

## Sources of Tension in Afghanistan and Pakistan

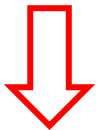
A Regional Perspective

# Pakistan: Monitoring the Key Regional Powers

QUARTERLY MONITORING BRIEF

## Report No. 1

January 1 - February 29, 2016



- Momentum of Indo-Pak talks disrupted following attack on Pathankot Airbase



- Pakistan attempts to mediate Saudi-Iran relations following Saudi execution of Shia cleric and subsequent attack on Saudi embassy in Tehran



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**CIDOB Sources of Tension in Afghanistan & Pakistan: A Regional Perspective  
(STAP RP)**

**Quarterly Report on “Monitoring the Key Regional Powers”  
January 1 to February 29, 2016**

**Introduction**

*The purpose of this series of quarterly monitoring reports (2013) is to monitor and track the actions, public statements of five key STAP RP regional actors (India, Iran, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia) on Pakistan; the development of, and their participation in relevant international and regional discussion meetings, including the Istanbul Process, Heart of Asia, RECCA, SCO; the five key regional actors’ economic decisions and agreements, including, but not limited to, the energy and infrastructure sectors, which have implications for the identified sources of tension in Pakistan with regional implications (see CIDOB STAP RP Mapping Document at [www.cidobafpakproject.com](http://www.cidobafpakproject.com)).*

*The Sources of Tension (SoTs) identified in the Mapping Document are used as reference points to determine relevance and are specifically monitored in Section 1.*

*The content includes short summaries by topic and by country, on actions taken, public statements made, regional meetings held and how these develop as mechanisms for dialogue, and the participation of the key regional powers in relevant regional and international events, as well as in subgroups of international fora, such as the Heart of Asia and SCO. Economic activity and investments by the key regional powers in Pakistan are also monitored, together with progress on, and shifting alliances in planned or actual economic projects. A short subsection on commentary from the media (in English) is included in each section. Section 2 focuses on the key regional powers. Section 3 looks at regional dynamics and crosscutting issues; and conclusions on the events of the past quarter are presented in Section 4.*

## 1. The Context

### Governance

11/01/16: Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) government opposes moves to convert Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) into province.

11/01/16: Multi-party conference hosted by the Balochistan National Party-Mengal on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project approves resolutions concerning the rights of people of Gwadar, Balochistan.

25/01/16: ISPR Director General rejects reports that army chief will seek to extend his tenure from three to four years, saying that Chief of Army Staff will retire as planned.

07/02/16: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan presents federal government with demands concerning petrol prices, electricity taxes and management of public institutions.

15/02/16: First mayor of Islamabad, PML-N's Sheikh Ansar, elected.

17/02/16: PM Sharif issues warning on accountability investigations to National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

### Social & Economic Issues

01/01/16: PM Sharif launches state-run health insurance programme for 3.2 million underprivileged families, describing it as the first step towards making Pakistan a welfare state.

01/01/16: Senate rejects Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Ordinance following Opposition's fears about privatisation.

05/01/16: Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE) Index drops, following arrest of chief executive.

07/01/16: Failure of basic health facilities cited as major reason behind newborn deaths in Thar, Sindh.

11/01/16: Pakistan Stock Exchange inaugurated.

11/01/16: KPK government fails to enroll 16,000 out-of-school children who had been selected for enrolment.

14/01/16: Pakistan faces Rs.3.3 trillion revenue black-hole, according to IMF report.

15/01/16: Bill to prohibit underage marriages withdrawn after the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) declares it un-Islamic.

16/01/16: New gas reserve of around 23.5 MMFC discovered in Khairpur district of Sindh.

23/01/16: Primary schools in Balochistan to end gender segregation.

26/01/16: Punjab Law Minister denies link between the provincial government's decision to keep schools shut till January 31 and threats of terrorist attacks.

28/01/16: Eight more children die in Thar, raising the drought-related death toll to 121.

28/01/16: Protests by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) workers against proposed privatisation of the national airlines continues for third consecutive day.

28/01/16: Government reaffirms its decision to recover Rs.101 billion from utility consumers for laying a gas pipeline.

31/01/16: Government announces reduction in prices of petroleum products by Rs.5 per litre.

02/02/16: Two killed, several injured as security forces open fire on protesting PIA workers.

05/02/16: PM Sharif announces the allocation of Rs.250 million for the development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

06/02/16: Pakistan and Afghanistan report the first cases of polio for the year 2016.

13/02/16: PM Sharif announces compensation of Rs.2.5million for each of the two PIA employees killed.

15/02/16: Sindh Assembly becomes the first to pass the Hindu Marriage Bill in Pakistan.

15/02/16: PIA reports further losses of Rs.4.312 billion as a result of strikes.



## Conflict in Afghanistan

05/01/16: Security forces establish new check posts along Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

08/01/16: Pakistan and Afghanistan agree on joint polio campaigns at the border, closer monitoring of migrations across borders, transit vaccination, and synchronised polio campaigns over next five months.

12/01/16: NATO supplies resume after a year as ten oil tankers carry fuel supplies to NATO forces in Afghanistan.

12/01/16: International Islamic University (IIU) looks to expand collaboration with Afghanistan universities.

14/01/16: At least six persons killed in targeted suicide attack on the Pakistani consulate in Jalalabad.

14/01/16: PM Sharif grants six-month extension to Afghan refugees.

14/01/16: Afghan President Ghani assures PM Sharif of enhanced security for Pakistani diplomats.

14/01/16: Pakistan Military Operations DG meets with his Afghan counterpart in Kabul.

18/01/16: Human Rights Watch (HRW) urges Pakistan to extend Afghan refugees' legal residency status until December 31, 2017.

21/01/16: PM Sharif holds trilateral meeting with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and US Vice President Joe Biden.

25/01/16: PM Sharif says terrorist elements inside Afghanistan involved in attack on Bacha Khan University in Charsadda.

25/01/16: Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani offers direct talks with the Afghan Taliban.

25/01/16: Afghan Taliban demand the release of political prisoners as one of the conditions to be met for them to consider re-joining peace talks.

28/01/16: Pakistan government extends deadline for stay of registered Afghan refugees living in Pakistan for two more years.

03/02/16: Drone strike in Afghanistan's border Paktiya province kills at least 18 Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) fighters.

13/02/16: Former governor of Afghanistan's Herat province Syed Fazlullah Wahidi abducted in Islamabad.

15/02/16: Number of civilians killed or wounded in Afghanistan in 2015 reportedly highest since 2009, reveals UN annual report.

26/02/16: Kidnappers release former Herat governor Syed Fazlullah Wahidi.



## Ethnicity & Sectarianism

05/01/16: Barelvi groups, supporters hold rally opposing death sentence for Mumtaz Qadri, self-confessed assassin of Punjab governor Salman Taseer.

31/01/16: Senior Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) leader and four other suspected militants killed in shoot-out with security forces in Mastung, Balochistan.

02/02/16: Court grants pre-arrest bail to Lal Masjid cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz in two criminal cases.

12/02/16: Religious scholars unanimously denounce all forms of terrorism, religious extremism and sectarian violence in joint declaration following Message of Islam Conference in Islamabad.

14/02/16: Government reaches understanding with different madrassah boards in the country over regulation of seminaries.

29/02/16: Mumtaz Qadri executed in Adiala jail.



## Militancy

01/01/16: No Dae'sh presence in Pakistan, reiterates Foreign Office following reports that a group of 20 people recently left for Syria.

01/01/16: Army Chief General Raheel Sharif confirms death sentences for nine terrorists convicted by military courts.

06/01/16: Pakistan-based groups to face action if their involvement in Pathankot attack is proven, says PM Sharif.

06/01/16: Sindh Rangers, together with the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), arrest a close aide of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leader Baitullah Mehsud.

12/01/16: Polio team held hostage in Layyah, Punjab; perpetrator arrested.

13/01/16: Suicide attack outside polio vaccination centre in Quetta kills at least 15 people, mainly police.

15/01/16: US State Department declares Af-Pak wing of Dae'sh a foreign terrorist organisation.

15/01/16: Security forces seize illegal arms and ammunition from militant hideout in Gwadar, Balochistan.

19/01/16: At least 10 people killed and over 20 wounded in bombing at security checkpost in Peshawar.

20/01/16: Four security personnel and six civilians killed, at least 25 others injured, in suicide attack on security checkpost in Khyber Agency.

20/01/16: Twenty people, including students, teachers and security guards, killed and 20 more injured in attack on Bacha Khan University, Charsadda.

21/01/16: PM Sharif warns Charsadda attack perpetrators of 'ruthless response from the state'.

21/01/16: Four Bacha Khan University attack facilitators arrested in Shabqadar, KPK.

21/01/16: TTP managed Charsadda attack from Afghanistan, says Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif.

22/01/16: Pakistan shares evidence of TTP involvement in Bacha Khan University attack with Afghan authorities.

25/01/16: Seventeen terrorists killed in aerial raids conducted by security forces in North Waziristan.

27/01/16: Interior Ministry directs educational institutions across Pakistan to enhance security.

28/01/16: Terrorism down in KPK by 87 per cent since last year, claims Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan.

05/02/16: Army Chief General Raheel Sharif says terrorism is a global phenomenon and requires a coordinated, global response.

12/02/16: Despite intelligence warnings that Dae'sh is an emerging threat, Pakistan's Foreign Office insists that the group has 'no organised presence' in the country.

12/02/16: Army Chief General Raheel Sharif approves death penalty for 12 Al-Qaeda, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Sipah-i-Sahaba (SSP) terrorists.

12/02/16: Around 97 Al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi militants, including three commanders, arrested in Karachi.

17/02/16: Seven TTP and LeJ terrorists killed in a police encounter in Sheikhpura, Punjab.

17/02/16: Three security personnel killed after armed militants launch attack on Levies check-post in Balochistan.

23/02/16: At least 15 terrorists killed and 8 hideouts destroyed near Pak-Afghan border in airstrike.

2. The Regional Powers



	Who?	The Source
<b>INDIA</b>		
<b>1. Bilateral Relations</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
18/01/16: India to put up laser fences at more than 40 'vulnerable' stretches along its border with Pakistan.		BBC News
11/02/16: Eleven Pakistani fishermen, including three teenagers, apprehended by Indian authorities from Pakistani waters, according to Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF).	Sameer Mandhro and Aditi Phadnis	Express Tribune
18/01/16: India to hand over dossier, detailing Jaish-e-Mohammed leader Masood Azhar's fundraising activities, to Pakistan.		India Today
28/01/16: Pakistan asks India to share updates from probe into Samjhauta Express attack.	APP	Daily Times
05/02/16: Indian military declines Pakistan Army's offer to help rescue 10 Indian soldiers buried under snow on the Siachen Glacier.		DAWN
<b>Public Statements</b>		
03/02/16: Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval says countries that support and sponsor terrorism have to be tackled more vigorously, following Pathankot attack	Indrani Bagchi	Times of India
13/02/16: India expresses 'disappointment' over the United States' decision to sell eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. Indian Foreign Secretary summons US Ambassador to convey 'displeasure'.	INP	Pakistan Today
14/02/16: Pakistan Foreign Office expresses its surprise and disappointment over Indian reaction to the US decision to sell F-16s to Pakistan.	Web Desk	The News
15/02/16: Former Indian PM Manmohan Singh criticises the Narendra Modi-led government for an inconsistent policy towards Pakistan.	Agencies	Daily Times
15/02/16: Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh alleges that a protest meeting held at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) to commemorate the executed Kashmiri Afzal Guru has a Pakistan Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) connection.	Correspondent	DAWN
<b>Media Commentary</b>		
17/02/16: Editorial argues India must continue to oppose the US-Pakistan aircraft deal.	Editorial	Economic Times
17/02/16: Editorial advocates scheduling Foreign Secretary-level talks as soon as possible.	Editorial	The News
17/02/16: Op-ed on India's opposition to US F-16 sales to Pakistan.	Nasim Zehra	The News
<b>2. Pathankot Attack &amp; Aftermath</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
11/01/16: Pakistan dispatches initial findings of Pathankot probe to India.	Web Desk	The News
12/01/16: Pakistan's spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) used a SIM card sold in Delhi to contact its operatives in India for over a year, according to Indian police sources.	Indo-Asian News Service	Zee News
23/01/16: Pakistan, India Foreign Secretary-level talks likely in near future; deliberations between the two countries ongoing.	APP	DAWN
25/01/16: Pakistani investigation team to seek access to crime scene in Pathankot.	Kamran Yousaf	Pakistan Today

25/01/16: Pakistan turns down Indian proposal for joint interrogation of Jaish-e-Mohammed leader Masood Azhar and others arrested in Pathankot terror attack case.	Shafqat Ali	The Nation
21/01/16: Indian Border Security Force kills suspect crossing Indo-Pak border near Pathankot.	Yudhvir Rana	Times of India
28/01/16: Foreign Office spokesperson urges India to do away with the practice of hurling 'unsubstantiated terror allegations against Pakistan'.	Mateen Haider	DAWN
22/01/16: India agrees to receive Pakistani investigation team to probe Pathankot attack.	Amir Wasim	DAWN
<b>Public Statements</b>		
03/01/16: Pakistan condemns attack on Pathankot Airbase.	Mariana Baabar	DAWN
05/01/16: India says it will take a decision on the next round of talks with Pakistan after the operations at Pathankot Airbase conclude.	Jawed Naqvi	Express Tribune
05/01/16: US State Department says it expects Pakistan to act against Pathankot attack perpetrators.		BBC
05/01/16: Indian PM Narendra Modi urges PM Sharif to take 'firm and immediate action' against those behind the Pathankot attack.	Irfan Haider	DAWN
06/01/16: PM Sharif says Pak-based groups to face action if their involvement in Pathankot attack is proven.	Baqir Sajjad Syed	DAWN
11/01/16: Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval denies cancellation of Pakistan-India Foreign Secretary-level talks, scheduled on January 15 in Islamabad.	Web Desk	The News
13/01/16: No reason to distrust Pakistan, says Indian minister Rajnath Singh.	Monitoring Report	The News
14/01/16: New Delhi welcomes Pakistan's move to form a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the Pathankot Airbase attack.		DAWN
19/02/16: Punjab Police Counter-Terrorism Department (CTT) files formal First Information Report (FIR) registering Pathankot Airbase attack.	Web Desk	The News
23/02/16: Phone number linked to Pathankot attack traced to Jaish-e-Mohammed headquarters, says Advisor to the PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz.	Correspondent	DAWN
26/02/16: Punjab government forms a five-member Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to investigate the Pathankot Airbase attack case.	Abdul Manan	Express Tribune
<b>Media Commentary</b>		
04/01/16: Article enumerates reasons why India should continue to talk to Pakistan in light of Pathankot incident.	Shivam Vij	Quartz
05/01/16: Opinion piece stresses the need for Pakistan to get serious about eliminating terrorism, following attacks in Afghanistan and India.	Mohammad Taqi	Huffington Post
05/01/16: Opinion piece argues Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) is to blame for Pathankot attack.	Bruce Riedel	Daily Beast
06/01/16: Article says it is time for India to stop blaming Pakistan for every terrorist attack in India.	Raza Rumi	Quartz
06/01/16: Opinion piece contemplates Indo-Pak dynamics in light of Pathankot incident.	Nasim Zehra	The News
07/01/16: In an opinion piece, a former RAW officer questions India and Pakistan's practice of exchanging lists of nuclear facilities in light of Pathankot attack.	R.K. Yadav	Dailyo.com
08/01/16: Opinion piece advocates the banning of militant organisations.	Zeeba T. Hashmi	Daily Times

09/01/16: Op-ed on the future of the Indo-Pak relationship after Pathankot.

Hamid Mir

Indian Express

**3. Status of Confidence Building Measures**

**Actions Taken**

01/01/16: Pakistan and India exchange lists of prisoners and nuclear installations, as per terms of bilateral agreement.

INP

Pakistan Today

11/01/16: India rejects visa applications of 75 Pakistani pilgrims.

DAWN.com

01/02/16: India open to allowing free movement of entrepreneurs in the South Asian region, but permission for Pakistani businessmen to come with conditions.

Abhishek Bhalla

India Today

25/02/16: India and Pakistan resume Samjhauta Express train service after it was suspended three days ago due to security concerns over riots in the Indian state of Haryana.

Web Desk

Geo News

**Media Commentary**

08/01/16: Opinion piece emphasises the continued importance of CBMs between India and Pakistan.

Sitara Noor

The News



	Who?	The Source
<b>IRAN</b>		
<b>1. Bilateral Relations</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
11/01/16: Pakistan and Iran constitute joint committee to curb human trafficking and drug smuggling.	Syed Ali Shah	DAWN
28/01/16: Joint Border Commission calls on Iran and Pakistan to secure the border in an attempt to effectively check drug trafficking and illegal migration.	Mohammad Zafar	Express Tribune
05/01/16: Pakistan's Foreign Office condemns mob attack on Saudi embassy in Tehran.	Staff Reporter	DAWN
06/01/16: Advisor to the PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz pledges to help defuse tensions following Saudi-Iran standoff.	Irfan Haider	DAWN
09/01/16: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan calls on Pakistan to play a role in easing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran.		The News
11/01/16: Foreign Office releases statement reaffirming importance of ties with Iran, and expresses hopes for further bilateral cooperation.		APP
12/01/16: Pakistan to back Saudi Arabia in case of territorial threat, but not join in on action aimed at a particular country, says Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif.	Awad Mustafa	Defense News
25/02/16: Iran hands over 57 deported Pakistani nationals at Pak-Iran border.	Reuters	The News
<b>Media Commentary</b>		
10/01/16: Op-ed on the state of Pakistan's regional diplomatic ties.	Hasan Askari Rizvi	Express Tribune
11/01/16: Op-ed discusses Pakistan's regional foreign policy challenges.	Mosharraf Zaidi	The News
16/01/16: Opinion piece on the Saudi-Iran conflict.	Maria Khalid	Pakistan Today
19/01/16: Opinion piece praises PM Sharif's efforts to broker peace between Iran and Saudi Arabia.	Mosharraf Zaidi	The News
11/02/16: Column challenges Pakistan's mediatory role in Saudi-Iran rift.	Maqsdul Hasan Nuri	Business Recorder
15/02/16: Special report on the future of Pakistan-Iran relations.	Correspondents	Express Tribune
<b>2. Bilateral Trade</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
02/01/16: Pakistan comprehensively engaged with Iran to enhance trade and economic relations, says Commerce Minister.		Daily Times
12/01/16: Pakistan and Iran to lay railway track connecting Gwadar, Balochistan to the Iranian port city of Chabahar.	Saleem Shahid	DAWN
12/01/16: Iran to restart rice imports from Pakistan in October 2016.	Erum Zaidi	DAWN
28/01/16: Pakistan, Iran agree to increase trade to \$5 billion over the next five years.		Pakistan Today
31/01/16: Government to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Iran once sanctions are lifted.	Sharam Haq	Express Tribune

20/02/16: Pakistan formally lifts sanctions on Iran; set to export goods to Iran worth over \$1 billion, ranging from textiles to rice and mangoes.

M. Aftab

Khaleej Times

**Public Statements**

05/02/16: Iran’s Ambassador to Pakistan Mehdi Honardoost urges the Pakistani private sector to step up efforts to promote trade with Iran.

Staff Reporter

Pakistan Observer

**Media Commentary**

18/01/16: Editorial on what a post-sanctions Iran means for Pakistan.

31/01/16: Editorial on realising Iran-Pakistan trade potential.

31/01/16: Op-ed on the implications of lifting Iran sanctions.

Imran Malik

Pakistan Today  
Express Tribune  
The Nation

**3. Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline**

**Actions Taken**

09/01/16: Tehran to take action should Pakistan fail to meet its obligations on the construction of a pipeline bringing natural gas from Iran.

13/01/16: Pakistan ready to complete final pipeline spur that will enable it to import natural gas from Iran once sanctions are lifted, according to Oil and Gas Development Company official.

09/02/16: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources to schedule a high-level delegation visit to Iran to discuss the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project.

Anthony  
McAuley

PressTV Iran

The National

Pakistan Today

**Public Statements**

04/02/16: Iran could supply cheap gas and electricity to Pakistan, says Iranian Ambassador.

APP



	Who?	The Source
<b>CHINA</b>		
<b>1. Bilateral Relations</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
04/01/16: China and Pakistan complete joint two-day naval drill in the East China Sea.		CCTV.com
09/01/16: A Chinese fleet arrives in Karachi for third Pak-China joint naval exercise.		Dunya News
<b>Public Statements</b>		
06/01/16: China's Foreign Ministry condemns attack on Pathankot Airbase; urges both Islamabad and New Delhi to go ahead with Foreign Secretary-level talks on January 16.	Reporter	Business Recorder
06/01/16: China attaches high priority to relations with Pakistan, says President Xi Jinping.	INP	The Nation
08/01/16: China reiterates support to Pakistan on counter-terrorism.		The Nation
12/01/16: Direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban are expected to resume within days of officials from Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and the United States meeting.	Kamran Yousuf	Express Tribune
<b>Media Commentary</b>		
01/01/16: Article speculates about China's role in the Indo-Pak peace process.	Toquir Hussain and Ishrat Saleem	The Diplomat
<b>2. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
14/01/16: Pakistan, China agree to establish a long-term plan for 15-year cooperation, and expand energy sector cooperation to the oil and gas sectors.	Mehtab Haider	The News
15/01/16: PM Sharif convenes a meeting of the heads of all parliamentary parties to redress reservations over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.	Web Desk	The News
27/01/16: Pakistan Navy increases surveillance activities as development of the deep sea port begins in Gwadar, Balochistan.	Irfan Ghauri	Express Tribune
29/01/16: Pakistan, China to implement electronic data exchange system to verify Chinese goods being imported into the country.		Business Recorder
03/02/16: PM Sharif inaugurates Gwadar-Hoshab (M-8) portion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.	Zafar Baloch	Express Tribune
<b>Public Statements</b>		
04/01/16: Calling CPEC a 'game-changer' for the entire region, Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination warns against turning CPEC into a Kalabagh-like interprovincial controversy.		APP
05/01/16: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Pervaiz Khattak demands that the federal government halt all projects initiated under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's Eastern route until KPK's reservations are addressed.	Zulfiqar Ahmad	Business Recorder
08/01/16: China expresses concern over the KPK Chief Minister's statements against CPEC.	Ansar Abbasi	The News

08/01/16: Chinese firm to build mega dam in Azad Kashmir despite strong opposition from New Delhi.

Ananth  
Krishnan

India Today

09/01/16: Minister for Planning and Development says Balochistan’s reservations regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor have been resolved after consultations with the provincial leadership.

Pakistan Today

**Media Commentary**

13/01/16: Op-ed on the broader geostrategic implications of CPEC.

Imran Malik

The Nation

28/01/16: Opinion piece examining the CPEC controversy.

Rafiullah Kakar

Express Tribune

04/02/16: Feature on the reaction Baloch locals on Gwadar’s development as part of Chinese investment.

Jon Boone and  
Kiyya Baloch

The Guardian



	Who?	The Source
<b>RUSSIA</b>		
<b>1. Bilateral Relations</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
02/02/16: Russia acknowledges Pakistan's reconciliatory efforts in the Saudi-Iran conflict.	Shafqat Ali	The Nation
<b>Public Statements</b>		
11/02/16: Kremlin spokesperson says Moscow highly values cooperation with Islamabad in the sphere of counter-terrorism.	News Desk	Express Tribune
<b>Media Commentary</b>		
25/01/16: Article notes Russian attempts to strengthen ties with Pakistan.	Naveed Ahmad	Express Tribune
02/02/16: Article outlining Russian attempts for closer ties with Pakistan.	Shah Rukh Hashmi	Russia Direct
<b>2. LNG Pipeline Deal</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
09/01/16: Pakistan and Russia agree to deepen cooperation in the energy sector as they jointly set up liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) air-mix plants.	Zafar Bhutta	Express Tribune
14/01/16: Russia's \$2 billion LNG pipeline project in Pakistan hits a roadblock after the US introduces a set of sanctions on the Russian firm set to work on the scheme.		
15/01/16: Pakistan sends another request to the Eurasian Economic Union about creating a Free Trade Area.	Sputnik	Russia and India Report
19/01/16: Officials from Pakistan and Russia meet to discuss \$2 billion LNG project; Pakistani delegation negotiates an LNG supply deal with Russian firm Gazprom.	Zafar Bhutta	Express Tribune
28/01/16: Construction on the North-South gas pipeline, the largest project in the history of Russo-Pak economic cooperation, set to begin in July 2016.	TASS	Russian News Agency
<b>Public Statements</b>		
06/01/16: Over 50 Russian companies looking for opportunities to invest in Pakistan, Russian trade representative tells Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.	News Desk	Fibre2fashion.com



	Who?	The Source
<b>SAUDI ARABIA</b>		
<b>1. Regional Security</b>		
<b>Actions Taken</b>		
01/01/16: Saudi official meets Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif to discuss regional security and bilateral defence cooperation.	Baqir Sajjad	DAWN
08/01/16: PM Sharif assures Saudi Foreign Minister of full support to Saudi-led Islamic coalition if its sole purpose is to fight terrorism and not any particular country.	Kamran Yousuf	Express Tribune
08/01/16: Saudi Foreign Minister meets General Raheel Sharif at the GHQ to discuss the regional security situation.	Web Desk	The News
18/01/16: PM Sharif and General Raheel Sharif visit Riyadh in an attempt to ease Saudi-Iran tensions.	Staff Writer	Al Arabiya News
14/02/16: Armed forces from around 20 countries, including Pakistan, gather in northern Saudi Arabia for 'the most important' military manoeuvre ever staged in the region.	AFP	Express Tribune
<b>Public Statements</b>		
05/01/16: Pakistan's Foreign Office condemns mob attack on Saudi embassy in Tehran.	Staff Reporter	DAWN
12/01/16: Pakistan to back Saudi Arabia in case of territorial threat but not join in on action aimed at a particular country, according to a statement by General Raheel Sharif.	Awad Mustafa	Defense News
13/01/16: Advisor to the PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz says Pakistan will not deploy forces on the ground in any other country.	Kamran Yousuf	Express Tribune
15/01/16: Pakistan bound to provide defence support to Saudi Arabia in case of a threat to the latter's territorial integrity, says Sartaj Aziz.	Muhammad Saleh Zafar	The News
<b>Media Commentary</b>		
06/01/16: Column stresses need for Saudi-Iran mediation.	Mosharraf Zaidi	The News
15/01/16: Opinion piece advocates prioritising Pakistani interests in the Saudi-Iran conflict.	Saleem Safi	The News
15/01/16: Article speculates about whether Pakistan will move away from traditional alliance with Saudi Arabia.	Umair Jamal and Yaqoob Bangash	Foreign Policy
16/02/16: Opinion piece implores Pakistani policymakers to resist Saudi pressure.	Moeed Yusuf	DAWN
<b>2. Bilateral Relations</b>		
<b>Public Statements</b>		
31/01/16: About 24,000 madrassahs in Pakistan are funded by Saudi Arabia, reveals US lawmaker.	PTI	The Asian Age
<b>3. Bilateral Trade</b>		
<b>Public statements</b>		
01/01/16: Finance Minister invites Saudi Arabia to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan.		Dispatch News Desk

### 3. Regional Dynamics & Crosscutting Issues

#### Bilateral & Multilateral Dialogues

- i. 11/01/2016: Third China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Dialogue held in Islamabad.
- ii. 11/01/2016: Quadrilateral Coordination Group, comprising the United States, China, Afghanistan and Pakistan, met to discuss prospects for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, in Islamabad.
- iii. 18/01/2016: Second Quadrilateral Coordination Group meeting discussed pathways for peace and made progress on a roadmap towards initiating peace talks with Taliban groups, in Kabul.
- iv. 18/01/16: Five-day Pakistan-China Business Friendship Conference organised by Ministry of Commerce in collaboration with the Board of Investment and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, in Islamabad.
- v. 06/02/16: Third Quadrilateral Coordination Group meeting devised action plan for early direct peace talks between the authorised representatives of the Afghan government and Taliban groups, in Islamabad.
- vi. 23/02/16: Fourth Quadrilateral Coordination Group meeting held in Kabul.

#### Track II

- i. 12/01/16: Fourth meeting of the Centre for Research on Security Studies-Duran "Beyond Boundaries" Pak-Afghan Track 1.5 in Islamabad .
- ii. 08/02/16: Fifth meeting of Centre for Research on Security Studies-Duran "Beyond Boundaries" Pak-Afghan Track 1.5 in Bhurban, Murree.

#### Crosscutting Issues

- i. 04/01/16: Tense Saudi-Iran standoff, following execution of Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr; subsequent attack on Saudi embassy in Tehran, and resultant expulsion of Iranian diplomats from Riyadh.
- ii. 27/01/16: Oil prices fall in Asia and long-running concerns over saturated market overshadow talks between major producers to slash output.

#### 4. Summary for the Quarter

On the domestic front, the first quarter of 2016 was marred by economic difficulties. Faced with an impending review by the International Monetary Fund, the federal government imposed an additional Rs.101 billion in petroleum taxes to shore up its faltering revenue collection targets, refusing to pass on the benefits of a 70 per cent decline in global oil prices to the average consumer. This drew criticism from the Opposition as well as economic analysts. Meanwhile, Pakistan International Airlines' announcement of a hefty loss of Rs.20.55 billion in just nine months set in motion the government's longstanding plan to privatise the airline. The announcement triggered a nationwide strike by PIA employees, with Opposition parties pledging to stall any legislation aimed at privatising the national carrier in the Senate. As the strike entered its second day, flight operations were suspended and an increasingly beleaguered PML-N government retaliated by enforcing the emergency services act on PIA and threatening to dismiss absent employees. On February 2, two protesters were killed and several injured when security forces opened fire on PIA workers in Karachi.

Elsewhere, progress was made in the fight for polio eradication. In January, a World Bank National Immunisation Support Project (NISP) delegation finalised a \$180 million deal for routine immunisation of children. Pakistan and Afghanistan also agreed on joint polio campaigns at the border, and a polio vaccination drive began in Balochistan. February saw similar immunisation drives in Karachi, Bajaur and Khyber Agencies, despite threats against, and attacks, on polio health workers.

On the security front, a brutal terrorist attack on Bacha Khan University in Charsadda on January 20 left twenty dead, once again reigniting debate on civilian leadership deficits in scaling up the year-old National Action Plan (NAP), as well as on continued implementation gaps. In the days following the attack, the government and National Assembly both reaffirmed their collective resolve to combatting terrorism, and the government urged educational institutions to undertake necessary security arrangements. A series of threats in the immediate aftermath of the attack prompted the Punjab government to shut down schools across the province for a week.

On January 1, the Foreign Office reiterated that Da'esh had no presence in Pakistan amid reports that 20 people had recently left the country to join the fight in Syria.

Progress in Pakistan's relations with India faltered following a militant attack on Pathankot Airbase in Indian Punjab on January 2, threatening to reverse diplomatic gains made during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brief stopover in Lahore on December 25. The attack was followed by a prolonged period of uncertainty in which the fate of Foreign Secretary-level talks, originally scheduled for January 15, was quickly made contingent on Pakistan's progress in the Pathankot investigation. Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) leaders were detained in Pakistan in connection with the attack. Following the registration of an FIR in Punjab, India allowed Pakistan to send in an investigative team. The governments of both countries displayed a welcome maturity in managing the crisis, however, with both sides presently working to reschedule Foreign Secretary talks for March. Meanwhile, a hostile Indian response to US plans to sell eight F-16s to Pakistan presents a new roadblock for the relationship, with the Indian government strongly opposing the sale, and Pakistan expressing disappointment at New Delhi's reaction.

Quadrilateral meetings on the Afghan peace process involving China, the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan began in Islamabad on January 16. Two further rounds were held in Kabul and Islamabad on January 18 and February 6 respectively. Pakistan reiterated its support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, and vowed to extend its support to President Ashraf Ghani's government in this regard. Renewed talks between the Intelligence chiefs of the two countries rekindled hopes of reviving the intelligence MoU that was inked in 2015, but optimism quickly buckled under the weight of domestic opposition in Kabul.

As political parties voiced reservations on the route of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China urged political leaders in Pakistan to resolve their differences. On February 13, the Rs.13 billion Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab (M-8)

stretch of the corridor was inaugurated. Prospects of cooperation between Islamabad and Moscow also increased in the first two months of 2016 as a result of planning talks on the \$2 billion Karachi to Lahore LNG pipeline project finalised in November 2015, as well as a meeting in January to discuss the sale of military hardware.

Finally, the Saudi-Iran rift following Riyadh's execution of Shia cleric Nimr Al-Nimr, and the subsequent attack on the Saudi embassy in Tehran, left Pakistan navigating a tense standoff. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif visited Riyadh and Tehran on January 20 and 21, respectively, to meet with Saudi and Iranian leadership. The visits, which drew praise from UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, were billed as attempts at reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia by Pakistan. Though Pakistan declared that it would under no circumstances participate in a military alliance against Iran, the exact nature of its participation in the 34-member coalition assembled by Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism, remains unclear. The volume of Pakistan-Iran trade is expected to rise to over \$5 billion following Pakistan's move to lift sanctions on Iran. However, progress on the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline remains fragile, due to renewed US cautioning against the project.

## 5. Publications from the Region

### Governance

"Election Commission of Pakistan in 2015", *Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency*, 01/2016.

### Social & Economic Issues

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, "China Pakistan Economic Corridor", *Sustainable Development Policy Institute*, 2016.

Dr. Ghulam Ali, "Forecast 2016: On China-Pakistan Relations", *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 15/01/2016.

"State of Religious Freedom in Pakistan", *Jinnah Institute*, 19/01/2016.

Priyanka Singh, "Will Diamer Bhasha Dam Get a Share in the CPEC Pie?", *Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses*, 18/01/16.

### Militancy

"Pakistan Security Report 2015", *Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies*, 06/01/2016.

A. Rauf K Khattak, "What NAP Missed", *DAWN*, 17/02/2016.

"Annual Security Report 2015", *Centre for Research and Security Studies*, 18/02/2016.

Robert Fisk, "Islamic State and Taliban are Carving up Afghanistan", *DAWN*, 18/02/2016.

Fahd Humayun, "Bringing NAP to South Punjab", *Jinnah Institute*, 19/02/2016.

Imtiaz Gul, "Great Guns", *Centre for Research and Security Studies*, 19/02/2016.

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