

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



**ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE AND COMPETITION IN SOUTH ASIA:
A CASE STUDY OF REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND ITS BRI (BELT & ROAD
INITIATIVE) IN SOUTH ASIA**

MASTER'S THESIS

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Political Science and International Relations Department
Political Science and International Relations Program

JULY, 2020

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JULY, 2020

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results, which are not original of this thesis.

Syed Siddeq Ullah AGHA

Signature

FOREWORD

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and analyze the emerging role of China and its mega infrastructural program BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) around the world, China as the biggest competitor of the world economic and political giants is going to make new land marks and strategic edges and the world will face a drastic power shift that would ultimately affect every country. Being a Pakistani national, this study would deeply address the pros and cons of this project for Pakistan and also for south Asian region.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my Advisor **Prof. Dr. RAGIP KUTAY KARACA** for his excellent mentoring skills, insightful comments and overall unforgettable support throughout my enrollment in the program of MS. in Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul Aydin University. I also would like to thank all my other instructors and professors who taught at the Institute of Social Sciences at university.

Last but not least, I am very grateful for the ultimate support I got from my family one by one.

July, 2020

Syed Siddeq Ullah AGHA

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIIB	: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ASEAN	: Association of South East Asian Nations
BCIM	: Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor
BRF	: Belt and Road Forum
BRI	: Belt and Road Initiative
CCCC	: China Communication Construction Company
CCDI	: Central Commission for Discipline Inspection
CPEC	: China Pakistan Economic Corridor
ECA	: Economic Commission of Africa
EIA	: Environmental Impact Assessments
EU	: European Union
FACT	: Federation of American Consumers and Travelers
FATA	: Federal Administered Tribal Area
FCPA	: Foreign Corrupt Practices Act
FOIP	: Free and Open Indo-Pacific
FONOP	: Freedom of Navigation Operations
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
G7	: Group of Seven
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
KSA	: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LNG	: Liquefied natural gas
LOC	: Line of Control

MDB : Multilateral Development Bank
MOU : Memorandum of Understanding
MRE : Middle Eastern Region
MSRI : Maritime Silk Road Initiative
NATO : North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDRC : National Development and Reform Commission
SCO : Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UAE : United Arab Emirates
UNO : United Nations Organization
USD : United States Dollar
USSR : Union of Socialist Soviet Republic

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the consequences of “complex interdependence” with reference to cooperation and competition in South Asia. By taking the theoretical standpoint of complex interdependence, it applies it to the case of China’s role in South Asia to understand *whether complex interdependence leads to positive results for cooperation or (to conflicts) not*. It becomes imperative to ask this question afresh in this context because the increasing role of China in South Asia through many flagship initiatives like BRI (Belt & Road Initiative) etc. has fueled competition rather than cooperation as the theory would predict. It asks the major question: why complex interdependence leads to conflict rather than cooperative behavior? And what does it imply for understanding globalization and international politics?

It understands the consequences of complex interdependence from *three perspectives viz China, the United States and South Asian region*. The United States an outsider being the traditional power with huge strategic and geopolitical influences in the South Asian region and hence, its existing influence is threatened with the entry of China in a big way.

The concept of interdependence is operationalized by defining it in terms of volume of trade, investment and level of infrastructure in the region. The study uses both *primary* and *secondary* data. The primary data on connectivity projects are taken from official sources as well as such databases like Reconnecting Asia that document each and every project with all relevant details. Secondly, it also uses data from the World Bank, the IMF and other agencies to trace out long term patterns. Secondary data include reports, academic articles and books published in addition to newspaper reports, print and broadcasted interviews.

Keywords: *BRI, China, Interdependence, cooperation, competition*

GÜNEY ASYA'DA EKONOMİK DAYANIŞMA VE REKABET: ÇİN HALK CUMHURİYETİ ÖRNEĞİ VE GÜNEY ASYA'DA BİR KUŞAK BİR YOL PROJESİ

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Güney Asya'da karmaşık ekonomik dayanışma ve rekabetin sonuçlarının incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, karmaşık ekonomik dayanışmanın daha ileri işbirliğine ya da ihtilaflara sebep olup olmadığına dair Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti örneği üzerinden inceleme yapılmıştır. Kendimize Çin'in Güney Asya bir kuşak bir yol projesi yoluyla artan etkisinin işbirliğinden daha fazla rekabeti mi etkilediğine dair soruyu sormak zorunlu olmaktadır. Bu bağlamda; karmaşık dayanışma işbirliği davranışından daha çok ihtilaflara mı yol açmaktadır? Ve bu durum uluslararası küreselleşme ve politikaya mı işaret etmektedir? Anlaşılan şudur ki, karmaşık dayanışmaya üç farklı perspektiften bakmak doğrudur. Bu durumun aktörleri Çin, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ile Güney Asya Bölgesidir. Aktörler arasında ise bölge dışından ancak bölge ülkeleri üzerinden son derece önemli ekonomik ve politik etkileri olan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin önü Çin tarafından kesilmektedir. Dayanışma kavramını açıklayan terimler ticaret hacmi, yatırım ve bölgedeki altyapı düzeyidir. Bu çalışmada primer ve sekunder verilerin ikisi de kullanılmıştır. Bağlantılı projelere ait primer veriler resmi kaynaklardan temin edilmektedir. Bu konuda bilinen en iyi örneklerden birisi Reconnecting Asia (Asya'yı Yeniden bağla!) veritabanıdır. Reconnecting Asia veritabanı gerekli tüm detayları ile her projenin iyi düzeyde dokümanite edildiği bir platformdur. İkinci olarak, Dünya Bankası, IMF ve diğer örgütlerden elde edilen veriler gelmektedir. Bu veriler çoğunlukla uzun vadeli paternlerin takip edildikleri veritabanları sunarlar. Sekonder veriler raporlar, akademik yayınlar, kitaplar ve bu konularda yayımlanmış her türlü gazete raporları, basılı ve uzmanlar ile gerçekleştirilmiş raporlardan oluşmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *BRI, Çin, Dayanışma, işbirliği, rekabet*

1. INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study is to explore the different dimensions of interdependency in term of economic cooperation and competition in international relations. In this contemporary world, state's security is largely dependent over the economic strength of a state, other countries reliance over a progressive and economically vigorous country paves a way to more cooperation and competition in the specific region as well as the world. After the disintegration of USSR, the concept of real power became something that was directly related to the economic and technological advancement, "quest for a stable and peaceful global order conducive to their economic development" (Bhatty, 1996). China is the best example of an economic giant who has this real power, China slowly established its influence through its immensely fast growth and economic stability which has been providing assistance and cooperation to the regional as well as international partners. After ending the bipolarity of the world, China could have in a position to take the place of a global power as it really worked hard in achieving the economic self-sufficiency but in the world politics, it took time to take the place of a super power but regionally, china successfully dominated the South Asian economies and was in a better position to establish its own influence.

There are Different approaches to understand this concept of interdependency in different dimensions like liberals, realists and game theoretical perspectives. Realists believe that world politics and international power relations are dominantly affected and associated with the maximization of security in a world of disputes, conflicts and anarchy. In the post-cold war world, developed countries achieved a realization that sound military equipment and sophisticated weapons cannot guarantee the security and stability of a state but economic competence and advanced technology are required to gain the real power and this further elaborated and presented by Neo-Liberal theorists. Following these different approaches, a debate was started between realist and liberals for declaring their

distinct thoughts compatible and real. Robert O Keohane and Joseph S. Nye presented the theory of Complex interdependency that supplemented the idea of liberals and focused on the importance of trade and state welfare rather than the military capability. Complex interdependency analyzes the state behavior in achieving the real power by maintaining economic alliances among the states rather military cooperation and arm enhancement. This theory is not considering state as a main actor but it is emphasizing over the economic character of it, it focuses on new emerging international institutions, organizations and regimes that are reducing the significance of military capability of a state but its economic strength and its welfare policies for its own people as well as for the rest of the world. It is actually referring towards a concept that is now called as globalization. This theory that exhibited neoliberal ideas and talks about cooperation as a dominant factor of world politics although, the believers of this theory are not undermining the importance of national security and military power but they are giving high priority to the social, economic and environmental issues.

This study will also discuss the specific theme in context with competition and conflict, cooperation leads to the competition among the states, according to the Kenneth Waltz theory of international politics, anarchic situation of the world gives rise to the competition, balance and cooperation among the state. In the perspective of research topic, China's growing competition is bringing the circumstances of cooperation among the different states of South Asia but at the same time, it has also been observed that the competition for USA and India has become quite complex and difficult, along with trade and other benefits, the stake holders are moving towards a quick and intense competition in every possible field specially in term of power and influence.

To identify the example for this complex interdependency, China is the most prominent actor who is the true follower of this thought as even in the presence of USA hegemonic power and its influence in the region, China pursued its way to acquire economic dominance and reliance of other states over the Chinese trade and business. China easily challenged USA presence in south Asia but also took the place of economic and trade partner of the world and South Asian states, it made multiple agreements, pact and plans. China's economic growth was started with the introduction of economic

reforms in 1979 and it performed spectacular in the areas of economic growth, trade and cooperation with the world. Till 1993, China became the world's 11th largest trading nation and this immense economic development posed threat to US but on the other hand, from 1987 to 1994 China became the fifth largest trading partner of USA. China US economic ties became complicated gradually as there were two factors working one was the economic hegemony of US was challenged across the world and second was, China was moving from economic to strategic cooperation in a different manner. Besides, economic affiliations and concerns, USA has become so conscious about Chinese expansion of its influence in the region as well as outside. In this regard, Chinese Belt and roads initiatives (BRI) possessed an enormous role in strengthening its bond in term of economic and strategic cooperation with the countries. This phenomenal connectivity plan throughout Euro Asian region and beyond could be a new beginning of China's economic and security boost but on the contrary, it comes up as an alarm for US and in South Asia India to secure its dominant and influential role in this region. BRI is a series of connectivity plan throughout the world even in different continents like Africa and Europe are also part of it, almost 61% of world population would be benefitted through this plan. To stimulate economic growth and increasing trade among the state, this plan is going to connect countries via land and maritime networks having six corridors. Besides to facilitate the economic cooperation and trade, it aims to integrate the region on the basis of economic lines. BRI significance is growing with the time as it is going to cover 70 countries of Asia, Europe and Africa.

2. ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCY AND COMPETITION IN SOUTH ASIA

2.1 Theoretical Background

The term power can be perceived and explained in multiple meanings, it depends upon the nature of the discipline that where and how it is used. In international relations, power has various aspects as it could be military, strategic, political and economic; every kind has its own set of rules and functions. On the other hand, all are interconnected and provoke another aspect to work with the other. Before the arrival of world economic order, states can be recognized as powerful when they are highly militarized and equipped with advanced arsenal but cold war, world became tilted towards the notion of soft power which actually means economic strength of a state that can drive its interests. States started working to fulfill their interests through economic means and this way gradually taken over the other approaches of state's power and security. More emphasis over economic power, states moving quickly to acquire more trade, business and capital that led to the dependence over the other state as all the economic activities could not be executed in isolation.

Every state has to be more interactive and diplomatically more vibrant for establishing better economic relations with the other country, states were very keen and they compete to gain more and more power as realists said that states are always motivated to maximize their power and same happened with the economic power. Trade has been used as a power instrument among the states enhancing the competition as well as conflicts. Economic interdependence term became popular and Albert Hirschman identified a fact that small states seek to trade with the powerful country and became dependent over them on the other hand, the countries with dominant economic power may use trade to make these countries dependent. (Hirschman, 1945). When the big power tries to take control of small states business and trade in order to establish the hegemonic impact

over the smaller one, conflict starts but the positive thing is, states are usually taking notice of any economic difference and tries to resolve it. Liberal believes in soft power acquisition but they are usually failed to answer a question that if economic power is aimed to reduce the conflict and war then why it leads to the competition that could be reason of conflict, disagreement and sense of inferiority. For economic dependency, the concept of transnationalism was the brain child of two theorists named Jr. Nye and R. Keohane who worked on world's new trends Neo liberal theory that can be said as economic interdependence theory that talks about worlds' actors that are closely connected with the economic ties so their actions and reactions are closely connected with the economic benefits, its repercussion and concerns, on the other hand, this economic competition and cooperation often comes up with the conflict and disagreement. Every country's policy and actions must have their profound effect over the other, it might be of any sphere but interdependency doesn't mean cooperation but also opposite effects could be visible in the situation as interdependency would be there in every area. This theory has some prominent characteristics like:

2.2 Dependency Over Different Channels

Dependency develops connections and it works through different channels and avenues, advantages as well as risks can be gained by the state through transnational organization, banks, multinational firms as these avenues have considerable influence on domestic scenario and international front.

2.3 Hierarchy In Issues

There is no definite and clear division in the domestic and international issues; they are not arranged and no prominent division in domestic and foreign policy issues. An important aspect is military and security that is also not dominating the agenda (Keohane & Nye, 1977), foreign affairs becomes more diverse in nature and procedure there are various other issues that have become a part of this domain but security is no more an unavoidable factor in this interdependency arena.

2.4 Role Of Military Force

According to realists, security and military forces acquire central position in state's affairs but in the world of liberals, complex interdependence declared that military strength does not have any influence and relevance in resolving economic issues and differences between and among the states, military alliances also don't have the ability to sort out the economic differences and conflicts.

2.5 Competition In International Politics As A Driving Force For Global Strategic And Economic Affairs

Competition has been perceived and derived as a multiple dimensional force to gain advantages in various scenarios like economic, political, strategic and military, this is a relative term as some believe that competition often pose a challenge or can be seen as a threat in some particular domains like in military and security field, competition leads to arm race and increase in defense budget by the states, in term of strategic competition, it comes up with the growing mistrust and insecurity between and among the states but for economic competition, it often brings some positive outcomes in the form of economic growth, cooperation and development in term of soft power. Although economic competition also produces various disagreements, differences that could better call as conflicts but these conflicts somehow increase the competition or shift the competition and dependency towards the other side (state). Economic alliances never turn into military coalition that means economic dependency keeps the state from war although they often involve in conflict as it is quite natural and inevitable but it never turns towards military action or power usage.

When it comes to the general definition of competition it is stated as “a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. (Mazarr et.al.nd)” In the perspective of international relations, it can be understood as “a state of opposed relations short without any armed confrontation furthermore, it is considered as an effort for gaining mutual benefits and some positive results that are difficult to acquire in a general situation (Mazarr, nd)”. It aims to pursue influence, power, prosperity and position from the relations with the other states.

2.5.1 Competition with the relation of economic dependency

In economic sphere, competition usually leads to more economic gains and when its further proceeds, intense economic ties create as there are various examples from the world like China and USA, in spite of having enormous economic gains, they still continue to grow economically with the mutual cooperation but their competition for more profit and for grabbing more markets or one another markets has not been stopped. In most of the cases, competition creates cooperation especially in economic dimension, state's economic competition is far different than corporate collaboration and profits because state are not only economic entities but they also comprise of political, social and strategic features which means that their collaboration does not always pave the way to positive economic competition but conflicts can also be emerged. In contemporary world scenario, states work for gaining bargaining power and influence but it is only possible when a state possesses economic strength as financially sound state can play an influential role in negotiation, mediation or peace keeping. For example, in UNO forum, G7 countries have heavy influence over UN decision making body, veto power is also devoted to the states that are considered as world's biggest economies.

As realists believe the states always seek power and influence for gaining status and domination but when it comes to the economic dimension, somehow the situation remains the same as their economic ties enhance their acquisition of more economic edge over the other although it does not involve military or weapon race but economic rivalries can have the potential to change the position of a state in global sphere like Japan growth diminished US status in a very unique mode of competition. Economic competitiveness that directly related to the national economic strength tested in international markets has some possible direct consequences like increase in living standards but it doesn't have relevance in every case as different states have different goal system and according to their immediate needs, they strive to achieve their goals. But in international relations, there are state's political goals that make the economic power relative in different situation, economical activities and competition is often shaped and defined by the state's political needs. On the other hand, state's political motives could not be achieved without having economic influence and potential.

2.5.2 Conflict and Complex interdependence theory

The debate over the relationship between conflict and interdependency has become vigorous and vibrant during recent times, for neo liberals who are staunch believer of soft power of state and they advocate the influential role of economic activities and trade in order to diminish the differences, war and conflict, moreover, they have the opinion about state's economic dependence over the other ad their mutual vested interest refrain them from war. European Union is the best example in this regard that the countries with bitter violent and a past full of disagreements are mutually collaborating with each other as they all are heavily dependent over the other one that they cannot promote conflicts because it discontinued their mutual economic gain business and could disintegrate the continuation of economic growth as well as political objectives that could not be achieved without having this enormous mutual cooperation set up.

On the contrary, realists believe that economic interdependency could easily move a situation towards the conflict when through this mean, political discontentment can be happened as excessive economic dependence can turn the countries as rivals. Some realists' scholars said that only economic ties don't have enormous impact over political and strategic interests but in reality, it is evident in the world that by using economic means and interests, states can get easy access to the territories of the other states and can get over with the political and strategic concerns, CPEC is a prominent example in this regard as China is really investing and collaborating enormously with Pakistan and the other stake holders in order to diminishing the threats and concerns of Pakistan and the other states through its unmatched economic strength. Although conflict or disagreement was there in various instances like on the route of that corridor, some factions from Pakistan criticized and opposed it but China with its hegemonic economic might in South Asian region, easily resolve it and continued its project along the site. Liberals concept of conflict in interdependency is directly related to the economy like conflict arises where an economy is forced to be isolated or if the trade or business reduces because of the action of any state, can be a source of conflict as it would be considered as sabotage economic foundation of a state.

Liberals also support the concept that economic interdependence creates cooperation and conflict both but international organizations have the potential to mediate and establish peace by enhancing and sustaining economic openness and reducing the conflict through peaceful adjustment. They provide forums for negotiation and different conflict resolution tactics like mediating, facilitating and dissemination of correct information. Conflict can more likely to initiate in a situation where the economic collaborated countries have greater chances of conflict than the states with uneven economic background although the dependency and cooperation is there but not at the same compatible level. Like if China and Pakistan are on the same lines to go with CEPEC then there is a less chance of having conflict and escalation of conflict towards war or suspension of the plan but in case of China and USA, economic ties are growing intensified as USA being a super power of the world could not let China to take its seat of super power.

3. CHINA BRI PLAN IN SOUTH ASIA

3.1 BRI Origin

World's greatest strategic development that attached financial, economic, societal and infrastructural advancement with it, is initiated by China as a revival of old Silk Road that comprised of land routes crossing three continents Asia, Africa and Europe. This is named as Belt and road initiatives (BRI), this plan is not just a developmental plan but it is a vision, it is a phenomenal idea which is gradually taking a concrete shape. For the world, it was only a thought that was not physically feasible as this program is not limited to only one state or two or three but it would engage eight countries from South Asia, eleven from South East Asia, five from central Asia, sixteen countries from west Asia and North Africa, sixteen from central and Eastern Europe and six Common wealth Independent states. It not only covers land routes but also sea route which called as 21st century maritime Silk Road.

Chinese president Xi Jinping announced this plan when he visited Indonesia and Kazakhstan in 2013, he mentioned this plan as the revival of Silk road leading to different continents for advancing the Chinese interests through the collaboration of various countries, for acquiring trans-continental influence, China is investing hugely like 3 trillion\$ is estimated for Chinese cost over infrastructural development for the whole Belt projects. It will affect 61% population of the world that means majority of states would be involved and beneficiary of this enormous logistic, economic and strategic plan. Chinese president Xi Jinping stated while announcing this plan that it is an unprecedented opportunity for development.

3.2 Objective

This great initiative that is also called as One Belt One Road has some intrinsic aims and objective that are “To build an integrated large market which will utilize both local and international market. It carries the aim of enhancing mutual collaboration on every ground, it is a matter of trust and understanding of member states as well as host state which is enormously investing over the plan to gain multidimensional significance. With the innovative pattern, BRI would be the source of capital flow, acquisition of highly advanced technology and talent pool. In early phase, it will emphasize over infrastructural development and related investment, construction material, railway, highway, automobile, real estates, iron, steel and power grid. This BRI plan has the determination of bridging the infrastructure gap across the areas of Asia Pacific, Africa, central and eastern Europe. Due to huge investment over the project by the host state that would be \$ 900 billion per year till the next decade (Mardell, June 10, 2018), many heads of states have welcomed it and showed their deep interest in joining the voyage of the world

Other important objective is to enhance and build the connectivity through BRI corridors that are listed as

- (1) The New Europe and Asia Land Bridge;
- (2) The China-Central Asia-West Asia Corridor;
- (3) The China-Pakistan Corridor;
- (4) The Bangladesh-China- Myanmar Corridor;
- (5) The China-Mongolia-Russia Corridor;
- (6) The China-Indochina Peninsula Corridor. (Anon., n.d.)

Moreover, it endeavors to achieve some important aims like foremost objective is to enhance policy coordination, to improve infrastructure connectivity, to establish and develop trade, to get collaborative investments, to have more capital integration and to encourage people to people cooperation and collaboration. According to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, BRI also will also serve for four primary sectors that are

1. Transport
2. Trade and investment
3. Information and communication technology
4. Energy

3.3 Principle

Every strategy, every plan has its foundations over some fundamental principles that provide the basic framework for working and further enhancement of objectives. BRI has its own set of principles that carries global significance and recognition like first prominent principle is about all round cooperation, it is evident that without having uninterrupted cooperation, this connectivity program cannot achieve its goals because alone, host state cannot be able to get its desirable results as it is not China's task to take all the responsibility of building this long route to facilitate trade and economics but it is the collaborative attempt to gain the most of it. Broad participation is another important rule for establishing and getting benefits from the plan because as it will build and increase the connectivity which is a collective attempt therefore, participation in the plan must be in a broader and wider grounds like countries should be more understanding towards strategic and other sensitive matters, there is a need of building and promoting more trust between and among the states so, they could easily let the process begin and continue. Cooperation on the basis of regions so that the program can easily implemented and start functioning, Conflict avoidance and conflict resolution is the most needed idea in this regard because it is the intrinsic nature of states that they ultimately have conflicts, disagreements and difference with each other so, in this specific regard, states should step forward to eliminate discontent and differences among them otherwise, this BRI could not achieve its goals properly or as estimated. The implementation of this plan in all dimensions is subject to have complete consensus, mutual collaboration and interaction, consultation, contribution, coordination, shared gains, voluntarism and consider the Charter of United Nations and international law moreover, without considering and respecting domestic laws, regulation and processes.

3.4 Initiation of BRI and Renewal of Silk Road

BRI was proposed by Chinese President to improve the connectivity and cooperation among the member states on transcontinental level, this advantageous and enriched strategic plan also analyzing on foreign policy grounds but if anyone finds out its root or core idea behind it, it was the revival of old Silk road that was initiated by China's Hans dynasty, it was an ancient trade route that worked during 130 BC – 1453CE, it was not comprised of one single road so rather term Silk routes was more frequently used. This route was built to promote trade with west in 130 BC and these routes remained in used until 1453 AD, when Ottoman Sultans stopped the trade from China and closed the route (Anon., 2019). Almost 600 years have been passed since the Silk route has not been used but it had its long-lasting impacts and deed to promote trade and cooperation. King of Hans dynasty Wu asked his staff to visit or to establish relations with central Asia for cultural and trade contacts, Zhang Qian who was the official envoy visited there and came up with very fascinating information about the lands, people and resources of that area. Present Iran that was formally called as Susa extended the limits of route towards Mesopotamia as well as modern day turkey.

3.4.1 Historical Background of Silk Road

The Silk Road was a network of trade routes connecting China and the Far East with the Middle East and Europe. Established when the Han Dynasty in China officially opened trade with the West in 130 B.C., the Silk Road routes remained in use until 1453 A.D., when the Ottoman Empire boycotted trade with China and closed them. Although it's been nearly 600 years since the Silk Road has been used for international trade, the routes had a lasting impact on commerce, culture and history that resonates even today (Anon., 2019).

Silk road or silk route is the greatest ancient trade route used to link china to Mediterranean, It carries a long but rich history because it was not only a trade route but it was a bridge to get introduce and accept in different region like it connected China with India, Persia, Arabia, Greek and Rome. The famous Chinese silk was sent to the world through this way, it was started during Han Dynasty¹ (206BC – 220AD) and of course, silk was the major good to trade along this route from China as China was the pioneer in

various new fields and inventions. This route was not used only for trading purpose, it also served as cultural and religion exchange source because it connects east to west like China and India were connected with Mediterranean. This route allowed different civilizations, religions and traditions to enter into different counterparts, Chinese culture and other things ultimately transmitted to the regions far from China like Europe, Arab and Persia, these regions also influenced a lot China in term of technology, knowledge and information. This route was also passed through Karakoram Mountain currently part of Pakistan and in contemporary times, new silk route or economic corridor (a part of BRI) which is also aimed to connect Gwadar to Kashgar, is a brilliant example of that old silk route.

3.4.2 Silk Road Beginning

Silk Road was initially opened for expanding the trade boundaries and creating new relations with the world, it was opened between Far East and Europe. The emperor of Hans dynasty who ordered to widen China's trade through this silk road, sent his delegates for collecting the information about the prospective areas from where this route was plan to reach, Wu (Hans emperor) sent his official envoy Zhang Qian for establishing official relations with central Asia. This Silk Road was not that new phenomenon at that time because the trading between east and west was going on before 300 years of opening of Silk Road. This was formerly called as royal road that connected present day Iran to Turkey near Mediterranean Sea and was established by Persian ruler Darius I of Achaemenid Empire before the official opening of silk road (Lockard, 2008). This older Persian royal road also expanded by including small routes that connected Mesopotamian region to Indian continent along with Northern Africa through Egypt. When Alexander the great was attempting to expand its empire, he used that royal road to establish his domination over Persia (Harold, 2012).

This trade route that was stretched from East to West, its working began through trade between China and Greece during first and second centuries, Roman Empire and Northern India Kushan Empire were the great beneficiaries of this Silk Road. In ancient Greece, China was called as "Seres" which means "the land of Silk" (Anon., 2019). The routes of Silk Road were highly significant and strategically important consisted of trade

posts, markets for integrating trade, distribution, exchange and transport. Routes were touching the land of present-day Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkmenistan with the additional routes of Afghanistan, Magnolia and China (Wilson, 2007). These trading land routes were also reached to the ports of Persian Gulf from where the products and goods were moved up to Tigris and Euphrates Rivers moreover, they linked the ports of Mediterranean Sea from which the trade was extended towards Roman and the other Empires.

3.4.3 Silk Road Economic Belt

Silk road got this name because Chinese silk was very famous for its quality around the world and this route was mainly established to transport this good across the world especially Roman empire and Europe. Besides Silk other commodities were also moved along the road like fruits, vegetables, livestock, leather, grain, tools, religious object, precious stones, artwork and metals but the most important aspect was the exchange of culture, language, beliefs, science, new information and philosophy. The specialty of China was paper and gunpowder were also some exclusive products that were spread throughout the world through this route like in Samarkand, both arrived in around 700 A.D. Before the introduction of paper and gun powder to Europe (Spain and Sicily) it had introduced in East completely. Due to the paper trading in Europe, Europe became able to grow in industries and printing press as Gutenberg's press was the first instance from where, the mass production of book, newspaper became the source of information exchange in the region (McFadden, 2018).

3.4.4 Silk Road Spices

Eastern spices got popularity in west after the introduction of Silk Road and changed the mode of cuisine in Europe. Many new techniques were also reached to the rest of the world like glass making from the Islamic world to the east and then China. Historians believed that gun powder from China that was used in fireworks and fire arms was also exported through this route to the Europe and Europe started doing more work and refined it for cannons in England, France and the rest of the Europe till 1300. This exchange imprinted great impact over the political history of Europe because it was highly advantageous in War (Anon., 2019).

3.4.5 Eastward Exploration

This route also opened new strategic avenues of exploration, further new routes and passages that enhanced the connectivity and interaction between and among the regions and states. Initially it gave the opportunities for the people passing through the route to seek better understanding of Far Eastern culture and geography, a famous explorer Marco Polo also used Silk Route while travelling from Italy to China in 1275 during Mongolian empire, he used to travel through boats and arrived at Xanadu, a summer palace of Mongolian emperor Kublai Khan. He worked with Mongolian emperor Kublai Khan for 24 years as Tax collector. He returned to Venice through this route in 1295 because Mongolian Empire was declining and he wrote a book “The Travels of Marco Polo” that was about his experience in China and Asian Commerce and Culture (Anon., 2012).

3.4.6 Modern Silk Road

Now the modern silk route has six corridors, first part goes through Pakistan and ends in Turkey. This new silk route that includes Pakistan is actually a channel of Southern corridor and it is a small part of a big BRI plan (Ahmed, 2019), this modern trade route is actually a copy of old pattern and it will definitely bring huge economic and strategic benefits to China. China’s heavy investments are not for the sake of world development or for the prosperity of its neighbor countries, this capital will come back to China with huge profit but for the contributing countries, this project will revolutionize every economic opportunity because it will have its effects over every field of the country and also initiated from infrastructural level. World has turned into a small global village in technological and communication term, citizens of this world are enjoying almost same culture and trends so, it is actually not bringing Chinese influence over other culture and tradition like olden route but this corridor will bring more business and vigorous trade pace into the country. It is a transcontinental project like old silk route; it will connect two continents through roads, bridges, highways and sea ports, according to contemporary

global circumstances, many complications and repercussions are there in this project but it will definitely give a concrete economic vision for a long time.

3.5 Major Component of BRI

3.5.1 Infrastructure

BRI has an integral element is to develop and establish a high-quality advanced infrastructure to all the BRI participant countries or it can be said that it is actually to maintain and harmonize the quality of infrastructure in the countries that are going to get benefits from this huge plan. Its cost is estimated to 3 to 4 trillion US dollars for almost 60 countries (Chatzky, 2020), this infrastructural revolution will be financed by Asian infrastructural investment bank and Silk Road Fund, both the institutions are coordinated by Belt and road summit forum. The corridor which will be constructed on land of different countries starts from western China to western Russia with the name of New Europe and Asia Land Bridge that will cross Kazakhstan, this belt further includes Silk Road railway that passes from Xinjiang to Kazakhstan and further cross Russia, Belarus, Poland and Germany. Another corridor that is named as China-Mongolia-Russia corridor which will initiated from Northern China and stretch towards Russia Far East. For investment and financial support, Russian direct investment fund has been established by Russian government collaborated with China investment corporation for strengthening the opportunities of bilateral cooperation. Next corridor will be China – Central Asia - West Asia Corridor that starts from western China to Turkey then there will be the Bangladesh-China- Myanmar Corridor and Indo China Peninsula corridor with the route from Southern China to Singapore, finally China Pakistan economic corridor which is considered as the most significant part of BRI plan that will bring 62 billion dollar for infrastructural projects in Pakistan, this component of BRI has been operational on November 2016 when Chinese cargo was transported through Gwadar Port for further transportation to Africa and West Asia.

This project is highly fascinating for developing countries as it will bring huge financial investment and technical assistance for building infrastructure for transportation, roads, rail, maritime routes, technology, energy and culture. With the huge infrastructure gaps and low economies, this program will give a boost to their economic condition as

well as new debt strategies will also be introduced through specialized monetary funds specially allocated for this BRI project.

3.5.2 Trade and Economic Growth

Through geographical connectivity, BRI has the aim to facilitate investment and trade especially in the developing neighboring countries, this project will have enormous impact over industries and technological development of a country for example, Vietnam economy is mostly depends upon textile and apparel business and its export, BRI supports the development of export oriented industries that's why in Vietnam this industry is continuously flourishing and boosting after becoming the part of this project total increase of 16.7% has been witnessed in year 2019. China is planning to move its cement, iron and steel industries to western part as well as to the BRI economies.

Around 212 projects in the participating country of BRI will get 67 billion US dollar from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Anonymous, 2018), these projects have industrial and developmental significance. Through this plan, China is aimed to promote its technology across the economic belt through different initiatives and technological enhancement program, Chinese equipment and standards and engineering know how would be adopted within this great economic belt and will surely make their presence in business and future projects with definite outcomes. Chinese technological strategy named "China 2025" is trying to take the technology edge in the BRI countries like western countries that did same after Second World War (McBride, 2019).

3.5.3 Strategic importance

China's most influential and historical strategic move of BRI possesses long lasting effects and geopolitical implications over the region as well as for the world. This gigantic transnational project is crossing through the geo-strategically important region associated with various conflicts and internal differences; BRI does not address only the economic needs of the countries but having multidimensional implications for the world and significance for the Beijing. The need to execute such a huge project is associated with the broad ranged strategic, political and economic effects more dominated with the repercussions specifically in the foreign policy and security domains. There is a chain of strategic objectives that are linked with this project, foremost aim is to get enough security

for Chinese energy resources as well as for enhancing their energy for the longer period of time so, the pace of development and progress cannot be interrupted moreover, to improve security of the region and extend the strategic influence in Europe and Asia without confronting US. This plan has been drafted considering the needs and the challenges faced by china within and outside the region, security and economic strength are directly connected to each other and through this economic belt initiative, security can be easily improved if there is a peaceful environment for development.

3.6 BRI in Asian Countries

3.6.1 BRI and Central Asia

China is actively promoting BRI plans in central Asian region as it is also a part of the project, the determinant of this plan for central Asia are, China is going to fully or partially financed the related institution that are Asian infrastructure investment bank, China development bank, export import bank of China or new silk road fund. This initiative will be executed in two levels either bilateral or multilateral. It will work in the same four categories that are road and rail connectivity, energy connectivity, trade promotion and industrial development and people-to-people projects. Its developmental category is sub divided into (a) mineral and petroleum exploration, development and processing (b) industry, (c) finance and IT, and (d) agriculture and food.

Among the all the proposed corridor, two of them will be initiated and run in Central Asia and South Caucasus, one thing which is important is that these countries are land locked and here infrastructure of transportation is relatively lower than the other countries in the Central Asia and South Caucasus. These countries are mostly land-locked, and their transportation infrastructures and quality tend to be low.

“If properly implemented, BRI transport projects are expected to reduce travel times and trade costs, potentially leading to enhanced trade, foreign investment which would translate into higher economic growth and poverty reduction for the countries involved,” said Asli Demirguc-Kunt, chief economist of the World Bank’s Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region. Sincerely 1990s China’s economic interests were increasing

in Central Asia countries as they were newly independent countries from the soviet influence and they could be the best market and strategic partner for the neighboring countries specially China because China was growing and moving towards the global and regional power so, it increased its financial and trade inflow in Central Asia and total trade turnover between these countries 60 fold from 1991 to 2016 and investment aggravate from 500,000 million to 30 billion (Vakulchuk, 2019), informal trade, small business collaboration is not included in this amount. Through BRI, China is aspired to fade the Russian and western influence and interests as China is the biggest importer of Central Asian energy resources. After the announcement of BRI in the region, China actively collaborated and cooperated in term of soft power in education and culture sector.

CEPEC under BRI is not just a road but a network of global connectivity, mutual trade, industrialization, shared resources and immense development that will benefit generations. The route of CEPEC is supposed to provide a link between Pakistan and western china through granting access to the Gwadar port in Southern Pakistan. This link will give a great opportunity to central Asian republics to promote its trade with china and Pakistan, Chinese province Xinjiang has been enjoying hundreds of year's old traditions and trade linkages with Central Asia, the old and famous Silk Road initially connected with the Central Asia and then moved towards other countries. Central Asian countries are rich in resources like oil, gas, gold and the other metals, possess the potential to pool investments in CEPEC related projects and could gain numerous benefits like natural gateway as these countries are land lock countries. Central Asia has always been very keen to get access to the regional markets Pakistan, China, west Asia including India. Pakistan with the significance of CEPEC can provide a great chance to the Central Asian countries for strengthening their economic growth

3.6.2 BRI and Afghanistan

Afghanistan with infrastructure and developmental deficit, has the fascinating opportunity to get the benefits from BRI, it could link with CEPEC, Afghanistan connects to Pakistan at four railway centers and these links can give access to Afghanistan to CEPEC. This connection would directly connect Pakistan to the Central Asian states and their markets. Afghanistan can become a part of BRI with the collaboration of Central

Asia where there are many huge projects are going on for one of the corridors of BRI. In 2016, China made its first entry by cargo train which reached Afghanistan's border town and port of Hairatan in Balk province but this train service was later suspended because of security concerns and poor infrastructure in Afghanistan. From Central Asia, Afghanistan could become a beneficiary of BRI through Silk Road Economic Belt which is already crossing this region. Scenario is gradually changing and now China is taking interest in this regard and it has become Afghanistan's largest business investors and putting more amounts of aid and investments by Chinese companies is changing the perception that China is bypassing Afghanistan existence in BRI. Afghanistan has large deposits of minerals like Lithium which is used in mobile phone batteries. Afghanistan's Oil and Copper fields that are located in North (Amu Darya Basin Oil field) and Kabul (Mes Aynak) attracted the attention of China and it has got its rights, in 2016, Afghanistan signed a memorandum of understanding and put \$100 million for funding in Afghanistan development (Stone, 2019) and China linked Kabul through air corridor with the city of Urumqi, this project was announced under BRI plan. Afghan officials were invited to attend Belt and Road forum in China in May 2017, it has also joined Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank funding BRI projects.

3.6.3 BRI and ASEAN Countries

For ASEAN countries, BRI is a fabulous opening to increase the connectivity and co operational bonding with each other as well as with the world. ASEAS countries would be a partner with China for development of Land Bridge connecting China to South East Asia, South Asia, Indian Ocean and China-Indochina Peninsula Corridor sea route (China-South China Sea-Indian Ocean-Europe). This will surely bring phenomenal development in infrastructural development that would enhance trade and investment along with logistics. The journey has been initiated with the assistance of Chinese funding agencies and construction companies on joint basis. China organized "China-ASEAN Expo and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit" in the month of October 2019 for making more advancement and progression in BRI and now China will initiate its construction work in 2021 for BRI in Southeast Asian countries.

China is heavily investing over ASEAN region and financing in billions like China's trade volume will increase up to US\$1 trillion with ASEAN countries in 2020 and investment would be exceeded to US\$500 billion (Aung, 2019). China is identified as the second largest investor in Myanmar in the year 2018 – 19 and it is the biggest trading ally of China as its trade volume has been increased up to US\$9.6 billion. Myanmar is cooperating on a larger scale with China as it is the main actor for Myanmar China Economic corridor and Myanmar China Border Economic Cooperation Zone, Kyaukphyu Deep sea Port and Special Economic Zone, and Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation Programme. Myanmar is also a part of BCIM Corridor Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar-Economic Corridor. Cambodia is also receiving many investment and trade benefits; construction in Siem Reap is promoting its tourist industry and again improves its connectivity with the other states (Aung, 2019).

3.6.4 BRI and Middle East

BRI is aimed to connect the world for global economic development and collaboration, the belt is comprised of two parts one part is land based linkages, one land based connection will start from East China to Europe via Central Asia and Russia, for North west China, it covers Indo China peninsula and the other one goes from China to gulf countries and Mediterranean. Middle Eastern countries are the biggest export partners of China and dominantly these countries are oil enriched states and many countries are going to turn to China and Russia for exports and trade dependency rather US and on the other hand, China is continuously increasing the investment here since 2005 particularly focusing over Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Algeria. In Middle East, BRI could face serious challenges in term of security, terrorism, long going conflicts, strong US role and presence and insurgencies but China is trying to cater it and to make the conditions feasible. China Central West Asia Economic Corridor and China Pakistan Economic Corridor carry great strategic implications for Gulf Cooperation Council and they are trying to give more importance to Chinese presence in the region in order to balance the power equation for the other world powers (Chas W. Freeman, n.d.).

3.7 BRI in South Asia

BRI project in South Asia is executed and progressed through a chain of capital, laborers, raw material and finished goods, Chinese construction companies are taking contracts of building roads. Ports and railway that are funded by Chinese banks

3.7.1 BRI and Pakistan

Pakistan's friendship with China is an exclusive example of unconditional cooperation, trust and association at every front. Both the countries have a long history of bilateral relations and traditional friendship. Pak China friendship has become a model for neighboring countries because of their strong bonding and understanding over every issue and problem. The fact has proven in international relations that there are no permanent friends and enemies but the only thing that is firm and permanent is, national interest. When it comes to Pakistan China case then it is quite contrary because this friendship is based upon unconditional cooperation and trust in any case. Pakistan and China have established very good economic relations also, China has initiated and completed various mega projects in Pakistan, they have proven highly significant for national development and still many projects are in progress. Among various other developmental programs, a huge and multidimensional project has introduced and also signed by both the countries and it is called revolutionary Pak China Economic Corridor which is the part of huge BRI project. This project basically aims to connect Gwadar port situated in southwest Pakistan to Chinese region of Xinjiang through a heavy network of highways, railways and pipeline for transporting oil and gas. This mega project has worth of \$46 Billion which is considered as the largest Chinese investment in any foreign country, it will provide Trade Bridge to China for Europe, Middle East through Pakistan. It will not only beneficial for Chinese economy but both the countries will definitely get uncountable employment opportunities, business and heavy revenue especially for Pakistan, this project will bring enormous development and economic boost as this sort of project has never been initiated in the country with foreign investment (Bilal, 2014).

This corridor is a part of an initiative that calls for rebuilding of Silk Road. This project will take three years to be completed and after its completion, it will make both the countries strategically powerful, economically strong and prosperous especially

Pakistan would get more basic development. This project was first proposed by Chinese premier Li Keqiang when he visited Pakistan in April 2013, for this purpose, a secretariat was also opened in Islamabad. Chinese government is facilitating Chinese companies financially to build this huge mega project; Chinese government will invest around 33.8 billion dollars in energy projects and 11.8 billion in infrastructure projects. Only for Gwadar port, china will devote 622\$ million (Ali, 2015) which is a huge investment as the control of this port has transferred to china's state-owned china overseas port holding in February 2013. After this transfer, Gwadar has become a full fledge commercial deep-water seaport and still growing very fast because of Chinese financial and logistic involvement. When this corridor builds, it will give enormous benefits to china, china would become more important for its strategic existence and also it will reduce 12,000-kilometer route that oil supplies from middle east taken to reach Chinese ports now a day. China mainly relies upon the shipping route that passes through Strait of Malacca that takes about 45 days to reach Europe via Middle East, after completion of this trade corridor, it will take only 12 days. It will also reduce the importance of Strait of Malacca which can be blocked by United States Pacific Command in days of hostility therefore, through this corridor China would come over its bargaining position. A large portion of this project in Pakistan is devoted to energy generation as it is the immediate need of energy starved Pakistan and rest of it is comprised of infrastructural development like roads and highways. This corridor will be stretched from one state to another like it will start from Himalayan mountain and touch Arabian sea at the end, this project is quite similar to US highway and German Autobahn systems that stretched to all corners of a region, it passes through different states and for every state, there are certain entry and exit points. It is really very important for Pakistan because Pakistan always need a plan that not only provide it revenue but also lots of jobs and infrastructural development for a long time. Pak China economic corridor will surely bring enormous benefits to the country and people of this country (Khan, 2013).

China will also get great gains in the form of small and secure trade routes, china is the world's biggest oil importer and it always needs short and secure trade routes, if its trade routes become short and safe then it would ultimately eliminate the cost of its imports especially oil. China is planning to build an oil refinery and oil storage facility on Gwadar

port, energy is the greatest concern of China, if gas pipelines from Iran pass through Pakistan then China's worries about security would ultimately lessen. Iran has shown its consensus over linking Pak Iran gas pipeline project with China. This project will connect south Asia with East Asia and through this step, it will add pace in regional integrity process.

3.7.1.1 Overview of Pakistan China Economic Cooperation

Pakistan came into being on 14th August 1947 and Peoples Republic of China established on 1st October 1949, Pakistan recognized China in 1950; Pakistan was the third noncommunist and first Muslim state to recognized China. Diplomatic ties were established between these two countries in year 1951, till 1957 Pakistan was quite inactive in this regard as it was an ally of west but during 1957 to 1969, these relations got a sudden but concrete boost that turned the relations into unconditional friendship between both although in international politics, there is no permanent enemy or friend but in case of China and Pakistan, this statement has become failed because after more than sixty years of friendship, their relations are growing stronger. China has contributed a lot in political and strategic scenario of Pakistan, against Indian offense towards Pakistan, China is always there along Pakistan side like it assisted diplomatically in 1965 war against India and it really solidified their relations. In every worst situation, china came quickly for support at diplomatic and military fronts but for economic assistance, their bilateral relations were not much warming because of Chinese closed socialist economy like Soviet model.

China allowed other countries entrance into its economy when economic reforms took place in China in 1978 during the reign of Deng Xiaoping. They decided to get rid of Soviet style policies and tried to adopt free market principle. In 1979, China opened its borders for international corporate and since that time, both the counties have established strong bilateral economic relations like their mutual investments have grown dramatically and China has invested almost \$1.3 billion dollars so far in Pakistan (Rafiq, 2017). Many Chinese companies have engaged in Pakistan and working in almost every sector, Pakistan is a very profitable market for Chinese goods and this happened because of convenient trade flows and open policies. Chinese imports are the reason of market pace although

Pakistan's exports towards china are quite less in numbers but in spite of this fact, Chinese cooperation is growing day by day. During 2008 and 2010, bilateral trade had reached to seven billion dollars and it is still rising (Rafiq, 2017). Pakistan has always a trade deficit as it has more imports than exports for China, Pakistan is not as highly industrialized state as China is and that is why, Pakistan is more dependent on Chinese economy than others. China and Pakistan reached to a milestone in economic cooperation journey in November 2003 when they signed a bilateral preferential trade agreement that was actually a free trade agreement. Motive of this agreement is to facilitate trading activities easy and feasible because China has always been conscious about investing in Pakistan and this agreement will be enforced very soon as five rounds of negotiations have been completed so far to resolve the prospective difficulties.

3.7.1.2 Pak China Economic Corridor and Its Motives

This corridor has a simple defined motive that is profitable long-term investment across the continents but it is an apparent view of this huge multidimensional project. Pak China economic corridor is really a multipurpose project which has numerous aspects that will contribute in china and other participant countries' economic and infrastructural growth. It has also many political and strategic objectives that will ultimately achieve through economic benefits. Foremost factor is to counter US influence in the region, according to a report by London based think tank named Catham House: “the increasing complexity of the Asia-Pacific region demands US attention, and the United States remains well-positioned to play a pivotal role in the region through the 21st century.’ Asia Pacific region has various complexities and to tackle this region US is ready to enter into the scenario. In term of economic corridor, China is trying to balance the situation and to maintain its position strong in the region and China decided to take Pakistan as an ally and partner in this venture as Pakistan is a trustworthy friend and also a balancing actor because it has good relations with both the superpower rivals. China has invested immense capital in Pakistan for many developmental projects and infrastructural building plans regarding CPEC, reason is not only the national development but it is an attempt to facilitate Chinese goods to travel through Pakistan quickly and safely. When there are better communication and transportation facilities in the country, it will ultimately provide ease and security to the Chinese activities within Pakistani territory (Salman, 2014). As

far as different power projects are concerned, these projects are utterly important for China if it really wants to survive in energy starved Pakistan for CPEC establishment. Although all these initiatives are like jewel in the crown for Pakistan because they are the most needed and long-awaited steps that must have taken in the past by national government.

3.7.1.3 Objectives of CPEC

- *To Gather Economic Actors on Defined Geography*

CPEC is a part of a very big inter and intra-regional project which is called as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it is comprised of six corridors and Pakistan is the part of first corridor that starts from Pakistan and ends on Turkey. In this vast sort of plan where many continents will connect with a single route is actually giving a golden opportunity to different economic actors across the world to come together and join each other through a defined single land route.

- *Bridging a Divided Geography*

This economic corridor is potentially striving to join scattered economic zones throughout the world. It is trying to pulling together some small regions for better business, more markets and uninterrupted supply of goods. In the world economy there are many economic nodes or hubs, these hubs are mostly situated in urban landscape where more economic resources and actors are present and this trade corridor is attempting to gather active actors on a defined geography.

- *Integrated Economic Network*

By attaching different economic actors of different regions in one chain, an integrated economic network will be evolved that will participate in the prosperity of the world. This corridor will give equal chances to all states for introducing and selling their goods in better conditions and desirable price. It will also help to build infrastructure where it is needed to be advanced and up to date. There is a need to work out some mutually accepted rules and regulations for this upcoming integrated economic network.

- *Development of Regional Markets*

As compare to South Asia, East Asia has better performance in key manufacturing sectors and also has strong integration across the borders. By coming closer through CPEC, all regional markets like South Asian markets that have low trade performance will work hard to compete the other connecting markets.

- *Transport Network Completeness*

Through CPEC, newly transcontinental trade routes will be improved and enhanced, it is quite hard to maintain uniformity in building, sustaining and maintaining different routes and roads regarding this inter and intra continental trading program but this economic corridor's think tanks are planning to launch different infrastructural development programs in related countries according to their circumstances and conditions.

- *Market Access Capability Development*

Through this trade route, different sorts and nature of markets will join each other or maybe they start working on other successful business trend or entity. They could be merged to gather or could be performed as a sole individual entity but they will ultimately give boost to this route and this corridor will devote them enormous business which these countries can't achieved without being the part of this great plan.

3.7.1.4 Strategic Importance of CPEC

International politics is highly complex in nature, it has hidden objectives, interests, conspiracies and implications, and it is the duty of state authorities to identify, understand and sort out the feasible strategy. For every new national or international plan, international lobbies drastically initiated to calculate profits and loss at every level and then, started their work over it to attain possible profit or interests. Same has happened in CPEC case, when this plan launched and global actors started discussing about it as it is a quite huge economic and strategic developmental program therefore, it ultimately has multidimensional effects over world economy and social development pace. Pakistan is a pivotal part of this plan and assisting China to achieve its objectives. It is a known fact that Pakistan and China are all weather friend and they will never intend to distract their

interests at any cost. They have signed agreement and primary level work has been started on the project as Pakistan is not only the best ally of China in the region but also possess enormous strategic importance. Chinese government has blind faith on Pakistan's friendship that it never allows to use its territory against Chinese interest but it tried to make their relations more strengthen and unshaken, it initiated the economic corridor plan. China is an economic giant; it has the potential and sources to pursue its plans without engaging itself into a long term plan but it is the strategic location and importance of Pakistan that convince them to make Pakistan a major partner of this economic boost program which also has political and strategic importance. Pakistan's location on the globe is considered as the most ideal position as it has all the seasons, it is blessed with sea and rivers, world most famous and long mountain ranges are there and also having large natural reserves. If we examine its location then we can easily identify that it is surrounded by two economic regional powers India and China on the other hand, it's two neighboring countries Iran and Afghanistan have largest and most precious reserves of natural resources. Its sea (Arabian Sea) is connected to the Persian Gulf and it also gives access to warm water to land locked countries. Pakistan's border with Iran and Afghanistan can earn \$500 million through transit fees; Stephen Cohen described Pakistan's geo strategic importance as,

“While history has been unkind to Pakistan, its geography has been its greatest benefit. It has resource rich area in the north-west, people rich in north-east.” (Ali, 2014)

When the world became unipolar again after USSR disintegration, for the sole world power (USA) it was too difficult but obligatory to counter the way of another world power. It was an era when regionalism was taking the place of bipolar world phenomenon and different regional powers were emerging on the base of their economic stability, in Europe it was European Union which clearly out classed US hegemony in the European region but most of the European countries are close allies of US because of NATO and cold war western sphere. In Asia, it was china that was attempting to take the title of regional power of Asia, it was the time when China decided to open its market for the world and to leave Soviet sort of economy working pattern. It was time to actually rethink the whole scenario but suddenly 9/11 incident happened and everything changed

drastically, Pakistan took part in the retaliation attempts with the name of War against Terror from US side, it was front line state because US wanted to fight against Afghan Mujahedeen later called as Taliban. Pakistan has always been a close ally of United States of America therefore, it had to enter into Soviet Afghan war in 1979 and at this stage, and it had to permit US to use its territory and resources to pursue its objective of this war. US always wants to maintain its influence over Pakistan through various means because it is totally aware of Pakistan's strategic importance and can see the long-term significance. Being a superpower, it is also much cautious about prospective constrains and rivals of the region, being a close ally of Pakistan, it is very easy for US to know the growing influence of any state in the region.

US is situated on the other side of the world therefore; it must have some friendly state that can safeguard their interests in a particular region and Pakistan has filled this gap properly. In spite of fulfilling US interests in the South Asian region, Pakistan has to consider the regional ties and requirements that's why it never disturb its relations with China in any situation. US always wants to establish its influence over the region, it wants to keep its eyes on Iran (for nuclear matter), Afghanistan (for Taliban reason) and for this purpose, it has made its existence possible in Asia by appearing as a close friend of Pakistan. To counter Chinese expansion, US is working along India and setting its corporate lines there. As everyone knows about tense relations of India and China over border and Tibetan issue and it is also a rival state to Pakistan so, US chose India to cater Chinese influence across the region.

In this economic corridor journey, Iran is also included as it will provide oil to China and pipelines will pass through Pakistan's territory. US have declared Iran a Rogue state of the world now, another US's enemy has entered into the corridor plan. It is an oil producing country and now a day, oil is considered as the compulsory component for industrial development of a state and friendly relations with oil producing country means uninterrupted supply of oil and gas for boosting industries and communication pace which is obvious in Chinese case. US cannot afford China to grow rapidly and to take over its markets that's why it is backing India to stop the way. India is continuously stating against Pakistan China Economic Corridor and registered its protest for recently signed \$46

billion project (Roy, 2019). India has shown its reservations for China is routing the corridor through Kashmir but President Xi Jinping rejected all of them and called it “a commercial Project”. India has launch international campaign against the project and India is raising its voice on every available platform against the program. US, China and India are far better than Pakistan in term of economy, law and order and influence but its strategic importance is unbeatable and matchless, due to this reason, Pakistan still has the potential to get high importance in world affairs and exhibit its strength because of geo political significance and its nuclear capabilities.

3.7.2 BRI and India

In spite of being an active economic and trade entity of the world, India strongly opposed BRI and showed serious concern over its territorial integrity and sovereignty, its stance is that BRI has some hidden strategic motives and this is not what China is projecting. Indian analysts claim that connectivity plan must have the elements of universally recognized international norms, good governance, transparency and equality, it should be attained and executed in a manner that value the territorial unity and sovereignty of a state. Indian officials claim that there is a lack of consultation with the important prospective partner and also ambiguity in the plan is also there which made the state reluctant to welcome BRI in India, China’s continuous presence in Indian Ocean region because of one of the BRI corridor is also not acceptable for India. India has a long list of apprehensions like BRI would bring corruption, political instability, environmental issues, uneven balance of power with reference to neighborhood and most dominantly, it is a debt trap for countries and ultimately the situation would lead to “Neo Colonialism” (Bansari, Kamdar., 2019).

There are certain important aspects for India’s reaction towards BRI, first is India considers itself as a regional power of this area and would not allow any other state to share or intervene here as India is especially concerned about small countries of South Asia that are part of BRI infrastructure and connectivity projects like small South Asian countries and states lying along the shore of Indian Ocean as India considers this ocean as its backyard as it has a long history of influence over this region. It is evident that in case of BRI development and projects, China would get edge over India regarding these

countries. Another most important aspect is the China Pakistan Economic Corridor which is one of the flagship projects of BRI in South Asia. Indian stance is, this corridor will run through Azad Kashmir therefore, this will assume a violation of Indian Sovereignty and they focused over the issue of sovereignty for opposing CEPEC. Currently, India refused to attend and participated second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) on April 26 and 27 2019 held in China and it also boycotted the first BRF in 2017 for concerns over CEPEC and its route in Pakistan.

3.7.3 BRI and Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an active participant of BRI as Sri Lanka has very close ties with China since a long time and for this project China is proposing and working over many mega plans for more close connectivity. As a long time, trading partner, China and Sri Lanka are working for Free Trade Agreement moreover Sri Lanka is also a member of Asian infrastructure investment bank (AIIB) (Anon., 2019). BRI has two kinds of program, one is to develop connectivity through roads and for that purpose, a land route is proposed between China and Europe via Russia and the other one is, Maritime Silk Road aims to connect countries through new sea routs and infrastructure. Sri Lanka is more connected to the latter one as it is located in the middle of Indian Ocean and will provide a transit route to China and other South East Asian countries. Currently China's imports related to energy and mineral from Africa are mainly passing through Sri Lanka. Under BRI, AIIB has passed funds up to 32 Billion dollars for further infrastructural development in Sri Lanka.

China has put 1.4 billion dollar for the infrastructure building of Colombo International Financial City that would be an integral and operational part of BRI, it is actually a plan to build a technological advance and developed financial hub along the coastline of Colombo that will operate Sri Lanka's economic, business and financial activities by 2030. The port of Hambantota possesses great importance to Chinese energy security and displacement, China operates its oil shipping through South but through this Sri Lankan port, but now with the establishment of Hambantota port, it facilitates the trade and shipping of energy resources to a very large extend and reducing the fears regarding the main port of Colombo. Initially Sri Lanka rejected this offer in 2008 because of the

Chinese financing and debt conditions as well as Sri Lanka wanted to maintain its control over the port. Currently China has resumed and taken over the project through additional funding through joint venture with Sri Lanka, China has hold 70% of it share and remaining own by the authorities. There are various other projects in pipeline like development of many industrial estates, expansion of Colombo port and construction of Mattala Rajapaksa Airport.

3.7.4 BRI and Bangladesh

Bangladesh is an active partner of BRI and crucial strategic stakeholder, it signed memorandum of understanding and agreements with China, under these agreements Bangladesh will receive \$26 billion USD especially for the collaborative plans for BRI and some joint venture developmental projects were also signed and \$14 billion USD was approved and transferred to Bangladeshi government (Muniruzzaman, 2019). Bangladesh occupies a very important position and location in Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean therefore, among six BRI corridors; one maritime corridor will pass through Bangladesh. This corridor is plan to start at Kunming passes through Myanmar then enters into north eastern side by crossing Bangladesh and finally ending in Kolkata. There is some confusion related to this corridor as the role and inclusion of India in BRI has not been decided yet.

3.7.5 BRI and Nepal

Being a South Asian state and immediate southern neighbor of China, Nepal is also a part of BRI and signed MoU on it. After signing MoU, the details are still left to be discussed and Nepali government should be active to do follow up work. Nepal has attended Belt and Road form and also signed various infrastructure developmental projects including roads, power grid, industrial parks and bridges. These projects will strengthen the China Nepal bond for South Asian trade. Nepal – China corridor has been proposed under BRI, there is another trilateral project including China-Nepal-India project but its feasibility is not clear because of the Indian reluctance for BRI.

3.7.6 BRI and Bhutan

Bhutan took the same path that is following by India as it is an ally of India and highly dominated by Indian influence. According to India, BRI is a violation of Indian

sovereignty and integrity and showed its concerns over the route of CEPEC through Azad Kashmir, Bhutan took the same stance and refused to participate in Belt and Road forum in 2017 and 2019 just like Indian government. China is continuously trying to make the situation clam and diplomatically sound as Bhutan don't have Chinese embassy over there, Chinese ambassador to India frequently visited Thimpu and now Bhutan has shown its consensus over negotiation for the issues of mutual interests.

3.7.7 BRI and Maldives

Maldives is a part of BRI Maritime Silk Road and has signed a memorandum of understanding with China on Dec 2017 when the president AbdulahYameen visited Beijing, it also entered into Free Trade Agreement with China. Initially China did not prioritize Maldives in its foreign policy even it did not establish its embassy in Male but when Chinese president Xi Jinping visited the country in Sep 2014, China established relations with Male for having its presence in the region and started funding mega infrastructure projects, the main project was friendship bridge connecting Male to Hulhule Island, 1000 apartment housing project in Hulhule (Ramachandran, 2019).

3.8 BRI Plan in the context of Conflict and Competition

China's BRI plan announced world connectivity and global cooperation across the continents, in less developed and developing countries, China is enormously investing for better infrastructure and advanced connectivity in the form of land and railway routes, China putting billions of dollars build linkages and to integrate states of three continents into one road. The world is looking at another side of this project, as it is called as debt trap diplomacy as a garb to take control of ports, roads, highways and railways across the half of the world. India, Japan and US are not in favor of this BRI plan as it is increasing the dominant influence of China.

As the study is about South Asia, India is the important and dominant state of this region and it has various differences and conflict with China over BRI. First of all, China and Pakistan both are important actors of South Asia and Pakistan as a close ally of China is an integral part of Chinese BRI plan because one of the corridors of plan is crossing the state and China is putting enormous investments over it. China Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC) is providing Pakistan the best opportunity to have sound infrastructure and industrial development, in other words, China is extending its presence in Pakistan and India is not ready to accept this dual enemy presence in his neighbor. Except Bhutan, all South Asian countries have signed MOU with China, India that is not a signatory of this plan is pursuing the road of conflict and putting many allegations that China's huge reserves of foreign exchange were idle therefore, China tried to utilize its reserves and to keep them in moving process, it started this project. US also not happy with this step because it will diminish its role in the region as well as in Europe and Africa. India has also concern over the route of the CPEC as it is crossing Azad Kashmir that's why India assumed it as a violation of its territorial integrity and sovereignty (Ahmed, 2019). Besides economic implications, this plan has a vast range of strategic impact over existing political and security situation in South Asia, whenever it comes to South Asia, India and Pakistan are the two main actors. Their interests always coincide with each other and their conflicts spread their implications across the world, more developed Pakistan and China's support for Pakistan in every issue ultimately threaten and weakened India's position. India is also not feeling comfortable with the encirclement by China's BRI beneficiary countries that were formerly India's dependent states. These things are evolving in creating and elevating more contradictions and conflicts between the two important states of this region. Balance of power or the distribution of power in the region is another important aspect because of it, many conflicts are evolving in South Asia, a continuous tussle between two regional powers India and China is going on like in Maldives,

There are more conflicts are becoming evident as in Maldives, China is pushing hard to establish its role here for its connectivity plan and India is trying to pursue its plan, both have different or rather conflicting maritime strategies crossing this small Indian ocean nation. India is competing to have more political influence over this tiny island but China is investing heavily as this island is a part of its maritime corridor to East Asia, Maldives endorsed this initiative and utilized China's money in building infrastructure like US\$830 million for rebuilding of airport and a bridge to connect Airport Island with the capital Male. Three Chinese naval ships stayed at the coast of Male in August last year and this aggravated India concerns for BRI (Ramachandran, 2019).

China is also accused of imposing debt schemes over less developed countries that are focusing over these investments, the world is pointing out the debt to equity deal through which China has gained control over Sri Lankan port but still from Laos to Tajikistan, countries are signing the heavy investment projects with China in spite of having the fear of being burdened by Chinese debt conditions and implications.

Another claim is the lack of transparency, the factor which is creating discontentment and conflicts is not telling the reliable list of projects as China officially announced one trillion dollar investment in this plan but according to independent sources, it is not more than some hundred billion and for China it is very difficult to make the world clear about the amount of the investment putting in these projects and the debt which is still ambiguous that how they are giving and on what conditions, states are lending these money.

Next thing is mug organizations for operating the functions and developmental processes, apparently BRI is supposed to be a centrally run project but practically China has allowed many locally run organizations, banks and state backed institutions for working in this mega project and this is the instance where the problem begins. Some infrastructural deal is usually done behind closed doors and states are not supposed to disclose them like Malaysia and Pakistan, as a result these deals are also making doubts and for the other sectors and departments of state remains stuck and confused regarding the continuation of this transnational projects.

For many geo political analysts, it is not just a business but it is an attempt to spread the supremacy of one state because BRI is not just an infrastructural initiative for the betterment of the world but it is actually countering the global power influence in the particular region and making US isolated and confined to its own continent. It is posing serious security threats and strategic challenges to the world as well as for the other global and regional powers. In South Asia, as India is not the part of this BRI plan and the reason is, not to accept Chinese growing power and influence in the region. In Europe and Asia region, China is unifying Central Asian countries and making them dependent due to enormous investment is threatening for US because these countries are having high amount of energy reserves as well as located on a very significant strategic position. In

Indian and Pacific Ocean, presence of Chinese Naval forces is another threat to India and US and a warning call that China is increasing the circle of influence around the world.

BRI is also give rise to the competition in the region therefore, along with conflicts, discontentment and differences; the notion of competition was also evident in South Asia after the introduction of BRI. As it has discussed earlier that in South Asia, India was the only influential state that was dominant over every issue of South Asia but after BRI project, states were very conscious and aspirant to become a part of BRI and now they are receiving aid, investment, money, security, assistance and infrastructural development but India don't want to be vanished in the scenario and in order to secure Indian Ocean trade routes, India and China are in a competition over Maldives and Sri Lanka. Maldives's former President was not in favor of India and its influence over Maldives so, he welcomed China and BRI but after his defeat in election in Sep, 2018 new president Ibrahim Mohammad Salih came and PM Narendra Modi gave 1.4 \$ billion aid and new government raised the issue of debt by China for the cost of constructing the China-Maldives friendship bridge which is the part of BRI plan (Bhattacharjee, 2018). In Sri Lanka, India is also trying to stay in front of China by a profitable investment for oil refinery constructing by Chennai based firm, it is going to be established alongside the southern shore of Hambantota. This would be the biggest investment in Sri Lanka by foreign country and this is only because to counter the economic influence of China in Sri Lanka, it cannot be compared with Chinese gigantic investment but this act keeps them aware of an opponent in the region. Colombo exchanged its equity in the port in swap for debt relief in Hambantota by granting a Chinese firm a 99-year lease to operate it.

Nepal and Bhutan are two tiny buffer states where the competition of two regional powers is going on; Beijing has given approval to 35 projects for the infrastructure building of Nepal for BRI initiatives. In Bangladesh and Myanmar, India has made its entry with trilateral developmental programs under neighborhood first policy. Except Pakistan all the small countries of South Asia were traditionally under the multiple influence of India are now openly welcoming Beijing's fascinating economic and developmental proposals which is emerging as a great challenge for the strategic bonding of India and posing threats for more intense competition in the region.

3.9 Prominent Conflicts in South Asia and their Implications over BRI

3.9.1 Afghanistan and Conflicts

Since several years, Afghanistan has been taking crucial place in discussing the world peace, security and stability. After 9/11 incident that entirely changed the course of the history made Afghanistan a nucleus of world security dilemma and notion of terrorism. Afghanistan has not been a developed or advanced state but it is highly significant in term of geopolitical or strategic outcomes as it lies between South Asia and central Asia as well as it also opens the door to middle east, it itself a land lock country but it provides lots of transit routes. Firstly, its importance was realized by USSR and it attacked over it in the name of preserving communist regime or to establish a communist state here or to counter the US influence here in the region.

Back in history, Afghanistan carried great significance as located along the Silk Road that gave a chance to Afghanistan to connect with the people of middle East and the other parts of Asia, As it is located on a position which is strategically and militarily possessed great importance because many military invasions for Asia initiated from this region like Alexander used this route to conquer this part of the world, Mauryas, Mongols, Arabs, Persian, British and Soviet with the agenda of spreading communist ideology here and finally USA who came and shook the world with the term terrorism and moved Afghanistan 50 years back with broken and distorted infrastructure and political system. Pakistani involvement as the most important ally of US and with the affiliation of Taliban who formerly belong to FATA region is evident (Alizada, 2018).

In 18th century Afghanistan was enjoying monarchies with the Hotak and Durrani dynasties but in 19th century, Afghanistan turned into a partner of a great game between Russia and India under British government, Britain always wanted smooth and peaceful relations with Afghan rulers so, it could deter Russia for attacking over India. During British rule, they developed boundary called Durand line between the states but Afghan government didn't recognize it and it caused bitterness in the relations with Pakistan even after many years of independence. After third Anglo Afghan war 1919, monarchy established by Amanullah khan but when Zahir Shah overthrew, an attempt of establishing a republic was made and soon it declared itself a socialist state and this led to the Soviet

Afghan war which was a part of US-USSR proxy war in the region and it continued for 11 years and ended in 1989 just before the disintegration of USSR. In 1990s, the mujahedeen who were fighting against Russia to defend Afghanistan and Islam, now taken over the government and till 1996, most of the area of Afghanistan was ruling by Taliban Islamic fundamentalist regime. Continuous controversy between Taliban regime and international world went on until 9/11 happened and US intervened here and removed the government of Taliban accused of operating Al-Qaida a terrorist organization, allegedly involved in that 9/11 attack. New democratic government was elected but still Taliban have their control over majority of the area of Afghanistan (Alizada, 2018).

This Taliban regime has become a main reason of threat and worry for the world because of increasing terrorism in the region especially Pakistan as a non-NATO ally as well as for the western world because Al-Qaida was not a regionally operated organization but it was a worldwide network that was functioning and taking instructions from Afghanistan therefore, it was necessary to take some actions but as the world was witnessed many years of result less combat between Taliban and NATO forces in Afghanistan which only brought casualties and terrible destruction which also affecting the future mega plans going on in the region therefore, many rounds of talks held sometimes between NATO and Taliban, sometimes Taliban and US with the mediation of Afghan government since 2007. A round of talks held with Afghan, Chinese and US officials hosted by Pakistan in January 2016. China was highly interested and willing to have its role in the peace process because China with the growing interest in the region as well as to counter the influence of US, wanted greater share in a new settlement. In June 2018, Taliban representatives from Qatar visited China and received state guest welcome, China's growing interest in Afghan peace talks indicates that China wants stable Afghanistan not for itself but also for US because according to them, a stable Afghanistan can help to build trust and cooperation between US and China for their common interests. China urged Pakistan for arranging or for persuading Taliban for talks as Pakistan has been a great supporters of the regime back in 1990s. China relations with Pakistan and now with Afghanistan cannot have a match because according to an USA institute, China has been investing 3.5 billion dollar since 2005 on the other hand China is the biggest economic and military investor in Pakistan, investment is of more than 60 billion dollars

as the highway (CPEC) which is going to connect Gwadar with Xinjiang is the main part of BRI (Mat Nashed, 2019). By giving military aid and assistance, it is also trying to safeguard the future strategic development in these areas. BRI is gradually working to diffuse some really intense conflicts of the region and Taliban talks are the best example in this regard.

3.9.2 China with Iran and Middle East Conflicts

Iran and Saudi Arabia is involved in an Arabia cold war and in various countries of middle east, they have their allies and interests as they were representing Sunni or Wahhabi and Shia school of thoughts and on this basis, the Islamic world is now splitting up and pursuing their interests with the assistance of these two influential states of Islamic world. These countries were supporting many conflicts even civil wars in Yemen and Iraq even Bahrain, Lebanon, Qatar, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Morocco. This conflict has multiple dimensions like it has sectarian, strategic and economic aspects but also the goal of regional hegemony is also working there. USA is with its longtime ally in Middle East means Saudi Arabia whereas Russia and China are with Iran. Being a regional neighbor and strategic partner, China is trying to maintain balance with Tehran as well as Riyadh because its interest is to gain economic advantages without completely indulging into the conflict, on the other hand, it also competing with the years old presence of US in middle Eastern region but its major concern is to alleviate tension in the region by equally investing in Iran with 600 billion dollar bilateral trade and 70 billion dollars in Saudi Aramco five percent shares (Ivan Lidarev, 2017).

For slowing down the situation, one of the greatest reasons is BRI plan of China that ultimately requires China's effective and influential role in Middle East and access to the Persian Gulf energy resources and Middle East market. BRI one corridor is going to pass from Middle East and the growing tension between Saudi and Iran in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Qatar will distort the huge infrastructure building in the region or might pose a serious challenge for BRI strategic design. Violent and undermined Middle East and a threatened infrastructure projects will ultimately end the importance and viability of BRI in the region. The situation is quite complicated for China because Middle Eastern countries are divided into two camps Pro Irani or Pro Saudi camps and in order to extract

the benefits from the plan, China has to introduce in the complicated geopolitics of the region to prevent BRI from obstruction and disruption through talks, mediation and pressure. As compare to Saudi Arabia, china is more closely linked with Iran first, because of regional location secondly, Iran can benefit China in an exclusive way that Saudis cannot because BRI will continue if Iran and China would have close cooperation ties and conflict resolution mood because Iran will give access to China to central Asian states, Persian Gulf, idle East, extreme west part of Asia that touches with the border of Europe so, the whole corridor could have sound and uninterrupted path. Another dimension is, Iran as a hostile state towards US and it increases its reliability in the eyes of China. For economic reasons, Iran is a big market for Chinese products and Chinese companies can have continuous supply of oil from one of the largest oil producing countries of the world (Chas W. Freeman, n.d.).

Due to the initiation of BRI in Middle East, China is going to establish close ties to Iran as these relations would have strategic gains for China. The foremost reason is, Iran would be more beneficial for safeguarding Chinese interests in the region as compare to Saudi Arabia as Iran possesses the location which can connect China to Central Asia, Persian Gulf and in westward Europe is also accessible to China. Iran USA hostilities increases the Chinese dependency over Iran and its vast market with large population would boost the Chinese investment and products availability in the region. Iran's primary significance is because of its energy production resources, Chinese companies have got an enormous opportunity to work independently as US involvement is zero because of sanctions. Iran's geographical location becomes more important when it comes to Euro-Asian regional gas infrastructure program. On the contrary, Saudi Arab has not any significant role in BRI because of its little population, no strategic location and US influence in spite of being the second largest oil supplier for China.

3.9.3 Indo Pak Conflict and BRI

India is the only state in South Asia that is opposing Chinese mega BRI project as it looks at the plan as a violation of state sovereignty. India has many issues regarding the BRI corridor which aims to connect Gwadar with Chinese province crossing whole Pakistani territory including Pakistani held Kashmir. It would be so close with LOC that

it could definitely affect the activities in Indian part of Kashmir, India doesn't want any interruption through this step and after ending Kashmir special status in August 2019 could lead to more tensed situation but China is actually playing a role of war avoider through heavy investment in the region, China assisting Pakistani armed forces budget through heavy investments which will ultimately add the element of strengths on the one front of conflict. India is deploying heavy number of forces on the border and putting pressure but Pakistan knows that they are not in a condition to effect the integrity of state as well as the possibility of shattering BRI project physically (Ahmed, 2019).

China's project of BRI is to connect deep sea port of Gwadar with China to facilitate its trade and economy as well as for the military cooperation, this imbalance of power could not be acceptable for India and USA and now USE is moving its interest towards India instead of Pakistan as it has suspended Pakistan aid of around 2 billion dollars but the most important conflict that has direct negative implications is Baluchistan issue, Baloch insurgency and liberation front, although the intensity of conflict has been reduced but it still carries great importance as India was allegedly involve in the terrorist activities and militancy in Baluchistan which is not suitable for the security of Gwadar port and CPEC. There are various threats for the security of CPEC as many Chinese engineers have been killed by insurgents but with the time passed, the situation became peaceful as Pakistani government deployed 17,177 security personnel from armed forces and other security forces (Khetran, 2017). After the arrest of Kalbhoshan Yadav, an Indian spy the role of Indian interference in domestic affairs and the security of Gwadar and sabotage of Chinese corridor was confirmed as India is the only country that is not the art of BRI plan in Asia and because of its rejection, it is also influencing Bhutan for not becoming a part of BRI. Indian involvement in Kashmir and recent accession of Kashmir can also affect the relations as well as overall relation mechanism of South Asia as it is a chain reaction process. Conflicts between India and Pakistan are still continuing with the changing dimensions and nature but the other international and regional development like BRI which has huge effects and implications for the world will surely affect by the India counter.

China is an equal stake holder in Kashmir issue especially after BRI project because as it involves the whole territory of Pakistan along with the Azad Kashmir area crossing the Pakistan till the coast of Baluchistan. Kashmir is a matter of discontentment and bitterness between Pakistan and India as it is a legacy of partition by British government back in 1947. After ending the special status of Kashmir by Indian government in August 2019, the situation became intense in the region and India as the biggest opponent of BRI in the region as well as an aggressive partner in Kashmir issue on the contrary, Pakistan as a biggest ally and partner of China and BRI as well as the immediate hostile neighbor of India are countering each other with the back of USA and China respectively. Since 5 August, Indian held Kashmir is under curfew and highly tense situation is going on, Pakistan is raising its voice on every possible forum even in UN Security Council but no international initiative has been taken so far. On the other hand, BRI/CPEC is passing through Kashmir of Pakistani side is very near to line of control and because of the intense situation in the area, the routine activities have been disturbed because of the military monitoring and border area. This mega project requires utmost security and continuous surveillance which is not possible in this situation. This conflict in the region will ultimately affect the other projects of BRI therefore, there is a need to diffuse the conflict and increase the cooperation between and among the states of South Asia for better and developed infrastructure and secure Asian region.

4. BRI: CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH ASIAN PARTICIPANTS OF THE PROJECT

4.1 South Asia and regional constrains

4.1.1 Pakistan and the other South Asian Countries

BRI is an initiative which is going to integrate the world's different countries with one cooperation plan through ground and maritime routes. Its implications for the world are multidimensional and has varied sort of nature, in the case of South Asia where most of the countries are in the process of development and they really need to have some financial and technological assistance that must be uninterrupted and influential. South Asian politics is mostly dominated by India Pakistan relations and their many years old conflicts and animosity, both the countries have different nature of relations with China and because of that reason, India still has not been the partner of China in this project as it has its own risks and concerns. Contrary to India, Pakistan has the history of unstable political scenario since its beginning like after independence, assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan (first prime minister of Pakistan) created political chaos in Pakistan, afterward, government was taken over by bureaucrats which hindered the people's wishes and demands for their rights meanwhile, the issues of discrimination and under representation was arising in East Pakistan that led to the separation of Eastern wing of Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh. Long eras of Marshal Law governments of Ayub and Zia with their affiliation of US restricted other big powers to establish their interactive relations with Pakistani governments. Afghan war and then post 9/11 scenario in Afghanistan and Pakistan discouraged foreign powers to invest and interfere here, from 1991 till 1998, four different governments came and gone that ensured the world about Pakistan's unstable political system and ineffectiveness of constitution. This sort of situation could not go in the favor of foreign investment and long-term developmental projects therefore; Pakistan didn't experience to be a part of a multilateral forum and gained any significant advantage

of it. One more reason which is highly evident in this regard is, the nature of relations between India and Pakistan that has always been conflicting and contradictory as there is the element of mistrust and hostility between them. The most prominent example is the Pakistan Iran gas pipeline project which is still not completed as there are various concerns of India, US and Saudi Arabia, USA was threatening Pakistan for not extending the project otherwise Iranian sanctions would ultimately impose on Pakistan, Saudi Arab proposed Pakistan an alternative financial plan or aid if Pakistan is not pursuing this project as Iran and Saudi differences are going to be more deepen and disastrous for the region and Pakistan has friendly ties with both the countries. India has different type of fears like this pipeline will be extended to India and India is not ready to have Pakistan as an active stake holder in this plan, this project maritime boundaries have two branches one will run from Pakistan and the other will run to Kutch. Another threat is from Baloch insurgents who can attack over the project and related infrastructure. Indian government is certain that in this case, Pakistan would have an edge over Indian strategic assets and because of this reason; this project has not been initiated yet.

4.1.2 Challenges for Pakistan related to BRI

4.1.2.1 Strategic Imbalance

Specifically in the context of Indo Pak relations and BRI, there are very crucial implications for both the countries, India Pakistan both are nuclear states and they have high level of threat, mistrust and deterrence, in this situation, China as a regional power tries to maintain balance in its policies towards Pakistan and India as China is a closest and trustworthy partner of Pakistan since a long time therefore, presence of Pakistan in this one belt one road project was compulsory but India as a neighboring and legacy holder country, China has to consider its hegemonic and dominant role in the region and ensure its presence in the project as without having India in BRI, this road cannot be completed and get uninterrupted land and sea connection.

In achieving strategic balance between these two countries, there are various other important aspects like the role of US cannot be ignored while China strengthening ties with Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries as USA has introduced free and open Indo pacific strategy and it is increasing the perception in Chinese circle that

balancing Pakistan with India policy might not be significant for China anymore. There are various arguments in favor of India because as compare to Pakistan it is economically and politically more stable and has wide experience and reputation in the field of diplomacy and it is working to strengthen its partnership with US and Japan because they both are in favor of China's bigger role in the region. At the same time, India has maintained its old and close relations with Russia which is aspirant of (Iwanek, 2020). Some Chinese scholar circles are not favoring Pakistan as Chinese strategic partner because they think that because of security lapse and strategic domain curtailed by India and USA, Pakistan could not be a beneficent partner for China in the future as it has been labeled as terrorist state by the west and India also. The intensified Kashmir issue has become another reason of concern for China as it will definitely hinder the process and progression in the BRI project and CPEC, Chinese think tank identified the need to warn Pakistan that it should work over its internal political machinery and wants them not to put negative obstructive impact over the construction of economic corridor in Pakistan which is the flagship project of BRI in South Asia. Another area of working for Pakistan is to improve its internal development through Pakistan's leadership not by China through CPEC as it is not a reformation act rather a business and development model.

4.1.2.2 The Debt Challenges

Another immediate and important issue arising for South Asian nations is increasing debt level. China is putting a lot of burden on BRI attached countries which is quite alarming for the world because when Sri Lanka had to handed over its port of Hambantota Port that was financed by China for the specific project to the Chinese company for 99 years lease, it was called as China's debt trap diplomacy. This incident gave rise to concerns for the other South Asian countries participating in BRI and several other Chinese projects. This act of taking control of Sri Lankan port has damaged the reputation of this plan and it also jeopardized the credibility of Chinese investors. China has the answer of this allegation that this debt problem is not basically created by BRI and its projects but its origin is historical because the defects and weaknesses in their financial and national structure. China claimed that this debt problem is not created after BRI investment but since a long time, western world has been the biggest creditor in the region so, some responsibility must be taken by them. From the very beginning of this BRI project, China has been

claiming to boost the local developmental sector, employment and better life style of the people of concerned countries but on the contrary, it is bringing financial debts, weakening of local markets and unilateral gains for the states.

4.1.2.3 Rising security threats

Pakistan has come across various challenges after 9/11 incident and almost every challenge has its implication over the security of the state, China's major concern is the security and law and order situation of Pakistan because of the growing notion of Islamic fundamentalism, extremism and militancy like in Afghanistan, when the war against terrorism was going on, it was affecting directly Pakistani people and its territory and now after the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, prospects for the coming of Taliban in power has become increased. China is now an active participant of Afghan peace process and utilized all its capacities for establishing peace in Afghanistan and border area as an attempt to safeguard the security of BRI in Pakistan. According to Chinese experts there are some biggest threat to the CPEC that are FATA based terrorists' organizations, Baluchistan insurgency, East Turkestan movement, religious and ethnic extremism in Sindh. It is a very complicated and complex as most of the officials of BRI try to revise the BRI strategy in South Asia, first of all there has to be some concrete attempts to resolve the security dilemma of Afghanistan and India and promote the cooperation among the other BRI states under the name of BRI project.

4.1.2.4 Chinese influence increases

This aspect has both positive and negative dimensions, long before BRI, China was providing professional and academic assistance and scholarships to Pakistani students and many have taken advantage of it but after the announcement of BRI, the scenario has become more vibrant and active because of the mega project of CPEC, the possibility for more jobs and other developmental opportunities has doubled now as Chinese BRI plan is to connect the world not just in constructing roads, bridges and maritime links but also person to person connection and for this purpose, it is necessary to have the understanding of language now, people are more inclined towards Chinese rather English because CPEC is creating more jobs and other opportunities for Pakistanis as China has put 60\$ billion dollars for building infrastructure for CPEC (Ali, 2014). Chinese ambassador to Pakistan

has announced that CPEC is bringing more than 70,000 jobs in Pakistan related to infrastructure, transportation and energy sector. In this way, this BRI is affecting positively on Pakistan's turbulent economy and give a vigorous move to the slowing down economical condition of the state.

In the same manner, Gwadar a coastal city of Baluchistan which was a small town of fisherman has now been turning into a modern technological city of trade and development, after becoming the focus of Chinese thinkers and planners, its value and attraction has been doubled in the eyes of investors and corporate world and now it is working as a trading hub for Pakistan as well as China as it is providing route to western landlocked province of China and nearest route to central Asian countries. Due to its great significance for BRI, it is turning into a starting point for superhighways, hotels, railways and container port. China and Pakistan both aspire to turn it into new Dubai and they have already initiated the process of growth and development.

Unlike of US and Europe where China is the biggest and equal trading partner especially after 2015, China is the largest import and export partner of 92 countries which is far more than USA of 57 partners, the most interesting fact is China has achieved this progress in very short period although China was the world's largest recipient of World Bank and Asian development bank loans but now alone China is giving more loans to developing countries than the World Bank did in the past. For developed western world China has different criteria of establishing good relations but for rest of the world, it is using other tactics like aid, trade, foreign direct investment for building good will, expanding its political influence and enhance its resources, BRI is the most appropriate example for it. In the countries, where this plan is going to be executed China is planning to build a close network of roads, highways, motorways and railway, for the cost of construction, it is funding in the form of loans rather than grants moreover, China is encouraging state owned companies to participate and invest in it. This fact reflects the reality that if Pakistan or any other BRI country is failed to pay back the loans then its assets like coal mines, energy plants, oil pipelines would be taken over by China. China collaborated in the construction and development of Gwadar port and now has the rights to operate this port for 40 years. All the related projects that have been started with the initiation of CPEC

in Pakistan mostly are executed through Chinese companies that are hindering local companies to take any benefit of it. It is not transferring the technology rather to manage it here in the territory of Pakistan and it will not put any long lasting and positive impact over Pakistani economy. As this corridor is moving across Pakistan therefore, the growing influence in the whole country would not have good impact on the government and administration of these areas. The environment of the enterprises in Pakistan are not friendly rather authoritative and humiliating for local people where people are working like prisoners as according to the responses of the workers associated with the Chinese companies here in Pakistan.

For the security of Chinese personnel, there must have enough security forces because there are various incidents when Chinese officials were killed or kidnapped by Baloch insurgents and Taliban parties from Pakistan.

4.1.2.5 Over Utilization of world's mineral resources (coal, iron, steel)

China is immensely focusing on the energy reservoirs of the world especially the areas where the BRI is executing, countries carry immense significance for the mineral or power resources are part of the project like Central Asia, middle East and Iran, Pakistan is also self-sufficient in mineral gas and now coal reservoirs in Thar parkar has become main matter of interest as according to some authentic research, China is a part of 240 coal fired power projects in 25 out of 65 countries associated to BRI with the capacity of 251,054 MW (Ren Peng, 2017). More than 52 projects are in process, the work has been started over 54 projects globally and 114 projects are operational and started working with the capacity of 88,018 MW, with this statistics China has acquired one of the important places in development of global coal fire power projects. Majority of the plans are based in South Asia and South East Asia, east and west Asia, North Africa and central and eastern Europe are the regions where China is taking interest and already started working over different power plant projects as it is the integral part of the development of infrastructure (Ren Peng, 2017).

- Thar Coal Power Plant in Pakistan

In Thar Parkar Sindh Pakistan, huge coal fields were found in 1991 by Geological Survey of Pakistan with the collaboration of United States Agency for International Development, after the discovery of these lignite coal mines, Pakistan occupied seventh place among 20 high coal producing countries as it is one of the largest lignite deposit in the world. The mines are spread over 9000 square km area with 175 billion tons of lignite which is enough for the requirements of the state or this coal can generate 100,000 megawatts for more than two hundred years (Ren Peng, 2017). There is a plan to make diesel by the conversion of coal and this would lessen the cost of fuel using in industries and vehicles. Pakistan is taking Chinese assistance in coal extraction with the collaboration of Shenhua Ningxia Coal Industry Group which a subsidiary of Shenhua group. This company and its working should be more active and loyal to the consumers as it will help to produce more efficient development of the resources.

Another coal power plant is installed in Rahim Yar Khan and it was the part of BRI plan, it is proposing two 600 MW units but when the issue of surplus power was emerged then it was removed from the list along with the Muzaffargarh project which was also a coal power plant. This fact showed that the China is not actually concerned in developing state's capacity beyond its own demand as it would be making a state self-sufficient and to grow unconditionally but it is more interested in its own benefits and lessening the cost of the project.

Besides Pakistan, various other states are also involved in coal-fired power plants like in East Asia although South Asia has occupied better and brighter position in this scenario because of Thar coal mine executed by Chinese companies and it has various associated interests which it is going to be pursued in the form of overseas projects. China is planning to have a project in which coal will be converted into oil in the north Western Chinese region of Ningxia that would supposed to take the raw material from Pakistan although it is not confirmed but apparently, it has been observed that the control and technological support Thar coal project has been given by the China. It will ultimately help China in energy demand for CPEC plan therefore, there must be a comprehensive plan for producing low cost energy for the project.

In South East Asia and South Asia, China is enjoying long presence because of having coal fire power projects in these region and China would never aspire to face any confrontation and political stability in these area as it ensures the completion or continuation of BRI without much obstruction and conflict, another aspect would be China's diplomatic attempts for peace and stability in the region in order to safeguard its economic and geopolitical interests in the area.

China's planning for the future development in South Asia has become fluctuating since 2010, China's started tilting towards Southeast Asia because of its increasing progress and growing markets as compare to South Asia as here, India with its hegemonic conflicting behavior made China to reduce its interest and focus in this region. Previously, China was highly interested in India coal fired power projects in the late September 2003 due to new legislature that encouraged inclusion and support of private companies in the power sector, this policy attracted Chinese companies of electrochemical equipment's to enter into the Indian business but in 2009, India adopted a protectionist policy and started to cancel foreign ventures and business, it suspended outside participation in 11 major boiler/turbine power generation projects furthermore, in July 2012, the Indian government has imposed 21% of import duty on related equipment's.

4.1.3 Challenges for Bangladesh related to BRI

Bangladesh is another stakeholder country in BRI and one of its corridors that is India Myanmar economic corridor which has to cross the land and water of Bangladesh. There are various challenges facing by the Bangladeshi government like first of all, Bangladeshi trade and diplomatic ties with India would be affected with the inclusion in BRI and Indian opposition of the project. If Bangladesh is going to have better relations with the regional power that is India then ultimately, it has not to be lenient with Chinese demands although it is receiving enormous finances and technical assistance from China in infrastructure, climate change and energy sector. China and Bangladesh have been signed 26 agreements and MoUs for the collaboration in the above-mentioned sectors and US\$23 billion loan has been extended to finance the series of infrastructural programs in Bangladesh (Muniruzzaman, 2019). After Pakistan, Bangladesh is receiving second highest influx of Chinese money and according to critics, there must be some integrated and defined

policies towards this debt that is being given by Chinese government for development of proposed infrastructural advancement in the state. There is no policy for debt sustainability therefore, experts should come forward and make some preventive arrangement for not falling in the debt trap of China like its neighboring country Sri Lanka did and lost its Southern Port to China under the BRI related funds and debts.

India is also not comfortable with the participation of Bangladesh in this BRI as it is already having conflict and issues with China for the immensely influential role of Pakistan in this project. India mentioned its concern like there is a lack of local involvement, participation, economic viability and growing risk of debt can create gaps in this initiative, local opposition for BRI is the matter of worry not for the Bangladeshi administration but India also.

4.1.4 Sri Lanka and Challenges related to BRI

Sri Lanka is a prominent victim of Chinese financial trap in the name of BRI developmental funds, Sri Lankan government received budget in the form of loans for building infrastructure, road, rail and ports but when Sri Lanka failed to repay the loan then the newly constructed Hambantota international port in the Southern part of Sri Lanka was forced to be given to China on lease and now China is planning to convert the port into its naval base. China is completely aware of the political and economic situation of developing countries of South Asia and knows that fact that they could not be able to reach the position when they would be able to repay the debts moreover, the regimes are working for their personal interest and are willing to utilize the loans for their personal professional or political growth that got revealed later that Sri Lankan president used BRI finances for his election campaign (Wijayasari, n.d.).

4.1.5 Nepal and Challenges related to BRI

Nepal is a low-income country and is showing great interest in developmental projects of China related to BRI, almost 25 major infrastructure and energy projects have been signed and initiated in Nepal by the China state owned companies. China is investing US\$10 billion in all the projects in Nepal along with the mega railway project (Shrestha, 2019), for this project, there are serious concerns from the local side as Nepal terrain is not suitable for these sort of projects and it is extremely difficult to build railway tracks on

mountainous terrain specially in Syaphrubesi-Kerung section of project as it is a highly difficult terrain but also in winter, there is extreme snowfall and the snow resistant railway tracks are quite expensive and it is not easy for a country like Nepal to build and maintain it. Another concern was that Nepal is not having advance technology to clear the frost areas and land for the proposed railway lines and in case of any damage, the maintenance and repair of the project is not so easy. If all the facts would be taken into account, the railway project is very costly and its Chinese cost is estimated around \$8 billion which is equal to one third of Nepal's total GDP and for Nepal it would be almost impossible to repay the BRI loan with the interest rate as the grant component in BRI is too minimal. This railway project would not repay much to Nepal as it will not lessen the trade deficit with China. For the Trade perspective, there is very little surplus products in the country to export but there are strategic implications for China as China could have easy access to Indian border (Shrestha, 2019).

There is also an element of Tibet controversy that tourism would only be promoted more when Tibet will be open for the tourists but China will not take the risk of opening it just to get control over small Nepalese market.

4.1.6 Maldives and Challenges related to BRI

China who is investing in Maldives that is half of its biggest city, carry some real geo political issues and its implications as Maldives is situated alongside the world's busiest shipping lines as well as supplies energy routes to India, China, Japan and Malaysia. It has highly significant maritime routes and control over maritime territory which is triple the land area of UK therefore, it occupies very influential and permanent role in Indian Ocean.

Through BRI, china is strengthening the friendly ties with Maldives specially when Abdullah Yameen came into the power in 2013 with his pro-china stance that was certainly have bad and hostile towards the Indian support. China massively introduced billion of debts with low interest rates into Maldives economy for building infrastructure and developmental projects. After the BRI introduced projects in Maldives, the country faced enormous pressure of liabilities and financial pressure of \$1.4 billion (Bhattacharjee, 2018), Chinese project carried 75% of it even the debt was increased to one fourth of its

economy and it was identified as one of the most at risk country participating in BRI among the other Asian countries. When the Saleh regime took over the country, it was exposed that Yameen utilized Chinese capital for his election campaign or the campaign was funded by China millions dollar.

4.2 Corruption related to BRI and other South Asian Countries

BRI plan in South Asia is mainly executed in developing countries where it is very easy to do corruption and bribery, for analysts and scholars, this area is a real matter of concern for ensuring transparency in this program. This BRI is focused on great Chinese investment and huge finances and this sort of capital flow especially in developing countries has always been victimized of corruption and bribery. There is a need to have serious eye on this matter and a systematic mechanism should be devised for not having any problem in funds distribution and transparent usage as China has been investing 900\$ billion on Europe (Bruce, 2017), Middle East, central Asia, North and East Africa and South East Asia for building Europe and Asia corridor which has sheer intensity and this requires to face the challenges and possible threats by the Chinese officials in the region and should highly recommend to create a strategy for reducing this risk.

As this BRI is in its early phase, officials and investors both should have made collaborated efforts for examining the risks of fraud or misconduct by investigating the matter through neutral approach and proper rules and regulation but there is a problem that can be resolved by the Chinese officials that they have to set rules according to the multiple jurisdiction and local laws but on the other hand they have the opportunity to establish a regional as well as global anti-corruption enforcement agencies that would be mastered in different local regulations and would be able to implement or enforce anti-corruption rules even at the level of BRI financial activities.

BRI potential investors should consider the following concerns when they plan their projects:

4.2.1 U.S. Anti-Corruption Enforcers

BRI has almost 70 business partner countries and will put its effects on every country of the world directly or indirectly even those that are not a part of this arrangement like USA as this plan would ultimately have an effect on global market and if the investment would have any vulnerable effects for anti-corruption enforcers like US which is already having conflict with China over BRI and other trading matters then all the member state must be aware of the fact that they could come across or could be answerable through US anti-corruption laws or foreign corrupt practices Act (FCPA)

4.2.2 Multilateral development banks response

For BRI investment projects, MDBs possess a key role in funding or providing finances like through newly established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and if any party would be accused of bribery or any sort of corruption will face sanctions by one or all MDBs. As president Xi said that there should be clean cooperation between and among the BRI partners

4.2.3 “Stress Tests” Against Multijurisdictional Investigations

In coming years, situation would become more crucial because when the plan will move forward, more and uninterrupted flow of finances would be started and in those circumstances exploitation of resources and money could be evident therefore, the level of transparency must be high and flawless. Investors, recipients and other stake holders should be highly vigilant while the utilization of finances. Otherwise multijurisdictional investigation would be faced by the stakeholders and official both local and state appointed assistants for BRI budget. As the project is too vast and multidimensional then there has to be the risk of sanctions or corruption because any act of any stakeholder can call an investigation.

4.2.4 Examples of Corruption

China’s BRI program has gradually turning into a track of trouble as Chinese companies are not expert in initiating and pirating international financial activities therefore, various matters and corruption cases are being observed since the initiation of this plan across the world. First reason is, the participating countries that are mostly having instable political setup and less powerful enforcement system of law and order, these

countries are not familiar with the rising need of new legislation against corruption rather the high rank officials are involved in the fraudulent activities.

As Chinese corporations push deeper into rising markets, inadequate social control and poor business practices area are turning the BRI into a worldwide path of difficulties not for China but also for the relevant country. An extended list of Chinese corporations has been issued from the World Bank and other developmental banks for fraud and corruption that covers everything from inflating prices to giving bribes. Primary example of corruption in BRI is China Communications Construction Co. (CCCC) which is one of the most active enterprise of China in BRI, it has already been accused of alleged deceitful bidding for the construction of highways in Philippine by World Bank in 2009 (Bank, 2009) although CCCC denied the allegation. Its subsidiary organization China harbor Engineering was publicly caught for offering bribe to a Bangladeshis official for some construction project and this charge was also called as a mistake by the media. Many Chinese companies have been blocked by the World Bank and other multilateral development banks but still they are the part of the game, with the passage of time, developing countries are lending more money from China as compare to the west owned financial organizations.

China is seeking to build roads, bridges and ports through world's poorest countries and this fact has already the high possibility of local and Chinese corruption, many incidents of corruption have been recorded like US arrested and convicted BRI advocate Patrick Ho which is assumed as a great setback for the project although Chinese communist party announced the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) but it has very little involvement in BRI activities and projects but its jurisdiction is limited at the domestic level and there is a need to expand its powers up to international monitoring of Chinese companies activities. It started working in Laos in 2017 to inspect a railway project built by a Chinese company, it sent its inspectors in the area and allowed them to work alongside the company an also established a joint inspection committee with the Laos authorities.

There are various other examples of corruption in other parts of BRI like in Kyrgyzstan where the government officials with Chinese contractors secretly devised the

plan for overpricing the cost of the project even two former PMs were accused and arrested because of corruption charges on them. These corruption charges led to the downfall of various governments in the region like Pakistan's Nawaz regime lost the elections, Sri Lankan President Mahindra Rajapaksa was also separated from the government in 2015 elections, Maldives president Abdullah Yameen who was considered as an authoritative ruler of the country had to lost the elections because of the corruption in Chinese owned developmental plans and I Malaysia, long run National coalition was ended because of the corruption charges.

Sri Lankan President Mahinder Rajapaksha was charged for asking funds by China for Hambantton port and it was stated by the media that the money released by the Chinese port construction fund was secretly using in the election campaign of Mahindra. International media reported that large amounts of money allegedly flowed from the Chinese's port construction fund to Rajapaksa's election campaign. He still lost.

Sri Lanka is not the last example because this debt trap by China is also working in rest of the BRI countries very quickly like the cost of construction and building is shown very high in the documents and due to this reason, debts and amount of lending money is increasing for any project, not only Chinese but local officials are also equally partnered the scheme. Chinese state-owned companies are enjoying extracting more resources and territories as well as heavy debts for the country because of that fraudulent report but also local officials are getting more money for their personal accounts.

In Pakistan where the corruption rate has already been very high and high rank officials are involved in every kind of money related corruption, China is also putting more money because the government threatened to reveal the terms of agreement to the public and ask IMF to bail out if China does not pass the finances asked by the government. China is ready to set heavy terms for the loan because of the high risks in the deal and the exclusive aspect is other development banks would not ready to set these sorts of terms. This need to be exposed and all the agreements must be unpublicized in order to maintain transparency and legality like in Malaysia when the new government came, they cancelled many deals with China after evaluating the transparency and its costs with benefits and

Mahathir Muhammad called it as a stupidity that has never been happened in the history of Malaysia (Transparency International).

There are two dimensions of this picture as China has zero tolerance towards corruption in its own state jurisdiction and the guilty people always face severe consequences and surely executed. When in Kyrgyzstan, Chinese ambassador asked for his statement over corruption allegation on BRI projects, he said that it is the internal problem of Kyrgyzstan and we will not interfere in it.

This situation has been criticizing the situation very hard and besides China, they are targeting the partner countries and give more blame to them as they themselves put them in a vulnerable position like Sri Lankan president willingly asked for funds from China in exchange of whatever asked by the China later just to fulfill their immediate need of finances for election campaign. The proposed plans were also not in use of Sri Lankan government as it has been over taken by the Chinese government on lease because of the heavy debts could not be paid off.

Same happened with Pakistan like its debt crisis were there old before the introduction of BRI even in 2000, 2008 and 2013 continued with the changing governments, their strategy was not to spend more until the end of the term and before elections, they spent immensely on their election campaigns and tried to gain more support. When China wanted to initiate CPEC in Pakistan and aspired to build road, highways and ports, Pakistan's debt servicing was of 5\$ billion and after BRI only 10% of debt was going to China, it means rest of the foreign loans were going to other multilateral financial institutions (Ali, 2014). Myanmar has also reduced the cost of its new port in Kyauk Pyu to \$1.3 billion dollar from \$7.3 billion after new administration took charge of the government (Aung, 2019).

4.2.5 Chinese initiatives after Corruption allegations

With the name of BRI, Chinese President Xi Jinping is not willing to convey negative images associated with it. In June 2017 at Belt and Road Forum, he called on this international forum to give more power and influence to global counter-corruption coordination” so that the BRI can be recognized as the “road with high moral standards.”

In December 2017, China quickly stopped funding for the three major highway projects connected to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) following reports of corruption. Nepal's US\$2.5 billion Budhi Gandaki hydropower project was also postponed because of not having transparencies within the bidding phase (Poindexter, 2017). China is also turning around over its funding policies for some deals that had been signed this year.

There are various suggestions and recommendations have been coming from different sectors like to propose Silk Road Anti-Corruption body by Lawyer Edmund Bao, it would have four primary functions like first is coordinated investigation, second to stop money laundering, there must be an integrated set of regulations, third is to initiate practical guideline for genuine and honest transactions and in the last, there should be some anticorruption provisions for future agreements.

In the Global Anticorruption Blog, lawyer Edmund Bao proposed the creation of a "Silk Road Anti-Corruption Body" that would have four primary functions. First, it should authorize and coordinate investigations. Second, it should coordinate financial regulation to deter money laundering, embezzlement and false accounting, among others. Third, it should produce best practice guidelines for ethical business transactions. Finally, it should advocate and facilitate incorporating anti-corruption provisions in future agreements (Chin, 2018).

4.3 Geopolitical implications for BRI

4.3.1 State Sovereignty

Sovereignty can be defined as complete control and absolute right of governing without having any interference from inside and outside the state, according to international law, the term sovereignty is a concept that refers to the exercise of power by a state. It has become a fundamental political institution in international law, one of its purpose is to establish peaceful coexistence of state without having interference in domestic or international matters. After Second World War, sovereignty has been discussed and debated throughout the history even today's world there are various new

concepts and themes have introduced and they are emerging new debate over the meaning and authority of this concept. This term can be easily understood by different ways like

Domestic Sovereignty: this is the power or authority of a state exercises within the boundaries

International Legal Sovereignty: Sovereignty of a state formally recognized by the other sovereign state.

Interdependence Sovereignty: Authority and control over the movement outside the borders of the state

From this point, a debate started about the exercise of sovereignty outside the physical jurisdiction of a state, when it comes to Chinese BRI plan and Chinese sovereignty which it is actually exercising across the world, according to the theorists and international law, it is justifiable and right of a state but the differences or the opposition of the other states have been stated because if this much power outside the boundaries of a state is exercising, it will definitely hurt the interest of the other states. Collision of interests is arising another debate that as far as, the interests are not hurting the other one, it is permissible but when it is moving out of the limit then it is not legal and could not be continued.

China is working on the same lines that it is exercising its own sovereignty along with the notion of interdependency inside the boundaries of different countries and these countries are also mutually collaborating and taking the economic advantage of interdependency therefore, the charge over China for interfering state's sovereignty is not right in theoretical manner but when it comes to practical and ground reality, the implications could be of different dimensions and effects. As most of the facts have been mentioned and discussed that how Chinese companies and government is grabbing the state's resources and assets in the name of mutually shared significance of BRI which is not absolutely wrong as states are enjoying and taking full advantage of the influx of finances and technological help. It is evident that how the Gwadar looked like before the origin of BRI in Pakistan and now it has been developed so much that international investment is increasing day by day and it is predicted as the future Dubai of the region. Same happened with the infrastructure of Baluchistan that it has improved and advanced

a lot that the foreign tourists attracting towards the sites here but also the citizen of rest of the Pakistan is also going to the different picnic points and attractive sites of the province. Baluchistan was the most troublant place for the government of Pakistan in different eras like Baloch insurgency, military operations and pathetic law and order condition discourage the common people to go there, it was like a no go area for the non-Balochi people in Pakistan but with the gradual increase of Chinese interest in the area, the intensity of insurgent activities became reduce as more aid and developmental funds were released and given to the provincial authorities for the development and growth of common people and with the increase in economic activities, the feeling of decimation and dissatisfaction diminished and they started feeling themselves as a part of integrated Pakistan. In this scenario, all the concepts can be easily identified like economic interests, interdependency at intra and interstate level along with the respect of sovereignty of the state. Another important thing is, Indian involvement in the Baloch matters and support to the separatist movements seemed to be decreased as China was also becoming an active partner of Afghanistan who is a stakeholder in BRI and this countered Indian dominating partnership with Afghanistan after 9/11 or after becoming Pakistan a non-NATO alliance of US (Khetran, 2017).

4.3.2 Concept of Sovereignty after globalization

After the introduction of the concept of globalization into the world, it has affected many old theories, approaches and practices. It gave rise to more dependency and collaborated trade and economic activities, states and their affairs were addressed on a uniform platform in a quicker and effective manner, technological transfer and introduction became so easy that everyone can be benefitted and the norms of business and trade took a new turn that any person in one corner of the world can establish its business to the other part of the world. Many multilateral institutions were introduced and operational like European Union, NATO, World Bank etc. Sovereignty of a state has been facing serious challenges since the inception of globalization in the world and state centric geopolitics changed into global politics, although it is creating more questions related to the interference in the state domestic matters, absolute authority of a state and global centric approach of governments. Now this new globalized system of states has been

practicing since two or three decades, the new query is what would be the responsibility of a state in this globalized world.

4.3.3 BRI as a Globalist Sovereign Regime

According to the critics and think tanks, it is a regime without territorial limits, there are various new names have been given to the BRI project like Pacific Silk Road or Silk Road on Ice (as it is supposed to cross the Arctic Ocean) or digital Silk Road. Its name which is comprised of the words Belt and road defines that it is going to connect or intended to merge large territories and it can be further elaborated in a way that it urges BRI participants to harmonize their activities in a collaborative manner following a borderless fashion. This project will give state a vision of globalist sovereign regime without having separate state interests but one thing must be under consideration that no state would be allowed to hurt or dominant over the other, if the interest is same then the results must be divided to every participant of the system. It is defined as possibly unique opportunity to reassert itself [China] at the Centre of regional, if not world affairs it can also be defined as China's new vision of global governance' (Callahan, 2016).

If China is trying to make itself a globalist regime, it cannot be rejected at once because after Second World War, USA did the same and it started making its influence over the destroyed Europe as well as over the world through aid, grants, loans and technological assistance and the popularity and strengthening of dollar was also acquired because of its fast flowing and broad use as international currency across different continents, it founded various multilateral financial forums like World Bank and International Monetary Funds for spreading its financial influence over the developing as well as western states. US had also an opponent in the world that was USSR and its communist system and now China is facing the counter attacks and criticism from USA and its supporters. China also worked on the financial mechanism for the gigantic plan and initiated Asian infrastructure investment bank (AIIB) and Silk Road Fund that are providing financial support in order to initiate and operate the projects in participating countries (Firzli, 2015).

4.3.4 Geo politics of BRI

As the BRI is also known as the program for regional cooperation and integration, this program has defined and announced rules and participation. The criticism over its

procedures and mechanism cannot be considered because all the participant states have discussed and signed MoUs means that they are willingly becoming a part of this attempt of regional integration. It is not limiting the liberty and the right of a state as they are free to establish their relations with any other state according to their needs and interests. An example from South Asia is the Bhutan who is under the influence of India not willing to be a part of BRI and China is respecting the concerns and reluctance of the state although it is trying to get the consensus but it is not forcing Bhutan government because the refusal of these states to be a part of it, is actually creating problems and causes the slowing down of the process. Another example is Bangladesh who is receiving BRI projects and advancement is also a close ally of India, in spite of having opposition from Indian side, it is participating in the plan that showed Chinese globalized approach and willingness of other states to be a part of this regional collaboration. Every country is taking care of its national and economic interests without having any fear and pressure from Chinese side (Flint, 2019).

4.4 Role of USA in BRI Scenario

USA being the sole super power of the world criticizing BRI and getting very loud for its economic, financial, military and geopolitical implications for the world as well as for itself. USA is also trying to make the world believe about the negative aspects and effects of this plan. It is the country that has not attended any BRI related summit or conference or international gathering. Washington stance over the plan was, it is an attempt to grab state's economic dependence and reliance through its debt trap diplomacy as a Neocolonial power's defines this initiative as an imperialist idea of getting control over the state's sovereignty, it is aimed to crush state's political and economic strength under the burden of heavy debts based projects. US is among those who perceive China's BRI as a serious threat for the global liberal norms and a sabotage to the world order. Some consider it as a start of new cold war between China and USA and China's attempt for global hegemonic role.

Without considering US concerns, BRI membership is increasing and world is not concerned about the absence of US from the table but China has been showing its willingness for answering the fears and concerns of it for the uninterrupted momentum.

USA assumed it as strategic threat but it would be proved as US mistake if it is not properly discussing the matter with the opponent that is actually not a real enemy because USA markets are still predominantly dependent upon Chinese products and it is also dependent on Chinese growing economic power. Not just Asian countries that are not much developed and having reliance over Chinese investment but the Euro Asian states with more sound economic system and the other potentials are also a part of the project and US can't just call for the threats of the plan but it has to engage itself into the scenario if it really wants to gain some concrete results or its own share. The opponents of Chinese economic expansion are not taking any counter initiative for competing the effects of BRI like Japan, US, Australia, India, even their closest allies are joining Chinese camp, modernization and advance development of these countries is making the world realize that this plan is actually for the betterment of participants and gave rise to more cooperation. At the same time, countries became more vigilant for having their fair share in the project by not taking the danger of much loans without receiving the growth results. Anti BRI front is not searching for more options to counter BRI effects and USA has started to compete and working for releasing more finances to produce infrastructure and to make the states agreed to resist against Chinese domination. Only competition is not enough as it will not affect the existence of BRI and its development in Euro Asian region but if US became a part of the forum then it would be able to earn some sort of gains and for having fair competition. US can set the principles for free enterprises and could be able to join and work for the reshaping of geopolitics even for decades. (Alek Chance, n.d.).

4.4.1 Free and Open Indo Pacific Strategy

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2016 formally announced the idea to integrate Asian and Africa states and establish trans-border connectivity and economic corridors from India stretching across Indian Ocean. It was an attempt to equate US Japan interest with Chinese BRI impact in the region although it is not that much immensely invested and occupies vast areas but it was the need of the time for balancing the situation because it is equally important for US not strategically but also in terms of economic gains. Many

South Asian countries are part of it like Philippine, Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore that are already a part of BRI, this treaty will strengthen the economic and strategic ties not only for economic gains but also enhancing the regional connectivity with the help of the projects like the East-West Economic Corridor and the Maritime ASEAN Economic Corridor. US is the equal partner of Japan in this strategy and they are trying to have nuclear cooperation as to gain an edge over Chinese project. US is now following the Japanese concept of Diamond strategy of coalition among USA, Japan, Australia and India. This plan of economic giants of the world is to stop China for its increasing militarism in Indian Ocean and beyond the region. USA secretary of State mentioned that USA wanted to work with equal partnership in Indo Pacific region and it will oppose the state who tries to dominate the relations (Kawashima, 2019).

It is an evident fact that FOIP is a preventive measure to deal with the situation shaping after the fast altering regional and global political and economic system because of the growing image of China in the world politics in the form of BRI but FOIP is still far behind of BRI in term of formal frame work, methods, approach and collaborative working although US is highly optimistic about the efficacy of this tool because US expensive geopolitical impact that was earned after a long journey cannot be loose easily through offensive words and statements as it will affect US foreign policy towards China. Although FOIP has the potential to create a unified agreed strategic system on the basis of the principles of openness, transparency and sustainable economies that would extend their significance to the developing countries

In the initial years after the announcement of the BRI, the United States didn't consider this initiative and thought it could become a reality. In early 2018, US think tanks evaluated the growing global role of China in multi regions alarmed they and US had to revise its policies, initially it was observed that border management, China's strict domestic policies and censorship system can obstruct the implementation of BRI.

The United States thought that BRI possesses two kinds of implications that are geo-economics and Geo political, and it took this initiative as a threat to its hegemonic role in the world. Exactly happened with China that it enhanced its

economic interests and integrated all the BRI partners on political and economic unified grounds. Besides Asian states, its Euro Asian partners also agreed for making a Euro Asian Supercontinent without the presence of USA. This would have enough for USA target BRI and China as its current geo political competitor. USA mentioned that if BRI would be promoted then it would pose serious challenges to various governments and it asked Japan, India and European states to boycott this regional scheme. USA was completely aware of its inefficacies and flaws related to the financial organizations, state's national interests, heavy debts and late completion of developmental projects but it was not completely against the plan because this gave an exclusive chance to the developing countries to become the part of the large markets and would have crucial impact on world's economy. The real matter of concern for US was, the inclusion of Euro Asian countries that would rather promote the globalization movement and these countries are the biggest allies of US if they tilt towards China then ultimately US influence in this region would diminish which is not acceptable to US at any cost. Some more extended loss for US would be more trade with china, easy availability of goods, Chinese currency would be more widespread used, Chinese technological assistance would have an edge over US advancement and USA had to step down from its long run super power position.

USA is in great confusion as it is not willing to have a counter strategy rather a comprehensive plan to manage the coming challenges of BRI and OFIP strategy gave it an opportunity not to restrict growing Chinese influence in different region but also gain united support of various European and Asian countries for restoring its impact and role. US also doesn't want west to have its long run impact within the international economy. It is also very difficult for USA to openly oppose China because in spite of highlighting various concerns and short coming, countries are openly welcoming this Belt and road initiative in their territories because China is offering what the world is really aspires to get. Other western powers and US have never offered them for better infrastructure and financial support with grants and aids instead they always tried to grab from the world for fulfilling their needs and future interests. BRI is creating thousands of jobs in the countries that are deprived of foreign aid and assistance in their weak areas. Like many developing countries like

Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam and Pakistan that are continuously facing the poverty, less advancement, weak infrastructure and old technologies moreover they are usually energy deficit states where electricity generation is still operating through old traditional methods, Chinese BRI plan is bringing new trends and advance technologies for infrastructure building and its maintenance.

There is a long list of US concerns for China's greatest economic venture, one of the most crucial matter is, China long time presence in Indian Ocean in order to continue its BRI project in different South East and Far East Countries, this is not only disturbing for USA but also for India and because of the growing concerns of India it has now joined OFIP and came up with the alliance of Japan, US and Australia to defend its strategic and economic interests. Then Sri Lankan southern port has also taken over by Chinese authorities because of not paying back the loan, it is also predicted that China will turn this port as its naval base. Chinese war ships and Submarines are always present in the ocean that is threatening Indian authorities regarding their security concerns. US has some different stance like this coastal line is having US major trade partners and if China acquires more influence and control over different ports, US would face great difficulties in smooth navigation through the ocean but the confrontation would be inevitable.

4.4.2 USA's perspective for BRI

4.4.2.1 US foreign policy for BRI

USA has never attended any BRI summit and openly opposing the initiative through different mediums and acts, US has been a close ally to European nations and Asia Pacific countries as Europe and US share common norms and systems like after WWII, this region accepted the capitalism and became a vibrant opponent of the other side, many Asian and African countries had become their colonies and following their prescribed rules. The relationship of China with USA and the other rest of the world is always been a kind of puzzle but at the same time, it can also be said as an intelligent and smart kind of policy as it never take risks, China never offended any state, being a communist state, it didn't follow Russian version of communism and in spite of doing all of this, it became the need of the world with enormously giant economy and

market, almost every region is somehow dependent over Chinese market. Same happened with USA, it is also largely dependent over China economically and this thing creates reluctance in its diplomatic attitude of USA for BRI.

In South Asia, India and Japan both are the biggest critics of the China's mega infrastructural development plan and their opposition is so vibrant that they are trying to persuade the countries of the region for not joining this plan like India is continuously in conflict with Pakistan for having a big share in the aid and grants for CPEC with various strategic edges and benefits, second is Bhutan that has also not joint BRI even though China really wants to make them agree because the route is also crossing these areas. India has got the US support along with Japan and Australia but the matter of fact is, this free Indo Pacific Quadrilateral alliance is actually not that much significant as the BRI is seemed to be, it has its practical and concrete implications, the list of its beneficiaries is becoming increasing. The important thing is, china is proposing what the states are aspire to have although every new phenomenon comes with its pros and cons but development and stability is the dream of every developing state and China is offering them enormous money and US has never taken this sort of initiative rather to establish a relationship on the principle of give and take. China is completely aware of the fact that the BRI participating countries are not able to do it on equal basis, another aspect is, and China's largest foreign exchange and revenue should have been in continuous circulation as it will increase with the introduction of Asian infrastructure investment bank and Silk Road Fund. China is not just receiving benefits but it is delivering some benefits to the countries where it is much needed.

Japan which is another influential state in Asia Pacific region and considered as economic giant, being an ally of US and Chinese opponent, it is also not in favor of BRI as it will surely challenge Japanese influence in South East Asian Countries and affect the trade and business as many South East Asian Countries are great economic partners of Japan and US. As BRI is offering Maritime routes along with land routes, this plan will definitely disturb major powers for permanent Chinese presence in

Indian and Pacific Ocean as it is also a route to US and all the major trade routes are there.

US is trying to have a prominent opinion and wants to gain diplomatic support from the countries as it is an accepted fact that China has now set to take the title of world super power as world is actually moving towards the multipolarity and through BRI plan China has the opportunity to do it and to get it. USA while opposing it not understanding that the world's scenario is not the same of cold war or may be post-cold war. World is now looking towards more cooperation and less conflict and the biggest example is European Union as it is also very keen to have strategic partnership with China after the world has introduced with this belt and road initiative. "Although [the] EU's Foreign and Security Policy really pays a lot of attention to the neighbors' geopolitical issues, [the] EU needs to build strategic partnership with countries beyond the EUs border. China is in the rest place. Any strategic partnership, especially EU-China partnership, should not be limited to economic cooperation. [The] Chinese Belt and Road Initiative should go beyond the connectivity between Euro Asian countries" (Waszczykowski 2016).

In spite of all the facts mentioned, US is still not ready to accept the situation and trying to make an alliance against BRI, there are various allegations that the project has been receiving but like its debt trap, limitation to state sovereignty, corruption allegations and many more mentioned earlier but US is now working on some other issues to defend its position over BRI plan and against China.

USA think tanks have given the speculation about the future of this plan, according to USA stance, after 5 or ten years, many of the countries that joint the project will withdraw because of weak debt policies and unproductive projects, the participants will soon lose the enthusiasm and momentum because many government will soon try to get rid of it other than China's forever partners and allies although their reservations were genuine and logical, these governments will be conscious and reluctant to continue the journey because of fruitless public investment projects and struggling towards their debts. Soon the world will realize that BRI participation was a mere liability not the asset, the goodwill that was nicely developed at the initial

phase of BRI would be vanished and the western participants would be more vibrant after some time. These are some speculations not the reality, not completely but some of the facts are real and China should think about them seriously.

China perspective over US opinion of grabbing the sovereignty of the other states is quite logical and simple which is not wrong completely, China is promoting multilateralism and collective cooperation among the states of different regions. China is also not a kind of a state which is keen to interfere in the domestic affairs of any state but it is more tilted towards the economic strength and soft power acquisition. Its super power behavior is not similar to the US hegemonic attitude that has been lasted since cold war. China wants to do it with soft power and without having the opposition of the world. There are various things that need to be improved and should be focused by the Chinese officials like modernization of its monitoring and evaluation practice, it should work to gain the support of other western aid agencies and developmental banks. US conception to work for slowing down the pace of this initiative and stop its expansion to the other states that are not being the part of it but China's flexible and fast approach towards infrastructural development and financing is so fascinating that states, traditional donors and lenders are compelled to enter into BRI projects. But US is right in one regard that it would not be able to sustain public support in participating countries.

4.4.3 Reasons for countering China's BRI plan

Expansionist policy of China in the form of BRI

USA is also very concerned about China's expansionism in South China Sea where it has built artificial island and building up its military bases and extending its strategic interest pursuance beyond the region. Since 2013, China has utilized 3,000 acres and equipped this place with long range censor arrays, port facilities (Stashwick,2019), runways and reinforced bunkers for fuel and weapons, Chinese government has not admitting it militarization but they called it necessary defense facilities for providing security for maritime routes and natural disaster support. For this disputed island, china is in conflict with Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia, USA is supporting these countries against China and this matter is going to affect the

continuity of BRI because they are the part of this initiative and China is also investing billions of dollars here. China was recently too active in the South China Sea and it has constructed first military supply base in Djibouti.

Russia is also becoming a close ally to China and Russia has sold China S-400 Triumph surface-to-air missile system and 24 Sukoi Su35 fighter jets that cost \$8 billion (Tsygankov, 2018), The growth of that much closer relationship with Russia has its alarming effects for the western world as these two countries are moving towards more integrated and beneficial Euro Asian region, China is also getting technical and security cooperation with Russia for People's liberation Army.

China is working for its growing influence to spread in various regions that were not in the list of priority of China before like arctic region, this area is greatly affected by the environmental changes and with the melting snow and it is becoming the most important strategic hotspot not for the arctic states but for the other global powers, it is an exclusive opportunity to exploit the natural resources of that region. US, Russia and China all are striving to get access to the abandoned quantity of oil and natural gas. The emerging concern for the states is the opening of the Northwest Passage which is going to become the shortest maritime route available which is two weeks faster than the traditional routes like Suez Canal. US, Russia and China are trying to design some strategies for pursuing their interests. US along with its closest ally Canada trying to get the ownership of this passage but China is trying to declare the region as the heritage for mankind and opposing the kind of sovereignty imposing by US, Canada and Russia. US is opposing China on this ground but there should be a joint effort to get long term benefits.

4.4.4 China as a strategic competitor to USA

- *China's growing partnership with Russia*

After the announcement of BRI in 2013, China was started to sign MoU with the prospective participants and Russia was quite enthusiastic for joining the plan because Russia saw it as the development of high-tech industry and China actually spent the most in energy sector of Russia. As compare to economic, China is actually seeking

the greater opportunities for achieving more influence and stabilization in other related smaller countries and in the region with the cooperation of Russia. Contrary to US, Russia is not going to oppose this plan instead it is aspiring to get more economic and strategic gains and it is not against the interests of Russia that's why it put more significant influence in this scenario.

- *Euro Asian connectivity*

As BRI is also crossing Euro Asian region and it is working to increase its relations and connectivity to this strategically important area because it is an important trade route and other transit ways are emerging from it. Therefore, it has joined Russian led Euro Asian Economic Union not just for cooperation but to have a strategic edge over other dominant powers of the world, another aspect is, growing relations of China and Russia is promoting concerns in other countries because of diplomatic exchanges and military cooperation that is showing their mutual goals and interests. Both the head of the states met several times for military and economic assistance and has resumed its arm sale the advanced weaponry that was discontinued because of the China's unlicensed copying.

4.4.5 China as a challenger and threat

China is challenging US hegemony and greater role in the world and according to the US CIA director, Mike Pompeo that China is using economic tools for gaining political power, it also added that China is posing strategic challenge to USA and CIA has warned its government that it should be more alert and vigilant towards every move of China but it doesn't mean to create hostile environment but figure out the grounds where US can respond according to its needs and confront it following USA vision which is democratic in nature and could work to spread democratic norms and strength for the world. Not in water and land but china is also given threat to USA to get the dominant position in space also and US China Economic and security review commission released the report about the increasing influence and position in space by the china and replace US here. China has initiated the programs to connect with the space along with the terrestrial, political, economic and military interests. China is striving to adopt the ambition to attain an important position in global commercial

space industry where USA has its influence and power. This plan is termed as “Space Silk Road”

4.4.6 What is the future of BRI according to USA?

According to USA, BRI is a plan with a fancy face but behind the fancy mask, there is a horrible situation is waiting for the participating countries, almost 70 countries have joined the BRI squad but they are not much aware of the severe consequences of heavy investment and China’s infrastructural cooperation projects as this is bringing long term heavy debts and could not be repaid by the beneficiary countries because most of the countries are from the developing world and they are not much financially sound for the loans and its impacts on economy. USA is calling it as debt trap scheme as the term of funding don’t reveal by the countries and the most recent example in this regard is, Sri Lankan Southern port Hambantota has been taken over by China because of not paying the loan. Another future prospect would be the loss of sovereignty by the participant countries because by occupying economic strength and strategic positions of states, China would get an edge over them and would be in a position to design political and economic policies of those countries. Debt and sovereignty is inter-related because in today’s world economic power determines state’s status and when China would take over the economic scenario being the biggest investor and money providing entity then ultimately the policies would also be designed by the influential entity and this scenario, there is no question of practicing national sovereignty as it would be handed over to the BRI. There are many other contradictions in this plan like it is also must be considered that small and economically weak countries are more at risk because majority of the BRI participating countries don’t have considerable bargaining power to put their own conditions, demands and claims regarding the plan and its aftermaths. China is widely utilizing its own workers and construction materials for BRI plan so, the increase in employment of a country will not be achieved. USA is also looking into the matter of project delays and legal risks and will use this aspect against Chinese popularity for BRI plan, one thing which is obvious in multilateral long term plans is they used to carry out a bit late because there is numerous preparatory tasks that must be done and circumstances must be clear then the execution would be started. In BRI, this usually

experienced in some ASEAN countries where because of terrain, policies and interruption may plans have been delayed and, in some cases, there is a risk of not having Chinese assistance.

There is a need to properly and promptly address these issues as these will ruin the reputation and market of China in the world and USA is making these flaws prominent in front of the world and the countries that aspire to join it are showing reluctance in making a part of it.

4.4.7 Creation of new World Order

USA and China's confrontation on trade grounds are gradually elevating, since 2018 this trade conflict has been started when China increased its imports from USA up to \$200 billion and doubled the trade which was predicted to disturb the domestic manufacturing, farmers and prices for consumers. In 2018, US announced \$300 billion tariffs on Chinese goods in order to reduce trade deficit and promotion of local manufacturing. In response, China has lowered down the tariffs for the other countries which will increase the access of foreign business to China and will find more new trade relationships on its own conditions. This economic confrontation will change the foundation of global trade and can be considered as new cold war of the times but this time, the issue so quite complicated as compare to Russia US as it was a military and in this situation Europe and Russia are as a balancer of the situation between US led and China led orders and if democrats could get the opportunity to be in the government then there is a big chance to have the same issue to resolve but with some changed trends. China and US are entering into the new world order in which China has an edge to shape the existing global system in the form of BRI which has introduced a new global order through a bigger and greater financial program. All the projects and alliances have their long run implications as Euro Asian countries are going to be a stakeholder in BRI and this route will prevent USA for blockage. US has also predicted that Chinese and its alliance ports will soon use by the people liberation army navy for the power play in the world. China's economic imprints have already been reached across the world with many economic corridors, Chinese products, industries, deals, another aspect is BRI is the biggest need for China as it is

widely accepted by the developing and European countries as a mean to develop and exactly happening that China is increasing its influence over the world under the title of BRI project that small countries are slowly becoming less powerful and sovereign to resist against China because of the cheap influx of technology, infrastructure and energy projects. Moreover, in BRI countries, China is insisting to adopt Chinese technology and Chinese state organizations and the biggest example is Pakistan that China has bought its electric supply corporation of Karachi and now the new installations and technology is mostly importing from China even the engineers and equipment is also Chinese companies made which obviously undermining Pakistani technology as well as man force. Another dimension is when the participating country becomes defaulter or fails to return the loan, it would again gone in Chinese favor as it can easily take over the state assets into its control like Sri Lankan port. This trend will reshape the world order and global supply chain goes in favor of China. This thing is alarming USA because it will surely hurt US and western monetary interests that is having its dominating hand over developing countries of Asia and Africa in the form of debts and heavy interests.

China is also ready to launch a new theme that will explain its economic rationale in an elaborative as well as fascinating manner, the theme of BRI is Tianxia meaning “All under Heaven “this is a Chinese concept rather a philosophy which is three thousand years old and through this theme, China will now explain BRI and its value. It will also aim to compete western thoughts, theories and philosophies of politics, systems and cooperation’s. Its slogan is “Community of shared destiny” which is the advanced form of multilateralism but this theme is quite different with the older meaning unlike of previous western groups and communities like NATO. The idea of Tianxia is completely based upon mutual struggle, cooperation and it values individual interests and desires (Deb, 2020), it talks about a community that carries more importance for individual, honest settlement of disputes, genuine approach and problem solving attitude with more emphasis on dialogue instead of tensions, conflicts, confrontations, differences and power politics. This model will result in a relationship of interdependency between states and people although it is also a fact that increased interdependence between the states that are not equal in term of

economy and power position will lead to suppression. Chinese think tanks and scholars are trying to prove this paradigm correct and applicable as it will help to resolve terrorism and climate change problem easily and more effectively as compare to the western system and its initiatives. Many countries have clearly rejected this new Chinese order as they think that western system and philosophies are more viable and practical for the world but every proposed system possesses its own set of values and norms with universal approach and Chinese Tianxia has the potential to compete western liberalism and replace the unjust US established international system.

4.4.8 Inequality between China and BRI countries

Among more than 70 BRI countries, majority of them are developing and having huge differences between China and them, for example, all the South Asian countries where this plan is executing, are least developing countries and already under the western debts and US political influence and under these circumstances, they are now adopting Chinese partnership which is not equal because China is not only a regional power but also a becoming super power with heavy political and strategic agendas, its monthly income is more than the annual earning of some of the countries. Here two important facts are arising that this type of interdependency in which one party is more powerful and highly influential and the next side is weak then this sort of relationships cannot remain equal. Same is happening in BRI scenario that the huge investment is only urban centric and the other small towns and cities are not affecting by the advancement and introduction of technologies. This aid recipient countries' rural working communities are not eligible to work in the developed cities and areas of the country, for these people, it is very difficult to find out any suitable job according to their expertise that are usually not required in developed cities therefore urban rural disparities are also growing because of the introduction of BRI developmental plans in cities.

Other western investments are mostly directed to strengthen land to land connection like roads and transportation network but BRI is mainly concerned with land to sea network as it is not a state centric plan but trans-continental project that includes maritime routes. Building of Gwadar port is the most relatable example which was in

past a small fisherman town but now it has been built and developed technologically advanced and strategically significant.

4.4.9 No affordability for developing countries

BRI is aimed to improve the developmental process of countries that need to be assisted in infrastructure and energy sector and this assistance will ultimately gone in the favor of China and its global strategic and economic mega project of BRI. Initially states assumed that the project is really a source of cooperation and development but practically it is a high cost project of most of the developing poor countries that are again caught by the fascinating slogans and dreams came with the idea of BRI. Although it has the potential to reduce poverty and lift up the standard of living of people through vigorous economic activities, it was a viable aspect of BRI through which the world was attracted and welcome China in their countries but there should have some very important and inevitable elements that must have been the part of this project like debt sustainability, environmentally friendly and less risks of corruption. It is only possible with the deep policy reforms, increased transparency and its continued productivity towards the participant state.

China and BRI has entered into a country by explaining its potential benefits and risks of participating in it, every state is free to join or refuse it but apparently its results are highly promising and economically viable for a developing country and they without much hassle and difficulties accept the terms and conditions of BRI. In the case of Pakistan, with China Pakistan is having long and strong friendly ties and they are also strategic partner along with economic and diplomatic friends. But here China also had a series of policy recommendations to help Pakistan for getting increased potential advantages if it is opening for various other risks. BRI needs every country to adapt its policies and introduce reforms related to the developmental projects and heavy investments. According to Ceyla Pazarbasioglu, the World Bank's Vice President for Equitable Growth, Finance, and Institutions "Achieving the ambitions of the Belt and Road Initiative will require equally ambitious reforms from participating countries" institutions

According to Chinese resources if it is implemented completely it can help to lift millions of people of various countries from extreme poverty line. As this plan is executing in many poor and under privilege countries of Asia and Africa where people's standards of living are very low, like Tanzania and Kenya where millions of populations are living under extreme poverty. After the introduction of BRI projects, according to World Bank report, one million more people will be coming out of the poverty line by the end of 2030. In South Asia, Pakistan is also expected to have 1.3 million people coming out of the staunch circle of poverty due to the introduction of many high tech and economically productive projects (Ali, 2014). Other South Asian countries like Bangladesh and Nepal will also gain the same sort of results like 430,000 and 52,000 dues to this huge infrastructure investment. Its potential gains estimated by different and reports are very high and could solve many economic related issues of the developing countries if they are going to implement fully with the objective of mutual gains and cooperation. These countries are cooperating and helping China in a really high extend that their sovereignty and power would have some serious threats. If China genuinely implements these initiatives then these have the potential to upgrade 32 million people's living status from the line of moderate poverty. The investment is so huge that it could raise 9.7 percent trade along the corridors economies and global income could observe the rise up to 2.9 percent. Initially China has descried this plan as a global opportunity for trade and cooperation but by disclosing the rules and the policies by the host country, the cost of these projects were not bearable for the tiny economies of Asia and Africa, the debt terms are exploitative and not feasible especially for some mega projects like Malaysia's new government has suspended some major railway project plans because of its high cost that we cannot afford such kind of expensive projects. Another example is a high-speed rail line in Laos is also planned and executed by China that's cost id country's half of its GDP. In Nepal, it is also planning to have a mega railway project which has the cost of 52 million dollar and it is identified as an impractical plan because of the highly rough terrain and the mountainous area, another aspect is Nepal's economy cannot bear the high expenses of this project and tried to figure out some alternatives (Shrestha, 2019). China should announce some recovery and sustainable debt program

which can give some kind of concessions to these countries who need some technical and financial help in coming out of the debts and also some recovery programs for these affected countries. IMF is ready to cooperate and collaborate with BRI in order to help the countries located alongside the corridors but China has no defined policy for this purpose and it is showing reluctance to collaborate and share the information with IMF (IMF, 2018). The countries that are asking help from IMF they have to provide every information and disclose the details of loan terms which is the open violation of the BRI policy but to get out of the situation, China and the western lending organizations must work hard to come up with the solution base strategy.

4.4.10 Geopolitical interpretation of BRI by USA

Currently BRI has expanded to almost 70 countries of Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin USA and Oceans with multiple future plans that are planned to enhance the connectivity and cooperation across the world, these plans are not to connect the land and maritime routes but also create and increase the communication into Arctic, cyberspace and even OutSpace. The ambition of China is immensely huge and multidimensional that it acutely requires high attention and it has now become successful in capturing world's attentions and headlines in the world. It is that much innovative and promising idea for the world that it has been analyzing, observing and adopting with a vigorous pace all around the world. It has now turned into a Chinese brand and prominent feature of foreign policy. Some time back, China was not an active participant of the world politics, it was there and had its role but not very vibrant as it was following the policy of "Hide and Bide" like China's role was remain there but in a hidden manner and this remained a long running behavior of China in every global engagement. But with the announcement of BRI, China has taken over the world stage and becomes an dominant and substantial power of the world because now the policy that was being projected and adopted, was giving a bright and prominent position to China because it was not a game of powers and high level complicated outcomes but it involved the countries that were not been the part of any global strategy and only used through their resources and locations. China came up with the infrastructural developmental plan that will enhance their strategic capacities and also assist them in their overall development, this promoted China's image as a

”responsible stakeholder” but for the rest of the world, it is not accepted as it projected but there are some little doubts in endorsing the fact because of the viable weaknesses (Alek Chance, n.d.)

Beijing needed all the countries of the world to contribute in its large scale and long-term investment for the advancement of infrastructure and connectivity across various parts of the world. This idea was apparently very appreciable and tempting for the countries and they quickly joined the venture but USA was very vibrant while mentioning the criticism and its own concerns over China’s growing interests and approach towards pursuing BRI targets, USA with other western countries told the world about its loopholes like the corruption on different levels, lack of transparency, debt sustainability, quality of projects and its feasibility for different low income countries, these concerns with the more serious issues of strategic fears were also identified by the counter side as according to them, this project is destined to alter the geopolitical landscape of the world and long running governing norms of international community.

World observers and think tanks believed that US should not oppose this infrastructural enhancement of the developing world in spite of having various ambiguities and suspicion attached to the idea Washington cannot simply speculate that it will fail or successful, another important factor is, USA cannot openly reject the plan because it will deteriorate the Sino US bilateral relations that are already turned into competitive and controversial. This will cause problem to US more than China because the image and the role which has been playing by US across the world can be termed as more like a dictator of the world although it has its bilateral relations and cooperation with every state but they are overwhelmingly dominated by USA that’s why US should look forward for the authentic dimensions to criticize and oppose BRI. BRI for the majority of the world observer is a kind of predatory economics but many analysts have found many aspects to work upon by US in order to achieve mutual understanding and support BRI. USA is actually not against the upgrading of infrastructure and huge work for enhancing and increasing the energy sector of the world, the concept of connectivity is also a very promising idea for the

world as well as it will bring some ease for USA also as the roads and connectivity means are not restricted to use by the other countries but US should work to search out some common grounds or common interests of US that can comprehend with China.

USA have to analyze the situation very objectively because the reason of BRI popularity is, China is offering the thing which is most of the countries want and they genuinely demand for investment for the development of their countries. BRI which is crossing Asia and many countries of Asia are participating in this project need 26\$ trillion investment for the investment of infrastructure and according to the Asian Development Bank, if Asia wants to continue the current growth rate by 2030 it has to be invested by this much amount. In Africa and Latin USA, the biggest problem that restricts their pace of progress is lack of infrastructure therefore, the BRI cannot take the responsibility of the world's development and improvement as it is contributing very least in it so, in order to meet the challenge some other inspiring participation must enter into the scenario. After the implementation of BRI program in the world, China has started working on comprehensive grounds because China was not much compatible with the other donor western countries that have an edge over China in term of soft power. China is now offering more scholarships, student exchange and grant programs for BRI countries, it is arranging courses for language and degree programs for under graduation, graduation and Masters level in the Top Chinese Universities. Chinese consultant companies are opening in different countries to facilitate the process. For example, since the implementation of BRI, the number of Pakistani students who enrolled in different Chinese universities has been incredibly increased from 5,000 in 2013 to 22,000 in 2018. In African region, it is also increasing the amount of investment for vocational training and capacity building. These under privileged countries are lacking in capacity and basic skill development, there is a need to introduce training and education programs at grass root level in African countries and give them opportunity for advanced education, China is building new avenues for these countries to become a part of fastest moving globalized world.

China has also adopted a unique but effective strategy for regions and emerging countries especially where the countries are not receiving western investment. Actually western countries always target the bigger states where they could get some sort of considerable profit but they don't have much interest in smaller and under developed countries but BRI's greatest appeal and attraction is it is targeting and working more in the areas which are deprived of world attentions, it is not only initiating the investments but also managing the funds to be spend properly and accurately. It is really an exclusive opportunity for these poor areas and even a single yuan is more precious and productive than it spends in some other area of the world like a bridge in Bangladesh or a highway in Laos may not have much value for the world but it possesses great significance for local economies and internal connectivity. This fact is going in the favor of Chinese economic initiatives in these parts of the world, China is taking enormous interests in the matters and affairs of the countries along the BRI that's why these countries are ready to accept whatever is offered by Beijing. As Pakistan's former commerce minister Khurram Dastgir Khan put it: "China is the only game in town." (Stacey, 2017)

Negatives:

US being a rival power, mention many justifiable charges over BRI and some allegations have its real implications like growing corruption, transparency and good governance. Collectively, these charges are going to affect the overall impression and credibility of this projects and some controversial debates have been going on like BRI is a threat to the sovereignty, sub-standard norms and practices and geostrategic implications that are surely disturb the status quo of the world. US demanded China to clarify its stance and the complexities of the policies otherwise, the third-party countries like US and other western allies will remain suspicious about the efficacy of this program rather to assume it an opportunity for collaboration.

4.4.11 Geopolitics and Global Governance

BRI is not a fast paced project because of its long term objectives and vastness around the globe, US is no longer assumed it as a positive initiative for the world progress and growth. USA is vibrantly working to expose corruption and debt traps

related to BRI procedures and functions, it also talks about the lack of transparency in policies as well as it also identifies BRI as a tactic to spread Chinese influence over the world. China is consistently repeating that BRI has no geopolitical implications rather to build a single unified global community on the basis of cooperation and infrastructural coordination but the extent of this initiative clearly reflects its geopolitical and strategical implications.

There are various instances when the world has compelled to think about BRI's as a source to promote new set of norms that will alarm the ongoing current global order. Various occasions recorded that comprehended the exact concerns like in Greece and Hungary, there was a protest and criticism over Beijing for its human rights abuses, there is another issue arose about the illegal acquisition of South China Sea which is very disturbing for many countries like Malaysia, Vietnam and Philippines. China is trying to popularize "China Model" through BRI and tries to challenge the international order by various means like introducing 16+1 initiative which is a Chinese operating forum for Central and Eastern European Countries as China is increasing its involvement and influence in Europe also. With the introduction of BRI in the world, China has also introduced some unique features in BRI digital Silk Road like some privacy, facial recognition, social credit-like system and surveillance software along with cybersecurity laws in Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Uganda, Tanzania and Russia.

Many projects of BRI has located on many important strategic points on world map, the Strait of Malacca which is the main shipping route between Indian and Pacific oceans and located between Malay and Sumatra, this is a high earning trade way which has been a cause of dispute between Malaysia and Singapore here three ports have been proposed by Chinese BRI plan, this will give direct access to the route, these ports are going to have commercial usage rather military. These Chinese funded ports have become a source of contention for the world and western powers because the presence of China in this sort of disputed locations have serious implications for the utilization of these ports beyond commercial use only. US and China are countering more tension and conflicts because with the gradual progression

of time, BRI strategy and its intentions become evident that they are going to displace US from its power position and rise of China.

For US in spite of having many benefits for developing countries as well as for the world, BRI is still a matter of great worry and trouble because it is slowly deteriorating the existing position of the world powers and their long running interests in different regions of the world, various locations of BRI are the cause of dispute between and among the neighboring countries. Many issues have been arising first of all, Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan has gained some prominence in the world because the route is also crossing the Pakistani held Kashmir which bothers the territorial security and integrity of India and one of the reasons of not joining BRI is this involvement of China in Kashmir territory. Likewise, in Maldives, China has built a friendship bridge on the Indian Ocean that will increase the connectivity of the port with the international airport of Maldives moreover it ensures Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean which is alarming for the other strong actors of the world. Acquisition of the Southern port of Sri Lanka seems to have similar sort of implications and it is also said by some observers that this port will soon become a Chinese naval base. In Nepal, China has proposed a mega railway project which is highly costly and can't bear the expenses and also cannot repay the debt released for this purpose but there are many strategic implications for China against India and Tibet that China would be in a better position to have a close eye on India and its involvement in Tibet.

This growing influence and getting involved in world's affairs are a sign of concern for the only super power for the last three decades. BRI is a softer way of achieving this goal of getting the role of the strategic power; China has spread the network of infrastructure building and numerous developmental plans for widening its scope of making itself a global leader. China is actually on the right path and it is an attempt to widen its national interest across the world, by providing aid and economic assistance to the nations that ensure the security of its border and national integrity. China is also aiming to alter the course of world's politics by including Euro Asian states and related trade routes into the economic and cultural sphere created by the Chinese attempt of BRI community around the world. This strategy not only

increasing the demand of Chinese surplus production but also the presence and close ties of China with Euro Asian countries will enhance its connectivity with North African zone. This area is previously considered as the US allies' countries and extended US interest zone but now by expanding the Chinese influence over maritime routes as well as land ways, it would be able to extend the sphere of Chinese control and help to make a great continental empire by putting enormous investment in different countries. States cannot continue their rule forever and US has to accept this reality that China is moving towards the position that has been enjoying by USA since a very long time but in different regions of the world, it is countering by China and its aspiring plan of unifying the world on economic and strategic grounds as well as it is shifting the axis of international system.

Another strategic dimension is growing relations of China and Russia as the trade between the states has now reached to \$100 billion for the first time and increased reliance over China instead of US is again a matter of concern for USA. Russia has a very clear stance for China as well as BRI that Russia's objective is to establish a productive relationship that should not be exceeded overly dependent on China. This will help China to steadily continue its projects along the Euro Asian side as well as central Asian states.

China is ready to displace US from its hegemonic position, by extending its powers on naval and military grounds. The presence of China in Indo pacific, Euro Asian land and South China Sea is actually a counter presence to have a close eye on US interests and military activities in the region as well as to observe its new and old ties with the countries. China can easily exploit the loopholes in US hegemony in the world, US interference in Iran and Russia, occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq, its Middle Eastern ties, Arab Israel conflict and growing differences in Islamic front and different nationalistic movement are now open for the Chinese involvement because of its presence in these areas. USAs militarization and unending war against terrorism will have some serious implications because of the changing political scenario of the world as the world has witnessed the changing strategic balance of the world and US reduced capacity for tackling these intrinsic conflicts of this region that are persisting

since a century. China is actually working on different grounds for diverting the aspirations of the people and the governments of Middle East, it has projected its economic interests and goals and tried to deliver the economic stability to the area so, they would be in a better position to get rid of US hegemonic influence over every sphere of their life from economic to politics. As soon they will be able to rely more on the other coming options then there would be more prospects for the Middle Eastern countries to come out of the miseries and also some counter effects for US traditional interests and politics.

4.4.12 Steps taken by US against BRI

US is the biggest critique of BRI although US companies from different sectors are deeply interested in getting the share of this huge multilateral economic plan but US has not permit any USA enterprise to participate in it. After the elections, Trump's regime is solely working over the agenda to counter this global power shift, there are various steps taken by US government for blocking capital acquisition like US committee on foreign investment has stopped capital from MoneyGram on national security ground and it badly affected Alibaba who is the owner of Ant financial. In 2018 Feb, US federal government restricted Chinese investment to Chicago Stock exchange and many other Chinese investments have been halted by US government for not letting China into US economic matters or activities but the question is arising is this initiatives would bring some desirable results for US (Alek Chance, n.d.), if it is stopping China to invest in US could it replace China from the international market where not the rest of the world but US itself a partner to Chinese trade so, who is going to fill the gap because there is an evident slow down witnessing by the world in the infrastructure growth of US which clearly showing the lack of competence in this sector. It is a fact that US could not take Chinese position in the world and if it tries to remove it then it would affect China not very harshly but on the contrary, US would face the consequences because World Bank and Asian Development Bank have continuously giving warnings that there is a serious need to fill the infrastructural developmental gaps

It is not a sensible move of US to stay out of this huge cooperation setting where majority of the developing countries are aspiring to be a part of China's plan. US has to move forward and become a partner of it as both the countries can collaborate with each other on similar grounds and have the expertise in infrastructure and technology building. China has the advantage over hard power means economic strength, construction and infrastructure building capacity as well as technological edge which is not as expensive as west has but its soft power needs to be improved like in China there is a lack of liberty on various ground because after all, it is a communist state and still many norms have been practicing here. US is far better than China in this regard as it has strong cultural, linguistic and social norms to be presented and spread around the world rather the world is already under the domination of US culture and globalized norms. Its education institutions, professional and corporate sector, research and development centers are attracting millions of people towards it, its entertainment sector is actually ruling the world that it has taken the form of an institution that is providing world expertise of film making and cinema. If they comprehend with each other, they can move forward without getting the negative effects because of the gaps in the current strategy of both the states. US claim of being a single super power of the world is acceptable but the challenges that are coming in its way are not simple they have various addressable dimensions because world is continuously changing and every state must adapt itself according to the conditions. China is very quickly making its place in the region and along with the economic, it is also working over military and security dimensions, initially these steps are only for the defense and security of BRI projects and the Chinese people who are working in different countries of the world but gradually these military base would become permanent and ensure the presence of China for the long time.

US is also identifying the weak areas of the plan like it is very vocal about the level of transparency and corruption of the governments which is right that the developing countries governments are trying to take the advantage of this heavy investments of millions of dollars. If it would be examined then there must be many cases of bribery, corruption and false commitment in different countries for the BRI projects but again the query is, by raising the voice and making the plan suspicious did any state with

draw from the Chinese economic plan. The answer is no although many countries refused some projects because of the high cost but they didn't quit completely as they have signed agreements and binding conditions are there. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bangladesh and other ASEAN countries they are still an effective and active partner of China in BRI, they are the lenders of the money from the Silk Road fund and Asian infrastructure investment bank. This situation should be distressing for US authorities as US has not yet come up with the alternative initiative because US has been more inclined towards power politics, military occupation and economic sanctions that's why its credibility for the development of the world is not appreciable and countries of the world look US as a big and exploitative power for power acquisition (Firzli, 2015).

USA is only doing extreme criticism over the Chinese economic progress across the world like during visit of European countries and its other allies, it is only giving them warning and prepare them for increasing Chinese involvement in Euro Asian region. US secretary of State Mike Pompeo said when he visited Britain and Finland that beware of Chinese BRI as it is undermining the sovereignty of states, US has declared it a "Predator financing" and asked the world to be cautious of China's dominating influence for building large infrastructure projects.

IMF is continuously examining the projects with its huge debts, lending and lacking transparency level although IMF is an international organization subsidiary of United Nations Organization but the world is completely aware of the fact that it is under the control of its donor countries and USA is the biggest money provider to it with its headquarter situated in Washington. The reports from IMF are highly credible but there is a slight tilt towards US opinion that's why IMF is only announcing the flaws and gaps of money lending and loans of BRI but not talking for the solution. If these organizations and US is sympathetic to the participating countries for their heavy loans and short time for returning the loans then they should have come up with the resolution plan because in spite of all the flaws, it is a fact that BRI is actually providing developmental assistance to the poor countries that can't afford this much influx of technology and energy projects.

US intense criticism is actually accepted by China as it has become more vocal and active in order to reform BRI lending terms, it is accepting that in various participating countries, Chinese authorities are involved in corruption and the states also that's why President Xi has accepted the challenge and announced the new strategy of new fighting arena for China BRI that are "three tough battles of poverty alleviation, pollution control and reducing financial risks" In 2018, China put limitation on signing of contracts and 6% less projects were signed. China has stick to its stance of improving BRI financial commitments and rescuing the concerns of participating countries as well as of world, China and IMF has already improved the mutual understanding and working to share their expertise as a China-IMF Capacity Development Centre has been introduced and announced to provide technical assistance and training for the BRI official to support BRI now there is a need to deepen this relationship and work to boost the confidence as a feasible and accepted program of their collaboration and working will surely bring some broader changes.

Beijing can demonstrate its commitment of addressing concerns about the BRI by partnering with the IMF to improve lending practices. The two sides have already improved communication and expertise sharing this year. In April, the IMF announced the opening of the Chinese funded China-IMF Capacity Development Center to help train development officials and support the BRI (Lagarde, 2019) China also unveiled its International Development Cooperation Agency in April in an effort to put BRI decision-making under a single agency, a decision the IMF applauded. The next steps will be to deepen these channels and launch targeted pilot reforms to boost confidence on both sides. A successful program for both sides could set the stage for broader changes.

5. US – CHINA COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE

The belt and road initiative aims to reshape the world by putting enormous investment of around US\$1 trillion for creating more connectivity and building infrastructure across Euro Asian region, Indian Ocean region, south pacific, Africa and Asia. Apparently, this plan is designed for the economic objectives for China but it is highly debatable aspect because its consequences and impacts are more political and strategic especially for host country China and economical significance is receiving by participating countries of developing world. It surely has strategic outcomes and the only country which is highly aware of the facts and the consequences is USA, its concerns and fears are beyond the possible prospects because according to USA, this economic mega project possesses the aims of getting the control of state's political and strategic aspects through infrastructure projects bringing by Beijing to all over the world.

5.1 Reshaping the Indian Ocean region

The most effected and active BRI area for the power competition between US and China is Indian Ocean region which can reset the strategic dynamics of this region. The role of China in strategic scenario of this region was very minimal or China was almost out of this region and couldn't have any access of this area, main reason was the geographical barrier of mountain like Himalaya and other ranges that stretch through South of Asia works like a barrier and it simply detaches the entire continent with the Euro Asian sub-continent and Indian Ocean. Before some little time ask, there was no mean of connection between China and Indian Ocean like roads, railways and maritime routes this shows that China had very limited access and interaction with the region and likewise, had a very least connection with the Indian Ocean states. It is the dilemma of this region that major Euro Asian powers like Russia and China couldn't get the chance to dominate the region and because of this gap, extra regional naval powers like UK and

US navy stepped in and reshaped as an extra regional power here especially US who quickly took the place of Royal Navy in 1970s. But with the introduction of BRI, the scenario has turned towards the Chinese interests with the announcement of BRI as it also involves a network of ports, roads and maritime routes in Indian Ocean that are now always open for Chinese commercial ships and navy. Some analysts presented the idea that in order to sustain the long run presence in this area, China has to increase the number of warships up to 20 within five and more years and this fact will ultimately pose a challenge to the regional and international balance of power. There are some greater goals and consequences which will definitely visible after a certain period of time as BRI has introduced a chain of communication in the form of roads, railway, airports and economic corridors between China and the sea like from Southern China across Myanmar Chinese owned port of Kyaukpyu and from Xinjiang province across Pakistan till the Gwadar port which is also a Chinese owned port, these routes originating from China are open for the people and goods both, it is also happened for the first time that this movement of people, goods or armies has made the China to easily move between its own territory and waters of Indian Ocean. This move has its political and strategic dimensions and after having this arrangement completed, china will feel like its home and it will impact a lot on the Indo pacific relationship with China

Indo Pacific region is actually a term that carries political and strategic implications and this region where Indian and Pacific Ocean are connected, the space that are between these two oceans is ranging from the eastern coast of Africa to the western shore of United States. This area interconnected with two regions having great strategic and economic significance, this gives rise to cooperation and competition, all the western powers and super powers are highly concerned to have their enormous influence over this area. USA and China are the two biggest competitors that are working on different agendas for gaining control over the region. It is comprised of some special featured states like India is a part of this area which is the world's populous state, largest democracy, and largest Muslim majority state and included almost half of the earth's population. The states of this area, 7 largest standing armies of the world are in the Indo Pacific region and 6 nuclear powers of the world are here. Economically, it is a highly important area of the world like more than 60% of the global maritime trade is happening through the ways it

means that the high ratio of global shipping is passing through the South China Sea alone. USA is also considered as a pacific nation because it has pacific territories like five states: California, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon and Alaska. Some of the world's largest economies are located here like Japan, United States and China, as this area is the center of world's trade and economic activities that's why here many countries are doing great in this regard therefore, world's fastest growing economies like India, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Nepal and Philippines are situated here and enhancing its economic importance day by day, US's around quarter exports are reaching to Indo Pacific Area, India and China are exporting through this route and their exports have become doubled since the past decade. This region's share in the World's current economic sphere is increasing because of the free and secure trade routes through sea, land and air transit.

If there is a discussion about the two great powers of the world that how China and USA are moving towards an open conflict over the area then there must be an element of BRI in it. China that has got an active participation and role in Indo Pacific region after the introduction of mega economic and strategic scheme BRI, China is building infrastructure and developmental projects along the ports to enhance the communication and connectivity among the pacific states mostly South East and Far eastern countries but China is trying to deepen its footprint across the length and breadth of the region, one factor is Chinese great influx of investment and involvement in the form of different projects in Myanmar, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Laos etc. On the other hand, US alliance system is getting weaker as economically, these countries are more tilted towards China and that's why it is quite easy for China is to make advancement in the sector of maritime across the two oceans and fulfill its energy requirements with growth of trade and economic ties with the respective countries.

5.1.1 South China Sea

In Pacific Ocean, South China Sea is a subsidiary sea spread from the area of Karimata and Malacca to the Taiwan Strait which is almost 3,500,000 square kilometers long. This sea possesses great strategic importance, it is a way from which world's one third shipping is passing through and worth \$3trillion trade is carried. Many maritime significances are attached with it like active fisheries are here in the region and gives food

security to the millions of Southeast Asian people, this area is also enriched with the huge oil and gas reserves, this area is surrounded by some of the countries which are supposed to be world's rapidly growing countries like China from the south, Vietnam from the East, Philippines from the west and Borneo, Bangka Belitung from the North (An Le. Quoc, 2019).

There are hundreds of islands around this specific area and mostly are uninhabited islands and many countries have claims of sovereignty over them. The dispute of South China Sea has been started since 2013 when China started to claim two island Spratly and Paracel island and China initiated building and construction over the island to consolidate its influence and claim but this action was not got accepted by the world and internationally huge refusal and condemnation recorded. Along with USA, other western powers like UK and France worked collectively and came up with the Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) then in next year, an arbitration tribunal was formed under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and tried to sort it out the China's claim but China and Taiwan both didn't accept the ruling and emphasized upon bilateral negotiation for the resolution of the conflict.

China has no intention to give up these areas although it is interested in resolving the issue with negotiations or in peaceful manner but China is not ready to accept the claim of Taiwan over the island. China is now using this waterway for fishing and trading purpose and not bothers to listen the counterpart and now according to China's new policy, China is going to initiate its military deployment to the region.

USA has the counter stance and it is trying to stop China from expansion in that specific area, when China launched its military naval exercises in these waters then United States also followed the same way and increased its military activities and naval presence, United Nations also arranged six FONOPs since May 2017 and after the visit of United States President Trump to Southeast Asia, he stated the significance of military exercises in the region in order to counter China and he emphasized upon the open and free access to South China Sea. For BRI plan, China has observed and realized the importance of this area as it is highly enriched with crude oil and gas under the sea bed, it is in search of

more energy reserves for building more Chinese routes and ways to enhance the connectivity along and beyond the region.

5.1.2 Strait of Malacca

It is a sea corridor connecting two oceans and this water way is claimed by Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, it is connecting many important shipping lanes and providing traveling to many big trading countries of the world like India, China, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea. It is again highly important and beneficial area for the trade and strategic purpose like annually 94,000 vessels are crossing this strait and 25% of the world's trade is going on through this channel that includes, Gulf oil, coal, Malaysian palm oil, Indonesian coffee and Chinese manufactured products, one third of the total oil that is shipping through this lane is from Gulf countries to the Asian Market. China has numerous developmental projects along this area under the banner of BRI but it is still involving in territorial disputes although it is not needed at this moment of time. Now China is exceeding from its water boundary and claiming Natuna Water as its own territorial water, it is actually linked with the Chinese dispute with Philippines over Spratly and Parcel Island, this extension would have impact over the security of Natuna waters. Recently Indonesia has announced to build its army, air and naval force around the island in order to fortify the defence against the rising instability in the South China Sea. Chinese growing influence has great threats for US and its allies in this region as China is not only economically occupying the world but it also has military and strategic implications for the world like half of the Middle Eastern oil is shipping through this strait therefore, dominant role of China would have possible repercussions for US and its allies. Being a world power, US has to stay in this area to safeguard its interests and to provide security to different countries like Taiwan against Chinese domination and expansion, South Korea and Japan against rogue state North Korea and its other South East Asian allies against Chinese claims in South China Sea. With the initiation of BRI, China has become a major source of concern for US because China is deeply associated with this plan and related various infrastructural projects because it will guarantee Chinese presence and resistance in this area for the longer period of time. One other dimension is, US had been a single hegemonic and super power for a long period and was there as a sole dominant actor but

now China has entered into the scenario challenging the US position in the region. The Natuna waters (named after the islands they border) are part of Riau Islands Province in Indonesia, located along the southern part of the strategic Strait of Malacca. They are part of the South China Sea. Fahru explained that a new map on Chinese passports encompasses part of the Natuna waters, raising the risk of Indonesian officials (Calamur, 2017).

5.1.3 Strait of Hormuz

It is another important trade route and water channel between Persian and Oman Gulf which is the world's busiest route for shipping and trade, it is a highly significant region because world's 25% of the oil and liquefied natural gas is shipping through this strait. As world's oil supply is done through this area and most of the oil is coming from Saudi Arabia, there is a continuous tension between US and Iran and USA has imposed some economic sanctions over Iran, some years ago, Iran responded against sanctions that it can easily cut off the oil supply to the world and US reacted by stating that it is ready to counter any malicious action. During the time of Iranian naval exercises, US naval fleets moved into the Persian Gulf and Irani government warned US to move back. After this tension, one of the US oil tankers and drone was attacked and Iran denied to have its role in it. The matter of concern for China is, 91% of its oil is coming from this strait of Hormuz and the dependence over Persian gulf is becoming crucial matter for China because with the growing tension in the region and increasing threat of clash between Iran and US would be highly risky for Chinese interest not in the region but collectively, it will affect the pace of its BRI plan (Goldstein, 2019).

5.2 US China Trade and cooperation

China and USA are very active great trading partners, both countries are greatly dependent over the other because of the biggest markets of the world. China is the largest goods trading partner of USA with \$659.8 billion in total during last year and in the sector of trade in services, total amount of \$77.3 billion was spend, this trade in services with China has created 911,000 jobs in 2015 as China has become united States 3rd largest goods export market in 2018. US is exporting aircrafts, machinery, electrical machinery, optical and medical instruments, vehicles, agriculture and domestic products like

Soybeans, cotton, hides and skins, pork and pork products and grains. China's foreign direct investment to US is about \$39.5 billion mostly led by real estate, manufacturing and depository institutions. US foreign direct investment to China is of \$107.6 billion in 2017, it was increased up to 6% in 2016 and it is mostly in the fields of wholesale trade, manufacturing, insurance and finance. (Alek Chance, n.d.).

5.3 Changes in US foreign Policy after BRI

China has introduced one of the most inspiring and long-term projects named BRI and with the introduction of this plan, it has to do multiple kind of actions to make itself secure and progressive. China has taken on some dramatic foreign policy steps and for the first time in history, it has turned into very vibrant and open about its foreign relations and initiatives like it has increased its presence throughout the world with the building of chain of infrastructural projects, in its own region, it is going to strengthen its military presence in South China Sea and the Indo Pacific region, not for economic but also for strategic means and this step as warned US and other western countries to be alert and take counter actions as it is a challenge to the existing powers of the world . In Middle East and Euro Asian region, China is going to get a new position which is not acceptable for the world, China's flagship project brought many unique ideas and practices like Asia infrastructure Investment Bank, Silk Road Fund and increase in foreign direct investment in the world. USA is now at a very crucial position where it has to be very vigilant and attentive towards each and every move of China, US being a largest trading partner of China can not openly oppose its trans-national and trans-continental activities that are gaining high recognition and appreciation of the developing world and now China's foreign policy has to be observed in a bigger perspective.

US has initiated new Indo Pacific strategy and became the part of open and free indo pacific region, his strategy devised to counter and stop China's increasing influence and activities in the specific region. China which is more tilted towards the military presence and practices because it has the aim to be the resident power of Pacific region, one reason is to have secure progression of BRI in various countries along the pacific and Indian ocean and to have a strong defence for the presence of US navy in these waters. US has the aim to remain here for the defence of Taiwan against China's occupation over

different island and to defend South Korea and Japan against the nuclear and communist regime of North Korea and also for India which has not been a part of BRI but wants to sustain and increase its influence as a regional power. USA has the status of world's highly influential and powerful state which has been enjoying this status since the end of the USSR and till now, no state has the power to challenge its position as along with the UN Security Council there are various other important organizations and institutions of the world are running through it. It has NATO which is also dominant by the US influence and interests for example in the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, on very thin evidences, it launched a long military attack and occupation of these two countries beyond its region but successfully concluded it (Flinton, 2019).

Now USA has long range foreign policy goals because of the BRI which has interests beyond economic gains. This advancement has the approach to become more proactive to expand its national interest and economic goals throughout the region, it is actually an evolution to the Chinese foreign policy after BRI and in this changed policy China is aimed to actively influence the shape of the global economy and politics as well, now onward China has adopted the objective to use economic and diplomatic instruments wherever they are needed. China is now more aspirant to gain strategic opportunities across the world and under the banner of BRI, China is working over nations' dependency and vigorous competition. This notion is gradually changing the power centres of the world. Asian and African countries that were previously looking towards US for their economic and strategic needs, now the focus has been shifted to China and USA has to take some serious actions for it. USA is keeping a close eye on the growing situation of the world.

Some analysts claimed that BRI is in the response of US "Pivot to Asia policy" in which US planned to invest heavily in South East Asian countries and advanced military systems were deployed to Japan and the other allies' countries, aircraft carrier construction and 60% of US submarines were deployed to Asia. US Pacific Command was got high alert during the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Another instance of worry for China was the US new Silk Road Initiative that was announced by Hillary Clinton in 2011 that started focusing on Central Asian states and Afghanistan for more quick and safe transit and trade

routes between Europe and East Asia, it was an aim of US to integrate the region for economic and strategic purpose in order to strong the presence of the world power without having a conflict and peace keeping role.

US which is also working for Trans Pacific Partnership not only for its own strategic interests but also to create some difficult grounds for China especially for the purpose of making it a hostile territory. There is no other important or drastic shift in US policy have been seen since the introduction of this plan, US is still more concerned to defend or to counter the implications of BRI through military and security means but it is still not interested to make its own goodwill in the region and along the countries that really need assistance to make them stable. US activities on foreign grounds are only seen in the pacific region as it is the most crucial and important location for US and it is dominantly affecting by Chinese initiatives. US trade; Oil and its boundaries are going to be vulnerable because of increasing Chinese actions on economic and geopolitical grounds. Almost 90 different named military exercises have been conducted here with the allies and partner countries each year. The purpose is to exhibit the strength and cooperation on this ground as well as to deter the adversaries.

Japan is the biggest and closest ally of US in Pacific region which has no affinity with China and they have common interests and grounds towards South East Asia and East Asia even they have worked to build common approach to curtail and resolve the regional issues. Although both have some different sort of geopolitical strategy towards China in perspective of their state's foreign policy but both the countries have this realization of changing conditions of the region that would have some potential negative impacts and they have to work out some possible grounds to protect themselves.

While the US China relations getting bitter and intensifying, Tokyo and US are standing together to resist Chinese influence in the region especially in the field of military and security, its increased military involvement and its entrance in others' maritime jurisdiction. Although Japan is a little reluctant that in the situation, when US and china is moving towards confrontation, it is effect negatively over Japan China high-tech sector cooperation. Tokyo is supporting Washington stance over Indo Pacific strategy but on the other hand, it is also ready to build more coexistence with Beijing in economic

sphere and non-traditional security. This portrays that state's national interest could never be undermined because of any developing current issue.

Japan is in the favor of long and continued US presence in the region as well as engagements in the issues arising after BRI moreover, the Korean peninsula is another source of concern for Japan because since the instance when US strongly objected North Korea, arms race and installation of long range ballistic missiles and warned North Korea from its increase arm production and proliferations. This act has more serious repercussions for South Korea and Japan as compare to USA because of its presence in the region. There are trilateral security relations among Washington, Tokyo and Seoul, Japan and South Korea are not partner but both are the partner of US and US has become the hub of relations, this trilateral relations would dominantly impact the China related activities as US encouraged the coordination as in Asia, countries are not united with their regional partners but with the help of US and other outside partners, they can formed a better counter strategy for China (Kawashima, 2019).

5.4 Middle East Conflicts and Chinese involvement

Since last decade, the involvement of China in the Middle Eastern countries has been increased for cooperation in various spheres like economic, politic and to a limited extent, security also, china has now attained the position of biggest trade partner and investor in this region. China's intention is not disturbing the whole security setting of Middle East designed by US but it is trying to make its own space and active role in there in order to establish its influence and existence in Middle Eastern Region (MER). In coming future, China is not going to challenge US role but its growing economic presence and cooperation with the countries that ultimately cause a wider and deeper involvement in the region and affect the European interests and regional politics. As Middle Eastern region has been a victim of disturbance and political instability since the decline of Ottoman, it is also remained a centre of attentions for the world powers and they established their vital role for more influence over this strategically important area. After the involvement of China, European countries should be more vigilant towards the nature of the cooperation between China and MER because for creating regional and national stability, China is providing surveillance technology and arm sales which would create

some sort of problems for west that has its own interests related to Israel and other ally's countries.

One more thing in this regard that must be considered by western powers and USA also that China is not ready to indulge into extremely complicated middle eastern political and strategic scenario, China's growing involvement in the region has dominantly economic implications because of the energy resources and its transit to the world as well as to China because when this plan was announced, it was projected as a plan to connect the world on economic grounds and construct infrastructure projects to link different markets of the world and as it is an evident fact that ME has enormous potential to become sole oil provider to the world but there are various conflict and issues in which the whole world is associated in different dimensions But China is claiming that it is a politically neutral initiative and every country can join it. This plan has moved the position of China under spot light as it is going to connect Euro Asian region and Indian Ocean region and markets from South China Sea to Mediterranean.

China is aggressively making middle East states member of BRI, Iran, Saudi Arab, UAE, Qatar, Palestine and Israel , all are parties in it but now China have to be focused on economic developments because the scenario in MER is high complicated and problematic that it unintentionally would become a party, China cannot exclude these countries from BRI because the framing of this plan allows China to extend its presence in this intensely competitive environment without getting involved in political and security requirements. China and middle east relations are mostly revolving around the energy demand, resources and routes because more than half of the China's oil is coming from this region and in 2015, China has officially declared as the biggest global importer of crude oil in the world and it is evident that this area is enriched with the oil, Middle East is very important for the future of BRI because the trade routes, transit lanes that are linking Asia, Europe and Africa constructed under the flag of BRI, all are dependent upon middle eastern oil and its strategic routes. Gulf countries acquire highly significant position in this regard and China is more concerned in making the relation with them more promising, friendly and cooperative. BRI project in ME prominently highlights energy, trade, infrastructure, investment and construction and officially China is not intended to

turn its economic goals to geopolitical aims as China has to be highly cautious in this region because here it cannot afford an abrupt engagement and status quo disturbance because it will instantly divert western power interest and attentions here and because of political intense inference, it would be difficult for China to continue economic regrowth process, its integrated interest are mostly revolving around economic and energy dimensions. It is a critical decision for China that how to maintain neutrality while formulating any agreement that it would project or produce mutual advantage and make the possibilities of future continued cooperation. China has a multipolar approach here in Middle East when it is not going to interfere in internal as well as regional matters but the relations are more directed to get the most benefit from it as well as establishing long term partnership on bilateral grounds. Chinese notion for working inside Middle East is attractive for those countries that are waiting for economic assistance with distorted governmental and economic system like it is going to promote stability with the slogan of “developmental Peace” instead of western motto of “Democratic Peace”

Before the announcement of BRI, in the previous decade, China started signing agreements with every country on bilateral grounds and every state got agree to cooperate on common grounds. China has concluded agreements with 15 countries most of the agreements talked about anti-piracy and maritime security pacts in Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden, china conducted large scale operation to rescue its nationals at the time of civil war and coup in Libya and Yemen in 2011 and 2015 respectively. China was also active in concluding nuclear deal in Tehran as well as it also worked to establish peace in the region by peace mediation in Yemen and Syria. China has also appointed two special ambassadors for avoiding and resolving conflicts in Middle East. After BRI, China has successfully established its first military base in Djibouti as well as presence of military on Pakistani Gawader port identified as the close existence of China to the crucial areas of Middle East especially maritime routes like Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb. On a low profile, China has started to play a key role in Middle Eastern politics although it is not ready to take the place of US in the region and not to have a clear political position here but it is trying to exhibit its growing interest as it has worked in the collaboration of Russia to protect and restore Syrian regime, this showed that it has now a direct interest in the Syrian conflict. Another prominent role of China became evident to the world when

US Iran tension grew over Strait of Hormuz, China due to its presence in the strait, it could take a strong stance or could play a role in the security dimension because China wants the secure navigation of its goods and oil but China saw and act very cautiously in the situation because it is the display of China's response that China is still not ready to have a significant and powerful role in this situation. Gradually China is moving forward and in 2019, United Arab Emirates official has announced that China will conduct and participate in maritime security operations in the specific strait, Iranian authorities also confirmed that Chinese navy will participate in exercises and drill along with Iran and Russia in the Sea of Oman and Northern Indian Ocean. Beijing has not confirmed these news but back stage, the play has been started and going on tactfully (Rakhmat, 2019).

The role of USA in Middle East is mostly for the protection of Jewish homeland Israel that's why the Palestine conflict has been lasted for so long and other Middle Eastern as well as countries from outside the region has interests and their clear stance about the issue. US did it by fostering military capability here and also working over the agenda by concluding treaties and accords. The fact which is highly evident is, China is supporting those countries or establishing friendly ties to the states that are anti-USA and anti-Israel or in other world, it can be said that China is assisting the opponent camp like Iran, Yemen, and Syria. This is making the situation very problematic not for the regional states but also for USA because almost in every ME state, anti-US group is very active and has its agenda for Israel and USA like Lebanon. On the other hand, many countries are having economic ties with China for Oil and energy transfer then there is BRI where all the states are on common ground of cooperation and collaboration with China. In this compact and complex environment, China and US both are at the crucial position as US cannot abruptly kick out Chinese presence as it is mostly on bilateral grounds and in the modern world, every state is free to establish relations with the country of its choice. China also cannot move very fastly but through economic cooperation, it can easily build a counter front for USA in Middle East.

China has its diplomatic relations with Israel and Palestine both, Israel is ready to sign economic agreements for more cooperation on technology, trade and investment grounds, China has proposed Israel to join BRI like other middle eastern countries but on the other

hand, it didn't stop to condemn Israel illegal occupation over Palestinian land and it officially stated that this conflict must be resolved on immediate basis to stop the killing of innocent people. It officially signed memorandum of understanding with Palestine for free trade in the region and Palestine should join the squad. Palestine asked Beijing to play an important role for the quicker solution of the Palestine Israel conflict. China is now working on two ground one is to develop the area so, they could be able to work more effectively for the establishment of Peace. With the introduction of BRI in Palestine, many Chinese companies will start working for infrastructure building and construction of energy projects. These developments would be threatening for Israel that China being a rival to US is going to have a permanent position in the region and moreover, it is assisting Palestine to grow and strengthen its foundation which will ultimately pose a challenge to Israel and its interests (Rakhmat, 2019).

5.5 Potential of China in Iran and Afghanistan (Two Important strategic Partners of China in Asia)

Iran has posed serious challenge to United states of USA in Middle East, it is still under heavy economic sanctions because of the acquisition of nuclear capability and US is not allowing any middle eastern state to have the nuclear state status especially Muslim state because Israel is already there in the region as the caretaker of US interests but Iran is the only country that solely and openly challenge Israel existence in Middle East and it declares Israel as a reason of contention and the presence of US in Middle East. It also warned that it will end the Jew and Israel existence. US explained the situation that Iran is financially and morally supporting terrorism in the region, its government is not democratic and there are many cases of human right abuse have been recorded, Iran is threatening US friends and allies, it is also favoring Anti US insurgents in Afghanistan, continuous support to Hezbollah (Lebanese militant group) against Israel and favor Bashar regime in Syria, all these acts are part of Iranian foreign policy. The most concerning issue for Washington is the pursuit of nuclear weapon capability and due to this issue, USA is striving hard to declare Iran as rogue state and along with its allies and United Nations authority, it has been successfully imposed serious economic sanctions over Iran but Iran didn't stop and it continued to attain Uranium enrichments and it is very near to develop

nuclear weapon technology. For having inclusive results of sanctions, US and the other supporter countries are heavily dependent on some influential actors of the world like Russia, India, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Turkey but these countries have already close and significant commercial and financial ties with Iran. Finally, Achieving China's consent over Iranian nuclear issue is one of the crucial elements of any USA attempt to stop Iran from developing nuclear capability. China has not yet supported the sanctions against Iran because of these states long term relations comprised of three decades, their relations have been built over the mutual needs of China and Iran like China needs uninterrupted supply of energy resources for its huge production sector and for the ongoing acquisition of BRI programs around the world and on the other hand, Iran is self-sufficient in energy resources but the cooperation is beyond these energy needs because Iran is also involved in arms sale and defense cooperation which is a cause of disturbance in geostrategic equilibrium against USA. The closest and the most reliable ally of Iran in the whole region is People's Republic of China, Iranian survival from the extreme pressure of the global community is the result of Chinese diplomatic and strategic support. Iran is stood against US pressure and continued with its nuclear enrichment because of the China's help, world industrial and developmental activities are completely dependent upon the availability of oil and gas from the different parts of the world and being a close geographical ally and neighbor of China, Iran possesses great importance not only for China but the whole world as a biggest supplier of oil and gas to various parts of the world. All types of relations between and among the countries always drive upon common interests, in this case both the countries are highly reliant on each other with common opponent that's why the Iran has become able to face world's opposition and collective sanctions. China's security and military cooperation with Iran is not acceptable for US because Iran has turned into a complicated case for US.

Economic dependency is like a game changer, this notion is perfectly suitable in Iran China case as Irani markets are now open for Chinese products. China's growing ties with Iran is the matter of concern and worry for US because US wants to make Iran isolated to refrain it from Israeli opposition and threat to the country. US also don't want Iran with nuclear weapons as it would be more vulnerable for Israeli and US interests in the region to be pursued. Iraq and Saddam experience is still remembered by the world

that how Iraq acquired weapons of mass destruction and then posed a serious challenge to the regional and international community but with Iran the case is different as Iran is not allied with US which has been a hegemonic super power but China which is trying to take that place but its working and diplomatic approach is not like US as it is more inclined towards economic power and its systematic acquisition, BRI is an instrument for this purpose that states are highly attracted towards the economic cooperation and collaboration without giving much, they are receiving infrastructure and multiple kind of advanced assistance.

5.5.1 Brief History of China Iranian Relations

Iran and China, both the countries have enjoyed ancient, long, honored and glorious civilizations that is comprised of many centuries, their past has very deep impacts over their present as still they have the pride and uniqueness for their civilizational identity and character, it might be happened that they found the historical commonality and cultural greatness as a common factor between them. Both the countries are striving to defend their legitimacy in an international system that emphasizes upon human rights and limited sovereignty. During 20th century, Iran and China both became semi-colonial states, China was attacked by many western powers and finally got independence through revolution by Mao Zedong in 1949 and Iran was divided into “Zones of Influence” by Russia and Great Britain in 19th century. China faced sanctions at its early phase because of the communist regime subsequently, Iran was like a puppet in the hands of the big powers at that time, and United States compelled Raza Shah Pahlavi to transfer power to his son Mohammad Reza to pursue western interest in the region. The decade of 1950s was not very prosperous and stable for the people of Iran because in 1953, Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh was dismissed after a coup and as a result, Iranian people realized that Western powers are disturbing their domestic affairs and because of their increased influence, Pahlavi regime failed to complete its ruling term. During the same time, China was facing western sanctions and because of those sanctions, Chinese rulers portrayed international world as enemy to Chinese people. Before Islamic Revolution, relations between these two countries were at a very low level because of the US pressure over Iran not to increase any economic and diplomatic ties with communist China. Before the end of Shah’s regime, Shah tried to establish better and improved relations with China

to have more independent foreign policy. After Islamic revolution, Iran was uncertain about China because big powers were at the verge of enter into the state sphere and exploit its resources. Iran's revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini was not inclined to forgive the transgression but Beijing started attempts for establishing good relations with the changed regime and during Iran Iraq war, it succeeded to restore the trust by selling arms for the war.

During the times of 1980s China was striving to spread its own kind of communism in the world and neighboring countries and at that instance, Iran felt some sort of risk because of the ideological clash because Islamic norms are completely coincide with the communist ideology on the other hand, it is also very important that after Islamic revolution, Iran was quite isolated from the Islamic and international world also and it could not afford any other challenge at that time. China Iran relations have been more focused on mutual cooperation and collaboration that's why it was not so easy to completely get away and when the time grew, Iran and China continued with the support and oil trade. Iran had another kind of opposition that is if Arab world which was not ready to have a Shia regime in Middle East that's why initial years of Iran after revolution were not very easy for it. During 1980s, Iran was looking forward for establishing its geostrategic influence in the region with the help of oil export, Iran was also highly beneficial for getting markets for its arms at the time when its economy was almost in stagnant position and US and USSR both had reservations with Chinese form of government and its expansion in the region. It means both the new regimes were facing opposition from the world's super powers as well as from the western world. For trade and profit, both the countries relied on each other and that cooperation continued till now and China proved an ideal foreign partner for Iran as it didn't have any territorial ambitions

For Iran, Iran-Iraq war was a total blow for its survival and the spread of Islamic revolutionary ideology to the region and this long war also pursued cold war challenges by both the combating countries. This war lasted for ten years and by the end of the war, Supreme leader of Iran Ayatollah Khomeini died and the whole set up of the government was changed with the coming of supreme commander of Iran Ayatullah Ali Khamenei and president Ali Akbar Hashmi Rafsanjani and at the same time, in China, the

government was fighting with the pro-democratic protests in Tiananmen Square which had its long and deep effects on domestic and foreign policy of China. In Tiananmen Square Chinese government killed hundreds of protesters that were students and world badly condemned China's anti human act. During this time period, both the countries got busy in economic reconstruction and military advancement by remained isolated from the western community and super powers of the world. Both the countries faced opposition and condemnation from USA and this thing made them realize about their common atrocities and opposition that's why they cooperated more deeply on diplomatic grounds as well as they enhanced arm sale and oil export during this period.

By attaining economic boom and industrialization, China has now moved towards major oil imports for increasing the growth rate of China. At this instance, China Iran economic ties got more strengthen and they developed more agreements and pacts for close cooperation. USA was monitoring the situation and it made the US to come up with the policy of "Dual Containment" against Iran and Iraq, this international suppression compelled Iran to close together as both the countries were having same sort of concerns and challenges.

China US open confrontation was going on and it seemed the more conflicts would be raised as in 1996, Chia Taiwan issue was at its peak and US unconditional support for Taiwan exhibited the fact that US is completely against Chinese regime and its regional expansion, China realized that if this bitterness increases then the consequences would be more disastrous. At the same time China and Iran were moving at the same pace and their cooperation getting more close that resulted in rapid economic growth of China but in late 90s, China decided to move the relations to low profile and suspended some agreements of military and arm support to Iran moreover, ceased the cooperation in nuclear and missile program of Iran (Harold, 2012).

With the start of 2000, there were many opportunities emerged for the countries because the Chinese regime was too strong and diplomatically successful that it skillfully managed the relations with US that there was no more concerns regarding the China Iran ties to be disrupted. This period of consensus and agreement between China and US soon ended with the US air attack on Chinese embassy in Belgrade and again in China, the

pressure of people and elite growing against US gave a way to the Chinese government to reestablish more close relations with Iran and keep distant from US and this is the most evident way of exhibiting the indifferent relations with USA. With coming millennium, there were series of events and new developments that put US to a vulnerable position because now, China was growing enormously economically and becoming the need of the states and global markets, USA was not in a position to openly deter or offend China on any move with its allies that had not responsive relations with US. In 2001 china got associated and became a member of World Trade Organization, this initiative was affected negatively over US intentions of surrounding or limited Chinese influence on global level because now the world is opening to China and accepting its highly strong economic and strategic position in the world. In 2002 when Iran's nuclear enrichment activities got disclose and world was quite anxious to have a Islamic revolutionary state which has close hostility with US and Israel in the region, the world was also got to know that it is very near to achieve the technology then various European and western countries began to withdraw from Iran and their government putting pressure on Iran but Chinese companies found open ground and awaiting markets in Iran and again they made more close ties, in this decade, their relations started maturing and took the recent form, China didn't take US pressure over its domestic issues because it is a universal right of a country to establish diplomatic relations to any country of the world and when there is a matter of interests and economic benefits then states always go for their national interests. In china Iran situation, China has been trying to have stable and peaceful relations in the region so, its struggle for regional power status could be productive and without regional opposition. In case of Iran, Iran has the edge over the other countries that is oil reserves which is the most wanted commodity for the world that's why, Iran couldn't be forced to isolate from the world (Harold, 2012).

Iran views China as a close trading and strategic power which has hostile relations with US, Iran from the very beginning, it never favor and welcome US because of the bitter past experience and increased influence over pre-revolutionary regime. Iran actually is the reason of US departure from the region and consequently, it planted Israel here to safeguard its interest. China and Iran mutual cooperation has been cultivated on the common ground of US hatred and this collaboration norm is still persisting because these

two states have the same ongoing hostilities and clash of interests with US and its hegemonic behavior. For Iran, US opposition is considered as its ideological pillar and for China, its communist ideology itself was a reason of offend and now its economic position is posing challenge to the super power status of USA.

5.5.2 Afghanistan Relation with China

The relations between China and Afghanistan have been mostly friendly since the advent of Silk Road and Hans dynasty, after getting the status of modern nation state in 1709, the nature of mutual relations were quite responsive, the foremost reason could be they are immediate neighbor and enjoying same region. In 19th century, they both fought against Japan in WWII and in early cold war period, China invested enormously in Afghanistan for development and rebuilding but after Soviet involvement in China and setting an anti-China regime there before Soviet invasion but after Afghan war ended, the relations restored again and China did a lot in the infrastructure development and resumed bilateral trade with Afghanistan. During the time of US Afghan invasion in 2001, China somehow had to limit the relations but the trade and transit didn't stop because Afghanistan is the largest trade partner of China, China gave millions of dollar aid to Afghanistan during US invasion of Afghanistan.

Trade between Afghanistan and China was never stopped even at the time when the Silk Road was open then both the countries enjoyed the trade of tea and fruits, Budh monks in the area (present Afghanistan) came to preach the religion. In Second World War, Chinese Muslims were fighting against Japan, they were so actively participated to gain war support for China that they visited various countries like India and met with Gandhi, Tagore and Mr. Jinnah then they gone to Egypt, Syria and Turkey to discuss the war and Chinese Muslims efforts against Japan. When the People's Republic of China created, they didn't start the relations but in 1955, they formally established diplomatic relations with Afghanistan and Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice Premier He Long visited Afghanistan in 1957 which was the first official Chinese visit to Afghanistan afterward, they worked together for strengthening their bilateral relations and with every new government these relations getting stronger. Beijing and Afghanistan signed boundary treaty in 1963 for settling Wakhan and Xinjiang border. During Soviet Afghan war,

mutual relations of Afghanistan and China were limited and tense even border clashes were reported but during the soviet backed government the relations became quickly hostile. After Soviet War, the relations were dominated by cooperation and during Taliban regime, Chinese ambassador was the first non-Muslim governmental official who visited Mullah Umar. During the time of US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, China recognized Karzai regime and provided cash and material aid for the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Every year, China worked for better, secure and productive relations with Afghanistan. China also expanded its attempts of peace keeping between Pakistan and Afghanistan when there was the issue of cross border terrorist attack and terrorist training camps in tribal areas. There were agreed to establish trilateral dialogue for promoting cooperation and revival of trust among them. Some analysts said that the establishment of CPEC is the main reason for stability and peace in the region, China also played an influential role in developing friendly ties with Taliban and it arranged several rounds of peace talks with Taliban leadership along with Pakistan, US and other stake holders to restore stability and harmony, the main reason of this extended cooperation and participation is because of the smooth development of BRI and one of the important corridor China Pakistan economic corridor in Pakistan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping presented the gigantic Belt and Road initiative plan, a long and transcontinental network of infrastructure plans around more than 60 countries but initially Afghanistan was not included in it and for establishing route to central Asia, Pakistan was chosen for building the corridor CPEC but with the growing time, China involvement increased in Afghanistan and for more stable and prepared political setup for BRI, it involved and negotiate with Taliban for getting the opportunity for more trade and development and investment. Afghanistan can play a vigorous role in promoting the Chinese infrastructure plan and it would be an amazing opportunity for Afghanistan to be the part of the world development and individual state enhancement. Afghan think tank that BRI is bypassing Afghanistan but it has the potential to be an effective BRI partner because of its location, immediate neighborhood with China and infrastructure deficit, it is the most suitable actor for BRI predominantly because of its locations as it is the shortest way to central Asian and South Asian states, it can give transit to Middle East and a gateway to Arabian Sea. After 1991, role of China in Afghanistan was quite restricted

although it didn't send its troops in Afghanistan for war on Terror but because of the very restrained role of China, it didn't involve Afghanistan in any high profile and heavily invested project as compared to other neighboring countries like Pakistan and even after the withdrawal of NATO forces, initially China worked for peace establishment and conflict settlement in Afghanistan but now after making the ground, China has initiated its plans and putting its investments in enormous amount and also increased the influx of aid in the country. Many Chinese companies are involved in various constructions and building projects, for Beijing, there are large deposits of Lithium in Afghanistan which is commonly used in mobile batteries. Afghan's poor infrastructure, government planning and logistics made the extraction of minerals very difficult and because of many hurdles, international companies are not ready to work in Afghanistan but finally China has got the courage and got the rights of Amu Darya Basin oil and Mes Aynak copper mine in Kabul. Afghanistan has become the official part of BRI in 2016 when memorandum of Understanding was signed and China announced \$100million investment for its neighbor. The BRI has actually started in Afghanistan with the initiation of many projects like in September 2016, a freight train from China reached to an Afghan town of Hairatan along the border, an air linking corridor from Kabul to the Chinese city of Urumqi was initiated under the banner of BRI. Belt and Road Forum 2017 was attended by the Afghan officials and it also became the member of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that will provide funds for BRI projects. Various previous ongoing developmental projects in Afghanistan from China were brought under BRI after becoming an official member of BRI.

Not only on bilateral grounds but Afghanistan has also be a part of some multilateral developmental projects in which many other states are involved like a railway project comprised of five countries that will start from China and reach to Iran through Afghanistan is in feasibility process, another long project is waiting for its start, it is a north south railway corridor that would aim to connect Kunduz and connect Torkham on Pakistani side.

There are various other proposed projects like energy programs not only for BRI survival and enhancement but also for the national development of Afghanistan for example, CASA-1000 and TAP-500, these energy generation plants are planned to supply

surplus electricity from Central Asia to South Asian energy deficient countries through Afghanistan. The work on TAP gas pipeline has already started, along with these project, another significant development in this regard is, Digital Silk Road fiber optic cable network which is solely not a Chinese project but other partners are also involved in it, it is for connecting 25 Afghan provinces and finally linked to China, South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East and Europe. China is actually playing a leading role in Afghanistan and many projects are solely financed and operated by China but China is also aspired to work with other foreign partners like five nations railway and Lapis Lazuli Corridor are assisted and financed by some multilateral financial institutions like Asian Development Bank along with China.

Afghanistan is like a testing ground for China and it is trying to work out some difficult relationships like here China is collaborating with USA in different plans and here, it is also agreed to work along its rival India. China India relations have not been smooth and friendly since a long ago and when China started the flagship BRI corridor CPEC, India China cooperation in Afghanistan were obstructed. CPEC is the most advanced component of BRI which involved \$60 billion investment. CPEC is the most feasible option for China to connect Afghanistan to BRI and it is a secure option for China to start its most important part of BRI from Pakistan instead of Afghanistan as Afghan land has been victimized by terrorism and Talibanization since 9/11 and another aspect is, it is dominant by US power and presence and obviously, in this uncertain and unfriendly condition, China could not take any risk for this huge project but China cannot avoid Afghan's role and existence as its neighbor and old close ally therefore, it joined BRI lately with some cross border rail and road connecting links. During and after the war on terror in Afghanistan, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were turned quite hostile, China tried to work out some solution of the problem by inviting both the countries for a trilateral dialogue along with itself to discuss the extending plan for CPEC and then in May 2018, the relations improved by concluding a cooperation agreement . Many Afghan officials are quite concerned about the increased level of dependency on Pakistan, they are more inclined to gain self-sufficiency and other options of reliance like Iran. But the evident fact is, Pakistan is the only and most convenient option for Afghanistan because it provides quickest route to sea and its access to international markets like central

Asian countries. Matter of fact is that every country cannot survive individually, they have to be reliant and dependent with each other because of their multiple needs and Afghanistan cannot ignore the significance of Pakistan for its development and progression (Stone, 2019).

When the US forces were returning back, security and peace situation became worse in Afghanistan and it was possible that this instability and disruption would spread to Central Asian countries and even in Pakistan therefore, China took quick decisions for making its presence permanent in Afghanistan to reduce the risks for prospective disturbance to BRI projects. Border security is also an important issue to be addressed by Chinese authorities between China and Afghanistan, according to them, terrorists can use Afghanistan as a base for their terrorist activities towards mainland of China that's why, it strictly looked into the situation and tightened the border security by regular patrolling along the border and by setting up a security base in Badakhshan province. Another security and cooperation mechanism was established among Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan. China is looking very far sighted and lining to set up multilateral forums for long term cooperation and durable security conditions in Afghanistan as China is working as a mediator for bringing Taliban to the table for negotiation with US, Pakistan and Afghan governmental authorities. Due to these steps and attempts, US government has now reached to an agreement with Taliban in January. China is doing its best efforts for enabling Afghanistan to play a role of vital partner of China's BRI plan.

5.6 China's Strategic advantage over US

The world is entering into a new era of power competition and USA is going to face a staunch rivalry with China because now china is moving towards the title of strategic competitor, Beijing is successfully working over various strategic and geopolitical domains. It was very difficult for China to make its prominent identity as a world power in the presence of USA and its hegemonic influence across the world. China identified the areas that have not been addressed by US, China started its plan from the developing countries and economic domain because of its increased industrialization, technological advancement and enormous profit, China launched a series of projects with multiple implications that declared by US as "Reemergence of Long Term Strategic

Competitor”. There are many factors that make China a more promising candidate for World Super Power, first factor is, geographical location. For pursuing any agenda in the world, it is very important to have easy access to that place unlike of US, China has easy access to the locations where it is going to pursue its projects or interests. China is physically present in the region and can easily get the assistance and immediate help in any case. On the contrary, US has to establish its bases in the region because it is situated at the corner of the world when it was going to launch War against Terrorism in Afghanistan, US set its military bases around the countries near to Afghanistan.

5.6.1 Military domination

USA has a dominant factor over China is its military capability, USA has been a military competitor to another former super power USSR that couldn't survive because of US leading military strength, USA decided to take the empty place after the collapse of old system, institutions and norms. When Second World War ended, USA took the responsibility of the world as it was the only state that didn't get destroyed because of the WWII, it had the potential to come up with a new set of democratic institutions, world order and agreements with lots of states. Allies powers that fought the war with US, now they accepted US as a reformer of the world and they followed the new norms. Along with new norms, values and ideologies, US also introduced new security apparatus and military arrangements, it spread its influence with the name of capitalist ideology and its combating with socialism also allowed the countries to open their gates for openness and opportunity in the form of capitalism. US military dominance for the world was not a big deal because it was the post war world affected badly because of the six years fight and also a nuclear attack over Japan. USA got open ground on its own territory to plan, prepare and execute strategies for rest of the world. It remained present in the world by making allies, maintaining security relationship, expanding those relationships even after the dismemberment of USSR. Not even during the time of cold war when the opponent power was present, for various instances, US forces used outside the country 40 to 50 times and after USSR, the number increased up to 100 and 135, except this, many times for humanitarian operations and peace keeping attempts US forces deployed to different corners of the world (Petraeus, 2016).

It is not a matter of number of forces because China is the most populated country of the world but the fact is, US has been a vibrant and active military force that is continuously deployed to different parts of the world moreover, it is also responsible of taking decisions regarding military operations and armed activities. It is also an active participant of NATO, UN peace keeping forces and Human rights intervention, it has its influential edge over China but now with the fast progression of China in this particular domain especially in Indo Pacific region, it is going to be a tough opponent for US not only in this region but around the world as in various other parts of different regions, China is making its strong position in security and military sphere especially in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Silence and North Africa.

5.6.2 Power Shift

After Cold War, with the dismemberment of USSR, USA claimed to be the sole super power of the world and there was no contender for almost three decades but with the growing power of China, US position became vulnerable and after the announcement of BRI, it is actually facing serious challenges due to Chinese transactional and mercantilist approach in addition, it is also trying to play a leadership role in different multilateral settings but the matter of fact is, China is not trying to make its position in the existing liberal values based structures but it is coming up its own kind of multilateral forums to fulfill its needs and strategies. There are various factors that are keeping the situation in control because both are part of a common economic system and their economic interests are mingled that's why in spite of being strategic rivals, they are not openly combating in different grounds. They are not equal in power but this asymmetry and bipolarity is gradually visible for the world and China is the second best choice for the world as a leading power after USA. Many other economically and politically strengthened countries around US and China are regional and global players like France, Britain, Japan, Russia and others, they are moving around and trying to enclose with either US and China. Power is no more concentrated in USA's hand but there is no proper mechanism has been prevailed yet to keep these powers from confrontation. All the strong countries and other regional powers should work to formulate a security setting which could not be dominated

by an institution like security council or western dominated military block like NATO but there must be serious shift to constructive power sharing and ideal security setting with no one having dominating powers (Keohane, 1977).

In the past years, China was not much visible and involved in world's political affairs and conflicts as it was more focused on economic growth and integration, China was mostly neutral in various global issues and silently used its veto power in its own and its alliances favor. Initially China faced difficulties in getting familiar and mingles with the world and especially western community because of its isolated communist approach and its cold relations with US. After cold war when it got open and expose to the world and China slowly making its place in the global affairs because of its increasing economic development and access to the world markets then the world realized about its influence and power but it was alarming for US that another power is making its position for posing a challenge to it although US established diplomatic relations with China and dependent over the mutual trade but its geo political and geostrategic interests were coinciding with the Chinese upcoming gigantic role. There are various possibilities for any kind of power shift or change in the power Centre, first is, this power shift could be peaceful or without any military confrontation just like it happened from United Kingdom to United States in 19th and 20th centuries, another chance is of initiation of new cold War as a unique kind of competition is emerging and taking the world under it, it is not like the previous proxy war between USA and USSR which was for the implementation of ideologies and world became bipolar but now the scenario would be completely changed because people are more concerned with internal economic security and peaceful co-existence, as BRI is called for economic, cultural and people to people connectivity which is more inspiring and tempting for the world, it is like to accept each other difference and permanence.

In twenty first century China is the best example of extraordinary growth and active diplomacy, it is clearly taking a prominent place of world's most influential and economically sound country and because of its increasing significance, it has already transforming East Asian region and it can be easily predictable that in future, its prominence and power will strengthen because there are various factors depicting the Chinese participation in many countries of this region first of all, it is the starting and

introduction of BRI which is the reason of advanced technology and infrastructure projects in these areas. On the other hand, in different conflicts China is making its role and successfully increasing its control like in South China Sea and Strait of Malacca. Even in Indo Pakistan traditional long hostility, China is taking a clear side against India and continuously assisting Pakistan against this stance, it is not only for the economic corridor but also for the security of this business route in future. India is completely against this hegemonic role of China in South Asia as it is supposed to be the self-proclaimed regional power and it has also many concerns regarding Indo Pacific region where USA has serious apprehensions because of the increased military activities of China and over domination over major business centers of the world. The question is whether China would be able to change the prevailing order of the world or how US would retaliate because many observers believe that the era of US domination and hegemonic rule is going to be ended soon and eastern influence would take over the western oriented world order. Two things would likely be happened like China would try to reshape the global norms and rules according to its own ideology and requirements as realists said that powerful could easily replace the less powerful entity and China's growing economic power is a very clear fact, it would be like the reorientation of the East and as a result, the declining gigantic former powers will perceive China as a major security threat to the world and the first power which is entering in world order. China role is increasing with the growing dimensions of the world because in every new emerging conflict, China is entering as another balancing edge for initiating Asian centered world order. The system has been changing since two or three decades but since the Trump regime, the situation is drastically taking another shape because of his anti-alliance view of world's foreign policy and clearly disrespecting the other powers growing influence will soon allow China to take a prominent place in the world politics as not only strengthening economic position but also its geopolitical importance because of the presence in different countries of the world, making him to stand against US. US is not considering China as the potential partner but as a strategic competitor and this will make the situation in China's favor. Another factor is, US is not ready to make changes its fundamental position, its strategic stance and its foreign policy but on the other hand, China has enormously adapted its conventional mode of diplomacy and foreign policy which is really working for promoting its BRI plan and its feasibility

in different region of the world. China realized that it had to be more open and liberal after the introduction of globalization because it was not enough for China to be economically strong but it was very essential for the China's international recognition to establish its political and geostrategic influence over the world and China understood this need of the time. China actively participated in the world's affairs, international trade and cooperation. China was also allegedly involved in human rights violation and restricted setup of state because of communism but after the exposure to the world, China also promised for basic structural changes after some time, for its long term economic development, it is very important to work upon political and social stability, China is quickly opening up and the effects of globalization and shrinking of the world is compelling China to bring changes on a broader terms. Not just China but the rest of the world was also quickly getting more open and aware that's why the traditional hegemonic position of US is shaking and states are demanding their fair share in the world's development. China is using its potential for the purpose because it is not only liberalizing itself but also it is channelizing its strength to the other parts of the world in the form of growing relations and extended developmental project.

The reason of China's immense influence for prospective new world power is, its economic power and its sharing with the deprived part of the world like the developing countries as China's BRI plan that is supposed to execute across the world and in different continents, the countries with the acute need of infrastructural advancement and developmental assistance they are getting what they want to have and this aspect is missing in the US side as US believes in power politics and hegemonic occupation, except marshal plan, there is no other example of US unconditional assistance and international help but the thing is, this plan was not for the world but for the US allies which fought world war along with US. Other than this example, every time, US offered any aid and assistance in return of something big like military occupation, conditions and acquisition of its national interests that recently happened in Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt and Libya where after the sabotage of basic political structure, change of regime or military occupation, it came up with the reconstruction and developmental plan of its own conditions. On the contrary, China infuses its influence first or build its credibility through financial and economic assistance to the state like in Pakistan, China has put enormous

finances not only on CPEC but since the establishment of Pak-China relations, and China is continuously putting different aid and assistance programs which is the main factor of prioritizing China over US.

Another factor is, US geographical rift between the world that makes it vulnerable and dependent over the other countries like US had to establish its military and security relations throughout the world because of the serious vigilance of the countries and its interest oriented areas that's why US have to be highly cautious for its national and global interest acquisition in the world. China has another edge over US because of this physical presence in the region, it is not dependent over other countries for its military bases, China is not willing to fight proxy wars in different regions but wants to work collaboratively with less conflict so, it can easily pursue what it wants to achieve. Chinese president xi jinping while visiting Croatia and US emphasized upon the need of new world order with the basis of economic benefits and foundations, China wanted a system which favor the increased economic clout not political or strategic pressure, it also doesn't want military or armed domination over any state and its line of action is totally different, it is aliening with the states and removing the role of US with soft power. In every state, there is a faction which is anti-USA and China is facilitating that specific bloc, it can be explained in a manner that wherever there is any anti USA issue like the problem of Strait of Hormuz where US and Iran fought for their interests, China's role cannot be neglected as being the busiest oil trade route it has its immense importance to China and as Iran cannot trust US and its presence in that area that's why now it is China to provide security to the oil ships. China is also very much dependent over this oil transit route because of its policy towards Middle East and continuation of BRI here.

As this is a prominent fact that US is managing world's affairs and geopolitics, it has its dominant influence and somehow it is the architect and executor of global issues and policies, now China has stated that the status quo should be changed and its president demanded for global governance which is apparently very hard but as China is working on the same agenda and using its all means to collect all the countries on the same stage. With the introduction of BRI, it is very evident that the role of US is gradually diminishing and the other global actors are becoming more vibrant and active, they are not more visible

and their stances are also getting more significance. China is in continuous competition with the world's great powers predominantly US because the case is quite different from the other western powers, other countries have established relations and recognized China on equal basis but US wants China to be a subsidiary actor of US interests in the world or to take instructions like Japan, South Korea and other countries are doing but China is not ready for it because it equates the US might even US is somehow dependent over Chinese production and trade (Hedrick-Wong., Nov 11, 2019).

5.7 Growing Aggression in Sino USA Relations

In world politics, economic relations play a very vital role in the development of competition and cooperation between and among the states, when the economic engagement increases the competition will ultimately increase but if the engagement diminishes, competition turned into a zero sum game. China and US could not stay isolated from each other as both are dependent upon economic dimensions, they both need markets for trading their goods but as it is very clear that US China are more like rival and China is giving challenges to US on every front like it is trying to ruin the long established USA's hegemony, security and prosperity. Contemporary dispute between these two countries is also aimed to check Beijing's intentions and ambitions in its region and outside the region that are hurting US interests. Different reviews, surveys and reports identified that three quarters of USA are in favor of continuation of trade between US and China after trade dispute between them in which US put heavy tariff over Chinese exports and limit the trade up to some specific percentage, majority of USA citizens opposed the imposition of tariffs as 68% of USA citizens aspire to have friendly relations with China rather to limit working with it. But the government stance is, trade must be built following a fair and broader system with defined rules, this trade is highly valuable for US also but it must not be un-fair because it gives rise to corrupt diplomacy and also allowing China to work upon its military build ups around the world that are threatening the position of US as well as for global peace and integration. Now the fact has been approved by US national security department that China is the biggest threat to US security and interests on long term basis. In the current scenario, China has two important priorities that are the survival of Chinese Communist Party and long existence of its "One China" policy. USA

is countering China's expansion and border disputes by supporting Taiwan in order to deviate China from its united/one China aim, US is with the Taipei stance of independence from China. This endorsement of Taiwan standpoint can aggravate political violence and tension in Chinese policies and Beijing can come up with the more vibrant and strict kind of plan for ensuring it's both the aims would intact. China has a very calm and composed strategy for setting up a stage that can put it in a gainful position for transforming international norms according to its own interests (Steil, 2019).

China after opening up its economy and society to the world, has gained numerous advantages and also profitable business throughout the world, it was previously following communist economic norms and was successfully leading the old closed system till the advent of globalization and now it has been associated and made its influential place in G-20 squad, became an active member of World Trade Organization and extracting its interests through economic means. In 2013, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was introduced by China worldwide for having global partnership and building infrastructure across the world. All these initiatives simply fortified China's power and influence and its partnership with the international community that generated more business and increased economic interdependence over China.

Not only just economic means but through strategic and security mechanism, China is trying to grab an edge over US and other western powers, China is fully equipped with its own produced weapon system , techniques and platforms that have been spread throughout the world. China has installed its military existence into different parts of the world and clearly posing challenges to the opponents especially US, its military and armed growth then its arm supply to different states clearly indicates that the world's tilt and interest is turning towards China from the old Centre of power US. United Nations Convention on Law of Sea in 2016 passed a ruling that Chinese claim over South China Sea is illegal and its security installations in Spratly and Paracel Island will affect the interests of other regional related states. For this ruling, US played a vital role in it and continued its support to the other claiming countries, thin thing shows that US keeps a keen eye over Chinese internal and external matters for its own international interests but also for gaining the support from these affected countries. China is also considerably

working on establishing diplomatic and military cooperation with Russia which is a strong and dominant country of the world. With better and improved relations with Russia, China could have easy and smooth access to European and arctic countries for its trade and also BRI plan. There is another plan is going on which is also against US interests which is the combined cooperation in Middle East which has been an old battle ground for US proxy wars and US cannot afford to counter other powers in this specific oil rich and strategically important region where emergence and continuation of conflicts are in favor of US arm industry and its pursuance of interests through Israeli regime. Recent development that has been occurred on Iranian side, Iranian Commander of special Quds force and Iranian Revolutionary guard force Qasim Suleimani was killed by a USA drone attack in Baghdad, on this crucial incident, China and Russia passed similar official statements that we condemn these kinds of use of force in the region and this act will aggravate the situation in the region, China also condemned the use of force. China and Russia are increasing their cooperation on different grounds like politics, economics, diplomatic and strategic domains, they have multiple trade agreements and military pacts that include bilateral military exercises in Middle Eastern countries and Euro Asian states, other aggressive military maneuvers are also going on in Pacific, Arctic and Baltic Sea against US and NATO air and naval bases. China is undoubtedly taking some decisions challenging the existing global trends and norms, it is highly disturbing for US although US is doing on various grounds for reducing the impression and impact of Chinese domination but sooner or later, it will take a prominent place in the global governance system (Steil, 2019).

International community especially US has now aware of China's disruptive aims, it has previously pointed out the Chinese aims are for territorial expansion and counter the other powers to exceed militarily in different parts of the world. Washington has previously declared China's territorial moves and strategies across the world are for acquiring more influence and power to run the world's affairs through a new world order headed by China although US continuously trying to establish freedom of navigation in disputed waters along Pacific Ocean but it didn't bother China at all.

US has realized the significance of economic tool to keep China from taking more turns on strategic path and instead of increasing military pressure, it is looking into short term effects which are mainly focused on economic disruption and lose. Recent tension between US and China is an episode of big plan because US is aware of the repercussions of this trade restrictions and tariff story over Chinese exports to US because it would have its strategic significance and it could disrupt the long term planning of China in the world. IMF said in its Article IV about Chinese economy consultation that if this trade tension between China and US do not end soon then it could affect the China's future progression and this damage to its economy would compel Chinese government to take some tough decisions regarding its geopolitical strategy like about military expenses and loans for infrastructure building in the other parts of the world. US should also view this trade war in the view of Chinese growing confrontation and aggression across the world which is definitely an attempt to contain US from more power acquisition. China is working over a four element strategy which is comprised of Diplomacy, Information, and Military and economic, this model is helping China a lot in gaining public support. US should be more vigilant in the matter of tariffs and trade restrictions over China because there is a very less chance of getting desirable results.

5.7.1 China's maritime Silk Road

China is reviving the centuries old Silk Road which is going to cover almost half of the world, China has an edge over US which is its old civilization and their highly creative ideology for economic enhancement. Old Silk Road was also a trade route for China and the other passing through countries of different continent and this new BRI plan is going to revive that old route with new sea routes which is named as maritime Silk Road. With the announcement of this route and map of this plan, there are various question and issues arise like whether this plan has economic or geopolitical implications because this proposed sea route is going to cross majority of Indo Pacific region countries where already US forces are present and it is creating a hostile scenario and it is going to develop only ports of these countries like Kyaukpyu (Myanmar), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Gwadar (Pakistan), and Chabahar (Iran). The matter of concern for US is in Kyaukpu (Mayanmar) where China is developing maritime route for connecting region and its people with each

other, mostly China state owned enterprises are concluding agreements with Myanmar government and cost of construction of deep water port and industrial area in a special economic zone along the coast of Bay of Bengal is exceeded to \$7.3 billion. Chinese company's also investing \$1.5 billion oil pipe line and natural gas pipeline terminus that will go to China's Yunnan province (Szechenyi, 2018).

These advancements and developments are purely for the economic purpose but fears of global community are of different kind as it is also claiming that China will use all its maritime investment and projects for enhancement of its military presence in the pacific region. Another fear is, enormous economic dependence of Myanmar over China would turn its interests around and by building special economic zones, and other western countries could be vulnerable in this area. The world is also highly concerned about the growing military influence of china on these strategic routes; in future china would surely have an edge over the other powers because this water way could ultimately utilize for military purpose. The strait of Malacca and Chinese involvement in Pacific ocean has become very alarming for US and other regional powers, this maritime silk road is not only a source of easy trade across the world but according to the demands and interests of contemporary era, this route will produce strategic outcomes for the China and its allies. Not just these sea routes but all the other projects under the BRI plan are more or less having strategic implications, in the name of development and advancement, China is building its power and influence which is quite obvious in the situation where it is not only a regional but future world power (Calamur, 2017). Another important factor of this episode is, China is not following the foot prints of previous powers that practiced might, offense and armed actions for establishing their control and maintaining their hegemony but it chose an acceptable mode of getting control of the world in which it is ready to give, for achieving the desired outcomes. The fact is also very appreciable that the countries who have joined Chinese camp, they willingly signed the agreements and memorandum because they are aware of having better infrastructure and high-tech development in return of Chinese debts and authority.

- *Kyaukpyu*

There are always some reasons and rationale behind every important step taken by a states, they always look for getting high benefits and profits of every kind financial, economical ad political etc. China's economic and infrastructure expansion policy on global level have multiple kind of implications and dimensions and all are based on ultimate authority of China over the world. Rest of the world is quite aware of this fact that's why there are various allegations and concerns emerging regarding this BRI. When it comes to Chinese maritime routes, there are four important routes, one of the important route is Kyaukpyu Myanmar. It is a coastal town situated along the Bay of Bengal in the western state of Myanmar named Rakhine. China has got the contracts of sea port development here in Kyaukpyu furthermore; China is also working to develop an industrial area as special economic zone near the town. It is an attempt to become less dependent over Strait of Malacca for oil imports to China. The world and even Myanmar is also feeling vulnerable for growing and capturing Chinese finances in the form of debts (Aung, 2019).

The estimated investment for this project is about \$7.3 billion and for special economic zone its value is \$2.7 billion, according to the terms of this project, Chinese company will build and execute it for 50 years which could be exceeded to 25 years. This project will be extended to the building to railway route to the Southern China for connecting SEZ between these two countries. This journey of development was not easy and even the future situation would not be so easy for both the countries because the suspension of Myitsone dam project and protest over Letpadaung copper mine distorted the pace of cooperation between China and Myanmar, the reason was the fear of heavy debts and political sensitivity. In the case of dam, government has to stop this because of the people and environmental concerns of the people living in that area, Chinese company claimed that this dam will fulfill the entire country's need of electricity and support the ongoing projects of China and the people of Myanmar ultimately but the matter of fact is, this dam will ruin the farm and earning source of millions of people, residents of this area had to leave their homes so, mass displacement was observed which was not acceptable for the people. This project brought various difficulties for the fishing industry of Myanmar as a large proportion of fisheries is associated with the river on which the dam was proposed

to be build. There is also some issue over the ownership of port and Chinese company had to reduce the share from 85 percent to 70 percent so, there are various issues with political and environmental impact over the population and government of Myanmar and opponent powers are trying to get their interests and desirable benefits from it (Aung, 2019).

5.8: Strategic and Economic significance

China has a long way ahead for having alternative routes of communication and transportation of its import commodities, it is planning to have more transit routes as there are many conflict gradually associating with the previous routes like Strait of Malacca and South China Sea as many Indo Pacific countries are associated with the issue and claimed over its authority and jurisdiction although China is not going to quit but there must be some alternative way for uninterrupted supply of goods and commodities necessary for the ongoing projects in the region. This Kyaukpyu project possesses enormous importance for China's economic and strategic well being as there are two gas and oil pipeline projects proposed to reach to Yunnan province, the construction has been completed in early 2015 with the cooperation of China national petroleum corporation and Oil and gas enterprise of Myanmar. The gas pipeline became operational with the capacity of sending 12 billion cubic meters to China annually; oil pipeline has started working by carrying 22 million barrels of oil per year which is 6% of total China's oil import. These pipelines will ultimately provide convenience and strategic advantage because Chins' reliance over Strait of Malacca would be reduced and any possibility of interruption from US side would be avoided (Szechenyi, 2018).

The Kyaukpyu port carries great strategic and economic sense for China because it is going to enhance the prosperity and trade to the inland province of China, supplies and trade from Africa, Europe, Middle East and India could be easily sent and reached to Yunnan with less time and distance. This new route is far better than the older route and mode like the cargo ships were crossing the Strait of Malacca, South China sea and then reached to the Sothern and Eastern Coast of China and then further travelled to China's western provinces, during December 2017, Myanmar State Councilor Aung San Suu Kyi and Chinese president Xi Jinping decided to resume the railway projects that was earlier suspended furthermore, they also announced a new China Myanmar Economic Corridor

that aimed to connect Kyaukpyu and Kunming, still there is no specific details have been disclosed yet but possibly, it contains road construction as well as the railway project that was suspended.

5.8.1 Hambantota

The Srilankan port Hambantota possesses immense importance as a part of BRI and enhances the feasibility and communication of China with the Indian and Pacific Ocean states, it was earlier under the control of Sri Lankan authority but some shares were of China, after some times when Sri Lanka was failed to repay the debt that were given for the purpose of port's development and advancement then it was taken over by Chinese authorities and it would soon turned into a military base. Its strategic importance compelled China to move ahead and took it for 99 years lease like British did with Hong Kong, this port is also a part of its maritime silk road and will definitely bring major gains and strategic edge over the other regional and economic giants of the world. China would no longer require to pay for having a transit route in different parts of the world but also would have increase influence over important trade routes that were previously controlled by powers not by the country who owns it (Wijayasari, n.d.)

5.8.2 Gwadar

This part is playing a very keen role in the BRI as it is the largest and the key part in China Pakistan economic corridor, it is also a milestone in the journey of Pakistan China friendship and cooperation. There are various issues associated with the building and then maintenance of this port like China has a practical concern of security of its labour and other skilled staff that is here in Pakistan but above all, it is the focused point and basis for further cooperation with between Pakistan and China. Pakistan is also facing increasing the amount of debts as this project is going to proceed but this plan is making the regional powers hesitant because of enhanced Chinese influence in South Asian ports and cities, the most important aspect of CPEC is its presence from one part of Pakistan to another one, its potential for naval access of China in Arabian sea and entrance to Indo Pacific turning it as the most significant corridor of BRI. Pakistan's strategic location has always been a source of attention in every international issue related to the region and China utilized this value to have better and interrupted access to waters and land towards

different parts of Asia. Pakistan as a strong ally to US, many times called and used Pakistani lands for its military actions but now with the presence of China on key locations of state, will create some sort of serious disagreement with Pakistan. Not just US but the new united front of India, Japan, Australia and United states are also anxious of growing Chinese influence in Pacific region and trying to have a better strategy for countering China in Pacific area also.

5.8.3 Chabahar

It is the Iranian sea port located in the Southeastern Iran on the gulf of Oman. Initially Iran signed MoU with India and Afghanistan for the development and advancement of this port, India announced \$21billion investment for its building and enhancement. Different Indian companies won contracts of logistics, transport and industrial development for setting it as special economic zone. This water way connects Iran, Afghanistan and India to the central Asian ports, Europe, Turkey and Russia. This is a strategic transit corridor because of its connectivity options and access, while welcoming Chinese contribution and investment on this port, Iran declared that by establishing better economic relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan through Gwadar Port and BRI platform, the threat of terrorism would be reduced because this social flaw comes due to the less economic activities and opportunities.

India was collaborating with Iran until US sanctions were imposed, the process of development slowed down and Iran looked towards China as China is still a big importer of oil from Iran even after the reimpose US sanctions now, Iran is looking forward for more cooperation from China as it showed its interests in building LPG pipeline to China along the CPEC. India and China both are in the quest of energy and are very active competitor in the global energy game which is going to be played on Pakistani and Iranian port. China has developed Gwadar port on south western coast and India is trying to bypass Pakistani territory and want direct access to Middle East, Afghanistan and Central Asia through Chabahar as an alternative to the Chinese run Gwadar Port.

India was so deliberate to develop a Chabahar as a challenger to Gwadar but with the growing tilt of India towards US has provoked Iran to look towards China and Islamabad

for connecting Chabahar and Gawader by road and rail links with the collaboration of China and Pakistan as this Iranian port is only 100 kilometer away from the Pakistani border. Iran has vaster and extended plan for the development of its port as it wants to further connect itself with the corridor to northward through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, it proposed a railroad system through Turkey via Iran to Azerbaijan and Russia. There is a very vast ground for the China to move and act as a policeman of Arabian Sea and Persian gulf because its presence in Gawader and Chahbahr opposite to the Strait of Hormuz and along the Persian Gulf not only bring economic, commercial and strategic significance but also its strategic role would be more powerful in these highly crucial but beneficial positions. As Iran is keen to get the Pakistani and Chinese participation in its Chabahar port and projects, it would pose serious repercussions to the Indian economic and strategic interests. If China is not going to take a dominant position in the development and extension of Chabahar port but its little presence would continue, it would have great loss for India because as India was planning to move towards Afghanistan and central Asia through this route but now its China who would have a better and strong role in Indian Ocean, Middle East and almost in the whole region.

5.9 Chinese Quest for Resources

After the announcement of BRI and its execution in different countries, China is continuously working over the quest of more resources for constant building and construction of infrastructure across the world. It is not a new phenomenon for China because after opening up for the world, it has achieved fast industrialization and for this purpose, they wanted enormous amount of energy. China has been a big importer of oil from Middle Eastern countries but with the introduction of BRI, it has increased and investment for energy generation plants and energy resource reserves is now directly related to facilitate the global infrastructure and connectivity plan. According to US, it is an attempt to undermine the developing economies and exploit their resources for the sake of building a global empire. The first thing which should be considered in this regard is, geostrategic implications and gains for China like the advancement and development of new transit channels and ports that surely provide safe passage to Chinese import of oil and transportation of gas. First of all, the reserves of oil in middle East and BRI initiative

in gulf region, although gulf is not an official part of BRI but it is the region where ultimately this plan would be implemented and all the Chinese government and private owned enterprises, banks, financial institutions are trying to work for the advancement of BRI in the gulf region specially in the energy sector (Laurence, 2017).

The most important aim for establishing good relations and developmental projects in the region is to secure energy resources, this is an evident fact that Chinese energy needs are growing day by day because of enormous industrial and developmental activities not in jus China but in the world and it is to be estimated that China is utilizing 14.2 million barrels of oil daily. Middle East is producing 48% of the world's oil and 40% of the world LNG reserves are in this region. China is getting its half of the energy needs fulfilled by Middle Eastern oil that's why it is putting heavy investment for connecting it with the main stream BRI connectivity process and planning to achieve the target of delivering larger volume of oil to Chinese energy firms as Director of Strategic Development department of China National Petroleum Corporation Lu Ruquan confirmed that BRI is also comprised of "Oil Road" through which it would transport and deliver energy resources from the oil producing countries to China.

For achieving this objective under the banner of BRI, China has started to sign energy agreements with Gulf state officials and establishing its partnership with Qatar when its head of the state visited China in 2014 and signed MoU called as "Qatar China Promotion of Related Cooperation on the One Belt, One Road". Similarly China is also extending its relations with UAE in the same regard, when the Chinese foreign ministers Wang Yi and Vice Chairman of National Development and Reform Commission NDRC Ning Ji Zhe had a meeting with Sultan Al Jaber (Minister of State) and CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company for expanding the relations and energy cooperation between China and UAE. China is not only involved in signing bilateral energy agreements but also initiated working in a wider dimension like it is intended to set institutional and regulatory frameworks for prolong and smooth continuation of energy cooperation in Gulf region. Although these frameworks have not been finalized yet because of many political risks and uncertain situation in the region that can hinder the implementation of the BRI (Laurence, 2017).

When it comes to uncertainty, the current situation in Middle East is highly tense and global powers are very concerned about it, even China and Russia are condemning the recent attack over Iranian Commander Qasim Sulaimani in Baghdad by US air strike. China and Russia both are on same grounds and they are supporting the Iranian stance, in this situation, China's interests in this region are on stake because now Iran and USA are ready on the battlefield and Iran will adopt every option for initiating proxy war in various areas of Middle East. Many countries are supporting Iran and its attacks over US bases in the region like Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and even Palestine. There is also a possibility of progression of this conflict on sectarian grounds like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait as they are the allies and protector of US interests in the region.

5.10 BRI countries growing importance and challenges for US

BRI is a project which is comprised of four continents and many countries are participants in it, the route that has been coming from Asia to USA is actually the expansion of Chinese influence and extension of power. These countries that are receiving the Chinese assistance and investment for long term projects in their own countries, they would be more inclined towards China's interests as the interests have become mutual and are operating and pursuing on the same grounds therefore, there is a possibility to have a new block supervised by China which is undergoing in transition and soon the world would witness a complete new scenario in which the US influence would be limited than before. The first example would be of Middle East where China is working very tactfully not on developmental and cooperation grounds but also strategically it is penetrating its influence and even its technological support making the less developed countries more offensive and anti US sentiments are growing. The regional regimes are directly involved in the whole process because in Middle East there is very strong and clear opposition for US and even the regimes are anti USA, in this situation, China through its economic influence can easily make its place which it is exactly doing, its energy needs are also connected with these countries and transport of energy is also the second most important concern of China for this purpose, it is making its stance very clear regarding US violent activities and hegemonic presence. The situation can be easily visible in Syria, Iraq, Iran and Yemen, being a close ally of US, Saudi Arabia (SA) has its separate role in it, by using its lands

and forces, US is fighting its proxy war in different countries and Iran as a rival state of SA gaining much support from the outside world like China, Russia and European Union. These countries are biggest supporters of Anti US regimes. Along with economic enhancement and heavy Chinese investment they are going to easily save their interests from US as they are no more dependent over it. This is an alarming situation for US and its allies although its role cannot be diminished completely from the world but since the end of Cold War and decline of USSR almost three decades, US was ruling and directing the world according to its own interests but now US has to be more critical and more vigilant towards building of an opposite front that can ruin its interests and policies in the world heading by China.

In the other part of Asia, its involvement and performance is quite impressive as it has been quite successful in turning of some US allies from its traditional path like Pakistan and India. Both the countries and their foreign policies have affected due to increased Chinese involvement in the region like after the CPEC and Gawader port, Pakistan economic balance is maintained because of the heavy Chinese investment of US\$46 billion for the development of connectivity of it with the landlocked central Asian States likewise, its purpose is to enhance Pakistan power, infrastructure, industries and agriculture under the flagship project of BRI that is CPEC which is crossing all over Pakistani territory. Chinese investment and assistance is for production sector of economy and energy generation capacity for the acquisition of rapid development of CPEC. After the introduction of this plan, it is estimated that Pakistan's GDP growth rate would be increased up to 7.5% by 2030 along with the two million employment opportunities in the market, it will also increase the urbanization process and high GDP growth rate till 2025. Through this rapid economic growth, Pakistan's economic drive would be directed by the Chinese economic forces and it would be obvious that Pakistan can not directly go with the US interests and its demands. It is the initiation of Pakistan's traditional position change through economic factors even more Islamic countries are now moving to Chinese option and investment besides the fear of heavy debts and its permanent presence in the country. India's internal situation is anticipating the fear of increased regional pressure and its significance would be reduced because of inability of controlling its domestic problems rather to escalate them. Its citizenship amendment act 2019 is largely criticizing

by the religious minorities predominantly Muslims as they are excluded from this act, this thing is continuously increasing the unrest and stability of the country. Back in August 2019, Indian government also ended the special status of Kashmir from the constitution and since that time till now, Kashmir is under serious military order and normal business has not been resumed yet. These acts and minority distressing initiatives are affecting the reputation of India on international ground; it also hinders new investment and agreement to enter into the state because of disturbed law and order situation. India has not been a part of BRI and with the introduction of these kinds of steps, its credibility and trust of global community would soon go.

In Pacific, China is actively involved in multiple geostrategic dimensions and economic fields. On one hand, it is putting efforts for the enhancement and advancement of less developed countries but the fact is, the importance and the value of this region is its locations and having two busiest sea routes of the world where almost all the countries have their economic interests. By putting large investments in East Asia Countries, China is also aiming to have its long term alliance with these countries as they have the capacity to produce goods for the global needs but also its supply is also easy through the trade routes connecting Asia, Europe and USA at the same time. Here the role of US, Japan, Korea and Australia come that is not in the favor of growing Chinese economic as well as military involvement. This region has been a continuous US grounds for its military and strategic activities, its military presence and naval bases are also there in Pacific region since quite a long time but by making it as Chinese extended region of its own economic and political outcomes could have long lasting impacts over the opponent countries, Indo Pacific alliance is an example of the counter action against BRI.

China's new field of interest is Africa, the region which has been a victim of exploitation since many centuries; big powers were only concerned with its resources and man power not for its development. This is the most discriminated region of the world but China had an eye over it as it is equally significant in term of economics and geostrategic. Between 2004 to 2014, China export import bank has played a major role in providing \$10 billion in East Africa Railway Project and it was constructed by Chinese state owned corporation. China is extending its actions in African continent by funding and building important rail

networks in Kenya and Uganda, one part of this project will pass through Nairobi National Park. China is extensively building major infrastructure of the region which was previously the most neglected part which is better road and logistic facilities. It is building roads, highways, bridges and mining projects. China has more diverse and significant projects of connectivity between Africa and South USA for example, 3,000 mile railway project by cutting remote forests and transport timber and other goods to the Pacific shores where they can easily ship to China. Africa is also enriched with the mineral resources and in past, major powers of the world were striving to get the major share of it without paying to the people of Africa. World's focus on this area is just because of its enormous oil, gold and diamond mines, the reason of its extreme exploitation is the same that the world does not want to have a prosperous and independent Africa because it would hinder their unlawful presence and activities in Africa, China is signing MoUs and formal agreement just to make sure that these countries sovereignty and their internal policies could not be affected by signing and participating BRI. Its working is comprised of building highways like Maghreb highway aimed to connect 55 major North African cities and town, 22 major airports and prominent universities, hospitals and research centers along this huge and long road across Africa. Another major project is in progress in Nigeria, it is the Nigeria's largest power generation plant, this plant is going to build over Dongo River and it is estimated to produce 3,050 MW of energy. It consists of four dams, two underground powerhouses with 12 turbine generators. Its proposed completion year is 2030. Third important infrastructure development is Nairobi-Naivashi Railway, significant factor is, these projects have planned long before the advent of BRI in Africa but because of the lack of resources and attentions they have not been completed. Tanzania Zambia line which was proposed in 1975 which was not completed because of various political outbreaks and incidents now China is planning to connect Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan through a master railway program. In Djibouti, China has set its military base which is enough to explain the world that China is not ignoring the strategic importance of Africa, this military base is considered as first overseas military base of China which is operated by Chinese People Liberation Army Navy, its plan is to guard the Suez Canal by setting it near Strait of Bab-e-Mandeb that separates red sea and Gulf of Aden, there are many other foreign bases in the south of the

Djibouti city including United States, France and Japanese military bases. This base is built with the investment of US\$590 million and it is in west of Djibouti city by the Port of Doraleh which is a Chinese operated port (Harding, 2019).

Besides working on infrastructure, construction and mining, it has also extended its sphere of working to health and education facilities to African people, on the forum of China Africa Cooperation declaration in 2013 and 2015 in Beijing and Cape Town talked about health development. China think-tank are certain about the efficacy and potential worth of different locations of the world and have very critical sight over the strategic and geopolitical gains of them along with the economic profits. They are very tactfully diverting world's direction from US influence to Chinese prospective power. US should be more concerned and attentive towards every move and initiative of Chinese authorities because they have a line of action which is more open, positive and acceptable for the world and it is an evident fact that the countries of different regions are quickly moving their interests towards China and amalgamated interests and plans are not in the favor of US (Pheiffer, 2019).

6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF BRI

6.1 Implications for the rest of the world

6.1.1 Middle East

Initially China BRI program was perceived as a global business and investment program which would enhance the world connectivity along with more cohesive relations among the states. The revival of old Silk Road was quite fascinating because it was supposed to be a better version for the continental connectivity and business. Before the advent of this idea, the world was dealing with the free trade or free market as the result of globalization; it was more concerned about the negative impacts and market domination from the big powers and economic giants then this idea came with its captivating concept of global communication and unified business links. When it gradually progressed, its nature, effects and implications became evident and visible to the world and the realization appeared that this initiative is not mere an economic attempt to enhance the business but its dominant implications are more strategic and foreign policy oriented. China is establishing close relations to almost more than sixty countries at the same time which is not an easy task because it is a fact that there must be various issues related to differences and discontentment but China is tactfully handling the situation to avoid those matters and focus on the development of positive relations that would enhance and boost up the BRI plan attainment. This conciliation and reconciliation between China and the world is not producing any encouraging reaction from the other world powers especially US because it is not in the favor of its hegemonic and traditional influence over world. This BRI is creating opposing ties as the world is more tilted towards this Chinese idea of mutual developmental policy rather the display and imposition of US hard power. Many old rivals and even the allies of US are now accepting the Chinese plan and becoming the part of this global community based on the notion of cooperation although it is also giving rise to

the competition but it is a positive kind of economic struggle which is enhancing states developmental and growth pace.

Different regions of the world are now taking part in this plan and having impressive outcomes and challenges like Middle Eastern Region, before the idea of BRI, China has been the biggest exporter of oil and gas from the region, China's oil security is more associated with the area as even Saudi Arabia is now shifting its dependency over China from USA and its extending to Russia for its exports. In North Africa, China is also working to expand its export especially in Egypt and Algeria. China's investment is likely to be more politically important because oil is the major necessity of every nation and being the biggest industrial state. China is ultimately in the need of uninterrupted supply of oil that's why China is using economy and financial assistance in order to reduce the risk of disputes and conflicts because economic growth make the individual to easily access to the wealth, China heavy investment has its positive ad long term effects in the politics and economies of the region, it is not only increasing its business here but also building up more advance infrastructure not on land but also through seas as this BRI is providing a route to Europe and North Africa through Middle East. This is actually a maritime Silk Road initiative (MSRI) which aims to start from South China Sea via Indian Ocean all the way through Gulf of Aden and Suez Canal ending in Port Piraeus in Greece (Keck, 2014).

As China is heavily dependent upon Middle Eastern oil and gas that's why it needs more secure navigation of it. These goods while transporting to China, it uses Strait of Hormuz when it leaves Iran and United Arab Emirates (UAE) when China trades Europe, it has to use Bab-e-Mandeb Strait which is located between Djibouti and Yemen. There are many potential and existing problems like piracy, regional tension and different disputes that can make China's trade like goods and energy imports vulnerable and can be disrupted therefore, China is highly concerned of security of shipping and also in search of some alternative routes to avoid future maritime chokepoints. For reducing every possible risk in the future, China is taking states into confidence by signing MoU and establishing partnership in different projects related to the construction and maintenance of sea routes and sea ports beside other transportation and communication facilities for safe and sound

infrastructure. This development not only improves navigation security but also it will create more easy and accessible transit routes to China and the world. Along with the betterment of trade and transportation, China is also looking forward for people to people exchange because in this way, the level of trust and confidence would be doubled between and among the states.

For this purpose, China has a number of new and old financial instruments like \$100 billion fund for this maritime route, Asian infrastructure Investment bank and Export-Import bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, China development bank. Major participating and highly significant countries of the region are Saudi Arabia, Iran, UAE and Egypt, China has concluded comprehensive strategic partnership with these countries for further cooperation in different spheres. China has clear interests in this region that's why it has announced some specialized plans to extend some strategic partnership in a wide range of fields like military, security, infrastructure building and communication. The potential benefits of this huge cooperation would not be received by every Middle East country because China direct interests are attached to some specific countries like Saudi Arabia and UAE. Saudi Arab is the largest recipient of Chinese imports, China is providing machinery and consumer goods in return of Saudi oil and petrochemical products. China is establishing very close economic relations with the kingdom which will affect the strategic alliance of Saudi Arabia with US as it has been an old caretaker of US interests in the region. Saudi kingdom is looking forward for more cooperation like Chinese companies are investing large amount of money over petrochemical facilities, development of nuclear power plants and research reactors that will enhance the state's energy generation sector and also maintain alternative power sources which is very important as the state is running out of its hydrocarbon reserves. China is aiming to collaboratively build an industrial park in Japan economic city which will diversify Saudi economy and improve the infrastructure for business and tourism.

UAE comes after Saudi Arabia which is the second largest trading partner of China, it deals in natural oil and gas exports then receives Chinese industrial products, textile and machinery. As compare to Saudi Arabia, UAE is the most appealing and first choice of outside world for investment because of its location and modern infrastructure therefore,

China also preferred it and putting heavy investment for making it a logistic hub for its goods, for this purpose, it has initiated some development in port Jebel Ali and some Chinese developmental steps have been taken for setting Port Khalifa of Abu Dhabi as a vital part of Maritime Silk Road Initiative.

Egypt is another business destination of China and China is very actively working to boost up its business and presence in this highly significant country of North Africa, china is assisting and facilitating Egypt mega projects initiated in the reign of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Egypt new administrative capital is also developing with the heavy investment of China which is USD 3 billion loan taken from Industrial and commercial bank of China. It is also very active in the rebuilding of Suez Canal and Port Said along with the industrial zone in the state. Beijing is thinking in very different dimensions and through Egypt, it is trying to develop communication links in Israel to have a direct route from red Sea to Mediterranean so, Suez Canal route can be bypass. China is trying to create new point of access by building a high speed railway from Eilat (Gulf of Aqaba) to Ashdod Port in Mediterranean, which will be expanded in the future through heavy investment. Another development in Tel Aviv is going on, development of new Haifa Port is next on the list of China. There is a plan of transporting goods from these above ports to the Ports of Piraeus in Greece that is already operated by a Chinese firm named China Ocean Shipping Company.

Iran is another beneficiary of this Maritime Silk Road, Iran is also a big exporter of Oil to China and China is aiming to increase its trading activities with Iran specially oil products but after the imposition and re-imposition of sanctions and secondary sanctions China has to decrease its imports from Iran, it proved that still US is more important trade partner than Iran but China is trying to sort the problem out. Due to this limitation, Saudi Arabia is again possessed continuous importance for China's energy needs and to have absolute outcomes of the plan and projects initiated, China has to look towards rich countries of the region like UAE, Israel and Saudi Arabia, the countries with instable economic setup like Egypt cannot be able to extract the expected benefits and the countries with more poor financial conditions could be able to gain fewer benefits. China's interests in this region is only limited to its own significance, its participation in the conflicts and working for

stability is actually a reflection of increasing the MSRI benefits. Chinese activities are more concerned towards geo-economic aspects in the Middle Eastern region, security implications must be followed because of the increased number of projects initiated and more Chinese nationals are staying and working there. As US is more into security commitment in the region but with the growing ties and presence in Middle East, China has to do so in order to protect its interests. China is more towards peace keeping and mediation activities in the region, it has been a part of US peace keeping mission in Lebanon in 2006, it is also doing mediation in some of the most important issues of the region like Syrian and Israeli Palestinian conflicts

6.1.2 Turkey

After the initiation of BRI, China Turkey relations have become warmer and more cooperative than ever before. Officials of both the countries are meeting frequently for discussing current development between the countries, they have the view that the current trend of globalization is actually come from west and it is moving from west to east but the BRI would be a source to balance the cultural and political globalization. After revealing the plan of BRI, Turkey welcomed it and considered it in the interests of both the countries. Recently Kars-Baku Silk Road has been inaugurated and a new railway line connecting Istanbul and the Chinese port of Lianyungang has been established and having a regular service. Both the countries have declared their mutual interest along with trade and investment targets as Turkey is like a bridge between Europe and Asia, it possessed critically significant geo strategic location and China is trying to gain through more cooperation and bilateral trade which is increasing with the great pace since the initiation of BRI. Turkey is the part of middle corridor and seeks to gain the most trade, developmental assistance and Chinese investment. With the passage of time, Turkey and China's joint ambitions are enhancing and various productive results are in concrete form like Turkey's support for the building of modern Silk Road is visible in the form of Marmaray rail Line which is a subsea tunnel which joins Baku-Tbilisi-Kars BTK railway provides connection between Asia and Europe. China has also ensured more assistance and investment in building of more railway connections and projects and will also give support in the spheres of energy, aerospace, finance fields in Turkey.

There are certain fears and concerns emerging as the alarm for Turkish policy makers and think tanks like the trade deficit are increasing between China and Turkey and Erdogan is now emphasizing to rebalance the bilateral trade when he visited Beijing in 2015. Turkish authorities and scholars are in the favor of Chinese imports reduction that they should be minimized and Turkish goods must be exported in the same proportion. Some circles said that Turkey should increase its export to China rather to restrict China as this action would eventually bring better results and balanced trade.

Another matter of prospective contention between Turkey and China would be of the situation in Uyghur Muslim, these Uyghur Muslims are basically Turkish ethnic group based in Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region of China, and this Muslim minority in China is continuously facing discrimination and crackdown from the Chinese authorities. It is actually for the prevention of religious fundamentalism and any form of terrorism; it is a form of human rights crisis for which the world must be vibrant and open. Turkey is quite clear in its stance that China should stop this crackdown against Muslim minorities that is of Turkish background. These Muslims from North Western China are now detained in political education camps where they are treated like prisons and forced to read propaganda material, sing songs related to the president praise and secular ideas to eradicate their ideology and music background. Previously Chinese authorities stated that these camps are only vocational training centers but with the leaked documents and reports, it has been confirmed that these are actually re-education centers of communist party and they are trying to enforce communist and anti-religious ideas into Uyghur Muslims mind because in the context of current situation, the world is facing resistance from the Muslim staunch ideas leading to militant activities in different parts of the world. In these camps, Uyghur Muslims are forced to quit their traditional religious ideologies and language. Turkey has a clear stance over the issue and wants China to safeguard the identity and ideology of these Turkish ethnic Muslim group.

6.1.3 North Africa

China multibillion dollar infrastructure plan is the best endeavor to place itself at the top of the list of the pioneer of new and developed African Region, USA has missed the chance to redevelop the region beside grabbing the resources and breaking up the

governments in the____14 name of various ideas and trends predominantly democracy. African countries and China has found new working avenues through which both of them can achieve their potential goals, heavy investment and infrastructure building is the top priority of China as this is the most deprived region of the world and nobody put any effort for its betterment and prosperity rather than just resource allocation and grabbing has been the main matter of concern for that world power. China took a new step for long term relations and policies in these countries although China is continuously facing the allegation of debt trap through this BRI plan and developing countries are gradually coming under this trap. Though China is actually offering the loans for heavy and long term infrastructural plans but the thing is, countries are getting benefits in one way or other which was not common in the previous time world policies and plan for African region. Global community is also targeting China for expanding its military agenda and to pursuing its political influence campaign but along with all the facts, it is proven that China is actually giving some sort of share to these countries which was not happened in the past. USA and the other world powers are scared that China is working to extend its totalitarianism in these African countries and it is quite free to exhibit its military intentions in the region as it has built its first military base in Africa in Djibouti. The world perceives it as a symbol, of Chinese aggression along the BRI. These are not mere concerns because US is ready to defend its position in the region against this offense.

China has announced 39 African countries that have become a part of BRI that are geographically start from Tunisia to South Africa, after the introduction of this plan, African countries external debts have been increased and 20% of it is lend from Chinese companies but not just Chinese firm gave this loan, many multilateral institutions have also given loans to Africa. China's investment is not properly documented but the estimated facts said that concessional loan is given to African countries are of amount 5 billion USD moreover, China is not the only country who is the major contributor to the heavy debts of Africa but six more countries are there for this debt distress. Chinese infrastructure activities in the region have more positive economic outcomes as it is producing more equal distribution of financial activities. Although USA put some efforts in the development of African in the past decade by \$1 trillion but it didn't affect its per capita income, African countries couldn't be able to compete the world rather the world

is more concerned about its declining standards of health, education and societal values. China is not only providing capital but also maintaining their infrastructure and basic growing needs as a nation and state therefore, the implications of this connectivity plan would be wider and beneficial for this region and China is actually making its more allies across the world. Africa would be able to provide markets and competition ground for the world but the main actor is China and its struggle in this region because all the big projects and development strategies are contributed by China.

6.2 Welfare Effects of BRI

Belt and Road initiative is proposed as a developmental strategy which has the aim to establish a unified infrastructure across the world through land and sea corridors. This plan is proposed and have been initiated since 2013 in different countries if the world. Many notions have been emerged with the development of this plan as this is the rebirth of old Silk Road which was used for trade and cultural exchange, it crossed different continents and every region gained according to its needs. Similarly BRI has a wide range of operations like infrastructure building, trade, financial assistance, investment and people to people exchange, all the activities have their positive and negative aspects, the evident positive outcomes are surely its welfare effects in some countries where it needed the most in its all dimension like East Asia Pacific, South Asian and North African countries where even the governments need some sort of financial and technological assistance to meet its needs.

There are various immediate and long term productive impacts of this plan, the proposed quick railway routes, maritime routes, ports and roads, during and after the building of these infrastructural links people got employment and advanced training through the introduction of high-tech plans and developmental procedure. Many countries will get gains from building new and advanced infrastructure without much paying for it but through using and consuming these upgraded traveling and shipping facilities, people are receiving advantages and welfare gains, local development often leads to the growth of GDP and local living standards which is now been observed in various countries predominantly Pakistan where the Gawader Port is being operated and constructed by Chinese companies as a part of CPEC a flagship project of New Silk Road. Because of

the heavy investment by China, the whole province of Baluchistan has now turned into a developed and advanced place. There have been various new roads, industrial zone, warehouses and many other significant developments occurred in Baluchistan because of BRI and CPEC and the people of Baluchistan got an opportunity to connect to the world and enjoy the latest technologies and facilities. This brought not only development but also lots of jobs and other opportunities like under the banner of BRI, there are many industries that have been initiated and started working like fisheries because of the growth of this field, thousands of jobs have been generated, many Chinese construction companies that working in the area appointing local people, many people have been sent to china and other countries for advanced trainings in different sectors. The matter of fact is, after the introduction of BRI and related investment even the state policy got change towards Baluchistan and the debate was initiated that the common people should have their share in the Chinese investment into the region. Previously the situation of law and order in Baluchistan was worst and it was impossible for any non-balochi to enter into the province, separatist movements were at their peak and involvement of India was evident in many terrorist activities and attacks. China and Pakistani state understood the fact that peace and security could always bring from economic prosperity and CPEC promised the same. The effects of this plan were the ultimate reflection of this fact and with the introduction of numerous developmental projects and infrastructure plans, the welfare effects were evident because Baluchistan is the major beneficiary of the CPEC projects in term of trade and employment. Local fish industry got a boost and improved the living standards of masses, other infrastructure like roads, railway, port, factories they are immovable and they will remain in Baluchistan no matter who and how they built. Now the Baloch people are a part of mainstream development process in Pakistan because this Gwadar development is having their immense effects all over the economic sphere of Pakistan. Building of Roads and highways are aimed to connect Baluchistan to the rest of the country that ultimately boost up the local trade and business but also people to people connect resumed which gave more chances of reducing misconceptions about the region and people same happened in the case of Baluchistan that with the increased communications and connections, Baluchistan have been exposed to new grounds and fields and the frustration and aggression of the Balochi people for being a marginalized

community became reduced. Modern and quick roads and highways also contributed in promoting tourist industry which eventually affects over the economy and international image building, after the introduction of CPEC, Pakistan's image as a peaceful and secure country was promoted and spread that's why the number of tourists increased in every coming year. Here in Baluchistan, the civilization of MehraGarh is situated and also a long coast is there for the attraction of tourists in Baluchistan.

Poverty was another hurdle and a catalyst in alleviating the ratio of terrorists' activities in Baluchistan, people were not even able to earn their own money and the reason was the lack of employment opportunities and lack of economic activities but this CPEC came with the gradual reduction of poverty and with this lowering intensity of militant activities, common people could have chance to become a part of growing economy and developmental process because of the lots of new projects for the series of BRI and CPEC. It has been observed that after the introduction of CPEC, separatist activities have been diminished because the feeling of discrimination and disparity was reduced that compelled the Baloch youth to involve in terrorist and destructive anti state activities. Baluchistan long coast line has the potential of establishment of a full fledged seafood industry as it has sufficient numbers of marine species that can help to build an industry. China has also expressed its willingness to work for the welfare and betterment of FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Area) because as it was experienced that the Chinese developmental plans whenever they have been introduced it brings better social and economic conditions. In Middle Eastern countries, BRI and China has started making more avenues of working as with the growth of trade not only more jobs have been created but also it is a golden chance for initiating new businesses and its foreign exposure.

6.3 Shared Benefits of BRI

BRI is a grand vision for world's connectivity with a sound and highly technological fast passage of communication which is comprised to roads, railway and maritime routes along with the power generation activities and infrastructure building. This plan is spread across the world with the revival of old Silk Road. 126 countries and 29 international organizations have joined this global economic and financial setting. Initially the world was not much aware of its outcomes because it was seemed quite impossible because of

the different political and economic setup and systems of the countries moreover, bilateral relations of states would definitely have their worst impacts over the continuation of this mega projects but the thing is, BRI could make the dream true which was about a shared and unified trade route that will cover almost all the world. Two international forum for BRI has been conducted and many countries that were not been a part of the plan have now joined the plan. As this plan is mainly focused over a unified system of connectivity that's why different countries have their reservations over border issues. This thing gives rise to the states to sit together and sort out the solution and countries on multilateral forums are having the intention to avoid and discuss the issues which is the highly positive aspect that comes after the introduction of BRI.

Not just infrastructure building but trade and business have brought tremendous benefits for the countries as after the BRI and its initiation like the trade volume has been extended up to 6 trillion \$ from 2013 and 2018 and more jobs around 244,000 jobs have been created for different nationals of the states and as the result, Chinese foreign direct investment have been increased up to 90 billion dollars. The positive thing is, China is not believing in individual benefit acquisition but it has mutual collaboration and benefit are divided to all the participants of BRI as this is not a China centric program but also a global level program that's why the benefits must be divided properly. This tremendous Chinese efforts of building mega railway lines and fast motorways will bring amazing outcomes for every partner of this plan because the most inspiring aspect of this plan is, it is not aimed to limit the profit to the investor but its benefits are shared like there is a plan of establishing China Europe freight trains that will connect China with 15 European countries, the project has been operational now and it has completed 14,000 trips in March 2019. The best part of this plan is, China is not trying to dictate the world or the BRI participatory countries but it is more keen to be a part of different multilateral forums and unions like in North Africa which has been a victim of world's ignorance and resource acquisition, China is actually seeking to promote African identity, capacities and potentials by becoming a part of African union and presented African Union Agenda 2063, similarly it has aligned itself with Russian Euro Asian Union, Italy InvestItalia Program. Saudi Vision 2030, Kyrgyzstan 2040 National Sustainable Development Strategy and Mongolia Development Road Program

If the progress is going to be recorded in term of construction of infrastructure then there is a long list of Chinese involvement and assistance, because of various construction and infrastructure building plan that has been operational now, many countries are receiving enormous benefits and these gains are not for a sole entity but its fruit is accessible for every stake holder for example China Laos Railway and China Thailand Railway plans. These railway has brought not only capital to the country but it is also attracting more tourism in these areas because now for the travelers, it is very easy to access those places which were not reachable due to less means of transportation. Even this state to state direct contact would be beneficial for trade, finance and businesses. The results are quite visible when it comes to Nairobi Mombasa railway which is constructed with the help of China, it has now become operational and more than 2.5 million passengers have been travelled through this train and 3.9 million tons of cargo has been displaced since May 2017. Likewise in Ethiopia, with the assistance of China an airport was built and operational and till now 22 million passengers are travelling through this airport which is making it an aviation hub of African continent. Through BRI and Chinese assistance, Greece fold Piraeus port has advanced with more capacity for container capacity up to fivefold and now it is considered at 36th position in top 100 ports worldwide. This progress has not yet reached to the energy and telecommunication although they have been enhanced much by BRI but there is still a long way ahead as many business opportunities are attached with this notion not only for Chinese Companies but for worldwide enterprises.

This road is a road to peace because it is the agreed and tested theory that economic stability brings security and peace, the phenomenon is going to be proved in this case because there are various current examples of establishment of peace in those parts of the world which were highly crucial and intense in term of law and order. Baluchistan is the best example as before the introduction of CPEC in the region, different militant groups were highly involved in the province and state's authority was only limited to some urban areas. This area was also a Centre of Indian sponsored terrorism that's why there were no developmental activities executed, infrastructure building was not possible because Baloch liberation front and other separatist groups didn't allow to do anything positive and constructive in the province but after CPEC, through a flood of opportunities, the situation has changed entirely because now the Gwadar port has been operational and

international communication has also started without any fear of being murdered and kidnapped.

China has not put itself first in BRI in spite of putting enormous efforts and investment, it is still trying to help and assist those countries that can not have enough finances for infrastructure building and initiating new big projects. BRI another aim is to develop energy generation facilities by exploring more resource sites in the related countries, Chinese officials said that they are trying to work upon clean energy, it is the highest priority as the world is endangered because of global warming and environmental degradation. China is more concerned to look for renewable resources so, it could preserve the nature.

6.4 Global Connectivity Tool

BRI is a successful attempt of making the world a single community by connecting them through a single route or road. This scheme is comprised of five continent, 70 countries and 65 percent of world population, all the participants of BRI are willingly became a part of this plan because it comes with the uncountable opportunities of developing infrastructure, peace and security and international communication along with the better and effective diplomacy. It is the revival of old Silk Road; the old silk road was actually the westward expansion of China during the times of Hans Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) and this road was initiated to spread trade networks throughout the Central Asia and Europe. At that time, the Central Asian region was the base of art, culture, technology, information, education and trade, it is the epicenter of globalization, world market and wealth that's why China tried to enhance its connectivity basically to that region through building this trade rote called Silk Road. Through this road, Chinese silk was transported to different parts of the region along with spices, Jade and other valuable goods moved towards west. In return, precious metal, gold, silver and ivory was sent to China, this route was a famous and popular route for Roman and then Byzantine Empire.

China officially announced this mega global connectivity plan in Kazakhstan which is a central Asian state, Chinese President shared his vision for this vast network of railways, energy pipeline, motorways, highways and maritime ways that it is the extension of old

Silk road and presence of China across the world like it will touch and cross the borders of former soviet republics in the west of China, in Southward, Pakistan, India and South East states will enjoy its benefits. This connectivity across the countries will enhance the integrity of the world and on the other hand, this will increase the use of Chinese currency on international level and China has much advanced and huge plans for building fifty special economic zones that will connect the industrial development and new technological advancement in various fields of industries. Along every corridor and important port, China has proposed to build industrial zones so, it would be cost effective and more beneficial for the host country as well as for China to easily ship the products or to quickly receive the building material for the construction purposes. Most recent example is Gwadar port and Djibouti port where China has planned to build industrial zone near the port so, the economic production and outcomes would be more profitable.

Subsequently, this connectivity is not confined to land but also sea, Mr. Xi also announced a Maritime Silk road to connect states through sea routes, China started investing in the development of ports along the Indian and Pacific oceans starting from Southeast Asia to East Africa. China is aiming to gain multiple benefits not just economical but geo-political and geo-strategic gains are ultimate and with this tremendous connectivity plan, China is quite near to get the position of Super Power and posing challenges to USA world's status but not by aggression and offense but with soft power. There are number of new aspects and new point centers emergence after the implementation of BRI like the new strategic and economic relations between China and Russia are growing which is a matter of concern for the rest of the western world because both are cooperating and planning to get the most from the plan and new economic and strategic relations. China is also trying to extend the Silk Road operation to the Arctic Ocean and call it Ice Silk Road. China has initiated the plan to build this route with the consent of Russia because this region is considered as the internal water of Russia, China and Russian companies are seeking to explore oil and gas reserves discovered in this area after the ice has melted because of the environmental changes. Although US along with many other economic powers of the world are trying to get the access and their share in these reserves because according to them, this region is not the official and recognized territory of Russia so, any country can go and explore the valuable resources there. In this context, China and Russia are building

close and strong bond for economic and strategic assistance and safeguard their interests. Besides infrastructure development and power resources and its generation, China is also aiming to have a super grid system for uninterrupted availability of electricity, it is going to develop for ultra-high voltage electricity accessibility across the world like from China to west Asia moreover, it is also aiming to have other power resources to be used for the advancement of the project like wind energy power plants in Central Asian countries and solar power plants in Sindh and Punjab are in the list of BRI extended plans. There are still some countries that have not be a part of BRI yet because of their clashing national interest and security matters with China's proposed plan like India, Japan, Korea, these countries have fears and concerns although China is ready to talk and solve these issues but some countries have totally rejected the plan.

6.4.1 Six Corridors – Six Connectivity networks

From the very beginning China has announced the locations and countries where this plan is actually going to be pursued, this huge long belt is comprised of six corridors, and names are

- New Euro Asian Land Bridge
- China Central Asia – West Asia Corridor
- China Pakistan Corridor
- Bangladesh China Myanmar Corridor
- China Mongolia Russia Corridor
- China IndoChina Peninsula Corridor (Anon., n.d.)

Building of these corridors that are touching and crossing the boundaries of various countries and continents carries great significance for quick and rapid connectivity with the help of advanced and sound infrastructure comprised of a series of road, railway and sea ways. This close communication between and among the states because of this project has opened new avenues for cooperation and development. This development of relations is multi-dimensional as it was aimed and described as the rationale of this mega plan that this is to develop connection not only state to state but also people to people. This aspect

of BRI is actually indulging human factor into this initiative and it is not all about the flow of trade, investment and capital but there is a human touch of this apparently concrete cemented project of roads and highways. This aspect is providing an opportunity to the masses to have close relationship with people across the world which is not only giving employment opportunities to the different part of the world but it is also going to mobilize the labor of different countries like along with the investment, China is delivering and transferring the skilled labor from its country to the world, the collaboration between these work force with the native people and labor could have better and cooperative environment in the world that can easily eradicate conflicts and other differences. As BRI is an interstate rather intercontinental project that has been initiated in which borders are crossing and becoming a part of unified BRI community therefore, not just cities but even town and villages are nor exposed to a bigger and global entities. It is not only about the transfer of money and goods but the interaction among people of different nations, communities and identities which will bring a world with less conflicts and more partnership.

BRI comes up with new ways of interaction and gateways like Pak China Corridor for Kashgar, New Euro Asian Land bridge for Khorgos, Bangladesh China India Myanmar and China Indochina Peninsula Corridor, the products shipping trough these ways have three main aspects, one is time to reach the destination from the domestic market through the road network, second is the time to reach the main gateway through international corridor. This factor describes the less time for transportation and cost because of the unified shorter routes with not much border hassles, this procedure was previously common in Europe after the formation of European Union but it was not similar in a manner that the states were connected within a single continent but here in BRI, distinct countries of different continents are going to have an integrated system of communication and transportation with unified mutual benefits. The claim of undermining national identity or national interest is not much real because BRI is making governments and their people to have their multiple goals and objectives but with the help of unified system and mechanism, there is nothing problematic in this method that central Asian train or freight reaches Moscow, Istanbul, Urumqi and Xinjiang in Western China, through one train and one route many countries could get its benefits.

This investment for attaining better and quick transportation is meaningful and significant specially for big cities, here people would take more favor of the new infrastructure of the region, people are more encouraged to live in these big, developed and new border cities, this will increase the wages and the rents of houses and lands. One economic development could bring prosperity in every dimension as with the more investment in trade and development of economic urban hubs near border crossing will ultimately increase the minimum level of wages and welfare initiatives by the state. For example, the people living in Kazakhstan near China border are having better living standards and high wages as compare to the Almaty which is near the Russian border. It is evident that this connectivity approach is putting pressure on every sphere of the state especially in time and employment. Almost same happened with China like the labor living along coastal areas and eastern border are having more mobility and better employment offers as compare to the western people. It denotes the viability and significance of developing different routes and corridors in order to get better living standards, high wages and high level of interaction between and among the states.

Along with positivity and cooperation aspect, there is some sort of challenges and threats came with the notion of unified working sphere through BRI and along BRI, the notion of terrorism is quite prominent in these days and in this case of BRI and its corridors, first priority must be the security of a state and the way to which it is connected. In the initial phase of BRI and CPEC, many terrorist activities were recorded in Baluchistan to stop the working of Chinese companies and government so, the third party could get the benefits and the process of development could be obstructed. Recently many countries especially Middle Eastern countries and South Asian countries are facing this internal law and order problem therefore, there must be some solid arrangement for the prevention of these activities along the BRI.

6.5 Achievement of Green BRI

BRI is an effort to make the world economically unified, developed and connected, 115 countries have become the part of this mega project by enjoying an investment of \$ 1 trillion by China into transportation, telecommunication, energy, infrastructure, industrial capacity and technical capacity enhancement. Any large scale development always comes

with the environmental challenges because the transition from unsustainable infrastructure to the modern high tech system is not very easy and long term negative effects over environment are necessary. China has an eye on this matter because the world is counting over BRI and it is a fact that large developmental plans for better and advanced infrastructure pose challenges to the environment. Heavy machineries, loud noises of machineries and heavy equipment's, mining and extraction of resources is a real danger to the environmental preservation. Most of the countries participating in the BRI are not much rich and developed and there is a chance for the states that they could not be able to meet the targets of 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

Building Long roads, bridges and highways are affecting biodiversity of the specific region including wildlife mortality, restricted animal movement, and pollution. BRI has not been completed yet and there are many additional roads and energy plants which are going to be built in different regions of the world this enormous development will lead to habitat loss, over exploitation of resources and devastation of surrounding landscape. In different countries, ports are going to be developed rapidly and because of it, more roads and industries would be established, the impacts would be the disturbed ecosystem and degraded landscape. Reports says that these corridors would affect a range of 265 species, 81 endangered species and important bird areas and there are expected negative environmental impact to the biodiversity which is described and mentioned by World Wild Life Fund.

When it comes to energy demand, this would be grown with the passage of time because BRI is expanding in other various countries and China is also trying to develop the required resources for the ongoing construction and building process around the world. China has targeted to work upon renewable resources and it is trying to develop its capacity in 38 countries for 644GW from 2020-2030, its total investment in wind and solar power is of \$644 billion. Mostly the BRI countries are having inadequate electricity system, financing difficulties and unexplored resources that are not being utilized by the government, China is not receiving any sort of national regulations from the participating country for the usage of energy resources and other non-renewable resources like coal, sand and limestone for the making of cement and concrete. Extraction of coal and sand

has been exceeded to its natural renewal rate, this much extraction is directly affecting river deltas and coastal ecosystem. Before the introduction of BRI, China was responsible of high emission of greenhouse gas and now shipping for BRI to the different countries is also contributing further for this increased level of emissions. Developmental and construction work across the world, heavy pressure on national and international natural resources is not beneficial for the wellbeing of human race, China should work upon some better development strategies which could ensure human and environmental safety.

One example of biodiversity endangerment is hydropower project along the Mekong River which covers Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, this is mega energy generation plan in which dams are proposed to cause river diversion and as a result, many villages and town would be affected, fish migration would have its impact over the livelihood of these areas as most of the people are associated with the profession of fishing. These hydropower dams and its negative effects over fish stock has been announced by Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT). Besides fish production and water diversion, another problem is evident which is deforestation for constructing road and highways like Pan Borneo Highway crossing Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, for the construction of this highway areas is clearing, trees have been cut down that cause land sliding, floods and other related environmental disasters. BRI has failed to address environmental concerns and this thing is making local communities uncomfortable and vulnerable. Due to BRI execution, WWF has identified 1700 critical spots of biodiversity and 265 threatened species like in Indonesia, the rarest habitat of great apes in danger because of US\$ 1.6 billion hydroelectric power plant building in Sumarea forest highland which is the most biodiverse region.

6.6 BRI and higher Education

Through BRI, China is working over its soft power and its exchange to the different parts of the world but China was still far behind from different countries in higher and advanced education field because students preferred to go to western countries for higher education as compare to China but now with the introduction of BRI scheme, its influence has now crossed through Asia, Africa and Europe. Over the past two decades, China is putting more efforts and funding into different institutions to grab students' attention around the

world with their excellent incentives and courses. Belt and Road initiatives is an attempt to extend Chinese influence across continents via land and maritime trade routes. This route will give benefits to the half of the world's population consequently now China is leading the Times higher education Asia University Ranking, Tsinghua University has recently displaced National University of Singapore and took first position in this list and Peking University is at fifth position. 16 Chinese higher education institutes are now in the top 100 universities list because of its research and doctoral programs.

According to different observers and professors, China is now going to indulge in long term journey for its potential growth with the other leading universities located in the countries crossing by the BRI. China is working to enhance and support 42 universities to achieve the status of "World Class", countries participating in BRI, are also very keen to get the potential benefits from this project. China has to work hard to become the global economic hub by middle of this century because it is the high time for Asian region to strengthen its position for excellence. With the growing pace of China and Asian countries, it is estimated that if Asia wants to constitute more than half of global GDP, it must increase its standards for quality, cost, diversity and governmental autonomy for its higher education institutions. China is doing great in this regard and creating world class universities.

With the introduction of BRI, China has stepped in a new stage of globalization and has successfully built the association with Euro Asian region and working collaboratively with the universities of 130 countries including Russia and EU. In this open and positive environment, students from these BRI countries are competing to get enrolled in Chinese universities. After passing from their native colleges, they just turned towards Chinese universities and attractive scholarships. Massive development along the route of BRI and various countries as stake holders, China has succeeded in reshaping the regional education system and it is equally capable of affecting global higher education. Chinese education institutes are attracting considerable number of students from the BRI countries and the ratio of number of students has risen up to 317,000 from just 12 percent. Although it is not new that the world is going to consider China for higher education but after BRI, the axis of higher education is quickly shifting towards China. Chinese state is not only

initiating education programs but also trying to facilitate the local and foreign students for having financial assistance, it is responsible to provide vision and basic framework for the development of this faction. Although different institutions, cities and regions are able to design their own scheme but the state, banks and large scale university partnership is becoming evident for more close cooperation.

In the recent years, the world's transformation of higher education has diverted towards China from USA like China is more open and easily accessed as compare to US. For Social Sciences and humanities, there is a wide opportunity for their enhancement and exchange of ideas when it is losing its importance in the west. There are new plans and agreements with Europe, Italy and Russia that have signed up for BRI, China is making its prominent place in Europe not only through providing higher education facilities to the low income or middle income earning class but also by building connectivity digitally and interdiction means like Huawei 5th generation mobile network has also accepted and working in Britain and Germany in spite of US warning of not compromising international security of the western community.

With the growing awareness and need of the plan, Chinese ministry of Education announced an education action plan in July 2016 for BRI and to make it uniform, signed memorandum of international cooperation with fourteen provinces, other sovereign regions and municipalities, the aim for this agreement is to build a high profit, governmental level platform for BRI countries. In which Silk Road Scholarship program has been launched for attracting more overseas students and for giving better opportunities to the native students and researcher for higher education. According to the Chinese government and its ministry of education, with the initiation of the services for BRI, 545,000 Chinese students preferred to go to BRI countries for advanced studies and in 2016, the increase was of 36.2%.

Chinese students who returned to China in 2012 were reached to 433,000 which was 58.6% and 443,000 students enrolled in Chinese universities in the same year and it was the increase up to 35.1%. China became the most popular place for the foreign students and most visited place in Asia because of its opening up for the Asia and the rest of the world after initiating its mega project BRI to the world. Along with the developmental

work, China has developed educational relations and partnerships with 188 countries and different regions of the world

The number of learners returning to China after completing their course reached 433,000, up 58.6% on 2012. 443,000 international students furthered their studies in China, marking an increase of 35.1% on 2012. China has become the country with the most outbound student in the world and the most popular destination country in Asia. China has established educational partnerships with 188 countries and regions, and carried out educational cooperation and exchanges with 46 important international organizations. (Peter, 2019) China has also signed special agreements for the recognition of academic degrees with 47 countries and regions. China has also developed research centers (Confucius institutes) and class rooms in 140 countries, among these 140 countries, there are 51 countries of BRI where these institutes have been developed and 67 countries approved Chinese language teaching in their national education system. With the promotion of BRI in different countries, Chinese language is promoting and Chinese language learning centers are growing and have now reached to 100 million.

According to Chinese education ministry, China has reached to the stage from where it can enter into a new era of development and advancement where education is accessible to all, Chinese government is not only concerned to take initiative for education within the country but also wants to internationalize Chinese education system and higher degrees through a world class modern education system dominating by Chinese characteristics.

BRI is a unique kind of project with its economic impacts over the world and by 2050, it has planned to include 80% world GDP increase and growth of middle class up to three billion more people. This is an exclusive Neoliberal model of development in the sector of higher education as BRI is trying to have the resources for attaining a prominent position among top ranked institutions of the world. China with its socialist norms is trying very positively to achieve a developmental model that better work for development and internal promotion of Chinese universities and BRI higher education system and plans are promoting international cooperation as China is providing finances and infrastructure support for developing countries above all, it is also aiming to propose a unified globally

recognized education and research programs for the countries contributing in BRI. China is providing an attractive opportunity for the students and scholars that they can avail the most advanced and recent education facilities within the region and now they are not dependent over western education institutes as China has developed a sound and unified system of higher education with less expenses and less travel hassle. It is state led system that's why there is no possibility of scam and other private institutions fraudulent offers. It is a time when China is promoting its new arenas for BRI countries and for these countries, it is an exclusive option opportunity to get the offer in the most affordable manner within their own region along with Chinese passion for more development in other sector of the society.

6.7 Digital Connectivity

For economic growth, digital economy has become a driving force which is going to change the geo-economic landscape of the world. Globalization bringing great competition in the field of information technology, every new plan for development and growth has an integral factor of digital faction responsible for the better and fast procedure of the plan. BRI has covered all the important aspects of today's world and from people to people connection, it was necessary to connect the road and countries along the road through digital connectivity and communication. With the introduction of BRI to the world, China has completely changed its policy of "hide your strength and bide your Time" and during the time of Jinping, China is now going to take the central position in the world and the coming time is of China. In the plan of BRI, if china would be able to implement this aspect of BRI which is Digital Silk Road then it would definitely determine China's position in the emerging international order of this century. China has got into the matter of strategic technological competition with US and it is actively disseminating its own model of digital connectivity program. Digital Silk Road was first announced in 2015 through a white paper in which Digital Silk road has declared an integral part of BRI. This initiative has both foreign and domestic policy aspects; this initiative is comprised of four interrelated technological components. First is China has also an aim of providing physical digital infrastructure to the world like 5G cellular network or next generation, fiber optic cables as a part of internet infrastructure and data centers. Second aspect is, the

development of advanced technologies along with its economic and strategic uses, satellite navigation system, quantum computing and artificial intelligence. Third aspect is that China and its technology corporations are already aware of digital commerce, its importance and its significant role for making China an economic super power. Under the program of Digital Silk Road, China has planned to create digital free trade zone to facilitate e-commerce for the consolidation of its role as economic super power.

Cyberspace and latest technologies are the spheres that have not globally defined regulation and norms, this will turn China is a position where it can be a God father or a world master of future digital world and it would be in a position to set the principles of cyber sovereignty. This Digital Silk Road would give an inspiring opportunity to authoritarian regimes that this cyber sovereignty will help their citizens to exercise their rights of expression and their association through this digital mode. China will be in a position in which it can shape people's opinion and design a scenario of future geopolitical situation beyond the Asia Pacific continent. China and US are in continuous competition for the acquisition of the title of world power and now China has realized the need to widen the competition in economic and then technological fields. China is not provoking US along with the other European powers for any direct conflict but for US, it is an alarming condition and it is carrying out all diplomatic efforts to restrict the development of Digital Silk Road and Chinese expansion to become a technological giant. China has initiated its digital efforts by introducing 5G telecommunication network and a new brand Huawei.

China has already gained enormously from this liberal capitalist order and it wants to adapt it but not completely because it has the plan to implement its digital silk road by creating some changes in the existing order. There is a need to implement Chinese technological model and its trend of advancement because it is the requirement for the domination of Chinese technological legitimacy. The purpose of this idea is to establish its own version of political and economic freedom which is already questionable for the rest of the world especially US and western countries. This is the need of the times because BRI as a unified mega infrastructure and power project and it requires a communication system for the long distance travelling staff and feedback of construction activities from

the different parts of the world. This BRI is spread across the world and different countries are participating in this mega project, many developing countries are part of it where they are not having a proper cyber space and mobile network so, through this technological revolution bringing by China, these countries would have high speed internet and 5G mobile network.

Beijing and Washington both are in a phase of competition which is not just economic, technological and political but also strategical struggle. But there is an increased possibility for China to win the favorable outcomes and can reshape the international order. US have to take the matter very seriously and should adopt a holistic approach towards increasing competition with China because it is trying to shape a geopolitical planning for the 21st century. US is practicing a liberal democratic model since a long time and it is also pursuing the norms like democracy, human rights, rule of law contributing in designing an international environment that's why USA has to be more realistic and rational towards the increasing influence of China across the world under the banner of BRI.

6.8 Future of BRI

BRI is the symbol of China's growing presence in world's affairs and international scenario, this assertiveness is making the world more China centric and Asian region is going to become the Centre of affairs. Asian BRI partner have now stepped in a ship of development and cooperation not only in economic sphere but also social and geo political fields. China with this mega developmental idea is gaining various benefits and most importantly, it is making its position inevitable and prominent in the list of influential western countries. The phenomenon of globalization has completely utilized by China in this BRI project as it practically and physically made many countries to come closer and make a unified front for the fast and better development of the world especially the countries that were being deprived of having their fair in the world growth.

BRI has been targeted and widely discussed because of many challenges, from economic dimension, it has been highlighted as debt trap for the initiation of heavy projects in developing countries that cannot afford it. China established developmental funds and

infrastructure banks for making investment outside the China. If the country is not able to bargain and get a better and safe position then the debt would ultimately be a threat for their autonomy and sovereignty as it has been recorded that China has taken over many state's ports and strategic locations. There must a system where the participatory state should have some certain rights and edges for the protection of its rights and interests.

Corruption free BRI should be the goal for the future, China should be more assertive and vigilant towards the claims of corruption because it is affecting the credibility of China and reduce the future adoption of Chinese option for development, All the developing countries with poverty and deprived social structure, it is an ultimate fact that the corruption is obviously happened but for transparent and for gaining more credibility, China has to come up with the strict mechanism to prevent this act to be occurred. Bribery is common for many project developers to take and use it for their benefits; this is the factor which is causing delay, failure, high cost and host problem. Chinese government must come up with some anti-bribery strategies and international convention for having clean and transparent BRI processes and activities.

Environmental concerns and increasing claims over BRI as an environmental time bomb because of its execution in the areas where natural assets are there and because of the developmental and construction projects, it is going to hurt the natural balance and resources. International community is demanding from China to re-evaluate the feasibility and design of the mega projects whether they are not harming the environmental balance of the region. Many Chinese projects are facing immense criticism and opposition from inside of the participatory state and outside the state resistance therefore, these projects should be examining through reliable Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for both domestic and overseas projects. International community is accusing China for spreading a debt trap for the world in the form of BRI as these projects are estimated with heavy investment and cost which is not a very easy task for the countries to execute it so, China offer loans for its construction but many states like Malaysia and Myanmar later found that these mega projects are going to create inflation and unaffordable, similarly many countries are facing many financial constrains because of the loans imposed over these countries. To produce realistic and productive results, Chinese banks should need

transparent projects preparation to examine right needs and financial feasibility so, that the state could be able to clearly understand the immediate and genuine need of the resources and financial requirements. Without the strict recommendation of financial institutions, these projects should not be implemented and should be send for further examination by the authorities.

BRI related projects are often so expensive and hard to bear by the struggling economies of developing countries. This thing gives rise to debts, loans and corruption. Many governments were allegedly involved in fraud and corruption due to this high cost projects like in Malaysia and Myanmar when the new regime came after election, they simply refused to work upon these sort of projects because of their less feasibility and high cost. For the sustainable and vigorous development and progression of these projects, Chinese banks as well as investment institutes should devise transparent strategies to examine actual needs and financial capability. This thing is very necessary to bring more capital and investors especially from private sector and this would be possible when the standards would be carefully set for calculating the possibilities and outcomes, if the commercial banks and investors are going to plan and set some standards then it could ensure viability and affordability of BRI projects in developing countries.

BRI is based upon some specific approaches, one of the approaches was government to government connectivity, this idea has the rationale to utilize state's human resource so, it would promote and enhance cooperation at governmental level but the evident fact is, so many Chinese labor is working in different BRI countries which is undermining the role of native labor force as they are not getting work in their own country and specially in BRI projects which is not promoting the internal growth norm associated with this mega project. Chinese authorities should work in this regard and devise a policy to bring its outcomes for the native people and companies, it should be more available plan so, it could bring a change in people's life and standard of living as it promises to provide a positive transformation of society in every mean. This could have more plans for employment, procurement and local training. Chinese embassies could better work in this regard and facilitate coordination with native stakeholders.

Beijing has wished to develop close ties with international multilateral organization/banks, financial forums and bilateral aid agencies but every international body first wants to have a well-designed and well supervised project then they would think about any cooperation with it but unfortunately Chinese projects lacking in this factor and long term monitoring especially outside the country, the staff and the officials do not behave responsibly and collaborating with the state officials, try to exploit the funds and resources which results in increasing cost, excessive construction and corruption which is quite evident in various countries of BRI therefore, in this period when it has been begun there is an acute need of making clear set of rules and regulations. State should work hard to make it well design and well supervise. Its corruption prevention and observation requires another department which will work for fair execution, implementation and evaluation of the projects.

China BRI plan has various implications for the world as well as the world powers especially USA, US has clear opposition and concerns over the execution and spread of BRI, in mid-2017, the opposition was growing from the international community and US was in the top of the list for identifying various hidden and prospective concerns related to BRI because this plan has posed a lot of challenges and risks to US, its partners and participating nations. USA should work to develop consensus that how they would react this project. US cannot compete or completely confront this mega development but it can work out an alternative strategy for the promotion of another regional connectivity setting and it could work for a new setting of regional connectivity with more capital and profits.

China has been highly successful in promoting and maintaining the norm of cooperation, China is the country who came up with the idea of economic cooperation at global level and this promoted economic gains and friendly ties with the various countries which ultimately reduce the competition as it set global cooperation model for the world. At the geopolitical ground, it is increasing competition among western states and US against China. There is a need to grow the circumstances favoring cooperation rather competition because according to Neo liberal's economic cooperation and dependency always bring integrity and stability in a state and when it comes to the world, this unified project has brought a revolutionary change in the paradigm and now states are ready to cooperate

rather to conflict. They are not negating the role of China and BRI in building world's cooperation for longer period of time therefore, the countries like India in South Asian region should think to become a part of global cooperation rather to confront it and compete it as competition mostly leads to conflict and war.

7. CONCLUSION

This study evaluated and analyzed China's BRI plan over the parameters of complex interdependence theory that talks about cooperation and welfare as a more important global issues than security, it also assumes cooperation as a dominant factor of international politics as compare to conflict. This theory is quite applicable in the defined scenario as China is really working to make this idea, a reality because it is catering the economic and infrastructural needs of the countries around the world, most of them really need some direct and uninterrupted assistance in term of capital, technology and labor. Now countries are moving towards cooperation and coordination for their economic growth which can ultimately reduce the possibility of conflicts and differences between and among the states.

China is trying to establish peaceful and long lasting relations with more than 60 countries which is not an easy task but with the help of financial incentives and infrastructural advancement, various countries have become a close ally of China and international supporter of Chinese BRI supporter. This international community although is under a great Chinese influence but on the other side, this trend is gradually moving towards making a global block and also a peaceful cooperation with minimal possibility of conflict.

BRI has come up with many outcomes, economic goals and infrastructural assistance to the world which is itself an alarming factor for the existing global powers and international community. The most visible is its strategic implications for the world, China is gradually taking the edge over US and in a very appealing and peaceful manner, it is going to dominate the geo political and strategic scenario as an evidence, China is present in middle east although apparently, its objectives are seemed to be economical assistance but through this manner, it is making its permanent place in the region and when a state is

controlling the trade and financial activities in its control then the beneficiaries world ultimately move under its influence. BRI has made a web of countries across Asia, Europe and Africa, this close network of cooperation will bring more trade and foreign exchange. In economic and trade domain China has taken a top position and it is very evident that it is also becoming a dominant actor in world politics which can reduce the tit for tat foreign policy and restricted trade as it will enhance the state's capability to bargain and trade for their own good and profit.

BRI is not only significant for the growth of trade and diplomatic relations but also it would give state more choices to move and establish relations with states of their own region and outside the region due to the quick access and fast communication means. In spite of having all the benefits, the world is concerned about the position of China as it is getting the higher place in every domain, world politics is also going to give more attentions what china is saying and thinking. China's corporate sector is no more a Chinese internal domain but because of BRI, it is moving beyond its borders and expands its jurisdiction across the world, in this manner China is the real actor working for internationalization or globalization. This Chinese initiative of BRI will vigorously create a situation of utter competition in the world and it would ultimately increase the economic activities, agreements and deals, if it comes up with fair competition then it will create win-win condition for the participating countries.

BRI network that is extending to different continents, it was not an easy task to make all the countries to stand on the same ground and lines explained and offered by China but this phenomenal condition describes the fact that without creating discontentment and disagreement, a power can take over country's internal and foreign affairs. It became possible because of the enormous investment of China over developing and poor countries, china didn't play a power show game but by spending money or by some peaceful tactics, it took over the long lasting outcomes and the destiny of the world in its hands. This trend of integrated progress is not a new idea especially for China because in the past, China built some special economic zones to overcome some institutional weaknesses within the system and even Silk road was an also an initiative which really provided benefit to the different part of the world. This idea of one road.one belt is going

to make the world more progressive and cooperative because when there are economic gains laid, the rate of conflicts would be diminished. History witnessed that China had not very friendly relations with many countries since its creation like Iran, Russia and many ASEAN countries but with the introduction of this massive project, China has successfully established and executed cooperative and friendly relations with the above mentioned countries. China is now having a say in international politics as well as emerged as an active international actor like it can be easily visible in the case of Iran USA tension when there was the assassination of Iranian commander Qasim Suleimani, China was the first state who released its official statement that USA is violating basic norms of International Relations and becoming a source of regional tension and violence. China is also working with Iran and Russia closely for making a trilateral forum for more cooperation and progress. This study is clearly mentioning the increasing inclination of Russia and Iran towards China, the reason could be to encounter the US influence in Middle East. This cooperation was started with the financial and infrastructural assistance but with the growing time, it has turned into strategic ground.

Through BRI plan, China is also facing some challenges that must be addressed properly as this study discussed three basic perspectives for BRI China, USA and South Asia but discussion can't be separately done and concluded because every actor has a multiple kind of character. Being a world power, USA has its multifaceted interests in every region therefore, South Asian region also carries great importance to US and whatever development happen here, will have its impacts and implications over the world power. This South Asian region is generally dominated with by Indo Pak relations but now with the entrance of China which is continuously supporting Pakistan in every ground, making India uncomfortable and compelled it to seek the support of the opponent. India is not a part of BRI but became a part of free and open indo pacific strategy. Now there is a need to look into the situation through a different perspective, on one hand, India is working over anti-china agenda in the region by provoking Bhutan, not to become a part of BRI but on the other hand, it is encouraging the counterpart like US and its allies to become supporters of each other and promoting more cooperation among them. Indo Pak relation and Sino India relations would play a vital role in the growth of BRI in the region, China could face some serious hindrance while making this plan feasible in this area but the most

important thing is, the volume of trade, investment and development coming in South Asia can easily determine the countries to cooperate on larger scale in order to get more fruits of this Chinese investment.

On one hand, this dependency is bringing cooperation but on the other hand, it is posing competition for the counterpart. USA, Japan, India, Australia and other western states are not in favor of this unification and long term cooperation of world with China as it is making China a strong entity physically present in every corner of the world. US China economic ties are getting intense because of this initiative and many flaws and weaknesses of BRI are known to the world because of the US think tanks and other institutions. US involvement and propaganda against BRI is no more a secret to the world. Continuous criticism coming out of US side and its trade tension with China is proving the idea right that conflict cannot be bypassed, it is inevitable and the whole discussion is comprehending the hypothesis that economic interdependency gives rise to peace and stability as well as conflicts among the state. As far as the competition concerned, it is there but not in a very large extend as the BRI participant countries are seeking more cooperation and assistance. They were not actually competing but they are striving to have more benefits and economic assistance. When it comes to the opponent and critics of this plan, they are challenging the authenticity and credibility of this program.

It can be concluded that BRI evidently increased the economic cooperation across the world, because of the state's economic dependency over Chinese investment and infrastructural assistance, it is moving the world towards the world scenario having less conflict and less differences among the states.

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- ❖ **Bachelor:** 2016, (BAs) Political Science, Political Science Department. Baluchistan University.
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WORK EXPERINCE

- Foreign Language Instructor, Istanbul Havacilik Kursu/TURKISH AIRLINES.
- Committee Chair & Delegation Recruiter, MODEL UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION.
- Associate Member, NYPP NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT.
- Interpreter/Refugee Force, UN/UNDP UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.
- Paralegal, INVESTO GLOBAL.
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PAPERS & PUBLICATIONS

- Afghanistan National Army & the post NATO scenario.
- Republic of Turkey & Historical background of Military Interventions.
- Why do some States that practice Liberalism and Human Rights at home, sometimes find it difficult to advance it on International level?
- The trade inclination of the European Union towards Pakistan and the challenges
- Field Experiment and Political Science.

- Economic Interdependence & Competition for International Relations (Case study of China and it's BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) in South.
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