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AN ANALYSIS OF CHINA-PAKISTAN COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GLOBAL SECURITY INITIATIVE

Abstract

This article examines China-Pakistan cooperation in counter-terrorism within the Global Security Initiative (GSI) framework. The threat of terrorist attacks targeting economic interactions between countries, which creates challenges to regional stability, is analyzed. The methodology is based on studying strategic interests, cooperation mechanisms, and existing problems in anti-terrorist partnerships. Despite common goals, cooperation effectiveness is limited by political instability, economic difficulties, and public perception. New partnership development paths are proposed through social environment optimization, building regional security architecture, and respecting people's right to autonomous choice. This experience can serve as a model for implementing GSI in the global fight against terrorism.

Keywords: Global Security Initiative, strategic partnership, economic corridor, regional stability, anti-terrorist mechanisms, multilateral forums, social environment, political instability, diplomatic interaction, cross-border cooperation

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КЫТАЙ МЕНЕН ПАКИСТАНДЫН ТЕРРОРИЗМГЕ КАРШЫ КЫЗМАТТАШТЫГЫН ГЛОБАЛДЫК КООПСУЗДУК ДЕМИЛГЕСИ АЛКАГЫНДА ТАЛДОО

Кыскача мазмуну

Макалада Кытай менен Пакистандын Глобалдык коопсуздук демилгеси (GSI) алкагында терроризмге каршы кызматташтыгы изилденет. Эки өлкөнүн экономикалык өз ара аракеттенүүсүнө багытталган террордук чабуулдардын коркунучунун күчөшү талданып, бул аймактык туруктуулукка олуттуу коркунуч жаратат. Методология стратегиялык кызыкчылыктарды, өз ара аракеттенүү механизмдерин жана терроризмге каршы өнөктөштүктөгү көйгөйлөрдү изилдөөгө негизделген. Жалпы максаттарга карабастан, кызматташтыктын натыйжалуулугу саясий туруксуздук, экономикалык кыйынчылыктар жана коомдук кабылдоо менен чектелгени көрсөтүлгөн. Социалдык чөйрөнү оптималдаштыруу, аймактык коопсуздук архитектурасын түзүү жана элдердин автономдуу тандоо укугун урматтоо аркылуу өнөктөштүктү өнүктүрүүнүн жаңы жолдору сунушталат. Бул тажрыйба терроризмге каршы глобалдык күрөштө GSIни ишке ашыруу үчүн модель боло алат.

Түйүндүү сөздөр: Глобалдык коопсуздук демилгеси, стратегиялык өнөктөштүк, экономикалык коридор, аймактык туруктуулук, терроризмге каршы механизмдер, көп тараптуу форумдар, социалдык чөйрө, саясий туруксуздук, дипломатиялык өз ара аракеттенүү, чек ара аралык кызматташтык

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АНАЛИЗ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА КИТАЯ И ПАКИСТАНА В СФЕРЕ БОРЬБЫ С ТЕРРОРИЗМОМ В РАМКАХ ГЛОБАЛЬНОЙ ИНИЦИАТИВЫ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ

Аннотация

В статье исследуется сотрудничество Китая и Пакистана в сфере борьбы с терроризмом в контексте Глобальной инициативы безопасности (GSI). Анализируется возросшая угроза террористических атак, направленных против экономического взаимодействия двух стран, что создает серьезные вызовы для региональной стабильности. Методология работы основана на изучении стратегических интересов, механизмов взаимодействия и существующих проблем в антитеррористическом партнерстве. Показано, что, несмотря на общность

целей, эффективность сотрудничества ограничивается политической нестабильностью, экономическими трудностями и общественным восприятием. Предлагаются новые пути развития партнерства через оптимизацию социальной среды, построение региональной архитектуры безопасности и уважение права народов на автономный выбор. Данный опыт может служить моделью для реализации GSI в глобальной борьбе с терроризмом.

Ключевые слова: Глобальная инициатива безопасности, стратегическое партнерство, экономический коридор, региональная стабильность, антитеррористические механизмы, многосторонние форумы, социальная среда, политическая нестабильность, дипломатическое взаимодействие, трансграничное сотрудничество

As a strategic partner and neighbor of China, Pakistan plays a pivotal role in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) but has also been a frequent target of terrorist activities. According to official statistics, from 2004 to 2017, over 20 terrorist attacks were directed at Chinese enterprises and personnel operating in Pakistan. To safeguard national security and protect mutual interests, China and Pakistan have engaged in counter-terrorism cooperation under a shared strategic framework. This collaboration has included high-level visits, joint military exercises, and the signing of extradition agreements for terrorists, among other mechanisms, achieving some success. However, terrorist incidents continue to occur periodically. In 2024, there has been a resurgence of terrorist attacks targeting economic cooperation between China and Pakistan. These incidents not only pose a severe threat to Pakistan's national security and China's overseas interests but also undermine stability across the broader South Asian region. Given these challenges, China and Pakistan must urgently rethink their strategies and intensify counter-terrorism efforts.

On April 21, 2022, during the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference, Chinese President Xi Jinping introduced the "Global Security Initiative". This initiative underscores the importance of collaborative efforts by the international community to address non-traditional security threats, including terrorism. Since its inception, the GSI has garnered support from over 100 countries and international organi-

zations. In the recent joint communiqué, Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to fostering international cooperation grounded in the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative. Both parties agreed to collaborate in addressing global challenges and advancing the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind. To this end, both nations must enhance counter-terrorism collaboration under the Global Security Initiative framework, elevate their cooperative mechanisms in counter-terrorism governance, and establish exemplary paradigms that provide theoretical and practical references for international counter-terrorism efforts.

1. Characteristics of China-Pakistan Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

Since the early 21st century, China and Pakistan have collaborated extensively in counter-terrorism efforts under the guidance of their shared strategic objectives. This cooperation has established a robust framework characterized by top-level diplomatic engagement and multi-layered counter-terrorism mechanisms. Such collaboration has not only deepened political mutual trust but also laid a solid foundation for enhancing bilateral relations.

(1) Highly Aligned Counter-Terrorism Strategic Interests

Maintaining national security is a multi-faceted and complex endeavor that requires the concerted efforts and cooperation of both a country and its neighboring states. China and Pakistan share highly aligned count-

er-terrorism interests, grounded in common security concepts, shared geopolitical objectives, and the intrinsic need to safeguard economic and trade security.

Firstly, a shared security concept forms the foundation of China-Pakistan counter-terrorism cooperation. The two countries maintain a high degree of consistency on issues such as the harmfulness of terrorism and the means to combat it. In terms of nature and positioning, both China and Pakistan recognize that terrorism poses a significant threat to regional peace, security, and stability. They are particularly concerned about the potential for regional proliferation of terrorism due to foreign intervention. The similar perspectives of the two countries on terrorism have significantly enhanced the effectiveness of their counter-terrorism cooperation. Regarding the means to combat terrorism, both China and Pakistan advocate for strengthening the authority of the United Nations in counter-terrorism efforts. They oppose hegemonism and unilateralism, especially actions that use counter-terrorism as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

Secondly, safeguarding economic and trade security serves as the intrinsic driving force for China and Pakistan to deepen counter-terrorism cooperation. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) represents an objective requirement for the expansion of bilateral relations from the political and defense domains into the economic sphere, reflecting the high-level strategic partnership between the two countries. Since its inception, CPEC's potential in enhancing trade capacity, fostering economic development in adjacent regions, and improving regional connectivity has been highly regarded by both governments and scholars. However, terrorist organizations like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) frequently launch attacks within and around CPEC, challenging the authority of the Pakistani government and undermining

China's efforts to protect its overseas interests. The frequent occurrence of terrorist incidents not only increases the operational pressure on Chinese enterprises investing in Pakistan but also poses significant security risks to economic cooperation between the two countries. In this context, safeguarding the economic and trade cooperation interests of China and Pakistan has become a critical incentive for expanding counter-terrorism cooperation.

(2) Diversification of Anti-Terrorism Cooperation Mechanisms

In addition to bilateral cooperation mechanisms, China-Pakistan anti-terrorism cooperation exhibits a multi-level structure, characterized by joint participation in UN-led initiatives, emphasis on regional multilateral forums, and deepening bilateral efforts. This multi-faceted approach stems from the two countries' consistent alignment on bilateral and multilateral issues, mutual support for each other's positions, and enhanced cooperation within regional organizations and multilateral platforms.

Firstly, both countries actively adhere to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant international legal norms, conducting anti-terrorism cooperation under the United Nations framework. The UN-level norms provide legitimacy and form a crucial foundation for implementing anti-terrorism actions. Secondly, within regional multilateral frameworks, China and Pakistan primarily conduct counter-terrorism cooperation through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Combating terrorism is a key agenda item and mission for SCO member states. In June 2017, Pakistan officially joined the SCO, enhancing China's efforts to coordinate the fight against the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism. This accession has also facilitated the peace process in Afghanistan and positively impacted the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Under the SCO framework,

China and Pakistan have strengthened security cooperation through joint military counter-terrorism exercises, issuing counter-terrorism declarations, and other initiatives aimed at maintaining regional security and stability.

II. Challenges and Difficulties Faced by China-Pakistan Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

Currently, the world is experiencing unprecedented changes at global, epochal, and historical levels. The deficits in peace, development, security, and governance have deepened, posing significant challenges to humanity. Terrorism remains a critical contributing factor to these "four deficits." While China-Pakistan counter-terrorism cooperation has achieved notable success, it faces a series of challenges due to the "hollow ground" effect of terrorism, limitations in the counter-terrorism cooperation mechanisms, and the influence of public opinion on internal security cooperation within Pakistan.

(1) The Prominence of the "Depression Effect" of Terrorism

The "depression effect" of terrorism refers to a phenomenon where a region's economic and social conditions foster an environment conducive to the proliferation of terrorism. Such conditions include widespread poverty, the presence of rebel forces or organized crime groups, a pervasive atmosphere of extremist ideology, and weak national governance capacity. These factors enable such regions to attract terrorists from other areas, while the expansion of terrorist groups further creates an environment that supports the survival of terrorism, leading to deteriorating local security situations.

In general, strong governments possess the capacity to maintain control over situations, while stable regimes are capable of effectively combating terrorism. However, frequent political conflicts in Pakistan have undermined its efficiency in addressing terrorism. Additionally, Pakistan's limited economic self-sufficiency has exacerbated the

"depression effect" associated with terrorism. On one hand, tensions between religious and secular political parties within Pakistan result in divergent views on anti-terrorism policy formulation. This lack of governmental cohesion increases political uncertainty and significantly diminishes the country's ability to counter terrorism. On the other hand, sluggish economic growth has driven some individuals, out of economic necessity, to become recruitment targets for terrorist organizations. The weakness of Pakistan's economy stems from a complex interplay of factors, including adverse global macroeconomic conditions, external pressures arising from great power competition, low levels of industrial mechanization, frequent natural disasters, and escalating terrorist attacks, all of which constrain economic development to varying extents. In summary, internal political disputes and insufficient economic dynamism in Pakistan directly impede the country's anti-terrorism efforts.

(2) Limited Effectiveness of Anti-Terrorism Cooperation Mechanisms

Counter-terrorism is a multifaceted international issue that not only pertains to national security but also encompasses regional stability and global governance. The cooperation between China and Pakistan in this domain constitutes a critical component of their strategic partnership, playing a vital role in maintaining regional security and advancing the development of the economic corridor. However, this collaboration is not without its challenges. While the establishment and refinement of anti-terrorism mechanisms are the result of joint efforts by both countries, their practical implementation encounters numerous obstacles.

Firstly, within the framework of the United Nations, a few countries have adopted a selective approach to UN counter-terrorism norms. This not only undermines the international community's collective counter-terrorism efforts but also negatively impacts Chi-

na-Pakistan counter-terrorism cooperation. Secondly, the limited effectiveness of multilateral security cooperation within the SCO and SAARC has, to some extent, impacted China-Pakistan counter-terrorism collaboration. For instance, the SCO's framework for criminal judicial assistance lacks depth, thereby constraining the efficacy of China-Pakistan counter-terrorism efforts. Thirdly, despite China and Pakistan engaging in various forms of cooperation in intelligence sharing, police collaboration, and judicial assistance, there remains a notable absence of a comprehensive cross-border counter-terrorism mechanism. For instance, in the context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the security of Chinese-funded institutions, enterprises, and personnel primarily depends on Pakistani security agencies and counter-terrorism units. Overall, the current mechanisms exhibit limited effectiveness, necessitating the establishment of a more robust and integrated counter-terrorism cooperation framework between China and Pakistan.

(3) Public Perception Deviation in Security Cooperation

The relationship between nations is not only reflected in macro-level policies such as foreign affairs, military strategy, and trade agreements, but also in the micro-level perceptions and attitudes of individual citizens toward other countries. As the saying goes, "the friendship between nations lies in the closeness of their people, and the closeness of people lies in the connection of their hearts." Only through rational public discourse and dialogue can a unified consensus be formed on national policies.

On one hand, a segment of the Pakistani population, lacking a rational understanding of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist elements, fostering resentment and hostility. Certain segments of the public have been misled by terrorist organizations into perceiving the bilateral cooperation as

a form of "resource exploitation," particularly regarding the construction of Gwadar Port. They believe that this project will undermine the political and fiscal autonomy of the Baloch people. On the other hand, certain external forces have been actively sowing discord between the Pakistani public and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, disseminating negative narratives that can distort public perception. These misleading opinions not only affect the objective judgment of some segments of the population but also constrain broader cooperation between China and Pakistan across various domains.

III. New Pathways for China-Pakistan Counter-Terrorism Cooperation: A Perspective Based on the Global Security Initiative

As a multilateral security cooperation mechanism, the Global Security Initiative focuses on addressing various security issues through international cooperation to maintain world peace and stability. In light of the numerous challenges faced by China-Pakistan counter-terrorism cooperation, the two countries need to innovate their thinking on counter-terrorism cooperation and, from the perspective of the Global Security Initiative, explore a new path that is scientific, reasonable, and practical. This can be achieved by jointly addressing security challenges, giving full play to the leading role of the new security concept, adhering to the principle of indivisibility of security, and respecting the people's right to make their own choices, in order to overcome the difficulties in China-Pakistan counter-terrorism cooperation and jointly maintain world and regional peace and stability.

(1) Leveraging the Guiding Role of the New Security Concept to Comprehensive-ly Optimize the Social Environment

Adhering to the new security concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable development serves as the ideo-

logical foundation of the Global Security Initiative. In the face of frequent terrorist attacks, China-Pakistan counter-terrorism cooperation can only effectively address the challenge of terrorism undermining social order by upholding the core principles of the new security concept—jointly responding to threats, comprehensively considering strategies, and promoting the realization of sustainable security.

On the one hand, the instability of Pakistan's political ecosystem undermines the foundation of China-Pakistan counter-terrorism collaboration. In Pakistan's party politics, any ruling party or coalition often faces intense opposition from rival parties both within and outside the parliament. Political activities frequently lack compromise and are characterized by violence. Currently, Pakistan's party system remains underdeveloped and far from achieving stability. To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of counter-terrorism efforts, Pakistan should establish a dedicated action committee to conduct in-depth discussions on counter-terrorism issues and formulate cohesive and impactful policies. Internal political chaos should not impede the progress of counter-terrorism initiatives, ensuring that efforts do not stagnate.

On the other hand, a considerable proportion of the unemployed and school dropouts in the Pakistani public must be prevented from being recruited by terrorist organizations. Due to the weak state of the national economy, some people may be forced by life to take the path of terrorism and violence. The government must attach great importance to such problems and properly handle various social development issues including education and employment to create a vibrant social environment. The "comprehensive" and "sustainable" approach in the new security concept emphasizes that comprehensive measures should be taken to address the root causes, coordinate and promote security governance, and promote sustainable security

through sustainable development. Education and employment are the foundation of people's livelihood and the bridge to maintain social stability and national security. Solving the problems of education and employment can to a certain extent prevent the possibility of recruitment by terrorist forces.

(2) Adhering to the Principle of Indivisible Security to Build a New Regional Security Architecture

The principle of "inseparable security" within the Global Security Initiative underscores that national security and collective security are inherently intertwined. This principle aligns with the contemporary realities of the international community. Given the ongoing challenges posed by terrorist organizations that threaten the integrity of regional security assets, China and Pakistan must recalibrate their multilevel cooperation mechanisms to effectively implement the principle of inseparable security. The goal is to construct a regional security framework that is inclusive, comprehensive, collaborative, and sustainable.

First, it is imperative to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and reinforce its central role. To achieve tangible and effective outcomes in counter-terrorism efforts between China and Pakistan, it is crucial to strengthen the United Nations' core coordinating role in international counter-terrorism initiatives. We must resolutely oppose any form of hegemonism that undermines the UN's leadership and fully support the UN's pivotal role in establishing a framework for peace.

Second, it is essential to prioritize the reasonable security concerns of all parties involved. China and Pakistan should enhance counter-terrorism efficiency within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) framework. Counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries should reinforce criminal judicial assistance within the SCO, including treaty-extraneous areas such as

the transfer of criminal proceedings, criminal trials, extradition, and judicial assistance for terrorism crimes. Based on the characteristics of contemporary terrorism, this cooperation should deepen integration, promote development, broaden judicial cooperation channels, increase forms of judicial cooperation, and actively address international terrorism threats.

Finally, bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation should be strengthened through an open and win-win approach. Given the lack of a joint cross-border counter-terrorism mechanism, efforts should focus on enhancing overseas security capabilities. For instance, establishing a China-Pakistan Security Committee to formulate counter-terrorism policies, organize regular security training activities, and build cooperative relationships with Pakistani police and relevant departments can foster a synergistic counter-terrorism effort. Additionally, forming a mature and high-quality joint security team to execute counter-terrorism tasks will ensure operational efficiency and safety. However, achieving these goals requires Pakistan to adopt a more open and collaborative attitude towards counter-terrorism cooperation.

(3) Respecting the People's Right to Autonomous Choice and Promoting the Implementation of Counter-Terrorism Policies

In China-Pakistan cooperation, we should respect the development paths chosen autonomously by the people, avoiding the imposition of our own models and standards. This entails respecting each other's differences and individuality while prioritizing the security needs of the people, thereby effectively promoting the implementation of counter-terrorism policies.

First, China and Pakistan must prioritize the development of a policy agenda for counter-terrorism cooperation. The asymmetry between the transparency of CPEC information and public understanding significant-

ly impedes counter-terrorism collaboration between China and Pakistan. To address this, the Pakistani government should enhance transparency by disclosing detailed planning and implementation information about the corridor. Establishing task forces to engage with local communities will facilitate better communication and understanding of genuine political concerns, thereby reducing public apprehension regarding CPEC projects. Local residents should have opportunities to voice their opinions through consultations with relevant government departments during the policy implementation phase. This approach can mitigate negative sentiments and foster an objective and rational perspective on Sino-Pakistani cooperation across various sectors. Effective two-way interaction and coordination between government policies and public understanding are crucial for promoting substantive progress in counter-terrorism cooperation.

Secondly, China and Pakistan should leverage the role of security forum mechanisms. The two countries should actively establish regional security forums to facilitate greater involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in counter-terrorism efforts. Civil society support is indispensable for any effective campaign against extremism and terrorism. Without such support, initiatives to combat these threats are likely to be significantly constrained.

Finally, China and Pakistan should strive to break down civilizational barriers and expand cultural exchanges. Cultural differences between the two countries can lead to cognitive conflicts, which may impede practical counter-terrorism cooperation. Deepening mutual learning and exchanges in the humanities is a critical means to eliminate misunderstandings and foster mutual understanding among the people. The framework for building a China-Pakistan community with a shared future should be grounded in mutual respect and accommodation of each other's

cultural systems. This approach will help establish a friendly national image conducive to deepening counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries and ultimately realize the vision of peace outlined in the Global Civilization Initiative.

Conclusion

In the future, China and Pakistan should be guided by the Global Security Initiative and use the "six adherences" to provide new ideas for counter-terrorism cooperation. They should adhere to jointly responding to terrorism and build a new national counter-terrorism discourse system; adhere to the principle

of indivisibility of security and construct a complete regional security architecture; adhere to the guiding role of the new security concept and optimize the social environment; and respect the people's freedom of choice and development to promote the smooth implementation of counter-terrorism policies. They should continuously establish a full and three-dimensional counter-terrorism image for the international counter-terrorism struggle, forge a new type of security path that suits both sides' development, and build a complete regional security architecture that is common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable.

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