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Prepared By:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ahmad Ali Asghar | 21-NTU-CS-1203 |
| Muhammad Awais | 21-NTU-CS-1846 |
| Ahsan Ijaz | 21-NTU-CS-1205 |
| Abdur Rehman | 21-NTU-CS-1201 |
| Faran Hassan | 21-NTU-CS-1220 |

Submitted To:

|  |
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| Miss Huma |

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# Foreign Policy

Foreign policy can be defined as the connections or associations amongst the sovereign states. However, in the broader perspective the foreign policy is said to be those endeavours of the independent states which they embark upon to develop close relations between them in order to benefit from each other’s achievements in various fields of human activity. The foreign policy is usually referred to as the general principles by which a state governs its re-action to the international environments.

# Pakistan’s Foreign Policy

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.

The peculiar location of Pakistan with its linkages with the West and Central Asia, its cultural and ideological orientations as well as circumstances surrounding its birth culminating in the partition of the Indian sub-continent make the task of fashioning a rational approach to international affairs complex and difficult. The wars with its hostile neighbour, the loss of its eastern part, its policy with regard to Afghanistan and its friendship and dependence on the USA constitute the salient elements of its foreign relations. To these may be added close links with China and the Muslim countries especially Saudi Arabia, Gulf States, Iran and Turkey.

Another very important factor has been the weak and unstable political system and the emergence of military as a dominant political force making the task of foreign policy formulating still much difficult.

## Guiding principles of Pakistan’s Foreign Policy

The guiding principles of Pakistan's foreign policy are firmly based in country's Islamic ideology, its rich cultural heritage and historical background, especially the intense struggle for freedom. As an Islamic and Non Aligned county Pakistan supports, with all its hearts, the Islamic causes and upholds with the principles of respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states Pakistan also openly corroborates the non-use of force international relations as well as the established behavioural standards of honourable neighbourliness peaceful coexistence and amicable collaboration for mutual gains.

Pakistan's strategic location made it a focal point of the world. Particularly the Super Powers, due to Pakistan's highly important geographical location, indulged into an ardent tug of war in order to establish a stronghold in Pakistan ever since the independence. Moreover the hostile Indian attitude, combined with the Super Powers vying for establishing influence in the newly born country, made Pakistan immensely vulnerable The political climate in the sub-continent before the independence, was also a dominant factor in moulding Pakistan's foreign policy after the partition The long standing animosities between the Hindus and the Muslims during the freedom struggle, were in fact, the maturing of thoughts and pressing methodology for ripening and developing Pakistan's relations with other states.

# Foreign Policy of Pakistan during Imran Khan Era

Ex. PM Imran Khan Niazi and Ex. FM Shah Mehmood played a vital role in establishing good relations with other countries. No State foreign policy is immune to change where Pakistan’s foreign policy under Imran Khan has no exception. Since Imran Khan became the Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2018, the foreign policy of Pakistan seems to have been in a position of change. The policy change will be explained by using Hermann’s three methods, which are: program change, second, adjustment change, and last problem or goad change. Program change means that the method of achieving foreign policy objectives has been changed. For instance, Imran khan is focusing on the diplomatic initiative, instead of to use the military to resolve the issues with India over the Kashmir issue.  Second, the adjustment change means that change in efforts and/or scope of foreign policy. In the case of Pakistan, Imran is working to normalize Iran-Saudi, Tehran-Washington and Taliban-US relations.

## Pakistan and Saudi Arabia

When Imran Khan stepped in as Prime Minister the country was deep in financial plight. It badly needed a bail out amount to come out of the financial quagmire Prime Minister's frantic efforts to manage the Balance of Payment (BOP) crisis were successful when the Saudi government agreed to give $3 billion to Pakistan as Balance of Payment support for one year and supply of $3 billion worth of oil on deferred payment for three years. The total package was $6 billion.

This is the second time when Saudi Arabia has bailed out Pakistan during the last four years. The Saudi assistance will immediately push the official foreign currency reserved back to double digit in addition to > lessening burden on the external sector.

Saudi Arabia will deposit $3 billion cash with the State Bank of Pakistan, in addition te providing one year deferred payment facility for the import of oil. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also agreed to reduce visa fees for Pakistanis

The Saudi aid strengthened Pakistani currency by 1.4% to Rs. 132.03 to the US dollar in the inter-bank market after Saudi Arabia agreed to $6 billion assistance package. The announcement of financial assistance came at a time when Pakistan badly needed foreign currency to avert default on import payment and debt payments The financial package injector á new lease of life into national economy and provided great support for the rupee The rupee's recovery came after the announcement of $6 billion and package for Pakistan by Saudi Arabia Saudi Arabia also promised to provide $3 billion in cash to reinforce Pakistan's foreign currency reserves. These announcements were issued after Prime Minister Imran Khan attended the Future Investment Initiative (FI1) conference in Riyadh. In addition to the current package Saudi Arabia has agreed to set up a multi billion dollar aid refinery in Pakistan during the next five years.

The country's looming Balance of Payment crisis had been avoided when China promised to provide financial assistance. Although China and Pakistan have a strategic relationship and are faithful allies, the PM Imran Khan's visit to China had received special significance due to expectation to Chinese financial assistance for Balance of Payment.

After the meeting with PM Imran Khan the Chinese leadership pledged to help Pakistan come out of a hovering economic emergency.

The government had already indicated that there was $12 billion financial gap out of which Saudi Arabia gave a $6 billion lifetime.

Besides negotiating the assistance for Balance of Payments, the Pakistan delegation headed by foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua, will discuss currency exchange arrangements and increased access for Pakistani products to Chinese markets. It has been agreed that the CPEC would be re-focused attracting investments for social economic zones, agriculture. sector, jobs creation and vocational training CPEC is made a gateway for progress prosperity and connectivity.

**Afghanistan**

Imran Khan in his victory speech said that peace in Afghanistan meant peace in Pakistan. He added that Afghans have suffered most in the ‘war on terror’, and before that in the Afghan Jihad. However much to his chagrin for peace, Imran has been in controversies due to his avowed support for Islamic insurgents in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. His party and he have never been attacked by Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). On the contrary, he was one of the top political figures to be nominated by TTP for peace talks with the Pakistani Government in 2014. According to him, a military solution with the militants is a small part of larger solutions but a conflict can’t be resolved through military operations alone.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have institutionalised their working relationship through Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). Imran’s Government has shown increased confidence in APAPPS but past public statements of Imran Khan do not offer much of a hope on how peace in Afghanistan is to be achieved. Imran Khan’s larger objective seems to be more intended to gain popularity as another Pathan from the other side of the border, especially when both the countries have differences in defining the terrorist group on respective soil. This puts him well with both military and economy of Pakistan when Pakistan is in search of its thirteenth bailout from the IMF. Imran Khan will treat the problem with Afghanistan as his priority to find reasonable political accommodation with its western neighbour. Ideally, the approach would be to have a durable and affordable relationship with Afghanistan without involving Pakistan military and yet serving its objectives.

##### **China**

It will be recalled that in past, Imran Khan had demanded more transparency in CPEC projects; he alleged that Nawaz Sharif deprived the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province its due share. His narrative of corruption infested CPEC projects led to turning down of a bus project in Peshawar which was to be added under CPEC in 2017. Some Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaaf (PTI) activists consider CPEC as a modern day equivalent of East India Company and claim that the money wasted could have been applied on health and education.

According to Michael Kugelman, the stakes are too high to imperil or even review the CPEC projects as these are of strategic importance for both the countries. Through connectivity projects Pakistan aims to use its geographical location as a transit corridor to retain a balance of power in Asia, and has taken the risk of mortgaging its future to Chinese finance. Imran Khan led Government has affirmed to accommodate ambitious CPEC projects worth $ 62 billion and broaden its base to include social sector schemes like clean water, health, and technical training of Pakistani youth to generate more employment. More nuanced signaling by PTI to review the CPEC thus appeared in the Financial Times recently10.

The biggest advantage which China has given to Pakistan for CPEC is in not disclosing the exact details of the MoU which gives Imran Khan and his masters some space to have different perception and make new demands. For Imran Khan it will be to choose between transparency of the CPEC or Sino-Pak indulgence, because the business model with China does not include fair tendering procedures, it rather promotes favored companies. All told, sooner or later therefore, China will realise that they might suffer the same fate as the USA learned in its war on terror.

##### **India**

Relations between Pakistan and India have been plateaued after highs and lows since their division into two independent countries. Both the nuclear neighbors have engaged in two full-fledged wars and regular skirmishes along the border. India has verifiable proof against Pakistan’s harboring and training terrorists who have indulged in murderous attacks on Indian soil as well as in exporting insurgency to the Kashmir region. Pakistan blames India for supporting rebellious elements in Balochistan which however lack credibility. Pakistan’s previous government under Nawaz Sharif accepted that terrorist in Pathankot were Pakistanis. That did not go well with the establishment as the move was intended to improve relations between India and Pakistan, and so he was thrown out. Another contentious issue has been the violations of Indian sovereignty over the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) through which the CPEC project traverses, and the construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam therein. The latest incident which triggered acrimony between India and Pakistan was abducting and framing of Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav. He has been sentenced to death by a Pakistan military court, which has become an international issue after the matter was taken by India to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Imran Khan has urged India to take one step to improve relations, in return of which Pakistan would take two steps. But Pakistan’s proxy warfare on the border has not been stopped. Therefore, such peace proposals from Imran will certainly receive cold reactions from Indian side; his highly ambitious politico- economic diplomacy of improved trade relations also might not work. Equally jarring is the poisoned domestic narrative towards India; there is now a larger scope to sustain that anti-India narrative. Considering the surge of ultra-right wing Islamist parties in 2018 elections, that might not go well in India-Pakistan relations.

##### **United States of America**

The common perception about USA in Pakistan is that over time 52 percent Pakistanis have come to believe that US was responsible for 9/11 attacks This anti-American narrative is where Imran Khan started his agenda for the top post in Pakistan. His *Naya Pakistan* promises found their motivation on these narratives against the West and America, whereby Pakistan would be liberated from the burden of patron-client relations. According to Imran Khan, Pakistan must maintain mutually beneficial relation rather than the US using Pakistan as a ‘hired gun that has resulted in huge sacrifices from Pakistan. He has been a vocal opponent of drone attacks executed by America on Pakistani soil. In the past he had said that he would order shooting down the US drones if he were to become Prime minister. But on the other hand, a political compromise by Imran Khan seems to be taking shape when he received Mike Pompeo and reiterated support to peace resolution in Afghanistan through political process. Patience is also running out on US’s side, the recent appointment and presence of Zalmay Khalilzad at a meeting with Imran Khan along with Pompeo proved so. Khalilzad is considered a fierce critic of the double game played by Pakistan

While Imran Khan has fallen-in with the establishment to push Taliban towards the helm of running affairs in Kabul, there will be larger US pressure on Pakistan in terms of accountability. US has further pressurised Pakistan by cancelling coalition support fund worth $300 million, while the recent decision by Pentagon to suspend intake of Pakistani officers to IMET (International Military Education and Training courses) will play foul in coordination and cooperation between the two armies and nations.

# Foreign Policy of Pakistan during Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif Era

Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, who was elected by Pakistan's parliament as the new prime minister, outlined his administration's foreign policy priorities during a speech in the National Assembly on Monday wherein he thanked Saudi Arabia for always providing generous support to his country and emphasized stronger trade relations with Gulf nations.

Sharif was highly critical of the diplomatic performance of the previous administration, saying the country had to suffer several setbacks on the foreign policy front in the last three years and was abandoned by its friends and strategic partners.

Discussing Pakistan's relations with **Saudi Arabia**, he recalled that the kingdom had come to rescue his country by ensuring generous oil supply after Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998.

"We are grateful to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, and Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud," he said. "We thank them that they stood by us as always in such difficult times."

The new Pakistani prime minister said his country had always cherished strong relations with the **Gulf nations and Middle Eastern countries**, adding that Pakistan should do everything to further consolidate its ties with them and nurture stronger trade relations.

Focusing on the **United Arab Emirates**, he described the country as "our neighbor, our caring and sympathetic friends" who always supported Pakistan.

"We also thank them for standing with us," he added.

Sharif also applauded **Turkey** for being "at the forefront" when the people of Kashmir needed international support.

He said that his administration would raise its voice for the rights of **Palestinians**, adding it was also strategically important for Pakistan to sensitize the international community regarding the situation in **Afghanistan**.

The new Pakistani prime minister criticized the previous government for making reckless statements about Pakistan's close international partners while mentioning that it also threatened the multibillion-dollar **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).**

"No one should have any doubt that China is Pakistan's loyal and reliable friend who has been there for us during good and bad times," he said. "Not only has China helped Pakistan economically but also supported us on international forums."

"What the previous government did to weaken this friendship is a painful story," he added.

The new prime minister said that his country needed to strengthen its ties with the **European Union** and ensure the renewal of a special trade arrangement with it next year.

"Modern diplomacy is dependent upon your economic strength," he said. "If we are not economically strong, our diplomatic efforts will be ineffective."

Discussing Pakistan's relations with the **United States**, Sharif said they had experienced several ups and downs in the past, adding that Pakistan should try to maintain them "on an equal footing."

He mentioned that **India** and **Pakistan** should try to eradicate poverty from the region by resolving the **Kashmir** issue in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

"We want good relations with India but enduring peace requires a just solution to the Kashmir dispute," he said. "We will raise our voice for our Kashmiri brothers and sisters on all forums."

## Visit to Saudi Arabia

Madinah Governor Faisal Bin Salman Al Saud and high-level Saudi officials received the prime minister and his delegation. The prime minister was accompanied by key cabinet members, including Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, Narcotics Control Minister Shahzain Bugti, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif.



During his visit Shehbaz sharif said that:

"Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are bound by deep-rooted and abiding fraternal ties which are built on a solid foundation of mutual trust and support,"

"We are profoundly grateful to Saudi Arabia for its consistent support to Pakistan in its difficult hours. For its part, Pakistan has always stood by Saudi Arabia and will always stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Saudi brethren."

PM Shehbaz also lauded the development the kingdom has achieved under the vision of the crown prince, calling it a transformational initiative.

"I look forward to my interaction with the Saudi leadership to review our multi-faceted bilateral cooperation and to take this special relationship to unknown heights," the prime minister said.

He also conveyed his good wishes to expatriates in the kingdom, saying that they contributed enormously to the country's economic development. "They are a key partner in further fortifying Pakistan-Saudi brotherly relations," he concluded.

"During the visit, the prime minister will have bilateral interaction with the Saudi leadership, with particular focus on advancing economic, trade and investment ties and creation of greater opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in Saudi Arabia. The two sides will also exchange views on a range of regional and international issues of mutual interest," the statement said.

PM Shehbaz's visit to Saudi Arabia will impart a strong impetus to deepening bilateral cooperation in diverse fields and further reinforce the growing partnership between the two countries, the statement added.

The two leaders had also discussed bilateral ties and reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing and developing them in all respects. The crown prince, according to the Saudi Press Agency, had confirmed the keenness of the Saudi leadership on supporting Pakistan in all fields.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the premier and the crown prince had also agreed to work together to further augment and diversify their bilateral ties in all spheres, particularly trade, investment and employment generation opportunities.

PM Shehbaz had thanked the crown prince for the support his country has been extending to Pakistan, describing it as “historic”.

PM Shehbaz's trip, during which he will also perform Umrah, has also garnered attention for reasons apart from it being his first foreign visit. He was initially criticised for bringing several family members on the trip on state expenses and for planning to charter a plane.

However, the information minister has insisted that the prime minister would be travelling on a commercial flight and all members of his entourage would be bearing their own expenses.

**Visit to UAE**

Sharif held a meeting with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ) as part of his visit to the UAE.

The two leaders, who met at the Qasr Al Shati Palace, "discussed advancing the longstanding relations between the two nations, and the prospects of propelling cooperation on various fronts as well as reviewed a number of regional and international issues of common concern," according to the state-run Emirates News Agency (WAM).

MBZ wished the newly elected premier "success in leading Pakistan towards further progress and prosperity over the coming period."

The crown prince hailed "historical relations" between the two nations and the "valuable contributions" made by the Pakistani community in the UAE.

The Pakistani prime minister thanked MBZ for the warm reception, commended the UAE's "great support" for his country in the development field and stressed his keenness to strengthen bilateral relations in various fields.

The Gulf nation has long been an intelligence partner of Pakistan as well as a regular source of financial relief for successive governments.

**Visit to Turkey**

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Tuesday landed in Ankara for a three-day visit — his first since assuming the office last month.

A high-level delegation — including Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Investment Board Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain, PM’s special assistants Tariq Fatemi and Fahad Hussain — is accompanying the prime minister, while Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will join the delegation later on.

Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi, senior government officials, and diplomatic personnel gave the premier a warm welcome. Apart from this, a contingent of the Turkish Army presented a salute to the prime minister.

During his visit, the prime minister will have a tete-a-tete with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan which would be followed by delegation-level talks.

Besides discussing the Pakistan-Turkey bilateral relations, the two leaders would also exchange views on regional and international issues. They will also address a joint press statement after their meetings.

As both countries are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, both leaders will jointly unveil a logo — marking the commencement of the celebrations.

The foreign office spokesperson in a separate press release said that the historic and long-standing relations between Pakistan and Turkey were firmly anchored in common faith, shared history, and a glorious tradition of mutual support to each other on issues of core interest.

The relationship between Pakistan and Turkey is underpinned by structured institutional mechanisms. The High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) is the primary platform at the leadership-level, which has been instrumental in further cementing bilateral relations. So far, six sessions of the HLSCC have taken place. The 7th session is slated to take place this year.

“The Turkish leadership and the government have steadfastly supported the just cause of Kashmir. Turkey is an important and active member of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir. The two countries have convergent views on a range of issues including peaceful and stable Afghanistan, Palestine, and countering Islamophobia,” it was added.

“Besides being part of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries, the Prime Minister’s visit to Turkey is important in the context of deepening and broadening bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, regional connectivity, health, education, culture and people-to-people relations. It will help in further strengthening the leadership dialogue and existing multi-dimensional strategic relationship between the two countries and will impart fresh impetus to the efforts to take this unique partnership to new heights,”

**Conclusions**

Despite the fact that the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is a well experienced person and has good relations with establishment, there is a series of challenges for him to tackle. The foreign policy is a major factor how he deal with other nations in the very intense current situation in the country. The current economic situation in the country is very alarming. It is the need of the hour that all the political parties of the country should come to one page of to work for the betterment of the state of Pakistan rather than crying for themselves in the current situation. They all should come together not for their personnel interests but for our beloved country Pakistan.