

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE SHADOW OF SINO-U.S. COMPETITION

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Abstract

The foreign policy of Pakistan subjected to various challenges as the competition between the United States and China was rising rapidly in the 21st Century. The given rivalry has not only affected the security system and economic policies of Pakistan but has a serious effect on the processes on a regional scale. Pakistan consider China as its most important economic partner by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its leading project, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The United States on the other hand has been able to sustain its influence by exercising leverage, both strategic and financial whereby it has helped Pakistan in counter-terrorism operations. Pakistan must find a compromise between two superpowers using the ambitious geopolitical terrain of opportunity and risk maximization. This paper will look at both the opportunities and the challenges of Sino-U.S. competition as it applies to the Foreign Policy of Pakistan. There is the need to balance the relations with both states and achieve the national interest through a subtle and pragmatic approach. Other key measures include increasing the diversification of the economy and not relying on one state. This study also offers ideas on the foreign policy choices that can help the state to manoeuvre through this intricate circumstance and meet its goals. According to the research findings, it is necessary to think strategically, to exercise caution in diplomacy, and to have a full grasp of geopolitical dynamics. Using a practical and active strategy, Pakistan will be able to guarantee its economic and security interests. The paper is also useful in comprehending the foreign policy of Pakistan in the face of competition, as well as offer an advice to policymakers and scholars.

INTRODUCTION

Henry Kissinger, a renowned American political scientist and diplomat, defined foreign policy through his remarkable writings. According to his doctoral dissertation, the legitimacy in international relations is defined as "an international agreement about the permissible aims and workable arrangements and methods

of foreign policy." Legitimacy refers to an international system that is accepted by all major powers, whereas a system not accepted by one or more major powers is considered potentially dangerous and revolutionary (Kissinger, 1957). For many years, Pakistan has been guided in its foreign policy by domestic and strategic factors.

Since its start in 1947, the country has struggled to acclimate to powerful nations and worked to develop relations in changing political scenarios. Pakistan has dealt with a complicated situation these days as increased competition between the U.S. and China reaches into other areas beyond geopolitics, such as technology, the economy, and security (Chwee, 2016). Islamabad is managing its new and complex set of relations quite closely.

Pakistan regarded China as its most reliable partner due to its economic support, military equipment, and strong strategic cooperation. The United States also actively participated in counterterrorism efforts, providing financial help and military assistance. Pakistan could face trouble as a result of the Sino-U.S. competitive stance. While this competition affects the whole world, Pakistan plays a bigger role due to its pivotal geographical location (Pantucci, 2021). The fact that the U.S. is strategically aligned with India by signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) and its deep involvement in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) worries Pakistan's security experts (Desai, 2025). Meanwhile, China's big investment projects in Pakistan also boost the country's importance within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Further, because of political unrest, economic instability, and problems with governance, Pakistan finds it tougher to handle the rivalry between China and America. Due to international financial pressure on Pakistan, it is obliged to manage its relations with the U.S., which also limits the state's financial options. With Sino-U.S. competition in play, Pakistan was able to redefine its foreign policy and goals for international relations. The strategic location of Pakistan is a critical junction that links Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia for business and energy resources. By joining CPEC and similar projects with Central Asian governments, Pakistan is becoming central to the regional connectivity (Bon, Mocci, & Torri, 2020).

Historical ties with the Islamic world and membership in multilateral forums opened more opportunities for Pakistan to approach foreign policy differently. The paper examines the complexities related to Sino-U.S. competition. This competition caused issues for

Pakistan's foreign policy and the opportunities it can capitalize on. To start with, geopolitical events, the economy, and security issues are well understood, which makes it easy to understand that the emphasis on strategic autonomy, the emergence of new economic directions, and the readiness to take diplomatic action determines the way Pakistan addresses the new global order. Another fact, highlighted in the article, is that Pakistan must modify its previous relationship with the current globalization trends to achieve national interests.

The evolution of Sino-U.S. competition in South Asia

The way China and the US compete is now a vital sign of how modern geopolitics works, mainly in Asia. The main reasons for competition today are China's growing global importance and the US actions to restrain Beijing's rise. When China established the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, it promised to carry out several infrastructure projects throughout Asia, Europe, and Africa to boost connectivity and international trade. In response, the United States has backed projects such as the Blue Dot Network to connect with regional nations and provide alternative finance for infrastructure work. Nevertheless, Pakistan finds this competition tough but also full of potential. For the BRI, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is central, meaning Pakistan has a leading role in China's vision. At the same time, the United States criticising both the BRI and CPEC as "debt traps" already causes tension in its ties with Pakistan and China (Goh, 2016).

Military and Technological Competition between the Two Major Powers

China's fast-growing carrier fleet for its navy is now giving the United States growing competition in the region. Via the Quad (U.S., Japan, India, and Australia), the United States wants to intervene to avoid Chinese dominance. Pakistan is concerned about the increasing role of the military in the Indian Ocean, particularly India's involvement in U.S. projects.

The two major powers are also competing in the development of 5G, artificial intelligence, and semiconductors. While the U.S. tries to separate Chinese companies like Huawei from other countries, China is boosting its tech

independence. As Pakistan uses Chinese technology and aid, it must work cautiously and navigate carefully among complications resulting from tensions between the U.S. and China (Lim & Rohan, 2019).

Regional Implications of the Sino-U.S. Competition

The intensifying competition between China and the United States is reshaping regional geopolitics and affecting their security. The main concern for Pakistan is the strong relationship between the United States and India, which includes rapid progress in defense, intelligence, and economic fields. The United States counts on India to balance the growing Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific. The country's involvement in the Quad, with the United States, Japan, and Australia, is an example of launching new multilateral partnerships. India sees that its improved warcraft, due to agreements such as BECA and COMCASA, puts Pakistan's national security at risk. Through this change, tension in the region can increase especially on issues that concern Kashmir, border security and water. Pakistan is caught with the two issues of strategic parity with India and managing the risks of having Taliban as an ally. Simultaneously, the strong relationship that China promotes with Pakistan provides it with a strong means through which it can counter the rise of India.

For China's dream of leading in its region, Pakistan features strongly in Beijing's main project, the Belt and Road Initiative. Besides, the close collaboration between the two nations in military technology strengthens Pakistan's capacity to deter India by maintaining its credible deterrence. Yet, this close alignment to China makes Pakistan's position more precarious as tensions between China and the United States rise. Pakistan also faced increasing scrutiny from some leading nations in the West, which are watching closely Pakistan's debt obligations to China. Pakistan needs to manage its partnerships in the changing geopolitical dynamics to avail all the key perks while making sure its security and independence are kept intact in the future (Pugliese & Insisa, 2020).

The Sino-U.S. Competition and Potential Risks for Pakistan's Economy

With China's heavy investment, the upgraded infrastructure and energy sectors in Pakistan greatly enhanced its sustainability, but it has made it difficult for the country to repay its debts and become less reliant. If Pakistan wants to get financial aid from agencies like the IMF or World Bank, it is often hit with tough economic demands from the U.S. Still, the ongoing trade war between the U.S. and China, along with new issues in the global supply chain, might influence Pakistan's economy if it cannot count on diversity in its relationships. Being a connection point between South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, Pakistan is well-positioned to draw in investment and trade opportunities from both powers (Boni, 2021).

For its part, Islamabad should improve its economy, be transparent with China, and try to balance its approach, not to back either the U.S. or China too heavily for its foreign policy. The two countries show opposing ideas about how to engage with South Asia. Because of this, co-operation between India and the United States has risen as they implement strategies to deal with China's influence. As a result, Pakistan must strengthen its position in the region by all means. Even so, Beijing's backing for Pakistan in global organizations, including the UN Security Council, clearly shows China is Islamabad's most important and reliable ally.

Pakistan's Strategic Position in Sino-U.S. Competition

The geostrategic position of Pakistan at the junction of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East has a greater role in regional politics. Since Gwadar Port gives it access to the Arabian Sea, it also enhances Pakistan's importance in global trade routes. With Gwadar, the main CPEC project, Pakistan acts as a gateway that can help supply China with energy and goods along its maritime Silk Road. Moreover, since Pakistan is very close to Afghanistan, it is at the heart of the reconstruction work and the drive against terrorism. Afghan stability is important for the U.S. and China, and Pakistan is the main actor in this region (Heiduk, 2021). Pakistan has redefined its foreign policy on how it relates to superpowers. While trying to halt Soviet expansion, Pakistan got major aid from the United States, but that alliance was transactional

rather than strategic; both countries often had periods of closer and more distant ties, mostly over the development of Pakistan's nuclear program. China was there for Pakistan during the same period, as it offered both military and financial aid when ties with the U.S. neared a rupture. Even after the post-9/11 attacks began, the U.S.-Pakistan alliance was revived, though differences in fighting terrorism and drone raids caused the relationship to suffer. Meanwhile, Pakistan has become China's main trusted partner because of CPEC.

Sino-U.S. Competition and Challenges for Pakistan's Foreign Policy

• Economic Dependencies and Related Risks

Having China as Pakistan's key economic partner comes with many positives as well as risks. CPEC has helped develop infrastructure, but it has also added to Pakistan's external debt. Officials in the U.S. frequently caution that Chinese loans might result in a debt crisis, and Pakistan has to deal with this to assure international investors. In addition, Pakistan's continuing reliance on U.S. financial institutions brings new difficulties. Stringent rules imposed by the IMF for economic change can stir up feelings against the rules among the public, proving the drawbacks of depending so much on Western support (Ghohroudi, 2021).

U.S. Exports to Pak	U.S. Imports from Pak	China's exports to Pak	China's Imports from Pak
\$774.7 million, 2025	\$1.2745 billion, 2025	\$17.3 billion, 2023	\$2.12 billion, 2023

The U.S. trade deficit with Pakistan is \$499.8 million in the first quarter of 2025 (The United States Census Bureau, 2025).

• Problems Arising from a Security Dilemma

Pakistan's security dynamics are deeply linked to its relations with the U.S. and China and their extensive support to its defence industry. The extensive support by China for defense projects like the JF-17 Thunder has become central to modernizing Pakistan's military. In this case, Pakistan is the largest recipient of the Chinese weapon shipment, which was 63 percent in 2024. Moreover, the US is the largest ally in combating terrorism. Still, the close ties that Pakistan has with China put an extra source of trouble to any alliance with the U.S. The emergence of U.S.-India relationship has brought several fears regarding the hegemony of South Asia and India in the region. Foreign policy will need to be carefully calibrated in order to deal with conflicting security needs. (Lim & Mukharjee, 2019).

• Regional Security

Rising conflict between China and the United States is increasing the unrest in the region,

• Balancing Relationship with Major Powers

One of Pakistan's toughest foreign policy tasks is balancing its relations with China and the United States. Although China invests the most in Pakistan and supplies military equipment, the U.S. is a major player in the IMF and World Bank. The U.S. has concerns about CPEC and has doubts over the costs and the possibility of debt problems (Javaid & Iqbal, 2020). Pakistan regards CPEC as the main foundation of its plans for economic development. It takes diplomatic finesse and sensitivity to stop one side from alienating the other.

especially in Afghanistan. With the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from the country, China elevated cooperation with the Taliban government on infrastructure and fighting terrorism. The involvement of Pakistan in Afghan peace talks means it now must handle rival approaches strategically. India's alliance with the U.S. further complicates the region's security (ISSRA, 2024). Agreements between India and the U.S., for example, the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), build up India's military, thereby making matters more difficult for Pakistan.

• Pakistan's Domestic Constraints

The nation's fierce political struggles, internal difficulties, failures in governing, and dissatisfaction of the people limit its direction in foreign affairs. The Pakistani public has unfavourable views about Western influence, mainly in terms of acceptance of IMF demands and past drone attacks. However, China enjoys more confidence and reliability in the joint

projects despite concerns about debt. Because of such disagreements, the government cannot act in foreign policy without meeting strong opposition from its people.

- **Political Instability and Institutional Vulnerability**

During many decades, instability in Pakistani politics and weak institutions have made it difficult for the nation to respond successfully to Sino-U.S. competition. Pakistan still has not reached a period of political stability, thus, there is not enough time to formulate coherent and practical foreign policy strategies. Pakistan tends to be less concerned with key issues in diplomacy due to political instability and is more responsive than proactive in their interactions with the big powers (Boni & Adeney, 2020). Indicatively, there were certain key matters under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that took even more time to resolve due to political instability in Pakistan. In addition, the instability will not allow Pakistan to enjoy the full benefits of their strategic location as unstable leadership tends to separate the government policies and cannot easily use their strategic location to the fullest and take advantage of development opportunities in the region. It has weak governance structures, bureaucratic laxity, and does not have good coordination among organizations, which makes the country unable to adapt and cope with its dynamic geopolitical location. In the precarious position of attempting to balance between China and the United States, Pakistan, at one time or another, is in a precarious situation either negotiating a good deal under CPEC or accepting strict conditions provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), primarily because of its poor institutions. The situation is aggravated by the fact that these flaws do not allow Pakistan to concentrate on its primary internal problems: mismanagement of the economy, corruption, and lack of control by means of regulations. Pakistan must build stronger institutions, apply the same policies over time, and achieve a more reliable political climate to play its role in the region amid U.S.-China tensions. Because politics are unstable in Pakistan, the country struggles to stick to set foreign policy objectives.

- **Afghan Factor and Counterterrorism Efforts**

Economic instability and political uncertainty further weaken Pakistan's negotiation position at the international level. Continued inflation, unemployment, and shortages of energy resources also distracted the state from long-term foreign policy planning. Afghanistan's unstable political and economic environment challenges Pakistan, which becomes more serious as China seeks to address these challenges with its BRI plan. In addition, Pakistan has to simultaneously satisfy the U.S. on concerns about terrorism in the context of Chinese economic initiatives in Afghanistan, further straddling Islamabad's diplomatic loads (CFR, 2025).

- **Sino-U.S. Competition and the Indian Ocean Region**

Pakistan's security is affected by the Sino-U.S. competition over the Indian Ocean region because it has become a geostrategically important space. By implementing its Indo-Pacific strategy, the United States is responding to Chinese growth by switching up its naval allies' priorities and increasing its activity along the Indo-Pacific coastlines ~ usually with India. As a key collaborator, India has increased its naval strength and started projecting its influence in important sea areas, making it more difficult for Pakistan to reach a middle ground in its foreign relations. Alternatively, China has set up military bases in Djibouti and invested in Pakistan's Gwadar Port to assure critical sea routes and gain a foothold in the Indian Ocean region. For Pakistan, the maritime rivalry increases its role in China's regional plans of securing critical sea lanes of communications, but also opens up a danger of becoming a conflict zone between the United States and India for shaping Beijing's future (Areeba, 2024). Islamabad needs to upgrade its naval capabilities and increase collaboration with nearby countries to push for the Indian Ocean to be declared a zone free from conflict and military face-offs.

- **Multilateral Forums**

Since Pakistan participates in institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), it does not play a main role

in making international or regional policies. Since China and the U.S. compete in these areas, Pakistan is not as able to encourage support for its ideas. The competition between the United States and China at these meetings creates new problems for Pakistan's diplomacy.

- **Limited Foreign Policy Choices**

With mounting China-U.S. political strains, Pakistan finds that its choices become even more difficult. It opens the door for them to become separated from economic and political communities. As Pakistan is close friends with China, this often draws Western censure and limits Islamabad from gaining from Western markets and industries. The growing divisions inside international organizations, including the United Nations, where the U.S. and China frequently disagree, make it difficult for Pakistan to remain neutral (Sacks, 2021).

- **Cyber security Vulnerabilities**

As Sino-U.S. competition grows in technology areas, Pakistan faces more problems associated with relying on technology and cyber security. Digital projects built by Chinese companies raise Pakistan's exposure to internet risks. Operating risks from Chinese technology reported by the U.S. could decrease Western interest in investing in Pakistan's digital sector. Because of the recent competition between Sino-U.S., Pakistan faces many difficulties with its foreign policy, including steering relationships, addressing economic issues, resolving regional problems, and handling internal issues. Islamabad has to adopt a multi-pronged approach to ensure its security. Because of the increasing polarization of international politics and the intensifying Sino-U.S. competition make the situation has become more critical. Pakistan faces challenges since it must ensure its freedom in foreign affairs, economic security, and work to promote its diplomacy (Nust Think Tank Report, 2024).

Opportunities for Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Pakistan's foreign policy enjoys several potential new openings because of the complicated Sino-U.S. rivalry. In the complex political scenario, Pakistan can boost its economic, security, and diplomatic aims by capitalizing on the shifting global order, making better use of its advantages,

international history, and participation in various multilateral bodies.

- **Leveraging Geostrategic Location and Economic Corridors**

Pakistan is a strategic crossroad in terms of trade, energy and connectivity at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. Consequently, a number of possibilities emerge. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor gives Pakistan the central position in the regional relations and gives China direct access to the Arabian Sea via Gwadar and does not have to use the Strait of Malacca, which is not as safe.

- **Trade and Energy Transit Hub**

The strategic location of Pakistan can offer access of the world markets to Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. The increase of the trading routes and linkages between regions due to the projects like TAPI and IP pipelines contribute to the emergence of numerous economic opportunities. Pakistan is a country that can significantly participate in energy trade in the region. In case the TAPI and IP pipeline projects become successful, Pakistan will be transformed into an important state in energy transportation, and domestic energy deficit will be reduced. The Gwadar is deep and therefore the oil coming to China in the middle East can sail through the Gwadar. The efforts made on the project of CPEC have significantly improved the highways, electricity projects, and the special economic zones (SEZs) in the country. These kinds of developments establish sustainable economic growth (Khan, 2020). As a result of SEZs, CPEC assists Pakistan in constructing the factories, foreign investors favoring the country, and connecting to the global supply market. CPEC projects have provided additional power generation flows to assist Pakistan in overcoming the chronic power shortage. Such projects can be handled in better and more environment friendly ways that will provide a boost to the economy of Pakistan.

- **Access to the International Market**

Pakistan can take advantage of China's large consumer market. Close cooperation with China, particularly in textiles and agriculture, can allow Pakistan to lower its trade deficit.

Entering into free trade agreements with China and other BRI member countries may help increase the market reach of our industries. The SCO gives Pakistan a chance to cooperate more closely with regional countries, including China, Russia, and Central Asian states, by joining as a full member. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) division of the SCO allows Pakistan to work together with its neighbors to help keep the region safe. Pakistan has the opportunity to work on regional projects with the SCO and match its own goals with those of other member countries.

- **The Belt and Road Initiative**

Pakistan is given a bigger role in the BRI. Pakistan can demonstrate itself as a stable and reliable partner to look attractive to Chinese investors by being involved in the BRI project and emphasizing working together and resolving disputes with the support of the BRI framework.

- **Bridging Gaps between China and the U.S.**

Because of its historical links with China and the U.S., Pakistan can help reduce tensions between the two superpowers. As a result of its location next to Afghanistan, Pakistan can be involved in the U.S.-China cooperation to rebuild Afghanistan and fight terrorism. Both China and the U.S. strongly wish to address climate change, which means Pakistan can lead in regional collaboration and show the way in regional activities to increase the use of renewable energy and disaster preparation. Pakistan's good relationship with China allows it to develop new technologies. Crafting Chinese-led technology systems for Pakistan in digital and network projects and 5G could boost its economy. Partnerships with Chinese companies in manufacturing and agriculture have the power to increase industrial growth. Even as a Chinese ally, Pakistan can benefit from Western technology investments by making its regulatory process simple and fair. Both American and European businesses can help Pakistan become a center for new developments in renewable energy and IT (Gul, 2024).

- **Consolidating Relations with the Middle East, European, and Asian States**

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar enjoy a shared culture and history with Pakistan. Financial support has always come from this region for the organizations. There may be more investment by the UK in Pakistan's energy, infrastructure, and agriculture sectors with the improved association. More energy partnership with Gulf countries helps Pakistan achieve stable and fairly priced energy supplies. It is planned for Pakistan to increase its Asian and European partnerships as part of diversifying its foreign policy. There is a long history and strong strategic link between Pakistan and Turkey (Goh, 2016). Increasing cooperation in defence and trading can help both countries advance. Being part of trade agreements and joining forces in projects in ASEAN economies is important for Pakistan as it helps access new markets and areas for cooperation. New economic chances can be created for Pakistan's textile sector with the help of the EU's GSP+ status.

- **Leveraging the Diaspora**

Pakistan's large diaspora living in the U.S., the UK, and the Middle East helps the country's public diplomacy efforts. Applying the sense of unity among the diaspora might help Pakistan raise its international visibility. A balance policy will ensure that Pakistan sits apart from the Sino-U.S. contest while still developing useful partnerships with both countries. As a result, the nation's interests are best served. Because of its neutral stance in world affairs, Pakistan could be viewed as a state that can help solve conflicts in its region. If Islamabad supports ways to settle conflicts peacefully, it will be seen as a more trusted regional actor.

- **Counterterrorism Efforts and Global Climate Agenda**

Having dealt with terrorism, Pakistan is valuable as a partner against terrorism and can strengthen security ties with China and the United States by providing training and sharing intelligence on terrorist groups. Pakistan must take the lead in some of the activities through the SCO and the OIC and be felt as a region stabilizing force through counterterrorism. U.S. and China have declared that climate action is an important element of their working relation. This is an opportunity that Pakistan can seize. With long term commitments, more investment can be

made in solar, wind and hydropower programs. Due to the increased rivalry between China and the U.S., now Pakistan can enjoy the economy, enhance relations with neighboring nations, and increase its presence in the international arena (Khan, 2014). Pakistan has a potential of expanding its position in the world provided it effectively utilizes its mainland, internationalize and maintain diversification of alliances with other countries. Nonetheless, Islamabad has to be on the frontline.

Conclusion

The competition between China and the U.S. and its result is one of the most significant changes in the contemporary world affairs, particularly disadvantageous in case of countries with difficult geostrategic problems, as is the case with Pakistan. Pakistan cannot afford to be caught between the two countries because they are very close allies of the United States and a significant source of Chinese partners. Everything alike, there are numerous advantages of the two partnerships; they have the same quantity of risks that may destroy the autonomy and sovereignty of Pakistan unless they are handled with accuracy. As the U.S-India alliance is evolving rapidly, Pakistan is great worried about the security and the influence it can have in the region.

The case of Pakistan is particularly delicate since the Indian army has become more powerful due to the US support and participation in the Quad resulting in the unceasing rivalry on the Kashmir border. Simultaneously, the rising relationship with China, which is emphasized by the CPEC, provides strategic interests of investment and technical assistance. In its turn, this special relationship is occasionally problematic, as people are concerned about the increasing debt and the impact that China may have on the Pakistani independence. Pakistan must be able to design its foreign policy in a manner that enhances the gains on both sides and minimize the risk of overreliance on either of the two sides. Pakistani economy is facing opportunities and challenges of Sino-U.S competition. The upgrading of infrastructure, energy, and technology by CPEC could have a significant impact on the economy of Pakistan and will provide a new way of trading with the local and far-off markets. Simultaneously, that the

international financial organizations, relying on the United States in particular, are forced to make concessions, Pakistan becomes increasingly fixed on the cheap borrowing overseas, which only makes it even more concentrated on it. A balance between Chinese economic interests is a delicate affair since it cannot give in to Chinese debt and at the same time creating a solid position with the West over the financial matters in challenging times.

It will be necessary for domestic economic control to improve, expand the variety of trade alliances, and change structures to overcome this complex situation. In addition, when political leaders are unstable and power institutions are weak in Pakistan, it makes it harder to create and carry out foreign policy decisions. Unstable and weak political control, common interruptions in government operations, and the inability to follow through on policies make it hard for Pakistan to face its challenges in the world and the region. Since fast decisions are required nowadays, Pakistan may come under more outside pressure because it struggles to create regularized governance and functioning structures. To strengthen political institutions and governance and promote policy dependability, Pakistan needs to become a credible and dependable nation in the world scenario.

Even so, Pakistan can make major progress in forming a more independent policy on world affairs during this Sino-U.S. competition. The country is placed so that it connects Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. It will support better links between regions, increased trade, and energy connections. Recent and planned developments of CPEC and increased trade with China and Central Asia offer Pakistan chances to improve its economy and enhance its influence in the region. Attention to its influence in the OIC and active membership in the SCO will allow Pakistan to continue growing as a regional leader. For this to take place, Pakistan has to concentrate on maintaining its stability at home, economic changes, and building good relations with other countries to deal with rising Sino-U.S. tensions. In sum, Pakistan has to carefully balance its foreign policy to take advantage of opportunities while reducing dangers from the Sino-U.S. competition. The problems are indeed great, but

the potential to boost Pakistan's geopolitics, economy, and relations with other countries is also enormous. When it strengthens its government, negotiates with a wider range of partners, and steps forward with its diplomacy, Pakistan can play a leading role in the area and beyond. Whether Pakistan can manage Sino-U.S. relations will greatly influence its part in the New World Order and its chances for peace, stability, and progress.

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