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The Practical Conditions and Paths for Xinjiang to Integrate into the Upgraded Version of CPEC under the New Development Pattern

Chen Ruihua ^{1,2}

¹ School of Economics, Nankai University, Tianjin, 300071

² China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Research Center, Kashi University, Kashi, Xinjiang, 844006

Abstract: As the flagship project of BRI in the post globalization era, CPEC has important strategic significance in responding to the profound changes unseen in a century and building a new development pattern. With the deepening of the joint construction of the Belt and Road, Xinjiang actively serves and integrates into the new development pattern, becoming a hub node for China to build a domestic and international dual cycle oriented to Europe and Asia. On the basis of explaining the achievements of the construction of CPEC, this paper focuses on the theme of high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC, analyzes the practical conditions for Xinjiang to integrate into the construction of the upgraded version of CPEC. From the perspectives of regional planning, industry integration, economic and trade cooperation, and knowledge sharing, it deeply discusses the paths for Xinjiang to integrate into the construction of the upgraded version of CPEC.

Keywords: New Development Pattern; Xinjiang; Upgraded Version of CPEC; Practical Condition; Path

The world has entered an era of equal emphasis on sea and land power, and the global economic and strategic security concept has been reshaped. As the geographical center of Asia and the hinterland of the Eurasian continent, the economic and strategic value of Xinjiang is important, which has been extensively elaborated by scholars such as Halford John Mackinder and Karl Haushofer^[1]. With the deepening of the joint construction of the Belt and Road, Xinjiang is no longer a remote area but a core area and a hub area, which is largely a response to the global situation change. As the intersection of the world's four major civilizations, three major language families, and three major religions, Xinjiang is an important window for China's opening-up to the outside world and a witness of China's prosperity and strength. At present, global geopolitical strategies and political struggles are exerting enormous pressure on the high-quality development of Xinjiang, and bringing unprecedented opportunities for the rise of emerging markets on the Eurasian continent. China is accelerating the construction of a new development pattern with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations mutually promoting each other. In the future, China urgently needs to drive the rise of emerging markets in Asia and Europe with the great achievements of high-quality development in Xinjiang. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the construction of the upgraded version of CPEC under the new development pattern, as well as how Xinjiang can integrate into the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC.

1. The construction of CPEC empowers the integrated development of regional economy and society

CPEC is a landmark project and an important pilot project of BRI, and has important strategic value and practical significance. After more than ten years of construction, CPEC has achieved an early harvest goal, will continue to release the huge potential of the corridor, and make it a landmark project that benefits the regional economic and social development. At present, CPEC has surpassed economic concepts and its functions have gradually radiated to the regional strategies, political mutual trust, economic construction, cultural exchanges, and other aspects, with higher political, economic, and social value.

1.1 CPEC cultivates endogenous driving force for the China-Pakistan community with a shared future

CPEC is a mutually beneficial and win-win economic corridor, as well as a cultural corridor to learn from each other. It is also a strategic corridor that is interdependent and closely linked. The economic development of China and

¹ MACKINDER H J. The Scope and Methods of Geography and the Geographical Pivot of History [M] . London: The Royal Geographical Society, 1951.

Pakistan is highly complementary, with enormous potential and space for cooperation. For a long time, Pakistan has had backward infrastructure, imbalanced industrial structure, slow economic growth, coupled with domestic political and religious disputes, and the continued presence of terrorist forces, resulting in a poor economic development environment, high unemployment rates, and difficult livelihoods. It urgently needs new economic vitality to change the economic downturn. CPEC has changed Pakistan's backward infrastructure, driven the development of industries such as agriculture, fisheries, textiles, and construction, and provided a lot of job opportunities. The construction of CPEC also provides a solution for China to achieve the transformation of driving forces, solve the problem of overcapacity, promote higher quality, more efficient, more fair, more sustainable, and safer development in China, and provide convenient conditions for achieving international and domestic dual circulation^[2]. CPEC has comprehensively docked and optimized the economic cooperation between China and Pakistan, formed a "1+4" cooperation layout focusing on Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure construction, and industrial cooperation, brought tangible benefits to the two peoples, and laid a solid foundation for Pakistan's economic and social development. More importantly, CPEC cultivates endogenous power for the China-Pakistan community with a shared future^[3].

1.2 CPEC provides sustained vitality for Pakistan and regional economic integration

The first phase of CPEC focuses on the construction of energy and transportation infrastructure in Pakistan, driving the development of economically underdeveloped areas and enabling them to enter the fast lane of rapid economic development. It has brought Pakistan \$25.4 billion in direct investment, accumulated revenue of \$17.55 billion, paid taxes of \$2.12 billion, created 192000 job opportunities, completed or under construction 46 projects, added 6040 megawatts of electricity, 886 kilometers of national trunk transmission lines and 1800 kilometers of highways. The bilateral trade volume between China and Pakistan has jumped from \$17 billion in 2014 to \$27.8 billion in 2021, accelerating its industrialization process and promoting commercial trade and economic development^[4]. At present, CPEC has entered its second phase of construction and is helping Pakistan achieve a transition towards modern agriculture and industrialization. A more positive impact is that the regional radiation effect of CPEC is gradually emerging, with more countries including Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan expressing their desire to join the construction of the corridor and investing heavily in projects such as Gwadar Port's oil refining and infrastructure, playing a positive role in promoting regional economic integration and coordinated development. In the future, the upgraded version of CPEC is becoming a landmark project that benefits the economic and social development of Central Asia, South Asia, and West Asia.

1.3 CPEC has become a new engine for promoting regional economic development

CPEC not only aims to promote the common development of China and Pakistan, but also is committed to building a regional community of common destiny, providing new opportunities for building a regional cooperation system in Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia. In recent years, China's economy has entered a stage of high-quality development, with a stronger domestic market, a more reasonable supply and demand structure. This has created more favorable conditions for building a mutually beneficial industrial and supply chain cooperation system and deepening international production capacity cooperation based on CPEC. The second phase of CPEC, also known as the high-quality development phase, focuses on industrialization, agricultural modernization, information technology, and technological cooperation, and prioritizes the development of special economic zones. It provides global investors with preferential policies such as a ten-year tax exemption period, zero import tariffs on factories and equipment, and 100% profit repatriation, fully unleashing the dividends of the first phase of corridor construction^[5]. Pakistan is located at an important node on the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, tightly grasping the key to the Indian Ocean. Its geographical advantages are very prominent. The construction of CPEC has created favorable conditions for strengthening Pakistan's connections with Central Asia, South Asia, ASEAN, the Middle East, and the African Union, and achieving regional integration. In the future, CPEC will attract global investors to join in cooperation and provide new momentum for promoting regional economic integration and development.

[2] Zhang Liwei. The Foundation and Challenges of CPEC Construction in the Context of BRI [J]. Reform and Strategy, 2016 (10): 160-164.

[3] Wang Peng. "Hedging" and "Wedge": The Intrinsic Logic of the US Indo Pacific Strategy: A Neoclassical Realist Perspective [J]. Contemporary Asia Pacific, 2018 (3): 4-52, 157-158.

[4] The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Ambassador Nong Rong, the exclusive interview with Pakistani media on the 10th meeting of CPEC Joint Committee (2021-09-25) . http://pk.china-embassy.gov.cn/zb/gx/zbjzl/202109/t20210926_9558448.htm

[5] Gao Zhigang, Tian Feng. Study on the Impact of Trade Facilitation Level on the Efficiency of China Pakistan Export Trade under the Background of CPEC [J]. South Asian Studies, 2019 (2): 136-156, 160.

1.4 CPEC has become a cornerstone for maintaining regional and global security and development

Currently, the US Indo Pacific strategy, the competitive relationship between China and India, and Pakistan's strategic dilemma determine that CPEC is a key to solving political, economic, and social issues in the region, especially in Pakistan. It is also a cornerstone for maintaining regional and global security and development. The strong implementation of NATO's eastward expansion plan has caused tension in the Asia-Pacific and Europe, and the Maritime Silk Road and the northern Silk Road Economic Belt project represented by the China Europe freight train have been boycotted^[6]. Both China and Pakistan face the historical responsibility of national development and national rejuvenation, and have consistency in safeguarding regional development and security interests. For China, Pakistan is still an important bridge for communication, dialogue, and mutually beneficial cooperation with Islamic countries, and has also become an important link in building a regional community with a shared future. Guided by CPEC, China and Pakistan jointly promote the deepening of the all-weather strategic partnership, build a closer China Pakistan community with a shared future, effectively integrate the resources and strength of Asian, African and European countries, and echo the construction of the Asia Europe community with a shared future along the northern route of the Silk Road Economic Belt. This provides strong support for responding to unprecedented changes, resolving the strategic blockade of the Western world, and promoting regional security and development.

1.5 The upgraded version of CPEC is a powerful driving force for the economic and social development of Xinjiang

The upgraded version of CPEC is a comprehensive economic cooperation solution that includes regional connectivity, information network infrastructure, energy cooperation, industries and industrial parks, agricultural development, poverty alleviation, tourism, financial cooperation, and improvement of people's livelihoods. It will create more development opportunities and promote the sustainable development of Xinjiang and Pakistan. Pakistan looks forward to further enhancing its national development planning capabilities during the high-quality development stage of the upgraded version of CPEC, accelerating the development of underdeveloped regions, creating more job opportunities through industrial cooperation, and strengthening the sustainable development of trade, logistics, and economic cooperation. The economic and social development of Xinjiang also faces practical needs such as industrial upgrading, capacity transfer, rural revitalization, and high-quality employment^[7]. The opportunities in Pakistan are also opportunities in Xinjiang. Meeting Pakistan's needs will inject strong impetus into Xinjiang's economic and social development and opening-up to the outside world. Currently, Xinjiang is taking the construction of "one port", "two zones" and "port economic belt" as the main body, and is deeply promoting the construction of the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt. With the construction of CPEC, cooperation between China and Pakistan in energy, trade, infrastructure, logistics and other fields will stimulate Xinjiang's advantages and development potential in geographical location, natural resources, talent and technology, policy communication, technological innovation and other aspects. Through economic cooperation, it will generate adaptability to an outward oriented economy, realize the transformation from economic development potential to economic development strength, gradually form an outward oriented economic development model, and lay a solid foundation for Xinjiang to build an open economy^[8].

2. The Practical Conditions for Xinjiang's integration into the upgraded version of CPEC

Xinjiang has been located at the hinterland of the Eurasian continent and was a necessary passage on the ancient Silk Road for thousands of years. Now, Xinjiang's hub position as the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt is increasingly evident, relying on the modern three-dimensional transportation network system and the strength of economic and cultural radiation.

2.1 Time, location, and people are important guarantees for Xinjiang's integration into the upgraded version of CPEC

Xinjiang's participation in the construction of CPEC has the advantages of favorable timing, location, and people. Firstly, CPEC is a pilot project and landmark project of BRI. Xinjiang's opening-up and development have been highly recognized at home and abroad, providing a strong guarantee for Xinjiang to promote the upgraded version of CPEC.

^[6] U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE. A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision [EB/OL]. (2019-11-03). <https://www.state.gov/a-free-and-open-indo-pacific-advancing-a-shared-vision>.

^[7] Cheng Yunjie, Jiang Ruirui. Research on the complementarity and competitiveness of commodity trade between China and Pakistan: based on the perspective of the construction of CPEC [J]. Journal of Xinjiang University, 2017 (3): 1-8.

^[8] He Wenzheng. Opportunities and challenges for Xinjiang's economic development in the context of BRI [J]. China Business Review, 2019 (21): 174-175

Secondly, the geographical advantage refers to Xinjiang's unique location advantage and important role as a window for opening-up to the west, comprehensively launching the construction of port economic belts, and building an open economic system in all aspects. Xinjiang's participation in the construction of CPEC has unparalleled geographical advantages. Finally, the harmony between people refers to the cultural affinity and similarities in customs between Xinjiang and neighboring countries. Cultural integration is easy to achieve conceptual consensus and has the cultural advantage of integrating into the upgraded version of CPEC.

2.2 Xinjiang has strong economic complementarity with Pakistan and excellent industrial advantages

Due to differences in development stages and resource endowments, Xinjiang's industrial structure and layout have strong complementarity with Pakistan^[9]. Taking the cotton industry as an example, Pakistan's cotton industry is a pillar industry for its export earnings. The cotton production of Pakistan is high and the quality is good, but the processing level is relatively low. If Pakistani cotton is transported to Kashi of Xinjiang, it not only solves the problem of Pakistan's exports and the trade imbalance between China and Pakistan, but also provides new development momentum for the textile and clothing industry in Kashi. In addition, the construction plan of Kashi Economic Development Zone can be involved with Pakistan's industrial parks, especially the Gwadar Port Free Trade Zone, to fully activate international and domestic resources. After peace and stability, Pakistan is in dire need of support from China, which has the most complete range of industries and the most complete industrial system in the world, in terms of funding, technology, and management. This is not only beneficial for promoting Pakistan's agricultural modernization and industrialization process, but also for China's capacity output and industrial upgrading, accelerating the construction of a new pattern of Xinjiang's all-round, multi-level, and wide-ranging opening-up to the outside world.

2.3 The infrastructure supporting facilities in Xinjiang are preparing for the integration with the upgraded version of CPEC

In recent years, Xinjiang has focused on the construction of the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt, and has made hardware preparations to connect with the upgraded version of CPEC. At present, major transportation projects such as Urumqi International Land Port Area, Kashi Airport expansion and renovation, Tashkurgan Airport construction, Karakoram Highway upgrade and renovation, G314 line Kashi transit section road construction, and Aksu-Kashi railway speed increase and expansion renovation are starting construction one after another. Key projects such as Urumqi-Kashi high-speed railway and China-Pakistan railway are intensifying preparations. Based on the construction of the port economic belt, Xinjiang has strengthened the construction of supporting facilities such as the Kashi Comprehensive Bonded Zone, and Kashi Airport, improved the functions of the China Pakistan Border Trade Zone, promoted the construction of the China Pakistan Tashkurgan Border Economic Cooperation Zone, and actively applied for the establishment of the China (Kashi) Cross border E-commerce Comprehensive Pilot Zone, Border Tourism Pilot Zone, and Cross border Tourism Cooperation Zone. Xinjiang's positive actions in infrastructure support have fully prepared for the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC and the connectivity between China and Pakistan.

2.4 Xinjiang and Pakistan have a long history of exchanges and a natural foundation for cooperation

From 1966 to 1978, China assisted in the construction of the Karakoram Highway, writing a new chapter in friendly exchanges and cooperation between China and Pakistan. In 1967, China and Pakistan signed a border trade agreement on Kashi of China and Gilgit of Pakistan, contributing to the improvement of trade between China and Pakistan. Since the launch of CPEC, Xinjiang has attached great importance to and promoted the construction of the corridor. Enterprises from both China and Pakistan have actively participated in project bidding and achieved significant results. Xinjiang's enterprises such as COSCO Shipping and TBEA actively participated in the construction of CPEC, showcasing the charm of Xinjiang enterprises in Pakistan. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19, the governments and people of the two countries have firmly supported each other in the fight against the epidemic. Xinjiang has repeatedly sent medical expert teams and delivered epidemic prevention materials and vaccines to Pakistan through airport and dry ports, and has been even more helpful in the post disaster reconstruction of floods and earthquakes in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Long term mutually beneficial cooperation and mutual assistance between the two countries have laid a solid and effective foundation for cooperation.

3. Xinjiang's role in the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC

^[9] Kong Dejin Opportunities and challenges for Xinjiang's economic development under the vision of the "the Belt and Road". Economic Research Guide, 2018 (9): 71-72.

Now, China is trying to build a new development pattern with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations mutually promoting each other. With the deepening of China's opening-up, the development of the western region, and the joint construction of the Belt and Road, Xinjiang has become the forefront of opening-up, creating more sufficient conditions to deepen international production capacity cooperation, build a mutually beneficial and win-win industrial chain supply chain cooperation system, and build a fair and shared cooperation mechanism relying on the Silk Road Economic Belt^[10]. In the future, Xinjiang should identify the opportunity to integrate into the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC, and serve the construction of the Belt and Road and the opening-up to the west.

3.1 Xinjiang is clarifying the historical responsibility of the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt and fully integrate it into the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC

Xinjiang has become a hub node for China to build a domestic and international dual circulation oriented towards Eurasia under the new development pattern of "dual circulation". Xinjiang should fully understand its historical responsibility in the high-quality development of the "the Belt and Road" and the upgraded version of CPEC, and accelerate the high-quality development. Specifically, Xinjiang needs to deeply implement the new development concept, construct a new development pattern, seize the historic opportunities of upgrading traditional industries, transferring eastern industries, developing emerging strategic industries, and modern service industries in China, develop supporting industrial and supply chains that are suitable for the market demands of Central Asia, West Asia, and South Asia, and try to promote the large-scale industries, logistics, and tourism.

3.2 Xinjiang is promoting the construction of the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt, consolidate the foundation of China Pakistan economic and trade cooperation and opening-up to the west

Firstly, Xinjiang is establishing a cooperation dialogue mechanism between Xinjiang and Pakistan. Local governments and relevant enterprises from both sides will participate in regular meetings to discuss cooperation matters. The second measure is to leverage Xinjiang's agricultural advantages and its role as a relay station and key node for China's agricultural product import and export, support the China Europe freight trains to transport more Xinjiang agricultural products to the international market, and encourage enterprises to fully utilize international exhibitions such as the Asia Europe Expo to promote and sell Xinjiang's characteristic agricultural products, agricultural technology, agricultural machinery and equipment. The third measure is to fully leverage the role of friendly cities between Xinjiang and neighboring countries in people-to-people diplomacy and the decisive role of market resource allocation, promote people to people exchanges and commercial, cultural and tourism exchanges, and lay a solid foundation for China Pakistan economic and trade cooperation and opening-up to the west.

3.3 Xinjiang is implementing the overall deployment of opening-up to the outside world and deeply participate in the construction of CPEC

Firstly, Xinjiang is striving for the support in terms of policies, talents, and funds, and to strengthen the Kashi Economic Development Zone, Comprehensive Bonded Zone, and other carriers of opening-up to the outside world, deepen the reform of port clearance management system, and cultivate new advantages of opening-up and cooperation. Secondly, Xinjiang should establish a good cooperation platform for industrial parks, explore the construction of China-Pakistan International Border Cooperation Center in Khunjerab Pass, and establish China-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Tajikistan International Economic Cooperation Zone in Wakhan Corridor. Through cooperation in industrial park construction, industrial park chain of CPEC and China-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Tajikistan interconnection will be formed. Thirdly, Xinjiang should actively coordinate with the preparation work of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway, promote the preliminary work of the China-Pakistan Railway, China-Pakistan Oil and Gas Pipeline, and China-Pakistan Power Transmission Line, improve infrastructure and multimodal transport mechanisms, and strive to build Kashi into an important node and commercial logistics center of China's diversified and three-dimensional transportation network with neighboring countries.

3.4 Xinjiang is strengthening civil communication and regional country studies, promote the establishment of talent cultivation and information sharing mechanisms

[10] National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce. Vision and Actions to Promote the Co construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road [EB/OL] . (2015-03-29) . <http://hr.mofcom.gov.cn/article/ztdy/201503/20150300925993.shtml>

Xinjiang is mobilizing resources from the government, universities, and civil organizations to jointly promote the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC and the connectivity between China and Pakistan. Firstly, Xinjiang should strengthen exchanges and cooperation around public opinion communication, people to people friendship, and industrial cooperation, promote people to people diplomacy and foreign aid, and enhance the comprehensive service capabilities of cities along the corridor. Secondly, Xinjiang should attract well-known domestic universities to establish a presence in Xinjiang, cultivate high-level talents who are useful, able to stay and do well for the economic and social development of Xinjiang, and attract international students from all over the world to study and engage in cultural exchanges in Xinjiang in order to reserve talents for the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC and the interconnection between China and Pakistan. Finally, the comprehensive research, economic research, and thematic research on Pakistan, Central Asia, South Asia, and West Asia is very important. Xinjiang is establishing academic information network platforms and information sharing mechanisms, creating a new type of think tank that promotes the high-quality development of the upgraded version of CPEC.

4. Conclusion

At present, the world is experiencing great changes not seen in a century. BRI is an important option to promote global stability and development, and China is the most stable and powerful leading force. Giving full play to the great wisdom and strength of the Chinese nation and unswervingly promoting the high-quality development of the Belt and Road and the upgraded version of CPEC are strategic arrangements to deal with major changes. In response to changes in the global and Eurasian situation, consolidating cooperation between China and neighboring countries, and building an upgraded version of CPEC, is an inevitable choice for establishing more convenient land connections between China and the Middle East and Europe, as well as emerging economies on the Eurasian continent. With the deepening of the joint construction of the Belt and Road, Xinjiang actively serves and integrates into the new development pattern, becoming a hub node for China to build a domestic and international dual cycle oriented to Europe and Asia. Under the new development pattern, building an upgraded version of CPEC will undoubtedly bring vitality and vigor to the economic and social development of Xinjiang, and will also contribute to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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