

# CHINA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN THE US: LESSONS FOR PAKISTAN

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## **Abstract**

*Revolution in the means of communication has made a profound impact on the conduct of public diplomacy worldwide. Communication is now seen as an important component of public diplomacy to ascertain how governments interact with foreign publics in pursuit of their objectives. Countries fully recognize that new media and technologies are crucial to present their stories to the global audience. As an emerging power, China has been proactively expanding its presence in the global communication landscape. China has pronounced 'Going Global' strategy, which is supported by the internationalization of Chinese media and ubiquitous presence at the social media platforms. China's international communication strategy has been aimed at increasing cultural soft power to influence foreign publics. This paper is an attempt to understand China's communication strategy in the public diplomacy sphere with particular reference to the US. The major influence behind China's communication strategy is twofold; first is to dispel negative connotations attached with the rise of China or 'China Threat', and secondly, to improve relations with the US through public diplomacy. For Pakistan, public diplomacy and external communication have been a neglected area of research. A comprehensive public diplomacy strategy and effective external communication approach could be instrumental for Pakistan to improve its image among the foreign audience and present a positive image of the country.*

**Keywords:** Public Diplomacy, Communication Strategy, Soft Power, Social Media.

## **Introduction**

**T**he most common question posed about China in the US media is regarding its rise and probable conflict with the US. The western media has presented China-US relations through the prism of Thucydides Trap,<sup>1</sup> which may lead a rising power (China) into conflict with the status quo power (the US). Graham Allison proposes that in the last five hundred years, twelve out of sixteen times a rising power had entered into conflict with the status quo power and China's rise could be another episode of any such conflict in the future.<sup>2</sup> The US has been assertively pronouncing the rise of China as a major challenge to the US global leadership.

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This is reflected in the post-Cold War threat assessment, considering China as a major economic and military threat to the US. Alongside China's economic growth and military modernization, geostrategic considerations, such as Taiwan, Tibet, South China Sea maritime disputes, human rights concerns, and alleged cyber espionage, are major concerns for the US.<sup>3</sup> The US intelligentsia has been writing on the rise of China since the end of the Cold War as the US strategic and military attention started to shift from Europe towards Asia. China was envisaged as a country with all prerequisites of becoming a potential threat for the US.<sup>4</sup> According to John Mearsheimer, China has developed its economic capabilities and political outreach, and is now focused on increasing its military power to offset the US from Asia like the US pushed Europe from the Western Hemisphere in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>5</sup> Robert Gilpin argues that China's economic wealth has disturbed the power distribution in the international system. China as an emerging power would revise the existing international norms bringing about the power transition, which is unlikely to be peaceful.<sup>6</sup> However, the forecast by the US did not bring an abrupt policy shift in the former's approach towards China. The successive US administrations cautiously observed China's peaceful rise while maintaining constructive engagement with a hope that the Communist State would further open to democratic reforms as it embraced state capitalism. The US national security assessments towards China did not forecast China's modernization as a direct threat to the US till 2010.

President Obama's *Pivot to Asia Strategy* (2011) was a harbinger of a change in the US security outlook towards China. It represented US conviction in which Asia was 'the Center of Strategic Gravity' and the need for rebalancing aimed to address the challenges posed by the rapid rise of China.<sup>7</sup> The growing strategic cooperation between the US and Asia Pacific region with Japan, the Republic of South Korea, India, Australia, and Taiwan, is aimed at containing China in the region. The Indo-US nuclear deal with a focus on increasing defense cooperation with India and the improvement of ties with Asia Pacific nations having maritime disputes with China set the tone for a new great power rivalry. Since Donald Trump took over as the US President, China is considered as a major strategic competitor, as declared in the US National Security Strategy of 2017.<sup>8</sup> The growing geo-economic rivalry between the US and China could be a precursor of a new great power strategic competition in the future. The US also sees China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a geo-economic tool serving overseas expansion and security interests.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the US view of China has progressively shifted towards a competitor from a partner.

The Chinese leadership has contested the US assessment of China's rise by presenting 'Peaceful Rise Thesis' to allay the US concerns. In 2003, Zheng Bijian<sup>10</sup> presented an alternative notion of the rise of China pronounced as 'Peaceful Rise of China' which counteracted China threat theory.<sup>11</sup> In 2004, the 'Peaceful Rise' was officially substituted with the narrative of 'Peaceful Development' to ensure 'Peaceful Coexistence and Harmonious World' to show the cultural and political rise of a 'Civilizational State.'<sup>12</sup> Chinese state and society envisage the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an opportunity towards peace and prosperity, both in the domestic and international

sphere.<sup>13</sup> Narrative of 'Peaceful Development' of China as a great power is based on peace and harmony and a new great power relationship between the US and China.<sup>14</sup> As Chinese leadership and academics have repeatedly called for the formulation of China's future based on 'Peaceful Development', Chinese diplomacy has turned to create peace and stability at the international level for the development of China.

According to the official account, China seeks peaceful development as a shared destiny with all people and would strive to achieve this goal.<sup>15</sup> Key message in the peaceful development narrative is that China does not intend to disrupt the existing international order and abide by the existing rules of the game.<sup>16</sup> The leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) shares the view that China should not be a prey of Thucydides Trap, where a revisionist power undermines a status quo power.<sup>17</sup> As China resonates with the salient features of the international system, such as liberal economic order, globalization, and the role of great powers, it is unlikely for China to create a Sino-centric international order for global governance. However, China seeks a new type of great power relation with the US, based on a harmonious world where great powers could coexist with different ideologies and political systems.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, this paper endeavors to discuss Chinese public diplomacy towards the US to build its positive image through new media and proactive communication strategy. It also highlights how Pakistan can learn from the Chinese experience to project its soft image to the global audience.

## **Theoretical Context**

The term 'Public Diplomacy' was first used by Edmund Gullion in 1965.<sup>19</sup> The underlining assumption of public diplomacy was to influence foreign publics and important stakeholders which in turn could influence government policies.<sup>20</sup> An aberration from traditional diplomacy which focuses on the government-to-government relationship, public diplomacy is a form of diplomacy where governments communicate with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture as well as its national goals and policies.<sup>21</sup> Since its inception, public diplomacy has undergone substantial transformations. The 20<sup>th</sup> century public diplomacy used radio and television for disseminating messages; nevertheless, this one-way communication process refrains interactive communication with limited or no opportunity for the recipient to respond.<sup>22</sup> With innovations in global communication mediums, government-to-government communication has developed into government-to-people communication.<sup>23</sup> This addition of new diplomacy opened new horizons for the governments, practitioners, public, and media to interact freely and frequently. Most importantly, the role of media in new diplomacy has expanded vertically and horizontally. Revolutionary changes in information technology, international politics, democratization, and mass communication have augmented the media's role in new diplomacy.<sup>24</sup> Today, public diplomacy has become more inclusive by embracing the tools of marketing, public relations, and branding to impact people across the globe. Likewise, public diplomacy's interdisciplinary character determines theoretical and conceptual

linkages with other academic fields, such as mass communication, culture, public relations, and international relations.

China as an emerging global power recognizes the importance of a favorable image and understands how communication through mass media could influence public opinion in the US. The modern media landscape has enabled communication through new platforms, such as digital communication, social networks, and blogs, that enable public diplomacy communication between governments and foreign audience. Extensive literature has been produced in the past two decades to understand the role of communication technology and media on public diplomacy. The growing role of mass communication to achieve foreign policy objectives through public diplomacy has been discussed by scholarship on diplomacy.<sup>25</sup>

The burgeoning growth of Chinese global media has led to Daya Kishan Thussu arguing about the globalization of Chinese media referring to a new lexicon of Sino-globalization. The gradual decline in the US power and growing challenge posed to the US-dominated globalized world is under stress due to Chinese global outreach, especially in the wake of mega projects and global connectivity in the form of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).<sup>26</sup> Expansion of Chinese media in the globalized world is an expression of how China's culture is manifested to the outside world. The context into which Chinese media operate refers to the need to develop a connection between Chinese civilization and the world community. Culture testifies an imperative role in reflecting upon China's makeover as a rejuvenated nation that would play a constructive role in global affairs.<sup>27</sup>

Hugo de Burgh states that the growth of Chinese global media and communication is also an expression of the progressive social changes within China to open up to the world beyond economic domain and establish connectivity in all spheres of human interactions.<sup>28</sup> China envisages modern communication platforms as an opportunity to engage with the foreign audience to project a soft rise of China. As China's rise is viewed with suspicion, China recognizes the importance of popular support to address the trust-deficit, especially among the US public.

The establishment of international communication networks through virtual connectivity has become an important aspect of international relations.<sup>29</sup> The underlining objective of public diplomacy is to engage foreign publics to advance national interests.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, modern public diplomacy is a form of communication, which is used by the government to influence governments by engaging their citizens.<sup>31</sup> As a communicative activity, public diplomacy encompasses an array of interactive activities that include government-to-government, diplomatic interactions, and government-to-people contact.<sup>32</sup> All these interactive activities form political communication through diplomatic channels towards the targeted audience and actors.<sup>33</sup> Public diplomacy, thus, performs dialogical communication aimed at establishing a mutually beneficial relationship based on the interest of the communicating agency.<sup>34</sup> Communication dimension has been studied extensively by

the public diplomacy scholarship. Communications supplements the productivity of soft power and modern-day diplomacy.<sup>35</sup>

Eytan Gilboa argues that public diplomacy is a form of communication through which statesmen, diplomats, and organizations communicate their interests and apprehensions to other actors.<sup>36</sup> Revolutionary changes in technologies have developed a new synergy between media and diplomacy, which has led to the terms, such as media diplomacy and digital diplomacy.<sup>37</sup> As of today, countries cannot remain anonymous; virtual platforms provide states with more visibility to present their perspective on key political, economic, and strategic issues. Global media space presents an opportunity for countries to provide their perspective to the global audience and paint a positive image to the world.<sup>38</sup> Some countries find it relatively easy to present a more favorable picture than others due to their cultural influence, political system, or soft power. The importance of various communication channels and non-state actors in shaping the public opinion of foreign publics have forced the state to build effective communication networks. Public relations scholarship has conceptualized public diplomacy as a process of strategic communication effort by identifying targeted foreign audience to effectively communicate ideas and policies. Therefore, China has initiated a wide range of public diplomatic activities, which includes public relation campaigns, national branding, strategic communication, and mediated public diplomacy as part of building global communication networks to potently promote China's message to global audience.

### **China's Public Diplomacy through Communication**

Countries with opposing political ideologies and cultural differences carry respective world views as in the case between the US and China. China's 'Socialist Market Economy', introduced by Deng Xiaoping, was an economic reform agenda with limited political consequences. Therefore, the US strategy of conditional engagement with China by supporting integration in international trading and financial system did not affect the political outcome. After the 1990s, China's rapid economic development and transformation were bound to bring economic, security and transnational issues with the US in subsequent decades.<sup>39</sup> China has received mixed perceptions since the inauguration of its relations with the US in the early 1970s. These perceptions range from collapsing China to rising China and a paper tiger to China threat that permeates the US view of China through decades. Successive Chinese governments have made endeavors to reinvigorate the national image as a peace-loving and developing nation. However, structural sources of the economic competition alongside differences on contentious issues, such as Tibet, One-child policy, human rights violations, and cyber espionage mars China's endeavors to cultivate a positive image in the US.<sup>40</sup> Many in the world also see China as an aggressor and hegemonic state in the East Asian region.<sup>41</sup>

To improve its national image, Chinese leadership relies on soft power as an instrument to realize the normative expression of the norms and values China presents to the foreign audience. President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized that soft power clearly narrates China's message and communicates China's dream to the outside world.<sup>42</sup> As the Chinese scholarship dispels the negative connotation attached with the rise of China, a pragmatic foreign policy approach based on public diplomacy initiative has been initiated by China to communicate its intentions in an unequivocal manner.<sup>43</sup>

To ensure China's message is communicated to governments and foreign publics, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Department of Public Diplomacy under Information Department in 2004.<sup>44</sup> In 2009, it was elevated to Public Diplomacy Office to manage all functions under the purview of public diplomacy. Keeping in view that soft power should not merely stem from state apparatus, in 2012, China established Public Diplomacy Association in Beijing to include citizens, retired officials, NGOs, and academics to informally communicate China's message to the outside world. The purpose of these institutional reforms was to develop broad-based channels to ensure two-way engagement between China and foreign publics, which includes listening, informing, and advocating as part of long-term relationship building.<sup>45</sup> To effectively construct a positive image and communicate Chinese achievements to the global audience, China is investing in international broadcasting to expand global outreach. According to Ingrid d'Hooghe, in 2009, China invested around US \$ 6.6 billion in international media broadcasting which includes news media, radio, and advertisement to communicate China's message.<sup>46</sup> According to a 2019 report by Reporters without Borders (RSF), China is expanding in the global media mix through investment in international broadcasting, advertisement, foreign media, and social media. An estimated US \$ 1.3 billion are invested annually by the Chinese government to increase Chinese media presence globally.<sup>47</sup>

At the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of CPC in 2007, President Hu Jintao spoke on the need to increase China's soft power to project and capitalize on economic and development gains.<sup>48</sup> China's soft power rests with traditional Confucius culture and development aid, especially to the developing world. At the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of CPC in November 2012, President Xi Jinping enunciated unprecedented challenges for China to engage with the outside world. President Xi pronounced the need for communicating Chinese ideology and culture imbibed in the core Chinese values. As a part of promoting the Chinese story, Chinese media has been entrusted the responsibility to present new, modern, and prosperous China.<sup>49</sup> To project the Chinese story, the traditional Chinese State media has incorporated new media to share China's narrative efficiently.<sup>50</sup>

## **Chinese Public Diplomacy in the US**

Chinese public diplomacy aims to counteract anti-Chinese rhetoric in the US mainstream media, change the perception about China through the appeal of its ideas,

and connecting with the US public to establish long term relationship. China's approach towards its image processing in the US is based on a comprehensive engagement with the US public through disseminating ideas and information through mass communication, national branding, and people-to-people contact.<sup>51</sup> Biggest challenge for China is the US media demonization, which results in a low approval rating for China. Jay Wang argues that the pursuit of soft power through public diplomacy with a comprehensive communication strategy is fundamental to China's favorable image.<sup>52</sup> There are two fundamental aspects of China's image branding in the US, which are an investment in broadcasting and improve social media presence.

### **Chinese Broadcasting in the US**

International broadcasting is an important pillar of China's communication strategy in the US. China takes international broadcasting as an important tool to change the misconceptions about China's image to the global audience and important stakeholders.<sup>53</sup> The former head of the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party, Liu Yunshan pointed out that powerful communication capabilities would provide China with potent global projection and influence.<sup>54</sup> In other words, strategic use of international broadcasting and communication can put public diplomacy into an effective foreign policy perspective.<sup>55</sup> With the beginning of satellite television for international broadcast in the early 1990s, China initiated its global media expedition. The introduction of internet in 1994 added a new dimension to China's aim towards global projection.<sup>56</sup> In 2007, China launched the 'Going Global' campaign with US \$ 7 billion to expand China's soft power through global media presence.<sup>57</sup> Global media outreach was one aspect of China's soft power campaign, which also included cultural diplomacy and nation branding as a comprehensive public diplomacy strategy. Under the 'Going Global' for projecting its cultural and heritage exhibitions, students' scholarship and language training programs, Confucius institutions, advertisements, and most importantly media projection through satellite broadcast and social media campaigns.<sup>58</sup>

In the US, most of the media is owned by private companies, whereas western business conglomerates own 95% of the total global media. China has found it a daunting task to penetrate the global mass media market saturated by western media outlets. Similarly, the establishment of a global media network, development of the journalistic network, and erecting infrastructure to support broadcasting have been major challenges for China.<sup>59</sup> In 2009, the Chinese government announced that it would invest around US \$ 6.6 billion in its campaign to extend media outreach. Media broadcasts like China Central Television (CCTV), Xinhua News, China Radio International, and China Official Newswire received major financial benefits from the government.<sup>60</sup>

Global Television Network (CGTN) and Chinese Media Group (CMG) are instrumental in the Chinese 'Going Out' strategy to break away from conventional

stereotypes about China while promoting the national image in a positive fashion.<sup>61</sup> CGTN is a subsidiary of China International Broadcast Network. It is a conglomerate of six multi-language, owned and operated by China Central Television CCTV, a state-owned media enterprise. CGTN operates in five different languages including English, Spanish, French, Arabic, and Russian, making it one of the largest viewed international broadcasts with more than 200 million viewers outside China.<sup>62</sup> According to the official website, CGTN aims to 'cover the whole globe reporting news from a Chinese perspective.'<sup>63</sup> The launch of CCTV-9, the first English news channel revealed China's outlook towards the outside world aiming to feature the Chinese perspective to the audience in the US.

Chinese online streaming services in the US like *iTalkBB*, Chinese TV, Charming China, Great Wall, and *KyLin* TV available nationwide, connect overseas Chinese with the mainland.<sup>64</sup> Many independent Chinese media outlets have seen burgeoning growth among which notable are *Wenxuecheng* (online Chinese language news channel), *Duowei* (Chinese language media), and *Mingjing* (Chinese language website).<sup>65</sup> The World Journal (Chinese language paper founded in 1976) is aimed at improving business ties, assimilate the Chinese diaspora in the US society while maintaining ties with the homeland and Chinese way of life.<sup>66</sup> China Daily Distribution Corporation (CDDC), established in 1984, covers North America with an aim to provide China's perspective on the global economic, political, and social issues.<sup>67</sup> These broadcast and print media have now a significant presence on social media including *Twitter* and *Facebook*.

China's pervasive footprints could be felt on the internet spectrum with the top four of ten companies including *Tencent*, *Baidu*, and *Alibaba* belong to China. Launched as CCTV America in 2012, CGTN is the largest Chinese broadcast network in the US. The expansion of CCTV (now CGTN) aims to increase the international influence of China and trying to raise the cultural development of the country to the level already achieved by its economy. The Voice of America (VOA) called CGTN a Chinese effort to promote soft power and increase its global influence internationally.<sup>68</sup> Based in Washington DC, the CGTN has a household viewership of 30 million, whereas its Washington bureau has 180 employees.<sup>69</sup>

## Use of Social Media in Chinese Communication

Social media has far-reaching implications on the ecology of communication in public diplomacy.<sup>70</sup> Statecraft has entered into a virtual domain, which has enabled unbroken global communication and information flow.<sup>71</sup> China's presence in social media and digital diplomacy is still in its infancy yet it is catching up with the US. Regarding the US approach to conduct public diplomacy in China, the US Embassy in Beijing started using Chinese microblogging *Weibo* in the absence of *Facebook* and *Twitter*, to connect with common people and dissidents in China.<sup>72</sup> An equivalent of *Twitter*, *Weibo* is used by around 450 million people in China. Learning from the US strategy of using social media for public diplomacy, China has become an active



participant in 'Diplomacy 2.0' for the dissemination of information to shape public opinion. Chinese embassy and consulates in the US have official *Twitter* and *Facebook* accounts and *YouTube* pages to engage with the US public and to present and testify the official Chinese views.<sup>73</sup>

According to a Pew Research Survey, the past fifteen years have seen exponential growth in social media applications in the US, which has grown from 5% in 2005 to 72% in 2019.<sup>74</sup> Majority of US public uses social media platform to gather information and uses it as a source for news media. Therefore, China has recognized this strategic opportunity to increase social media presence in the US as part of public diplomacy to directly access the US public and present a candid view of China and Chinese perspective on key issues. Part of the strategy is to present a softer image of China which remains left-out from the mainstream US media. Chinese culture, language, people, infrastructure, and cuisines are prominent aspects that are part of branding China's campaign in the US.<sup>75</sup> Social media campaigns compliment China's 'Going Out' strategy, which focuses on finding commonalities between Chinese and western culture attractive to the US public.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, Chinese mediated diplomacy in the US has been focused on increasing cultural imprints in media campaigns. China has followed the suit by learning from the US example in rationalizing foreign policy actions through digital diplomacy and strategic communication. All major Chinese media broadcasts have been making their presence felt in the US social media platforms. For instance, CGTN has a substantial subscription on *Twitter*, *Facebook*, and *YouTube*. While CGTN disassociates itself from Chinese state affiliation, it reflects an integral part of China's 'Going Global' campaign showcasing the brighter side of China. The majority of the content on CGTN projects Chinese cultural activities, history, economic achievements, tourism, and business opportunities.<sup>77</sup> Alongside CGTN, numerous Chinese media outlets including *Xinhua News*, *Global Times*, *China News Service*, *China Daily*, *People's Daily*, and *China Radio International* have social media presence across the US. One of China's leading public sector conglomerates, *Tencent*, is one of the world's largest social media.

E-commerce and gaming providers have expansive footprints in the US. Social media apps, such as *Vincent QQ* and *WeChat* are affiliated with *Tencent*. *WeChat*, used for communication, business services, and online payments, has a huge demand among Chinese diaspora in the US. Also, US politicians are using this app to connect with people in their constituencies.<sup>78</sup> In 2018, *WeChat* had 2.47 million active monthly users in the US with 22 percent of the age group between 18-24 using the application. Interestingly, *WeChat* has the second-highest traffic coming from the US after China.<sup>79</sup> Another app *TikTok* owned by Chinese company ByteDance became the most downloaded application in 2019 worldwide. *TikTok* has 26.5 million active users in the US with more than 60 percent users between the age group of 16-24.<sup>80</sup>

According to a survey conducted by a market-based research firm, Sensor Tower, by October 2018, *TikTok* had more downloads in the US than *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *Instagram*, and has been downloaded 80 million times in the US.<sup>81</sup> During the Covid-19 outbreak, an unprecedented number of people switched to work from home. A Chinese social media app *Zoom* developed by a Chinese-American, used for video conferencing and meeting, was downloaded by 3.2 million users in the US between March 26 to April 1, 2020.<sup>82</sup> Use of these social media apps is not only popular among the Chinese diaspora in the US but also the US public. The Trump administration is skeptical of Chinese social media landscape in the US and has termed it as a national security threat. For instance, *TikTok* used for lip-synching or perform some musical acts, has arguably received the most attention recently. *TikTok's* popularity is unprecedented vis-à-vis any Chinese social media app outreach in the US. These apps are more attractive to US teenagers who use them for social projection and attention. However, celebrities and active military servicemen using the *TikTok* application along with *WeChat* can no longer use due to a ban imposed by the US.

## Lessons for Pakistan

Pakistan can benefit significantly from China's public diplomacy and communication strategy towards reinvigorating its global image. China's economic development necessitates a national image that could resonate with its successes. China has not only developed its hard power but also the soft power, which is more attractive to win the hearts and minds of the global audience.

Pakistan can learn a great deal about developing soft power resources into dividends from China. Pakistan's image since becoming part of the Global War against Terrorism has been under great stress due to the pervasive law and order situation and a growing wave of extremism. Currently, Pakistan ranks 53<sup>rd</sup> in the Soft Power Index, which is considerably low.<sup>83</sup> Though, Pakistan possesses substantial soft power resources namely rich cultural diversity, historical heritage, and potentials of an emerging economic market; nevertheless, the application of these resources into dividends through public diplomacy and communication has been missing in Pakistan's foreign policy discourse.<sup>84</sup> As a result, the 'Brand Pakistan' does not reflect the positive side of Pakistan to the international community. The lessons from this study can be used to reflect upon the deficiencies in Pakistan's approach towards its image improvement among the global public and exploit the opportunities that come along in economic and developmental areas.

Today, military power alone is insufficient to achieve foreign policy objectives. Countries need to develop institutions and invest more in increasing their soft power capabilities. Pakistan has not explored its soft power potential fully, thus, has a less effective public diplomacy strategy at the moment. Keeping in mind the goals of public diplomacy and communication, which are to engage a

foreign audience to improve national image, Pakistan can develop a comprehensive strategy to put its soft power resources into perspective.

Politically, Pakistan's soft power generates from being a Muslim country with democratic credentials, a vibrant civil society, and an educated youth. Pakistan has requisite political institutions and political parties, which are considered imperative for democracy, and represents a multiethnic and multilingual society. Culturally, Pakistan is home to ancient Indus Valley civilization, and Buddhist archeological sites carrying a diverse cultural heritage. Pakistan's archeological diversity is an amalgamation of ancient, modern, and contemporary texture. These sites carry a huge potential for tourism and study of the ancient history of subcontinent. Pakistan also has many highest peaks in the world above 7000 meters, which can attract thousands of tourists annually to the North of Pakistan.

Pakistan's image as a progressive pluralistic society lies upon economic uplift and improvement in the law-and-order situation. Similarly, Pakistan can get help from a well spread Pakistani diaspora, channelize the civil society and NGO sector, and introduce legislative reforms to show Pakistan as a business-friendly country. The burgeoning growth of media and social media enterprise in Pakistan is an asset to project the positive side of Pakistan. The government's patronage towards investment in tourism and nation-branding campaigns by telecasting documentaries, hiring social media influencers, and branding agencies could bring Pakistan's achievements and soft power resources to the limelight.

## **Conclusion**

The presence of Chinese mass-communication mix, which includes cable, radio, and print media, reflects the Chinese endeavor to communicate with the US public. The burgeoning growth of Chinese media footprints has exposed US audience to contemporary Chinese society, technological advancements, entertainment, and socio-economic achievements. For Chinese public diplomacy, the media outreach has paved the way for two-way engagement with common Americans, while presenting Chinese perspective on a variety of issues. Generally, apolitical aspects, such as culture, tourism, innovation in science and technology, and Chinese modernization and development are reported transparently. However, the US has raised concerns regarding Chinese news media sources being state-controlled, which are allegedly presenting high political issues towing the official line. For China, however, to counteract the anti-China narrative is to adopt a proactive strategy to tackle the pro-US media dominance. This strategy underlines that China's growing economic strength is shaping its 'Going Out' strategy with a profound focus on external communication.

Pakistan's image building and soft power potential have not been fully highlighted due to the lack of a comprehensive approach. Pakistan can learn from the Chinese experience to present its true image to the global public. Besides

governmental efforts and rethinking of its communication strategy, there is a dire need for strong global media outreach and effective social media campaign to highlight Pakistan's soft image to the global audience through public diplomacy.

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- <sup>2</sup> Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017):50.
- <sup>3</sup> Daniel R. Coats "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community" January 29, 2019, <https://www.dni.gov>
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