

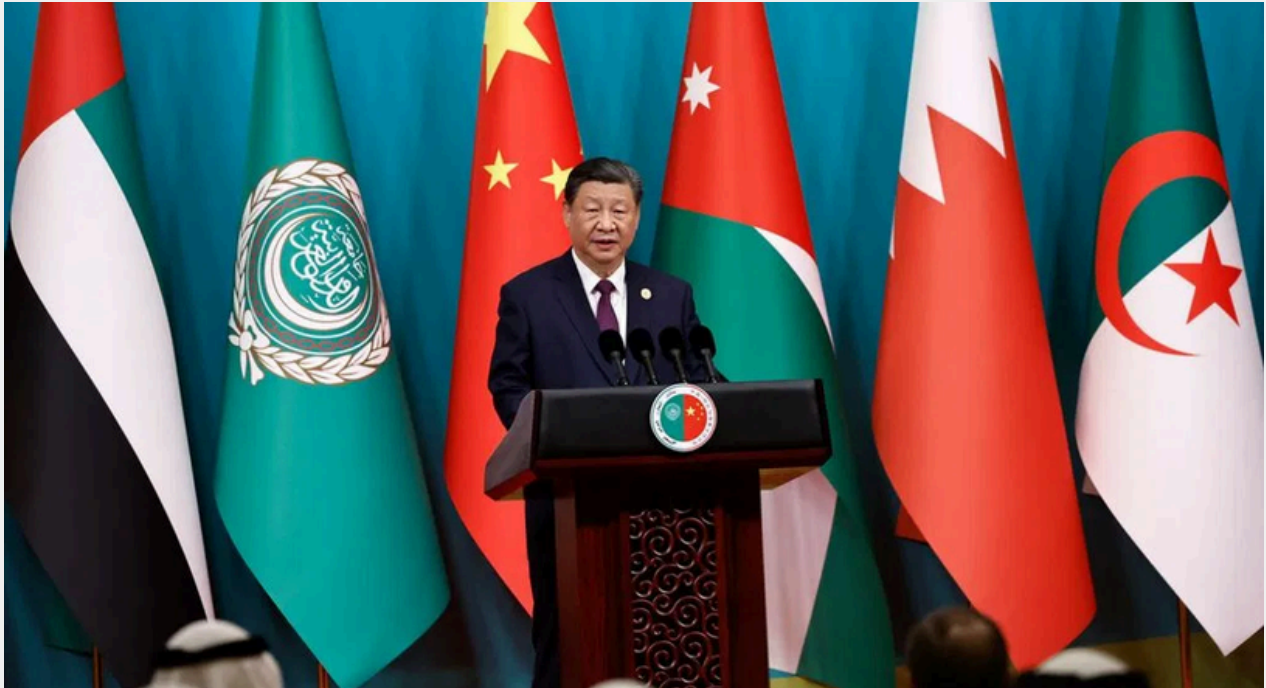


China's South Asia strategy and Geopolitical Shifts

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Dr. Shamaila Farooq is a senior expert in international relations, strategic communications, and policy advocacy with over two decades of experience in academia, media, & development sectors. She holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Peshawar, where her research focused on U.S. media influence on foreign policy toward Pakistan post-9/11.



China's positioning in geo-politics due to realignments in the global politics have redefined its South Asia's strategy. Recent visits of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to three important countries — Pakistan, Afghanistan and India shows its pivotal place in the South Asian politics in shaping its relations at regional level. The presence of Wang Yi in Pakistan is a strategic and conventional matter owing to closer ties with Pakistan, his first ever visit to India since 2022 after chilly relations over Laddakh incident and a day trip to Afghanistan shows seriousness and consistent approach of China towards South Asia, ultimately showing China as a leading power of Global South.

China has skillfully used the recent developments in South Asia that shows grounded, yet mature diplomacy. Donald Trump's tariff war on India on importing Russian oil; India's reluctance to acknowledge Trump's mediatory efforts on stopping Pakistan-India war, are few to mention on regional geo-politics shifts. China's approach in New Delhi was for cooperation, connectivity and its long term vision over opportunity. Wang Yi didn't rub salt on wounds, reflects Beijing's consistent response unlike conventional powers that are swayed by taking shifts in regional politics.



A similar analysis of Pakistan–US relations explains a familiar trend in the behaviour of international players in South Asia. Trump’s symbolic gestures at the luncheon with Pakistani leadership and Washington’s recent focus on Pakistan’s mineral and rare earth resources, to name few shows the same recurring historical pattern nature of U.S.–Pakistan relations. These ties oscillating between cooperation and mistrust further accentuate to have a stable global power particularly, China with steady presence and which is now crucial for ensuring stability in geo–regional politics.

India had to readjust its priorities with China in the wake of US tariff pressure over importing Russian oil and US's visible support for Pakistan over India. India once comfortable within "US–India anti–China's cocoon" is now forced to make changes in its foreign policy. The decision to participate in the SCO 2025 might not have been in India's radar before such developments — reflects these readjustments. Pakistan for now need to avoid reaction with the sudden US policy shifts. Now is time to learn from the past and avoid knee jerk reactions in the wake of "pragmatic choices". With China, Pakistan has to be consistent and hand in hand due to certain major developments ahead; China is set to kick off CPEC–II (amid concerns of security of Chinese personnel as well as progress on CPEC I); joint ventures are planned in agriculture, climate and minerals sectors and the SCO 2025 where Russia, India and South Korea are there at the same time, Pakistan has to be there with China as strategic partner.

Both Pakistan and China should look at the changing global dynamics implying direct effects at regional level. The revived relations between Islamabad and Washington, in light of revived ties between Beijing and New Delhi are to be gauged without any abrupt reaction given an unpredictable history of US in South Asia. Pakistan's improving ties with Bangladesh is another benchmark to reset the regional geopolitics that goes in favor of Pakistan and China. It has already shaken the India's hard line and hegemonic policy in the region. The recent shifts in US foreign policy towards South Asia's favor China to prove its power as a trusted Global South power in the world politics. The SCO 2025 is shaping to be China's magnificent power show!