

# Foreign Policy of Pakistan



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**Foreign Policy of Pakistan** title can be described as Pakistan's foreign policy has its roots in the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who emphasized peace, sovereignty, and friendly relations with all nations, especially neighboring countries. The ideological foundation of the country, based on Islamic values and solidarity with the Muslim world, has also influenced its foreign relations. Since independence in 1947, Pakistan has strived to balance its Islamic identity with geopolitical and economic interests.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan emerged as an independent country through the partition of India in August 1947 and was admitted as a United Nations member state in September 1947. It is currently the second-largest country within the Muslim world in terms of population, and is also the only Muslim-majority country in possession of nuclear weapons. De facto, the country shares direct land borders with India, Iran, Afghanistan, and China.

Pakistan's foreign policy seeks the 'promotion of Pakistan as a dynamic, progressive, moderate, and democratic Islamic country; developing friendly relations with all countries of the world, especially major powers and immediate neighbors; consolidating our commercial and economic cooperation with international community".

Pakistan's foreign policy is meant to formalize and define its interactions with foreign nations and standardize interactions with organizations, corporations and individual citizens. Backed by the semi-agricultural and semi-industrialized economy, Pakistan is the 44th largest (nominal GDP, 2025) and

26th largest (purchasing) economic power and 7th largest military in the world in terms of active personnel, with a defense budget of US\$10.2 billion (2024), 2.7% of its GDP (2024).

## **Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Vision**

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In 1947, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of the state of Pakistan, clearly described the principles and objectives of Pakistan's foreign policy in a broadcast message, which is featured prominently in a quotation on the homepage of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: "The foundation of our foreign policy is friendship with all nations across the globe."

On 15 August 1947, outlining the foreign policy of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam observed:

"Our objective should be peace within and peace without. We want to live peacefully and maintain cordial and friendly relations with our immediate neighbours and with (the) world at large. We have no aggressive designs against any one. We stand by the United Nations Charter and will gladly make our contribution to the peace and prosperity of the world."

## **Pakistan–China relations**

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China has played a significant role in the development, economy and security of Pakistan, with relationship beginning in 1951 when Pakistan was among the first countries to sever diplomatic ties with the Republic of China (on Taiwan Island) and recognizes the People's Republic of China (PRC) on Mainland China as the sole representative. Since then, both countries have placed considerable importance on the maintenance of an extremely close and supportive special relationship and the two countries have regularly exchanged high-level visits resulting in a variety of agreements. The PRC has provided economic, military, and technical assistance to Pakistan, and each country considers the other a close strategic ally.

A cornerstone of the success of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC contains initiatives worth a total of \$62 billion, such as infrastructure, energy, economic zones, and the development of the Gwadar port. A Chinese spokesperson said in 2022 that "the bond of friendship and mutual assistance between the Chinese and Pakistani people is stronger than gold, and the two countries' iron-clad friendship is deeply rooted in the people and boasts strong vitality.

## **Pakistan-Saudia relations**

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Saudi Arabia has also provided extensive religious and educational aid to Pakistan.[citation needed] Saudi Arabia remains a major destination for immigration amongst Pakistanis, the number of whom living in Saudi Arabia

stands between 900,000 and 1 million.[citation needed] Saudi Arabia is the largest source of petroleum for Pakistan. It also supplies extensive financial aid to Pakistan and remittance from Pakistani migrants to Saudi Arabia is also a major source of foreign currency.

## **Pakistan-Turkey relations**

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Pakistan has an embassy in Ankara and a Consulate General in Istanbul. Turkey has an embassy in Islamabad and Consulates General in Karachi and Lahore. Both countries are members of Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Economic Cooperation Organization, OIC and WTO. Trade volume between the two countries was US\$856 million in 2019 (Pakistan's exports/imports: 306/550 million USD). Yunus Emre Institute has a local headquarters in Karachi and Lahore.

## **Participation in International Organizations**

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Pakistan is an active and engaged member of various international organizations, using these platforms to advance its diplomatic, economic, and strategic interests. Within the United Nations (UN), Pakistan has made significant contributions, particularly through its longstanding role in UN peacekeeping missions, where it is recognized as one of the top troop-contributing countries. As a founding member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Pakistan consistently advocates for the rights and unity of the Muslim world, raising its voice on issues such as the plight of Palestinians, the situation in Kashmir, and Islamophobia. In the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Pakistan promotes regional cooperation in areas like trade, health, and education, although progress has often been hindered by political tensions with India. Additionally, Pakistan's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has opened new avenues for collaboration with Central Asian states and China, particularly in security, counterterrorism, and economic development. Through active participation in these organizations, Pakistan seeks to strengthen its global presence, build partnerships, and contribute to regional and international peace and stability.

## **Challenges to Foreign Policy**

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Despite its ongoing diplomatic efforts, Pakistan's foreign policy faces numerous complex challenges. One of the most persistent issues is the long-standing conflict and deep-rooted mistrust with India, particularly over the Kashmir dispute, which continues to hinder regional cooperation and peace initiatives. Additionally, regional instability, especially due to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and the presence of terrorism in border areas, poses serious security threats that directly impact foreign relations. Pakistan also struggles with economic dependency on foreign aid, loans, and support from international financial institutions, which limits its policy autonomy and negotiating power on the global stage. Another significant challenge is the

negative global perception that associates Pakistan with extremism and militancy, often impacting its international image and partnerships. Furthermore, Pakistan must carefully navigate its relations with rival powers such as China and the United States, as well as Iran and Saudi Arabia, maintaining a delicate balance without alienating any side. These multifaceted challenges complicate the formulation and execution of a consistent and effective foreign policy, requiring strategic foresight, internal stability, and diplomatic skill.

## **Future Outlook**

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Pakistan's foreign policy is evolving in response to shifting regional dynamics and global developments. In the coming years, the country seeks to deepen its strategic partnerships with major powers such as China and Russia, leveraging these relationships for economic growth and geopolitical influence. Simultaneously, there is a strong emphasis on improving ties with neighboring countries, particularly India and Afghanistan, through dialogue and regional cooperation, despite the historical and ongoing challenges. Pakistan also aspires to play a more constructive and leading role within the Muslim world, championing causes that unite the Ummah and addressing global issues such as Islamophobia and humanitarian crises. Furthermore, promoting economic interests through enhanced trade, foreign investment, and participation in international initiatives remains a central pillar of its foreign policy strategy. Achieving these goals will require internal political and economic stability, skilled diplomacy, and the flexibility to adapt to an increasingly complex and multipolar global order.