

The CPEC and China-Pakistan Relations

A Case Study on Balochistan

*Mir Sher Baz
Khetran and
Muhammad Anjum
Saeed*

Abstract: The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will not only enhance the strategic cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad, but also open up new avenues of economic development for the people of Balochistan. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has declared that Gwadar will be connected with main cities to expose the full potential of Balochistan. According to statistics from the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, Balochistan is estimated to receive \$7.1 billion initial investments through the CPEC, ranking second in its share from the total of \$46 billion. The CPEC will connect Pakistan to Central Asia via the Eurasian Land Bridge planned under China's "Belt and Road" initiative. The Pakistani government plans to hook up the country with Central Asia via Termiz (Uzbekistan), making Balochistan the central point of economic

Mir Sher Baz Khetran is Research Fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. His mailing address is ISSI, F-5/2, Islamabad, Pakistan. He can also be reached at sbmir_isb@hotmail.com. Muhammad Anjum Saeed is a Ph.D. candidate at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. He can be reached at anjumsaeedrana@gmail.com.

activities in the region. Balochistan, in general, and Gwadar, in particular, will hopefully become the linchpin of the CPEC. Significantly rich in mineral resources, Balochistan can contribute to regional economic integration and, in turn, benefit from this economic opportunity greatly.

Keywords: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC); China-Pakistan relations; Gwadar port; Balochistan.

Pakistan is entering into a new chapter of economic take-off through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC is a \$46 billion flagship project of China's "Belt and Road" initiative (BRI). The BRI is viewed as the rebirth of the Silk Route connecting Asia with Europe and Africa, which emphasizes regional connectivity through economic development. China's prime purpose of building up the CPEC is to promote its economic and trade connections with regional countries. It is largely meant to fulfill its increasing energy demand and towering exports.¹ The CPEC will unveil a meaningful cooperation between the two neighboring countries of Pakistan and China, extending its benefits to the West, Central and South Asia. It will also provide a shortcut for shipping millions of tons of Chinese goods to the Middle East, Africa and Europe via the Gwadar port.² Meanwhile, it is envisioned that the establishment of the CPEC will afford Pakistan and China a strategically favorable position in the Arabian Sea, and in particular, make Balochistan and Gwadar both the center of economic activities and the hub of intense geopolitical contest.

Geopolitical Implications of the CPEC

The prime reason for China in establishing the CPEC is to revive trade and economic connectivity as in the time of the ancient Silk Road which had historically kept the world connected. It would also help make regional countries stronger under the new paradigms of regionalism and

¹"China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Game Changer," Special Report, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad.

²Azhar Ahmad, "Gwadar Port: Potentials and Prospects," Special Report, Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, Islamabad.

globalization. With China's growing energy needs and increasing exports, the road linkages have become essential. The BRI would be a valuable avenue to open up the Xinjiang province of China as well as connect it with Central Asia. China's geopolitical relations with both the East and the West would require redefinition and reconfiguration with the BRI. It would be placed both in Central Asia as well as an Indian Ocean state.³

The CPEC aims to make full use of the Gwadar Port, located beside the Strait of Hormuz in Pakistan's province of Balochistan. It is an entry point by which energy shipments could arrive and be sent through Pakistan via proposed pipelines. It could mitigate the risks of interruption in sea transport by adversaries. The Karakoram Highway, linking Pakistan and China via the Karakoram mountain range, is also scheduled to be upgraded. As a major concentration of the CPEC, China intends to expand energy trade routes to and from the Middle East. China has agreed to pay for the Pakistani portion of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline.⁴ In current years, China has made efforts to establish connections with the resource and energy-rich Central Asian states as a way to decrease its reliance on imports via the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, areas where a well-built United States naval existence could allow for obstacles at block points, such as the Strait of Malacca, in the event of conflict between the two powers.⁵

The CPEC will offer China a major shortcut to energy resources in the Middle East and thriving markets in Europe.

At the global level, China's geopolitical objectives are increasingly ambitious, growing beyond its direct neighborhood. The decision to declare its huge investment in the CPEC is an obvious hint that Beijing views Pakistan as a significant partner in meeting its ambitious economic and political goals. China views its investment in Pakistan, particularly its plan to build a rail corridor between the two countries, as the flagship

³"China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Game Changer."

⁴Saeed Shah, "China Builds Pipeline from Iran to Pakistan," *Wall Street Journal*, April 9, 2015.

⁵Safdar Sial, "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: An Assessment of Potential Threats and Constraints," <http://san-pips.com/download.php?f=268.pdf>.

project of BRI.⁶ This proposal seeks to link China's economic partners in Southeast Asia to Europe by means of overland and maritime trade routes, including key Middle East energy resources and emerging African markets.

At the regional level, India is wary about the Chinese-funded economic corridor in Pakistan. Among other concerns, New Delhi fears that Beijing may use the Gwadar port for military purposes. Pakistan's military is going to increase its presence there as well, to protect Chinese workers. Furthermore, Balochistan is located next to Afghanistan. Islamabad alleges that New Delhi uses Afghanistan to foment instability in Balochistan. Pakistan wanted China to build a naval base in Gwadar to strengthen ties with Beijing, and expressed that it would be grateful to the Chinese government if a naval base was constructed at the site of the Gwadar port for Pakistan, for it would strengthen the defense line of the country.⁷

Economic Dividends of the CPEC

Balochistan is a resource-rich province covering 43 percent of the land area of Pakistan. It has an approximately 700 km-long coastline on the Arabian Sea, which connects Pakistan to the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz. It has one of the largest gold mines (RekoDiq) and reservoirs of iron and copper (Saindak mines) in the world (see Table 1).

Under the general framework of the CPEC, a large number of energy, infrastructure and port-related projects (see Tables 2–4) have been initiated, especially in Balochistan. The Pakistani government has proposed 29 industrial parks and 21 mineral economic processing zones in all four provinces under the CPEC. The majority of them will be established in Balochistan.⁸ The proposed sites for industrial zones in Balochistan included Quetta, Gwadar, Khuzdar, Uthal, Hub and Dera Murad Jamali. The proposed Minerals Economic Processing Zones in Balochistan include

⁶"New Railways Tracks Planned under CPEC," *Dawn News*, December 20, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1227664>.

⁷Kamran Haider, "Pakistan Says It Wants China to Build Naval Base," *Reuters*, May 21, 2011.

⁸"Government Proposes 29 Industrial Ports, 21 Mineral Zones under CPEC," *The News*, July 26, 2015, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/13780-govt-proposes-29-industrial-parks-21-mineral-zones-under-cpec>.

Table 1. An Overview of Mineral Reserves in Balochistan.

Mineral	Reserves (in tons)
1. Copper Gold	4.5 billion
2. Iron	273 million
3. Lead Zinc	26 million
4. Coal	262 million
5. Fluorite	100,000
6. Barite	30 million
7. Gypsum & Anhydrite	7 million
8. Onyx Marble	12 million
9. Sulphur	787,000

Source: <http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/~balochi/images/minespdf/Mineral%20Reserves%20in%20Bln%20DGMM.pdf>.

Table 2. An Overview of CPEC Energy Priority Projects.

Projects	Location	MW	Estd. Cost (US\$ M)
Gawadar Coal Power Project	Gwadar	300	360
HUBCO coal power plant 1 × 660 MW	Hub Balochistan	1320	1940
Gaddani Power Park Project, Gaddani	Balochistan		
(i) 2 × 660 MW		1320	3960
(ii) Jetty + Infrastructure			1200
Total Energy Projects		2940	7460

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Khuzdar (chromite, antimony), Chaghi (chromite), Qila Saifullah (antimony, chromite), Saindak (gold, silver), RekoDiq (gold), Kalat (iron ore), Lasbela (manganese), Gwadar (oil refinery), and Muslim Bagh (chromite).⁹ Agriculture would also be modernized, with Chinese technology of agro-chemicals, pesticides, seeds, fertilizers, and research to be provided to farmers in Pakistan, as disclosed at an expo held in Lahore recently. Chinese technology and cooperative forming would revolutionize Pakistani agricultural production and reorient it according to the Chinese method.

Notably, the Gwadar port has become the flagship project of the CPEC and also a milestone in China-Pakistan relations. According to the CPEC arrangement, Gwadar has been allotted with an amount of \$770 million

⁹*Ibid.*

Table 3. CPEC Transport Infrastructure Projects in Balochistan.

No.	Projects	Location	Length (km)
Western Route Roads			
1.	Continued construction project (M-8 & N-85)	Gwadar-Hoshab-Pajjgaur-Nag-Basima-Surab	
2.	Short term project	Quetta-QilaSaifullah-Zhob	
3.	Short term and continued construction project	Basima-Rango-Khuzdar	
Rail Sector Projects			
1.	New construction project in middle and long term	New Railway line from Quetta (Bostan) to Kotla Jam on ML-2 via Zhob & DI Khan	560
		Gwadar to Jacobabad and Quetta (Mustung) via Basima New Railway line	1328
2.	New construction project in far future	New line from Gwadar to Karachi Reconstruction/upgrading of Quetta-Taftan existing railway	633

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Table 4. CPEC Gwadar Port-Related Projects.

No.	Projects	Cost (US\$ M)
1.	Eastbay Expressway	140.60
2.	Gwadar International Airport	230.00
3.	Construction of breakwaters	123.00
4.	Dredging of berthing areas & channels	27.00
5.	Infrastructure for Free Zone & EPZs port related industries	32.00
6.	Necessary facilities of fresh water treatment and supply	130.00
7.	Hospital at Gwadar	100.00
8.	Technical and vocational institute at Gwadar	10.00
	Total Gwadar Port Projects	792.60

Source: Compiled by the authors.

(see Table 5). A portion of China’s transit trade through the Gwadar-Kashghar corridor could generate substantial economic activity for Balochistan, Pakistan, and the whole region. The revenues would not only be generated by transit fees alone, but innumerable employment and business opportunities would be created along the corridor. Once desired infrastructure, services and facilities are made available at the Gwadar port, it would also be a port of choice for trans-shipment of cargo to and from a

Table 5. Ongoing Projects in Gwadar Through Chinese Funding.

Name of Project	Grant Size	Capacity	Notes
Gwadar Fauqeer Primary School	N/A	150 students	
Gwadar Hospital upgrading	\$90M	Expansion from 50 to 200 beds	
Gwadar Vocational Technical Institute	\$10M	Scholarship Program	
Gwadar International Airport	\$250M		
Gwadar East Bay expressway	\$160M interest free loans		MOFCOM team visited in February 2017
Gwadar power plant	\$500M		Feasibility study is in process
Desalination Plant	\$180M		

Source: Abid Qaiyum Suleri, "View From Across the Border," *The News International*, April 30, 2017.

number of countries. Its ideal location, natural seawater port and quick turnaround would attract larger vessels to offload their cargo for further trans-shipment to the countries in the Persian Gulf and the littoral states of the North Arabia Sea. The construction of the Gwadar port, with its central geo-strategic location and as the upper lip of Dubai port, the likelihood of international exposure would also vastly increase.

The Gwadar Port would provide an entry point and connectivity for trade as it would accommodate all types of international business activities. The major free zone, covering an area of 968,000 square meters, for manufacturing, warehousing, international purchasing, and transportation and distribution trans-shipment, commodity display and supporting services has also been established. The free zone is exempted from federal, provincial and local taxes and would make Gwadar an attractive port for maritime trade. Plans to establish the deepest berth of 20 meters mean that some of the largest vessels could be berthed at the port, bringing in more prosperity for Pakistan.¹⁰ The construction of Gwadar Free Zone will

¹⁰"Industrial Potential: Deep Sea Port in Gwadar Would Turn Things Around," *The Express Tribune*, March 17, 2016, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1067204/industrial-potential-deep-sea-port-in-gwadar-would-turn-things-around/>.

be an important part of the CPEC which will serve as the engine of local development. The basic objective of the free zone is to develop a commercial logistic center and industries with the local resources.

Also, the Gwadar port is advantageous for China, particularly its Xinjiang province, which is almost 4,000 km away from any main coastal cities of China.¹¹ It seems that Gwadar has become a crucial route for China under the developing geopolitical situation. While using the Gwadar route, transport distance and cost can be considerably reduced. Currently, most of China's energy imports and trans-shipments come through the Strait of Malacca with high

economic cost and security challenges. Pakistan is working on a plan to lay an oil pipeline from Gwadar to China for the export of crude oil and has given the task to the state construction firm Frontier Works Organization.¹² The pipeline will be laid down between western China and the Gwadar port and allow Beijing to expand and expedite import of crude oil. The proposed oil pipeline from Gwadar to China could be extended and hooked up with Iran that has already offered to establish a pipeline for the supply of crude oil to Gwadar. China fulfills its 50 percent oil requirement through imports from the Middle East. Oil supplies come via the Dubai-Shanghai-Urumqi route covering over 10,000 kilometers. The crude oil processed and refined in Pakistan can be exported through the shortest possible Dubai-Gwadar-Urumqi route, a distance of about 3,600 km. This can be attained by setting up an oil pipeline through the energy corridor up to western China via the Karakoram Highway and Khunjerab Pass.¹³ The other major development is the Gwadar International Airport with an estimated cost of

Local economies can benefit a lot from various CPEC projects including construction of the Gwadar port.

¹¹Mir Sherbaz Khetran, "The Potentials and Prospects of Gwadar Port," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 34 and 35 (Winter 2014 and Spring 2015), pp. 73–75.

¹²Zafar Bhutta, "Pakistan Working on Gwadar China Oil Pipeline," *The Express Tribune*, July 13, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1140506/crude-export-pakistan-working-gwadar-china-oil-pipeline/>.

¹³*Ibid.*

\$260 million, which would be able to accommodate Airbus 380 and the largest Boeing jet.¹⁴

Furthermore, the Gwadar port has been recognized as an initiative for collective regional economic activities. It is the shortest and most feasible route to sea for Afghanistan and most Central Asia states, and for the parts of Russia, especially during winter when most of its ports are closed.¹⁵ The Gwadar-Urumqi-Almatay-Astana-Moscow route would eliminate the need for Pakistan to seek transit from Afghanistan in order to reach Central Asia and beyond.¹⁶ At the moment, Central Asia economies are weak and it will take time before they are able to generate substantial goods for trade via Gwadar.

Social Impacts of the CPEC on Balochistan

The major transformation expected through the CPEC is the Chinese push for political stability and consistency in Pakistan's economic and development policies. China's refrain is always that the secret of their development is political stability in the country. If there can be stable government in Pakistan, it will bring change in economic development and foreign investment. It would also ensure the strong writ of the state. Due to its economic backwardness, Balochistan has been experiencing insurgencies. It has been vulnerable to insurgent intentions over the years. Any mega economic engagement would help restore people's trust in the political system and governing institutions of the province.

The CPEC cannot become a success story unless there is peace and stability in Balochistan. Growing economic activity in Balochistan, irrespective of all negativities, is certain to bring economic prosperity to one of the least developed economic regions of the country. Perhaps, such economic gains have convinced both the Baloch separatist leaders and the state to rethink their mutual hardline approach toward each other. Baloch

¹⁴"Gwadar Airport to Cost \$260 million," *The Express Tribune*, July 5, 2016. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1136476/infrastructure-gwadar-airport-cost-260m/>.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Abid Qaiyum Suleri, "View From Across the Border," *The News International*, April 30, 2017.

leaders, while sensing the CPEC as an opening to redeem their political and economic grievances, have realized that insurgency is not a solution to Balochistan's chronic problems, which largely stem from its historically neglected economy. In recent months, hundreds of militants have voluntarily surrendered because of the government's newly adopted reconciliation approach that guarantees amnesty from prosecution, among other rewards.

The Pakistan state's policy change towards Balochistan is already evident. There are talks of improving people's lives by directing the dividends of Chinese investment into the region. Given the current security situation, whilst a military presence is essential to keeping peace and stability in Balochistan, lasting peace and security will only come through economic prosperity and development, which the CPEC promises.¹⁷ Balochistan would be a major beneficiary of the multi-billion dollar economic development project which would bring an end to unemployment in the province. It would stand to achieve much from the CPEC projects, in the form of trade and employment opportunities. Most residents in Gwadar are fishermen. The fishery processing center will add value to local fishery products and improve the well-being of locals.¹⁸ The infrastructural expansion of Gwadar is immovable. All Chinese investment, be it expansion of the Gwadar port or roads and other assets, will remain the property of Balochistan as these assets cannot be shifted elsewhere.

In the past, no attention was given to the development of Balochistan and historical evidence show that the area was completely ignored. After the completion of the Gwadar port and the whole CPEC, a new chapter in political and economic development will hopefully emerge. Several neglected parts of the province will be connected through this corridor with the rest of the country. The CPEC could hence reduce the concerns among the

The CPEC will boost socioeconomic development in Balochistan as a means to achieve regional peace and security.

¹⁷Umair Jamal, "Can CPEC Become a Reconciliation force in Balochistan?," *The Diplomat*, November 29, 2015.

¹⁸Zhao Lijian, "Fish Processing Zone Inaugurated in Gwadar, China Pakistan Economic Corridor," May 7, 2017, <http://www.cpecinfo.com/cpec-news-detail?id=MjA4Ng==>.

Baloch people and give them a chance to become an important part of the mainstream developmental process. It is hoped that Gwadar would be converted into an economic focal point and will subsequently contribute to the development of the whole province, resulting in better solutions to the various economic and social problems of Balochistan. The construction of new roads can be seen as a new instrument of economic development. It aims at raising the economic level for the people of Balochistan by building roads and communication networks more extensively. Developed infrastructure of the region would help create new economic opportunities and provide modern health facilities and accessibility to education, thereby improving standards of living.

Another aspect of the construction of roads in the mountainous region is the boost to the tourism industry. Road development has led to substantial economic growth and social change in many countries such as China, Malaysia and several other countries of Europe. Balochistan has potential as a tourism location, for instance, it is the site of the oldest Maher Garh civilization and the coastal areas of the province are also attractive for tourists. In addition to tourism, Balochistan also has potential to grow its seafood industry because its coastline is rich in different kinds of fish and other marine species.

Poverty is one of the main causes of terrorism in Balochistan. Security forces operations tackle the visible symptoms, but not the root cause. The CPEC will play an important role in eradicating the menace of terrorism and poverty in the province. It is believed that, since CPEC projects have started, terrorist activities and insurgency in Balochistan have been gradually losing strength. Economic activity outweighs the uprising and people have resisted the insurgents opposing the CPEC.¹⁹ The Chinese side expressed its willingness to provide assistance and financial help for social welfare work in Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs). It is believed that with the implementation of CPEC projects, the social and economic conditions of the backward areas will be improved. It will help lift the people out of poverty as China has set a great example in

¹⁹"Does Insurgency Falter?," Interview with Sarfraz Bugti, Home Minister of Balochistan.

its own country by lifting 680 million people out of poverty within three decades.²⁰

During the last six decades, the close Sino-Pakistan relationship has withstood the test of time in national and international politics. Pakistan is familiar with the Chinese norms, value system and way of working. China has been engaged in Pakistan since the 1970s by building dams and the Karakoram highway in Gilgit-Baltistan. In 2002, China Metallurgical Group of Corporations took over coal mines in Saindak Balochistan.²¹ Working on the CPEC, the Pakistani and Chinese workforce will interact and collaborate on mega projects — with increasingly shared cultural values.²² Chinese work ethics are desirable: they strongly believe in the importance of hard work, dedication and commitment and this is one of the reasons for China's fast economic growth. Both China and Pakistan also exhibit the Asian characteristic of hospitality and warmth.

In addition to transfer of skills by China, the hope is also that social and cultural norms will spread. For instance, when the people of Pakistan benefit from engaging in the CPEC projects, attitudes of the Baloch may improve and resistance towards foreigners significantly decrease. Since the major CPEC routes will be passing through Northern areas, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Balochistan to

reach the Gwadar port, there could be an overflow of social-cultural effects. Any key economic development brings in its wake important social-cultural changes in the societies. In the process of its development work in the third world (e.g., the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America), China has

Apart from economic benefits, the CPEC will contribute to people-to-people exchange between China and Pakistan.

²⁰"Towards the End of Poverty," *The Economist*, June 1, 2013, <https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21578665-nearly-1-billion-people-have-been-taken-out-extreme-poverty-20-years-world-should-aim>.

²¹Peer Muhammad, "Saindak Copper-Gold Project: Govt Moves To Transfer Ownership to Balochistan," *The Express Tribune*, October 27, 2013.

²²Maqsudul Hasan, "CPEC: Socio-cultural Dimension," *Business Recorder*, February 22, 2016, <http://fp.brecorder.com/2016/02/2016022218746/>.

established merits and by and large earned the respect and appreciation of local people.²³

At present, feudalism and tribalism are gradually embracing forces of modernization and development. Incremental changes are happening and, gradually, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will evolve. Education for the locals to study in China is expected to receive a boost and many young people will be attracted to travel and pursue education in different fields. Upon doing so, they might be inspired by Chinese values and its exceptional development. Whilst China's engagement with Pakistan is mainly economic at the moment, aspects of the socio-cultural, such as the Chinese education system, language, and cultural civilization, may trickle down into the Pakistani culture. The Chinese language is already getting attention and China's soft power is rising as engineers, doctors and teachers seek education in China and then return. People are well acquainted with Chinese soft power in Pakistan, particularly in music, dance, fairs, sport and cultural activities in the country. Confucius Institutes in universities are also teaching history and cultural courses.

Another positive aspect could be that the CPEC's western and eastern routes, once completed with additional development projects, can develop economic opportunities for Pakistan's neighbors including Iran, Afghanistan and India. If the outcome is as expected they might be willing to participate in CPEC projects as well. As a result, this would reduce mistrust between South Asian neighbors. Thus the CPEC may create open vistas of regional economic cooperation if it is carried through. With prerequisites of effective law and order, national focus and consensus, timely implementation, transparency and accountability, benefits can eventually accrue to smaller provinces. Here, China and Pakistan will mutually benefit. The CPEC is anticipated to become a knowledge corridor too, when there are regular networks of transportation. People-to-people contact will be enhanced with increasing cultural and social exchanges. New centers of knowledge will be created. According to Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of Planning and Development of Pakistan, three universities are being

²³*Ibid.*

established on the western route of the CPEC in the FATAs and Balochistan, and they will begin operations this year.²⁴

Conclusion

Balochistan is the hub of natural resources in Pakistan. It is a potential connection between the sea routes of the Indian Ocean with the Central Asian countries and China through the 2,200 kilometer land route from Kashghar to Gwadar. More than 60 percent of European oil passes through the sea-lanes of the Gwadar port. Gwadar is only 500 kilometers from the Dubai free port, making it the upper lip of the Middle East. The geographical contiguity of Balochistan makes it a potential reservoir of oil as well. The CPEC can help reduce the pessimism among the Baloch people who have suffered both economically and politically. The mainstream development process can easily reach out to them. Underdevelopment has kept the region neglected and provided fodder for non-state actors to promote extremism. With the launch of \$46 billion CPEC projects, Pakistan's economic growth is likely to increase multi-fold and Balochistan will be its main beneficiary. The major developments have already taken place including the completion of the western route (Balochistan part) at the end of 2016.

Although Western analysts have positive views on Pakistan's prospective economic development, the CPEC has received much criticism from India. The major power rivalries have a potential to derail the CPEC projects. However, the determination and cast iron friendship between China and Pakistan could prove fruitful. It is imperative for the Pakistani government to ensure that the benefits of the CPEC trickle down to the people, especially those in Balochistan. The ownership of the Gwadar Port is to be handed over to the

The Pakistani government needs to address social challenges in Balochistan and guarantee people's benefits from CPEC projects.

²⁴"Three Universities on Western CPEC Route to Start Functioning this Year," *Dawn News*, March 20, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1246870>.

Balochistan government as it is envisioned as the game changer, both in letter and spirit, to make the project sustainable.

In this world of geo-economics, financial negotiations allow business elites to benefit most, while ordinary workers remain deprived. Any feeling of deprivation amongst the natives can undermine the utility of the project. It is the responsibility on the part of Islamabad to enhance the capacity building of professionals to meet the criteria of Chinese companies, as well as the deadlines on CPEC projects. Capacity building and skills development of the Pakistani workforce, particularly the Balochs, should be undertaken as a priority of the federal government so that they can work efficiently on CPEC projects. Demands on the political leadership by residents of Gwadar for more say and share of interests must be addressed, the people's main fear is that they will become a minority and face challenges to their identity. In Balochistan and Gwadar in particular, there should be fair compensation for the properties of the people, so that CPEC projects can be executed more efficiently and in a balanced way to serve the interests of both the countries on the whole and the local people.