China and WTO Review
2025, 11(2), 25-39
ISSN: 2384-4388
https://cwto.net
Review

The Indian Concern on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Justification from the Perspective of International Law

Hafiz Usman Ghani [1*], Xiangqian Gong [2], Aftab Haider [3], Asif Khan [4*]

[1] PhD Law Scholar, School of Law, Beijing Institute of Techhnology, Beijing, China
[2] Associate Professor, School of Law, Beijing Institute of Technology, Beijing, China
[3] PhD Law Scholar, School of International Law, Southwest University of Political Sience and Law, Chongqing, China
[4] Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of law, Hainan University, Haikou, China
* **Corresponding Author:** usmantabish3551@gmail.com

Citation: Ghani, H. U., Gong, X., Haider, A., & Khan, A. (2025). The Indian concern on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and justification from the perspective of international law. *China and WTO Review, 11*(2), 25-39.
https://doi.org/10.52152/cwr.2025.11.2.03

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 03 Jul 2025
Accepted: 01 Sept 2025

ABSTRACT

This article takes a close look at the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), exploring its importance from legal, political, and economic angles. It fills an important gap by combining these different perspectives to better understand the challenges and benefits of CPEC, especially because it passes through the disputed Kashmir region. Using a mix of legal analysis, examples from similar international cases, and data on trade and economic impact, the study digs into India's claims over the territory and how countries like the UN, EU, and US are reacting to the project. The main goals are to examine the legal arguments for and against CPEC, see how the international community is responding, and assess how the corridor affects trade and diplomacy in the region. The findings show that while CPEC could bring big economic gains to China and Pakistan, it also raises political tensions because of unresolved border disputes and gaps in international law. The article points out how tricky it is to balance economic development with respect for countries' sovereignty and international rules. What makes this article unique is how it connects legal ideas with real-world politics and data, stressing the need for transparent management and open discussions between all parties involved. It offers useful insights for policymakers, legal experts, and anyone interested in the region, highlighting the importance of diplomacy and international law to help CPEC move forward smoothly and peacefully. In short, it shows that projects like CPEC require thoughtful approaches that consider legal, economic, and political issues all at once.

Keywords: International Law, China's Trade Policy, CPEC, Indian Agenda, International Communities.

INTRODUCTION

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) ranks among the biggest and most important initiatives of this century (Sadiq & Haider, 2024). The main point of the project is to connect a deep-water port in Gwadar, Pakistan, to China's western region of Xinjiang, allowing trade routes to become available between China, Central Asia, and more countries. Roads, railways, and energy pipelines are being built in the project, along with special economic zones and a variety of industries. Thanks to an investment of $60 billion, CPEC will significantly improve the regional economies, mostly the economies of Pakistan and China (McCartney, 2022). For Pakistan, the project will address its key economic issues, such as energy issues and a lack of infrastructure, and for China, it will ensure a quicker way to access the Arabian Sea and enhance the BRI (Anwar & Atif, 2025). There has been major opposition to the project, largely from the government and people of India. India is concerned about the CPEC, saying that it magnifies a set of political, territorial, and legal issues. The primary concern for India is that the route through Gilgit-Baltistan lies in the larger context of the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan. According to India, the area belongs to it, and allowing CPEC to use it infringes on India's sovereignt (Khan & Khalid, 2018). As a result, many people are questioning whether CPEC is acceptable under international law based on issues of

Ghani, H. U. et al. / *CWR*, 11(2), 25-39

sovereignty and customs.

This study focuses on research questions that require detailed attention and analysis. The first part of the question looks at whether the CPEC passing over disputed territory is contrary to international law. International law recognizes norms about territorial integrity, sovereignty, and the ability of states to carry out their trade and development activities on their land. Because the CPEC is built in a region claimed by India, there is concern about whether this project could be argued to infringe Indian laws at the international level. The question about Kashmir discusses the dispute and its implications for the legality of CPEC. According to international law, is the continuing conflict in Kashmir a problem for the CPEC project, given that India justifies its stance on Kashmir through various international treaties and UN resolutions?

This article will analyze India's objections to CPEC using the framework of international law. To understand if CPEC remains legal despite India's opposition, the paper reviews the rules of international law and what is allowed under India's laws in cases of territorial disputes, control of lands, and joint infrastructure projects. In addition, the study considers whether the CPEC is justified as part of international trade law, paying attention to the effects of the Kashmir issue within geopolitics. This paper looks into the arguments presented by India in court and also assesses how international law has addressed similar cases internationally.

OVERVIEW OF CPEC

The CPEC aims to transform the economies of Pakistan and China and has regional effects as well (Fazal et al., 2023). It includes many plans like improving infrastructure, power supplies, and industrial regions to strengthen regional economies, ensure steady energy, and support regional trade. By joining CPEC, Pakistan will see its economy grow strongly, while China will get a new trade route to the Arabian Sea and connect its economy with Central Asia (L. Ahmad et al., 2025).

Key Components of CPEC

CPEC places significant focus on developing the transportation sector (Sadiq & Haider, 2024). The construction and improvement of roads, railways, and seaports will allow for more economic and smoother trade among China, Pakistan, and Central Asia. One of the primary tasks is building the road that will expand the Karakoram Highway, used for both trade and transportation. As well as connecting Pakistan with China, this highway will create a safer and more efficient option for trade between these two countries. Building the Gwadar East Bay Expressway will help the Gwadar region by linking it to other parts of the country's road system. In addition, the finished Matiari–Lahore ±660 kV HVDC transmission line under CPEC will contribute to the easy transfer of electricity across Pakistan. Infrastructure works are expected to cut transport time by around half and save up to 40% on related costs. As a result, Pakistan's competitiveness in trading with other countries is projected to rise (Sadiq & Haider, 2024).

Addressing Pakistan's energy shortage is another key goal of CPEC, which has received a total investment of $35 billion for related projects (Khurshid et al., 2018). There are many types of energy projects, including those using coal, as well as those based on solar and wind energy. The projects should contribute a total of more than 6,000 MW of electricity to the national grid. As a result, energy shortages that have impeded Pakistan's progress will be less severe. According to recent reports, the CPEC efforts will increase energy growth from 4.5% (1990–2015) to 14.6% (2016–2035). The capacity growth will increase from 4.9% to 12.3% during 2016–2035 (Duan et al., 2022). Finishing these energy projects is necessary for Pakistan, as previous energy problems caused the country's economy to suffer and its industrial growth to shrink.

CPEC, in addition to infrastructure and energy, focuses on creating Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to help drive industrial progress, attract investors from abroad, and generate jobs for people. Up to nine SEZs are planned in Pakistan, and the Rashakai SEZ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is considered one of the most important (L. Ahmad et al., 2025). These areas will use tax cuts and lower tariffs to attract both businesses and investors, benefiting companies from other countries as well as those in the UAE. As these SEZs are developed under the CPEC project by 2025, it is expected to create around 200,000 jobs, with even higher numbers anticipated as more zones are launched. CPEC is predicted to boost Pakistan's GDP growth by increasing the country's annual output by nearly 2.5% (Butt, 2023).

CPEC's Strategic and Economic Importance

Both countries value CPEC greatly for its economic and strategic importance. By using the corridor, China can send goods to the Arabian Sea much faster and more directly. For China, this is an important advance as it lets them avoid using the already crowded and vulnerable Malacca Strait for energy transportation. One reason why CPEC matters to China is that it is estimated to save the country about $2 billion every year in transport costs

(McCartney, 2021). This route will also be essential for BRI, as it will link China more closely with Central Asia and the Middle East, which could increase its influence there. CPEC allows Pakistan to work on some of its main economic challenges. CPEC promises to quickly tackle Pakistan's problem of insufficient energy. Having the power and energy infrastructure set up through CPEC is likely to increase the country's energy production greatly, cutting the frequent electricity outages that have affected many businesses and homes. Introducing over 6,000 MW to the grid will support a reliable supply of power to industrial areas like Lahore and Karachi, which play a major role in the country's manufacturing sector. In addition, by upgrading its infrastructure, CPEC will make exports from Pakistan more affordable and faster to reach the world. Analysts say that CPEC will raise Pakistan's GDP by 2.5% every year and open up jobs for around 200,000 people in both industrial and service areas. CPEC is predicted to contribute around $1.5 billion each year to the growth of Pakistan's economy. Over 10 years, it is hoped that CPEC will boost Pakistan's economy by roughly $60 billion, due to the direct benefits of the project and its indirect effects as well. An increase in industry, energy, and development of vital infrastructure is expected, while increased influence on trade, foreign investment, and regional links will also result from CPEC (Butt, 2023).

Political and Regional Implications

CPEC greatly impacts the region's politics, especially when it comes to how India views security. India is concerned about the route of the project, especially since Gilgit-Baltistan lies in an area claimed by India as part of Kashmir. India is concerned that Pakistan will gain recognition from a possible agreement for its control over Gilgit-Baltistan, which will threaten India's claim to the region. India sees the CPEC as demonstrating China's increasing influence in South Asia and fears that this could shift the region's power closer to China and Pakistan, leaving India alone (Khan, 2019). India has also brought up these issues regarding CPEC at various United Nations forums. Furthermore, some projects in Balochistan, where CPEC is underway, have been the subject of many security concerns. These separatists have attacked CPEC projects before, saying they worry about the local population not receiving any benefits and about the resources from the region being exploited. As a result, people are asking if regional instability will affect the sustainability of CPEC. While Pakistan works hard to secure the CPEC projects, the frequent security issues are making it difficult to allow CPEC to reach its full potential (Abid & Ashfaq, 2015).

Since China will be more visible in South Asia, CPEC may improve, rather than reduce, the stability of the region. Experts believe this is one example of China's efforts to increase its power in the Indo-Pacific region (Panda, 2021a). For India, China's increasing involvement in regional matters and its support for nearby countries through the BRI concern the country. Therefore, while CPEC holds great economic promise for Pakistan, it is also a source of significant geopolitical friction in South Asia.

THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE ON CPEC

India views the CPEC from a mixed perspective, considering matters like politics, economics, and law, due to their long history of disagreement about Kashmir. Most of India's objections to CPEC are because of concerns over its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the effects of China's rise in South Asia (Shah et al., 2020). We must look into these concerns from political and legal points of view to grasp India's position.

Political and Economic Issues in India

Most of India objections to CPEC revolve around its disagreement over who governs the Kashmir region, especially the disputed area of Gilgit-Baltistan (Shah et al., 2020). India believes Gilgit-Baltistan belongs to the Jammu and Kashmir state, so seeing CPEC or similar projects within this region is a breach of their territorial integrity. India considers Pakistan's hold over Gilgit-Baltistan to be unlawful, as it believes it was a part of Jammu and Kashmir that should have been deeded to India at the same time as the partition. For India, CPEC is significant for reasons that go beyond its land borders. Having the route of CPEC pass through Gilgit-Baltistan benefits Pakistan's infrastructure and helps China increase its influence in South Asia. The construction of this corridor is seen by India as strengthening China's influence in the area, which could change the security balance in the region. India believes that CPEC is a plan by China to increase its reach in South Asia, possibly at India's cost (Shah et al., 2020). Allies in the CPEC project, China and Pakistan, work together more closely, which worsens the tension between India and Pakistan. India believes that a close China-Pakistan partnership as a result of CPEC could make India more isolated in the region.

Regarding trade routes, India is concerned that CPEC could let China have greater influence over them, especially because it has a direct link to the Arabian Sea's Gwadar port in Pakistan (Shah et al., 2020). Since India trades widely in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, it regards the building of the Chinese port near Gwadar as a serious threat to its position in the region. India sees this as an example of China's “string of pearls” strategy, where China builds important infrastructure along the Indian Ocean to support its trade and add military strength

(Khurana, 2008).

Legal and Diplomatic Arguments

India strongly feels that ongoing disputes over the region of Gilgit-Baltistan, under Jammu and Kashmir, allow it to oppose CPEC. India believes that following the path of CPEC through the disputed region is illegal, as it goes against international rules regarding territorial integrity. According to India, under the UN Charter and international law, all parties involved must agree before any state alters the status of territories in dispute (Haider et al., 2024). India believes that letting CPEC go through Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region with China's help will unilaterally change the situation in the region and threaten India's claimed territory. India usually cites UNSC Resolution 47 of 1948, which proposes a referendum to decide the fate of Jammu and Kashmir (Akhtar, 2023). India believes that by constructing CPEC on territories in Kashmir over which both nations claim, the resolution is not being adhered to. India believes this goes against its sovereignty and against the international norms established for handling disputes over territorial control. India further claims that other international agreements and conventions are now being disregarded by CPEC. In addition, India highlights the principle found in the UN Charter that nations should not meddle in other countries' affairs. India points out that the infrastructure development by Pakistan in territory it believes is theirs is a breach of India's sovereignty and this principle. India further argues that India should have been part of the talks about any project related to the Kashmir region.

Moreover, India has regularly spoken out against Pakistan and China at the UN and used diplomatic ties to express its objections. India states that CPEC, as it stands now, runs against international law, specifically the disputed Kashmir question within the Shimla Agreement of 1972 framework. According to the Shimla Agreement, the Jammu and Kashmir issue must be addressed through talks between India and Pakistan without any participation from third parties (Rahman et al., 2021). Hence, India believes that China's participation in CPEC breaches the bilateral agreement. In the diplomatic sector, India wants to separate the project internationally and gather help from other countries and international groups to resist CPEC.

INTERNATIONAL LAW FRAMEWORK

Many scholars and experts are questioning whether the CPEC aligns with international law and does not harm the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and infrastructure of other nations (Afzal & Mushtaq, n.d.). The problems are more apparent when thinking about Kashmir and where the CPEC will travel through unsettled areas. To analyze these matters, we must examine the standard rules of international law for these projects, the legal problems posed by disputed land, and the applicable international treaties and UN resolutions.

General Principles of International Law Applicable to CPEC

An essential part of international law is ensuring that each country's sovereignty and unbroken borders are respected. Article 2(4) of the Charter reminds us that the use or threat of force to influence any country's independence or sovereignty is not allowed (Ruys, 2014). Since the CPEC passes through Gilgit-Baltistan, an area claimed by both Pakistan and China but governed by Pakistan, people are wondering if these two countries are crossing India's border in that region. India believes that laying the CPEC road through Gilgit-Baltistan is illegitimate because it claims the territory belongs to its Jammu and Kashmir state. According to the Principle of Sovereignty, only the state can govern its territory, and any changes from outsiders require the permission of the state (Biersteker, 2013). In general, international trade law encourages the building of infrastructure projects that span countries to support trade, create more economic alliances, and enhance regional progress. The World Trade Organization (WTO) values infrastructure projects that lead to economic progress (Baldwin, 2016). Regardless, the practice of these projects in places where borders are disputed relies on respect for each nation's sovereignty and territory. Since the WTO does not address disputed territories, the question arises whether India views CPEC as violating its territorial claims, even though it could support better regional trading links.

International Law on Disputed Territories

When a project goes through a disputed area, international law provides specific instructions on how to handle the situation. Conduct in a contested land that changes the existing situation should be agreed upon by both sides, as the ICJ declares. The 2004 Advisory Opinion by the ICJ looks at the effects of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The judgment stated that projects in areas in dispute, when they change either the structure or the legal situation, should only be approved by all parties who have an existing claim to the territory (Bradley, 2005). CPEC does not include India because it was not involved in the agreement that the Chinese and Pakistanis reached, and India did not want any projects in Gilgit-Baltistan. According to India, the construction of CPEC that does not involve India in its territory is against established international conventions. Article 1,[International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171, art 1. of the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) specifically states that people ought to be free to decide their political future and should be able to follow their cultural, social, and economic interests. According to India, any proposal that harms the political situation of the region and allows Pakistani authority there goes against the main rule of international law.

UN Resolutions and Declarations

The UN has been involved in the Kashmir problem, especially by issuing resolutions intended to stop the clash between India and Pakistan. According to UNSC Resolution 47 (1948), a referendum should be conducted in Jammu and Kashmir to decide on the area's political stance (Ashraf, 2002). It stresses that for Kashmir to join India or Pakistan, the people of Kashmir must be allowed to vote freely and fairly under the UN's supervision. Using this resolution, India's legal side disputes Pakistan's construction of infrastructure in the disputed region as a legal violation. India believes that by including Gilgit-Baltistan in CPEC, the UNSC resolution has been undermined as India regards Gilgit-Baltistan as part of Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, UN Resolution 38 (1960) involved in the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan also complicates the matter (Cornell, 2022). Although IWT is a treaty between India and Pakistan, CPEC is a project in which China also takes part. India fears that China's work on CPEC projects, mainly in infrastructure and through its leadership, could conflict with the Indus Waters Treaty which determines how water resources are shared between the two nations.

Treaties and Agreements Involving India, Pakistan, and China

There are a number of treaties and agreements that include India, Pakistan and China and affect CPEC. The Indus Water Treaty (1960) is one of the most vital examples, since it outlines how India and Pakistan share the water coming from the Indus River. According to the treaty, water rights are carefully distributed between the two nations, but since CPEC's infrastructure is being built near the disputed areas, individuals are worried that China's wider influence on Pakistan may cause difficulties with accessing water. India and Pakistan have also concluded various bilateral deals to lessen their conflicts and cooperate, including the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration. They aim to support negotiations for peace and to respect the borders of each country. At the same time, building CPEC in areas claimed by India puts the agreements in difficulty. India is concerned that CPEC prevents any meaningful dialogue and harms the peace process since the third-party (China) participates without participating in Kashmir talks.

KASHMIR ISSUE AND ITS IMPACT ON CPEC

India and Pakistan have remained at odds over Kashmir since the partition of British India in 1947. It is considered one of the longest-lasting disputes over land in modern history and any project that runs through the area is strongly affected. By going through Gilgit-Baltistan which India claims as part of its territory, CPEC increases the struggling legal and political matters of the Kashmir dispute. For India, CPEC is regarded as a breach of its borders and a challenge to its rules, as well as an economic development project. We must also consider the past events leading to the disagreement, the direct legal effects on CPEC and the approach the international community takes towards the matter.

Historical Context of the Kashmir Dispute

When British India was split into India and Pakistan in 1947, the conflict over Kashmir began. The state of Jammu and Kashmir which was mainly Muslim, was told that it could become part of India or Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh first opted for independence, but following an invasion by Pakistani tribes in October 1947, he chose to access India through the Instrument of Accession (Snedden, 2021). After the India-Pakistan war of 1947-1948, the United Nations negotiated a joint ceasefire, resulting in the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC) that divided Kashmir between India (Jammu and Kashmir) and Pakistan (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan) (Bouzas, 2024). Although the UN Security Council passed Resolution 47 (1948) to offer the people of Kashmir a vote, this procedure was not followed. India wants Gilgit-Baltistan, but Pakistan has declared it part of Gilgit-Baltistan instead. Aksai Chin had been part of China's territory since the country invaded the region in 1962 (Shafiq, 2011). Understanding the issue deeply helps judge how political and legal aspects impact any project built within the disputed territories such as CPEC.

Legal Implications for CPEC Passing Through a Disputed Region

The ICJ found that, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel's creation of the separation wall in Palestinian lands was against the law, specifically since it moved its citizens into occupied territory (Anthony, 2023). The idea still holds: it is legally suspect for any project to affect the political or territorial status of a disputed region like CPEC under international law. It is noted that Article 1 of the ICCPR, which upholds the right to self-determination, is frequently mentioned by both India and Pakistan regarding Kashmir. India believes that by modernizing Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan is taking away the Kashmiri people's right to decide their political status. It is believed by India that the completion of CPEC could make Pakistan permanently shift the political situation in Kashmir, so resolving it becomes more challenging. The Geneva Conventions set out the main legal rules on how territories declared to be 'disputed' are managed and how the people there should be treated, especially if they are under occupation.

TRADE LAWS AND CPEC: A CASE STUDY IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has the potential to change the way trade and business are done in South Asia, Central Asia, and nearby regions. CPEC connects to different areas of trade law, both under World Trade Organization (WTO) guidelines and agreements at a regional scale. To judge the CPEC's potential for boosting the economy, it's crucial to look at its interaction with these laws and study its influence on regional trade among China, Pakistan, and India. It will examine how the legal framework of trade views CPEC, how it affects China's and Pakistan's trade, and what political and economic outcomes it creates.

CPEC under International Trade Law

There are several deals, standards, and protocols in international trade law, including the WTO agreements, which control international trade among different countries. For instance, big projects such as CPEC, which invest in infrastructure, are considered critical for the whole global economy, helping to make trading more convenient by enhancing transportation systems. Under the WTO's key agreement, GATT, countries signing trade contracts agree to remove barriers to trade, lower tariffs, and improve cooperation (Finalyzson & Zacher, 1981). In this context, CPEC helps achieve these targets through better connections between China and Pakistan, as well as improved links to Central Asia and the Middle East. Building and improving roads, railways, and major energy projects increases trade efficiency thanks to faster and cheaper delivery, helping to make trade more open.

Nonetheless, CPEC leads to issues related to trade law when dealing with countries involved in the project. Along with promoting infrastructure growth, the WTO expects projects to ensure that trade is not distorted and that the free market continues. Because India and Pakistan are not alike in their economic development and industry, CPEC's trade zones and routes may result in unbalanced trade between them. The WTO is expected to pay attention to CPEC's potential subsidies, trade benefits, or protections, especially if they seem to favor one country ahead of others and affect fair trade. There could be disruptions in the market if Pakistan and China, for example, reduce tariffs on the corridor in ways that make it difficult for competitors to participate. Further, the 2006 China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA), recently reviewed in 2019, is one of the key regional trade agreements used to advance the CPEC (Dastgeer et al., 2023). Because of the agreement, Pakistan can trade with China without paying duties on different items. Yet, this situation has concerned other regional nations such as India, due to the imbalances in their trading relations.

Impact on Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

CPEC is causing China and Pakistan to form stronger links with their neighbors, as their trade increases (Sadiq & Haider, 2024). The project allows Pakistan and China to solidify their economies and enhance their collaboration in other fields. Due to the Kashmir issue, there have been even greater disputes between India and Pakistan as a result of this project. India believes CPEC is a plan by China to increase its authority in South Asia, which puts them in direct competition with India in the region. Now that CPEC is progressing, India may impose tariffs or trade barriers on goods that pass through the economic corridor to defend its local industries and address its perspective on China getting an economic advantage from CPEC.

Through CPEC, India is also shaping relations with nearby countries in Central Asia (Sachdeva, 2016). Better infrastructure and transport between China and Pakistan could see these two nations take over the role of Central Asian trading hubs from India. So, India might reach out to other local allies to limit China's growing influence in the region. As CPEC makes China more influential in these organizations, India's role could be tested in areas such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)(Kumar, 2020).

Use of Trade Barriers and Political Influence by India to Block CPEC's Success

India feels that CPEC could come at its expense, specifically affecting trade and the political impact of China and Pakistan. Due to India's conflict with China, India may aim to interfere with the trade route by placing tariffs on goods coming through the CPEC or by influencing the smaller trade routes passing through Afghanistan. Even though opposing CPEC with political pressure may not violate international trade rules, it would be recognized as a move to protect security and be dominant in the region. The country might make use of diplomacy to block the achievements of CPEC in global spheres. Already, India has addressed this subject in places like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO), arguing that CPEC ignores international regulations for areas claimed by two or more nations. As a result, India could try to get support from different countries to prevent the project from being fully carried out.

STATISTICAL DATA, GRAPHS, AND FIGURES

To provide a comprehensive overview, Table 1 summarizes key CPEC infrastructure projects, detailing their scope, estimated costs, and current statuses.

Table 1. Projects, estimated Costs and Status

Sector	Project	Location	Length/Capacity	Estimated Cost	Status	Completion Year
Roads	Karakoram Highway Phase II	Gilgit-Baltistan to Burhan	118 km	$1.315 billion	Completed	2020
	Multan–Sukkur Motorway (M-5)	Multan to Sukkur	392 km	$2.889 billion	Completed	2019
	Hakla–Dera Ismail Khan Motorway	Hakla to Dera Ismail Khan	285 km	$0.735 billion	Completed	2022
	M-6 Motorway	Sukkur to Hyderabad	306 km	$1.7 billion	Under Construction	2025 (Projected)
Railways	Main Line 1 (ML-1)	Karachi to Peshawar	1,872 km	$6.808 billion	Under Construction	2027 (Projected)
	Khunjerab Railway Line	Havelian to Khunjerab	682 km	$12 billion	Planning	2030 (Projected)
Energy	Karot Hydropower Project	Jhelum River, Punjab	720 MW	$1.42 billion	Operational	2022
	Port Qasim Power Project	Karachi, Sindh	1,320 MW	$1.91 billion	Operational	2018
	Matiari–Lahore HVDC Transmission Line	Matiari to Lahore	660 kV	$1.95 billion	Operational	2023
Ports	Gwadar Port Expansion	Gwadar, Balochistan	-	$300 million	Partially Completed	Ongoing

Sector	Project	Location	Length/Capacity	Estimated Cost	Status	Completion Year
SEZs	Rashakai SEZ	Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	702 acres	-	Operational	2021
	Dhabeji SEZ	Thatta, Sindh	1,530 acres	-	Under Development	2025 (Projected)

Trade Flow and Economic Impact Analysis

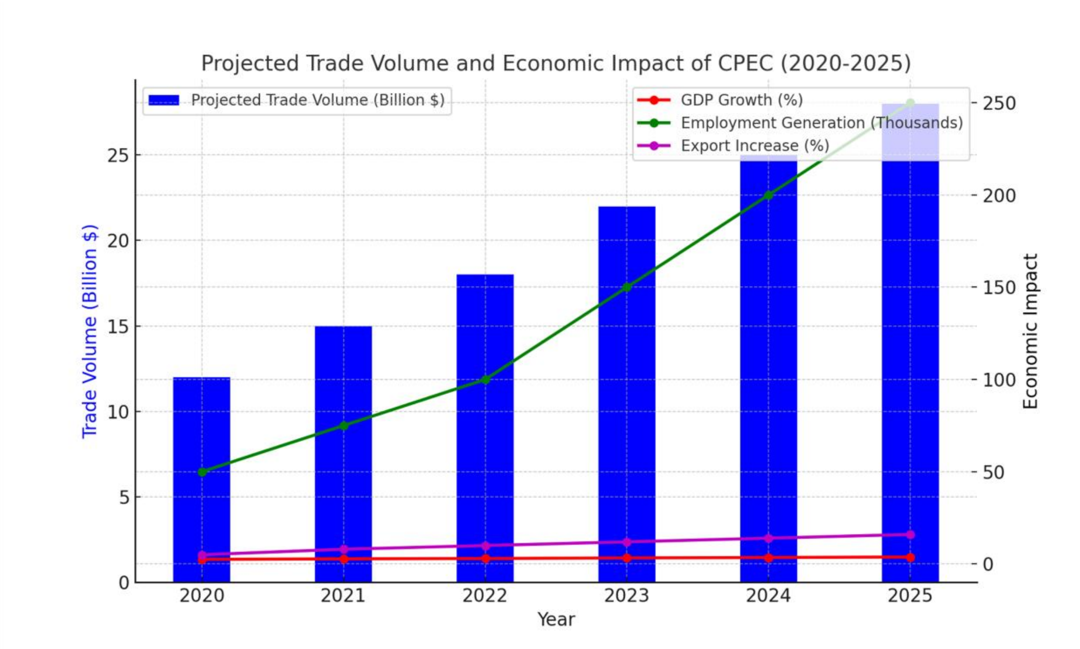

Figure 1. Projected Trade Volume and Economic Impact of CPEC (2020-2025)

Figure 1 shows the expected increase in trade volume, GDP growth, employment, and exports due to CPEC. It highlights the economic benefits of improved infrastructure and trade routes, with rising trade and job creation projected over the next six years.

Source: China Briefing, "China-Pakistan Trade, Investment, and Strategic Partnership," March 24, 2025.

Table 2. International Law Precedents

Case/Project	Disputed Territory	Legal Outcome	International Court/Organization	Year
Israel Separation Wall (2004)	Palestinian Territories	ICJ ruled against Israel's actions, considering violations of international law, particularly the Geneva Conventions	International Court of Justice (ICJ)	2004
Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Road Project (2005)	Ethiopia-Eritrea Border	The project continued despite the border dispute, under international mediation	United Nations (UN)	2005
Trans-Siberian Railway (Russia, 1990s)	Russia and Former Soviet States	International acceptance of infrastructure, though with concerns over sovereignty issues in some areas	International Court of Justice (ICJ)	1990s

Case/Project	Disputed Territory	Legal Outcome	International Court/Organization	Year
Turkish Cypriot Infrastructure Projects (2000s)	Cyprus (Northern Cyprus)	Limited recognition of infrastructure, as it was built in a disputed region not internationally recognized	European Union (EU), UN	2000s
CPEC through Gilgit-Baltistan (2020)	Kashmir (Gilgit-Baltistan)	Ongoing international disputes, India claims violation of sovereign rights over Kashmir	India, Pakistan, and China (not yet resolved by international court)	2020

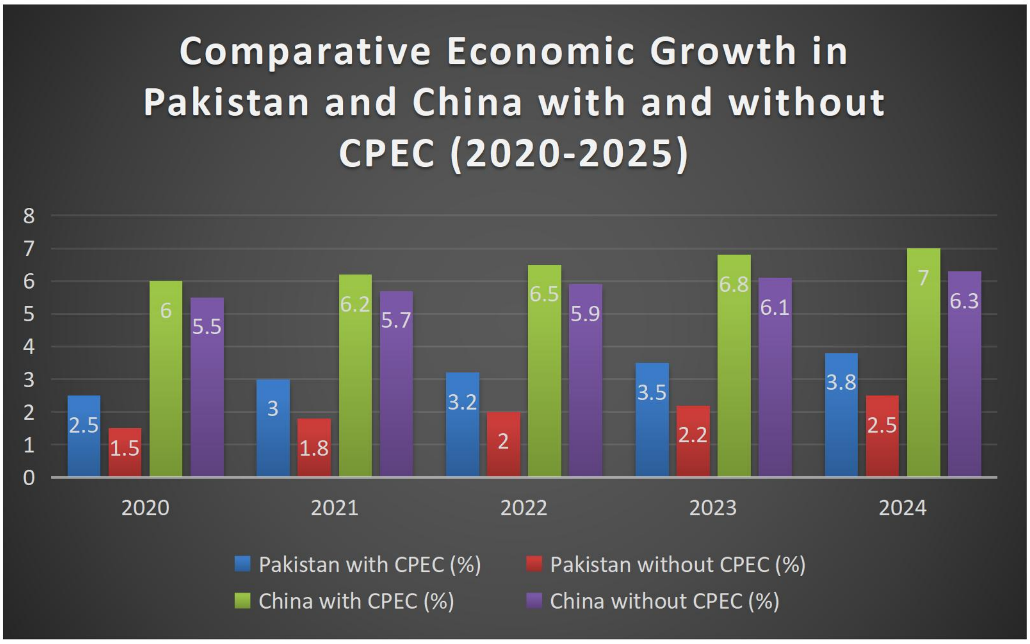

Figure 2. Comparative Economic Growth in Pakistan and China with and without CPEC (2020-2025)

Figure 2 Figure shows the projected economic growth rates of Pakistan and China from 2020 to 2025, comparing scenarios with and without the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The data indicates that Pakistan's economic growth is expected to be higher with CPEC, reflecting the positive impact of enhanced infrastructure and trade routes. China's growth shows a steady increase in both scenarios, highlighting the broader regional economic integration facilitated by CPEC.

Source: China Briefing, "China-Pakistan Trade, Investment, and Strategic Partnership," March 24, 2025

STATISTICAL DATA, GRAPHS, AND FIGURES

International Community's Role and Future Outlook: An Argumentative Analysis

CPEC is seen as bringing major economic gains by both China and Pakistan, though the international community has not all agreed with it, due to intertwined global, regional, and legal reasons. This section explains that CPEC represents an increase in cooperation between China and Pakistan, but its progress is determined by how the world's actors handle their conflicting goals, especially those of India. As such, the discussion about CPEC highlights the main issues in global business and the challenges countries face while trying to improve their economies.

International Reactions to CPEC: Diverse and Divisive

The way the international community has responded to CPEC can roughly be labeled as supportive, neutral, or opposing. The United Nations has stayed in the middle, encouraging a peaceful end to the project since it travels through the disputed Kashmir area. Since the Security Council's decisions can shape UN policy, they often make it challenging for the UN to act strongly on CPEC. Yet, the UN puts a strong focus on talking and honoring international law, which appears to go against the solo actions Pakistan and China have taken on matters of sovereignty. CPEC, a part of China's BRI, has caught the EU's attention, as it sees the project as a means to develop trade and the economy in South Asia (Zanardi, 2021). However, the EU says it is concerned about hidden information, pollution, and rules related to CPEC projects. European policy is in line with the EU's general approach to global development, which tries to support business and help people at the same time. The EU pays extra attention to regional peace, largely highlighting that it wishes to see peaceful conflict resolution, especially in Kashmir (Doyle, 2012).

The US is now expressing concern about CPEC due to its rivalry with China (Ali, 2020). Washington believes that CPEC allows China to reach further in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, threatening American power there (Fayyaz, 2019). Washington's stand is shaped by its close connection with India and worries over Pakistan's impact on regional safety, such as terrorism and attacks on its borders by militants. So, the US has depended on diplomatic interactions, aid rules, and regionally focused ties to check the impact of CPEC, calling it a security risk and reportedly a "debt trap" for countries in the region. Often, such skepticism is also found in reviews of other BRI projects because the US and China are competing for global dominance.

CPEC has received a cautious and realistic approach from Russia as well as some Central Asian nations. Although Russia is seen as a strategic partner by India, it is now connecting with countries abroad through projects such as CPEC, as it appreciates the improvements that additional trade routes can bring (Saud & Arif, 2018). Generally, Central Asian nations back CPEC, provided there are no major concerns about potential issues that arise from the project.

Geopolitical Repercussions: Shaping South Asia and Beyond

India is seeking to keep CPEC isolated internationally by strengthening its alliances with the US, Japan, and Australia (Panda, 2021b). All in all, CPEC illustrates how China and countries like it can apply their economic power overseas to gain influence. The corridor is threatening the model of the international system that Western nations have shaped after World War II (I. Ahmad et al., 2024). It shows that new economic corridors are gaining importance because developing infrastructure helps countries such as China extend their influence internationally. Moreover, CPEC affects the security situation in the Indian Ocean, given that sea-based command is so important. By developing the Gwadar port under CPEC, China is near the Strait of Hormuz, where much of the global oil flows (Rashid & Shirazi, 2023). Both the US and India are concerned that China could turn this port into a military base.

Future of CPEC in International Law: Navigating Complex Challenges

Difficulties in the future development of CPEC may arise due to disputes about sovereignty, boundaries, and the fulfillment of international law. India and Pakistan continue to disagree on permitting the project to pass through the part of Kashmir they both claim. India keeps insisting that CPEC interferes with its sovereignty and contradicts UNSC resolutions requesting a peaceful decision and plebiscite about Kashmir (Kurita, 2022). So far, CPEC's dispute has not been correctly settled by an international tribunal, so the nature and status of the project are disputed. Someone from India or an affected party could appeal to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or the WTO to claim that CPEC infringes on international requirements relating to trade. Still, these kinds of cases encounter issues with jurisdiction because many agreements are established by nations, and jurisdiction often depends on both countries' importance. It is necessary for the international community and all countries involved to find methods that address India's genuine issues with CPEC and support the economic incentives it provides. This could involve:

1. Trilateral Talks: Supporting exchanges among China, Pakistan, and India to tackle issues of territory and strengthen economic cooperation.
2. Providing reassurance: Developing fair management and guidelines for the environment to show Pakistanis that there will be no hidden political or strategic motives behind CPEC projects.
3. Creating Rules for International Projects: Devising clear international laws to guide infrastructure work that passes through contested places, which is still not well covered by international law.
4. Third-Party Arbitration: Including an outside party or a group of people to mediate and carry out deals made under CPEC.

The advantages of CPEC, increased trade links, secure energy supply, and regional progress, are hard to dispute. At the same time, efforts should not create instability in an area as fragile as the Taiwan Strait. Trying to build an effective approach to the future involves being aware of each country's sovereignty issues and encouraging economic relations.

Statistical Recommendations and Lessons from Past Precedents for CPEC: A Logical and Technical Analysis

Both the many benefits and the pressing concerns associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor are made clear, given that the route crosses disputed land and affects geopolitics. Reliable data and ideas taken from previously completed projects in contested regions will help secure and maintain its success and sustainability. They help establish guidelines that ensure progress, obey laws, and support stability in international relations. Using this analysis, it is explained how CPEC can address its challenges with the help of data and past best practices.

Emphasizing Data-Driven Infrastructure Planning and Risk Management

Statistical studies from important infrastructure works around the globe prove that having strong data analytics helps in reviewing risks and planning any given project (Ajayi et al., 2019). By using statistics, it is possible to predict cost delays, possible challenges, and potential concerns about geopolitical risks for CPEC. According to a global study of big infrastructure projects by Flyvbjerg, the majority suffer from rising costs, with budget overruns occurring in 90% of cases, and delays are often seen (Flyvbjerg, 2014). Using predictive models with CPEC's assets can make sure resources are put to best use, predict challenges in moving supplies, and control threats linked with security in Balochistan.

Recommendation: Introduce a system for storing data that includes the progress of the project, important economic details, security cases, and effects on society. This system should make it possible to oversee projects in real time and help prevent delays or stretching the budget. Records from projects such as TEN-T reveal that regularly and openly monitoring data helps to reduce inefficiency (Öberg et al., 2018).

Leveraging Socioeconomic Impact Assessments with Quantitative Metrics

Having precedents points out that proper SEIAs with numbers are necessary before and during the project to address socioeconomic concerns. The World Bank proposes using baseline information on employment, income, and social mobility to measure the benefits of a project, both directly and indirectly (Talero & Gaudette, 1995). An analysis of data related to social and economic life in Gwadar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan can allow the benefits of CPEC, like more jobs, extra income, and fewer people living in poverty, to be understood. For example, findings from the Suez Canal Expansion Project suggest that investing in infrastructure increases a region's GDP by up to 2.5% each year.

Recommendation: Use something like a data-driven SEIA framework with defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that support regional growth. Study the effects of CPEC on society and the economy through time and adjust policies accordingly.

Incorporating International Legal Precedents Through Empirical Analysis

Challenges to the legality of CPEC result from its being built in areas that are disputed. Projects built in disputed territories in the past have created useful knowledge. The International Court of Justice case study (2004) on the Israel Separation Wall indicated that poorly planned projects with partners often increase conflicts and require more legal time to resolve (Williams, 2006). In places affected by conflicts, buildings and large infrastructure usually take less time to finish and encourage cooperation among the people there, if they are built within a transparent process to resolve disputes.

Recommendation: Use models based on statistics to measure the impacts of legal and political risks. Formulate strategies that involve every stakeholder and rely on previous data on conflict resolution to reduce the chances of facing international condemnation or being taken to court.

Enhancing Regional Trade Flow Projections with Advanced Econometric Modeling

CPEC's central goal is to boost trade among China, Pakistan, and other countries. Properly estimating the growth of trade volumes is necessary. For instance, the Panama Canal expansion results showed that investing in infrastructure can cause an increase in international trade (Hummels et al., 2001). If transportation costs drop by 10%, it can result in up to a 25% rise in the amount of trade between adjacent regions. With available trade and logistics information for CPEC, advanced methods can project future trade and spot the main challenges.

Recommendation: Consider using advanced programs for econometrics and network analysis to explore how trade may be affected by different problems, including issues in foreign politics. The InfraSt model should include tariffs, customs performance, and trade agreements between regions to achieve optimal infrastructure planning.

Applying Financial Viability Analysis Using Historical Cost-Benefit Data

Overcoming costs is a common difficulty found in megaprojects. History has shown that projects that examine costs and benefits with a focus on society, the environment, and politics often do well financially and socially over the years (Flyvbjerg & Budzier, 2018). Problems with the Eurotunnel initially occurred because the developers misunderstood the expenses and forecasts, but they were handled by adjusting.

Recommendation: Perform regular financial reviews with models that consider factors such as changes in geopolitical risk, variations in currencies, and abrupt changes in global trading activities. As a result, financial plans and budgets can be recalculated as necessary to keep the project successful.

Incorporating Security Risk Analytics to Mitigate Insurgency and Terrorism Impact

The safety of CPEC in Baluchistan and along its western route is currently unpredictable. Statistical analysis of relevant data in Afghanistan's infrastructure projects suggests that integrating security risk analysis helps to avoid surprise interruptions (Ahmadzai & Ye, 2025).

Recommendation: Predict the risk of cyberattacks by examining old attack data, changes in politics, and relevant socioeconomic indicators. The models should show where protections should be placed to lessen costs and inconveniences.

Promoting Transparency and Accountability via Open Data Initiatives

Experience from cases like the LAPSSET corridor in Kenya has shown that openness and open data in projects can lead to people trusting the government more and seeing less corruption (Ong'anya, 2024). When aid is open about its finances, more projects are finished and greater international funding is received.

Recommendation: Open up an online platform detailing current project figures, funds spent, and how the project affects different communities. Transparency indicators should be regularly monitored using statistics.

CONCLUSION

The article provides an important insight to readers by covering the CPEC from the perspective of international law, geopolitics, and its effect on the economy. Many previous studies have analyzed either the financial benefits or the political challenges caused by CPEC, but this one brings them both to light with a review of legal rules and world community policies. It deals with an immediate requirement to know how large infrastructure projects relate to issues over disputed territories and apply to international laws in an area like South Asia. The article, by discussing the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, helps further the study of territorial controversies and infrastructure diplomacy. It looks more closely at issues such as CPEC by highlighting how different elements of international law affect disputed borders. Concentrating on the legal aspects is vital because it explains the various issues and threats facing CPEC in both politics and upholding global standards. Moreover, the article makes the discussion more relevant by providing details on how the UN, EU, and US responded. It points out that CPEC has regional importance and is also part of the larger strategic rivalry between China and India. Readers interested in seeing the entire scope of issues and how an economic plan may impact the world beyond its borders will benefit from this perspective. It is significant because it analyzes the topic from several sides. Studies in this book will help interested experts in international law, trade, and security to see the ties between economic corridors and the rules of national sovereignty and foreign policy. For people living in South Asia and all over the world, the book explains why CPEC is important in terms of progress and as a possible source of complications. The combination of facts and legal and political descriptions allows the readers to look closely at the pros and cons of CPEC.

REFERENCES

Abid, M., & Ashfaq, A. (2015). CPEC: Challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. *Journal of Pakistan Vision, 16*(2), 142–169.

Afzal, M., & Mushtaq, S. A. (n.d.). Pakistan's territorial disputes and state sovereignty: An analysis of international law and implications. *Journal of Law & Social Studies (JLSS), 6*(3), 320–337.

Ahmad, I., Haider, A., & Afzal, J. (2024). The geopolitical and economic impact of BRICS on the Middle East. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 18*(4), 80–95.

Ahmad, L., Haider, A., Ahmad, I., & Jawad, A. (2025). Can CPEC unlock Pakistan's economic potential and overcome its challenges? *Journal of Asian Development Studies, 14*(1), 1361–1372.

Ahmadzai, M. B., & Ye, K. (2025). A mixed-method investigation of the root causes of construction project delays in Afghanistan. *Heliyon, 11*(2). https://www.cell.com/heliyon/fulltext/S2405-8440(25)00303-2

Ajayi, A., Oyedele, L., Davila Delgado, J. M., Akanbi, L., Bilal, M., Akinade, O., & Olawale, O. (2019). Big data platform for health and safety accident prediction. *World Journal of Science, Technology and Sustainable Development, 16*(1), 2–21.

Akhtar, Z. (2023). Kashmir's right to self-determination: UNSC resolutions, human rights violations and culpability under international law. *Athens Journal of Law, 9,* 139.

Ali, S. M. (2020). The US-China strategic rivalry and its implications for Pakistan. *Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific Project*. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Syed-Ali-213/publication/348418806_The_US-China_Strategic_Rivalry_and_its_Implications_for_Pakistan/links/5ffe033b45851553a03d52e5/The-US-China-Strategic-Rivalry-and-its-Implications-for-Pakistan.pdf

Anthony, D. (2023). Wall case: ICJ advisory opinion on the Israeli separation wall. In K. W. Gray (Ed.), *Global encyclopedia of territorial rights* (pp. 1–12). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68846-6_608-1

Anwar, U., & Atif, M. (2025). CPEC & BRI regional game changers: Security and geopolitical implications in Pakistan. *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs,* 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/18366503.2025.2480945

Ashraf, F. (2002). Jammu and Kashmir dispute: Examining various proposals for its resolution. *Islamabad Papers, 20*(1), 51.

Baldwin, R. (2016). The World Trade Organization and the future of multilateralism. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 30*(1), 95–116.

Biersteker, T. J. (2013). State, sovereignty and territory. In *Handbook of international relations* (pp. 245–272).

Bouzas, M. (2024). The Line of Control in Kashmir. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*. https://oxfordre.com/asianhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277727-e-746

Bradley, K. K. (2005). A mending wall: A critical look at the International Court of Justice's analysis in its advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory. *Temple International & Comparative Law Journal, 19,* 419.

Butt, H. D. (2023). China's Belt and Road Initiative 2.0—A recipe for development: A case study of the CPEC. In *Tidal view from Boao: Building Belt and Road in the past decade* (p. 120).

Cornell, M. J. (2022). Boundary blurring in international law: Globalization, climate change, and cooperation in the Indus Basin. *Loyola University Chicago International Law Review, 18,* 75.

Dastgeer, A., Hassan, A., Husnain, M. A., Bhatti, M. K., & Javed, A. (2023). The impact of the China-Pakistan free trade agreement (FTA) on the economic growth of Pakistan. *Russian Law Journal, 11*(3), 2288–2299.

Doyle, J. (2012). *The EU and Northern Ireland, SAARC and Kashmir: The role of regional organisations in internal conflicts*. Retrieved from https://doras.dcu.ie/17110/1/1204.pdf

Duan, W., Khurshid, A., Nazir, N., Khan, K., & Calin, A. C. (2022). From gray to green: Energy crises and the role of CPEC. *Renewable Energy, 190,* 188–207. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.renene.2022.03.066

Fayyaz, M. (2019). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): The road to Indian Ocean and its geopolitical implications for the India-Pakistan strategic relations. *The National Interest*. https://www.academia.edu/download/61018480/1-1-15-97220191025-37508-1pmox88.pdf

Fazal, I., Khan, W. A., & Ali, M. I. (2023). Geo-economic benefits of the CPEC project for Pakistan. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review, 7*(4), 573–589.

Finalyzson, J. A., & Zacher, M. W. (1981). The GATT and the regulation of trade barrier: Regime dynamics and functions. *International Organization, 35*(4), 561–602.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2014). What you should know about megaprojects and why: An overview. *Project Management Journal, 45*(2), 6–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/pmj.21409

Flyvbjerg, B., & Budzier, A. (2018). Report for the Edinburgh Tram Inquiry (No. arXiv:1805.12106). *arXiv*. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1805.12106

Haider, A., Ahmad, I., & Yaseen, M. (2024). Jus cogens and the right to self-determination: A study of its peremptory status and erga omnes effects. *Pakistan Journal of Legal Analysis & Wisdom, 3,* 59.

Hummels, D., Ishii, J., & Yi, K.-M. (2001). The nature and growth of vertical specialization in world trade. *Journal of International Economics, 54*(1), 75–96.

Khan, H. U. (2019). Regional security threats to CPEC: A strategic overview. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan, 56*(1), 181.

Khan, H. U., & Khalid, I. (2018). CPEC and federalism: An analysis. *Journal of Political Studies, 25,* 207.

Khurana, G. S. (2008). China's "string of pearls" in the Indian Ocean and its security implications. *Strategic Analysis, 32*(1), 1–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160801886314

Khurshid, M., Rashid, A., & Zahid, R. A. (2018). Impact of CPEC energy projects on socio-economic development of Pakistan. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Renewable, Applied and New Energy Technologies*. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/R-M-Ammar-Zahid/publication/329799370

Kumar, S. (2020). Reinvigoration of BIMSTEC and India's economic, strategic and security concerns. *Millennial Asia, 11*(2), 187–210. https://doi.org/10.1177/0976399620925441

Kurita, M. (2022). China's Kashmir policy since the mid-2010s: Ramifications of CPEC and India's Kashmir reorganization. *Asian Security, 18*(1), 56–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2021.1978426

McCartney, M. (2021). The prospects of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): The importance of understanding western China. *Contemporary South Asia, 29*(3), 358–375. https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2020.1855112

McCartney, M. (2022). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Infrastructure, social savings, spillovers, and economic growth in Pakistan. *Eurasian Geography and Economics, 63*(2), 180–211. https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2020.1836986

Öberg, M., Nilsson, K. L., & Johansson, C. M. (2018). Expected benefits and drawbacks of Baltic Sea European transport corridors—Implications for complementary governance of TEN-T Core network corridors. *Cogent Business & Management, 5*(1), 1423870. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2018.1423870

Ong'anya, D. O. (2024). The development corridor strategy and its influences on economic development and growth in Kenya. *Journal of Business, Economics and Management Research Studies, 2*(2), 81–103.

Panda, J. P. (2021a). China as a revisionist power in Indo-Pacific and India's perception: A power-partner contention. *Journal of Contemporary China, 30*(127), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2020.1766906

Panda, J. P. (2021b). India, Indo-Pacific coalitions and China: From alignment to alliance? In *Asian geopolitics and the US–China rivalry* (pp. 103–126). Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003106814-7

Rahman, A., Muneer, S., & Khan, M. M. A. (2021). Impact of Shimla agreement on the application of UN resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir: A critical analysis under international law. *Perennial Journal of History, 2*(2), 285–302.

Rashid, A., & Shirazi, S. A. (2023). Gwadar Port-Pakistan as an axis for regional connectivity under CPEC: A geographer's perspective. *Journal of Politics and International Studies, 9*(1), 105–120.

Ruys, T. (2014). The meaning of "force" and the boundaries of the jus ad bellum: Are "minimal" uses of force excluded from UN Charter Article 2(4)? *American Journal of International Law, 108*(2), 159–210.

Sachdeva, G. (2016). Indo-Central Asian economic relations. In *Mapping Central Asia* (pp. 123–142). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315593791-12

Sadiq, A., & Haider, A. (2024). Statistical analysis of the potential benefits of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) for

Pakistan. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Aftab-Haider-3/publication/389778287

Saud, A., & Arif, K. (2018). US-India strategic alliance and CPEC "the game changer": Prospects for Pakistan and Russian cooperation. *Central Asia, 83*(Winter), 19–43.

Shafiq, N. (2011). India versus China: A review of the Aksai Chin border dispute. *Journal of Political Studies, 18,* 207.

Shah, T. A., Muzaffar, M., & Yaseen, Z. (2020). Debunking concerns of New Delhi over CPEC. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review, 4*(1), 33–46.

Snedden, C. (2021). Maharaja Hari Singh and his accession issue. In *Independent Kashmir* (pp. 44–92). Manchester University Press. https://www.manchesterhive.com/abstract/9781526156167/9781526156167.00011.xml

Talero, E., & Gaudette, P. (1995). Harnessing information for development: A proposal for a World Bank Group vision and strategy. *Information Technology for Development, 6*(3–4), 145–188. https://doi.org/10.1080/02681102.1995.9525267

Williams, S. (2006). Has international law hit the wall? An analysis of international law in relation to Israel's separation barrier. *Berkeley Journal of International Law, 24,* 192.

Zanardi, C. (2021). Europe and the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI): Infrastructure and connectivity. In *Europe in an era of growing Sino-American competition* (pp. 155–169). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007746-13.

ETHICAL DECLARATION

Conflict of interest: No declaration required. **Financing:** No reporting required. **Peer review:** Double anonymous peer review.