

Pakistan's Security Risks and Their Impact on the Construction of "the Belt and Road" Project

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Abstract: Pakistan is one of the countries most affected by the threat of terrorism in the world. The frequent occurrence of terrorist events and the cross-border combination of terrorist forces and religious beliefs are often used by terrorists, which restricts Pakistan's modernization transformation. Pakistan, as China's all-weather strategic partner and an important fulcrum country for the implementation of "the Belt and Road" project, domestic instability factors affect the smooth implementation of the strategy and hinder the realization of personnel exchanges and economic connectivity in neighboring countries. "The Belt and Road" strategy is committed to serving neighboring countries, with the goal of achieving equitable global economic development. Therefore, discussing the security threats in Pakistan and analyzing their impact are of great significance for the in-depth development of China-Pakistan relations and the steady progress of "the Belt and Road" strategy.

Keywords: The Belt and Road; Pakistan; Security Threat; Terrorism

1. Introduction

"The Belt and Road", relying on the history of the ancient Silk Road, adapting to the development of the times, composes a friendly melody of world peace and development. It marks that China has abandoned the attitude of being passively involved in international affairs and has begun to actively establish good-neighborly friendship with neighboring countries, and take the initiative to assume the responsibility of a major country, provide Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions for the development of the world, and open the 3.0 version of China's diplomacy.

Pakistan has an important strategic position in China's surrounding environment and diplomacy. It is an important bridge connecting China with West Asia and the Middle East, and also an important role in achieving strategic balance and stability in South Asia. President Hu Jintao once commented that Pakistan is China's true good neighbor, good friend, good partner and good brother.^[1-2] The world is experiencing great changes that have not occurred in a century. China's relations with other countries are also deepening with the development of economic globalization. Under the influence of public health crisis, political risks and other factors, it is increasingly important to expand new economic development models. In 2013, Premier Li Keqiang proposed the initiative of building the China Pakistan Economic Corridor during his visit to Pakistan,^[3] to strengthen trade exchanges between the two countries in energy, infrastructure construction, etc. The strategy was immediately positively responded by the Pakistani government. Today, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has become an important part of "the Belt and Road". On the basis of the all-weather strategic partnership, the economic integration of China and Pakistan is deepening. However, it cannot be ignored that although the traditional history of friendship between the two countries has provided a good external environment for cooperation, Pakistan has still encountered many obstacles in the process of carrying out "the Belt and Road" construction, among which the security threat has the most serious impact. Therefore, we can't help thinking about what security threats Pakistan is facing in the process of carrying out "the Belt and Road" construction? What impact will these security threats have on the implementation of "the Belt and Road" strategy? This article will focus on the above two issues.

Pakistan is located at a strategic point, and has been a battleground for strategists since ancient times. Its strategic importance is self-evident. Therefore, the academic community is very concerned about the development of Pakistan. In describing the overall development of the country, Stephen P. Cohen's "The Future of Pakistan" is a representative work. He introduced Pakistan in detail, placed Pakistan within the scope of the current geopolitical and international economy, and discussed the existing issues of population, education and development.^[4] With the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, foreign scholars have also turned their attention to this field, Waheed Ali focused on the

development status of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its potential role in regional integration and prosperity.^[5] The article "Public Opinion Analysis of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" written by Huang Deling et al. analyzed the powerful role of public opinion in the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the degree of China's control of public opinion in promoting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.^[6] However, many articles have questioned "the Belt and Road" project. Mathieu Duchatel believes that the terrorist risk in Pakistan will lead to the dual adjustment of China's policy towards Pakistan.^[7] Muhammad Saqib Irshad discussed the impact of China's massive infrastructure investment in Pakistan on the economic cooperation between the two countries.^[8] The International Symposium on "Regional Situation Development and China-Pakistan Relations", edited by Li Tao and others, focuses on issues related to Pakistan's security situation and China-Pakistan relations.^[9] Articles such as Analysis of Risks Faced by the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Progress and Risks faced by the China Pakistan Economic Corridor from the Perspective of "the Belt and Road" and Terrorism in Pakistan and Its Impact on "the Belt and Road" Strategy analyze the possible risks faced by the construction of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Inject a dose of preventive measures in advance.^[10] In order to prevent risks and ensure the smooth implementation of "the Belt and Road" project, many scholars have proposed solutions, such as Ma Bei's study on China Pakistan security risk prevention under "the Belt and Road" framework, which led to religious threats faced by Pakistan, And put forward his own views on how to avoid risks.^[11] Li Li and Zhang Xin's "Impact of Pakistan's Security Situation on the Construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" discusses in detail the security situation in Pakistan's Baluchistan region on the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.^[12]

Pakistan is a traditional friendly country of China and an important fulcrum country to implement "the Belt and Road" strategy. It is also an important bridge between China and West Asia and the Middle East, and an important role in achieving strategic balance and stability in South Asia. It has important strategic value for China. Based on this, this paper will sort out the main existing security risks in Pakistan under the theoretical framework of security, and discuss the impact of security risks on the implementation of "the Belt and Road" strategy.

2. Security Threats Facing Pakistan

Security threats can be divided into traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats, mainly based on the characteristics of their outbreak and the different forms of development. Traditional security threats refer to the military threats faced by a country and the military factors threatening international security. According to the degree of threat, they can be further divided into three categories: arms race, military deterrence and war. There is always a territorial dispute between Pakistan and its neighbors, and even small-scale war broke out when the conflict intensified. Non-traditional security threats refer to the factors that pose a threat to the survival and development of sovereign countries and human beings in general, except for military, political and diplomatic conflicts. The main characteristics of non-traditional security threats to Pakistan are transnational and uncertainty.

2.1. Traditional Security Threats - National Conflicts in the Region

Pakistan borders India in the east, China in the northeast, Afghanistan in the northwest, and Iran in the west,^[13] therefore, "the Belt and Road" project carried out by China is bound to touch many nerves and intensify regional conflicts. With the continuous evolution and escalation of the conflict, Pakistan is difficult to provide a stable environment for the implementation of "the Belt and Road" strategy, which hinders the smooth implementation of the project.

The long-threatened national conflict is the fight between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. In 1947, India and Pakistan began to solve the problem of land ownership after shaking off the rule of British colonialists. 80% of the residents of Kashmir believe in Islam. According to the principle that the majority decides the minority in the partition plan, Kashmir should be classified as Islamist Pakistan. However, because the prince of Kashmir is a Hindu, according to the provisions of the "Monbarton Plan" in which the ownership of the land state is determined by the prince, Kashmir will to a large extent be classified into the territory of India. If India controls Kashmir, it can deploy ballistic missiles here, making the whole country of Pakistan within the range of Indian artillery fire, posing a great threat; At the same time, Kashmir also controls the economic lifeline of Pakistan. If it falls into the hands of India, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will be destroyed, and the exchange and cooperation between Pakistan and other countries will also be interrupted, making it difficult to obtain material and economic

assistance from other countries. In addition, Pakistan's own economic conditions are far behind that of India. If the economic corridor is lost, the possibility of winning in the India-Pakistan conflict is even less. For India, if it loses Kashmir, it will make the domestic states of Punjab, Rajasthan Canal region and Gujarat face serious security threats. If India wants to realize its "dream of a big country", it must control Kashmir to strengthen its influence on Central Asia, As Nehru said, "Without Kashmir, India would not occupy an important position on the political stage of Central Asia".^[14] The importance of Kashmir has led India and Pakistan to gather a large number of troops near the ceasefire line, which is highly explosive. A part of the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passes through the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir region, causing dissatisfaction from India. On November 13, 2020, India and Pakistan exchanged fierce fire near the "Kashmir Line of Actual Control", resulting in 16 deaths,^[15] the relationship between the two sides deteriorated again, and after the intervention of international organizations, the situation of cease-fire gradually emerged. Kashmir dispute has a long history and has become one of the important reasons that hinder Pakistan's stable development. As an important pivot country of "the Belt and Road" strategy, Pakistan's instability will also affect the smooth implementation of the project.

Another regional conflict is the dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan over the Durand Line. In the 20th century, the British colonists unilaterally demarcated the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan—the Durand Line, and drew Baluchistan Province in Pakistan into the scope of the line, which led many Pashtun Afghans to enter Pakistan,^[16] laying the fuse for the intensification of future conflicts. During the Cold War, the Afghan government allied with the Soviet Union to use the Pashtun issue to cultivate anti-Pakistan forces, while the Pakistani government united with the United States to support the anti-Soviet forces to check and balance Afghanistan. Finally, this anti-Soviet force evolved into the notorious Afghan Taliban,^[17] which posed a serious threat to world peace and security.

The Afghan government firmly advocates the wrong division of the Durand Line. They believe that Pakistan's Khyber Pashtun and Baluchistan provinces have been under the jurisdiction of Afghanistan in history, and the Afghan side should enjoy rights and interests, while Pakistan is firmly opposed to the Afghan side's claim, and the two countries have constant disputes. At the same time, India is also actively involved in the dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan for the sake of fighting for Kashmir with Pakistan, which makes the situation more complicated. There is a serious mismatch between theory and reality on the Durand Line, which makes it absolutely impossible for Pakistan and Afghanistan to compromise with each other. The disputed areas of the two countries are just included in the necessary scope of the construction of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. In addition, the long-standing Afghan refugee problem and cross-border criminal activities in the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan make it difficult for the China Pakistan Economic Corridor to have a stable environment, which hinders the smooth implementation of "the Belt and Road" strategy.

2.2. Non-traditional Security Threats - Terrorism

2.2.1. Overview of the Development of Terrorism in Pakistan

After Pakistan's independence in 1947, the military government and the civilian government took power in turn, and the conflicts between sects and between the central and local governments continued to intensify. In order to retaliate against the society and meet personal interests, terrorist attacks occurred frequently. Driven by the rebel forces and other forces, Pakistan has become a breeding ground for terrorism, but the terrorist attacks at that time were sporadic and small-scale, and did not have a certain scale. After the 9·11 incident, terrorism has become one of the major security threats facing the world in the 21st century. The United States Department of Defense has identified the "Arch of Instability" region covering South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East as the birthplace of Islamic extremism.^[18] As an important country in the "arc of instability" region, Pakistan is close to Afghanistan—the "vortex of terror", which is full of all kinds of terrorism. With its unique geographical location, it is also the frontier of the interests of the United States, China, India and other major countries, and the security and stability of the country is greatly threatened.

Before the 9·11 incident, the terrorist attacks in Pakistan were limited to small-scale explosions, and the main targets were government officials. However, after the 9·11 incident, global terrorism developed wantonly, the demand of terrorists continued to expand, and their attack weapons continued to improve, making the frequency of violent attacks increased year by year, seriously threatening the personal safety of ordinary people, and the whole country was in turmoil. Especially after 2006, the number of casualties and the degree of terror in terrorist attacks in Pakistan have risen sharply. The number of civilians killed has risen sharply from 190 in 2001 to 1311 in 2007, and the number of deaths in 2009 is as high as 11704.

It is a bloody year for Pakistan. By the end of 2021, more than 60000 Pakistanis have been killed in terrorist attacks (see Table 1.). With the intervention of international organizations and the surrounding countries, the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan has decreased, and the number of deaths has also decreased, but the base number is still relatively large, and the domestic security situation is precarious. The irregular outbreak of terrorist attacks has hindered the development of Pakistan's modernization. As the anti-terrorism ally of the United States, Pakistan has suffered serious terrorist attacks on many occasions. On August 14, 2012, the Chief of the General Staff of the Pakistan Army Kayani said that "the domestic threat has exceeded the foreign threat",^[19] according to the report of the Global Terrorism Index 2019 released by the Institute for Economic and Peace (IEP), Pakistan's terrorist index ranked fifth in the world in 2019,^[20] although the impact of terrorism on Pakistan has declined, the harm it brings cannot be ignored.

Table 1: Death Toll of Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan (2001-2021).

Unit: year; people				
year	Civilian	Government	Terrorist	Total
2001	190	31	26	295
2002	148	20	65	257
2003	137	23	29	197
2004	347	208	302	925
2005	482	79	124	703
2006	541	301	568	1466
2007	1311	548	1271	3594
2008	1796	647	3724	6683
2009	2154	1012	7884	11317
2010	1537	512	4945	7342
2011	2371	674	2752	6050
2012	2743	734	2444	6188
2013	2713	665	1541	5294
2014	1478	508	3268	5517
2015	866	339	2407	3685
2016	541	291	897	1797
2017	439	216	533	1269
2018	363	158	161	692
2019	142	137	86	365
2020	169	178	159	506
2021	214	226	223	663

In general, terrorism refers to the behavior of the perpetrator, based on political purposes, using violence or threatening violence against unarmed persons in an organized manner, with the purpose of placing certain objects in terror by special means to achieve their own political goals or specific requirements.^[21] To a large extent, terrorists want to get enough attention, so they continue to expand the size of their organizations and enhance their deterrent power. Due to its unique geographical location, Pakistan has become a hotbed for the proliferation of terrorism. Various terrorist organizations have been constantly divided or integrated in the process of fighting against the anti-terrorism forces, forming some relatively large and active terrorist organizations. At present, the main extremist organizations active in Pakistan include: "Islamic State", "Al-Qaida", Pakistan Taliban, Afghan Taliban, "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" (East Iran Movement), etc.,^[22] of which the East Iran Movement is the most threatening to China, Because its main purpose is to split China and establish an "Eastern Turkestan Islamic State" in Xinjiang, which combines politics and religion. The organization has frequent contacts with the "Al Qaeda" organization. It has sent members to the "Al Qaida" organization for training several times, and participated in actual combat in Afghanistan, Kashmir and other places, and then sneaked into Xinjiang, China to carry out violence. Xinjiang is the starting point of China's "the Belt and Road" strategy, and Pakistan is an important strategic fulcrum of the project. Terrorists sneak into Xinjiang to create terrorist attacks, which have caused great harm to the safety of people's lives and property, as well as the implementation of "the Belt and Road" strategy, and destroyed geographical security. Some ethnic terrorism also poses a threat to national security and the development of projects, especially some separatist organizations opposed to China. Ethnic separatist terrorism mainly uses civil issues as the main carrier and takes the goal of ethnic separatism as its goal to actively carry out actions. On July 25, 2020, the Pakistan Baluchistan armed group BRAS Alliance and the Sindh Revolutionary Army (SRA) announced the formation of a military action alliance, which will free Baluchistan and Sindh from the

control of the Pakistani government by taking joint military action.^[23] The ethnic separatist forces in the two provinces have always expressed dissatisfaction and protest against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project. Chinese-funded enterprises in Pakistan may become one of the targets of their terrorist attacks. At the same time, the Pakistani government actively promotes the corridor project, which is bound to become the target of anti-government terrorist attacks. Although the Pakistani government currently adopts the "three lines" plan, that is, planning the "east, middle and west" routes in the route design, and taking the west line as the priority route, arranging the settlement of major engineering projects, and to some extent promoting the construction process of the corridor, in the future development, once the project construction is frustrated or the interests are unevenly distributed, terrorists are likely to launch attacks on this basis, Destroy the current achievements of "the Belt and Road" strategy and hinder the development of the project.

2.2.2. Characteristics of Terrorism in Pakistan

(1) Terrorism is Frequent and Destructive

Pakistan's Khyber Pashtun Province was once known as the "paradise" of terrorists, while the Swat Valley region in the north and the Waziristan region in the south and north were known as the "lawless country among terrorist countries". It can be seen that the extent of Pakistan's terrorism is rampant. Since 9·11 incident, Pakistan has become an anti-terrorist ally of the United States, and more than 60000 people have been killed in terrorist attacks. Baluchistan and Khyber Pashtun provinces are still the hardest hit areas of terrorism. Terrorist attacks occur frequently, and almost half of the casualties are caused by suicide attacks. Most of the terrorist attacks in Baluchistan are carried out against Pakistani military and police personnel and personnel of security agencies, and the risk level has remained high. In 2020, the number of attacks on the security forces in Baluchistan increased sharply, with an average of 2-3 terrorist attacks every day. In Kashtun province, Pakistani Taliban and other terrorist organizations are increasingly active. According to the latest statistical data of the South Asia Terrorism Portal, a total of 2347 terrorist attacks occurred in 2012, a record high, from 2034 in 2013. After that, with the efforts of the international anti-terrorism movement, the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan gradually decreased, and a total of 267 attacks broke out in 2021.

Although the number of cases shows a downward trend, the lives of Pakistanis are still threatened. With the development of science and technology, terrorists have significantly improved both in weapons and equipment and in tactical capabilities, and are no longer limited to the past simple sniping and stealing attacks, burying roadside bombs and other ways. At present, terrorist organizations in Pakistan have equipped with remote-controlled improvised explosive devices, heavy machine guns, grenade launchers and other equipment, and the degree of damage has increased significantly. At the same time, terrorists often take more large-scale attacks during some sensitive nodes. For example, August 14, 2020 is Pakistan's "Independence Day". Before and after this node, Baluchistan radical militants launched eight attacks against the Pakistani army and other targets, causing great negative impact. As mentioned above, Pakistani terrorists are mainly concentrated in Baluchistan and Cape provinces, and the major terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2020 are also concentrated in these two provinces, and the people are always in a state of panic. (See Figure 1.)

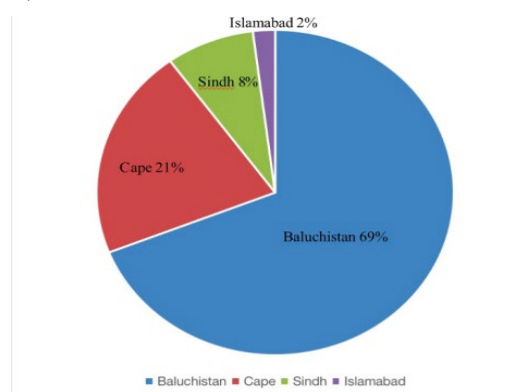


Figure 1: Proportion of Terrorist Attacks in Major Provinces of Pakistan in 2020.

(2) Transnational Nature of Terrorist Force Combination

Pakistan is under the "arc of instability", and the phenomenon of "spillover" of terrorist organizations originating in, appealing to and operating in the local area is common. On the one hand, due to the

influence of the "partition of India and Pakistan", the tendency of national separatism is very serious in all provinces of Pakistan. For example, Punjab and Sindh provinces on the border between Pakistan and India, Khyber Pashtun province on the border with Afghanistan, Baluchistan province on the border with Iran and Afghanistan, and Kashmir on the border with China and India are all the hardest hit areas of ethnic separatism and terrorism, and are also the active areas of cross-border force combination of terrorists. The unique and convenient geographical location enables terrorists in Pakistan to maintain close contact with terrorists in neighboring countries, so terrorist activities within a country often spill over to neighboring countries, forming a transnational threat.

On the other hand, with the progress of transportation, the activities of terrorists are no longer confined to a single country. At the same time, for the sake of enhancing the destructiveness, terrorists will also seek the assistance of other countries' forces, making terrorist activities take on the characteristics of transnational nature. Despite the intervention of the international community, the forces of Al-Qaida and the Taliban have weakened, but they have not been completely eradicated. Some of their forces have fled to Pakistan, forming the Pakistani Taliban, establishing close ties with local extremist organizations, and their nature is more international. Most of the members of the Pakistani Taliban are local Pashtuns. As the Pakistani Taliban expanded the scope of attack targets, the personnel structure of terrorists began to shift to other ethnic groups, such as Punjabs in the inland Punjab province. At the same time, as Pakistan is close to Afghanistan, it has received support from many Afghan terrorist organizations. In 2020, the Afghan Taliban has been promoting peace negotiations with the Afghan government. During this period, the Pakistani Taliban, who are operating in Afghanistan, hope that the separated factions will reunite. If this proposal can be realized, It will not only bring serious internal security problems to Pakistan, but also pose a serious threat to the security of projects and personnel in northwest Pakistan related to China's "the Belt and Road" initiative. In a number of remote areas adjacent to the Cape Province of Afghanistan, there are a number of Chinese-funded enterprises responsible for the development and construction of hydropower and infrastructure projects. Since the announcement of the alliance, the number of attacks against northwest Pakistan has increased sharply.

(3) Combination of Terrorism and Religion

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, Pakistan has been deeply influenced by Islam and has become the world's first modern country based on Islamic teachings. The whole country is full of the complex of religious saviors, therefore, many terrorist organizations use the banner of religion to recruit followers, And a series of terrorist activities are carried out through the fanaticism of believers about religion. What is more serious is that religious terrorists never think they are carrying out terrorist activities, but that they are only carrying out sacred activities in accordance with religious doctrines, which makes religious terrorism separate from terrorism in the secular sense, covers the mysterious cloak of religion, and makes it have "legitimacy", The activities carried out by religious terrorists are often more lethal and destructive. For example, "Pakistan Sage Army", an extremist organization established by the Sunni in Pakistan, aims to crack down on the Shi'ites and turn Pakistan into a pure Sunni Islamic country. The terrorists took advantage of the high recognition of Islam among most Muslims in Pakistan to actively carry out jihad and other campaigns. At the same time, due to Pakistan's unique geographical location, its domestic religious risks began to spill over to surrounding countries and regions, which coincided with the areas covered by "the Belt and Road" initiative, hindering the smooth implementation of "the Belt and Road" initiative. For example, although the countries in Central Asia are not geographically connected with Pakistan, the Islamic extreme terrorism in Pakistan still has a radiation effect on these countries, making the terrorism in Central Asia also have a strong religious color. These terrorist forces seek to establish a theocratic state and form terrorist organizations such as the "Islamic Liberation Party" and the "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", triggering political crisis and security threats. Pakistan is one of the main sources of terrorism. Through their religious schools and training camps, extremist religious organizations have instilled extreme ideas and taught military skills to Muslim youth in Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, bringing serious terrorist threats. As terrorism in these regions is often mixed and intertwined with ethnic, ethnic, religious and territorial disputes, countries along "the Belt and Road" are facing serious security threats.

3. Impact of Pakistan's Security Risks on "the Belt and Road" Strategy

3.1. Influence the Construction Process of "the Belt and Road" Project

"The Belt and Road" is an important practice for China to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and working together to address various risks and challenges facing mankind

is exactly the meaning of the proposal. However, during the construction of "the Belt and Road" project, many risks and challenges are often faced. As an important fulcrum country for the implementation of the project, the Pakistani government has made efforts to combat terrorism and other forces over the years, and its security environment has improved. However, as the flagship project of "the Belt and Road", the China Pakistan Economic Corridor has been facing many challenges, affecting the progress of the project.

First, the number of terrorist attacks on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been increasing, and Chinese citizens, consulates abroad and staff along the project have become the main targets of terrorists. Since a Chinese exploration team was attacked in the Baluchistan Sibi region of Pakistan in May 2001, at least 32 terrorist attacks against Chinese citizens have occurred in Pakistan in the past 20 years. In 2013, as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project was put on the agenda, terrorist attacks against Chinese citizens and projects showed a trend of frequent occurrence. In the first half of 2019 alone, the police of Sindh Province of Pakistan defeated 11 terrorist attacks targeting the construction workers of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. At the same time, with the resurgence of the Baluchistan separatist group in 2004, the insurgents targeted the government's key development projects more and more frequently. They targeted the infrastructure construction. Baluchistan is at the core of the project of the western route of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. From a long-term perspective, it is bound to have a positive impact on the economic development of the province. However, since 2018, the number of terrorist attacks against Chinese citizens in Baluchistan has been increasing. Baluchistan ethnic separatist organizations express their political demands by destroying the infrastructure of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and collude with separatists in Sindh to expand the scope of destruction. Secondly, Islamic extremist organizations also pose a huge threat to the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. In 2015-2020, 1272 of the 2073 terrorist attacks in Pakistan were committed by radical organizations, accounting for 61% of all terrorist attacks. The Islamic State has publicly stated that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project and all Chinese people in Pakistan, including Chinese engineers, are targeted. The public declaration of the radical organization has kept the Chinese citizens working in Pakistan under a state of unrest, it is difficult to carry out work safely. Every year, China sends a large number of workers to Pakistan to support project construction, but terrorist attacks pose a threat to the personal safety of Chinese citizens. As the main force of "the Belt and Road" project, frequent terrorist attacks against Chinese citizens will also seriously affect the project construction process. In addition, terrorism has also increased the security costs of maintaining "the Belt and Road" project and increased the economic burden of both sides of the initiative. At present, Pakistan has provided 32000 security forces for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and the cost of security protection in the 2019-2020 fiscal year is up to 32.5 billion rupees, which increases the financial pressure of the Pakistani government and hinders the smooth construction of the project.

Second, the game of big countries hinders the progress of the project. South Asia, where Pakistan is located, has always been a place of war. The conflict between India and Pakistan and the intervention of the United States and other major countries outside the region have made the situation in South Asia more complex and diverse. China's "the Belt and Road" project aims to improve the external environment of countries along the line and build a peaceful and stable world. However, due to the interweaving of multiple contradictions, it makes it difficult for China to achieve its goal of improving the overall security environment. Indian Foreign Minister Su Jiesheng accused Pakistan of using terrorism as a legitimate tool of governing the country, while the Pakistani Prime Minister said that the attack on the Chinese Consulate in Karachi was a conspiracy against the economic and strategic cooperation between Pakistan and China. In the next India-Pakistan confrontation, terrorism will become the subject of speculation between the two sides. If the relationship between the two sides continues to deteriorate and the terrorism-related issues are difficult to be effectively resolved, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will also continue to be threatened by terrorism, forming a vicious circle. On the other hand, in the context of the game between China and the United States, Pakistan, as China's all-weather strategic partner, will maintain consistency with China on the issue of core interests. In order to counter China's influence in South Asia, the United States proposed the "Indo Pacific Strategy". India, which has always harbored the dream of a great power, actively responded to the United States' plan, negatively treated China's "the Belt and Road" strategy, and clearly expressed its interest in participating in the "Blue Dot Network" plan aimed at countering "the Belt and Road" initiative, making the regional situation more complex and the external environment for the implementation of "the Belt and Road" strategy more adverse.

3.2. Affect the Trade and Personnel Exchanges of Countries along "the Belt and Road"

The world is in the midst of great changes not seen in a century. The deep impact of the international

financial crisis continues to emerge. The sudden COVID-19 has broken the original world pattern, and all countries are facing serious development problems. China has proposed "the Belt and Road" strategic project to safeguard the global free trade system and build an open world economy, and to explore a new model of international cooperation and global governance. With the continued weakness of the European and American market economies, the economic vitality of Asia has attracted the attention of all countries in the world. The implementation of "the Belt and Road" project can drive the economic development of the countries along the line. However, Pakistan, as an important pivot country, is full of security threats, which also challenges the smooth operation of "the Belt and Road" project, but also affects the economic and trade cooperation and personnel exchanges of the countries along the line.

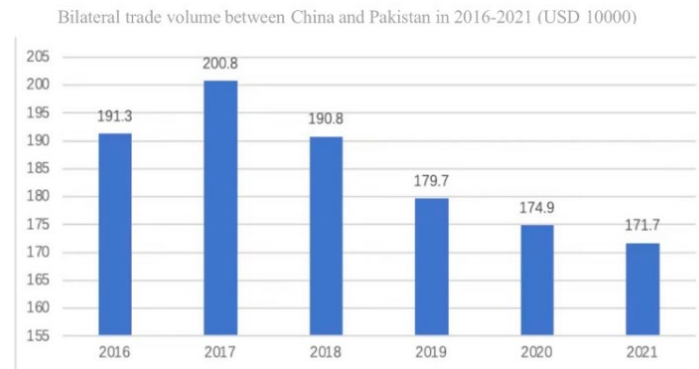


Figure 2: Bilateral trade volume between China and Pakistan in 2016-2021.

First, economic and trade cooperation. China has become the largest source of investment and the largest trading partner of Pakistan for many years in a row. However, in the trade between China and Pakistan, China has always been in the position of more exports and less imports, while Pakistan has more imports and less exports. In 2019, the trade balance between China and Pakistan was as high as 1.436 million US dollars, making the trade between the two countries seriously unbalanced and restricting the deep development of trade. (See Figure 2.) The reason is that there are structural problems in the economic and trade partnership between the two countries, and the domestic security threats in Pakistan also affect the rapid development of bilateral trade between the two countries. There is a positive correlation between terrorism and the bilateral trade volume between China and Pakistan. When terrorist attacks against Chinese citizens occur frequently, the bilateral trade volume will decline. For example, 2009 is the bloody year since the founding of Pakistan. In this year, 11704 people were killed in terrorist attacks, and the bilateral trade volume between China and Pakistan was 6.78 billion US dollars, A year-on-year decrease of 2.9%. Next, the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir has kept the trade negotiations between India and Pakistan at a standstill. At the same time, the economic strength of the two countries is extremely unequal, resulting in a trade deficit. In order to promote the development of Pakistan's economy, it is crucial for India and Pakistan to achieve a ceasefire and build a safe and stable border environment. However, the terrorist attacks in India have repeatedly stopped India from negotiating peace, and the bilateral trade process has also reached a deadlock. The Taliban in Pakistan maintain close ties with the extremism in neighboring Afghanistan. They want to achieve their political goals by preaching religion, disrupt the overall situation of peaceful national development, destroy the infrastructure along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, hinder the normal trade exchanges between the two countries, and expand the economic gap.

Second, personnel communication. "The Belt and Road" project runs through the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, covering more than 40 countries. If the project is carried out smoothly, it will effectively drive the economic, political and social development of these regions and achieve win-win results. However, the difficulty in carrying out "the Belt and Road" project is that many areas it passes through are not peaceful places, and there are often serious religious extremism, terrorism and other phenomena, among which the more serious impact is the harm of terrorism. The western region of China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and other countries are suffering from terrorist attacks, which hinder the development process of the country. Pakistan and Afghanistan are inextricably linked to terrorism. The terrorist organizations of the two countries often engage in relevant activities in the border areas. They often flee to another country after a terrorist attack, seeking refuge from the organization, which seriously threatens the security of the border areas of the two countries, and also hinders the normal civil exchanges between the personnel of Pakistan and Afghanistan. At the same time, Pakistan's terrorism has also had a negative impact on Iran. Baluchistan terrorists are often active in the border area between Pakistan and

Iran. On religious issues, Pakistan belongs to the Sunni Islam, while Iran belongs to the Shiite Islam. In the dispute between Afghanistan and Iran, if Pakistan supports the Sunni Afghanistan to build regime, it will pose a threat to Iran's national security and Shiite believers. In addition to the threat of terrorism, the regional conflicts between neighboring countries have also caused considerable pressure on normal personnel exchanges. Pakistan and India have long disputed Kashmir. When the conflict intensifies, they even exchanged fire directly, resulting in the death of innocent civilians. For example, on November 13, 2020, India and Pakistan shelled each other at the border of Kashmir. A total of four Indian army soldiers, one deputy inspector of the border security forces, and six civilians were killed in the exchange of fire; On the Pakistani side, 4 civilians and 1 soldier were killed, and another 22 were injured. The India-Pakistan conflict has a long history and has not been resolved substantively. The frequent occurrence of war has hindered the improvement of the economic development level of the two countries, and also made the people in a state of fear. The civil exchanges between the two countries have been seriously frustrated, which is not conducive to the development of the normalization of international relations.

Due to its unique geographical location, Pakistan's security risks pose a threat to all countries along "the Belt and Road", making it difficult for neighboring countries to carry out normal trade cooperation, let alone personnel exchanges. The original intention of "the Belt and Road" project is to build a community with a shared future for mankind, so that all countries can unite to overcome various challenges and difficulties that may arise. However, the security risks existing in Pakistan have reduced the normal exchanges among countries along the line, which is not conducive to the normal development of the project.

4. Conclusion

The strategic significance of "the Belt and Road" project is highlighted against the backdrop of volatile Sino US relations and the complex security situation around China. As an important platform to actively build a community with a shared future for mankind, "the Belt and Road" holds high the banner of peaceful development, actively develops economic partnership with countries along the Belt and Road, and makes important contributions to strengthening exchanges and cooperation among countries around the world. Pakistan, as China's all-weather strategic partner and an important fulcrum country of "the Belt and Road" project, plays an important role in the implementation of the project. In order to further promote the construction, it is necessary to elevate the security issues faced by Pakistan to a strategic level. It cannot be ignored that terrorist activities in Pakistan are still frequent, and terrorists are more likely to express their dissatisfaction with the government by creating terrorist attacks. At the same time, ethnic separatism and religious extremism continue to develop, and the three forces often combine with each other, making the security issue more complex. As a model project of "the Belt and Road" project, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor has been damaged from time to time, and even the aid workers sent by China have become the target group of terrorist attacks. Whether for the purpose of the smooth implementation of the project, or from the perspective of the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan, or from the perspective of China's responsibility as a major country, China should actively help Pakistan deal with security threats, minimize the frequency of man-made security incidents, and create a good, stable and peaceful development environment for the implementation of "the Belt and Road" project, so as to better carry out cooperation and benefit the people.

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