

Foreign Policy of Pakistan

No state can live in isolation as individuals cannot live in isolation, they interact with each other. Similarly the states can not live in isolation and they will have to interact with other states that are there in the international system and they also interact with international organizations and other entities that play important role in the World affairs. You interact with the international system in order to project, protect and promote your national identity and national interests. Economic interests or economic needs also emphasize the need of working with other states and other actors in the international system. A large part of economic system relates with the financial and technical assistance that a country gets from outside. Similarly, issues of peace, security and stability in the international system cannot be promoted unless different states work together, discuss their issues and decide about the ways and strategies to deal with the situation.

Pakistan is an active and an important member of the international community. It interact with other states at different levels, one level of interaction is **bilateral which mean that you interact or you deal with or you develop relations with individual countries** for example we can talk about Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, Iran and so on and this is bilateral level. There is another level of interaction which is called as **multilateral level of interaction; Pakistan interacts with more than one state**, this interaction is generally with reference to issues for example the issue of peace in the international system is something that has to be addressed along with a large no. of other states. Multilateral level of interaction also includes interaction with the international organizations. The third level of interaction is through the United Nations and other international organizations.

Pakistan is an active member of the UN and in addition to UN Pakistan is a member of several other international and regional organizations. You act as the member of these organizations within the framework, basic principles and charter of these organizations and work with others for the achievement of goals of these organizations like the goals of the UN, goals of the organization of **Islamic Conference** and that is another level that you function and operate within the framework of an international organizations and bodies.

The next level is the non official, in addition to official channels govt to govt communications there is also a non official side where ordinary citizens play an important role or various groups, various organizations play a role for example, lot of Pakistani students go abroad for education, they also go abroad for visits and other purposes, Pakistanis are settled abroad and they are doing jobs. All these peoples are not officials of Pakistan but what they do, how they live, how they interact with others affects a nation's role at the international level. Similarly there are different organizations **NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS** they also interact with similar Non-governmental organizations else where in the World. So when you talk of Pakistan's relations with the rest of the World you talk of the both official and non official level where individual, citizens and their groups interact with each other.

Now we will highlight some of important features of Pakistan's foreign policy that is within the broad outline that I have given we will talk about certain principles which have influence on Pakistan's foreign policy or you can say that these are certain goals which Pakistan wants to achieve.

Features:

1. protection of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan

The 1st feature of Pakistan's foreign policy is protection of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan, primary concern of Pakistan and for that matter every state is its security and survival. This is for key concern of Pakistan's foreign policy and Pakistan is in a position all the times to conduct its foreign policy and domestic affairs on the basis of its national interests and goals as defined by the leadership. Therefore attention has to be paid to the security affairs. When we talk about security there are couple of things that have to be kept in mind.

First, for security diplomacy is must that you interact with other states and develop relations with other states and you try to deal with the issues with peaceful means through negotiations by opening different channels of communications, so we can say that diplomacy is compulsory for the security of a country. For security we also need strong trained and professional and equipped military although problems and issues should be resolved peacefully through diplomatic means but there are some situations where non peaceful method are resorted too, when some other state may impose aggression on you then you need strong military to deal with the situation.

Along with that you also need security arrangements to deal with the conditions. In addition to military you need all kinds of security arrangements. An integral part of security system is social mobilization. You involve people in security and defense of the country because modern warfare is not limited to the border areas or to particular or specific battle fields. When modern war breaks out all parts of the country becomes the battle field because you can use Air Force, a country can use missiles and a lot of other ways therefore a perfect defense requires that the military must enjoy the sport of the nation as a whole. If nation as a whole stands up to the security challenge only then you can meet with the threats to security and sovereignty of your country.

Pakistan's relations and problems with India have greatly influenced its foreign policy options and security issues, but we will talk about Indo-Pak relations later on.

2. Relations with all states:

The second feature of Pakistan's foreign policy is the relations with all states. Pakistan maintains its relations with all kinds of states irrespective with the type of the political system; these states are adopting that is not Pakistan's concern, so Pakistan maintains relations with all kinds of states and the relations at the international level are maintained on the bases of common interest, what you need is certain areas of common interest. Those commonalities of interests are the bases of good relations. So if you have more common interests between Pakistan and other country relations would improve. Another thing that influences the relations is the relationship must

provide some benefits; some rewards to both sides, relationship cannot be one way traffic. Let's say if Pakistan has relations with Iran then that relationship must be viewed by the both govts as serving their interests. So the basic criteria for Pakistan's friendly relations with other countries is that there must be some common areas identified to work together and this relationship must be of use to benefit to both the countries. Another consideration which affects Pakistan's relations is non interference with each others affairs. Pakistan does not interfere in the internal domestic affairs of all the states with which it has relationship. Similarly Pakistan will not like other states interfering in it domestic and internal affairs.

Another related principle is problems should be resolved peacefully, amicably and through negotiations so that the problems are either resolved or kept within manageable limits.

Relations with Major Powers:

The nature of relations with major powers has varied. Here we can briefly mention Pakistan's relation with the major powers to have an idea of the fact that Pakistan conduct relationship with different and diverse types of countries.

United States

First let's say few words about United States, Pakistan-US relations have been generally friendly, smooth and cordial but problems developed from time to time and there are issues on which Pakistan and United States do not see eye to eye but despite differences they still work together for example some areas of differences are on nuclear issue, this is an area on which Pakistan and the United states have differences and there are certain other issues on which both countries have reservations like arms sales, Kashmir etc. However there are common grounds and shared areas on the bases of which Pakistan have maintained smooth relationship with the United States.

China

Since the 60s China proved to be a reliable trustworthy and consistent friend over the periods of decades and despite the fact Pakistan and China have different domestic political systems, their domestic priorities are different but still they maintain very close cooperation and interaction. China had provided affective and consistent economic assistance to Pakistan and it had also contributed to the industrial development of Pakistan and in this context it is also important to note that China had also made significant contribution to Pakistan's Defense Industry and it also extends support on diplomatic forums and on Kashmir Chinese policy is sympathetic to Pakistan's position and emphasizes a peaceful resolution of the disputes which Pakistan has with India. Pakistan supported China diplomatically in the UN and the Outside. Both the countries have developed close relations in the areas including science and technology, environment and trade.

Russia:

With Soviet Union before 1991 and now Russia Pakistan has working relations with Russia but frequent problems remained unsolved during the period of Cold War. Within the South Asian context Russia had always been remained favorable to India at the cost of its relations with Pakistan. On Kashmir issue, her attitude has been ranged from pro India to neutrality.

Despite these kinds of problems Pakistan and Russia have working relations and they regularly interact and try to expand the areas of common interests. Some economic relations strengthened the bilateral relations when Russia provided economic and technological assistance to Pakistan in establishing steel mill in Karachi. Russia had also helped Pakistan from time to time in oil exploration. In post-Cold War era, Pakistan is trying to normalize the relations. The recent tour of President Musharraf is a step towards this goal.

So what we have seen here is that Pakistan has maintained relations with different countries on the bases of sovereign equality, mutuality of interests, shared goals and consideration which give benefits and rewards to both sides.

3. Economic Issues, Trade, Investment:

The third important feature of Pakistan's foreign policy relates to economic issues, trade and investment. These issues are important all the times even in the past but now for the last 10 years economic issues, trade and investment have gained a lot of importance in the foreign policy of all the countries and Pakistan also pursued that objective. For that purpose Pakistan deals with other countries and several other international financial institutions in order to obtain economic assistance for its development projects and to obtain loans which Pakistan gets from international financial institutions and also from the states. International financial institutions may be described as World Bank, IMF, Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank. The issue of trade that is Pakistan goods go abroad is also important then investment Pakistan has been striving hard for attracting international investment for different kinds of industrial and other projects in the country because if you obtain international financial support and investment it speeds up the process of industrialization and economic development.

Issue of transfer of technology to Pakistan, issue of favorable trade that the trade is done in a manner that it provides advantage to Pakistan and also humanitarian assistance. Sometimes there are natural calamities in Pakistan and these calamities are in rest of the World. So Pakistan extends technical and humanitarian assistance to other countries when they face problems like Earthquakes, Floods and other problems. Similarly when Pakistan is confronted with these kinds of problems it also seeks assistance from abroad.

Economic relations are both bilateral and multi-lateral. Technology, trade, access to market and investment are keys to the cordial relations between the two countries.

Pakistan is also trying to establish its relations with other countries on the same footings.

4. Muslim States:

The 4th feature of Pakistan's foreign policy is its relations with the Muslim states. Pakistan attaches great importance to developing relations and the ties with the Muslim States. It is one of the basic principles of Pakistan's foreign policy but we are not going to discuss this relationship in detail at this stage. We will devote one of our lectures to this aspect that is Pakistan's relation with Muslim World and in that lecture we will discuss this topic in detail. Being Islamic country, Pakistan has been always in search of good relations with the Muslim countries. It has been a central point in the ideology of Pakistan even before Independence.

5. Solidarity with the Developing States:

The next feature of Pakistan's foreign policy is solidarity with the Developing States. Pakistan is a developing country, trying to develop itself in all fields of life in economic development in industry and in other areas. Pakistan had been concerned with the issues and problems of the states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As it is developing countries it is well aware of the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, disease, famine, civil strife and border disputes, refugees and drug addiction. Pakistan has always cooperated with the developing countries so that they can meet with the problems of underdevelopment and poverty. In fact if you examine and study the social, economic and cultural problems of states of Asia and Africa and Latin America then you will find a lot of common problems, problems of underdevelopment, poverty, illiteracy, civil strifes, inter state wars, human migration and the problem of refugees. These are the issues which are common in varying degree in the developing World. So Pakistan works at two levels to deal with this kind of issue.

1. Pakistan raises these kinds of issues or the problems of the developing countries at the international forums like the United Nation and other forums and urges the industrialized and developed countries to contribute in solving these problems in the developing World because peace cannot be maintained in the international system if half of humanity is suffering with these kinds of problems. Stable peace can only be possible if globe as a whole prospers and develops. The disparity in the international system is reduced. This is one level on which Pakistan is working for the developing countries.

2. When Pakistan urges other developing countries to collaborate with each other that is Cooperation among developing countries in the areas of economic and technical assistance, trade and diplomacy. They can help and cooperate with each other for addressing the problems that I have highlighted. Since problems are common then you should learn from each other experience, you could also transfer technology from one developing country to an other. I give you an example, in Pakistan literacy rate is low but there are developing countries where literacy rate is very high, you can take the example of Sri Lanka a neighboring country of Pakistan where the literacy rate is over 90 percent therefore Pakistan can learn from their experience that how they have dealt with this problem and then Pakistan can also adopt the methods suitable to our conditions to raise literacy. Similarly Pakistan can help other country in the areas where Pakistan had made progress. So the issue is that for improving your conditions you should not look towards the developed and civilized World but you should also make effort and take certain steps to deal with the situation.

6. United Nations:

Next feature of Pakistan's foreign policy relates to its membership with UN and other international bodies. Pakistan joined the UN as a new member on Sept. 30, 1947. And since then it has commitment to the UN Charter and is an active member in UN bodies. One Pakistani has served as the president of the UN General Assembly and Pakistan has been a non permanent member of the UN Security Council for 6 times and the latest membership for the SC is the year 2003-04. In addition to the UN Pakistan is also a member of other international bodies and within UN Pakistan has been active in different specialized agencies and organs of the UN. An important role played by Pakistan relates to Peace Keeping Mission. It has been a part of UN Peace-Keeping Missions all over the world. UN sends its forces to different countries for peace keeping where conflicts exists and UN doesn't have its own forces and then the UN sends the forces from different member countries and Pakistan has been contributing in this mission by sending its Army, Police personnel and others for UN peace keeping operations. Even today Pakistani army and other official are serving under UN to different countries which help Pakistan to build its image at the international level.

7. Anti-Colonialism, Right of Self Determination:

Next feature of Pakistan's foreign policy is Pakistan's support to anti-colonialism and opposition to the racial discrimination that existed in the past and sometimes it now manifest in certain parts of the World. As we have been suffering from colonial rule after our independence and we always support decolonization for Asia and Africa. Pakistan always opposed racial discrimination in the World for example Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) suffered from apartheid or racial discrimination where white minority was ruling the black population by force and Pakistan was the part of the global effort to eradicate this kind of injustice and ultimately Rhodesia became an independent state with majority rule under the name of Zimbabwe, We can talk about South Africa where similar case existed, Namibia another case of racial discrimination etc. So in all three examples majority rule was established and Pakistan supported UN effort to promote the principle of equality and opposed racial discrimination.

Pakistan has always supported right of self determination for the people and the areas whose political future is not as yet settled. It is not merely in Kashmir that Pakistan supports the right of self-determination, Pakistan supports the Palestinian cause their national rights and their freedom, Pakistan had also supported very strongly Algeria's freedom movement because that was another case of right of self-determination. In Afghanistan when Soviet troops marched in December 1979 and occupied Afghanistan. Pakistan opposition to Soviet occupation and support to Soviet resistance to Soviet occupation was part of its commitment to the right of self determination and the presence of foreign troops in a country.

8. Arms Control:

The next feature of foreign policy is Arms Control. Pakistan is not in favour of spread of weapons and arms in the international system because it diverts resources to non development purposes and if arms and weapons proliferate there is a danger of wars and conflict therefore Pakistan had joined global efforts to control weapons and that control. Pakistan believes that

arms races to be controlled, resources to be used for human development. It has spoken for this cause in the UN and the outside. It opposed arms race not only at the superpower level because arms race in the past was at the super power level, I am talking about the period before the 1991 when Soviet Union and United States were competing so there was an arms race between them. But also at the regional and bilateral levels both for conventional and non conventional arms. It stressed that the root causes of arms races should be curtailed. Pakistan's point of view is that the best way to control arms proliferation is to address the issues, the causes the factors which contributes to arms race, the factors that lead a country to obtain weapons and to engage in wars, conflicts and similar actions

9.Nuclear Policy:

Pakistan has been a great champion and supporter of peaceful uses of nuclear technology although Pakistan has acquired nuclear manufacturing capabilities in the mid 80s but Pakistan avoided making weapons. Pakistan avoided nuclear explosions despite having the knowledge and capability of processing Uranium, Plutonium. It was only for the sake of deterrence and reaction to India's nuclear explosions. Pakistan was of the view that this technology should primarily be used for economic development and for betterment of the people rather than for making weapons. Pakistan exploded nuclear weapons in May 1998 in response to India's nuclear explosions. India's nuclear explosions created strategic imbalance in the region. Pakistan decided to rectify and remove this imbalance there at the end of May 1998 Pakistan exploded its nuclear explosions. So had India not exploded the nuclear devices Pakistan would not have gone for that strategy. Even after its explosions Pakistan talked about nuclear restrained regime in this region that India and Pakistan should agree on basic principles for control of conventional weaponry and also containment of Nuclear weapons proliferation.

There are other principles which are important for the foreign policy of Pakistan and which Pakistan emphasizes from time to time. One important area pertains to Pakistan's relation with India.

Relations with India:

The most problematic area of Pakistan's foreign policy is the relationship with India. The relations have been strained since independence in 1947. There were periods of normal relations but generally it remained troubled marked with distrust and conflict changes of tough statements have been the features. This bitterness caused three major wars in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971. Then there have been Limited conflicts and troubles at Loc (Line of Control) along with propaganda war are common practices. This relationship is of major concern due to which Pakistan have security measures. Tension escalated when India mobilize its troops on the Pakistan although at the end of this year most of the troops were withdrawn but even in the year 2003 there were problems in the relationship and despite Pakistan's effort to start negotiations to diffuse the tension and start dialogue India was not forthcoming. India was not ready to open dialogue. But now there is a hope of bilateral dialogue on Kashmir and other issues. It is the only way to bring prosperity and peace for 1.2 billion people of South Asia.

Kashmir:

Another feature pertains to Pakistan policy on Kashmir. Main source of conflict and bone of contention between India and Pakistan is Kashmir dispute. Pakistani position on Kashmir is that this is a disputed territory and its future should be determined in accordance with the resolution of the UN passed in 1948-49 which calls for a fair and free plebiscite to be held in Kashmir so that the people of Kashmir decide their political future. Despite Pakistani efforts India doesn't want to hold plebiscite there. But India has declared it as integral part of it. Instead of having plebiscite, she has blamed Pakistan for initiating insurgency in Kashmir since 1989. India claims that it is engineered by Pakistan and equates this with terrorism.

Control of Terrorism:

The last feature of Pakistani foreign policy is control of terrorism. Since year 2001 Pakistan is an active participant in global efforts to contain terrorism. The issue of terrorism gained prominence as the UN took up the issue and passed a resolution calling up the states to cooperate for controlling terrorism. Pakistan has been cooperating with the international community for the control of terrorism because Pakistan itself has been a victim of terrorism. Pakistan withdrew support to Taliban and joined hands with the international community. She also acted against terrorists within Pakistan, as it was victim of terrorism & sectarianism.

Pakistan believes that to eradicate terrorism first the root causes of the problem should be removed.

Concluding Remarks:

Pakistan has been an active member of the international community. It has been balancing the diverse pressures through diplomacy, engagement and compromises for the betterment of humanity. This concludes our discussion on important features and highlights of the foreign policy of Pakistan.