



Strategic Dimensions: CPEC's Influence on Pakistan's New Geo-economics Narrative

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ABSTRACT

The evolving landscape of international relations is increasingly defined by the fusion of geo-economics and geopolitics. This transformative shift is exemplified in the strategic partnership between Pakistan and China, where decades of Chinese economic, military, and technical support have reshaped traditional state relations. Their collaboration extends into infrastructure development and trade corridors, most notably the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), illustrating the convergence of economic cooperation and strategic alignment. This study explores the interplay of geo-economics and geopolitics, focusing on CPEC. It examines the primary economic impacts of CPEC on Pakistan, scrutinizing its effects on the nation's economy and trade relationships. It also examines the CPEC's influence on Pakistan's strategic positioning within the region, investigating shifts in regional alliances and rivalries. Additionally, it dissects the sociopolitical and cultural transformations incited by CPEC within Pakistan's borders. As China's role in shaping the regional security order expands, this research uncovers the utilization of geo-economic instruments to achieve geo-strategic objectives in a conflict-prone region. This study sheds light on the evolving geo-economic narrative of Pakistan and its profound implications, aligning seamlessly with the overarching theme of this research article.

Keywords: CPEC, Special economic zones (SEZ), Regional trade, Trade liberalization, Geopolitical Pivot

Introduction

In the annals of international geopolitics, few developments have captured the world's attention as distinctly as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI stands as a remarkable global endeavor aimed at fostering international cooperation and reaping mutual benefits in various domains, particularly trade and infrastructure development. This visionary concept, first articulated by China in 2013, aspires to extend the realms of prosperity across the vast expanse of Eurasia while resurrecting the historic Silk Road. The BRI encompasses a multifaceted approach, encompassing the construction of international economic corridors and ports, large-scale infrastructure projects, robust investment and financing mechanisms to support these endeavors, and a myriad of initiatives focused on enhancing connectivity among the nations traversing the BRI's expansive routes.

At the heart of this ambitious global undertaking lies a partnership that has redefined traditional state relations and exemplified the fusion of geo-economics and geopolitics – the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Born from decades of Chinese economic, military, and technical support, CPEC stands as a testament to the transformative potential of such collaborations. It transcends the boundaries of conventional economic projects, extending its influence into the realms of strategic alignment and regional reconfiguration.

The launch of the CPEC initiative in 2013 marked a qualitative shift in the relationship between China and Pakistan, which had already enjoyed a long and fruitful partnership spanning over five decades. What makes CPEC particularly significant is its sheer scale and scope. This \$62 billion

project encompasses the construction of roads, railways, and power plants over a 15-year period, threading its way through the heart of Pakistan. These developments are in addition to prior agreements between Pakistan and China in the fields of military cooperation, energy, and infrastructure development.

At the heart of CPEC's geostrategic importance is the port of Gwadar, a strategic jewel nestled on the shores of the Indian Ocean, at the gateway of the Persian Gulf. China was granted 40-year operation rights to Gwadar, a move that has the potential to reshape the region's maritime dynamics. Beijing's investment of \$1.62 billion in Gwadar is a testament to its strategic vision. This port will serve as the gateway for the CPEC, connecting it to Kashgar in western China. In the future, Gwadar may also become a transshipment hub for China's oil needs, circumventing the vulnerable Malacca Strait. Furthermore, Gwadar holds the key to China's land and maritime silk routes, linking it to Central Asia and beyond. While its primary purpose is commercial, the possibility of it evolving into a naval facility cannot be discounted, setting the stage for heightened competition in the Indian Ocean (Rakisits, 2015).

As China's role in shaping the regional security order expands, this research embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted dimensions of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. By scrutinizing the impact of CPEC through various theoretical lenses and rigorous research methodologies, this study aims to unravel the intricate dynamics that underlie this transformative initiative. It seeks to provide valuable insights into the evolving geo-economic narrative of Pakistan and its profound implications, aligning seamlessly with the overarching theme of this research article.

This article provides a deeper exploration of CPEC's economic, strategic, and sociopolitical impacts on Pakistan and the broader region, thereby shedding light on the evolving landscape of international relations defined by the fusion of geo-economics and geopolitics.

Literature Review

Sabena Siddique (2015), in the realm of global geopolitics, highlights the pivotal significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Acknowledging CPEC as a vital component of China's strategic vision, Siddique describes it as one of the "String of Pearls" projects strategically planned across Central, South, and Southeast Asia. CPEC emerges as a beacon of opportunity, promising substantial economic growth for Pakistan, offering employment prospects, and fostering trade opportunities. Moreover, it signifies China's pursuit of enhanced political and economic control in these regions. The geostrategic significance of CPEC cannot be overstated, given its potential to significantly reduce shipping times and reshape trade routes, making it a topic of paramount importance in contemporary geopolitics and international relations.

Zahid Anwar (2013), in the context of fostering connectivity among Asian nations, underscores the ongoing efforts to integrate the physical infrastructure of South and Central Asia. He highlights the strategic importance of Pakistan's geographical location, with its borders touching two of the world's most populous countries, China and India. This geographical proximity holds immense potential for regional economic development. An integral part of this infrastructural integration is the development of the Gwadar deep-sea port, situated on Pakistan's Arabian Sea

coast. Gwadar possesses the capability to provide Central Asia and Afghanistan with access to the Indian Ocean, opening avenues for the export of their abundant natural resources through southern routes. While Pakistan identified Gwadar as a port site in 1964, its transformation into a reality came to fruition when China invested in this deep-sea port project in 2001. This strategic collaboration holds significant implications for regional connectivity and trade, making it a noteworthy subject within the domain of geopolitics and international relations.

Khan (2015), in terms of China's overarching vision for CPEC, pointed out that the Vision 2025 document not only emphasizes regional connectivity through CPEC but also through similar arrangements with neighboring countries. President Xi's concept of a "China-Pakistan Community of Shared Destiny" for pursuing common interests through mutually beneficial partnerships has the potential to elevate Pak-China relations to a much higher level. While the concept of the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (PCEC) preceded the "China-Pakistan Community of Shared Destiny," their underlying spirit has remained consistent. For China, the PCEC aligns with its more extensive Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) initiative, further underscoring its significance, especially in the context of the development of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Kashgar.

Baig's (2022) examination of the sociocultural effects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) reveals a significant increase in cultural tourism within the region. As a consequence, there has been a visible expansion of touristic amenities, marking a notable shift from previous mountaineering-focused tourism to a more inclusive cultural tourism. Baig's findings indicate a complex relationship, with cultural conservation playing a partial mediating role. Notably, cultural tourism has a positive and substantial impact on the well-being of the host community, with cultural conservation serving as an intermediary in this process. This study provides valuable insights into the multifaceted repercussions of CPEC, extending its influence into the sociocultural domain, and contributes to our understanding of the transformative effects of this initiative.

Statement of problem

CPEC has been touted as a game-changer for Pakistan's economy, but its impact on the country's geo-economic narrative remains complex and multifaceted. This study examines how CPEC has influenced Pakistan's economic, strategic, and sociopolitical relations with China and other key regional actors, as well as its global positioning.

Research questions

1. What are the principal economic consequences of CPEC on Pakistan's economy and its trade relationships?
2. In what ways has CPEC influenced Pakistan's strategic positioning in the region and its diplomatic relations with neighboring countries?
3. How have the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics within Pakistan been transformed as a result of CPEC's implementation?

Objective of the study

- To comprehensively evaluate the primary economic implications of CPEC on Pakistan's economy and its trade relationships, including an examination of alterations in trade dynamics, infrastructure development, and economic growth resulting from CPEC investments.
- To conduct a thorough analysis of how CPEC has shaped Pakistan's strategic positioning within the region, with a specific focus on shifts in regional alliances, the transformation of diplomatic ties with neighboring countries, and its broader impact on the geopolitical landscape of South Asia.
- To explore in depth the sociopolitical and cultural transformations catalyzed by CPEC within Pakistan, encompassing an investigation into changes in governance structures, societal dynamics, and the far-reaching consequences of increased cultural tourism along the CPEC corridor.

Background

The vision for an economic route between China and Pakistan dates back to the early 2000s. In 2013, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang emphasized the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) during his visit to Pakistan. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Beijing in the same year and signed agreements worth \$18 billion for CPEC projects, including the construction of 200 kilometers of tunnels. In 2014, President Mamnoon Hussain visited China to discuss the plans for the corridor, and Prime Minister Sharif again visited China and signed 19 agreements worth over \$45.6 billion for energy and infrastructure projects along the CPEC. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in 2015, and during his visit, 51 agreements were signed worth \$46 billion, including the development of CPEC. The \$46 billion investment that China pledged to Pakistan under CPEC was impressive, exceeding all foreign direct investment that Pakistan had received in the past several years and being considerably more than all the aid that Pakistan had received from the US since 9/11.

CPEC, which is expected to be completed in 2030, is integrated with China's One Belt, One Road initiative. The implementation of CPEC projects has been divided into three phases: short-term (to be completed by 2017), mid-term (to be completed by 2025), and long-term (to be completed by 2030). The overall construction costs are estimated at \$46 billion. CPEC is a network of highways, railways, and pipelines to transport oil and gas. The first phase of CPEC includes development at Gwadar Port and the construction of an international airport, as well as the widening of the Karakoram Highway connecting China and Pakistan and the upgrading of the rail network between Peshawar in the north and Karachi in the south. The two countries also have a plan for fiber-optic communication links (Shapiee & Idrees, 2017).

CPEC is a major undertaking that has the potential to transform the economies of China and Pakistan, and to have a significant economic and political impacts on the region as a whole. It is important to note that CPEC is still under development, and there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed, such as security concerns and the need to ensure that the benefits of CPEC are shared equitably.

Economic implications of CPEC

The economic impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing trade, infrastructure, and overall economic growth. This section explores these facets, interprets the findings within the context of economic consequences of CPEC on Pakistan's economy and its trade relationships and shedding light on CPEC's profound influence on Pakistan's economy.

Trade Relations:

CPEC is poised to redefine trade relations between China and Pakistan. Its extensive infrastructure projects, spanning roads, railways, and economic zones, promise to streamline the flow of goods between these nations. This enhanced connectivity lies at the heart of CPEC's economic objectives. According to a study by the World Bank, Pakistan's exports to China could surge by up to 300% by 2030, thanks to CPEC's infrastructure developments. The reduced logistical complexities and transportation costs are expected to render Pakistani products more competitive in China, driving export growth. Furthermore, the establishment of industrial parks and economic zones along the CPEC route is set to attract foreign investment. This influx of capital will bolster Pakistan's industrial capabilities and create new trade opportunities, aligning with the principles of the infrastructure-led economic growth theory.

Infrastructure Development:

CPEC's hallmark is its extensive infrastructure development in Pakistan, encompassing roads, railways, power plants, and industrial parks. Such investments hold the potential to catalyze economic growth through various channels. Firstly, CPEC's infrastructure development will significantly enhance Pakistan's transportation networks, reducing the time and cost of moving goods and people within the country. This will improve overall economic efficiency and foster job creation in sectors like logistics and freight services. Secondly, the increased electricity availability resulting from power plant developments is expected to alleviate Pakistan's chronic energy shortages. This will not only benefit industrial and commercial sectors but also enhance the quality of life for the population.

The two fundamental pillars of industrialization that support economic expansion and national development are the energy and infrastructure sectors. Unfortunately, Pakistan has a terrible economy and is constantly having problems. Pakistan's overall energy needs are estimated to be 29330 MW, but there is now a shortfall of 4500 MW, causing a 5-hour power outage and a 2- to 2.5% GDP reduction (Kumar, 2007). Under CPEC, the energy sector is heavily concentrated, and a programme called "Early Harvest" was launched with the goal of producing 10,400 MW in 2018. The "Early Harvest" Scheme includes initiatives for coal, liquefied natural gas, and renewable energy. According to a PakChian.com report, Pakistan's energy crisis will be alleviated and the energy sector will be boosted by the 33 billion US dollar investment. Since energy and infrastructure are the two areas of the CPEC that have received the majority of the investment, this will have an effect on Pakistan's economic development and growth.

Additionally, an empirical analysis of the impact of CPEC on Pakistan's and China's energy perspectives. The fundamental goal of the CPEC is to build infrastructure to connect China and Pakistan with Asia, Europe, and Africa in order to lower trade and transportation restrictions. After the CPEC infrastructure projects are completed successfully, Pakistan will be a desirable

market for commerce. It is also stated that the CPEC will have a positive impact on Pakistan's infrastructure and energy development. The World Bank estimates that CPEC could create up to 700,000 jobs in Pakistan, directly linked to infrastructure development, reaffirming the infrastructure-led economic growth theory.

Economic Growth:

The combined impact of improved trade relations and infrastructure development is poised to yield significant economic growth for Pakistan. The World Bank's study indicates that CPEC could contribute up to 2.5% to Pakistan's annual GDP growth rate, underscoring its transformative potential. This GDP growth signifies increased economic activity across sectors. As trade volumes rise, sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and services are poised to expand to meet the heightened demand. Moreover, the expansion of industrial parks and economic zones will encourage entrepreneurship and attract foreign investments, further propelling economic growth.

The economic ramifications of CPEC for Pakistan are overwhelmingly positive. The corridor's role in enhancing trade relations, developing critical infrastructure, and fostering economic growth aligns with established economic theories. The infrastructure-led economic growth theory posits that investments in infrastructure can stimulate economic development by enhancing productivity, reducing costs, and creating new markets. CPEC's focus on infrastructure projects resonates with this theory, as it seeks to improve transportation and energy networks, generate employment, and stimulate economic activity.

Additionally, CPEC is anticipated to lead to trade liberalization between China and Pakistan, driven by new infrastructure development. This trade liberalization aligns with the concept of comparative advantage, wherein each country specializes in producing goods where it holds a comparative advantage. Pakistan is expected to export goods in which it excels, such as agricultural products and textiles, while importing goods where China has a comparative advantage, such as machinery and electronics. These shifts in trade patterns are projected to benefit Pakistan's economy by optimizing resource allocation and promoting specialization.

Ultimately, CPEC is not only a transformative force for Pakistan's economy but also a case study illustrating how strategic investments in infrastructure and trade can drive economic growth, create jobs, and bolster trade relations between nations. It represents a beacon of opportunity, promising a brighter economic future for Pakistan while contributing to the broader objectives of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

The Geopolitical implications of the CPEC

Since the start of CPEC in April 2015, geopolitics in the larger South Asian region, which is home to eight nations, has changed. Among them, Pakistan and India both possess nuclear weapons and have ongoing territorial conflicts dating back to 1947. With a population of over 1.749 billion, or almost one-fourth of the world's population, the region has an area of 4.5 million square kilometres. With CPEC's launch, the politics, economy, and security of the

region have received a great deal of attention in academic and policy-making circles because of the region's advantageous geostrategic position for both regional and global powers (*China-Pakistan Economic Corridor*, 2018).

The geopolitical implications of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are significant and deserve careful examination. It is imperative, prior to embarking on an exploration of Pakistan's evolving geopolitical status pre and post-CPEC, to establish a firm understanding of the theoretical underpinnings that underscore this discourse. The Regional Power Dynamics and Alliance Theory proffer the notion that alterations in economic and strategic partnerships possess the capacity to exert substantial influence on the dynamics of regional power. In the case of CPEC, this theory attains heightened significance, given its potential to recalibrate Pakistan's regional affiliations. Concurrently, the Geopolitical Pivot Theory accentuates the significance of geographic locations in the formulation of global geopolitics. CPEC transcends mere economic implications, as Pakistan's strategic location, acting as a conduit connecting China's western provinces to the Arabian Sea, elevates its geopolitical relevance. Armed with these theoretical foundations, we are poised to delve into the reconfiguration of Pakistan's geopolitical landscape instigated by CPEC and its implications for relationships with neighboring nations.

Regional Power Dynamics and Alliance Theory: CPEC's Impact on Regional Alliances and Rivalries

The Regional Power Dynamics and Alliance Theory posits that shifts in economic and strategic alliances can significantly influence regional power dynamics. This theory is particularly relevant to CPEC because it highlights the potential for economic and strategic alliances to shift regional power dynamics. CPEC has the potential to realign Pakistan's regional alliances, primarily by strengthening its ties with China. China's substantial investment in CPEC, which has exceeded \$62 billion, has created a deep economic and strategic partnership between the two countries. As Pakistan becomes a crucial link in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it aligns itself more closely with the world's second-largest economy. This realignment has implications for regional rivalries, most notably with India. India has expressed concerns about CPEC, viewing it as a strategic move by China to gain a foothold in the region and potentially encircle India. This perception has led to increased tensions between India and Pakistan.

CPEC is not solely a bilateral economic development project; it represents a mega-regional connectivity initiative with the potential to benefit all involved stakeholders. This inclusivity extends to India, as its participation could enhance connectivity with South and Central Asia through Afghanistan, bolster trade, and address energy deficits. Currently, trade between India and Pakistan is limited to the Wagah–Attari border land route. However, India's involvement in CPEC could open up two additional trade routes in Pakistani and Indian Punjab, namely the Ferozpur–Kasur and Fazilka–Sahiwal border points. Furthermore, numerous trade routes could be established in regions like Kashmir, Sindh, and Baluchistan. As a result, India would gain overland trade access to Central Asia via Pakistan. To realize this vision of connectivity, the Pakistan army has extended an invitation to India to join CPEC. Lt. General Amir Riaz, Commander of Southern Command, openly welcomed India to participate in the project and share in its future development. Similarly, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson stated that CPEC is an open and inclusive initiative for all, and they are prepared to welcome India's participation. However, after the CPEC announcement, India's obsession with Pakistan

grew, and New Delhi stepped up its covert efforts to destroy the massive development initiative (Hussain & Jamali, 2019).

The geopolitical rivalry in South Asia has been exacerbated by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). India has expressed concerns, perceiving CPEC as China's strategy to encircle it. India's response to CPEC involves strategic collaboration with Iran through the development of the Chabahar Port, offering access to Central Asia. Afghanistan holds a key role in this scenario, with India providing significant security and economic support. Bilateral trade has grown, and India invested in infrastructure like the Zaranj-Delaram road. India's investments in Chabahar Port, railway connections, and plans for a free trade zone aim to counterbalance China's influence in the Arabian Sea and potentially undermine the strategic importance of Gwadar Port, shaping evolving regional rivalries influenced by CPEC (Kuszevska & Nitza-Makowska, 2021).

As the CPEC has its implications on the regional realignments. The security paradigms for China and Pakistan have changed as a result of the geopolitical realignments in the South Asian region. There is widespread agreement between Washington and New Delhi that they are "natural allies" or "indispensable partners" as a result of the two countries' strong strategic alliance built on shared interests of the twenty-first century. While Washington's strategic interests in the region are bound to include maintaining de-facto hegemony, eliminating terrorism from Afghanistan, and containing rising China through forging alliances with the regional powers, India is determined to achieve high economic growth and become a regional hegemon. Beijing was referred to as a "strategic competitor" by US rather than a "strategic partner". Consequently, the China factor has been crucial in advancing the strategic alliance between India and the United States.

From a geo-economic standpoint, this realignment has significant implications. Pakistan's economic integration with China through CPEC strengthens its position as a key player in the region's trade and infrastructure networks. However, it also introduces geopolitical complexities, as Pakistan's alignment with China may affect its relations with other regional actors, particularly India.

Geopolitical Pivot Theory: CPEC's Role in Elevating Pakistan's Geopolitical Significance

The Geopolitical Pivot Theory asserts that certain geographic locations hold pivotal importance in shaping global geopolitics. In the case of CPEC, Pakistan's strategic location becomes a central element of this theory. CPEC's strategic value lies not only in its economic potential but also in its geographical positioning. Pakistan serves as a bridge between China's western regions and the Arabian Sea, providing China with a shorter and more secure trade route to the Middle East and beyond. This strategic location elevates Pakistan's geopolitical significance. As CPEC develops, Pakistan's role as a geopolitical pivot gains prominence. Its close ties with China and the infrastructure investments under CPEC enhance its relevance in regional and global politics. This newfound significance results from Pakistan's ability to facilitate China's access to the Indian Ocean through the Gwadar Port, located on Pakistan's coast.

From a geo-economic perspective, this geopolitical pivot translates into economic opportunities. By positioning itself as a critical node in China's BRI, Pakistan opens doors to increased trade,

investment, and economic growth. However, it also means that Pakistan must navigate complex regional dynamics, as its strategic importance may lead to heightened competition and geopolitical tensions in the Indian Ocean region. CPEC's geo-economic and geopolitical implications are intertwined. While CPEC offers economic benefits and opportunities, it also introduces geopolitical challenges and realignments. Pakistan's closer alignment with China under CPEC and its strategic location in the region make it a crucial player in shaping the complex interplay between geo-economics and geopolitics.

Sociocultural implications of the CPEC

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has brought about significant sociopolitical changes within Pakistan. These changes encompass various aspects of governance, society, and politics. One of the most noticeable shifts has been in the realm of governance. To effectively manage the various projects and investments associated with CPEC, the Pakistani government established the CPEC Authority, a dedicated body responsible for overseeing and expediting the implementation of CPEC projects. This marked a departure from traditional governance structures and demonstrated Pakistan's commitment to streamlining administrative processes to facilitate the corridor's progress.

Furthermore, CPEC has spurred an increased focus on transparency and accountability in governance. With substantial investments flowing into the country, there has been a heightened emphasis on ensuring that these funds are utilized efficiently and without corruption. The Pakistani government has taken steps to address concerns related to transparency by instituting reforms and mechanisms to monitor the utilization of CPEC funds, demonstrating a commitment to responsible governance (Rana, 2022).

In the sociopolitical landscape, CPEC has also led to increased attention on the province of Balochistan. This region, which serves as a key part of the CPEC route, has historically faced issues related to underdevelopment and marginalization. The corridor has prompted the government to address some of these longstanding grievances, aiming to improve infrastructure and socioeconomic conditions in Balochistan. This not only demonstrates a shift in government priorities but also reflects a desire to address regional disparities and promote inclusivity. Additionally, the sociopolitical discourse in Pakistan has witnessed an evolution in terms of foreign policy and international relations. CPEC's close association with China has led to a deepening of Pakistan-China ties, with the two countries referring to their relationship as an "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership." This alignment has implications for Pakistan's foreign policy orientation, as it increasingly looks towards China as a key partner in economic development and strategic cooperation (Bashir & Ullah, 2022).

Cultural changes in Pakistan due to CPEC are multifaceted and span various dimensions of society. One of the most visible cultural shifts has been the influx of Chinese nationals into Pakistan. As CPEC projects advanced, a significant number of Chinese workers and professionals arrived in Pakistan to work on various infrastructure and industrial initiatives. This cultural exchange has introduced Chinese language, cuisine, and customs to many parts of Pakistan, leading to a more diversified cultural landscape. Furthermore, CPEC has accelerated urbanization in certain areas, particularly those along the corridor route. This urbanization trend has brought about changes in lifestyle, consumption patterns, and social norms. As urban centers

grow, there is increased demand for modern amenities, entertainment, and consumer goods, reflecting a shift towards a more urbanized and consumer-oriented culture.

The impact of CPEC on cultural shifts is not limited to the urban areas alone. Even in rural regions along the corridor, there have been changes in agricultural practices and livelihoods. Improved infrastructure and connectivity have facilitated access to markets, leading to shifts in farming practices and economic activities. This has had a trickle-down effect on cultural aspects, as rural communities adapt to changing economic conditions. On the cultural front, the impact of CPEC is evident in the introduction of Chinese culture, increased urbanization, and changes in lifestyle and consumption patterns. These cultural shifts reflect the dynamic nature of Pakistani society as it adapts to the opportunities and challenges presented by CPEC.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stands as a monumental endeavor with far-reaching implications across economic, geopolitical, and sociocultural dimensions. Economically, CPEC promises to redefine trade relations, boost infrastructure development, and stimulate economic growth in Pakistan, aligning with the principles of infrastructure-led economic expansion. Geopolitically, CPEC has already reshaped regional alliances and rivalries, presenting Pakistan with opportunities for strategic realignment and cooperation, while also generating complexities in the geopolitics of South Asia. Pakistan's newfound geopolitical significance as a pivot in the region, facilitated by its strategic location and CPEC investments, underscores the interconnectedness of geo-economics and geopolitics. Socioculturally, CPEC has ushered in governance reforms, emphasized transparency and accountability, and addressed regional disparities in Balochistan. The corridor has also brought cultural exchange and urbanization to Pakistan, transforming lifestyles and fostering a diverse cultural landscape.

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