**Foreign Policy of Pakistan**

“Our foreign policy is one of the friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings, and are prepared to make our contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter.”

*Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah*

The Constitution of Pakistan also lays down guidelines for the conduct of foreign policy of the country. Article 40 of the constitution provides that:

“The State shall endeavour to preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic unity, support the common interests of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, promote international peace and security, foster goodwill and friendly relations among all nations and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.”

The foreign policy of Pakistan is primarily directed to the pursuit of national goals of seeking peace and stability through international cooperation. Special emphasis is laid on economic diplomacy to take advantages offered by the process of globalization as also to face challenges of the 21st century. Our foreign policy is also geared to project the image of the country as a dynamic and moderate society.

The foreign policy of Pakistan seeks to promote the internationally recognized norms of interstate relations, i.e. respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other State; non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes. Pakistan has therefore always sought to develop friendly and cordial relations with all countries of the world.

**What is foreign policy?**

General objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states. The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behaviour of other states, or plans to advance specific geopolitical designs. Leopold von Ranke emphasized the primacy of geography and external threats in shaping foreign policy, but later writers emphasized domestic factors. Diplomacy is the tool of foreign policy, and war, alliances, and international trade may all be manifestations of it.

Foreign policy is a plan of action that a nation adopts with regard to its diplomatic dealings with other countries in the world. This is the policy that dictates how a country will act with respect to other countries politically, socially, economically, and militarily. The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behaviour of other states, or plans to advance specific geopolitical designs.

No state can live in isolation. There is a need of interaction. The linkages between internal & external environment are very necessary to create harmonious relations among the peoples living in the different regions. The national interests and identity, economic reasons, peace and stability are the motives of foreign policy of a country. Pakistan functions at different levels: Bilateral and Multilateral. It is also a member of the UN and other international organizations.

**Features of Foreign Policy:**

The main aims of features of ‘Foreign Policy’ are protection of- independence, Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity. Primary concern is the SECURITY through diplomacy and military security arrangements. National mobilization regarding Pakistan’s security vis-à-vis India influenced foreign policy options. Strong defense is indispensable for survival.

**Relations with All States:**

Pakistan has good relations with almost all the nations of the world on the basis of mutuality of interests, cordiality, peace and non-interference in internal affairs. Pakistan believes that problems to be resolved peacefully.

**Relations with Major Powers:**

The nature of relations with major powers has varied.

**United States**

Pakistan-US relations have been generally friendly but problems developed from time to time on nuclear issue, arms sales, Kashmir etc.

**China**

China proved to be a reliable and consistent friend over the periods of decades. Pakistan supported China diplomatically in the UN and the Outside. Both the countries have developed close relations in all the areas including economic development and industrialization, defense, science and technology, environment and trade. CPEC is the largest foreign investment in Pakistan.

**Russia**

Pakistan has working relations with Russia but frequent problems remained unsolved during the period of Cold War. Russia remained favorable to India at the cost of its relations with Pakistan. On Kashmir issue, her attitude has been pro India.

Some economic relations strengthened the bilateral relations when Russia provided economic and technological assistance to Pakistan in establishing steel mill in Karachi. In post-Cold War era, Pakistan is trying to normalize the relations. The recent tour of President Musharraf is a step towards this goal.

**Economic Issues, Trade, Investment:**

Greater importance is attributed to the issues like economic development, direct foreign investment and trade relations in international relations. Foreign policy is linked with foreign assistance from the World Bank, IMF, Asian Development Bank, International Development Bank and other sources. Economic relations are both bilateral and multi-lateral. Technology, trade, access to market and investment are keys to the cordial relations between the two countries. Pakistan is also trying to establish its relations with other countries on the same footings.

**Muslim States:**

Being Islamic country, Pakistan has been always in search of good relations with the Muslim countries. It has been a central point in the ideology of Pakistan even before Independence.

**Solidarity with the Developing States:**

Pakistan had been concerned with the issues and problems of the states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As it is developing countries it is well aware of the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, disease, famine, civil strife and border disputes, refugees and drug addiction.

Pakistan always emphasized on the UN and developed countries to help them. Peace cannot be maintained if humanity is suffering.

Cooperation among developing countries in the areas of economic and technical assistance, trade and diplomacy support to these causes should be enhanced.

**United Nations:**

Pakistan joined the UN on Sept. 30, 1947. It has commitment to the UN Charter and active in UN bodies. Pakistan has enjoyed the Security Council membership for 6 times. It has been a part of UN Peace-Keeping Missions all over the world.

Anti-Colonialism, Right of Self Determination:

As we have been suffering from colonial rule we always support decolonization for Asia and Africa. Pakistan always opposed racial discrimination in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), South Africa, Namibia etc. It always supported right of self determination for Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan and others.

**Arms Control:**

Pakistan believes that arms races to be controlled, resources to be used for human development. It has spoken for this cause in the UN and the outside. It opposed arms race not only at the superpower level but also at the regional and bilateral levels both for conventional and non conventional arms. It stressed that the root causes of arms races should be curtailed.

**Nuclear Policy:**

Pakistan has been champion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Pakistan avoided nuclear explosions despite having the knowledge and capability of processing Uranium, Plutonium. It was only for the sake of deterrence and reaction to India’s nuclear explosions.

**Relations with India:**

The most problematic area of Pakistan’s foreign policy is the relationship with India. The relations have been strained since independence in 1947. There were periods of normal relations but generally it remained troubled marked with distrust and conflict. This bitterness caused three major wars in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971. Limited conflicts and trouble at LoC (Line of Control) along with propaganda war are common practices. Tension escalated when the troops on the border from both sides faced each other throughout 2002. India was not ready to open dialogue. But now there is a hope of bilateral dialogue on Kashmir and other issues. It is the only way to bring prosperity and peace for 1.2 billion people of South Asia.

**Kashmir:**

Main source of conflict between India and Pakistan is Kashmir dispute. It should be resolved under the UN Resolutions. But India has declared it as integral part of it. Instead of having plebiscite, she has blamed Pakistan for initiating insurgency in Kashmir since 1989. India claims that it is engineered by Pakistan and equates this with terrorism.

**Control of Terrorism:**

Pakistan is an active participant in global efforts to contain terrorism. Pakistan withdrew support to Taliban and joined hands with the international community. She also acted against terrorists within Pakistan, as it was victim of terrorism & sectarianism.

Pakistan believes that to eradicate terrorism first the root causes of the problem should be removed.

**Major Phases of Pakistan's Foreign Policy**

The major phases of Pakistan's foreign policy are:

1. 1947-53: Explorations and friendship with all
2. 1953-62: Alignment with the West
3. 1962-71: Transition
4. 1972-79: Bilateralism and nonalignment
5. 1980-90: Afghanistan and Partnership with the U.S.
6. 1990-2001: Post-Cold War Era and Pakistan's Dilemmas
7. 2001 onwards: Pakistan and Counter Terrorism

**Determinants of Pakistan’s foreign policy**

Following is a brief description of the factors that policymakers have to keep in mind while making decisions related to country’s policy.  
  
**1. Ideology**  
Pakistan was created as a homeland for Muslims of British India after a long freedom struggle. Islam was at the core of this struggle because Two Nation Theory reinforced that Muslims were a separate nation, with their distinct cultural, ideological and religious values. In the establishment of Pakistan, Muslims actually dreamed of a separate homeland where they could spend their lives according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).  
Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah also vowed to preserve the Islamic ideology of the country. He said:  
“Pakistan not only means freedom and independence but the Muslim Ideology which has to be preserved, which has come to us as a precious gift and treasure and which, we hope other will share with us.”  
Moreover, at the very outset, Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, declared:  
“Pakistan came into being as a result of the urge felt by the Muslims of this subcontinent to secure territory, however limited, where the Islamic Ideology and way of life could be practiced and demonstrated to the world.”  
So, it was not possible for our foreign policy makers to set aside this ideology while framing country’s foreign policy. Hence Islamic ideology has always been a central focus in this realm.  
  
**2. Geography**  
“The foreign policy of a country is determined by its geography”.  
— Napoleon Bonaparte  
  
For the policymakers, it is important to take into considerations factors like what country’s neighbours are, as their attitude, irrespective of their size or power, has a direct bearing especially on issues of its security, development and resource allocation. No country could change its geography nor choose its neighbours. So, in Pakistan, sole consideration has been on safeguarding and preserving country’s independence and territorial integrity. Geography, thus, placed on Pakistan the onerous responsibility of consistent vigilance and careful conduct of its relations not only with its immediate neighbours but also with the rest of the world.  
  
**3. History**  
Since its inception, Pakistan has been facing complex challenges. Hence, the country’s foreign policy is also guided by its history. Pakistan and India relations have been marred by distrust and antagonism. Pakistan and Afghanistan have also been at odds since long, major concern being the Durand Line which Afghanistan is not willing to accept an international border. Thanks to the old imperial connections, we immediately got sucked into the Cold War struggle. In the process, we encountered unbroken series of crises and challenges that perhaps, no other country in the world has ever experienced. So, foreign policy makers cannot remain oblivious to these factors.  
  
**4. Domestic Policies**  
The foreign policy of a country is linked to its domestic policies, governance issues and political situation. A country’s standing in the international community always corresponds directly to its political, social, economic and strategic strength. Foreign policy cannot be divorced from domestic considerations. It is an outcome of national priorities, strength and weaknesses. Unlike large powers, mistakes in foreign policy can be very costly for a developing country like Pakistan. Pakistan’s position in the world is constrained by its weak economics and its dependence on foreign finances. And, that has been a big challenge before the policymakers.  
The policymakers must understand that no country has ever succeeded externally if it is weak and crippled domestically. Even a superpower, the former Soviet Union, could not survive as a superpower because domestically it was weak and crippled.  
  
**5. Security**  
Internal and external security is the most important factor in Pakistan’s foreign policy.  
Historian Paul Kennedy named Pakistan as one of the nine pivotal states whose future evolution would not only determine the fate of their region, but also affect international stability. Pakistan has developed as a principal actor and a vital personality of its own. So, it is supposed to secure and protect its all vital interests, at all costs.  
  
**6. Economic Compulsions**  
Pakistan as a developing country also needs to establish and maintain cordial relations with those states with whom it can maximize its trade relations or from whom it can obtain maximum economic aid. Pakistan’s position in the world is constrained by its weak economics and its dependence on foreign finances. The main aim of Pakistan’s foreign policy is to boost economic trade.  
  
**A Pragmatic Future Strategy**  
  
**1. Pursuing National Interest**  
“The meaning of national interest is survival—the protection of physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nation-states”—Morgenthau.  
Foreign policy of every nation around the world is formulated on the basis of its national interest. Since seeking its national interests is a universally accepted right of each state, therefore, this should be the only driving force behind Pakistan’s foreign policy. All our alliances should be subjected to this keystone criterion. That said, no country can remain isolated and all relationships between states, bilaterally and multilaterally, are therefore based on mutual interests which are freely determined and pursued.  
Pakistan’s national interest lies in enhancing country’s economic, military and cultural power within its ideological framework. Pakistan should use foreign policy to defend its territorial integrity. That necessitates strong defence and deterrent capabilities. Pakistan has to leverage its relations with nations in the region and beyond, as well as with international multilateral institutions, to attract foreign direct investment, start off joint ventures and promote trade. A national interest-centred foreign policy will also act as a catalyst for domestic economic development and international clout.  
  
**2. Focusing Regional Dynamics**  
Pakistan’s sense of insecurity vis-à-vis India has been the core driver of its foreign policy since partition. Its relations with its immediate neighbours such as Afghanistan and Iran, and other regional countries such as Turkey and the Gulf States, have all been filtered through this security prism. But, changing global trends in regional trade and the growth of Asian economies have forced Pakistan to readjust the focus of its foreign relations especially within its neighbourhood. Pakistan’s reluctance in getting militarily involved in the Saudi-led war in Yemen is evidence of this new thinking. As Iran would soon be rejoining the global economy and also Russia is cosying up with Pakistan after India’s unprecedented tilt towards the US, Pakistan should also change its policies to not only benefit from these changes but also to gain an important role in regional politics.  
  
**3. Promotion of Economy**  
Pakistan’s foreign policy ought to be based on our country’s inherent strengths. As the sixth-largest nation in the world by way of population, country’s foreign policy makers should take into account the factor that we possess a reasonable quality of human resources and have an extremely useful geography.  
  
Our human resource base was good enough to make us the only nuclear Muslim state in the world. Our strength is our agriculture, which enables us to be food-sufficient with a considerable surplus of rice and wheat. We also enjoy an abundance of fruit, vegetables and dairy products and have the capacity to launch all these for export.  
  
We can rightfully boast of the highest quality of craftsmanship in leather, metals, pottery and stitched craft, and are now entering the fashion market at an international level. Moreover, our considerable mineral resources await exploration, as do our deposits of natural gas.  
  
Despite all these strengths, we have fallen into a debt trap because of poor governance and mismanagement, rectifying which is certainly within the realm of the feasible. A growth- and export-driven economy would enable us to exploit our strategic advantage effectively and base our foreign policy on an economically strong agenda.  
  
**Conclusion**  
Traditionally, Pakistan has been a security-driven state and that’s the reason why more emphasis has been on state-building over nation-building. However, changing regional as well as world dynamics present our foreign policy makers with a set of complex challenges. This is perhaps the most opportune time that Pakistan should reap the benefits of its geographical location and its importance to the whole world. Our foreign policy makers should move forward with extreme prudence.

**Foreign Policy Objectives**

In light of the guiding principles laid down by the founding fathers and the constitution as also aspirations of the people of Pakistan, the objectives of foreign policy can be summarized as under:

1. Promotion of Pakistan as a dynamic, progressive, moderate, and democratic Islamic country.
2. Developing friendly relations with all countries of the world, especially major powers and immediate neighbours.
3. Safeguarding national security and geo-strategic interests, including Kashmir.
4. Consolidating our commercial and economic cooperation with international community.
5. Safeguarding the interests of Pakistani Diaspora abroad.
6. Ensuring optimal utilization of national resources for regional and international cooperation.