



## Dual front threat: Evolving patterns in China Pakistan military coordination against India

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### Abstract

A complicated and dynamic military threat to India, the dual front threat from China and Pakistan is defined by growing collaboration, collusion and coordination between the two countries against Indian interests. In recent years, this dynamic has become more intense, impacting operational planning, military strategies and paradigms of regional security. An in-depth analysis of the changing trends in China-Pakistan military cooperation against India can be found below. The military collaboration between China and Pakistan against India has progressed from opportunistic assistance to a sophisticated, multi-faceted alliance marked by real-time information exchange, combined military drills, advanced armament supplies and aligned strategic goals. This article looks at how China and Pakistan's military cooperation against India has changed over time, it puts these changes in context with the geopolitical and military effects and talks about possible strategic responses.

**Keywords:** Counterbalancing, CENTO, SEATO, geo-political, interoperability, reconnaissance, CENTAIC, artificial intelligence, electronic warfare

### Introduction

The complicated and historically contentious connections between India, China and Pakistan have a big impact on the strategic landscape of South Asia. Indian military strategists have been worried for decades about the likelihood of a two-front war, where they would have to fight both China and Pakistan at the same time. The China-Pakistan relationship has grown from occasional collaboration to a complex military alliance that makes India's security calculations more difficult. On account of the ever-evolving character of China and Pakistan's military cooperation, a situation that was once only a theoretical possibility is now becoming an increasingly conceivable and perhaps hazardous reality. This partnership has progressed to the point that it is now characterized by a high degree of strategic alignment, interoperability and common military goals with the goal of counterbalancing Indian supremacy in the area. This relationship has gone well beyond occasional diplomatic assistance or modest defensive actions. China and Pakistan pose a complex and multi-domain danger to India. This threat manifests itself in a variety of ways, including cooperative military drills, the sharing of information and coordinated military planning. India's military posture is being reshaped as a result of this strengthened relationship, which is driving the country to reevaluate its strategic goals in order to either prevent or react to threats that originate from both its eastern and western borders working together. The dual front threat posed by China and Pakistan constitutes a multifaceted and dynamic military danger to India, marked by increasing collaboration, collusion and coordination between China and Pakistan aimed at undermining Indian interests. In recent years, this dynamic has become more intense, impacting operational planning, military strategy and paradigms of regional security.

### Historical Background of China-Pakistan Military Relations

China-Pakistan military cooperation began in the late 1940s, soon after the People's Republic of China was established and Pakistan gained its independence in 1947. In the beginning, ties were friendly but not very close since China was a newly formed communist state and Pakistan was allied with the West via agreements like CENTO and SEATO. However, because of shared worries over India's regional aspirations, the relationship started to change in the early 1960s. An important turning point occurred in 1963 when Pakistan agreed to give China, the Shaksgam Valley in the disputed region of Kashmir. A developing alliance based on mutual fear of India and common geopolitical goals was strengthened by this boundary modification, which was crucial both strategically and symbolically.

One significant event that strengthened bilateral relations was the 1965 India-Pakistan conflict. Islamabad turned to Beijing for military assistance throughout the crisis because the US had placed sanctions on Pakistan. In the ensuing years, China became Pakistan's primary arms supplier, going from almost no defence sales in the 1950s to substantial military assistance by the late 1960s. While China's support was not totally unconditional but it included strong diplomatic support and warnings to India, which helped legitimize Pakistan's position in the conflict. This included training, assistance for domestic manufacturing capabilities, and the provision of conventional weapons.

Over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, the connection continued to develop. Through knowledge transfer, equipment co-production, and substantial assistance for Pakistan's missile and subsequently nuclear aspirations. In the nutshell, China assisted Pakistan in increasing its military output. The completion of the Karakoram Highway also aided military supplies and strategic movement between the two nations. Regular military delegation exchanges and strategic discussions served as the foundation for this complex collaboration.

Despite the long-standing partnership, China chose to maintain a more neutral public posture during the Kargil war in 1999, refraining from openly endorsing Pakistan. However, Pakistan's military stance was still shaped by Chinese diplomatic influence as well as past shipments of weapons and sensitive technologies. Sino-Pakistani military cooperation had developed from a pragmatic alignment in the 1960s to a deeply institutionalized partnership by the end of the 20th century. This partnership included the supply of weapons, the transfer of technology, the sharing of intelligence and strategic coordination. The overarching goal of this partnership was to counterbalance India's military and regional predominance.

### Patterns of Military Coordination

China and Pakistan's military collaboration against India has developed into a multi-layered alliance with substantial overlap in strategic, operational, and technological areas. An extended analysis is shown below, which focuses on the primary patterns that are responsible for forming this dynamic. These patterns are classified under important thematic headings:

#### a. Arms Cooperation

The bulk of Pakistan's arsenal is comprised of modern military gear and China continues to be the country's primary supplier of such weaponry. This includes contemporary fighter aircraft such as the J-10C, air defence systems such as the HQ-9 and LY-80, precision-guided bombs and missile systems most notably the PL-15 air-to-air missiles that have been used in recent battles. Projects that include co-production, cooperative development and technology transfer are included in the scope of the partnership. One example of this is the JF-17 fighter program. By assisting China in testing and refining its weapon systems in real-time battle scenarios, this weapons collaboration allows China to successfully turn Pakistan into an operational laboratory for Chinese technology. In addition to modernizing the Pakistani military, this partnership also helps China improve its weapon systems. The majority of Pakistan's armed forces are equipped with gear that originates from China, which not only ensures interoperability but also makes it possible to integrate them seamlessly for coordinated operations.

#### b. Strategic Cooperation

At the strategic level, China and Pakistan coordinate their preparedness and align their military philosophies. This is particularly important in preparation for the possibility of two-front scenarios against India. It is possible because of:

##### 1. Joint Military Exercises

Specifically, the Shaheen (air force) and Warrior (army) series are intended to improve the capacity of China's and Pakistan's armed forces to work together and comprehend each other's strategies. This will result in more collaboration between the two countries' armed forces.

##### ▪ Shaheen Exercises

The People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) of China and the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) get together every year to participate in the Shaheen Exercises, which are a kind of combined air force exercise. An airborne manoeuvre, a combat simulation, and the exchange of operational tactics are the primary focuses of the exercises, which began in

2011 and rotate between the two nations where they are conducted. In order to achieve the aim of interoperability, which means that pilots, planners and support crews from both sides will be able to cooperate with one another in a seamless manner during times of crisis or war and they will also benefit from each other's experiences in battle.

##### ▪ Warrior Exercises

These are military exercises that are being carried out by the special forces of both nations. The primary emphasis of these drills is on ground operations, namely counter-terrorism, hostage rescue, urban warfare and joint protection of vital installations. These exercises, such as the Warrior-VIII in 2024, go beyond the typical military drill where they incorporate live fire training, tactical simulations, the care of battle wounds and the sharing of best practices for operating procedures. The capacity of both armies to carry out combined operations, react to threats and perform complicated manoeuvres is improved via the process of operating together under actual combat situations.

Through the frequent execution of joint exercises, China and Pakistan are able to create mutual trust, tactical knowledge and compatibility within their respective military forces. This enables them to collaborate more successfully in real-world operations or when they are engaged in wars with rivals such as India.

##### 2. Intelligence and ISR collaboration

Recent missions, most notably Operation Sindoor, which took place in May 2025, showed levels of information sharing that had never been seen before. China provided Pakistan with real-time satellite, electronic, and reconnaissance data to enable Pakistani deployments and targeting against Indian troops. This resulted in a significant improvement in Pakistan's situational awareness and effectiveness on the battlefield. During the deepening of the crisis, the China's BeiDou navigation satellite system rendered precise data for improved monitoring and coordination.

##### c. Joint Technology and Networked Warfare

The Pakistan Air Force has received active assistance from China in regard to the development of capabilities that are based on network-centric and multi-domain operations. Through programs such as CENTAIC, China has assisted Pakistan in the development of a system that integrates sensors from the ground, the air and space. This system enables Pakistan Air Force operations to be linked directly with Chinese air defence networks, resulting in speedier decision-making and a shorter kill chain for targeting. Additionally, this technical connection is strengthened by collaboration in the areas of artificial intelligence, electronic warfare and cyber capabilities. This collaboration enables both nations to exchange inventions and increase the number of defensive and offensive instruments at their disposal.

##### d. Diplomatic and Logistical Collusion

Beyond the battlefield, China frequently offers diplomatic support for Pakistan in international forums during times of crisis. This helps to minimize demands from the outside world and shields Pakistan from criticism about military activities along the Line of Control or elsewhere. Enhanced logistical coordination is achieved via strategic

infrastructure projects, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Dual-use logistics routes and joint bases contribute to increased preparation during times of peace and provide benefits in the event of a crisis.

### Recent Developments: Integration and Escalation

The strategic equation has lately grown increasingly significant. Over the course of the confrontation between India and Pakistan in May 2025, which was named Operation Sindoor, the Indian military verified a significant new dimension in regional warfare: Pakistan was given with real-time information by China, which led to the provision of "live inputs" about Indian military deployments. This direct and almost immediate help was a big step forward from the more passive help that had come earlier. It showed that the Chinese and Pakistani command systems were working together more closely. Pakistan was probably able to improve the accuracy and efficacy of its military planning and targeting throughout the battle because of the shared information, which most likely included satellite images, electronic surveillance, and real-time updates on the situation. This level of collaboration made Pakistan's battlefield awareness much better and made it difficult India to respond tactically. This event shows that China and Pakistan are working together more smoothly and in a more advanced way. This might mean that future regional battles would have even deeper and quicker forms of integrated assistance, which would make India's old military plans less effective.

### Conclusion

The growing military cooperation between China and Pakistan against India is one of New Delhi's biggest security problems right now. The combination of real-time information sharing, joint drills and upgraded weapon systems shows that military operations will be more coordinated in the future. India has to be better equipped militarily, come up with new strategies and be good at diplomacy in order to respond. India has to understand the "new normal". In future China will give indirect but advanced technological support to Pakistan to deter India and this trend is going to continue at least for a few years as the evident from the global situation. India has to make sure that its Army, Air Force, and Navy needs to be integrated to counter the dual threats from China and Pakistan. Further, India has to diplomatically play its card in a fashion that China is constrained to limit its support to Pakistan. To get rid of enemy advantages, it is very important to develop and put into use superior ISR, electronic warfare, missile defence, and satellite navigation denial capabilities. Better infrastructure along borders for quick troop mobility and logistics may make up for the problems that come with fighting on two fronts. Working with other regional and global powers may provide India more strategic depth and strength, particularly when it comes to exchanging information and technology. India should use diplomacy, international forums, and confidence-building measures to aggressively stop China and Pakistan from working together.

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