

# Changing Dynamics of Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Overview

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“No foreign policy - no matter how ingenious - has any chance of success if it is born in the minds of a few and carried in the hearts of none.”

(Speech of [Henry A. Kissinger](#) (56<sup>th</sup> US Secretary of State, 1973-77)  
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## Abstract:

*This study attempts to analyze the very reason behind Pakistan's jumping into the western bandwagon. This research aims to underline subtle shift in foreign policy and dig out the motivations behind radical change in foreign policy after the 9/11 incident and Endgame in Afghanistan. Moreover, given the changing global outlook of diplomacy in the age of globalization, internationalization, economic and public diplomacy and technological revolution, how Pakistan can promote and uplift its image in the world. It attempts to provide meaningful and viable suggestions in order to make foreign policy a success.*

**Key words:** Foreign Policy, Geo-politics, Cold War, Globalization, Public Diplomacy.

## Introduction

Foreign policy is a crucial tool with which the socio-political, economic and military interests of any nation state can be served. It is well-orchestrated, planned and prepared not by layman but by the chief executive of a country. This task can also be taken by the legislature. No state lives or tends to live without robust foreign policy. Policy is considered to be aggregate or sum total of national interests. The destruction of Berlin Wall in 1989 and end of Cold War heralded into new equation and configuration in the geo-politics of the South Asian region. Keeping in view these radical changes, Pakistan had no other option but to reorient its foreign policy. Pakistan termed as ‘A Hard Country’ (Anatol Lieven, Pakistan: A Hard Country, year 2012) and ‘Sick Man of Asia’ (Roedad Khan, *The Nation*, 19 February 2014) has witnessed multiple challenges and attacks at its nationhood. Pakistan has its own chequered history punctuated with weaknesses, conflicts, and wars within and without. The major obsession with foreign policy makers of Pakistan is economy to survive and security to stop Indian belligerency. Pakistan's Post Cold War preoccupation has been security and economy. Most of the times, Pakistan's foreign policy has either been Indo or American centric.

Foreign policy basically entails social, political, economic interests of the nation state that it jealously guards within the limits set by the international environment. Foreign policy making is the most daunting challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The world has become a global village due to advancement of technology and fast communication. An incident in one part of the world has direct or indirect impact on the other part of the world. The disintegration of Berlin Wall in 1989 and dismemberment of USSR in 1991 paved the way for the decolonization, new wave of nationalism, alignments in the region and geo-politics in the South Asia. Pakistan—a crisis state, has always confronted with multipronged problems, issues and challenges since its birth. Among other things, Pakistan has been very much concerned about changing geopolitical and economic realities in the region. However, the foreign policy

of Pakistan is not devoid of domestic challenges and external influences.

## **Pakistan's Foreign Policy sailing through choppy waters**

It has on and off been said that Pakistan has a threat within but not without. Internal threats and challenges are: bad governance, poverty, extremism, terrorism, inter-provincial disharmony, delicate civil-military relations, mullah-military alliance, crisis of identity, lack of socio-political cohesion, ethnicity, Baluchistan and feudal mindset has left deep impact on the smooth working and development of Pakistan. Musa Khan Jalalzai- an Afghan journalist writes in his book: 'the Foreign Policy of Pakistan-Sectarian impacts on Diplomacy, 2001: "His focus is on Islamic ideology and its impact on the foreign policy of Pakistan, moreover, he says, that Pakistan's security problems are not Indo-centric rather threatened by the internal political dynamics" (Jalalzai, Musa Khan, 2000. P: 13). The domestic problems and issues do let any foreign policy down. Internal crises in Pakistan are so deep that no remedy could work overnight. The surgical measures and off the hook policy will not deliver goods to the public.

Externally speaking, it is being said that Pakistan's foreign policy is prepared by Britain, approved by America and implemented in Pakistan. No doubt, there has been a deep impact and foot prints of colonial masters. We got Pakistan truncated and moth-eaten. G.W Chaudhry wrote in his book: "Pakistan's relations with India: 1947-1966", Indian's belligerent attitude and mistrust looms large. Moreover, while referring professor Quincy Wright that, India has an eye out for re-annexation of Pakistan. Professor Trager was of view that, Nehru regarded Pakistan an area which should be reincorporated into an Indian dominated confederation. Pakistan, in the age of infancy, was weak and ill prepared to face with imminent threats and challenges like: refugee influx, communal riots, unequal distribution of military assets, water issue, undecided fate of princely states, administrative management, constitutional delays and delay in formulating cohesive, confident and contented foreign policy.

Wherever there is foreign intervention that particular country cannot work in a smooth way. Because foreign powers give aid that carries a lot of strings with it. International institutions like: IMF, World Bank, have a restructuring economic plan for the third world countries. For the short term goals it offers some respite for the political and economic development of third world countries. However, for the long term it is supposed to enslave, make dependent and trap the third world countries. Three centuries ago, the half of the world was colonized by Great Britain, and now it is known as neo-colonialism. The concept of neocolonialism is that it has new ways and methods of working with third world elite groups. The major powers give aid but not technology. We don't need fish but they should teach us the method to catch it. Due to these aids and strings Pakistan has been made parasite and dependent on foreign aid.

The founding fathers of Pakistan did not wish to see their country descending into chaos, anarchy, civil war and drifting in the hands of handful of the religious extremists. The father of the nation-Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah underlined the need to frame up foreign policy based on friendliness, good will, non-aggression, non-interference where the honesty and fair play be the norm. The main elements on which the entire foreign policy exists are: promoting ideology, national interest, security, and economic development, friendly ties with neighbors, and support for Muslim freedom struggles and promote national integrity. He reiterated the incessant support for the freedom struggle of the Muslims

worldwide and he was also the staunch advocate of UN charter and principles. “He wanted Pakistan to be strong, stable, moderate and secular” (Abdul Sattar, 2010. P: 09). The ultimate death of a founding father left the nation leaderless and rudderless. The ship of the nation drifted from one extreme to another. There are different periods in the history of Pakistan in which foreign policy was formulated. Those important phases in the foreign policy of Pakistan are given and examined here critically.

## Pakistan’s Foreign Policy at Glance:

**Table: 01**

<b>Governments</b>	<b>Phases</b>	<b>Reasons/Causes</b>	<b>Impacts</b>
Liaquat Ali Khan and Ayoub Khan	1949-1965	Security	Seeking unwarranted alliance
Yahya and Z.A Bhutto	1965-1971	War with India and debacle of the East Pakistan	Brief interlude
Z.A Bhutto and General Zia-ul-Haq	1971-1989	Rising expansionist USSR communism	Client state
Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif	1989-1998	End of Cold War and Nuclear tests by India and Pakistan	Sanctions
General Pervez Musharraf	1999-2008	Downfall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan	Frontline state
President Asif Ali Zardari	2008-2012	WOT (War on Terror)	Frontline state
Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif	2013-Cont..	Drone Attacks and US drawdown from Afghanistan.	Talibanization

Source: *The author*

After the birth of Pakistan on the face of this planet, it was faced with multiple challenges. “The legacies of colonialism, crisis of identity, security and lack of conflict control mechanism” (Jalalzai. P: 15). These challenges were due to unjustified demarcation of boundaries. Jinnah- the founder of the young nation was too much upset over the boundary award. He said, “We got Pakistan moth-eaten, mutilated and truncated. We have to accept this as a civilized nation of the world” (Sherwani, Latif,1980, p: 17). Anyway Pakistan was thrown in to the jaws of religious and communal riots. The biggest migration into Pakistan and undecided fate of the princely states brought not less than trauma, trouble and tribulations. In the aftermath of this biggest mass exodus into a new born state, the then leadership of Pakistan had no other option but to look for security alliance with a major power. “There is no love lost between India and Pakistan” (Mushtaque Ahmed, 1995. P: 82).

## Pakistan’s jumping into the Western bandwagon

Liaquat Ali Khan-the first Prime Minister of Pakistan was invited from USSR and USA. After deliberations and discussions at home it was decided that he has to go for the western bloc. The main reason behind this joining was that the US was a major power after the Second World War; we had good friends in America. In addition to this, America was the

super power-militarily might, economically giant, technological advanced and biggest democracy in the world. The newly born state was weaker and had a security threat from India. Besides that it was in the dire need of economic support in order to develop its own infrastructure. The USSR was a communist state. This communism was aimed at harming Islam and Muslims of Pakistan. Their policies and approaches were imperialistic and aggressive in outlook. After a few decades the vision and farsightedness of Pakistani leaders became true. It was true in a sense that the USSR tried to control Afghanistan-an Islamic state and neighbor of Pakistan, in 1979. Therefore, "Pakistani establishment decided to place faith in the United States of America" (Bajwa, Naseem Farooq. 1996. P: 02).

Keeping in mind the security dilemma in the region, it inked an agreement like SEATO and CENTO with America. Whereas the USSR had an expansionist approach, communism was threat to Islam and Muslims. During the U2 incident with USSR, Pakistan was threatened with dire consequences if its spying plane doesn't go back. The USSR occupied Afghanistan. It was perceived that the USSR might enter into Pakistan territory after Afghanistan. In addition to this, Pakistan's leadership decision reflected the foresightedness in dealing with external powers. Their decision in fact was in the national interest of Pakistan. Moreover, given these and few other reasons, Pakistan opted to join the western powers rather than the Communist bloc.

In 1962, India and China fought a war over the border. The hegemonic designs of India did not stop here. They also attacked Pakistan in 1965. Again in 1971, while supporting to the Mufti Behni of Bengal, Indians were somehow successful in creating trouble for Pakistan's survival and existence. After Ayub and Yahya, Z.A Bhutto took the power in the aftermath of crisis. Z.A Bhutto after Simla agreement in 1972 was successful in returning back 90,000 prisoners of war (POW). It was his diplomatic and political acumen that he brought back those soldiers. Critics blame him for the failure at Simla, placating army and ignoring the issue of Kashmir.

## **The Post Cold War Era**

In fact, the regional scenario was changing rapidly. Disintegration of the USSR in 1991 heralded into the new era of nationalism, birth of new states (CAR's), refugee influx at Pakistan's border, spread of drug and kilashionkov culture. Taliban's took the control of war ravaged Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces. Pakistan was supported and funded by Americans and its Arab allies diplomatically, militarily and financially, to train Pakistani Taliban. These trained and fully equipped Taliban's were supposed to fight against Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

The end of Cold War between USSR and America gave birth to the new centers of power and realignments in the South Asian region. However, India meanwhile prepared herself for the detonation of bomb with the help of powerful states of the world. Indian leadership was of the view that China was their number one enemy. In result of these developments, Pakistan perceived imminent threat from Indian side. Therefore, it also followed the same tests of missiles in 1998. "Indian nuclear tests were motivated; inter alia, by the fact that the nuclear status would pave the way for being the permanent member of the Security Council" (Hussain, Ijaz, 2006. P: 213). These nuclear tests kicked off a nuclear race in the region. America along with other powers left no stone unturned to sanction on Pakistan and India.

## **The Post 9/11 Scenario:**

There came attack on twin towers of the sole super power. Those who carried out these attacks were supposed to have been people belonged to Al Qaeda. They finally took refuge in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban's were asked by American's to extradite what Taliban's termed their special guests. On their resistance, American leadership got enraged with the arrogant attitude of Taliban. In the wake of these developments, Pakistan was asked whether they are with America or terrorists. The former president General Pervez Musharraf took no time in accepting American demand. The reason was that India was too much crazy and they offered American's their services. Pakistan's leadership had taken this decision in the national interest of country.

Due to Pakistan's cooperation with America to launch attack over Afghanistan, Pakistan was supported politically, diplomatically, economically and militarily. However, after a few decades of war against terror, there emerged differences between America and Pakistan over the conduct of war. For most part of the last couple of years, relations between the two allies have remained tense and strained. Beginning with Raymond Davis, the raid on Osama's compound to take out the Al Qaeda chief, the attack on Salala check post and Pakistan's decision to suspend Nato supplies, demanding apology from the US, all sent relations between Islamabad and Washington into a tailspin.

## **Pak-India relations and Kashmir Tangle**

The Indo-Pak history is witness to this fact that India and Pakistan have fought four wars: (1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999). The Pak-Indian relationship have often been characterized archenemies and rosy and sometimes cozy. Since the birth of Pakistan it has faced with multiple security concerns in the region. The Kashmir issue has been haunting both India as well as Pakistan. The major tug of war between two neighbors has been on Kashmir imbroglio. Due to conflict with India, Pakistan can't sit idle or arms folded. Kashmir and terrorism issues need attention, care and proper understanding by Pakistan and India. The incumbent government should rise to the occasion and try to offset simmering disputes.

## **Sino-Pak ties in the changing regional dynamics**

Pakistan and China have been time-tested friends since a long time. Their friendship is portrayed as 'higher than Himalaya, sweeter than honey and deeper than ocean'. Pakistan's major foreign policy preoccupation has been China, India, and the USA. China has supported Pakistan in all testing times. Such as: 1965 and 1971. India and China fought a brief war over border issue in 1962. China, after war with India, took a U-turn in its relationship with its neighbors. It started to develop cordial and friendly ties with Pakistan. In 1963, China made a landmark border agreement with Pakistan. It also supported Pakistan's stand over Kashmir. Currently, the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang during his two day landmark visit to Pakistan pointed out that 'Pakistan-China friendship was planted decades ago nurtured by successive leaders and is now exuberant with abundant fruits'. However, in spite of making toll claims about economic development and friendship, they have deadly failed in making headway on the economic plane. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh opined that China and India can increase their bilateral trade from \$61 billion dollars to \$ 100 billion dollars by the year 2015. Whereas the Chinese trade with Pakistan is from \$12 to \$ 15 billion dollars. The cornerstone of the Pakistan's foreign policy has been China.

Pakistan attaches a great importance to the rising power-China. However, the real facts about their economic development look gloomy and speak volumes about their dismal state of economic activities. Owing to this cloudy picture of Sino-Pak relations, the people of Pakistan asking questions like: Can Pakistan replace America with China or China with America? Anyway, Pakistan has to play its cards more carefully in the context of balance of power in the South Asian region. Pakistan should avoid from putting all its eggs in one basket rather that it must look out for other options like: Russia and Iran.

### **American Drawdown from Afghanistan:**

In the wake of American drawdown of its troops from Afghanistan in 2014 has given the wide currency to debate over the future of Afghanistan and its likely implications for country like Pakistan. Recently Afghan President Hamid Karzai visited Pakistan in which he said that Pakistan has to take specific and real steps in the context of negotiations they have had during meeting. Afghan President Karzai had visited Pakistan only after flurry of criticism over his running of administration and stability in his own country. Afghan president puts onus of his inefficiency over Pakistan. They charge Pakistan that it has been supporting Afghan Taliban. Karzai was of the opinion that “Pakistan was nourishing snakes on its soil” (*TIMES Magazine*, Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013). Pakistan maintains that it has no control over Afghan Taliban. Rather that Afghan Taliban with nexuses to Pakistani Taliban is and has been creating havoc and hell for the society in Pakistan.

However, it is widely held that Americans hasty withdrawal will create a big vacuum in the war torn Afghanistan. It is feared that this self created gap will be filled by regional players. Such a topsy turvy situation will pave the way for tug of war and great conflict of interests not only in Afghanistan but also in the entire region. Before the US pull out from volatile region, they have to revisit their policy like peaceful coexistence and treat Afghanistan as a buffer state; should follow a regional approach; besides taking into account Pakistan’s sensitivities.

During the era of Gen Zia (1977-88) as the circumstances demanded Pakistan took adequate measures in making Afghanistan its “Strategic Depth” keeping in view the Indian hegemonic designs and belligerent attitude. However, with the fast pace of changing times and situation, Pakistan took decision to get rid of this mantra of Strategic hangover and historical baggage. Pakistan believes in the durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistan’s foreign policy also endorses that idea. Afghanistan has to put its house in order before pointing fingers at its neighbors.

### **Conclusion:**

Defense analysts believe that good friendly relations with all countries of the world could be a foreign policy goal but not the policy itself, because a comprehensive foreign policy needed to cope both with threats and opportunities. It is needless to say that Pakistan’s sixty five years foreign policy has remained prone to many trials and errors mechanism. As it is true that foreign policy of any nation is focused on national interests. It serves the purpose of political stability, economic independence, and social dynamism. The domestic problems are posing a grave threat to the security and stability of Pakistan. Internal disturbance heavily impact on the foreign policy. Domestic issues are: extremism, terrorism, good governance etc. Pakistan needs to take radical measures in order to get rid of those problems. If timely action is not taken, it will obviously put a dark spot on the polity of country. Pakistan’s

current leadership must realize the gravity of the problems within the country and be aware of the changing geo-economic realities in the region.

Changing dynamics of Pakistan's foreign Policy are: rejecting the notion of strategic depth in Afghanistan, working to stabilize ties with the US on the basis of respect, dignity and reciprocity. The US need to accept that many of the Pakistanis grievances, concerns are genuine and legitimate, promoting public diplomacy, progress with India that benefit both countries and resolve issues of fundamental importance to both sides, rapprochement with Russia and economic diplomacy.

Pakistan has recently shunned the idea of strategic depth in Afghanistan. "It has moved away from strategic depth in Afghanistan" (Dawn, dated: 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2012.) .This decision has been taken in the interest of Pakistan. Pakistan believes in peaceful, prosperous and stable Afghanistan. According to the current Foreign Minister of Pakistan, "that Pakistan supports Afghan-led solution. And this support should not be seen as interference in Afghan matters." Until or unless the major powers find a logical, durable and reliable solution, taking into account what Pakistan believes, till then peace and stability might remain a pipedream.

The global changes are bringing along with it the change in how to deal and interact with other states. In connection to India, China, and America, Pakistan has begun public as well as economic diplomacy. The benefit of this new trend is in line with changing geopolitical realities in the region. The sacrifices made by the people and armed forces against war on terror must be recognized by our American friends. Disregard of this will again cause frictions in already fractured relations.

Nonetheless, today in our country there is a crying need to revisit and redefine foreign policy in such a way that must improve the image of the country worldwide, and be in the interest of mass public. Dynamic changes are must in our country. Foreign policy makers need to formulate policy independent rather than at the behest of the outside powers. The policy must be brought to parliament forum so that the transparent, free and fair foreign policy could be crafted in the larger benefits of its people. Moreover, the current global trend focuses on the nations, better economic relations than the political hegemonies and point scoring. Pakistani foreign policy makers reorient its ties with other nations accordingly, so that the nation may not fall behind in the growing re-emergence of Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

No doubt, until or unless, farsighted, sincere, and committed leader takes the helm of affairs, we can neither come out of past follies in the making of foreign policy nor we can hope to reach at new global dimensions of foreign policy. If the foreign policy of Pakistan has been passing through winter season, can spring be far behind? Thus, let us try our best in the present times to give a real touch to the proverbial vision of our founding father regarding formulation of foreign policy. The ideal foreign policy of our country is only possible if political will and pragmatic approach is constructed on strong footing.

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