



Sources of Tension in Afghanistan and Pakistan

A Regional Perspective

Pakistan: Monitoring the Key Regional Powers

QUARTERLY MONITORING BRIEF

Report No. 2

March 1 - April 30, 2016



- Pakistan-India ties worsen after Indian spy is apprehended in Balochistan



- Iranian President's visit to Islamabad spurs agreements on Pak-Iran trade, commerce, energy cooperation



- Chinese companies sign deals worth \$2 billion as work on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor continues



- Pakistan's participation in Saudi war exercises prompts concern about nature of Pak-Saudi ties



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**CIDOB Sources of Tension in Afghanistan & Pakistan: A Regional Perspective
(STAP RP)
Quarterly Report on “Monitoring the Key Regional Powers”
March 1 to April 30 2016**

Introduction

The purpose of this series of quarterly monitoring reports (2016) 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).

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

04/03/2016: Ex-Karachi mayor and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) politician Mustafa Kamal announces launch of new political party.

19/03/2016: PM Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif meet to discuss external and internal security developments.

04/04/2016: Panama Papers leak reveals offshore holdings owned by PM Sharif's children.

05/04/2016: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan calls for National Accountability Bureau (NAB) investigation into Sharif family assets.

06/04/2016: PM Sharif announces judicial commission to investigate offshore companies owned by his family.

09/04/2016: PTI Chairman Imran Khan announces 'long march' to the Sharif family's residence to protest offshore companies and undeclared assets.

11/04/2016: PTI Chairman Imran Khan calls for PM Sharif's resignation in the wake of Panama Papers revelations.

14/04/2016: PM Sharif leaves for London amidst Panama Papers fallout.

21/04/2016: Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif dismisses 11 military officers over corruption charges.

24/04/2016: PTI Chairman Imran Khan announces the start of an anti-corruption movement in Sindh from April 26.

Social & Economic Issues

01/03/2016: Punjab Assembly passes Protection of Women Against Violence Bill 2015.

01/03/2016: Council of Common Interests (CCI) postpones population and housing census after provincial governments cite concerns relating to the presence of illegal immigrants and refugees.

01/03/2016: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar extends deadline for tax amnesty scheme.

05/03/2016: Senate rejects bill seeking to convert Pakistan International Airlines Corporation into a public limited company.

06/03/2016: Mainstream religious parties reject women protection bill passed by Punjab Assembly.

12/03/2016: Senate passes bill criminalising sexual assault against minors, child pornography and trafficking.

13/03/2016: Death toll from torrential rain rises to 28 after houses collapse in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

14/03/2016: Anti-polio drive begins in Mohmand agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

14/04/2016: Criminal gangs kill six policemen and capture 15 others in Rajanpur, South Punjab.

16/04/2016: Army takes over operation against criminal gangs in Rajanpur.

20/04/2016: Rajanpur-based criminal gangs release hostages and surrender to armed forces.

21/03/2016: Sindh government announces public holiday to observe Hindu festival of Holi for the first time in country's history.

25/03/2016: International Monetary Fund (IMF) approves \$502 million tranche for Pakistan.

01/04/2016: Price of petrol and diesel increase by 2.38 per cent and 1.96 per cent respectively.

04/04/2016: Torrential rains and flash floods claim 60 lives in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan.

05/04/2016: Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) rejects Khyber Pukhtunkhwa's Women Protection Bill, declaring most clauses un-Islamic.

12/04/2016: World Bank asks government to build consensus among all stakeholders to ensure that \$46-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects deliver on potential.

12/04/2016: Senate adopts amended Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (Conversion) Bill 2016 after Opposition agrees to extend its support.

13/04/2016: Controversial Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill (PECB) 2015 sails through National Assembly.

13/04/2016: Pakistan hangs four prisoners convicted of murder in Multan amidst rising international alarm over its frequent use of the death penalty.

Conflict in Afghanistan

02/03/2016: Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif makes brief stopover in Kabul to meet with top Afghan leadership.

02/03/2016: Advisor to the PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz acknowledges that Islamabad has some degree of influence over the Afghan Taliban.

09/03/2016: China offers expanded military aid to Afghanistan to combat the Taliban.

15/03/2016: In secret meetings with Pakistani officials, Taliban reject Pakistani efforts to get them to join peace process.

16/03/2016: Islamabad says it is reluctant to host direct talks between Afghan government and the Taliban; recommends holding next round of talks in Qatar.

18/03/2016: Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) begins talks with Afghan government to lay the groundwork for peace negotiations.

21/03/2016: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi says Pakistan desires friendly ties with all its neighbours, including Afghanistan and India.

22/03/2016: Pakistan detains Mullah Rasool, chief of Afghan Taliban breakaway faction, according to reports.

22/03/2016: Minister for Commerce Khurram Dastgir says regional peace can be achieved through economic cooperation and that prospects of enhancing Pak-Afghan bilateral trade are high.

24/03/2016: Hizb-e-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar wants 'power-sharing' arrangement with Kabul in exchange for peace.

28/03/2016: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani telephones PM Sharif to express grief over loss of lives in Lahore terrorist attack.

28/03/2016: Pak-Afghan border crossing at Torkham closed following exchange of harsh words between border guards.

03/04/2016: Khyber Pukhtunkhwa government to send delegation to Kabul to curb illegal use of Afghan SIM cards.

06/04/2016: Afghan intelligence agent arrested from Pakistan-Afghanistan border region of Chaman.

11/04/2016: Afghan Ambassador Dr. Omar Zakhilwal and Higher Education Commission (HEC) chairman agree to work on joint higher education venture.

12/04/2016: Houses of Afghan nationals in Torkham demolished after a number of refugees refuse to comply with order to vacate the area and return to Afghanistan.

12/04/2016: Afghan Taliban announce the start of annual spring fighting season with the launch 'Operation Omari'.

18/04/2016: Pakistan tells the Taliban to call off their spring offensive or else face dire consequences.

19/04/2016: At least 28 people are killed and 329 injured in suicide attacks in Kabul, Taliban claim responsibility.

25/04/2016: Kabul calls on Pakistan to take action against Taliban, threatens to move United Nations Security Council if Islamabad fails to take military action against Taliban leaders.

25/04/2016: Three-member Taliban delegation arrives in Islamabad to discuss Afghan reconciliation process.

27/04/2016: Pakistan strongly rejects Afghan allegations about the country sheltering certain terrorists, saying that Islamabad is indiscriminately taking action against all terror groups.

27/04/2016: Afghan Foreign Ministry summons Pakistan envoy over claims of deadly cross-border shelling.



Ethnicity & Sectarianism

01/03/2016: Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman says Mumtaz Qadri, convicted murderer of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, was executed for taking the law into his own hands.

01/03/2016: Amnesty International urges Pakistan not to use disproportionate force to suppress protests following Mumtaz Qadri's hanging.

02/03/2016: Funeral prayers of Mumtaz Qadri held in Rawalpindi amid tight security.

10/03/2016: Commander among eight Baloch Liberation Army rebels killed in Sibi.

27/03/2016: Approximately 2,000 Qadri supporters stage sit-in within Islamabad's Red Zone in protest of his execution.

31/03/2016: Red Zone protesters end sit-in following successful mediation with government officials.

09/04/2016: Two Shia men and a child killed in ambush after offering prayers at a Karachi Imambargah.

23/04/2016: Sikh minority leader Sardar Soran Singh gunned down in Buner, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa.



Militancy

01/03/2016: Security forces kill 12 militants in North Waziristan's Shawal valley.

02/03/2016: Seven suspected militants including Baloch Republican Army (BRA) commander killed in Balochistan, says Frontier Constabulary.

04/03/2016: Four suspected militants killed, and two others injured, during a search operation conducted by security forces in Balochistan.

08/03/2016: At least 16 people, including six women and two policemen, killed in suicide bomb blast in Charsadda, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa.

09/03/2016: Shahbaz Taseer, son of murdered Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer, recovered near Quetta after being held by kidnappers for over four years.

11/03/2016: Nine FATA Development Authority (FDA) employees kidnapped in South Waziristan Agency.

15/03/2016: At least nine suspected terrorists are killed in two separate intelligence-based operations in south Punjab and Karachi.

16/03/2016: At least 15 people are killed and 30 others injured in a bomb explosion on a bus carrying government officials in Peshawar.

20/03/2016: Four suspected militants are killed in a gun battle with security forces in Balochistan's Nasirabad district.

23/03/2016: A former director of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is killed in drive-by shooting in Peshawar.

27/03/2016: At least 72 killed, and more than 233 injured, in a suicide blast in crowded Lahore park on Easter Sunday.

28/03/2016: Faction of the Pakistani Taliban, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), claims responsibility for Lahore bombing.

28/03/2016: Military gives go-ahead for South Punjab operation following Lahore attack.

30/03/2016: At least five suspected terrorists killed by Punjab's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) near Lahore.

31/03/2016: Two Pakistani Taliban terrorists sentenced to death by a military court are executed in Kohat, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa.

02/04/2016: Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar meet Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif to discuss Punjab anti-terror operation.

19/04/2016: Over 140 rebels surrender in Balochistan as government works to secure ongoing CPEC projects.

2. The Regional Powers



INDIA

1. Bilateral Relations

Actions Taken

16/03/2016: Indian security forces kill three out of 10 alleged terrorists after receiving a tip-off from National Security Advisor (NSA) Naseer Janjua.

17/03/2016: Advisor to the PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz meets Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in Pokhara, Nepal and extends a formal invitation to Prime Minister Modi to attend the 19th SAARC Summit scheduled to be held in Islamabad.

23/03/2016: Five-member Joint Investigation Team (JIT) from Pakistan applies for visas to visit India for probe into Pathankot attack.

24/03/2016: Pakistani Rangers gift sweets to Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in Indian-held Kashmir on the occasion of Holi.

24/03/2016: Security forces in Balochistan discover and arrest Indian Navy officer on espionage charges, according to Balochistan Home Minister.

28/03/2016: Indian PM Modi calls PM Nawaz to condemn the Lahore blast.

28/03/2016: Five-member Joint Investigation Team (JIT) from Pakistan visits Pathankot Airbase and meets with Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials.

30/03/2016: Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) releases a confessional video statement by alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Yadav.

10/04/2016: PM Sharif telephones PM Modi to express shock and grief over temple explosions in Kerala.

11/04/2016: Indian government prepares five-layer plan to stop infiltration along the 2,900 kilometre Indo-Pak border.

17/04/2016: Four suspected RAW agents, working as fishermen, apprehended from Sindh.

26/04/2016: Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan meet on the sidelines of Heart of Asia preparatory conference in New Delhi to discuss roadmap for engagement.

28/04/2016: India activates 'laser walls' along border with Pakistan in Punjab to prevent cross-border infiltration.

Public Statements

02/03/2016: Terror attack on Pathankot Airbase was carried out by non-state actors operating with the support of the Pakistani establishment, claims Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar.

07/03/2016: Pakistan's High Commissioner to India stresses the need for uninterrupted talks between Pakistan and India.

11/03/2016: Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar insists that the Pakistani cricket team will not travel to India until 'clear public guarantees' of foolproof security are received from New Delhi.

18/03/2016: An investigation team from Pakistan will visit India to carry out inquiries into the Pathankot attack, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj announces after meeting her counterpart Sartaj Aziz in Nepal.

30/03/2016: India to ask for access to Masood Azhar in exchange for allowing Pakistan access to Pathankot crime scene, says chief of India's National Investigation Agency.

30/03/2016: India's Ministry of External Affairs rejects authenticity of video confession of alleged RAW spy, claiming that the arrested officer was tutored and

Who?	The Source
Correspondent	DAWN
	Dunya News
News Desk	Express Tribune
News Desk	Express Tribune
Syed Ali Shah	DAWN
Web Desk	Dunya News The News
APP	DAWN
Reuters	The News
Neeraj Chauhan	Times of India
INP	Daily Times
Hari Kumar & Geeta Anand	New York Times
News Desk	Express Tribune
Correspondent	DAWN
Agencies	Pakistan Today
Iftikhar A. Khan	The News
Correspondent	DAWN
Correspondent	DAWN
Correspondent	DAWN

possibly abducted from Iran.

08/04/2016: Pakistan's Foreign Office says it is ready to work with India to prevent an arms race in the region.

08/04/2016: Pakistan's High Commissioner to New Delhi says peace process between Pakistan and India is suspended at present.

10/04/2016: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon expresses willingness to play a role for the resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India.

12/04/2016: Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif accuses India of trying to subvert \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

17/04/2016: Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh claims India has been consistently trying to improve ties with Pakistan.

23/04/2016: New Delhi says dialogue process with Islamabad was never 'suspended'.

23/04/2016: Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti sees no reason why India and Pakistan cannot come together.

28/04/2016: Foreign Secretary says there was no breakthrough in talks with his Indian counterpart.

Media Commentary

13/03/2016: Opinion piece calls for allowing India-Afghanistan trade through Pakistan.

30/03/2016: Opinion piece on the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) and Indian nuclear advances.

30/03/2016: Editorial sees progress on Pathankot attack investigation as essential to the Indo-Pak peace process.

08/04/2016: Editorial on the India-Pakistan stalemate.

08/04/2016: Opinion piece on the current state of India-Pakistan relations.

09/04/2016: Opinion piece contends talks must continue despite disruptions.

09/04/2016: Opinion piece about India's growing nuclear arsenal.

12/04/2016: Opinion piece on the Indian spy affair.

17/04/2016: Opinion piece evaluates the impact of closer Indo-US ties on Pakistan.

27/04/2016: Editorial on the implications of India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary-level talks.

28/04/2016: Editorial on Pak-India dialogue, following Foreign Secretary-level meeting.

28/04/2016: Opinion piece reflects on shared challenges facing India and Pakistan.

28/04/2016: Editorial on the deteriorating state of India-Pakistan ties and the possibility of a Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue.

28/04/2016: Opinion piece lists reasons why Pakistan and India must continue dialogue.

Correspondent	DAWN
News Desk	Pakistan Today
	Radio Pakistan
Kay Johnson	Reuters
	The Hindu
News Desk	Express Tribune
PTI	Economic Times
Baqir Sajjad	DAWN
Rustam Shah	Express Tribune
Talat Masood	Express Tribune
	Pakistan Today
	Express Tribune
Shahzad Chaudhry	The News
Mosharraf Zaidi	Indian Express
Sarwar Naqvi	The News
Marvi Sirmed	The Nation
Munir Akram	DAWN
	Daily Times
	DAWN
I.A. Rehman	DAWN
	The News
Jayanth Jacob	Hindustan Times

2. Tensions over the Line of Control (LoC)

Actions Taken

14/03/2016: India alarmed after spotting People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops at forward posts along the Line of Control (LoC) on the Pakistani side of Kashmir.

11/04/2016: Indian troops violate LoC ceasefire with heavy firing and mortar shelling; Pakistani Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) contacts his Indian counterpart via hotline to discuss incident.

Correspondent	DAWN
Syed Irfan Raza	DAWN

3. Status of Confidence Building Measures

Actions Taken

14/03/2016: Pakistan cricket team agrees to participate in the ICC World T20 Championship after getting security assurances from Indian officials.

21/03/2016: Pakistan releases 86 Indian fishermen.

27/03/2016: India releases 33 Pakistani Hindus detained in Rajasthan.

14/03/2016: Pakistan cricket team agrees to participate in the ICC World T20 Championship after getting security assurances from Indian officials.

21/03/2016: Pakistan releases 86 Indian fishermen.

27/03/2016: India releases 33 Pakistani Hindus detained in Rajasthan.

Public Statements

21/03/2016: PTI Chairman Imran Khan urges India to play a constructive role in restoring bilateral cricketing ties with Pakistan.

12/04/2016: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan urges both countries to resolve the issues of arrested fishermen.

18/04/2016: India considers proposal to simplify procedures to grant Indian citizenship to minority Hindus from Pakistan.

Media Commentary

19/04/2016: Article on the potential of religious tourism to bring Pakistan and India closer together.

Kashif Abbasi	DAWN
Shazia Hasan	DAWN
Web Desk	Pakistan Today
Kashif Abbasi	DAWN
Shazia Hasan	DAWN
Web Desk	Pakistan Today
News Desk	Express Tribune
Tarique Siyal	Daily Times
	DAWN
Shehryar Nabi	Quartz



	Who?	The Source
IRAN		
1. Bilateral Relations		
Actions Taken		
17/03/2016: Iran deports 161 Pakistanis for not holding valid residence permits.	Agencies	Pakistan Today
25/03/2016: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani arrives in Islamabad on two-day visit.	Madiha Fareed	Dunya News
26/03/2016: Pakistan and Iran sign six MoUs to strengthen cooperation in the fields of health, commerce, finance and foreign services.		Daily Times
27/03/2016: Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif asks Iranian President Rouhani not to allow India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) to use Iranian soil to foment unrest in Pakistan.	Staff Report	Daily Times
27/03/2016: Iranian President Rouhani rejects claim that the issue of RAW involvement in Pakistan was discussed during his meeting with Pakistani leadership.	APP	DAWN
06/04/2016: Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Mehdi Honardoost says news about the captured RAW agent was leaked to the media despite friendly relations between the security agencies of Pakistan and Iran.	Zarghon Shah	The News
15/04/2016: Pakistan, Iran discuss shared challenges of terrorism and militancy in a meeting between the Pakistani Information Minister Senator Pervaiz Rashid and Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan.	Nokhaiz Sahi	The Nation
20/04/2016: Pakistan and Iran announce joint naval drills in the Persian Gulf.		The Nation
Public Statements		
22/03/2016: PM Sharif expresses his desire for stronger relations with Iran during a meeting with Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Honardoost.	ANI	Business Standard
28/03/2016: Iran strongly condemns recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan and calls for concerted global efforts to counter terrorism and extremism.		Press TV
07/04/2016: Islamabad says Iran has given full assurances that it will not allow its soil to be used against Pakistan.	PPI	The News
Media Commentary		
28/03/2016: Special report on Pakistan-Iran relations.	Madiha Fareed	Dunya News
28/03/2016: Editorial reflects on President Rouhani's visit to Islamabad.		DAWN
29/03/2016: Opinion piece on the implications of President Rouhani's visit to Islamabad.	Javid Husain	The Nation
11/04/2016: Opinion piece discusses Pakistan-Iran relations in light of the Indian spy saga.	K. Iqbal	The Nation
16/04/2016: Opinion piece on Pak-Iran strategic cooperation in light of President Rouhani's visit and Iran's alleged links to the Indian spy affair.	S. Farooq Hasnat	The Nation
2. Trade & Energy		
Actions Taken		
26/03/2016: Pakistan and Iran aim to increase annual bilateral trade volume to \$5 billion by 2021, says PM Sharif following meeting with Iranian President Rouhani.	Mehreen Zahra-Malik	Reuters
27/03/2016: Governor State Bank of Pakistan and Governor of Central Bank of Iran sign MoU on banking cooperation.		Mehr News Agency
27/03/2016: Iranian President Rouhani says his country has completed work on a multibillion dollar gas pipeline on its side of the border, and will be able to provide gas to Pakistan in a few months.	Abdul Manan	Express Tribune
Public Statements		
22/03/2016: Governor State Bank of Pakistan says that Islamabad is fully open to Iranian banks opening branches in Pakistan.		Dunya News

24/03/2016: Pakistani businessmen to open Letters of Credit for imports from Iran in euros instead of dollars so as to avoid US sanctions.

24/03/2016: Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) says Pakistan has an opportunity to benefit from Iranian markets after the lifting of sanctions.

16/04/2016: FPCCI says Pak-Iran relations will help promote economic activity in the region.

Peer Muhammad APP	Express Tribune
	Daily Times
	Pakistan Observer



CHINA

1. Trade & Economic Activity

Actions Taken

01/03/2016: Punjab government and Chinese hydroelectric company sign MoU for water sector cooperation.

Staff Reporter The Nation

19/03/2016: A Chinese delegation visits the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), and expresses interest in joint ventures with, and, investment in, Pakistan.

The News

29/03/2016: Pakistan and sign MoU to promote and expand textile cooperation.

Salim Ahmed Pakistan Observer
Radio Pakistan

03/04/2016: Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Chief Minister Pervez Khattak says the federal government has addressed his province's reservations about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

05/04/2016: Chinese delegation inaugurates Gwadar Port Free Zone.

Correspondent Express Tribune
Reuters Express Tribune

08/04/2016: Companies from China's Xinjiang province sign deals worth about \$2 billion with Pakistan.

15/04/2016: Two agreements signed for increasing cooperation between Punjab government and China's Shandong province, along with six other MoUs.

Staff Reporter The Nation

21/04/2016: Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) signs contract with China for the development and launch of a Pakistan Remote Sensing Satellite (PRSS-1) system.

Zahid Chaudhary Pakistan Observer

23/04/2016: Pakistan and China develop a 1,320MW coal-based power generation project in Hub, Balochistan.

The News

27/04/2016: Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz met Chinese counterpart Wang Yi to express satisfaction over the pace of CPEC projects.

Staff Reporter The Nation

Public Statements

06/03/2016: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects are part of the goals of China's five-year plan, say Chinese officials.

INP The Nation

17/03/2016: Balochistan Governor says Quetta's water crisis may affect CPEC implementation.

Saleem Shahid DAWN

18/03/2016: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal says all reservations on CPEC have been addressed.

INP The Nation

22/03/2016: Khyber Pukhtunkhwa government demands that the centre assimilate two 2,600 MW Khyber Pukhtunkhwa-based power projects into CPEC.

Syed Irfan Raza DAWN

27/03/2016: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar says the government has initiated mega energy projects under CPEC.

Radio Pakistan

17/04/2016: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal says first phase of CPEC will be completed by 2018.

Staff Reporter The Nation

29/04/2016: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal says China has become the number one foreign direct investor in Pakistan just within two years of CPEC starting.

The News

Media Commentary

01/03/2016: Opinion piece describes CPEC plans as ambitious but unclear.

Niaz Murtaza DAWN

22/03/2016: Opinion piece criticises Pakistan's Ministry of Planning and Development for having disproportionate control over CPEC.

Saleem Safi The News

10/04/2016: Article enumerates challenges facing CPEC's Gwadar project.

Saeed Shah Washington Post

24/04/2016: Opinion piece looks at CPEC through a security lens.

Amir Rana DAWN

29/04/2016: Opinion piece sees CPEC as the way forward for Pakistan.

Saleem Safi The News

2. Bilateral & Multilateral Relations

Actions Taken

09/04/2016: China and Pakistan launch 'Shaheen V' joint air force training exercises.

28/04/2016: Pakistan and China announce joint production of JF-17B fighter jet at Chengdu Aerospace Corporation, Chengdu, China.

Khawaja Daud
Web Desk

Daily Pakistan
Dunya News

Public Statements

28/03/2016: China condemns Lahore attack 'in the strongest possible terms'.

05/04/2016: Advisor to the PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz says that the 'all-weather' strategic partnership between Pakistan and China is an anchor for regional peace and stability.

Xinhua
NNI

XinhuaNet
The Nation

Media Commentary

11/03/2016: Article probes China's motives in promising military aid to Afghanistan.

23/03/2016: Article sees neutral China as well placed to facilitate Afghan peace process.

27/04/2016: Commentary on Pakistan's deepening ties with China.

Shannon Tiezzi
Najma Minhas
Anja Manuel

The Diplomat
Foreign Policy
Reuters



	Who?	The Source
RUSSIA		
1. Bilateral Relations		
04/03/2016: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Vice President calls for banking channels with Russia.	PPI	Daily Observer
24/03/2016: At least 84 Pakistani traders detained by Russian authorities at Moscow airport for over eight hours.		Express Tribune
26/03/2016: More than 120 Pakistani traders deported from Moscow return home.		Geo News
28/03/2016: Russian President Vladimir Putin offers his condolences following Lahore blast.	Web Desk	Samaa
12/04/2016: Government approves construction of Russian-funded 1,100 kilometre long North-South gas pipeline.	Shahbaz Rana	Express Tribune
Public Statements		
01/03/2016: Russian Ambassador to Pakistan says bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia is falling short of potential; stresses need for increased trading.		Pakistan Observer
18/03/2016: Moscow believes that there are still not enough reasons to justify Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Islamabad, according to Russian Ambassador.	Baqir Sajjad	Pakistan Herald
20/04/2016: Russian President Vladimir Putin says Russia is actively developing multifaceted relations with Pakistan, including in the fields of trade and counter-terrorism.	Kamran Yousaf	Express Tribune
28/04/2016: Pakistan and Russia in talks for the sale of helicopters, air defence systems and tanks, says Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif.	Agencies	The Nation
Media Commentary		
09/04/2016: Opinion piece on Pakistan-Russia economic and security ties.	Sarwat Rauf	Pakistan Observer



	Who?	The Source
SAUDI ARABIA		
1. Bilateral Relations		
Actions Taken		
10/03/2016: PM Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif arrive in Saudi Arabia on three-day visit.	APP	DAWN
27/03/2016: Saudi authorities execute Pakistani man convicted of killing a Bangladeshi woman.	AFP	Newsweek
28/03/2016: Military heads of 39 states discuss Saudi-led anti-terrorism alliance in Riyadh.	Ali Zain	Daily Pakistan
28/04/2016: Pakistani Air Chief Marshal calls on Saudi Minister of Defence during official visit.	Agencies	Daily Times
Public Statements		
19/03/2016: A total of 2,393 Pakistanis are being held in different Saudi jails, National Assembly told.	Mohsin Ali	Gulf News
22/03/2016: Pakistan highly values its relations with Saudi Arabia as the two countries share religious, cultural and historical ties, National Assembly Speaker tells Saudi Ambassador.	Staff Reporter	Daily Times
05/04/2016: President Mamnoon Hussain says Pakistan will continue to cooperate with Saudi Arabia in the fight against terrorism.	NNI	The Nation
06/04/2016: President Mamnoon Hussain urges Saudi businessmen to invest in Pakistan's energy infrastructure and agriculture sectors.		The News
26/04/2016: Saudi Arabia to introduce a 'green card' system within five years to allow resident expatriates more rights in order to improve Kingdom's investment climate, according to Deputy Crown Prince.	Agencies	Khaleej Times
Media Commentary		
20/03/2016: Opinion piece on remittance debt of Pakistani workers in Saudi Arabia.	Farrukh Saleem	The News
23/03/2016: Opinion piece says Pakistan will not sell nuclear weapons to Saudi Arabia.	Muhammad Umar	The Nation
23/03/2016: Editorial sees upcoming visit of Iranian President Rouhani as an opportunity to restore equilibrium to the Iran-Pakistan-Saudi Arabia equation.		The Nation
03/04/2016: Opinion piece on the future of Pak-Saudi relations.	Fahd Humayun	The News
2. Bilateral Trade		
Actions Taken		
07/03/2016: Pakistani business delegation calls on Saudi Ambassador to discuss ways to enhance bilateral trade between the two countries.	NNI	The Nation
16/04/2016: Saudi Arabia bans shrimp imports from Pakistan, citing health concerns; other countries may follow suit.	Aamir Shafaat Khan	DAWN

3. Regional Dynamics & Crosscutting Issues

Bilateral & Multilateral Dialogues

- I. 14/03/2016: South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Inter-Summit Session in Pokhara, Nepal.
- II. 19/03/2016: 5th Pak-China Business Forum attracts 700 representatives from over 400 Chinese and 150 Pakistani companies in Lahore.
- III. 12/04/2016: 5th International Halal Conference and Exhibition showcases livestock and allied industries before the international community to increase Pakistan's halal trade.
- IV. 14/04/2016: 13th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) opens in Istanbul, Turkey.
- V. 26/04/2016: Senior Official Meeting of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in New Delhi, India.

Track II

- I. 18/03/2016: Key civil society leaders and opinion makers from India and Pakistan including parliamentarians, former diplomats, former military officers and policy experts meet in Bangkok for the 18th Chaophraya Dialogue from March 18 to 20 organised by the Jinnah Institute (JI) and the Australia-India Institute (All).

Crosscutting Issues

- I. 07/03/16: White House pledges to release data on civilian casualties from US drone strikes since 2009, the first-ever disclosure surrounding the lethal operations.
- II. 02/04/16: PM Modi visits Saudi Arabia on King Salman's invitation in bid to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries.
- III. 12/04/16: India and the United States agree to share military logistics, according to US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter, as both sides seek to counter China's growing maritime assertiveness.
- IV. 18/04/16: India, Afghanistan and Iran finalise Chabahar Agreement to operationalise facilities at the strategic deep-sea port, giving New Delhi access to Afghanistan.

4. Summary for the Quarter

The reporting period was marked by heightened political uncertainty and renewed debate on the impact of violent extremism on Pakistan. On Easter Sunday, 75 people were killed and 340 injured in a suicide attack targeting Lahore's crowded Gulshan-i-Iqbal Park. The attack was carried out by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) splinter faction Jamaat-ul-Ahraar (JuA). Later, the group announced its intention to undertake further acts of violence in the Punjab heartland.

On February 29, following the execution of Mumtaz Qadri for the 2011 murder of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, a 25,000-strong crowd of rightwing supporters occupied Islamabad's Red Zone in protest, bringing life in the federal capital to a standstill. The protests ended on March 31 after state officials intervened and offered to mediate with the gathered protesters.

In the aftermath of the Lahore attack, the Pakistan Army launched a targeted operation against militant outfits in South Punjab. On April 16, the Army also took charge of the ongoing security operation against criminal gangs and militants in the Rajanpur district after six policemen were killed and 24 others captured in a police-led offensive. In Balochistan, while development work on the western route of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) continued, the military operation against insurgents picked up pace. A security raid on April 9 resulted in the deaths of 34 militants, including United Baloch Army (UBA) commander Andul Nabi Bangulzai.

On the governance front, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif came under domestic fire after the Panama Papers exposé revealed that three of his family members owned shell companies and expensive residential properties in London. As PM Sharif formed a judicial commission to investigate potential wrongdoing, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan announced a long march to the Sharif family's Raiwind residence in late April.

Despite getting off to a promising start and verbal commitments from both governments to continue the dialogue process, India-Pakistan relations saw a visible slowdown in March and April. Until the third week of April, there was no forward movement on the subject of Foreign Secretary-level talks, even as Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj met on the sidelines of a SAARC Ministerial Conference in Pokhara, Nepal, in March. On April 26, the Foreign Secretaries met on the sidelines of a Heart of Asia conference in New Delhi, the highest-level official scheduled interaction between the two sides since January's Pathankot attack. As investigations into January's attack on Pathankot Airbase continued, a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) from Pakistan visited India in late March to collect evidence and inspect the attack site—an unprecedented step in terms of bilateral counterterrorism cooperation. However, the capture and arrest of RAW spy Kulbhushan Yadav in Balochistan on March 29 sparked nationwide furore, with many in Pakistan pointing to his discovery as concrete evidence of subversive Indian involvement in the province. Following fresh ceasefire violations on the Line of Control (LoC) in April, both the United States and the United Nations urged Pakistan and India to focus on constructive engagement. Additionally, as the United States and India moved to strengthen bilateral cooperation between their two governments, India was quick to reiterate its objections to the American sale of F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan.

On April 12, meanwhile, the Afghan Taliban announced the launch of their annual spring offensive 'Operation Omari' in honour of Mullah Omar, leading to renewed concerns about Afghanistan's stability and the future of peace talks. Little progress was made on the Afghan reconciliation front during the reporting period. The Quadrilateral Coordination Committee (QCC) was unable to meet after February, despite calls and commitments by all parties to facilitate an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political settlement. After at least 28 people were killed and 329 injured in coordinated suicide attacks in Kabul on April 19, President Ghani issued a hard-hitting statement labeling the Taliban 'terrorists' and calling on Pakistan to take decisive military action against the Taliban leadership.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visited Islamabad in late March; Iran and Pakistan subsequently signed six MoUs to strengthen bilateral cooperation in various fields, including health, commerce and security. The visit followed

mounting concerns about the impact of Pakistan's high-level participation in military exercises staged by Saudi Arabia earlier that month on Pakistan-Iran relations. The Pakistan-Iran dynamic was further complicated after captured Indian spy Kulbhushan Yadav confessed to having entered Pakistan via Iran. In the aftermath of this revelation, Pakistan placed an official request with Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Honardoost for Tehran to investigate this matter.

Pakistan's relations with China continued to see steady progress. In April, the two countries' air forces launched a joint training exercise 'Shaheen V' in Shanghai. As development work on CPEC continued to pick up pace, Islamabad and Beijing signed additional MoUs on water cooperation and textile trade. On April 8, companies from China's Xinjiang province signed deals worth \$2 billion with Pakistan. The Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa Chief Minister, meanwhile, acknowledged that the government had successfully addressed most of his province's reservations on the route of the proposed Corridor, a welcome development following concerns about inter-provincial disagreements over the trajectory of the \$46 billion project.

Elsewhere, the Russian Ambassador to Pakistan relayed Moscow's willingness to expand bilateral trade to its 'fullest potential' on March 1. Moscow remained noncommittal, however, on the subject of a potential visit to Islamabad by President Vladimir Putin. On April 12, the Pakistani government approved the construction of the long-awaited 1,100 km, Russian-funded North-South gas pipeline.

5. Publications from the Region

Governance

Monitor on Civil-Military Relations. Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT). 03/2016.

Social & Economic Issues

Pakistan Education Statistics 2014-15. National Education Management Information System (NEMIS). 2016.

Militancy

National Action Plan Brings Down Incidence of Heinous Offences. Asif Chaudhary. DAWN. 14/03/2016.

Pakistan After the Lahore Bombing: Shaping the Security Response. Colin Cookman. United States Institute of Peace. 04/08/2016.

Sauleha Kamal, Jinnah Institute