TURKEY PAK RELATIONS

# Development of bilateral relations

# Cultural relations

# Trade

# Strategic ties

# Trilateral Ankara cooperation process

# Military relations

# Aid exchange

# Opposing ambitions

# Military Relations

Pakistan has pretty adequate military relations with several other countries, particularly with Muslim nations. Turkey is one of them. Pakistan and Turkey have been close friends for over half a century, having a multi dimensional relations.

Turkey always maintains military and political support during wars with India. Large number of Turks volunteered to fight for Pakistan against India and a number of Nurses to serve Pakistan flew in from there. In December 1965, President Ayub Khan visited Turkey and expressed his profound gratitude to the Turkish President Gural for the moral and material support provided to Pakistan during Indo-Pak war of 1965.

Pakistan has long had military ties with Turkey. Pakistan air force officers are training in Turkey to upgrade their F-16 fleet. Both the countries have eight meetings before this. Pakistan and Turkey had signed a treaty of cooperation and friendship, on 2nd April 1954. Both countries have linked-up the US-led Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Relationships regarding defense are also very powerful between Pakistan and Turkey, consisting of a substantial portion of the Pakistan Navy’s fleet and joint practices. Turkey is currently a major arms seller to Pakistan. Turkey had previously purchased arms and also proceeded to buy parts of minor aerial weapons from Pakistan. As a consequence, the two nations have enjoyed strong military and diplomatic relations, which are now strengthening more towards economic cooperation.

Pakistan Turkey joint defence: Pakistan and Turkey are expanding ties through joint military exercises and defence production building on a long tradition of military cooperation. At the last year’s meeting of the group, Turkey had gifted 34 T-37 aircraft and spares to Pakistan. Turkey is, meanwhile, buying MFI-17 Super Mushshak aircraft from Pakistan besides upgrading three Pakistani submarines and jointly building the fleet tanker. Pakistan’s defence minister Syed Naveed Qamar visited Ankara and discussed the exchange of information and experiences on military equipments.From Turkey five F-16s took participation in indus viper 2013 exercise at mushaf air base in Punjab province of Pakistan. Areas of interest of both the countries never crossed each other even there are some topics on which both the countries are following different policies but they never goes against each other. The reason is that both countries show strong cooperation potential. President of turkey Abdullah Gul said world recognize the Pakistanis sacrifices and fights against terrorism and extremism and Turk can’t calm if terrorists attack their region, people and their partner Pakistan.

Recently Pakistan and Turkey agreed to enhance and deepen the defence and military relations, resolving to cooperate against terrorism and extremism in all forms.This agreement was made during the meetings of General Salih Zeki Colak, Commander of the Turkish Land Forces, with Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif and, Army Chief General Raheel Sharif here at Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

According to Defence Ministry spokesman, Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif appreciated the exemplary and historic brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkey. He expressed Pakistan’s strong desire to deepen, broaden and strengthen Pak-Turkey relations in the field of defence. Both leaders discussed issue of mutual interest to include extremism, terrorism and flow of refugees across the borders. They also shared the resolve to co-operate with each other in order to effectively face challenges. Defence Minister also apprised the Turkish General on Pakistan’s success in operation Zarb-e-Azb and National Action Plan.The minister valued the cooperation from the Turkish side in the provision of Trainer-37 aircraft to Pakistan on gratis basis. Moreover, the minister offered sale of Super Mushak aircraft with the Turkish specifications. In the meeting, the minister expressed satisfaction over the successful holding of the 11th Round of high level Military Dialogue Group meeting in Ankara in Oct-2015. He thanked the Turkish Navy for their participation in the exercise, AMAN-13.

The Turkish general was briefed on Pakistan army training and intelligence affairs in details. General Salih appreciated the role of Pakistan army in the war against terrorism and said Turkey stood with pakistan for regional stability and counterterrorism. The Turkish army chief paid homage to the martyrs of the Pakistan army and laid wreaths on Yadgar e Shuhada as well.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa also emphasized the need to further enhance the existing military to military cooperation between brotherly armed forces of Pakistan and Turkey. Enhanced Pakistan-Turkey cooperation would have positive impact on regional security.

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# Strategic ties

Since the independence of Pakistan, it has maintained cooperative strategic relations with Turkey that have progressed over the years. Through several collaborations including military exercises, economic agreements in various industries such as energy, transport, infrastructure and etcetera, it is safe to say that both countries have a well-established partnership at the global front as two Muslim countries.The Pakistan-Turkey High Level Cooperation Council (HLSCC) was established in 2009, as a framework for consultations at the highest political level between the two sides. The mechanism provides strategic focus and direction to the bilateral relationship and helps chart a vision for the future.

Despite the fact that both the countries have shared histories, cultural affinities and common faith, the strategic relation extend over diverse areas from political to economic, to defense and security, to education and culture. Both countries work closely in the United Nations and other international and regional forums. Both countries support each other on issues like Kashmir and North Turkish Republic of Cyprus and have similar perspectives on international issues.

Talking about the military cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey, both countries seem to extend and develop a strategic partnership with joint military ventures and consistent support to each other. Recently, several agreements were signed between the two countries in the International Defense Fair held in Istanbul including aviation collaboration. Moreover, an agreement was reached in 2016 in which Turkey is modernizing three Pakistani attack submarines. Both countries have struck a deal in an aviation project under which Istanbul will update Pakistan’s air fighter planes and some of them have already been flown to Turkey. Pakistan-Turkey Military Consultative Group (MCG) was formed to work on extending assistance and exchanging experiences in the fields of military training and defense production between the two countries and to review geo-political environment of the region in 1988. Both countries have established high level military discourse group in 2001 for promoting defense collaboration between the two countries. Both the countries have been doing joint military, naval & air exercises Aman & Indus viper series. These key events in the defense area reflect the strong will of both Pakistan and Turkey to translate their cordial relations into strong strategic alliance that clearly is an asset to both nations.

Both countries satisfied at the rapidly growing multidimensional cooperation. Both countries agreed on the necessity for sustained engagement for enhanced cooperation in diverse fields. Both countries thoroughly discussed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and agreed on its early conclusion of bilateral Free Trade Agreement. It would significantly contribute towards the overall vision of the leadership of the two countries to transform the traditionally cordial bilateral relations into a robust economic partnership. It is hoped that it would be game changer for the further strengthening of socio-economic relations in the days to come.

Most recently, the Republic of Turkey foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu officially visited Pakistan and thoroughly discussed issues of mutual interests with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, President Mamnoon Hussain and the Advisor to PM on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz. Government of Pakistan highly appreciated Turkish government and its people determination for democracy and democratic norms in the times of crises in form of a failed military coup. Islamabad stood in solidarity with leaders and people of Turkey in their recent difficult times.

Frequent high level visits are a clear indicator of the close political relations between Turkey and Pakistan. In November 2016, President Erdogan came to Pakistan for a two-day official visit that was marked historic in the Islamabad-Ankara relation. President Erdogan addressed Pakistani parliament for the third time during recent visit, which was a record for a foreign dignitary. Mr Erdogan denounced what the Turkish government refers to as ‘Feto’— the organisation led by US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, the alleged instigator of the failed coup — as a terrorist outfit comparable to Al Qaeda and the militant Islamic State group, and expressed his appreciation of Pakistan’s decision to expel the Turkish staff of the Pak-Turk schools — allegedly run by Gulen-linked elements — on the eve of his visit. While Mr Erdogan may have his reasons for branding his political opponents as terrorists, it is problematic that he expects Pakistan to fight his battle with them on its turf. It is even more problematic that the government has obliged him with alacrity at the cost of thousands of Pakistani school children's educational future. In whole, this key features of the historic visit mark the strengthening understanding and cooperation between both the countries for a long-lasting and mutually beneficial strategic alliance at the global front.

The Republic of Turkey and Islamic Republic of Pakistan are strong strategic partners. Both countries are indispensable cohorts working diligently to promote peace and prosperity for their people and the region. Turkish former Prime Minister emphatically declared that Pakistan’s security was Turkish security and Pakistan’s flag was the Turkish flag and that Turkey would always stand by Pakistan. The similarity amongst the people of the two countries, supported by decades old cultural, religious and geopolitical ties is an almost unparalleled phenomenon in the history of strategic relations between the states.

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# Trade

Similar is the case with trade relations. Trade relations are also contributing a well amount to the overall positive and healthy relations. Right from start of the journey pakistan and turkey started economic collaborations. To clear the fact, “On 19 February 1954, issued in Ankara and Karachi; according to which Pakistan and Turkey pledged to closer cooperation in the economic, political, and cultural departments, and both nations will put their sincere efforts for development”, says it all. Both countries have worked together to notably proliferation investments and trades, especially in telecommunications, transport, tourism, manufacturing and several other industries. Both nations have pursued to increase the volume of bilateral trade to more than $1 billion from $690 million by 2010. Pakistan’s exports to Turkey include sesame, rice, leather, seeds, fabrics, textiles, medical equipment and sports goods. Turkish exports include wheat, lentils, chickpeas, chemicals, diesel, machinery, transport vehicles and energy products.

### ECO:

It is the vital factor of Pak-Turkey trade relations and promotes healthy trade in the region.ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization) previously known as RCD (Regional Cooperation for Development) was founded in 1964. Pakistan and Turkey were the founding members of the organization and by the fall of 1992 it expanded to include new members mostly predominantly muslim countries. The purpose is to establish a single market for goods and services, much like the European Union.

### Road Transport Joint Commission:

A Bilateral Road Transport Agreement between Pakistan and Turkey signed on 15th June, 2003 in Islamabad. It somehow was stopped and is now again under consideration. Last year second session of Pakistan-Turkey Joint Commission on Road Transport was held under the framework of previous one.

The goal is to achieve $5 billion increase in the trade. Hence strategies were adopted to make it successful like matters related to visa facilitation for the drivers/crew, technical mechanism for movement of road transport between the two countries, insurance of goods, vehicles and drivers/crew and knowledge sharing in the fields of Roads and Road Transportation as well as further enhancing the collaboration between the private sectors of both sides.

### Pakistan–Turkey Free Trade Agreement:

Free trade agreement is under discussion between both the countries. FTA(Free Trade Agreement) means that the associated states will try to minimize the trade barriers and hence increase the trade of goods as well as services.Official negotiations were launched in October 2015 and it is being reported that the Free trade agreement is to be signed in May 2017 after a long period of negotiations, but we find a number of reports expecting the agreement date somewhere in the year 2016 which shows that it is facing delay. From July 25 to 27, 2016, the third round of FTA negotiations was completed in Ankara. However the FTA is supposed to increase bilateral trade to $5billion by 2019 and to $10billion by 2022.

Pakistan will get market space in agriculture and pharmaceutical sectors while the exports to Turkey are denim, PET,ethanol, Cotton yarn, fabric, rice, garments, leather, carpets, surgical instruments,sports good,chemicals. Pakistan’s major imports from Turkey would be man made textiles, towels, steel structure,tanning and plastic chemicals, processed milk and whey,the official said.

### Train service:

A container train service was launched by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Yousuf Raza Gilani between Islamabad and Istanbul on 14 August 2009. The first train carried 20 containers with a capacity of around 750 t (738 long tons; 827 short tons) and would travel 6,500 km (4,000 mi) from Islamabad, through Baluchistan and Tehran, Iran and on to Istanbul in two weeks' time. However it could not be continued after December 2011. It was reported that a passenger train would also be launch on the same route which could help strengthen the ties. According to wikipedia the main setback for this service is the poor infrastructure of railway between Quetta and Taffan in Pakistan. Relaunch of this train service is under consideration and hence BALO (Great Anatolia Logistics Organization) is undertaking feasibility studies for strengthening coordination and initiating further investments for this train service.

### Trade Communities:

Many business communities made up of common businessmen are of great importance for the healthy trade among the partners.

Turkey-Pakistan Business Council and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey are closely cooperating with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry to provide platforms for increasing interaction between the business communities.

Turkey’s private corporations also have invested appreciably in construction and industrial projects developing highways, canals, and pipelines.

Turkish and Pakistani business communities are also cooperating at the regional and trilateral level in the organizations and mechanisms such as the Federation of D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Chambers of Commerce (ECO CCI) and Istanbul Forum for Economic Cooperation between Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### TURKEY AND CPEC:

Turkey states on the topic of CPEC as:

“Memorandum of Understanding on Aligning the Silk Road and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and the Middle Corridor Initiative between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the People’s Republic of China”

It believes that Turkey, Pakistan and China can collaborate closely in reviving the ancient Silk Road. Therefore a strong cooperation between these countries will bring successful results in aligning the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative with the Middle Corridor project. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) where Pakistan, Turkey and China were among the founding members could be very helpful in this regard.

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