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# Terrorism and Sino-Pak Relationship: A Case Study of Chinese Nationals as Victims of Terrorism in Pakistan during Musharraf Regime

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## Abstract

The diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China were established in the early fifties but at the start of 21<sup>st</sup> century, some forces tried to create misunderstanding between the two states by attacking Chinese nationals employed in different economic projects in Pakistan. A number of Chinese became the victim of terrorism in different areas of Pakistan during the Musharraf era. This paper addresses the inter-related issues such as the terrorist attacks on the Chinese nationals in Pakistan, reaction of the Governments of Pakistan and China and attempts to probe the forces behind these attacks. Almost all the Pakistani newspapers-- both English and Urdu were consulted to write this paper besides other secondary sources of information.

During the Musharraf era (1999-2008), the first attack on the Chinese nationals was reported in 2001. In Baluchistan, 48 Km away from the city of *Dahaheed*, the terrorists attacked on a Chinese engineer.<sup>1</sup> The engineer was on his way back to the survey area along with his driver and two duty guards. When they reached near *Ambada* area of

*Sunny* subdivision, some unidentified persons fired a rocket which hit the vehicle. The driver, Bacha Khan, died on the spot, while the Chinese engineer, Mr. Pong, and his two guards, Sher Muhammad and Jabbar Riaz, were injured. The injured were rushed to Civil Hospital Sibi, and were later shifted to Quetta. As the background, it may be pointed out that the Premier Oil Company had got the concession for the exploration of oil and gas in the Sunny Sohan area of the Sibi district.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of attack was to create hurdles in the way of the Company to work on oil and gas exploration in the area. This was also the act of those who do not want Pak-China friendship to flourish.<sup>3</sup> Soon after the incident, the Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf issued a directive to the Baluchistan Governor, to employ all available resources, civil and military to trace down the terrorists who were responsible for this act.<sup>4</sup> He also directed the relevant authorities to launch a full scale search operation of the area to arrest the culprits.<sup>5</sup>

In September 2003, there was an attempt of terrorists to kidnap the two Chinese engineers as they were coming back in a vehicle from their construction work on the Gomal Zam Dam. But this act of terrorism failed, because the driver who saw a few armed persons standing on the roadside, wisely and successfully rushed the vehicle and saved the engineers from becoming the hostage of the terrorists.<sup>6</sup>

On May 4, 2004,<sup>7</sup> at 8.30 am, a group of terrorists attacked a vehicle that was carrying the Chinese engineers, working at the Gwadar deep seaport. The incident took place when the Chinese engineers were moving towards their workplace and their vehicle slowed down at a speed breaker, and at that moment an Aluto Suzuki car standing nearby was blown up with a huge bang with the help of a remote control. Consequently, three engineers died on the spot before getting any medical aid, while the other eleven including the driver and a guard of Baluchistan Reserve Police (BRP) were injured. According to the local police sources, no one was at the place of incident except the

victims.<sup>8</sup> The injured were flown to Karachi by a special flight and were admitted to Agha Khan Hospital for medical treatment. Immediately after the injured were shifted to Karachi, Sindh Chief Secretary, Dr. Muttawakil Kazi, arranged ambulances to carry them to the hospital. He also directed the health department to provide the best medical facilities to the injured. Baluchistan Governor, Owais Ahmad Ghani visited the Agha Khan Hospital and inquired about the health of the Chinese and Pakistani personnel. The Federal Minister for Communication, Senator Babar Khan Ghauri visited the hospital. He said,

“Anti-Social elements do not want any development in Pakistan.”<sup>9</sup>

He said a special monument would be built as a mark of respect and tribute to the Chinese engineers who became victim of the explosion and added

“We consider them as our hero.”<sup>10</sup>

The bodies of three engineers were flown from Karachi to Tianjin (China), hometown of the deceased,<sup>11</sup> by a special C-130 aircraft and the Communication Minister accompanied them. A compensation cheque of \$ 145,000 for the victims was handed over to the Chinese Consul-General, Sun Chun Ye, in Karachi by Karachi Port Trust Chairman Vice Admiral Ahmad Hayat. The Admiral Hayat announced to pay an amount of \$25,000 to each deceased, \$10,000 each to the four who were seriously injured and \$5,000 each to the six who were not critically injured.<sup>12</sup> President General Pervez Musharraf strongly condemned this barbaric act of terrorism and he assured his Chinese counterpart that,

“We will do utmost in providing every assistance and treatment to those injured.”<sup>13</sup>

The Prime Minister, Mir Zafar-Ullah Khan Jamali assured his Chinese counterpart by saying,

“We will leave no stone unturned to apprehend the culprits, who will be given the most severe punishment.”<sup>14</sup>

The Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Kong Quan, said China urged the Pakistani side to find out the cause of the explosion, punish the killers and take effective measures to guarantee the safety of Chinese people in Pakistan. He said China would send a joint working group made up of officials from the Ministries of Commerce, Health and Communication to look into the explosion in Pakistan.<sup>15</sup> The Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing assured Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri that terrorists would not succeed in their nefarious aims and China would continue to work on the project as it was vital for the development of the area.<sup>16</sup> The Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister, Shen Guofeng while talking to the delegation of Pakistani journalists, said that the recent terrorists attack against the Chinese engineers at Gwadar would not affect Beijing's resolve to help Pakistan to develop the deep seaport.<sup>17</sup> The Baluchistan, Governor Owais Ahmad Ghani, Chief Minister Jam Mir Mohammad Yousaf, the Chief Secretary Major (retd) Ashraf Naasar and Provincial Police Officer, Dr. Mohammad Shoaib Suddle said that the experts were reviewing the different aspects of the blast, but one thing was confirmed that the terrorists were fully trained in explosion with the use of the remote control.<sup>18</sup> A unanimous resolution was adopted by both the Government and the opposition parties of Baluchistan Provincial Assembly to condemn the terrorists attack on engineers and expressed their deep sorrow over the loss of lives.<sup>19</sup> The Former Chief Minister and head of Baluchistan National Party (Mengal), Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that everyone felt sorry for the loss of human lives, but naturally those who were hurt over Government action, would show their reaction, as every action was bound to have some reaction. All the nationalist parties and groups of Baluchistan were opposing the construction of Gwadar Port as well as

the construction of cantonments in different areas of the province including Gwadar. They had declared Gwadar project as death warrants for the Baluch population and held the view that its development, would turn the people of Baluchistan into minority by a flood of outsiders that would capture the economic opportunities there.<sup>20</sup>

Another horrifying episode of terrorism took place in October 2004 with Chinese engineers as employees of China National Water Resources and Hydro Power Engineering Group Co-operation,<sup>21</sup> who was working on the project of Gomal Zam Dam of Rs. 12.825 billion,<sup>22</sup> in South Waziristan. On October 9,<sup>23</sup> two Chinese engineers, Wang Peng and Wang Ende, were going to the site of Gomal Zam Dam from their residential area of *Hathala* (South Waziristan),<sup>24</sup> a group of terrorists led by a former Guantanamo Bay detainee Abdullah Mehsud, abducted the engineers along with their driver and guard<sup>25</sup> from *Tank* (South Waziristan).<sup>26</sup> Abdullah Mehsud had just come back to Pakistan in March from Guantanamo Bay after spending twenty-five months in custody at the U.S. Naval base.<sup>27</sup> The Chinese ambassador, Zhang Chunxiang, also disclosed that the kidnapers were identified as Afghan immigrants, but their motives behind kidnap were still not clear.<sup>28</sup> President General Pervez Musharraf took serious notice of this incident and directed the Interior Minister and Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to secure the release of Chinese engineers immediately. He termed this act of terrorists as a conspiracy to disturb the Sino-Pak relations.<sup>29</sup> The Secretary-General of Pakistan Muslim League (Q), Mushaid Hussain while condemning the abduction of Chinese engineers said this would not affect the Pakistan's relations with China because those involved in such activities were neither Pakistani nor they have any connection with Islam.<sup>30</sup> A spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Office, Zhang Qiyue said that the Chinese government had called Pakistan to take measures for the safe release of engineers.<sup>31</sup> A scholar, Zhang Yulan, of Chinese Academy of Science, said the

hostage case would not influence Sino-Pakistan ties but suggested to the Chinese Companies in Pakistan to tighten the security for staff, or withdraw some of them, no matter if it delays the project.<sup>32</sup>

The local tribal elders of South Waziristan while assuring cooperation put their full effort in the release of Chinese engineers. They met with Abdullah Mehsud the head of kidnapers. During their negotiations, Abdullah was willing to surrender the two Pakistani's (guard and driver of Chinese engineers) who were in his custody but the local *Jirga* and administration had rejected the offer. So the first attempt for the safe release of engineers was failed as no compromise was achieved between the local *Jirga* and Abdullah Mehsud.<sup>33</sup> A 24 member team of Mehsud tribe elders headed by members of National Assembly Maulana Merajuddin and Brig (ret'd) Qayoom Sher Mehsud again started talks with militant leader Abdullah Mehsud at an unknown place in South Waziristan Agency to convince him to release the engineers.<sup>34</sup> During the negotiations, Abdullah Mehsud demanded a safe exit for the kidnapers, while the government said that it could be considered only after the release of the Chinese engineers. The team returned with the message that their efforts made no significant headway regarding the release of the Chinese engineers along with their security guards.<sup>35</sup> Failure of negotiating team motivated the concerned authorities to exercise the option of commando operation to secure the engineers.<sup>36</sup> Federal Minister of Communication, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed said, government was in contact with abductors for the last three days but they have not responded positively. The security forces started the operation when they heard the sound of fire from the side where the abducted Chinese were kept.<sup>37</sup> The operation was jointly conducted by twenty two commandos of both military and para-military forces with the help of several helicopters.<sup>38</sup> During the operations a brief armed encounter took place between the two forces and the kidnapers in which all the five kidnapers were

killed on the spot.<sup>39</sup> The security forces succeeded in the release of one engineer who got some injuries but the other one, Mr. Wang Peng, received serious injuries and consequently died,<sup>40</sup> because the kidnappers used him as shield during the operation in *Chakmalai* village near *Jandola*.<sup>41</sup> The security forces collected, a satellite phone, 300 rounds, 7 hand granites and an American wireless set from the kidnappers.<sup>42</sup> Out of five killed kidnappers, three were identified as foreigners, showing the involvement of foreign hand in this act of terrorism. This was basically the act of those who want to damage the Pakistan-China friendship.<sup>43</sup> The Interior Minister, Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao said that the operation was carried out as the last option after intercepting some radio communications of the terrorists in which they were planning to move out of the area with engineers or after killing them.<sup>44</sup> The Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmmod Kasuri telephoned to his Chinese Counterpart, Li Zhaoxing to inform him about the tragic death of one of Chinese engineers, during the rescue operation.<sup>45</sup> He said the people who were doing such kind of activities didn't want to see investment or development in Pakistan. They want Pakistan's relations with other countries to be worsened.<sup>46</sup> Ambassador, Zhang Chunxiang praised the efforts made by Pakistani security forces for the rescue of engineers. He thanked his Pakistani counterpart for keeping him informed throughout the crisis.<sup>47</sup> He further said that,

"I want to tell you that this will have no effect on our relations."<sup>48</sup>

The Chinese Assistant Minister, on behalf of his government said,

"We are fully satisfied and comfortable that Pakistan did utmost effort and care to get the hostages released."<sup>49</sup>

The bodies of, Mr. Wang, was wrapped in Pakistani and Chinese flags and before the PAF plane left the Chaklala

airbase, a special ceremony was held at the airport at 8.45 am<sup>50</sup>, during which a military guard of honor was given to the deceased.<sup>51</sup> It was a symbol of rare gesture of respect reserved usually for those who made exemplary services to the nation.<sup>52</sup> The Minister for State for Foreign Affairs, Syed Mekhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar, during an interview said,<sup>53</sup> Pakistan had decided to provide \$ 100,000 as compensation to the family of deceased engineer and \$ 50,000 to the engineer, who was rescued in the operation.<sup>54</sup> The Chinese President Hu Jintao said that the incident would not affect the co-operation between Pakistan and China.<sup>55</sup> During his meeting with National Assembly Speaker, Chaudhry Amir Hussain, at the Great Hall of the People, he also said that China was aware of the fact that Pakistan had taken all possible measures for the release of the engineers.<sup>56</sup> The tribal elders strongly condemned killing of a Chinese engineer and assured the government of extending all-out support in its fight against terrorism. They expressed their solidarity with the Chinese brothers.<sup>57</sup> Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Lt Gen (retd) Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah had strongly appreciated the co-operation extended by the Mehsud tribe particularly the *Jalalkhel* sub-tribe in dealing with the issue of Chinese engineers.<sup>58</sup> Xinhua, the Chinese news agency, reported that the Chinese company in charge of Gomal Zam Dam project had withdrawn its staff temporarily,<sup>59</sup> although previously it was reported that Chief Executive of Sino-Hydro Corporation, Guo Jiantang, assured Pakistan's ambassador to China, Mr. Riaz M. Khan that the Corporation would fulfill its ongoing five projects including the Gomal Zam Dam.<sup>60</sup> China had also expressed some reservations about the two incidents in 2004. Beijing had indicated that the killing of three Chinese engineers in May in Gawdar and the current murder of another in South Waziristan pointed towards the loopholes in Pakistan's security arrangements.<sup>61</sup> China also considered these incidents as conspiracy of those forces that were opposing Chinese influence in Pakistan. It was also suggested that



Mehsud might have done it to please those who spared his life and freed him from the hell that Guantanamo Bay was.<sup>62</sup>

In November 2005, terrorists fired five rockets at the Chinese workers camp in *Tallar* area of Gawdar district. The rockets were carried out when Chinese engineers were busy in their work on Tubat-Gawdar section of Gwadar-Rato Dero highway. Two rockets landed near parking area of the camp.<sup>63</sup> Many vehicles were damaged. Three other rockets landed in an open space close to the camp. Rockets were launched from the *Dahram* mountain range at the company's camp site. Fortunately, no casualty in this attack was reported.<sup>64</sup>

President General Pervez Musharraf decided to go to China on an official visit, starting from February 19, 2006, but just four days before his visit, on February 15,<sup>65</sup> three Chinese engineers were shot dead in Hub area of Baluchistan. The Chinese engineers working for Attock Cement factory, 18 Km away from the Hub City<sup>66</sup> or 680 Km southeast of Quetta,<sup>67</sup> were on their way back to homes, when their vehicle was ambushed by two motorcyclists.<sup>68</sup> Due to the firing by the motorcyclists, three Chinese engineers along with their Pakistani guard died, while one engineer was injured and shifted to Karachi. The Chinese engineers were moving without any police or company guard.<sup>69</sup> According to SHO, Munir Hussain, Sakran Police Station, the attackers used Kalashnikovs in attack.<sup>70</sup> Chief Minister Balochistan, Jam Yousaf while condemning the death of Chinese engineers said that two days prior to the incident, the vehicle of Chinese engineers was changed but the incident happened.<sup>71</sup> President, General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister, Shukar Aziz sent messages of condolence to their counterparts in People's Republic of China on the killing of Chinese engineers in Hub. The President assured the Chinese ambassador that the culprits would not go unpunished, would be detected soon and brought to justice.<sup>72</sup> The Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed the responsibility of the killing of the Chinese

engineers through a telephonic call to a newspaper office in Quetta,<sup>73</sup> and claimed that the attack was a warning to the outsiders engaged in exploiting the mineral resources of Baluchistan.<sup>74</sup> BLA spokesman Meerak Baloch reportedly said, that the attack, "is part of our struggle against the central government and his collaborators (Chinese), who are aiding the centre's exploitation of our natural resources."<sup>75</sup>

Babar Bashir Nawaz, Chief Executive Officer of the Attock Cement Factory, talking to a private TV channel said that a total of 14 Chinese engineers<sup>76</sup> and workers including two women was working on the project.<sup>77</sup> He announced that after the death of three engineers, the remaining 11 would be sent back to China.<sup>78</sup> The bodies of deceased engineers were flown to China by C-130 aircraft. The Minister of State, Shahzad Waseem accompanied the bodies.<sup>79</sup> While taking the bodies of the Chinese engineers from the Agha Khan Hospital, Chinese Consular General, Shun Chun Ye, said that Chinese engineers would complete their ongoing projects in Pakistan but there was a need of fool prove security for them.<sup>80</sup> Baluchistan' Provincial Police Officer, Chuadry Mohammad Yaqub, said that the local police with the help of Sindh rangers, especially called from Karachi, arrested 49 suspects in connection with the killing of engineers, for screening and interrogation purpose.<sup>81</sup> During the interrogation, a person named Shah Nawaz admitted that he had telephonic linked with the killer.<sup>82</sup> Khuzdar police announced the amount of 10 lacs as prize for those who would give information about the killers.<sup>83</sup> The Chinese leaders expressed 'deep concerns' over the killing of three engineers and demanded from Pakistan to catch the killers.<sup>84</sup> According to Qin Gang, Foreign Ministry Spokesman at Beijing, President Hu Jintao ordered the Chinese Foreign Ministry as well as the embassy and consulate in Pakistan to request Islamabad to catch the murderers and ensure the safety of the Chinese in Pakistan and properly handle the aftermath.<sup>85</sup> Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing conveyed the order to his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Kasuri in an

'urgent' 1:00 am phone call. Li demanded from Pakistan to catch the killers and ensure the safety of Chinese personnel in Pakistan.<sup>86</sup> Mr. Kasuri conveyed to his Chinese counterpart deep sorrow and grief over the tragic killing of the engineers and assured him that immediate measures would be taken to strengthen the security of all Chinese nationals in Pakistan.<sup>87</sup> He also pointed out that this was an act of those who want a rift between the two countries. President Musharraf was to leave for five days visit to China starting from February 19, but the incident had soured the mood of his visit.<sup>88</sup> The Chinese ambassador Zhang Chunxiang has termed the killing of the three Chinese engineers in Hub as a shameful act to undermine the friendly relations between Pakistan and China.<sup>89</sup> According to Xinhua, the government of China sent the Foreign Ministry task force in order to handle the aftermath of the case properly.<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, the killing came just four days before General Musharraf's visit to China, the purpose of which was to 'further strengthen the economic, political and defence links between the two countries.' The government was also trying to attract the investors from all over the globe by offering 'an enabling environment' but the security situation was deteriorating, sending negative signals to foreign investors.<sup>91</sup> It is clear that the killings were planned to embarrass the President in front of our friends<sup>92</sup> and to abort the visit.<sup>93</sup> Li Zhaoxing claimed that President Musharraf's visit to China would boost bilateral ties between China and Pakistan. Li said,

"We are ready to work with Pakistan to open new horizons."<sup>94</sup>

During his meeting with the Chinese President, Hu Jintao and leaders of People's National Congress, President Musharraf expressed his regrets over the recent killings of the Chinese engineers.<sup>95</sup> He assured the Chinese President that all the culprits involved in the killings of Chinese engineers would be brought to justice. He also pointed out

that this was the act of those who did not want the flourishing of friendship and co-operation between Pakistan and China and wanted to see Pakistan as an underdeveloped state.<sup>96</sup> During his address at Pak-China Business Forum in Beijing, President Musharraf again conveyed his regrets over the killings of the Chinese engineers in Hub.<sup>97</sup> There were two apprehensions about the killings of the Chinese engineers in Hub area of Baluchistan. The first one is based on the premise that due to the development of Baluchistan, the level of poverty would be reduced and people would become aware of their rights and the influence of the local *Sardars* would be eroded and as such, development was not in the interests of the *Sardars*. So they would try to crush all those elements involved in the development of Baluchistan.<sup>98</sup> The second one related to the possible involvement of foreign hands, as was hinted by the Inspector General of Baluchistan, Chuadhry Yaqub.<sup>99</sup> The US was well aware of the fact that Baluchistan was well endowed with minerals, oil and gas resources, and for that reason wanted an upper hand in Baluchistan and did not like the Chinese involvement there.<sup>100</sup> So the killings of Chinese engineers, technicians and workers reflected an effort to reduce the influence of China in Baluchistan and to sour the relations between China and Pakistan.<sup>101</sup> China was also well aware of America's long term plans to separate the Baluchistan province from Pakistan and to integrate it with Iran's Baluchistan region to create a Baluchi state. This plan was being mentioned in various US intelligence papers such as CIA reports on Global Trends in 2015.<sup>102</sup>

It is worth noting that in the context of terrorism 2007, was also not a peaceful year in the Pak-China relations. In this year, a series of attacks on Chinese nationalists was observed. All these incidents were connected with one incident or were in reaction to one incident particular (*Lal Masjid*). On 22 June, the female students of *Lal Masjid/Jamia Hafsa* abducted seven Chinese women along with a man. The Chinese citizens were running massage

parlour in the posh area F8/3 sector of Islamabad.<sup>103</sup> The number of Chinese parlour had increased in last two years in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi due to the increase in the number of clients, because the parlour were providing the facilities of acupuncture, osteopathy, hot stone massage, body to body massage, Chinese herbal medicine, remedial message etc. The Chinese parlours were immediately closed after this incident, as the news of the kidnapping spread like a wild fire all over the world.<sup>104</sup> The students of *Lal Masjid/Jamia Hafsa* accused them of engaging in prostitution and took action against them as part of their campaign of enforcing Taliban style Islam.<sup>105</sup> The deputy chief cleric of the Jamia, Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, claimed that they had received several complaints that the massage centre was an undercover brothel. The parlour charged Rs-1000 for a message, with additional Rs-500 for "desirable services". He further pointed out that Islamabad Deputy Commissioner, Chaudhry M. Ali, Assistant Commissioner, Farasat Ali Khan and Senior Superintendent of Police, Zafar Iqbal had acknowledged that the parlour was also used as a brothel. He informed that the students of Beacon-house school in the vicinity had helped the *madrassa* students to gather evidence against the message parlour.<sup>106</sup> All the Chinese were released after being detained for 16 hours due to efforts of some diplomatic channels.<sup>107</sup> On the eve of release of the Chinese citizens, Maulana Ghazi said,

"If we hurt the feelings of our Chinese brothers . . . we apologize, and we ask them to look at it from our point of view."<sup>108</sup>

The release of Chinese women in *burqas* woke up the government over the issue, especially the embarrassment it faced globally on the abduction of the Chinese.<sup>109</sup> In his address to the nation on 12 July, President General Pervez Musharraf had called the abduction as "most embarrassing and shameful."<sup>110</sup> In a press conference in the Parliament

house, the Minister for Religious Affairs Muhammad Ijaz-ul-Haq condemned the act of kidnapping the Chinese from the massage centre. He said it was an attempt to damage the friendly ties between the two states. He claimed that the Chinese women were running the health clinic in Islamabad and their kidnapping was interference in their personal life.<sup>111</sup> Chinese ambassador Luo Zhaohui expressed his regret over the abduction by students of *madrassa*. He said,

“We were shocked and surprised on such an incident, which took place in Federal capital.”<sup>112</sup>

Zhaohui appreciated the efforts of government to secure the release of the Chinese hostages.<sup>113</sup> The action taken by students of *Lal Masjid/Jamia Hafsa* against the Chinese nationals gave rise to the Chinese worries and suspicion about the security of Chinese in Pakistan. The warning given by the Ghazi brothers to the government, that if any action was taken against them, they would react through bombing and attacks all over the country, sent wrong vibes all over the world especially in China about Islam. There were reports that Chinese government was reviewing its investment plan in Pakistan due to security apprehensions about their citizens.<sup>114</sup> The Chinese Minister of Public Security, Zhou Yongkang Zhou, called the *Lal Masjid* mob “terrorists” who kidnapped the Chinese and asked government of Pakistan to punish the “criminals.” While meeting with the Federal Interior Minister, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao in Beijing, he stressed the need to provide security to the Chinese working in various development projects in Pakistan.<sup>115</sup> In July, Musharraf ordered troops to take action against the *Lal Masjid* militants.<sup>116</sup> The Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam pointed out that the Chinese government welcomed the *Lal Masjid* operation in the context of abduction of the Chinese.<sup>117</sup> But later on in an interview, this statement of the Foreign Office spokesperson was rejected by the Chinese ambassador by stating that it was against the policy of China to interfere in the domestic affairs of any state.<sup>118</sup> In 2008, the

Capital police claimed that they had arrested seven Chinese and two Pakistani involved in illegal business of prostitution in G-9/4 area of Islamabad. Sub Inspector, Mahar Aslam claimed that after receiving a number of complaints against these Chinese, they got the search warrants from the magistrate and raided the house and caught them red handed.<sup>119</sup> Although it was evident that some Chinese were involved in illegal activities but it was not the responsibility of *madrassa* students to punish any culprit when there were specific laws to deal with the crime.

On July 8, a few days after the *Lal Masjid* incident, three Chinese workers of an auto-rickshaw factory were killed, due to the firing of unidentified men.<sup>120</sup> The Chinese nationals were the workers of Quing Qui, motorcycle workshop in Peshwar. At 9.30 pm, some unidentified persons armed with automatic rifles opened fire on them. The Chinese workers were rushed to Lady Reading Hospital where three were declared dead while fourth one was seriously injured.<sup>121</sup> The wounded Chinese told the police that three men came into their house, they demanded money from them but when the Chinese refused, they first beat them and then opened fire on them.<sup>122</sup> But later on, the wounded Chinese worker stated that the attackers entered in their house and sprayed fire on them and after that they made the film of their bodies. He also said that he could not understand the language they were speaking.<sup>123</sup> The initial reports suggested that this incident happened as Chinese were resisting the dacoits but subsequent reports pointed out that the killings of Chinese was connected with *Lal Masjid* siege. The witnesses from the area confirmed that a number of bearded men came to the workers' house opened fire on them and left without taking anything.<sup>124</sup> Villagers in the surrounding area where the Chinese were killed, termed the foreigners as friendly, having many friends in the village. They said the foreigner's economic condition did not seem at its best and they were planning to shift back to China next month.<sup>125</sup> President, Pervez Musharraf and the Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz sent

their messages of condolences to their respective counterparts in China on the tragic killing of three Chinese nationals in Peshwar city.<sup>126</sup> Prime Minister Shukat Aziz declared that harming Chinese in Pakistan was a “deliberate act of our adversaries to create mistrust between the two countries but assured that such attempt would be dealt with “Iron hand”<sup>127</sup>

The President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan ordered an immediate inquiry of the incident, as it was clearly an attempt to strain the relations between Pakistan and China.<sup>128</sup> The Chinese government had showed serious reservations over the killing of the Chinese nationals and had asked the Pakistani government for the medical treatment of the wounded persons and help to send back bodies of the deceased.<sup>129</sup> The Chinese ambassador Luo Zhaohui, said in an interview, a day prior to the killing of the Chinese nationals in Peshwar, that he had announced a huge amount of money for malaria eradication in Pakistan and had contributed cash for the flood victims. The media in Beijing showed strong reservations on this gesture of goodwill because the Chinese nationals were being killed in Pakistan.<sup>130</sup> The Provincial Information Minister, Asif Iqbal while condemning the killing of the Chinese nationals, expressed the view that the purpose behind this disgraceful act was to harm the relations between China and Pakistan.<sup>131</sup> The Chinese State Councillor and Defence Minister, Cao Gangchuan had expressed the determination that such acts would not affect the strong bond of friendship between the two states.<sup>132</sup> The Deputy Chief of Mission of Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, Mao Siwei, led a three member team and visited Peshwar. In Peshwar, the team met with senior police officers, as well as wounded Chinese nationals and they also visited the place where the incident occurred. The Deputy Chief of Mission showed satisfaction over the progress in the investigation of the murder of the Chinese workers.<sup>133</sup> Mao said that two theories emerged from the making of the video film by the attackers. The first theory



was that the killers had made film to show their head that they had killed the targets and got the money. According to the second theory the attackers wanted to show the film on some TV channel. He supported the second theory on the premise that some forces and elements wanted to malign the relations of Pakistan and China.<sup>134</sup> There were many speculations about the attack on the Chinese in Peshwar. Firstly, it was considered as a simple case of robbery<sup>135</sup>, as was suggested by the wounded Chinese in his first statement to the police. But Khyber Paktunkhwa Information Minister, Asif Iqbal Daudzai claimed that there was no evidence to term this incident as dacoity.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, according to the local witnesses, the attackers did not take anything from the Chinese house. Consequently, this speculation was considered quite weak notwithstanding the statement of the wounded Chinese. However, he had also changed his statement later on, which rendered this speculation weaker. The second speculation was based on the thinking of the majority of people who linked the incident with the *Lal Masjid* operation of the government. It had suggested that the Chinese government statement welcoming the military operation against the *Lal Masjid*, did not go down well in Pakistani society. Peshwar Police Chief, Abdul Majeed Marwat also endorsed the view that the killing was a revenge of *Lal Masjid* operation. A militant leader, Maulvi Fazlullah, having close links with the clerics of *Lal Masjid/Jamia Hafsa*, declared through his illegal FM radio, an open confrontation against the government to take revenge through armed attacks and suicide bombing.<sup>137</sup> Although this statement was rejected by the Chinese ambassador in an interview by stating that China did not pressurize Pakistan for undertaking operation against *Lal Masjid/ Jamia Hafsa*, as it was against the policy of China to interfere in the internal matters of any state. He further added that although he had accepted the invitation to visit *Lal Masjid/Jamia Hafsa*, but it couldn't be materialize due to security reasons.<sup>138</sup> The third speculation suggested the involvement of foreign hand in the

killing and hurting the Chinese in Pakistan. A member of National Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary of Defence, Major (retd) Tanveer Hussain was of the view that in the killings of Chinese in Pakistan, the Indians and U.S Intelligence agencies were involved, as no Pakistani can ever harm the Chinese.<sup>139</sup> The India backed separatists belonging to the *Jundollah* (God's Soliders) and Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) were working to undermine the cordial relationship of China and Iran with Pakistan. On April 18, 2008, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi disclosed that,

"Some external forces are trying to weaken China-Pakistan strategic ties by 'creating misunderstanding."<sup>140</sup>

The fourth speculation envisaged the attacks and killing of the Chinese in Pakistan as part of revenge operations of the Muslim separatists of China as their fellows were killed by the Chinese authorities after their extradition from Pakistan.<sup>141</sup>

In the mid of July (2007), the second incident of terrorism occurred in Baluchistan, related to the Chinese nationals after the *Lal Masjid* operation. A time bomb was exploded at Hub in Baluchistan and it killed 24 policemen and local citizens. The target was basically the van in which the Chinese engineers were moving from their work location of Zinc mine to Karachi. The suicide attacker was killed on the spot, who probably pressed the button to detonate the bomb, missed the front van of the Chinese and hit the vehicle full of Lasbela police men guarding the van of the Chinese.<sup>142</sup> The Chinese Consul General, Karachi, Chen Shan Min, stated publically that his government was much concerned about the security of the Chinese working in the various projects in different areas of Pakistan, particularly in Baluchistan. He pointed out that the Chinese government was well-aware that a handful of people were involved in killing, attacking, and abducting of the Chinese nationals and

that these people did not represent Pakistan or its people.<sup>143</sup> Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi wrote a note of thanks to his counterpart Khurshid Kasuri, after the Chinese workers narrowly escaped a suicide bomb attack in Hub.<sup>144</sup> Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister thanked President Pervez Musharraf for the support and co-operation extended by the government of Pakistan in the wake of the recent incident. He conveyed condolences of the Chinese side over the casualties suffered by Pakistan police personnel while providing security to the Chinese engineers.<sup>145</sup> The Federal Information Minister, Muhammad Ali Durrani, pointed out that targeting the Chinese in Pakistan aimed at hurting the strategic ties between the two states and to damage the economic progress of Pakistan.<sup>146</sup> Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam, while commenting on the suicide attack in Hub said the relations with China were vital and imperative for Pakistan, and for that reason, some forces were intent on demaging these relations.<sup>147</sup> In Baluchistan the Chinese nationals were being attacked and killed as a part of international conspiracy. There is a general perception that the Americans have a eye on the rich mineral resources of Balochistan and are using terror to achieve their objectives. Another speculation was based on the involvement of 'Friends of the *Lal Masjid* Clerics' in this incident to take revenge.<sup>148</sup>

As an aftermath of *Lal Masjid*, the third incident happened in mid of September 2007, when some unidentified motorcyclists attacked the convoy of the Chinese engineers, when they were heading towards their project of *Kachhi* Canal near Rajanpur. Fortunately no causality was reported. After the incident, the engineers returned to their camp office in Rajanpur. The Elite force of the Punjab police, the border military police and the Baluchistan levies had reached the spot and started the search operation, but did not succeed in tracing any culprit. The Chinese engineers were engaged in the construction of 144 Km Canal, most of which was to be completed in the

sensitive border areas of Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan. The work on this project had been for the last three years, due to the incidents of mine-laying, firing and abduction of workers.<sup>149</sup>

At the close of the year 2007, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. After her assassination, China impressed upon the Government of Pakistan to provide security to its citizens working on power generation projects, and other projects towards off the looming danger.<sup>150</sup>

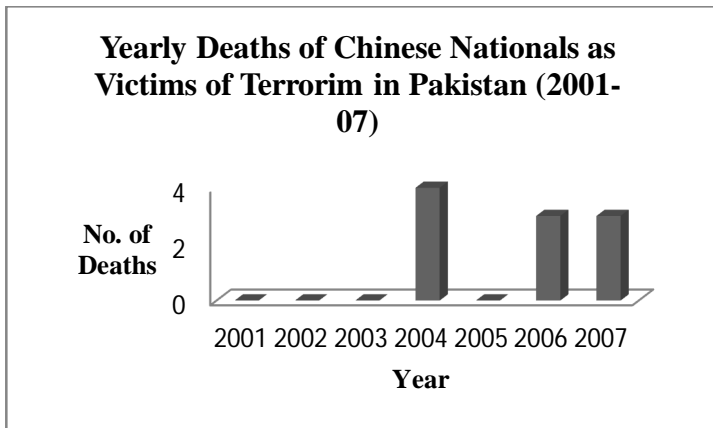
#### Chinese Nationalists Who gave their lives at the Altaz of the Pak-China Friendship

Name	Place	Year
Zhou Xuemeng	Gwadar	May, 2004
Hao Guang Chang	Gwadar	May, 2004
Guo Qihong	Gwadar	May, 2004
Wang Peng	South Waziristan	October, 2004
Long Hongbao	Hub	February, 2006
Wei Jianpin	Hub	February, 2006
Zhao Bin	Hub	February, 2006
Lee	Peshwar	July, 2007
Fing	Peshwar	July, 2007
Lillee	Peshwar	July, 2007

*Source: Taken from different Newspapers*

## Conclusion

During the Musharraf era, ten Chinese became the victim of terrorism in Pakistan and the worst year was 2004, when maximum Chinese were killed. On the one hand, the Chinese government was worried about the security of its citizens in Pakistan but on the other they fully understood the fact that neither Pakistani government nor any Pakistani national could do any harm to their Chinese friends on their soil. As a result, they never withdrew from any of the ongoing projects in Pakistan which had been started with the collaboration of China. The Pakistani government and people always condemned the attacks on the Chinese and some scarified their lives while providing security to them.



Source: Author

There have been many speculations about the killing of the Chinese nationals in Pakistan, the strongest being the one which was based on the premise of the involvement of foreign hands. Actually there have been numerous external forces which did not want the Chinese involvement in the economic uplift of Pakistan. This can be concluded from the nature and frequency of the terrorist attacks on the Chinese who were involved in the major economic projects e.g. construction of Gawdar Port, Gomal Zam dam, *Kachhi* Cannal Project, Attock Cement Factory ect. The province where the most Chinese became victim was that of Baluchistan, where many forces (Balochistan Liberation Army, *Jandullah*, even some Baluch: *Sardars*), funded by external elements (Indian and U.S Intelligences) were working against the development projects. Baluchistan was blessed with some special geographical characteristic e.g it shares borders with Aghanistan, Iran, in the close vicinity of Central Asian States (rich of energy resources), full of mineral and energy resources, and a few miles away from the Strait of Hurmaz, from where the imports and exports of oil take place to all over the world. So some elements did not want the Chinese involvement in this Province. The major

drawback of this Province stemmed from its population which was under the strong influence of *Sardars*, having little awareness about the significance of their Province, and prone to exploitation.

There were three major objectives behind the attacks on Chinese in Pakistan. Firstly, these attacks tried to damage the relations between Pakistan and China, and reduce the Chinese involvement in different economic projects in Pakistan. Secondly, the attacks created hurdles in the economic uplift of Pakistan because if it becomes economically vibrant it would reduce its dependency on western states. Thirdly, these forces tried to stop Chinese to access the Indian Ocean.

Pakistan and China collectively took a number of measures to combat terrorism e.g. Setting up of the Joint Task Force, Agreement on Extradition Treaty, joining of Shanghai Co-operation Organization, joint military anti-terrorism exercises, and signing of an accord to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism etc.

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