

## Chapter 7

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**Foreign Policy of Pakistan**

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Foreign policy of a state is shaped by three critical elements, its geography, history, and orientations of leadership and institutions that manage its foreign relations. In Pakistani case, like in most states, Ministry of Foreign Affairs has acted in concert with the civil and military leadership in the formulation of foreign policy. Here, it is pertinent to note, as I will illustrate in the following pages that the undercurrents of domestic politics do impact the foreign policy orientation of a state and Pakistani case is no different. This chapter will provide a brief overview of interplay of these factors in the evolution and development of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Geography has and continues to play a vital role in the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy. Locational significance of a state changes with the changing political realities. Pakistan's geostrategic location has made it a country of critical importance from its very inception and even after 1971, the loss of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh that has not diminished. Geography not only shapes Pakistan's foreign policy, but also its defence considerations and strategic outlook. Its vital position in South Asia, with its proximity to the Arabian Peninsula and access to the Horn of Africa and Central Asia, makes Pakistan a strategically attractive and unavoidable state for global and regional powers. Peoples Republic of China (PRC) continues to be a reliable friend and considers Pakistan a window of strategic opportunity. For the United States of America (USA), Pakistan was an important pillar of its Containment policy and bridge with Muslim states of Gulf and Middle East. For Russia, Pakistan remains attractive on three counts; collaboration to combat terrorism, linkages with the Central Asian States, and more importantly it offers access to "warm waters" as Afghanistan gains stability, thus improving the level of trust between the two countries and across the region. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi the emergence of a Hindu militant and a belligerent India as a regional power will surely be contested by Pakistan, and the peace process between the two rivals will continue at a snail's pace.<sup>1</sup>

Geography matters because great power political dynamics and equations are continuously changing. Pakistanis need to ingrain in their minds the gravitational pulls of its geography. Pakistan continues to have strong cultural and strategic partnerships with Iran and Saudi Arabia, for varying geo-strategic reasons. With the growing US- Saudi Arabia strategic cooperation and India- US strategic ties, the pressure

on Pakistan to distance itself from Iran is likely to mount.<sup>2</sup> With the intensification of China-US strategic competition and the prospects of looming New Cold War, the geo-economic and strategic significance of Pakistan is gaining a new ground. The New Cold War is pushing Iran to consolidate and strengthen strategic partnership with China. The recent China–Iran Deal is manifestation of that<sup>3</sup>, while Pakistan has to tread carefully in maintaining a delicately balanced relationship with the US and China. For China, the Gwadar Port (Pakistan) accompanied by Chabhar (Iran) open up unprecedented opportunities for entry into Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. Under these fluid and precipitously changing regional dynamics and great power competition, the critical question is; how will Pakistan charter the future direction of its foreign policy? In the coming decade, as the regional tensions mount and rivalry among global powers to dominate the Indo-Pacific Ocean region intensifies, it is ominous that whichever power reigns over the Persian Gulf will control not only the Arabian Sea but also dominate the Indian Ocean.

### **Brief Historical Overview and Orientations of Pakistani Elites**

Pakistan was born in 1947 and at the time of independence, it had a unique geographical location and was divided into two parts, East, and West Pakistan. Geography provided Pakistan a geopolitical advantage of building relations with Southeast Asia as well as Southwest Asia. On the western side, geographical contiguity to Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey and on the eastern side (East Pakistan) giving the vicinity of Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Pakistan emerged as a pivotal state and the changing dynamics of great power rivalry also helped Pakistan acquire the status of a pivotal state. After the Second World War, the US perceived Communism as the ‘ideological threat’ and designed its foreign policy to contain communist states led by the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> To pursue containment as a foreign policy goal the US sought geographical proximity to states that were on the peripheries of the Soviet Union and China. During this phase from the 1947–1971, Pakistan became an important state in the superpower rivalry between the Soviet Union and the US. This superpower rivalry exacerbated the Cold War and also sowed the seeds of a Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Given the rivalry and Cold War between these two superpowers; the political leaders and the formulators of Pakistan’s foreign policy acted smartly, on one side it aligned with the US and, on the other, strove for seeking entry into the NAM. Thus, in the 1950’s Pakistan joined the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and also

Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). In joining these two pacts, more than supporting the so-called containment, Pakistan's primary objective was to deter the prospects of any threat from India. The 1965 war with India and then eventually breakup of Pakistan in 1971, made both these alliances redundant and subsequently Pakistan left these pacts.<sup>5</sup>

During this period of united Pakistan (1947-71), there were six critical moments that impacted the formulation and orientation of Pakistan's foreign policy. The first was 1954 (joined SEATO and CENTO 1955). The second was 1955 (April) when Pakistan joined the Bandung Conference and was skilful in playing an active role in the nonaligned movement despite being aligned. Third, the Sino-Indian War 1962, in which India suffered a humiliating defeat from China. This provided Pakistan an opportunity to solidify relations with China, whose beginning had been made at the Bandung Conference. Prior to Sino-Indian War, in 1961 Pakistan had begun negotiations with China on demarcation of the boundary between the two countries, however, the Sino-Pakistan Treaty- a boundary agreement was signed in March 1963, in which both sides ceded territory to each other.<sup>6</sup> Fourth, the signing of this treaty marked the beginning of strategic partnership between the two and that strengthened the foundations of China-Pakistan relations. During the September 1965 war with India, China provided incomparable military, political and moral support to Pakistan.

Following September 1965, particularly from 1966 to 1969, Pakistan underwent domestic political turmoil that shook the foundations of its internal politics and foreign policy orientation. In 1970, politically Pakistan was a deeply divided country, whose military was engaged in fighting an insurgency that developed into secessionist movement in East Pakistan. At this critical juncture, Indian policy makers acted shrewdly and signed a twenty-year friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in August 1971, abandoning its long-standing non-aligned policy. Fifth, this treaty had a triggering effect that prompted India to openly support the insurgents—the 'Mukti Bahni' in East Pakistan and thus engineering the breakup of Pakistan in December 1971.

Sixth, the breakup of Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh had a traumatic effect on the psyche of Pakistani people, domestic socio-economic structures, and the politics, institutions and personalities who shaped its foreign policy orientation.<sup>7</sup> The post 1971 Pakistan emerged as geopolitically a much more compact state and began to tilt towards the Muslim world in general and showed stronger affinity for Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and the Organization of

Islamic Conference/ Cooperation (OIC), which was formed in 1969, renamed as Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 1972.

The foreign policy of post 1971 Pakistan underwent significant changes and can be conveniently divided into five eras (1971-2020). In each era, as noted above the formulation and shaping of Pakistan's foreign relations is conditioned by its geography, history and orientations of the leaders and institutions managing its foreign policy. These are manifested through three processes, first the change and continuity in relations with the Great Powers: China, the US and Russia, including the nuclear issue; second, solidarity with the Muslim world; and third, relations with India, inclusive of Kashmir dispute. The eras are the following, discussed one by one in the following pages.

### **National Rejuvenation 1971 – 1977**

The breakup of Pakistan impacted the psyche of the ordinary people; they feared institutional collapse and societal disarray and, for a short while, the existence of 'remaining Pakistan' was considered in jeopardy. Following the breakup of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), became the President (December 1971- April 1973) and, subsequently, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, after the promulgation 1973 Constitution. Bhutto boosted national confidence and rejuvenated the nation-state. The policy makers also realized that building self-sustaining defence capability is essential for preserving the territorial integrity and unity of the state. Under Bhutto's leadership, Pakistan's relations with the Great Powers (the US, Soviet Union, and China) underwent significant transformation. Pakistan adopted a three-pronged foreign policy: 1) Distancing, but not withdrawing or dissociating from the US. Thus, from an ally, Pakistan became a state that sought autonomy and pursued relatively independent foreign policy. 2) Pakistan initiated a policy of mending relations with the Soviet Union—moving away from hostility to engagement. 3) Deepening strategic partnership with China, particularly in pursuing the continuation of the Karakorum Highway (KKH), Taxila/Kamra military complex, and simultaneously extending support to China on diplomatic front (one China policy), Security Council membership etc. Alongside this deepening friendship with China, Pakistan also showed vigour by recognizing the governments of North Korea, German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Vietnam and Cambodia.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Pakistani state manifests

the signs of a budding regional middle power, confident, independent, and assertive in foreign relations.

## **Great Powers and Pakistan**

In the context of relations with the Great Powers, three issues became critical, self-reliance in defence capability, attaining nuclear capability and quest for non-aligned foreign policy. Leadership and policy makers realized that an independent and non-aligned foreign policy demanded strong defence capability. Therefore, Pakistan embarked on building military-industrial complex around Kamara and Taxila and in the post-1971 period China has been vigorous in helping Pakistan build its own defence and security capabilities. In the 1970s China helped Pakistan establish the Heavy Mechanical Complex (HMC) and Heavy Foundry (HF). Later, the Wah Industrial Complex, additional facilities at Gadwal, Sanjwal, and Havalian along with the Heavy Defence Industry (HDI), formerly known as Taxila Heavy Rebuild Factory (HRF), were also set up. In order to strengthen the defence capability and in view of India's pursuit of nuclear ambitions, Pakistan found itself compelled to join the nuclear race.

Here, it is pertinent to recall two significant turning points. First, from 1976 to 1978, France was under pressure from the US to withdraw support for Pakistan's nuclear power plant, which it eventually did in 1978. Second, China stepped in to support Pakistan in developing its nuclear capability.<sup>9</sup> China's support of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program appears to have started in 1976 with exchanges between Mao Zedong and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The US opposed China's policy of aiding Pakistan for the development of "independent nuclear"<sup>10</sup> forces. The US did put pressure on Pakistan through diplomacy and by persuading Pakistani leadership to either abandon or curb Pakistan's nuclear program but with little success.<sup>11</sup> Both the civilian and military regimes in Pakistan deserve credit for showing determination in resisting the outside pressures and pursuing the nuclear program with a sense of commitment and national purpose. In May 1998, following India's nuclear tests, Pakistan also conducted its nuclear tests. Global powers and human rights and peace activists in Pakistan and India did not welcome this nuclearization of South Asia. Yet, significantly, the program continues to enjoy popular support.

The nuclearization of South Asia can be traced from India's nuclear explosion in 1974, facetiously labelled as 'Smiling Buddha', that roused Pakistan's security concerns and sowed the seeds of nuclear

arms race in South Asia.<sup>12</sup> Initially, Pakistan tried to defuse the nuclear arms race by moving a proposal in the UN on de-nuclearization of South Asia. China supported Pakistan's proposal of declaring South Asia as a nuclear-free zone.

The China–Pakistan<sup>13</sup> strategic partnership was further strengthened as Pakistan supported “One China Policy” in the UN. Now it is part of history and public knowledge that Pakistan played a vital role in facilitating US-China rapprochement when Henry Kissinger, American Secretary of State, clandestinely flew to Beijing via Islamabad. The opening up of US–China relations gave Pakistan an opportunity to pursue a non-aligned foreign policy with greater vigor.<sup>14</sup> On the other side, to the discomfort of China and Pakistan, the Indo-Soviet economic and military collaboration continued rising, it got jolted only with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

## **US- Pakistan Relations**

As noted above, the US-Pakistan relations underwent a shift in the early 1970's. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto withdrew Pakistan from SEATO and CENTO pacts. While solidifying relations with China, Pakistan kept diplomatic window open to the US. On the global front, President Richard Nixon was striving to find diplomatic ways to withdraw from Vietnam and showed keenness to open up relations with China. Under these changing great power interactions, Pakistan emerged as a pivotal conduit state for bridge-building between the US and China. The US was disconcerted following India's nuclear test in 1974, as Pakistan also was determined to acquire nuclear power plant from France. Pakistan's nuclear ambitions discomforted the US and that strained relations between the two countries. In 1976, as President Jimmy Carter assumed presidency, he advocated nuclear nonproliferation and promotion of human rights as the key US policy goals. To thwart Pakistan's nuclear ambitions, the US invoked the Symington Amendment in 1977 and, on that pretext; it stopped economic and military aid to Pakistan. Simultaneously, the US mounted pressure on France to back down from providing nuclear plant to Pakistan. Thus, under President Carter, Pakistan–US relations became strained to a degree that it led some to argue that the US prompted Pakistan military to overthrow Bhutto's slumping civilian regime in July 1977.<sup>15</sup>

## **Solidarity with the Muslim World**

Solidarity with the Muslim world and support for Muslim causes has been a fundamental principle of Pakistan's foreign policy. In the post-1971 period, Pakistan not only continued this policy but also began to pursue it with greater vigour and diplomatic skill. It was best reflected in the Second Islamic Summit Conference held in Lahore, on 22nd-24th February 1974.<sup>16</sup> In any difficult situation for the Muslim and the Arab states, Pakistan has been steadfast in supporting them and vociferous in expressing camaraderie. To mention a few, for example, since the creation of Israel in 1948, Pakistan has supported Palestinians right to have their own state and opposed the recognition of Israel—the Suez Crisis (1956), Arab–Israel war (1967), attack and occupation of Al-Aqsa Mosque (1969), the 1973 Arab–Israel war (the Ramadan war) and as, of today, Rohingas and the Kashmiri Muslims, Pakistan has shown solidarity with Muslim societies and states. In some situations, for example, in the case of Saudi Arabia and Jordan, Pakistan has even provided military assistance.

Earlier, in 1964<sup>17</sup>, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey created the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) organization in order to strengthen the cultural as well as economic ties with each other. It was during the late 1960s that the three countries came together for a wide range of research and development projects including: the family planning, oil exploration, transportation and communications, and more. Later, in 1969, when President General Yahya Khan visited Iran, the official joint statements by the two nations emphasized on the close, growing relations between the two countries while also stressing upon the increased level of cooperation as part of RCD and its benefits in the foreseeable<sup>18</sup> future. The RCD continued to grow and expand slowly. However, after the Iranian revolution and social turmoil and political changes in all the three countries its optimal growth could not occur. The RCD still remains a dynamic model of regional cooperation.

In 1969<sup>19</sup>, when a fire broke out at the Aqsa Mosque, it caused a state of panic in the Muslim world. King Faisal, of Saudi Arabia called for a meeting of the Muslim countries to discuss the “vandalism by the Israelis”. King Hassan of Morocco responded by offering to host the summit meeting at Rabat.<sup>20</sup> On 25th August 1969<sup>21</sup>, Pakistan conveyed its concerns to the UN Secretary General on the Aqsa Mosque in the following words:

The feelings of Muslims throughout the world have been deeply outraged and wounded by the fire in the Al Aqsa Mosque, which is their first Qibla and one of the

holiest of Muslim shrines. It would be deplored and condemned by the followers of all faiths in the world. The international community must hold Israel fully responsible for this sacrilegious act. The Security Council should ensure Israeli compliance with its resolutions and observance of the universally recognized principles of civilized behaviour. Pakistan will concert action with other Muslim countries for safeguarding the Muslim Holy Places and for the restoration of Jerusalem. Muslim unity is a paramount necessity at this juncture.<sup>22</sup>

The president of Pakistan was invited to attend the Rabat conference. However, when the Pakistani delegation was informed that an Indian delegation would also be attending the conference, the president of Pakistan insisted that India be denied attendance, otherwise Pakistan will not join. The other participants acceded to Pakistan's demand and India was denied attendance.<sup>23</sup> The Rabat conference led<sup>24</sup> to the formation of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation).

Having failed to take back the territories (Golan Heights and Sainai) that Israel had occupied in the 1967 Arab- Israeli war, Syria and Egypt banded together to retake their captured lands. On 6th October 1973, Syria and Egypt ran into an armed conflict with Israel that escalated into a war.<sup>25</sup> The situation demanded ceasefire and peaceful dialogue. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto showed solidarity with both Egypt and Syria, and recognizing the gravity of the situation, sent a letter to the United Nations (UN) Secretary General reminding the Security Council's role and responsibility and calling for the evacuation of occupied territories according to the UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967. Besides calling for a meeting of the Arab representatives in Pakistan, the Prime Minister, visited Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia to "coordinate diplomatic efforts", and mobilize support for Syria and Egypt.

Four months following the Arab Israeli War of 1973, the Second Islamic Summit was held in February 1974, in Lahore. Among others, Iran and Egypt were the key contenders and Pakistan was chosen to be the host. Pakistan's<sup>26</sup> strong opposition to Israel's expansionist policy and support for Palestinians has been evident over the years. Pakistan has held onto its stance that without reaching a resolution to the Palestine-Israel conflict and the Holy Land being given back to its lawful residents, peace in the Middle East is unlikely to happen.

## **Re-defining Relations with India**

The rivalry, strategic competition, and varied sources of distrust are rooted in the history of independence- the partitioning of British India into two states- India and Pakistan.

A large segment of Pakistani citizens and leaders believe that India has accepted the creation of Pakistan with reluctance and never fully reconciled to its reality. In 1971, when Pakistan broke up many Pakistanis saw and continue to believe it was an act of Indian aggression. The national humiliation, defeat and surrender of the military continue to hurt our national pride. However, under President and subsequently Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan was quick to launch a process of national rejuvenation and mending fences with India. There were four reasons for this. First, with the separation of East Pakistan, a new nation-state, Bangladesh had emerged, so Pakistan had to reconcile with this new reality despite a sense of severe loss. Second, with the loss of East Pakistan, we also lost substantial Hindu minority and new Pakistan was 97% Muslim. The Islamic political parties and the religious groups began to demand greater Islamization and advocated a narrative of national identity wrapped up in religion. Third, besides the loss of East Pakistan, India had also captured some territory in the Pakistani side of Kashmir, which compelled Pakistan to negotiate and demarcate the ceasefire line between India and Pakistan. Finally, India had over 90,000 Pakistani troops and civilians as prisoners of war (POWs) from East Pakistan. Under these conditions, Kashmir dispute and its resolution acquired new urgency for Pakistan.<sup>27</sup>

In 1972, when President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto went to Simla<sup>28</sup> to negotiate peace and terms of withdrawal of Indian forces, he had three broad goals: release of the prisoners of war (POWs), gaining back Pakistani territory that had been occupied as a consequence of the 1971 war, and delaying the recognition of Bangladesh till such time the POWs were returned. During Simla negotiations, both President Bhutto and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, showed tenacity. After prolonged discussions, delays, occasional halts, both leaders showed their negotiation skills and worked out a compromise formula, whereby the two sides agreed that 'without prejudice' to the internationally recognized position of the two sides, the ceasefire line should be declared as the line of Control (LoC). The other issue at hand was the release of the prisoners of war. India desired that it should be discussed and resolved with the participation of Bangladesh, Pakistan did not

to grasp the gravity of the situation.<sup>30</sup> Amidst the nuclear embargoes<sup>31</sup> against Pakistan and the French withdrawal of its uranium processing facility in 1978, Pakistan was keen to ensure the continuity of its nuclear program and was concerned that the Carter administration did not have a strategy to counter the Soviet intervention and also provide financial support for the Afghan refugees. Carter, who had built his foreign policy around nuclear non-proliferation and human rights, found the Pakistani military regime's record on both- dismal. In 1978, President Carter visited India and Iran but refused to stop in Pakistan. He also cancelled the sale of 100 A-7 jet fighters to Pakistan. President Carter invoked the Symington Amendment and discontinued all military and economic assistance to Pakistan. Pakistan's nuclear program became a major irritation for the US and continued to evoke unease among the policy makers, the civil society, and a segment of public intellectuals.

In 1981, as President Ronald Reagan took over in the US, he showed greater vigour and vision in thwarting Soviet intervention and that changed the fortunes of Zia's military regime in Pakistan. Pakistan was declared a "frontline state" that the US could rely on to halt the Soviet expansion in Afghanistan.

Reagan declared the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire' and the Afghan insurgents as 'Mujahedin'—the freedom fighters. Thus began the first Afghan Jihad and Pakistan and US revived and energized the painfully enduring US-Pakistan relationship. Reagan's administration rebuilt a framework of the US-Pakistan collaboration that provided an aid package of military and economic assistance to achieve the policy goal. In 1981, Reagan announced a USD 3.2 billion aid package spread over six years at USD 400 million per year for military purchases, including F-16s, and USD 100 million per year in economic aid. The collaboration between the two had started at a modest level of covert operations. In December 1981, Pakistan was given a six-year waiver of the Symington amendment sanctions. The US- Pakistan collaboration in the Afghan Jihad had worked so well that even before the first aid package expired, Reagan delivered another USD 4 billion package, USD 2.20 billion in economic and USD 1.72 billion in military aid. During the Zia years (1977-88), particularly starting 1981, the US-Pakistan partnership expanded, and Pakistan become the largest recipient of US economic and military assistance, and as a reliable ally in Afghan Jihad, its status changed from a pariah state to a strategic partner.<sup>32</sup>

## **Relations with the Muslim World**

The fall of the Shah of Iran<sup>33</sup> in 1979 led to the making of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini. The Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan further flustered the already divided Muslim World. The Afghan Jihad brought Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt closer under the US tutelage. The Islamic regime in Iran was declared by the US as inimical to its interests in the Middle East and Gulf region. On the other side Iran's Khomeini called the US a "great Satan". The Iraq-Iran war (1979-89) further deepened the gulf in the Muslim World. In Pakistan, the Khomeini revolution also galvanized the Shiite community, which in turn, discomfited the Zia regime. Once the Soviet troops began to withdraw from Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan were found at opposite ends, Iran showing preference for the Shiite dominated Northern Alliance whereas Pakistan stood in favour of the Sunni Alliance of Islamic Parties.<sup>34</sup>

## **Changing Dynamics of Indo- Pakistan Relations**

In 1979, when the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan, India, being an ally, could not oppose Soviet action.<sup>35</sup> Pakistan denounced the Soviet intervention and welcomed the Afghan refugees and mobilized support of the Muslim countries for Afghan cause and indeed kept channels of communications and support open with the US. Focusing on the Afghan Jihad, Pakistan energized a bilateral framework with the US. In supporting Afghan resistance to Soviet intervention, Zia's regime, sensibly, restrained itself from any direct confrontation with the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup>

The year 1984 was eventful for India and Pakistan for domestic politics and for external relations. That year, at the pinnacle of Afghan Jihad<sup>37</sup>, when India and Pakistan had skirmishes in the Siachen Glacier region in Kashmir, General Zia trivialized it and avoided any military escalation. In the same year, the Sikh insurgency in Indian Punjab blew out of proportion and led to the murder of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It aggravated India-Pakistan relations. However, both sides showed considerable restraint and avoided any escalation.

In 1985, the silver lining was the creation of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Its first meeting was held in Dhaka on 7th-8th December, which was presided over by the

Bangladeshi President Hussain Ershad and was attended by the Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi, President Zia-ul-Haq, King Birendera Shah of Nepal, President JR Jaywardena of Sri Lanka, and President Maumoon Gayoom of Maldives. It was decided to establish its Secretariat in Katmandu. Although SAARC's optimal potential as a platform for peace and cooperation has yet to be realized but on occasions it did provide the leadership of the two, India and Pakistan, for informal discourse on bilateral relations.

### **Democratic Dispensation, 1988 – 1999**

During the decade of 1988-99, Pakistan made a painful transition towards the revival of party-led democracy and struggled fruitlessly to institutionalize a parliamentary form of government. The two prime ministers (Benazir Bhutto, 1988-90 and 1993-1996 and Nawaz Sharif, 1990-1993 and 1997-1999) and the military leadership also found it difficult to build consensus on the orientation and direction of the domestic political order and foreign policy goals. With reference to great powers during this period two foreign policy issues became critical, Afghanistan and the emergence of Taliban, and the nuclear program of Pakistan, while uprising in Kashmir inflamed India-Pakistan relations. With the end of the Cold War (1991) Pakistan was confronted with the challenge of reconciling security imperative and reorienting its foreign policy.

On 17th August 1988, Zia died in an unfortunate air crash. His death dampened an era of the US-Pakistan strategic partnership, which had flourished under Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979-88). Zia was discomfited by the direction and outcome of the Geneva peace process, whereby the Soviet troops were to withdraw from Afghanistan. He was of the view that the associated American withdrawal was leaving Pakistan unprotected. With the implementation of the Geneva Peace Accords, (April 1988) the US began to disengage from the Afghan war, but it was disengagement without dismantling the infrastructure that it had built for jihad against the Soviet Union. The religio-political groups involved in jihad were not fully convinced about disengagement. Therefore, the culmination of the Geneva peace process marked the parting of ways between the US administration and the 'holy warriors'.<sup>38</sup>

Following General Zia's death, the military decided to take a back seat and allowed holding of elections. As a result of the electoral outcome, the PPP led by Benazir Bhutto emerged as the winner at the

national level and formed the government as the Prime Minister in 1988. However, in Punjab, Nawaz Sharif, who was Chief Minister, his party Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) remained in majority, thus he retained the chief ministership of the province. The politics of tension and acrimony between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, PPP, and PML-N, lasted for the entire decade and, in the process, proved injurious to the conduct and execution of Pakistan's foreign policy. Despite the conflictual domestic politics, the broader goals of the foreign policy remained the same but underwent transformation of sorts.

### **Changing Dynamics of relations with the Great Powers**

In 1989, as the Soviet military withdrew from Afghanistan, the Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze visited Pakistan in February and offered a package of technological and economic cooperation. The Benazir Bhutto (1988-90) government was not prepared and thus could not avail the offer. This probably was a good opportunity to mend fences with the Soviets. However, it could not be materialized.<sup>39</sup>

With the US disengagement and Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, a new phase began in the development and orientation of the Pakistan-US relations. The US, once again, put on the 'security lens' and perceived Pakistan as supporter of 'Islamic fundamentalism'. In the post-Geneva period, the US not only disengaged itself from the Afghan war, but it also adopted a hostile attitude towards those who persisted in pursuing the 'holy war'. This offers a context to analyse the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan (1994) and subsequently in Pakistan.

During 1989-91, a number of unrelated developments—an uprising in Indian held Kashmir (1989), civil war in Afghanistan (1989-94), dismemberment of the Soviet Union (1989-91), Gulf War (1991), and termination of Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty (1971-91) proved fortuitous for the designers of Pakistan's foreign policy. In January 1991, when the US invaded Iraq, forcing it to withdraw from Kuwait, the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (1990-93) decided to re-align itself with the US led international coalition and that marked the elevation of Pakistan's relations with the US. The turmoil in Afghanistan provided Pakistan's policy makers an opportunity to devise a policy, which acquired the title of 'strategic depth'; thus, Pakistan reshaped its Afghan policy, linking it with

strategic competition with India. On 25th April 1992, the Peshawar Accord was signed between several Mujahideen parties of Afghanistan to come up with an interim government in the country. The Accord recommended that Burhanuddin Rabbani would assume Prime Ministership for duration of four months followed by Gulbaddin Hekmatyar subsequently. However, after the stipulated four months passed, Rabbani refused to vacate the office of the prime minister. On the other hand, Pakistan was discomfited on two counts with Prime Minister Rabbani, for not abiding by the Peshawar Accord but also pursuing a policy of closer affinity with hostile India. With the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan and the US disengagement, the regional states- Iran, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and some of the Central Asian states became active to fill in the void left by Soviet and the US withdrawals.<sup>40</sup> During this phase, restoring order and ensuring stability in Afghanistan became critical. Pakistani policy makers thought that, besides the strategic depth, a stable and friendly Afghanistan could serve as a pivotal transit route for the energy/gas pipelines. Pakistan was keen to assure the Central Asian states and the international community that, if the US were to support Pakistan, it could guarantee the safety of supply routes through Afghanistan.

Rabbani-Hikmatyar bickering caused chaos in Afghanistan and augmented the emergence of Taliban in the year 1994, and indeed by 1996, they were able to gain complete control of the country. Pakistan favoured the Taliban for good reasons. With the Taliban in power in Kabul, Pakistan began to re-engage with the Central Asian states and also pressurized the Afghan government to process the return back of Afghan refugees.<sup>41</sup> Given Taliban's harsh and repressive rule, however, the international community showed little interest in recognizing the Taliban government. But Pakistan continued its support. In 1996 the world was shocked to learn that Taliban have been providing sanctuary to Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan. In 1998, when the US embassies were bombed in Kenya and Somalia, the US alleged that Osama Bin Laden was involved. In retaliation, the US attacked some terrorist bases in Afghanistan as well as Sudan.<sup>42</sup> On learning this, Pakistan<sup>43</sup> approached the Taliban government to hand over Osama to Pakistan, without any success. Despite failure on the diplomatic front, Pakistan continued to support the Taliban government till 11th September 2001. It forsaked Taliban only when the US decided to attack Afghanistan.<sup>44</sup>

## **Paradox of Seeking Peace and Conflict Resolution with India**

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (December 1988 to August 1990) showed some interest in steering the foreign policy of Pakistan. For example, she gestured reconciliation with India, improved relations with the Soviet Union, reshaped bilateral ties with the United States, consolidated relations with Muslim countries and expanded strategic partnership with China.

On assuming power, she initiated a dialogue with India through the fourth SAARC summit that was being held in Islamabad in December 1988. Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and Bhutto<sup>45</sup> met during the summit. Bhutto-Rajiv meeting produced short-lived optimism on restoration of peaceful dialogue between the two countries. The reconciliation process between India and Pakistan led to the signing of three agreements. First, the two signed an agreement assuring not to attack each other's nuclear<sup>46</sup> installations, directly or indirectly. Second, opened up cultural exchange as a means to support cooperation in projects related to art, archaeology, education, and more. Third, avoiding double taxation on income that was being accumulated by international air transport. These three agreements were small steps, but they certainly created the impression that both Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto were ready to forge peaceful relationship between the two countries. However, convulsions of Pakistani domestic politics dampened those prospects.

In October 1990, the Bhutto government was dismissed, and fresh elections brought Nawaz Sharif into power as Prime Minister. He could not build consensus on the direction of foreign policy, particularly on engagement with India and disengagement from Afghanistan. Unending and fruitless Bhutto-Nawaz rivalry led to the removal of Nawaz Sharif government in 1993 and fresh elections brought back Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister but, again, her government lasted barely till 1996, and Nawaz Sharif was brought back to power.<sup>47</sup>

Ironically, during the decade of 1990s both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif struggled to reset the direction of Pakistan's foreign policy by mending relations with India and Afghanistan and could not succeed in spite of becoming prime ministers twice and having opportunities. During the 1990s, despite Pakistan's domestic upheavals, the governments continued to explore ways of opening up the process of peace dialogue with India. The 1990s can be divided into two distinct phases on India-Pakistan peace dialogue process. The first

phase of the dialogue<sup>48</sup> for peace process between the two countries continued for four years from 1990 to 1994. During this period, the Kashmir, and Babri Mosque destruction/Ayodhya temple construction issues scuttled the prospects of peace and dialogue between the two countries. After 1994, there was no dialogue for three years. During these three years, the relationship between the two countries had only worsened. Finally, in 1997, the second phase of dialogue between the two countries began.<sup>49</sup> However, before any significant progress could be made, in the year 1998, both India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests. This stymied any negotiations between the two. When India conducted the tests on 11th and 13th May, Pakistan strongly objected. However, on 28th May 1998, Pakistan, too, conducted its nuclear tests. These nuclear explosions halted any attempts of a peaceful and cordial relationship between the two countries and intensified strategic rivalry. Both India and Pakistan, of course, came under heavy criticism from the international community for conducting nuclear tests.

### **Nuclear Explosions and Kargil**

In May 1998, as India detonated a nuclear bomb, it put enormous pressure on Pakistani leadership. The internal demand and expectation was to explode a bomb; the external pressure was to resist the detonation. The civil and military leadership fostered consensus and on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1998, Pakistan also conducted nuclear tests. The tests did act, as a morale booster for the public, reassuring the people that Pakistan also has nuclear capability and would be able to deter any Indian aggression. The nuclear tests further amplified geostrategic salience of Pakistan<sup>50</sup> and given the uprising in the Indian held Kashmir, the nuclear tests heightened the arms race in South Asia and produced fears of a lurking 'nuclear flashpoint'. The US responded by imposing sanctions on India and Pakistan. Thus, the nuclear tests re-engaged the US in India and Pakistan. The US adopted a quiet diplomacy of encouraging India and Pakistan for bilateral talks, which eventually led to Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Pakistan and the signing of Lahore Declaration 1999.

In Pakistan, political and military leaders were divided on how to press forward in conducting relations with India. Apparently, the military was not fully convinced on the urgency of the peace process. Now there is evidence to suggest that while Indian Prime Minister's visit was on, Pakistan's military was preparing to launch the Kargil operation. The diplomatic fall out from Kargil conflict was huge for Pakistan; it led to a paradigm shift and the US decisively tilted

towards India. At the global level, Pakistan was defamed as an “irresponsible state” and “rogue state”, whose conduct, as a nuclear weapons state, could not be trusted. During July-September 1999 two decisions by the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif: first, to withdraw Pakistani troops from Kargil and second, yielding to the US pressure to withdraw support for the Taliban, widened the gulf between the civilian government and the military and to some extent paved the way for the military’s coup.<sup>51</sup> In October 1999 when General Pervez Musharraf overthrew the government of Nawaz Sharif, trust deficit between India and Pakistan was high, the US-Pakistan relations were fractured, and globally Pakistan was faced with an image crisis.

### **Global War on Terror (GWT) and Globalization, 1999 – 2008**

As General Pervez Musharraf took over, domestic politics and governance were in disarray and Pakistan’s foreign relations with the US were in a state of flux—from safety of nuclear weapons to Kashmir and possible conflict with India looming large in the minds of the US policy makers.<sup>52</sup> However, when the tragic 9/11 attack on Twin Towers in New York happened, the US policy towards Pakistan underwent drastic transformation, eventually evolving into a collection of ironies, in terms of use of rhetoric, proposed objectives and actions taken. First and foremost, 9/11 changed the fortunes of Musharraf’s regime as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had changed the fortunes of Zia’s military regime in 1979.

Pakistan was once again a ‘frontline state’- a pivotal and unavoidable ally. Ironically, it was a grand reversal for both the United States and Pakistan. It began where it had started in 1980— Pakistan. Only the ‘terms of endearment’ had changed, as the war against ‘Soviet infidels’ could not be won without Pakistan; similarly, the ‘Global War on Terrorism’ (GWT) could not be fought without Pakistan- a geo-political necessity. Pakistan’s geographical position became the regime’s lifesaver. Musharraf seized the moment and capitalized on “Pakistan’s support” against the War on Terror. He calmed the anxieties of Americans to potential terrorist attacks. The US reciprocated by glossing over the military, authoritarian character of Musharraf regime and that showed the signs of a paradigm shift in the US foreign policy towards Pakistan. Despite the asymmetrical nature of relationship, both the US and Pakistan were faced with a critical question; would it be a tactical alliance as in the past or a strategic

partnership for the future? With hindsight one can aver, it has remained, a tactical, transactional, and painfully enduring partnership.

Significantly, from 2001 to 2008, the US remained focused on GWT but also facilitated India-Pakistan engagement on Kashmir, remained watchful on nuclear nonproliferation front, and deepened understanding with both India and Pakistan on Afghanistan. Thus, during this era the US-Pakistan relations oscillated between a tactical alliance and a potential strategic partnership.

Here Pakistan-US relations can be analysed in three distinct phases. The first phase began on 20th September, 2001. President George Bush in his address to the US Congress announced his plans regarding the “Global War on Terror” (GWT). He declared that in this war, you are ‘either with us or against us’. The US explicitly demanded from Pakistan three forms of support: logistical facilities, use of air space and Intelligence gathering/sharing. Pervez Musharraf and his government weighed its options and decided to support the US on GWT. For logistical assistance, Pakistan provided four of its air forces bases: Dalbadin, Pasni, Jacobabad and Shamsi (Kharan). Pakistan also gave the US forces access to North and South Waziristan, Hindu Kush, Zhob, Chitral as well as hilly zones between Afghanistan and Balochistan to help assist in surveillance, intelligence gathering, and use of air space.<sup>53</sup> This led to a sophisticated arrangement of intelligence sharing/gathering between the US and Pakistan, and Pakistan agreed to aid North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and International Security Assistance Fund (ISAF) in order to eliminate the Al-Qaeda network from the world.<sup>54</sup>

It is pertinent to note that, while agreeing to provide logistical assistance<sup>55</sup>, Pakistan demanded and secured from the US, lifting of all sanctions imposed by the US on Pakistan under the Glen-Symmington and Pressler amendments. The Glenn sanctions were also waived for India. The waiver of these sanctions removed restrictions in four areas: (a) all economic and development assistance sanctions which included agricultural credits, loans by international finance institutions, commercial bank loans, and Export and Import (EXIM) Bank credits for Pakistan, (b) military sanctions (including Munitions list license and foreign military sales [FMS]) and military spare parts, both official and commercial, (c) revision of some 92 Pakistani entities, involved in nuclear and missile activities, barred in 1998 from buying the US goods, (d) dual use items and high-tech which includes performance computers (HPCs). The lifting of the nuclear related sanctions and democracy related sanctions (section 58) was arguably the most important development in Pakistan-US relations since 1990. It opened

facilitated the penetration of other regional actors in building connections with militant factions in the tribal areas, thus escalating incidence of violence.

During the decade of 1999-2008, Sino-Pakistan relations remained steady, despite a jolt during the Kargil conflict, when China shied away from any mediation between India and Pakistan. The strategic partnership has slowly begun to expand into deeper economic, cultural, and educational ties. In 2002, China and Pakistan started to converse on constructing the Gwadar port. Over the years, Pakistan has continued to view Gwadar port as one venture that is both strategically and economically beneficial.<sup>60</sup> Today, Gwadar is a key component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In 2006, Pakistan and China signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). China was and continues to be an “all-weather” friend.

The third phase began when, in January 2004, President Musharraf and Prime Minister Atul Bihari Vajpayee agreed to meet. As noted earlier, the US policy makers feared that, given India-Pakistan contestation on Kashmir, the two may not stumble into a nuclear war on Kashmir. Therefore, the US encouraged an engagement between the two. The meeting focused around a two-point agenda on Kashmir and cross-border terrorism. Media reports blamed Pakistan for the activities of the militants in Kashmir and Taliban in Afghanistan.<sup>61</sup> Upon joining the US-led GWT, Pakistan had insisted that it was not supporting any militant organizations. However, the 13th December 2001 attack on the Indian parliament, which, was allegedly conducted by the two religious’ groups, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (L-e-T) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Pakistan was put in an embarrassing position. Despite insurgency in Kashmir and rising tensions between India and Pakistan, the US and international community kept pressing Pakistan on initiating a dialogue with India. Pakistan assured the Indian side that it would not allow any militant group to use Pakistani soil for any terrorist activity.<sup>62</sup> In January 2004, on the sidelines of the SAARC meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan and India embarked on what has been called a “composite dialogue process”. Both sides agreed on a framework to discuss and resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir through peaceful means.<sup>63</sup> The Joint Statement was done with considerable degree of behind the-scenes dialogue and prodding and persuasion by the US. India was open about recognizing the role of US as a ‘facilitator’, and that was a major change in the dynamics of US-Indo -Pakistan relations. The dialogue process between India and Pakistan was applauded by the international community and was well received by the public and business communities in both countries, though its sustenance hinged

on how the two sides approached on recognizing and seeking resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

This brings us back to Post-9/11<sup>64</sup> developments, Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan. Pakistan's relationship with the Taliban government has been complex, multilayered, and has gone through convulsions. Before 9/11, Pakistan was the principal supporter of the Taliban government. However, after joining the GWT, Pakistan began to distance itself from the Taliban government. According to Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, while Pakistan agreed to accept US demands publicly, it continued expressing its reservations on a complete break from the Taliban, while negotiating with the US.

Following the Bonn Agreement (2001), Hamid Karzai was installed as president of government in Afghanistan and the international community hastened to recognize his government, deserting the Taliban. The US declared Afghanistan a sanctuary of Al-Qaeda and their supporters, including the Taliban and launched 'Operation Enduring Freedom' to hunt, disrupt and capture them. As a consequence of this policy change, Pakistan came under enormous pressure to not only disassociate from Taliban but also assist in capturing, tracking down and disrupting their terror network. Following the bombings by the US air force and army on the Taliban hideouts and targets, the Taliban, and their accomplices, increasingly rushed into FATA region of Pakistan. In 2002, as Pakistan launched its military operations, Pakistan was careful in not targeting Afghan Taliban sanctuaries, as Taliban were predominately Pashtun and that could have had backlash in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.<sup>65</sup> Subsequently, and particularly after 2003, as Pakistan intensified military operations against Taliban, their remnants and their accomplices, and captured and hunted many, the frequency of terrorist acts and retaliation also escalated in Pakistan. The US and the international community demanded from Pakistan to 'Do More'- to curb, hunt, capture and dismantle terrorist networks.

It was under increased terrorist attacks and tensions with the US on GWT that General Musharraf made an error of judgement by unceremoniously removing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, which triggered the 2007 Lawyers protests, and developed into a movement demanding the resignation of Musharraf, and calling for fresh elections in the country. The restoration of political parties, assassination of Benazir Bhutto (December 2007) and in its wake, the elections in 2008 brought the Pakistan People's Party into power. Asif Zardari became the president and Yousuf Raza Gillani was elected Prime Minister of the country.

## **GWT and Uncertainty, 2008- 2020**

The year 2008 was transformational for both domestic and foreign policy orientation of Pakistan. The lawyers' protests (2007), as noted above, paved the way for democratic transition in Pakistan. Significantly, prior to installation of civilian government, the US policy towards Pakistan also showed signs of new direction. On 5th May 2008, John Negroponte, US Deputy Secretary of State, made a policy statement on Pakistan at the National Endowment for Democracy, stating, "More than ever [America's] national security depends on the success, security, and stability of Pakistan...we recognize that our fate—that is, our security, our freedom, our prosperity—is linked to the fate of the people of Pakistan".<sup>66</sup> In July 2008, Senator Joseph Biden (currently President of the US) and Senator Richard Lugar introduced the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2008, aimed at providing a comprehensive social, education and economic partnership policy framework with Pakistan, thus strengthening democracy building in Pakistan. On 6th September 2008, Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the President of Pakistan. The GWT was at its climax, while Pakistan's relations with the US were under strain. This was the moment when the U.S. had begun devising new strategies to combat terrorists who increasingly attacked NATO and U.S. convoys and soldiers in Afghanistan.<sup>67</sup> As a result, the Afghan-Pakistan borderland was perceived as the epicenter of terrorism by American policymakers. This illustrates how on occasions, in Pakistan, domestic politics gets entwined with the foreign policy of the country.

While the newly installed PPP government was still struggling to consolidate power and comprehend the dynamics of changing regional geo-political environment and establish its grip on foreign policy, the US began to push Pakistan on three demands; provide greater support and access in logistics, revive dialogue process with India, and hunt and mutilate Taliban in Afghanistan. While, for Pakistan, economy and energy crisis were two pressing challenges, for the US, GWT and encouraging India-Pakistan engagement were the key concern. Prioritizing national need and interest, President Zardari chose to visit China in October 2008 and broached the issues of expanding nuclear energy and financial assistance programs with the Chinese leadership.<sup>68</sup>

The PPP government was still trying to grasp the complexities surrounding Pakistan's foreign relations when its foundations were shaken by the Mumbai attacks in November 2008.<sup>69</sup> Pakistan struggled to develop a coherent response and determine the causes, while India

and foreign media were quick to blame Pakistan. The relationship between India<sup>70</sup> and Pakistan worsened after the attacks. The rising tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad prompted intervention by the international community, especially the US.<sup>71</sup> India was vociferous in calling Pakistan a 'terrorist state' and demanded that Pakistan should stop extending support to the entities such as, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET) in Kashmir. Pakistan tried to convince India of its non-involvement in Mumbai attacks, and Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani by appearing on CNN-IBN (an Indian channel) tried to assure India that Pakistan will fully cooperate with India on hunting down the culprits and indeed pleaded for re-starting the dialogue<sup>72</sup>, but to no avail.

In March 2009, President Obama unveiled the broad contours of this new relationship with Pakistan in his Af-Pak policy document, which coupled Pakistan with Afghanistan; this bracketing with Afghanistan was not generally well received in Pakistan.<sup>73</sup> Most Pakistanis felt that it was unfair to compare the two infrastructurally, institutionally, economically, and politically, as Pakistan was in much better shape. Nevertheless, Obama's policy was geared towards deepening and expanding relations with Pakistan. The policy document explicitly stated that the US "must engage the Pakistani people based on our long-term commitment to helping them build a stable economy, a stronger democracy and a vibrant civil society".<sup>74</sup> In 2009, Senators Lugar and John Kerry, in the U.S. Senate, presented a newer version of this bill, the Kerry-Lugar Bill. Once President Obama signed it on 15th October 2009, it became law. Pakistan continued to have reservations on Af-Pak.

The Af-Pak document and Kerry-Lugar Bill were two significant policy initiatives of the Obama presidency that did set the tone for redirecting the future thrust of US-Pakistan relations. This was emphasized and pursued through frequent and regular visits from both US and Pakistani officials. While these measures were meant to improve confidence and build trust in the short term, they did lead to more institutionalized cooperation agreements, improving and stabilizing relations between the two countries.

The relative stability and continuity in US-Pakistan relations was once again jolted in 2011, due to a series of events.<sup>75</sup> In January 2011, a CIA contractor, Raymond Davis, shot two civilians in Lahore. In May, the American Navy Seals raided a compound in Abbottabad where Osama bin Laden was found residing, to the shock of many Pakistanis. Apparently, the government of Pakistan did not know about it. On this violation of national sovereignty, the people were appalled, and the government and the Intelligence agencies were found clueless.

Speculations became rife in the media as to how much the government knew or did not know about the raid. In November, US-led NATO forces launched an attack on two check posts of the Pakistan military in Mohmand agency. This attack resulted in twenty-four Pakistani soldiers being killed. Pakistan demanded an apology from the US, but it refused to oblige. In retaliation, Pakistan shut down Ground Lines of Communications (GLOCs)<sup>76</sup>, which was used to send essential supplies to NATO and ISAF forces deployed in Afghanistan. To pressurize further, Pakistan now insisted that the US evacuate the Shamsi airbase (Balochistan) immediately. Despite this pugnacious behaviour and bitterness, the two countries never completely cut off their diplomatic ties and painfully endured relations to find a common ground for reconciliation. In July of 2012, the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, broke the ice and phone called her counterpart, Pakistani Foreign Minister, Hina Rabbani Khar, and formally apologized on the loss of lives from the US attacks on military check posts. Following this telephonic apology, Pakistan restored the NATO supplies via Pakistan. The US also restarted the aid, which was suspended following the 2011 incidents, and Pakistan received USD 1.1 billion for counterinsurgency training and equipment.<sup>77</sup>

This trend towards steady improvement got additional boost in 2013, when the US<sup>78</sup> Secretary of State, John Kerry visited Pakistan, the two countries agreed to resume the “Strategic Dialogue” to develop a more “comprehensive partnership”. During the same year Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited the US, which led to confidence building and, in January 2014, strategic dialogue paved the way for energy, trade and economic investment agreements. In 2015, the US Secretary of State John Kerry and Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, held the fifth Ministerial meeting in Islamabad. Both sides agreed to strengthen processes of combating terrorism and the US agreed to enhance trade and provided USD 250 million to help rehabilitate the “temporarily dislocated persons (TDPs)” as a result of Zarb-e-Azb.

In May 2015, President Ashraf Ghani visited Pakistan, the two countries agreed to cooperate on intelligence sharing; Pakistan also became a facilitator for dialogue between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban.<sup>79</sup> During the year considerable progress was made on tripartite peace negotiations among Pakistan, Afghan government, and the Taliban.<sup>80</sup>

As noted earlier, Pakistan’s relations with China have remained solid and strategically stable and strong. As part of bilateral arms transfer, Pakistan and China also joined hands to develop a fighter jet for the Pakistan Air Force. This fighter jet is known as the JF-17

(Thunder) and the first of its kind was built in China in 2009.<sup>81</sup> In the past three to four decades, the relations between China and Pakistan have expanded from security to trade, educational exchanges, infrastructural and economic development. This is a positive trend and likely to deepen further.<sup>82</sup> The bilateral trade between Pakistan and China has risen from USD 5.2 billion to USD 15 billion in 2010. The Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao<sup>83</sup> visited Pakistan in 2010. Beijing agreed to provide Islamabad over USD 300 million for the repair of Karakorum Highway, which was damaged because of landslides and flooding.

The initiation and launch of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by the Chinese President Xi Jinping (2013) has given new meaning to geopolitics and geo-economics in the global world order. It has opened up new vistas for expanding and deepening China- Pakistan partnership. In that spirit, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of the pivotal components of BRI. Pakistan's joining the CPEC under the BRI holds key importance for initiating connectivity as well as trade relations with SAARC countries, the Association of South-East Nations (ASEAN), the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). In other words, CPEC has spurred the geo-strategic significance and the middle power state status of Pakistan. Invoking a 2000-year-old history that China shares with Central Asia, Eurasia and other parts of the world, President Xi Jinping has been persistent in conveying that the BRI, including the CPEC, aims to revive regional connectivity through infrastructure development, trade, and investment in industry from which development dividends can be shared across the region. The CPEC offers Pakistan an opportunity for both economic and human development. Projects in the CPEC are estimated to be in the range of USD 46 to 62 billion, around 17 per cent of the country's total GDP. Through the CPEC, a network of road and communications infrastructure will be developed spanning over 3,000 kilometres from the city of Kashgar in China to Pakistan's south-western most tip, Gwadar. It will augment the geo-strategic location of Pakistan in the Persian Gulf and also in the Arabian Sea, connecting and providing China access to the rest of South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. In addition to infrastructure development, there are three key elements to the CPEC: the development of the Gwadar port, investments in the energy sector, and the creation of industrial zones, both in western China at close proximity to Pakistan and within Pakistan as well.<sup>84</sup>

China's BRI and Pakistan joining the CPEC has not been well received by the Trump and now even the Biden administration in the

US. In 2017<sup>85</sup>, President Donald Trump launched a frontal attack on Pakistan, in an undiplomatic language, alleging that Pakistan has been harbouring terrorists, syphoned off aid from the US and tweeted made “lies and deceit”. Trump administration persisted with undiplomatic rhetoric and continued to pressurize Pakistan on several fronts, Pakistan felt humiliated and upset. Pakistan did not lose patience and responded diplomatically that, for our country, financial aid or material assistance from the US is low priority, Pakistan demands mutual respect and trust. In January 2018<sup>86</sup>, once again the US suspended security aid to Pakistan. The Foreign Office was quick to respond, calling the act “counterproductive”. Pakistani officials felt that the US Afghan policy lacked coherence and clarity and was withering but it blamed Pakistan instead for its own failure with regard to Afghanistan. In 2018, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, visited the US and met officials of the Trump administration to discuss the whole gambit of relations with the US. He also showed discomfort on growing US- India strategic partnership, and raised fingers on India’s meddling in Afghanistan, which was proving harmful for Pakistan in maintaining peace and security within the country as well as its surroundings.<sup>87</sup>

In 2018 the US made a tactical policy shift and besides dismantling terrorist networks, it added another rider, that Pakistan should also facilitate opening up of the peace process and dialogue with Afghan Taliban.<sup>88</sup> In order to help, Pakistan took necessary steps such as, releasing a prominent Taliban representative Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in 2018.<sup>89</sup>

In 2019, the White House recognized Pakistan’s efforts in bringing the Taliban on the table for peace negotiations with the US and welcomed Prime Minister Imran Khan’s role in it.<sup>90</sup> The US also emphasized that it hoped that Pakistan would play a key role in encouraging as well as convincing the Taliban to complete the peace talks with sincerity. Despite this, a host of issues regarding Afghanistan have been the reason for friction as well as cooperation between the US and Pakistan. For instance, if the United States expresses concern and shows ‘strategic interest’ in Afghanistan for not harbouring terrorists that proceed to attack the US and its allies, Pakistan will have the same concerns for its territory not being attacked from there. This, however, does not change the support that Pakistan shows towards the Afghan Taliban, which largely springs from Pakistan’s unwillingness to let Indian influence succeed in Afghanistan.<sup>91</sup>

To conclude, the foregoing analysis is a broad survey of the key foreign policy determinants and how these have shaped Pakistan’s foreign policy goals and influenced its role in international relations.

In the post -1971 Pakistan, geopolitical significance and pivotal position of Pakistan has continued to shape its foreign policy with the changing dynamics of great power interactions in the region. The US-Soviet Union/Russia rivalry intensified the Cold War and, in this struggle, Pakistan, from its early phase, aligned with the US. This alliance further deepened, as Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and then, in the post-2001 period, the US reliance on Pakistan became essential to combat GWT. Despite restraints and insipid leadership at times, Pakistan has been adept in leveraging its policy goals. It enhanced strategic relations with China, improved relations with Russia and sustained painfully enduring tactical, strategic, and more often than not, transactional relations with the US.

During this present decade, if Pakistan can manage its domestic political agenda build consensus on domestic politico-economic goals, then the formulators of Pakistan's foreign policy can build a meaningful relationship with all three great powers- China, the US and Russia. Cementing, sustaining, well and indeed and expanding partnership with China and circumventing any New Cold War holds the promise of a manageable and rewarding relations with the great powers.

On relations with the Muslim world and in particular with reference to Saudi Arabia, Gulf States, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, the formulators of Pakistan's foreign policy would need to update and revise its traditional stance on solidarity with the Muslim world, as a matter of principle to adapting a pragmatic approach, according to the changing realities. Pakistan must avoid involvement in any potential rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as the regional dynamics seem to convey. Retaining cordial, friendly relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, Pakistan can deepen economic and strategic ties with Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and Central Asian States.

Finally, pursuing peace with an increasingly belligerent and militaristic India would remain the biggest challenge for Pakistan's foreign policy makers. India and Pakistan are nuclear powers and Kashmir continues to be not only a nuclear flashpoint but also a festering wound on the conscience of Pakistanis and Muslims across the world. The plight and human rights violations of the Kashmiris at the hands of Indian military are unbearable. Finding an acceptable resolution to the Kashmir dispute could consume Pakistan's diplomatic energies and economic resources and, that is, where formulators of Pakistan's foreign policy will need to mobilize their diplomatic skills to persuade the great powers (China, US, Russia) and the Muslim world to help restore a peace process dialogue with India that guarantees protection of Kashmiris rights and resolution of the dispute. That is a

daunting task. However, regional peace and stability is dependent on it for better and brighter future of the younger generation across the region. To convert these challenges into an opportunity, the onus is on the country's leadership to build domestic national consensus on economic and strategic policies and align these in the pursuit of a foreign policy that solidifies the status of Pakistan as the middle power states.

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28. For the text of Simla accord, see, *Pakistan Horizon*, No. 3, Vol, XXV, 1972, 117-118.

29. For a detailed discussion on this point, nuclear issue, and US approach towards Pakistan, see Kux, *The United States and Pakistan*, 238-242, also, 249.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

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