Far East, Africa, Middle East, North America, the Central Asian States and Europe.
Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun 12.7MM Type 54	Infantry Weapon	
Bomb HE AC 500 Lbs	Aircraft and anti-aircraft ammunition	
Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra		
JF-17 Thunders (Block 1,2,3)	Fighter Aircraft	JF-17s exported to Nigeria and
Karakorum-8 (K-8)	Basic-cum-Advance Jet Trainer	Myanmar; K-8 exported to Angola, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Egypt, Ghana, Myanmar, etc.
MFI-17 Mushak	Basic Trainer Aircraft	Mushaks exported to Nigeria, Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, etc.

33. Bhadauria, n. 31

Heavy Industries Taxila		
Al-Khalid	Tank	Al-Khalid exported to Morocco, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka; Talha and its variants (including Saad) exported to Iraq
Al-Zarrar	Tank	
Saad and Talha	APC	
Global Industrial & Defence Solutions, Rawalpindi		
Shahpar, UQAB, Huma, Scout Mini	UAV/ Tactical UAV System	Anza missiles exported to Malaysia. Shahpar exported to Saudi Arabia; UAE, Indonesia, Egypt, etc. have shown interest in UQAB; Bakhtar Shikan exported to Bangladesh and Malaysia
Anza Mk-II	Surface-to-Air Guided Missile	
Bakhtar Shikan (HJ-8 :- Chinese variant)	Anti-Tank guided Missile System	
Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works		
F-22 P (PNS Aslat)	Frigate (Zulfiqar class)	Karachi shipyard has not exported any major naval weaponry as of now to other nations and is manufacturing ships, primarily operated by the Pakistan Navy.
Agosta 90B (PNS <i>Hamza & Saad</i>)	Submarine (developed with France)	
Jalalat II Class (PNS <i>Jalalat & Shujaat</i>)	Missile Boat	

Source: Author's compilation of data from the Ministry of Defence Production, Government of Pakistan.

China's Assistance to Nuclear and Missile Sector of Pakistan

Pakistan, led by Dr. AQ Khan, has taken great Chinese help to develop the nuclear competence to secure its territories. It was rightly opined by nuclear proliferation analyst Gary Milhollin, that if one removes the Chinese assistance from Pakistan's nuclear programme, there would not be one at all.³⁴ After the defeat in the 1971 War, it became essential for Pakistan to attain nuclear ability, especially when India first conducted its nuclear test in 1974 and later in 1998. The US was never in favour of Pakistan's nuclear pursuits, yet during their partnership years, it ignored this aspect because of its own national interests.

Pakistani scientists visited China a number of times to understand the technology and China did not hesitate in assisting and transferring technology. Pakistan's main objectives were to outsmart the Indian superiority, to deter

34. Ibid.

Most of these joint exercises with China are primarily under the Western Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Exercises in Chengdu are focussed on high altitude operations, with special emphasis on the use of space-based reconnaissance. With these exercises, both militaries have achieved a high degree of inter-operability, joint planning and intelligence sharing.

a war, and secure its territory. China was instrumental in providing Pakistan with the know-how of the ways in which it could develop, the bombs including allowing Pakistani scientists in a nuclear test in Lop Nur in 1983. Second, it assisted them in developing their nuclear plants, especially at Chashma, Kahuta, Khushab, and now at Karachi (scheduled to be completed in 2021), and many more being developed under Chinese guidance ³⁵. Despite being a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), China continued to provide

Pakistan with warhead designs, highly enriched uranium, heavy water, ring magnets, assistance in developing a plutonium production reactor, etc.³⁶

China also assisted in manufacturing a number of systems, especially missiles, aircraft, ships and submarines that are capable of delivering nuclear warheads on the enemy. Most famously, China assisted in the ballistic missile category with the M-9, M-11 missiles, Hatf series (Abdali, Shaheen, Ghauri, Nasr, etc.) and in the cruise missile category with the Hatf-8 (Ra'ad) and the reverse engineered Tomahawk missile,³⁷ the Babur, that can be fired from all facilities. Pakistan recently tested the Babur-III in 2017 at an undisclosed location in the Indian Ocean. China has also supplied Pakistan with the Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM), and also agreed to supply the CM-302 anti-ship missile that can be delivered from the Type-054 A, equipped with modern weapons capable

35. V. N. Veda, "Evolution of Pakistan's Nuclear Programme," in *Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons*, New Delhi Papers: 3 (New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2012), pp. 1-15.

36. Ibid.

37. Shalini Chawla, "Nuclear Delivery Systems." in *Nuclear Pakistan* (New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2012), pp. 100-110.

of countering India.³⁸ Quite obviously, with such technology, China will try to keep India entangled in the South Asian region. On the other hand, Pakistan is elated and feeling secure despite the economic and social problems faced by it. Pakistan has for a very long time been the hub for nuclear proliferation in the region and has also proliferated the technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea through the illicit network of AQ Khan.

Military Training and Exercises

Apart from weapons trade and technology transfers, both nations' militaries have also engaged each other in various drills and military exercises to improve joint operational capability, and have had delegations of officers visiting other's country for training. For instance, both countries were involved in a joint air exercise in December 2018 called the Shaheen-VII, and in the Warrior VI special forces exercise from December 2018 to January 2019. Both took part in the Aman 2019 exercise in January-February, for which China sent two of its warships.³⁹ These exercises tremendously increased the cooperation between the two and their ability to carry out combat operations in case their assets are threatened in either's territory. Most of these joint exercises with China are primarily under the Western Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Exercises in Chengdu are focussed on high altitude operations, with special emphasis on the use of space-based reconnaissance. With these exercises, both militaries have achieved a high degree of inter-operability, joint planning and intelligence sharing.

Both countries have also been making joint efforts to manage militancy and terrorist activities. Chinese workers have been repeatedly targeted in Pakistan and are most vulnerable there. The Chinese are extremely concerned about the growing militancy in the region that can spill over to the volatile Xinjiang

38. "Game-changing Chinese Missile to Pakistan a 'Deterrent'," Anadolu Agency, January 12, 2019. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/game-changing-chinese-missile-to-pakistan-a-deterrent-/1362546>. Accessed on May 19, 2019.

39. Manu Pubby, "China Backs 'Iron Brother' Pakistan with Primary Weapons and Complex Exercises," *The Economic Times*, March 15, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-backs-iron-brother-pakistan-with-primary-weapons-and-complex-exercises/articleshow/68418192.cms>. Accessed on May 19, 2019.

province. Hence, to secure their assets, especially the CPEC, from any threat, both have together deployed armed forces, paramilitary forces and private security companies. Chinese private security companies have initiated a joint venture with Pakistan's domestic companies that are directly linked with the armed forces to protect their interests: the Chinese Overseas Security Group has a joint venture with a Pakistani private security company which has links with the Pakistan Navy.⁴⁰ In a first, the PLA and Pakistan's border police force have carried out a joint patrol along their shared border. While China has been patrolling its border since 2014, this is the first time that Pakistan joined such patrolling that has been taking place in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).⁴¹ The Pakistani armed forces have raised a Special Security Division for the CPEC consisting of 15,000 dedicated soldiers, including 9 army battalions and 6 wings the of civilian armed forces, commanded by a major general. China, as per reports in 2018, may also deploy its marine corps, which shall act as the principal force for protecting assets in the region.⁴²

Deploying such a force was necessary to protect China's geo-strategic interest which was entry into the warm waters of the Arabian Sea via Pakistan, as an alternative to the Malacca dilemma. China also perceives the alliance as an entry into the Muslim world, with development programmes and assistance. In view of the strategic interests of China, its dream to attain the status of a superpower in the region and be able to counter an emerging India and the existing superpower (the US), it will maintain a strategic partnership with Pakistan and try to entangle India in South Asia, while ringing alarm bells in Washington about their growing nexus.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

On the security front, the growing nexus creates the much debated, two-front

40. Saira H Basit, "CPEC Emboldens China and Pakistan's Joint Effort to Manage Militancy," *The Diplomat*, April 6, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/cpec-emboldens-china-and-pakistans-joint-effort-to-manage-militancy/>. Accessed on May 19, 2019.

41. Bhadauria, n. 31.

42. David Brewster, "Security Forces May Accompany China's Belt and Road Abroad," *The Maritime Executive*, November 30, 2018, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/security-forces-may-accompany-china-s-belt-and-road-abroad>. Accessed on May 19, 2019.

war dilemma, as both countries have strategic interests to overpower India and simultaneously command the nuclear capability to target any strategically important location in India. This becomes a security threat, making it necessary for India to modernise its armed forces rapidly in case of an emergency. This nexus has led to an increase in the arms race, with all three countries trying to modernise and be at par with each other. Pakistan's possession of the JF-17 Thunders and F-16s, its procurement of the Yuan (S-20 version) submarines and Type-054A frigates is building its ability for a second strike. This has led India to boost its production of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, capable of carrying the BrahMos missile, increase the process of procuring the medium multi-role combat aircraft and also develop its own fifth generation stealth aircraft, the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

With the CPEC, Chinese troops have a presence in POK, making it another concern, since it adds another issue to the Kashmir conundrum between India-Pakistan. Although China has claimed that Kashmir is a bilateral issue, its presence to safeguard its assets increases the threat of a military confrontation even more as, in the event of a war between India and Pakistan, if the Chinese assets are harmed, China could use its armed forces to protect its interests. Similarly Gwadar and Jiwani ports will be used for conducting surveillance activities and gathering intelligence on the Indian Navy and to counter Indian dominance in the Arabian Sea and IOR.

On the economic front, China is infrastructurally developing POK and entering Afghanistan with its development projects, specifically to exploit the resources, and outmanoeuvre India's efforts and block its entry into the Central Asian Republics for economic and strategic purposes, by developing roads and highways across the Shaksgam Valley and Gilgit-Baltistan, and also signing trade agreements suiting its own interests. India has to consider explore possible measures, apart from the strategic partnership with Iran, to counter this growing concern.

On the diplomatic front, the nexus has halted India's efforts to emerge as a regional power. China supports Pakistan's stance on Kashmir and shall continue to do so despite the irritants in the relationship. China has also

shielded Pakistan-based terrorist Hafeez Saeed and the 26/11 mastermind, Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi against the UN sanctions, despite removing its veto after a long time, which it had used against the banning of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. China had been also holding up the demand made by India to join the NSG. It went ahead to sign a defence agreement with Pakistan as soon as India sealed a deal on logistics exchange with the United States in 2016. India has to look into possible ways to counter such influence.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the shift in the relations and trust of Pakistan from the United States to China, which has benefitted Pakistan extensively, despite being supplied with cheap weapons in comparison to the quality arms from the US, has led to China's growing influence and leverage. This has made Pakistan almost a vassal state of China, influencing its politics and aiding it immensely to keep its interests at par with India. This, in turn, benefits China with the geo-strategic location that Pakistan is giving it access to. Keeping all of this in mind, it is necessary to note that arms trade and military cooperation between the two will be on a surge and the alliance will only grow stronger, much to the dismay of others, especially India and the US. Hence, it is necessary for India to strategically build up its options to overcome this nexus, and modernise and equip its armed forces with the latest technologies to counter the two-front war dilemma. It is also necessary for India to take up a greater economic role by offering economic assistance to other developing countries so as to grow as a credible partner in geo-politics. It is foreseeable that in the future, the arms trade and military expenditures are very likely to grow at a rapid scale in the South Asian region, yet it is important to note that a full-scale nuclear war is not an option for any nation and is unlikely, considering the destruction that would be caused and the economic backlash that the aftermath of a war would entail.