

FOREIGN POLICY OF PAKISTAN IN THE CHANGING REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SETTINGS

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Abstract

The evolution of International Relations, since the dawn of the 21st century coupled with powerful forces such as globalization and communication technology, has fundamentally changed the world around us. These changes have brought a number of challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. The main argument of this paper is that Pakistan needs review of its national interest, goals, priorities and ultimately an overall adjustment and readjustment of its foreign policy in order to cope with the opportunities and challenges that await us. Hence, this paper, by adopting a futuristic approach and keeping the national interest of Pakistan at the centre of discussion, analyzes the impact of a vast array of changes around our borders as well as in the region. After discussing the changes, the paper then raises a number of important questions and evaluates a number of policy responses and alternatives that may be helpful in the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy in the future.

Key words: *National interest, globalization, diplomacy, national security, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, economic prosperity.*

Introduction

Foreign policy, solely guided by a country's national interest, is used as a tool by a particular country for dealing with the outside world in various areas such as security, economy, trade, commerce, culture and technology. As International Relations have been evolving since the treaty of Westphalia, the conduct, methods and scope of foreign policy have also been changing.

In the age of Globalization, more and more areas of global, regional and bilateral interactions today fall within the ambit of foreign policy. Terms like cultural diplomacy, citizen diplomacy, commercial diplomacy, defence diplomacy, digital diplomacy, economic diplomacy and regional diplomacy are presently considered part and parcel of foreign policy.

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Moreover, in the present era countries rely on a number of methods such as hard power, soft power and smart power in order to achieve foreign policy goals. Ultimately, the purpose and function of a country's foreign policy is to skilfully use its collective strength in order to achieve desired ends and prevent incoming threats.

In any discussion on foreign policy, it needs to be remembered that all states — as realism suggests — are rational not emotional actors. Against this backdrop, two more points need to be noted. Firstly, foreign policy is the reflection of a country's internal environment and secondly, states' foreign policy remains neither static nor rigid. As the famous realist dictum asserts "states neither having permanent friends nor permanent enemies" goes by, the success of foreign policy, therefore, depends on rationality and in its close consonance with the grand strategy, security policy and domestic policy of a country.

In practice, it means that foreign policy changes in nature, scope and orientation from time to time as per the long-, mid- and short-term requirements of a country's objectives, national interest and the dictates of domestic and international environment. It should also be noted that states do not operate in vacuum, they operate as the members of a larger community of states having international obligations.

In the contemporary era, globalization and the revolution, among other types, of the information technology have affected foreign policy thinking and the conduct of diplomacy in a fundamental way. Globalization has also bound the fate of planet earth and the people living on it together. Thus, factors such as the promotion of international peace, amity and respect for international norms and international law also have considerable importance in shaping the foreign behaviour of a state.

Guiding principles of Pakistan's foreign policy

The foreign policy of Pakistan is guided by the vision and principles set forth by the founding father of the country, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who said that:

*Our foreign policy is one of 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 utmost 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.*¹

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of Pakistan, <<http://www.mofa.gov.pk/content.php?pageID=Foreign%20Policy>>, accessed 5 November 2015.

Article 40 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan also outlines a number of principles that shall guide Pakistan's foreign policy for all times to come. This article states that:

The State shall endeavour to preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic unity, support the common interests of the people 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.²

Thus, the Quaid's vision and Article 40 of the Constitution outline the guiding principles of Pakistan's foreign policy.

An empirical analysis reveals that the principles of Pakistan's foreign policy, as envisioned by the founding father and mentioned in the Article 40 of the Constitution, have generally remained constant. Understandably, however, the goals of Pakistan's foreign policy have remained dynamic and flexible owing to the changing priorities of the government, internal socio-political and economic dynamics, varying diplomatic and military strategies adopted for the pursuance of national interests, and the dynamic nature of international relations.

In a summarised form, the objectives of Pakistan's foreign policy in the contemporary era can be outlined as under:

1. The primary objective of Pakistan's foreign policy is to safeguard the national security, territorial integrity and political sovereignty of the country.
2. To protect Pakistan's economic interests abroad.
3. To project the image of Pakistan as a progressive, modern and democratic Islamic country.
4. To promote peace, stability and friendly relations with Afghanistan.
5. To find the resolution of all disputes with India including the issue of Kashmir. Raise the Kashmir issue on international forums.
6. To forge cordial and friendly relations with all neighbours, Muslim countries and the larger international community.
7. To fulfil its responsibilities as a responsible member of the international community.
8. To prevent and respond to threats and capitalize on opportunities.
9. To safeguard the interests of Pakistani diaspora.

² G. W. Choudhury, "New" Pakistan's Constitution, 1973, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Middle East Institute, (Winter, 1974), 10-18.

Foreign policy of Pakistan and the quest for global peace

As evident from the vision of Quaid and Article 40 of the Constitution, the quest for global peace remains a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan has always been an important partner of the global community when it comes to the promotion and strengthening of global peace. Pakistan has played an important role of a frontline state in ending the menace of terrorism and extremism which has emerged as the most destructive threat to international peace in the contemporary era.

The unfortunate terrorist incident of 9/11 was a critical threshold in the foreign policy of Pakistan. In fact, "9/11 came as a thunderbolt".³ As former President Pervez Musharraf himself mentioned, the incident brought with it unprecedented challenges for Pakistan, which demanded to "absorb external pressure and mould domestic opinion."⁴

No doubt, the role Pakistan is playing in fighting international terrorism has come with a huge cost. Over the last 15 years, 55,000 Pakistani men, women, youth, children as well as army personnel have laid down their lives⁵ in this fight. Pakistan has also suffered a huge economic loss of over 100 billion US dollars⁶ in the war against terror. Despite the huge losses of men and material, Pakistan has remained committed to international peace and will continue to fulfil its responsibilities as a peace-loving and responsible member of the international community.

As a responsible member of the United Nations Organization, Pakistan has always stood by the UN's aims of securing peace. In fact, Pakistan's role as one of the largest contributors to United Nations' peacekeeping missions has been always cherished and appreciated. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations, while referring to Pakistan's contributions to international peace, appreciated Pakistan's role in these words: "Gratitude as the United Nations Secretary-General and gratitude as a global citizen for what Pakistan and her people have been doing for international peace and security. More than 100 countries

³ Shamshad Ahmed, Post-9/11 Foreign Policy of Pakistan, *Criterion Quarterly*, Vol 1, No 1, September 2013.

⁴ Shamshad Ahmed, Pakistan's Foreign Policy Post 9/11, *World Times*, 1 March 2008, <http://www.jworldtimes.com/Article/32008_PAKISTAN%E2%80%99S_FOREIGN_POLICY_POST_9_11>, accessed 10 November 2015.

⁵ PTI, "Over 8,500 killed in Pakistan," *The Economic Times*, 28 November 2015, see <<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/over-8500-killed-in-pakistan-due-to-terrorism-in-five-years-govt/articleshow/49959679>>.

⁶ Ibid.

contribute troops and police for United Nations peacekeeping missions, Pakistan is number one,"⁷

In addition to what is stated above, it should also be noted that Pakistan has at times, reiterated its desire for cooperation, dialogue and diplomacy in order to achieve a peaceful settlement of all disputes with India including the core dispute of Kashmir.⁸ As Pakistan enjoys cordial relations with China and Iran, the desire for peace in Afghanistan remains as strong and important for Pakistan as it has ever been. Instability in neighbouring Afghanistan has had tremendously negative fallout for society, economy and politics in Pakistan.⁹

The Geneva Accord followed by the Peshawar Accord, then the Islamabad Accord and most recently, the Murree talks, reflect Pakistan's strong desire for peace in Afghanistan. Apart from these, Pakistan has always called for peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Pakistan tried to end the Iran-Iraq conflict through negotiations and diplomacy, and recently Pakistan has taken a very clear stance on the conflict in Yemen as well, where again Pakistan has urged talks and peaceful resolution of the conflict without becoming a part of it.¹⁰

Pakistan at the doorstep of a changing world

One of my favourite things about International Relations is its dynamic nature. The world around us changes constantly which keeps politics in a state of flux. Therefore, the most important job of a policymaker in Pakistan's foreign office should be to see, feel, understand and respond to the changes that are taking place.

While all of the above mentioned points are true, understanding the change itself happens to be the most important part of the puzzle. Because change alters old beliefs, it creates new heroes and villains, it keeps new and antithetical forces in motion and lastly change may convert threats into opportunities and opportunities into threats.

So how is our world changing or has changed over the past decade? The world has changed beyond our imagination. The root of this change lies in technology, its belly in politics with the head in economics.

⁷ Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (at lectern) speaks at the inauguration of the Centre for International Peace and Stability in Islamabad, <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45613#.VlM-dLcrLIU>>.

⁸ "PM tells UN India 'missed opportunity' for peace", *Pakistan Today*, September 27, 2014.

⁹ Rasul B. Rais, *War Without Winners: Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition after the Cold War* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹⁰ "Pakistan calls for peaceful settlement of ME conflict", *The Nation*, 14 November 2015.

Today, we are living in a world that is totally different than the 20th century. It is a completely technologized world today.

The power of technology in politics is present and visible everywhere. From satellite television networks, social media, to mass movements and then to Facebook and Twitter revolutions, these are the innovations that have created new forces of such magnitude and strength which have influenced the conduct of International Relations and foreign policy.

Similarly, the world is changing economically. From the debris of the Cold War and the socialism of Mao Tse Tung, has emerged a China, whose economic rise has taken the world by surprise. A China guided by the ideas of Deng Xiaoping has surpassed Japan and Germany economically, stands at number two today, and is likely to surpass the United States in the coming decade or so.

Coming towards Pakistan's west and east where Afghanistan, India and Iran stand different with the passage of time, India has made significant economic progress in the past two decades. Choosing its way between Socialism and Capitalism, the Indian economy stands 3rd as per GDP (PPP) in the world and is likely to grow further. This is an important development for Pakistan. Because India, like any other country in the world, is translating its economic development into political, military and diplomatic strength.

Iran also looks freer and more confident after the nuclear deal. So Iran, too, must be looking for a strategy to translate its huge stock of natural resources into economic and political strength. Again, Pakistan's policymakers should be cognizant of the fact that Iran's role in the Middle East and Afghanistan and its relations with India will strongly resonate in Pakistan as well as across the wider region.

And finally, there is the strategic change that is taking place around Pakistan. The Middle East stands out as the symbol of this herculean change that has not only transformed the Middle East but has sent shocks much beyond the region. Although one would have been expecting or wishing for a different kind of change, yet no matter how it is, the change is occurring. Most of the Middle East has fallen into chaos. Syria, Yemen, Palestine and, Iraq are bleeding, while the soldiers of the (un)Islamic State (IS) have let the hell loose upon the people. There was a time where one could immediately think of the United States role in such a situation, but again things are now different here too. The people know that is not going to be the case anymore. The US has lost both its credibility and efficacy in the Middle East and now Russia is emerging to fill the void. As it did in Ukraine, Syria and might be thinking of reasserting itself over geopolitics in Central Asia as well.

Coming towards Pakistan's west, the land with which Pakistan shares too much in terms of religion, society, culture, language and history; there was a time when a Pakistani official could go to his home without

being concerned with any threats to Pakistan's security from the western border. Yes, it was the Taliban's era — when Kabul looked much different. A time when Hamid Karzai and many of his ministers and officials were residing in Pakistan and the commander of the faithful, Mullah Mohammad Omar, was ruling Afghanistan from Kandahar.

It was a time when India, the United States and its NATO allies, were not much concerned about Afghanistan. In those times India did not maintain any diplomatic presence and so many consulates were right next to Pakistan's western border. Call it the best of times for Pakistan, because back then none of us could have thought of IS, Fazlullah, others of their like and the Baloch separatists sitting in Afghanistan, waging their war against Pakistan from there.

It is also important to mention here that Iran does not remain an outcast anymore, China is vying for power, and Russia is no more heir to the antiques of the Cold War – it's reasserting itself in a big way. The Middle East is also becoming less and less famous for its oil, shopping malls, skyscrapers and Burj al-Khalifas. Today it is more known for IS, Al-Qaeda and for the number of conflicts going on in the region.

The world around Pakistan has changed much, in fact, is still changing. With more players in the game, the environment around us is much more complex, hostile and competitive. Therefore, it will be a hard job for foreign policy makers in Pakistan to operate in such an environment.

Connect, disconnect and reconnect – Pakistan's relations with India

In most of the writings on Pakistan's relations with India, authors have mostly discussed Pak-India relations in a chronological order depicting the trajectory of relations with special emphasis on some highs and lows. This article suggests that Pakistan and India's relations can be better understood when looked at in **a cyclic manner that has its three different phases of connect, disconnect and reconnect.**

Pakistan's relations with India have been moving in the manner of a wheel that revolves around an axis without producing any forward movement. Despite having fought two wars and a number of clashes on the border, both countries have also been involved in different rounds of dialogue. The truth, however, remains that diplomacy —although limited to, or mainly focused on crisis management rather than trade, economy or people-to-people contact — has been successful in bringing momentary thaw in relations, but has proved unable to bring about a solution of the core disputes between the two countries.

The demands of the present day are vastly different from those of the 20th century. In future, Pakistan's diplomacy will have to operate in a totally different global and regional environment. Pakistan's diplomacy is

set to deal with an India that has grown much economically and enjoying considerable diplomatic clout in the world. In addition to these changes, India is also poised to become member of the nuclear club, while at the same time its relations with the United States are strengthening by the day. Apart from these developments, India is also sitting right next to Pakistan's eastern border.

So, what are the options for Pakistan to deal with India? The environment that surrounds Pakistan clearly dictates that Pakistan's foreign policy towards India will be guided by security – that should be considered as the rule of the thumb. Henceforth, the general expectation should be that Pakistan's foreign policy towards India will remain directed by the security concerns emanating from across its eastern and western borders. This means, Pakistan will be taking a good care of its borders, improving its conventional and deterrent capability against India, while at the same time allowing diplomacy to try its luck on Kashmir, trade, crisis management, and people-to-people contact.

Diplomacy, no doubt, plays a significant role in resolving long standing disputes. The appeasement of India, however, should neither be the choice nor option. Thus, Pakistan would not like another Ufa taking place, where India dictated the rules of engagement. It is to be noted here that by not reciprocating to the goodwill gestures of Pakistan, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems to have decided to walk on the traditional path of keeping Pakistan under diplomatic pressure.¹¹

The events of the past two years, therefore, lead us to the conclusion that India will try to use pressure tactics in order to take concessions from Pakistan on Kashmir and other issues. If history be the guide, India's current strategy is that normalization of relations with Pakistan will depend on Islamabad's acceptance of Indian regional hegemony and its stance on Kashmir. Pakistan on the other hand, should maintain its position by telling India that normalization of relations will not be coming without discussing and resolving the core issues between the two countries.

The next important question that concerns Pakistani policymakers is that, will Pakistan be able to reduce the Indian influence in Afghanistan? A tough guess! Although the answer to this question is quite difficult, yet through a mix of logic, thinking, skill and imagination, Pakistan can develop an approach that can bring about normalization of relations with Afghanistan that should also aim at a reduced Indian influence as a crucial component of this process.

¹¹ Praveen Swami, "Why Narendra Modi is smoking the Pakistani peace pipe," *The Indian Express*, July 10, 2015, <<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/web-edits/why-narendra-modi-is-smoking-the-pakistani-peace-pipe/>>, Accessed 5 November 2015.

Pakistan's immediate goal should be to minimize and, ultimately, eliminate threats to its security on the eastern border, while India's influence in Afghanistan should be viewed in a relative rather than in an absolute way. This means that India will remain influential in Afghanistan, because over the last 15 years it has massively invested in creating a pro-Indian lobby in the political and defence establishment of Afghanistan. Pakistan's foreign policy, therefore, by combining soft and smart power, should play a skilful stroke of public and economic diplomacy to counter Indian propaganda, increase trade and commercial activities with Afghanistan and work on an outreach to all Afghans.

How will the future be different from the past this time? The answer is very clear. India, as already stated, has grown economically and strengthened diplomatically. With Narendra Modi occupying the office of the Prime Minister of India, relations should not be expected to take a turn towards normalcy any times soon. The government led by Narendra Modi may add even more offensive elements to its foreign policy viz-a-viz Pakistan which might include, massive arms buildup, conspiring against China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, defaming Pakistan diplomatically, violation of the ceasefire on the border with Pakistan, and a more potent interference in FATA and Baluchistan.

India's violations of the ceasefire along the Pakistan-India border have risen sharply. Moreover, Pakistan's internal problems as well as the conflict in Baluchistan and Fata should give enough reason to India for becoming more offensive. Thus, India, by benefitting from its economic stability and diplomatic clout in the world and by capitalizing on the diplomatic lag of Pakistan, will continue to create more problems for Pakistan. So it should not be beyond the imagination of anyone in Pakistan's foreign office that India would like to bring Pakistan face to face with a strategic fatigue or choke.

With the "Cold Start" in place and the doctrine of "Offensive Defence" in operation, Ajit Doval, the national security adviser to Prime Minister Modi, has publicly stated that India will exploit Pakistan's internal problems for its advantage.¹²

Another major issue that Pakistan foreign office needs to consider is whether Islamabad is going to award India any of concessions on foreign policy? As long as India continues with its "Offensive Defence" policy viz-à-viz Pakistan, Islamabad must be cautious in yielding any such incentive to New Delhi. Pakistan's defence of Indian offence has started giving its own fruit.

The internal dynamics of Pakistan are changing. What had kept Pakistan and its society bleeding over the past 10 years or so, are taking its

¹² Ajit Doval, who became national security adviser in 2014 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech in SASTRA college stated to exploit Pakistan's economic, political and social vulnerabilities.

final breaths. Thanks to operation Zarb-e-Azb, Pakistan has made significant gains against extremism. Insurgency in Baluchistan has been degraded and FATA is no more a rendezvous for local and international militants — they have been taught a hard lesson. The mood at all levels inside Pakistan is very clear. The people, government and the army of Pakistan have decided to put an end to the menace of terrorism, fanaticism and sectarianism. In a nutshell, it can be said that Pakistan is on the right track that will finally lead it to come out of the baggage of the Afghan war.

Pakistan's military and nation as a whole have proved its mettle and resilience. This must be enough to make India understand that they too will be dealing with a different Pakistan in the times to come. And if economic turnaround is also made — the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor be the case in point — then Pakistan will be even more stronger and different.

So the change that Pakistan is currently going through is positive, solid and will have long-lasting effects. China is now a global economic powerhouse and its relations with Pakistan will further enhance in the coming years. Sri Lanka can also be considered as wary of Indian domination in the region and the sane heads in Washington and Kabul realize that Pakistan's role with regards to any settlement in Afghanistan is vital and cannot be ignored. Moreover, Pakistan's relations with Iran are expected to improve further especially after Islamabad's principled stance on Yemen.

All of these developments, when looked at collectively, provide Pakistan ample opportunities to play an active role and adopt a region-centric approach to counter Indian designs.

The future of Pak-Afghan relations

Afghanistan provides a mix of challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. As with India, Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have been hostage to security. However, the biggest trouble with Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan is its deep socio-political and economic impact on Pakistan. The past 35 years have proven the fact that any foreign policy towards Afghanistan will have great social, economic and political fallout on Pakistan be it the Afghan-Soviet war of 1979 to 1988, the era of Taliban or 9/11.

Since the unfortunate event of 9/11, Afghanistan and the region have gone through a rapid change. The Taliban, although ousted from power, are not yet defeated. America and the West have, to a large extent, given up their interest in Afghanistan; new players have taken positions in the region. The only thing that one finds common when it comes to Afghanistan, is the concern among Afghanistan's neighbours regarding the threat of terrorism, extremism and militancy reaching their borders. This threat, therefore, raises the interest of all neighbouring states to get

involved with Afghanistan. So dealing with Afghanistan means dealing with a number of countries that include China, Russia, United States and Iran.

Since the United States attack on Afghanistan in 2001, Pakistan has been facing continued challenges on its western border. Unfortunately, promises that the Americans made to Pakistan prior to the attack were not kept. Resultantly, Pakistan could not develop a considerable support base or a strategic space in Afghanistan's current political establishment.

Secondly, Pakistan, due to its own economic downturn, could not buttress its foreign policy goals in Afghanistan with economic tools. Therefore, we could not invest much in Afghanistan as India or Iran did. Thirdly, the mistrust between the two countries as well as with the Americans and NATO remained a hurdle in developing friendly relations with Afghanistan.

Pakistan should clearly and effectively communicate to Afghanistan that Pakistan's foremost objective — the sanctity of its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity — can never be compromised. Therefore, cooperation with Afghanistan will be conditioned with the elimination of anti-Pakistan elements on Afghan soil — be it the Baloch separatists, remnants of the TTP or other terrorist outfits.

So how should Pakistan pursue its Afghan policy beyond 2015? Stability in Afghanistan is in the utmost security, political, economic and social interest of Pakistan. Policymakers in Washington and Kabul understand that stability will not come to Afghanistan without Pakistan's help. Kabul and Islamabad also agree that terrorists, extremists, militants and others of their likes cannot be and will not be allowed to hijack the destiny of the two countries. The presence of militants on both sides of the border necessitates mutual cooperation to deal with this menace. But in reality this has proved to be an ardent task. Translating the goal of ending militancy into practical action requires; coordination, trust, political will, vision and flexibility which unfortunately do not exist currently.

During last few years, Pakistan has taken serious measures to reach to all Afghans.¹³ This time Afghanistan must understand that blaming Pakistan for everything that goes wrong in Afghanistan will achieve no end. Therefore, the government in Kabul should look to their own incompetence, discrepancies, governmental and institutional problems rather than blaming Pakistan for every wrongdoing that takes place in Afghanistan.

While all of the abovementioned points carry a considerable weight, the most crucial point on Pakistan's foreign policy agenda with Afghanistan should be preventing India from using Afghanistan as a

¹³ Safdar Sial, "Pak-Afghan Relations: Emerging Trends and Future Prospects," *IPS*, Jan-Mar 2011.

launching pad for subversive activities against Pakistan's national interests.

While cooperation on security and political issues might be a hardnut to crack, economics can be the beginning point. Certainly, economics can play a vital role to bring the two countries closer to each other. This suggests that economic diplomacy must take the lead as far as relations with Afghanistan are concerned. Pakistan has the opportunity to develop an economic depth in Afghanistan, because, Afghanistan is a land-locked country. It is industrially and economically underdeveloped and depends on Pakistan for transit and supply.

Moreover, it should not be surprising that 50,000 people cross the Pak-Afghan border daily with a big majority of them being Afghans crossing into Pakistan for treatment, business or meeting families.¹⁴ Therefore, one can say that Pakistan has every chance of developing a huge constituency in Afghanistan.

The above discussion suggests that Pakistan's economic diplomacy should be clever and proactive enough to take advantage of the huge economic opportunities that exist in Afghanistan. More economic integration will have a trickle-down effect on politics and security as well. Economic integration between Pakistan and Afghanistan will also help both countries to reduce militancy in the bordering regions.

Pakistan's relations with China

Pakistan and China have been enjoying close, amiable and ever-growing diplomatic, economic, trade and security relations since the independence of Pakistan. After partition of the sub-continent both China and Pakistan have been working closely with each other in many areas of mutual interests. As the time passed by, the relations of Pakistan and China have gathered more strength and dynamism. Currently these relations cover a wide spectrum of areas such as; diplomacy, culture, science, technology, economy, military and people-to-people contact.¹⁵

Pakistan and China's interest converges in many areas that makes cooperation both possible and desirable. Pakistan's geography attracts huge interest from China. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is crucial for China's economic development because this project provides the shortest transit route between Eastern China, the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. It is not only about distance, CPEC is also of strategic importance for China because it acts a malady for China's "Malacca

¹⁴ Mohammad Sadiq, *"Pakistan-Afghanistan: The Conjoined Twins"*, (Kabul: Publication Department of Embassy of Pakistan in Kabul, May 2010).

¹⁵ Bloomberg, "China submarine sale to Pakistan ups nuclear clash risk," *The Economic Times*, 18 April 2015, <<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-submarine-sale-to-pakistan-ups-nuclear-clash-risk/articleshow/46966867.cms>>, accessed 10 November 2015.

Dilemma.” So the huge economic opportunities that CPEC gives to both countries necessitate deep and growing relations between the two neighbours.

In addition to these, the India factor will also be a crucial player in Pak-China relations. Both Pakistan and China serve each other as a counter-weight to Indian designs. So Pakistan’s relations with China have a strategic, economic and political value for Pakistan and are expected to become stronger as well as closer with the passage of time.

Pakistan’s relations with Iran

Despite some difficulties — common in international relations — Pakistan’s relations with Iran have remained good and friendly. Both countries have enjoyed a long period of good relations that are central to the stability of the region. Presently, Iran is emerging as a powerful broker in Middle Eastern politics. After the nuclear deal with the United States and Western powers, **Iran looks more confident about its regional role. Pakistan and Iran have stakes in Afghanistan as well as in the wider region. The nuclear deal between Iran and the world will give an opportunity to Pakistan to benefit from trade and commerce with Tehran.** Iran also provides Pakistan an opportunity to fulfil its energy requirements.¹⁶

Pakistan must bring dynamism in its foreign policy regarding Iran and the gulf countries. Walking a fine line between Iran and the GCC will be a major challenge for Pakistan’s future foreign policy.

Pakistan’s relations with the GCC countries

The Middle East is one of the most troubled regions today. It is considered as an “arc of crisis” owing to the speedy changes that have swept the region since the US invasion of Iraq, and later the Arab spring that began in 2011. As Iran, the GCC and the wider Middle East comprises of Islamic countries, the concept of Muslim brotherhood will naturally resonate across the width and breadth of Pakistan. Our relations with the GCC, Afghanistan and Iran involve societal, religious and cultural factors that come under the broad umbrella of ideology.

No doubt ideology is an important part here, but it should not supersede the vital interests of Pakistan such as religious and sectarian harmony as well as social cohesion. Pakistan should know that the ideology has not worked in its diplomacy as far as the Middle East is concerned. Therefore, future foreign policy must revolve around our national interest.¹⁷ One of the most outstanding challenges for Pakistan’s

¹⁶ Asif Ezdi, “The spin-off of the Iran nuclear deal,” *The News*, December 2, 2013.

¹⁷ Dr. Qaisar Rashid, “Challenges of Pakistan’s foreign policy”, *Daily Times*, 26 November 2015.

foreign policy viz-a-viz the gulf countries will be to wash away the impact of Pakistan's decision on Yemen. It will take some time to undo the effects of Pakistan's decision on Yemen, but again Yemen should serve as an example for Pakistan so in the future it should not opt for indulging in any regional conflict.

Pak-US relations in the changing regional context

Pakistan's foreign relations with the United States are one of the most important of the relations with the outside world. This relationship might also be considered as more dynamic than any other. Geopolitics, security and economy are the main factors driving Pakistan's relations with the United States. Albeit it is important to mention that defining Pakistan's national interest in relation with the United States has been generating huge public sentiments at home.¹⁸

Pakistan and the United States have a long history of engagement and estrangement. Despite 70 years-long history of relationship, United States and Pakistan have not been able to develop solid, long-term and strategic relations with each other. In other words, it is to say that Pakistan's relations with the United States have mostly remained driven by 'ecotegic' (economic plus strategic) dependency not by a long-term thinking.

Since the time of independence, Pakistan's approach towards the United States has been influenced by the Indian factor. Pakistan has looked at its relations with the United States through the prism of security.¹⁹ Alongside security, economy has also been a major factor in shaping foreign policy decisions in Pakistan viz-a-viz the United States.²⁰

If history be the guide, in the coming years, Pakistan's relations with the United States may be expected to move ahead on an issue-to-issue basis. It will be like a few steps, but will not be a long walk together. As we move along the road to the future, three areas of interest are expected to be dominating the future of Pakistan's relations with the United States. These include militancy, Afghanistan and nuclear weapons.

Although Pakistan has rendered valuable sacrifices in the war on terrorism at times, it has been asked for a "do more" by the United States. This shows that Pakistan's diplomacy has not been much successful in telling the United States their side of the story.²¹ Despite the element of

¹⁸ Dr Iram Khalid, *"Pakistan Foreign Policy, Evolution, Development and Strategies,"* (Lahore: Peace Publication,, 1st Edition, 2013), 45-46.

¹⁹ Abdul Sattar, *"Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2012: A Concise History,"* (Karachi:Oxford University Press, 2013), 239.

²⁰ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *"Pakistan and the Geostrategic Environment: A Study of Foreign Policy,"* (London: Macmillan Press, 1993).

²¹ Richard W Mansbach and Kirsten L. Rafferty, *"Introduction to Global Politics",* (Routledge, 200g), 381.

distrust remaining high, instability in Afghanistan dictates closer cooperation between the United States and Pakistan. However, this time Pakistan must make sure that the US does not repeat the history. Pakistan must have guarantee that any endgame or settlement in Afghanistan must ensure the protection of Pakistan's legitimate interests in Afghanistan.²²

The challenges for Pakistan's foreign policy in dealing with the United States are huge. Therefore, Pakistan will have to play a clever, pragmatic and proactive diplomacy in order to deal with the United States that is friendlier with India and less friendly to Pakistan. It will have to work out creative solutions to keep the United States engaged after the issues of terrorism and Afghanistan are over.

One-sided economic dependency, as commonly seen in Pak-US relations is a major cause that has inhibited continuity and depth in our relations with the United States. In the future, therefore, Pakistan needs to end its economic dependency on the United States. This dependency when reduced or ended, will allow Pakistan to keep a good degree of strategic autonomy in its foreign policy and build long-term relationship with the United States.

The emerging contours of Pakistan's relations with Russia

The changing regional dynamics is bringing a change in Pakistan's relations with Russia. Although Pakistan has a long history of alignment with the United States and the Western world, yet terrorism, militancy, Afghanistan, and the changing dynamics of the region raise hope and interest in a renewed cooperation between Pakistan and Russia. Pakistan and Russia have had a considerable degree of economic cooperation and a high level of diplomatic engagement during 1960s and 1970s.

Geographical proximity, regional security, Afghanistan, the US drawdown, China, militancy, terrorism and defence cooperation can serve as areas of mutual interest for both the countries. Pakistan and Russia can work together on eradicating terrorism and extremism. There can be no clear answer as to how much of a reset is likely to happen between Russia and Pakistan. But the realities of the region are changing. New dynamics are emerging that can form the basis for a strong relationship with Russia.

Conclusion

Foreign policy is thought as the facade of a country in the global community; as systematic, dynamic, effective and successful foreign policy elevates the stature of a country on the international stage. While a weak and passive foreign policy causes failure and may lead up to negative

²² Dennis Kux, *"The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies,"* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

consequences such as diplomatic isolation, economic downturn and political chaos.

History, pragmatism, dynamism and rationality should act as a guide for Pakistan's foreign policy in the future. Our future foreign policy should not be based on delusions and sentimentality. Instead, Pakistan's relations with every country should be based on national interest, mutual respect, equality and reciprocity.

The protection of global peace and security must, as usual, be an inherent goal of Pakistan's foreign policy. As an important member of the region, Pakistan must continue to work with regional countries for ensuring peace and stability. The threats that our region and the world is facing currently make peace a necessity not a choice or an option.

With India, Pakistan has tried to restore trust and confidence. Unfortunately, such efforts were given a cold shouldered response by India. Although Pakistan should desire peace with India, yet this should not be a one-sided aspiration. Diplomacy should continue its work, but Pakistan cannot afford another Ufa. Hence, if we are not receiving a positive response from India, then it's probably time for a pause until the right time arrives.

Pakistan needs to come out of the diplomatic lag as far as Iran, GCC and Afghanistan are concerned. Our relations with the GCC, Afghanistan and Iran are not only important from a foreign policy perspective but also from the social and economic point of view.

Peace and stability in Afghanistan is necessary for the peace and stability in Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan should facilitate talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Indeed, Pakistan should play active role in any effort that is meant to bring peace to Afghanistan.

Pakistan's relations with China will keep on improving. The CPEC will add immeasurable strength to the relationship. The only expectation for the future of Pak-China relations is more engagement and more cooperation on political, economic, trade, commercial, scientific, cultural and strategic levels.

Iran and the GCC are important areas of Pakistan's external relations. Pakistan has huge economic interests in these countries. The success of Pakistan's foreign policy will depend on a balanced approach towards Iran and Saudi Arabia. The stance that Pakistan took on Yemen must guide our foreign policy in the future as well.

With the United States, relations will be conditioned by Pakistan's role in Afghanistan settlement. As a thumb rule, the depth of relations between Pakistan and the United States will depend on the convergence of our national interests.

Although a reset with Russia is very much on the cards, yet it will take more time for the relations to take a complete take off. Pakistan's relations with Russia will depend on the level of interdependence that exists between the two countries. Looking into the future, Pakistan's

relations with Russia should flourish, however, there should be no over excitement and emotionalism in this regard.

Pakistan's foreign policy, like that of any other country, will be hugely affected by our internal environment. Our overall national interest, foreign policy goals and the objectives of our national security and foreign policy are linked to political stability, economic strength, good governance, vibrant institutions and social cohesion. Thus, the best of our foreign policies will not bring us any good unless and until we put our own house in order by bringing law and order, eradicating corruption, improving governance and economic management. Lastly, in order to create a favourable domestic environment, we need to consolidate the effects of operation Zarb-e-Azb and move harder against militancy, sectarianism, fanaticism, and extremism.

