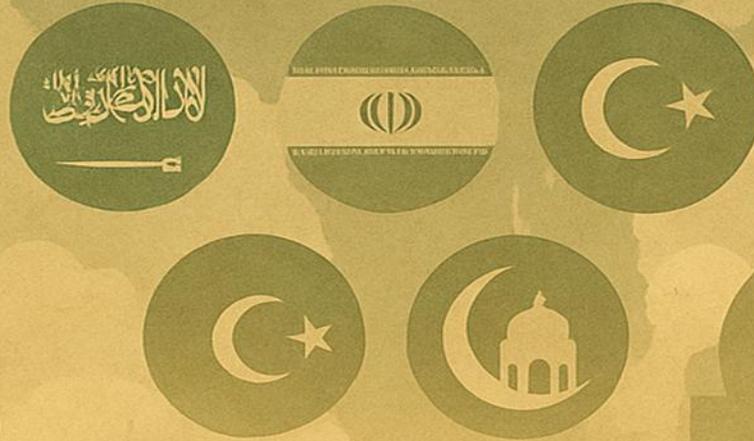


Pakistan and the Muslim World

By Ahmad Malik



The Song of the Stormy Petrel (Excerpt)

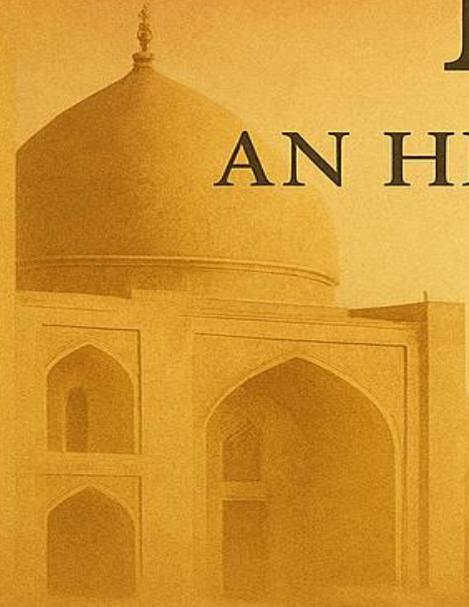
By Maxim Gorky (1901)

- Above the grey plains of the ocean,
- The **stormy petrel** proudly soars,
- Like a black lightning bolt,
- **Piercing the clouds** with his wing.
- Between the storm and the sea,
- He cries with joy, For in the storm he **feels the breath of freedom,**
- And the power of struggle.
- Let the storm **rage stronger still!**
- The stormy petrel is **not** afraid of thunder,
- Nor the roar of the sea,
- For he knows —The storm brings **victory!**



IRAN

AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW





Iranian History: A Brief Timeline

- **Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BCE):** Founded by Cyrus the Great; first Persian empire, stretching from Indus to Greece.
- **Seleucid & Parthian Eras (330 BCE–224 CE):** Successors after Alexander; Parthians checked Roman expansion.
- **Sassanian Empire (224–651 CE):** Last pre-Islamic dynasty; centralized power, Zoroastrian state religion, fought Byzantium.
- **Islamic Conquest (651 CE):** Arab armies toppled Sassanians; Persia became part of the Islamic Caliphate.
- **Safavid Dynasty (1501–1736):** Established Shia Islam as state religion; major cultural renaissance.
- **Qajar Dynasty (1794–1925):** Decline amid European interventions; lost territories to Russia & Britain.
- **Pahlavi Dynasty (1925–1979):** Reza Shah and his son modernized Iran; aligned with the West, oil-driven economy.
- **Islamic Revolution (1979):** Ayatollah Khomeini led overthrow of monarchy; established Islamic Republic.
- **Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988):** Costly conflict defined early Islamic Republic; shaped defense and foreign policy.
- **Modern Era (1989–Present):** Post-Khomeini consolidation; nuclear program disputes, sanctions, regional influence in Middle East.

Naser al-Din Shah Qajar
in 1881. Photographed
by Nadar

The 4th Shah of Qajar Iran.

He was assassinated.

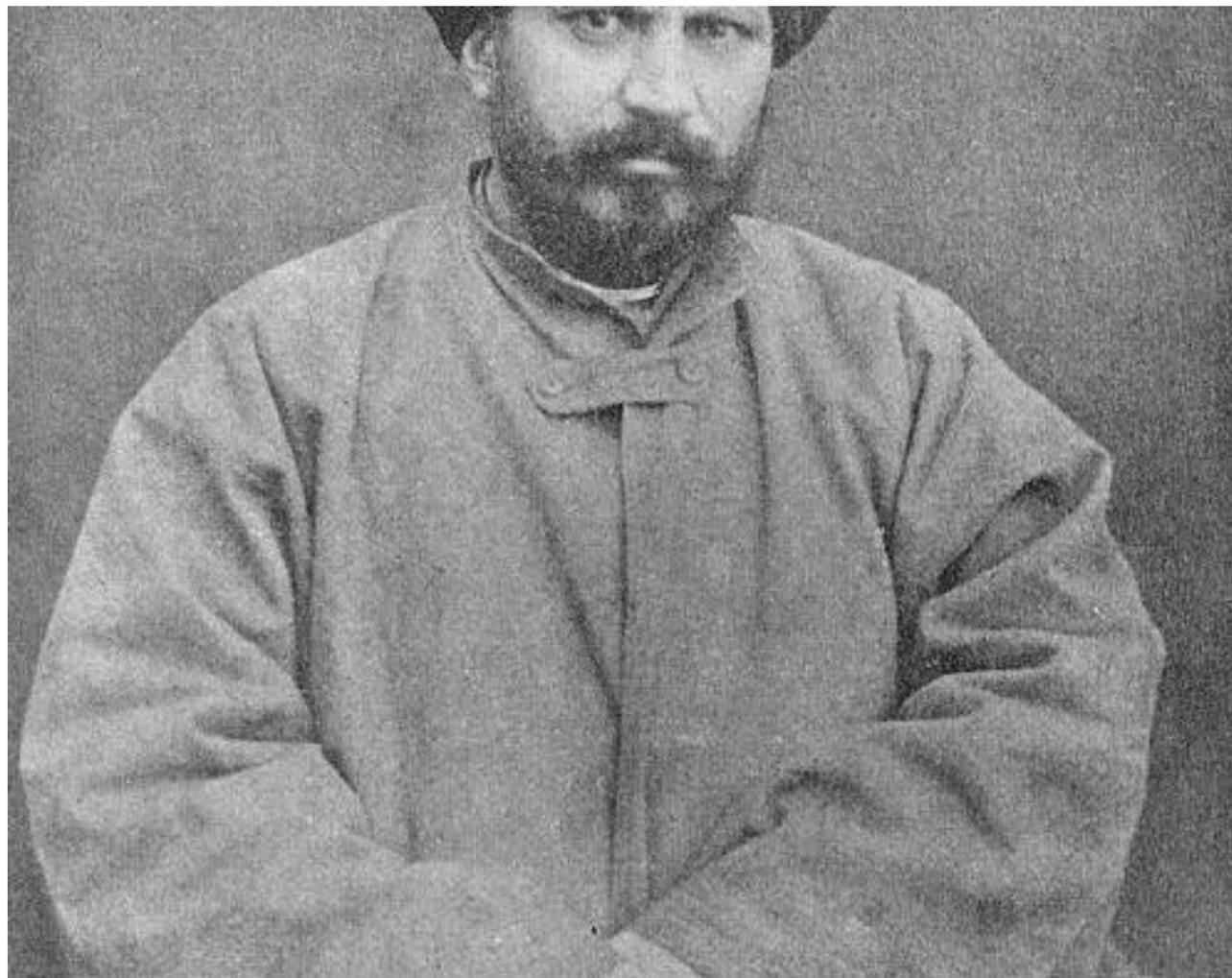




**Mirza Reza Kirmani.
He assassinated the
Qajar Shah in 1896**

Al-Afghani

Pan-Islamist



**The English people believe me a Russian
The Muslims think me a Zoroastrian
The Sunnis think me a Shiite
And the Shiite think me an enemy of Ali
Some of the friends of the four companions have believed me a Wahhabi
Some of the virtuous Imamites have imagined me a Babi
The theists have imagined me a materialist
And the pious a sinner bereft of piety
The learned have considered me an unknowing ignoramus
And the believers have thought me an unbelieving sinner
Neither does the unbeliever call me to him
Nor the Muslim recognize me as his own
Banished from the mosque and rejected by the temple
I am perplexed as to whom I should depend on and whom I should fight
The rejection of one makes the friends firm against its opposite
There is no way of escape for me to flee the grasp of one group
There is no fixed abode for me to fight the other party
Seated in Bala Hisar in Kabul, my hands tied and my legs
Broken, I want to see what the Curtain of the Unknown will
Deign to reveal to me and what fate the turning of this malevolent firmament has in store for me.**



"Family in Iran before Islamic Revolution"
type post



THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION: WHY IT HAPPENED, WHAT IT CHANGED



The Iranian Revolution: Basic Information

- **Why it Happened**

- **Authoritarian Monarchy:** The Shah (Mohammad Reza Pahlavi) ruled with repression, backed by the secret police (SAVAK).
- **Westernization & Inequality:** Rapid modernization created cultural alienation and widened wealth gaps.
- **Religious Opposition:** Ayatollah Khomeini mobilized Shia clerics and masses against secular reforms.
- **Foreign Influence:** Perception of U.S. domination through oil, military, and politics fueled anti-imperialist anger.

How it Unfolded

- **1978 Protests:** Nationwide strikes, student movements, and clerical mobilization escalated.
- **Exile Leadership:** Khomeini coordinated resistance from abroad (Paris).
- **Collapse of Monarchy:** Shah fled in Jan 1979; regime lost legitimacy.
- **Return of Khomeini:** February 1979 – Khomeini returned and declared an Islamic Republic after a national referendum.

Outcome

- **End of monarchy** → birth of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- **Shia Islam became central to politics and governance.**
- **Shift in global geopolitics:** Iran became a revolutionary power challenging U.S. and Western influence.

IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL



What is the Iran Nuclear Deal?

- **Formal Name:** Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
- **Signed: July 14, 2015, in Vienna.**
- **Parties Involved: Iran + P5+1 (US, UK, France, Russia, China + Germany) and the EU.**
- **The JCPOA was designed to limit Iran's nuclear program to peaceful purposes in exchange for relief from international sanctions.**

Key Provisions

- **Uranium Enrichment Cap:**
 - Iran limited enrichment to 3.67% purity (well below weapons-grade 90%).
 - Stockpile capped at 300 kg of low-enriched uranium for 15 years.
- **Centrifuge Reduction:**
 - Iran reduced centrifuges from 20,000 to 5,060 first-generation IR-1 machines at Natanz.
- **Fordow Facility:**
 - Conversion of Fordow (underground site) into a research center; no enrichment for 15 years.
- **Inspections:**
 - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) granted access to Iran's nuclear facilities.
- **Sanctions Relief:**
 - UN, EU, and US sanctions (oil, banking, trade) were lifted, unlocking \$100 billion in frozen assets and re-opening trade.

Data & Examples

- **Oil Exports:** After JCPOA, Iran's crude exports jumped from 1 million barrels/day (2015) to 2.5 million barrels/day (2017).
- **GDP Growth:** Iran's GDP grew 12.5% in 2016 (World Bank), largely due to oil sales.
- **Compliance:** IAEA repeatedly confirmed Iran's compliance until the US withdrawal.

Challenges & Withdrawal

- **2018:** US President Donald Trump withdrew, calling JCPOA *“a bad deal.”*
- **Sanctions were re-imposed** → Iran resumed higher enrichment (up to 60% in 2021, close to weapons-grade).
- EU tried to salvage deal, but enforcement weakened.



Current Status Of the Deal

- **Deal's Demise:** The JCPOA was a 2015 agreement designed to limit Iran's nuclear program.
- **US Withdrawal:** The US withdrew from the deal in 2018.
- **Iran's Violations:** Iran responded by violating its nuclear limits, expanding uranium enrichment to near weapons-grade levels (60%) and deploying more advanced centrifuges.
- **Expiration:** The deal's formal provisions are set to expire by the end of 2025.
- **Lack of Trust:** A major obstacle to reviving the deal or negotiating a new one is a significant deficit of trust between the US and Iran.
- **Regional Instability:** The ongoing [Gaza war](#) has further complicated diplomatic efforts.
- **UN Concerns:** The UN has urged renewed diplomacy, warning that the JCPOA's objectives remain unmet, and calls for a political solution.
- **IAEA Limitations:** Due to reduced cooperation, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has limited ability to verify Iran's nuclear activities

What's Next???

- **Expiration of UNSCR 2231:**
- The UN Security Council resolution that endorsed the JCPOA also expires in October 2025, which removes a key enforcement tool.
- **No Easy Path:**
- While the UN and others advocate for a diplomatic path, the path to a new agreement is challenging.
- **Escalation Risk:**
- The situation presents a risk of escalation, and a new, stronger agreement is considered essential but difficult to achieve
- **However, Iran has declared its termination.**



PAKISTAN-IRAN RELATIONS



Introduction: Pakistan–Iran Relations

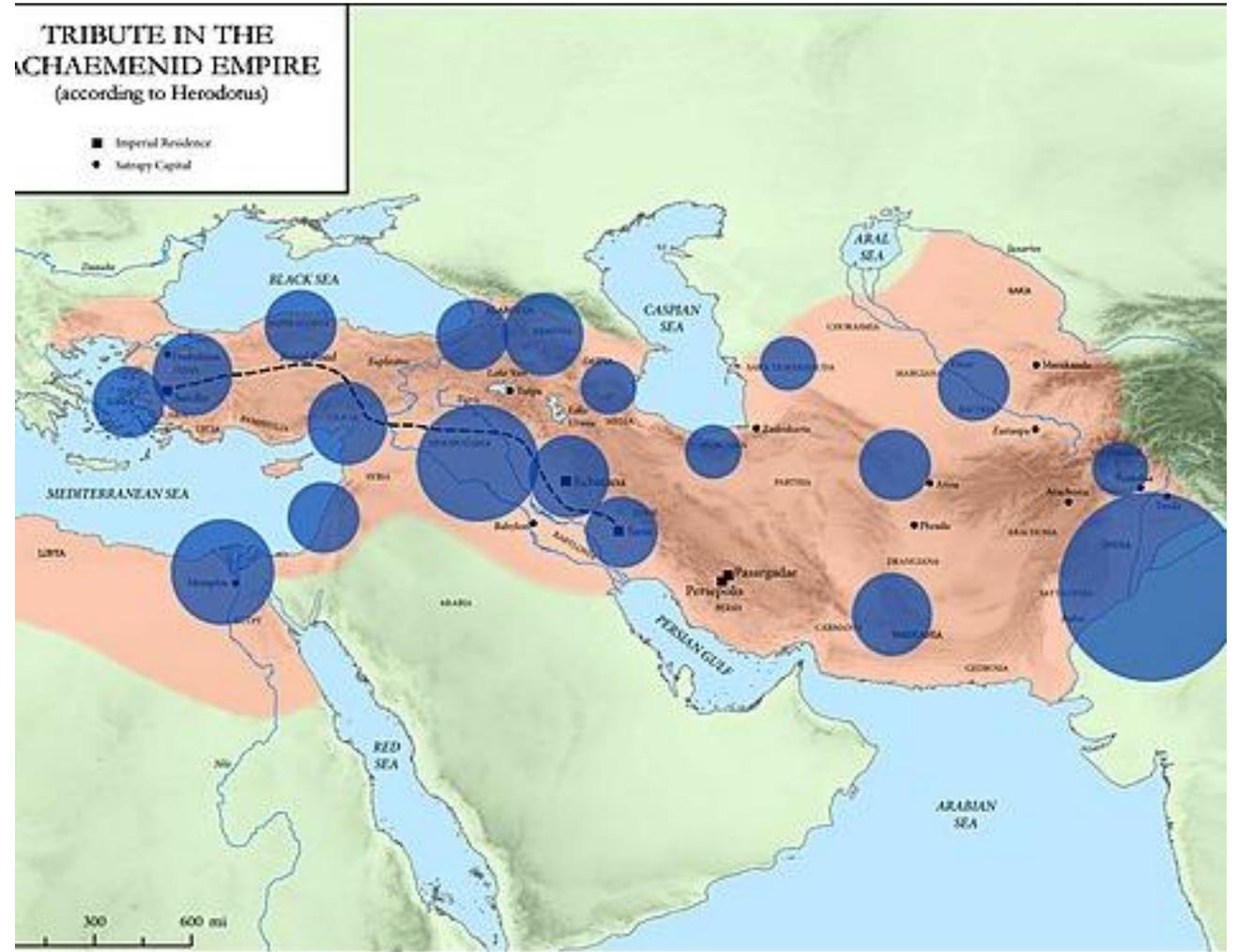
- **Crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East**
- **959 km shared border** through Balochistan–Sistan region
- Persian cultural influence and religious pilgrim exchanges
- **Baloch insurgency, militancy, and porous border issues**
- Trade = \$2B; smuggling fuels border economy
- Iran supplies electricity to Gwadar, Makran coast
- **Shaped by Saudi–Iran rivalry and US sanction**

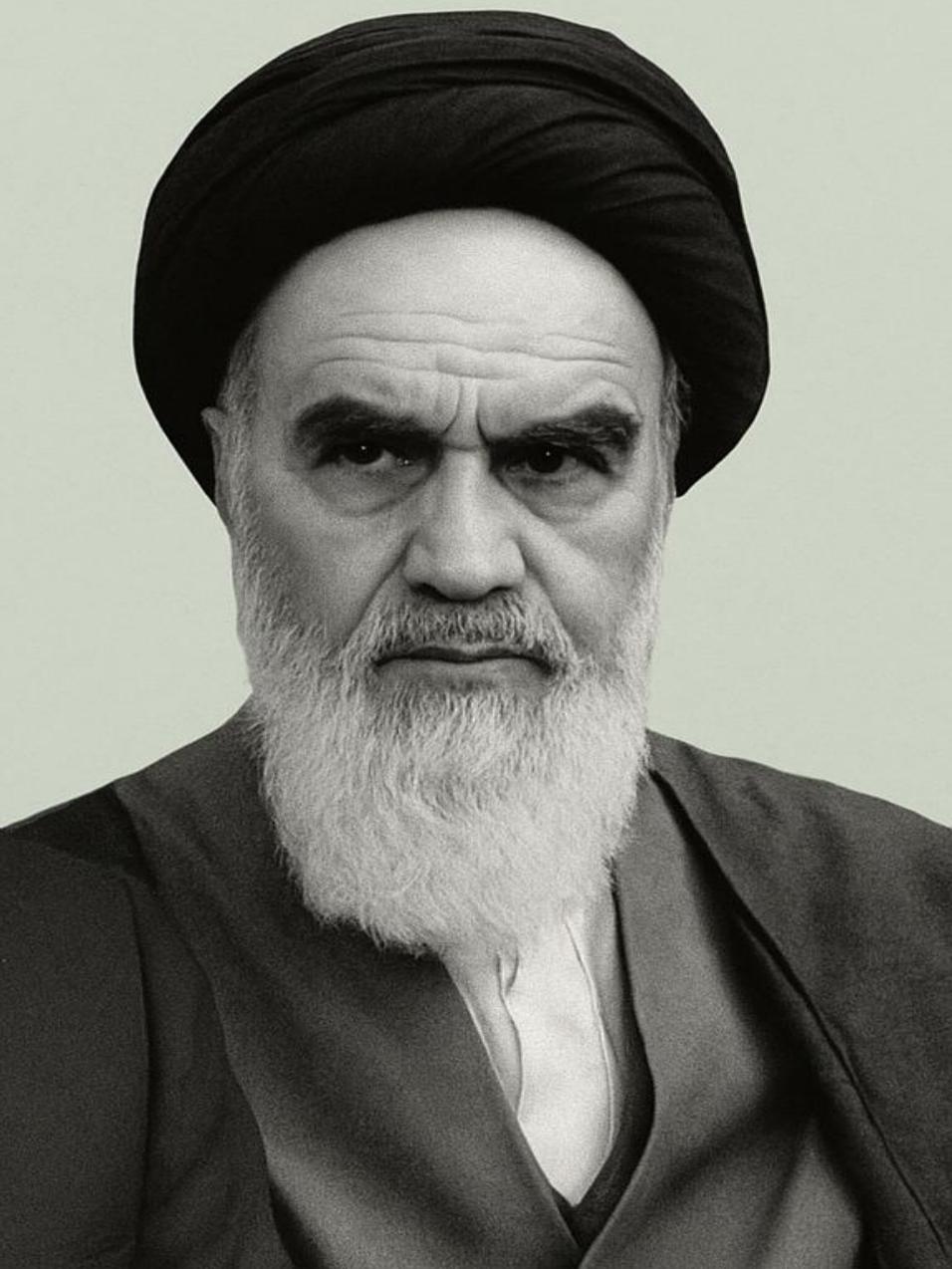
Historical Roots of Pakistan–Iran Linkages

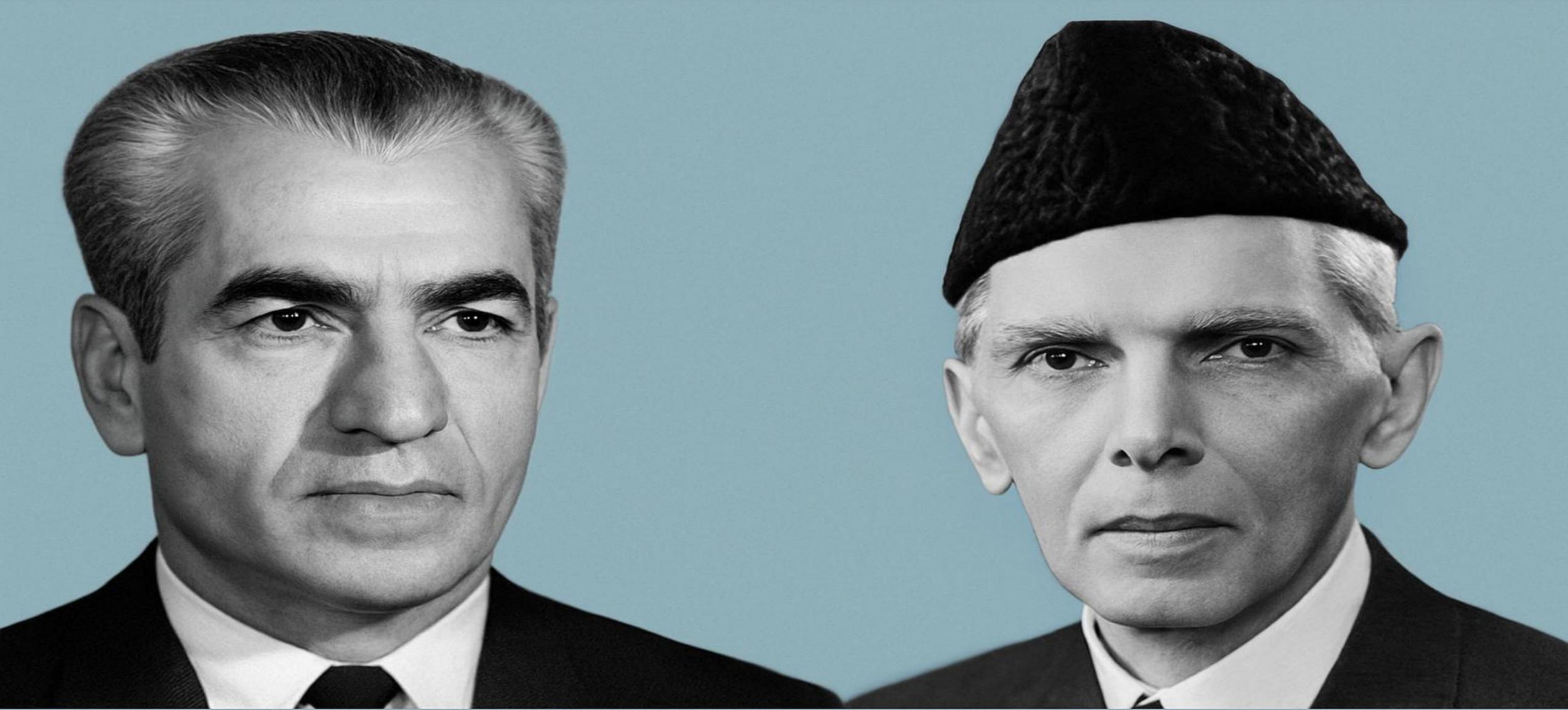
- Pakistan bridges Iranian Plateau and Indian Subcontinent
- Shared rule under contiguous Eurasian empires historically
- **Achaemenid Empire spanned from Balkans to Indus**
- **Darius** conquered Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- Persians referred to Indus region as **“Hind”**

MAP

Map showing the distribution of Achaemenid tax revenues, according to the Greek historian Herodotus







1947 to 1971

Early Recognition & Cordial Beginnings

- Iran first to recognize Pakistan (**Aug 1947**).
- **Shah Pahlavi: first state visit (March 1950)**.
- **Friendship Treaty signed** (May 1950) – trade & security clauses.
- Iran offered oil/gas on easy terms; **MFN trade status**.
- Jinnah emphasized ***Muslim world solidarity***, Iran central partner.



Most-Favored Nations (MFN) Clause

['mōst 'fā-vərd 'nā-shən 'klōz]

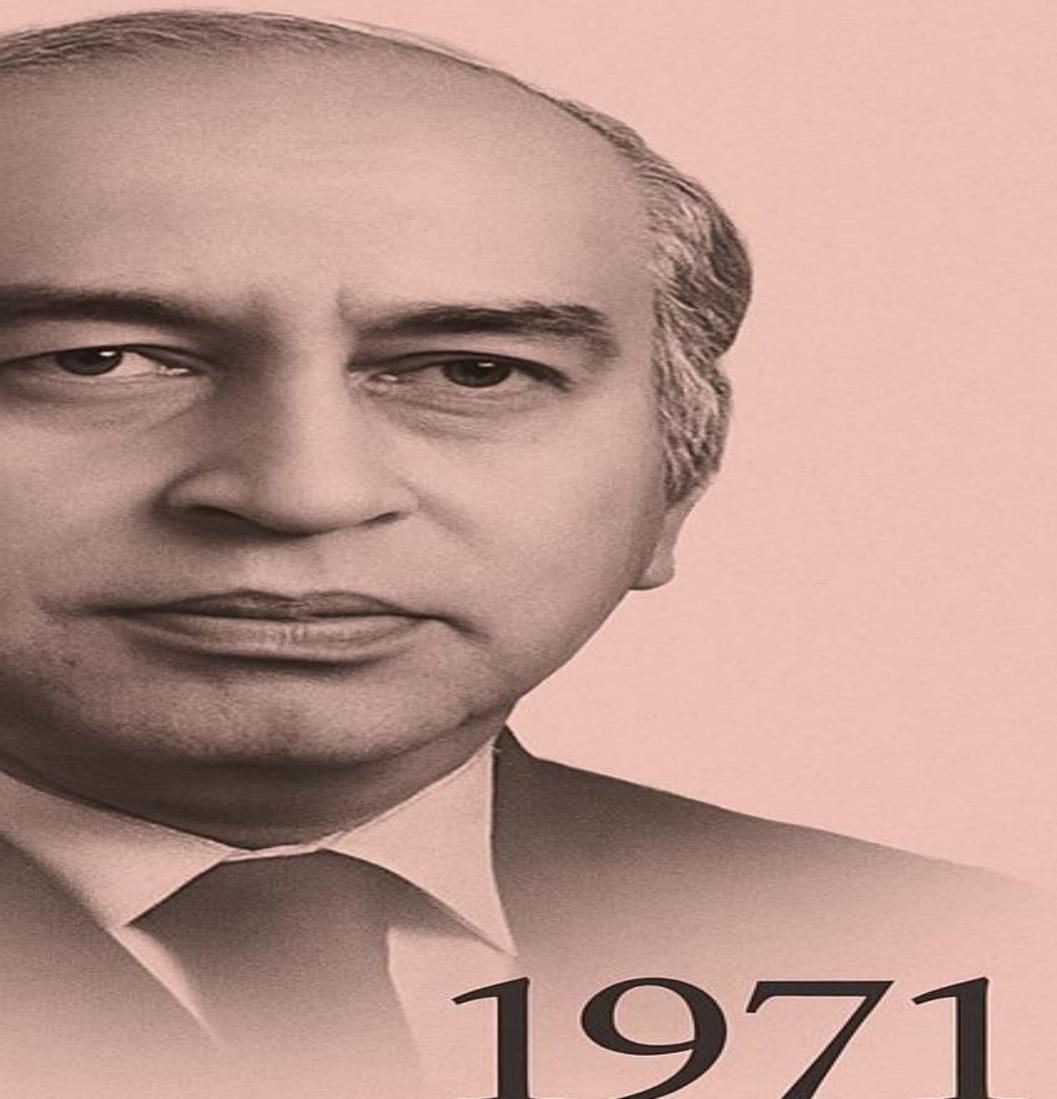
A requirement that countries providing a trade concession to one trading partner extend the same treatment to the others.

Cold War Alliances & Military Cooperation

- **Both joined US-led CENTO (1955) with Turkey.**
- Iran supported Pakistan in 1965 war: **nurses, 5,000 tons petroleum.**
- Reported transfer of **90 Sabre jets via West Germany.**
- Militaries cooperated to suppress Baloch insurgency.
- India believed Iran **“blatantly favored”** Pakistan (Abdul Sattar).

Critical Analysis & Strategic Significance

- Partnership shaped by Cold War alignment with US bloc.
- Iran sought Pakistan's support vs **Arab nationalism (Nasser)**.
- Pakistan relied on Iran during US aid suspensions.
- Sattar: Iran was Pakistan's ***"natural ally"*** until **1979**.
- **Husain: illustrates Pakistan's recurring dependence on external patrons.**
- **Key lesson: Alliances gave short-term security, not long-term autonomy.**



1971 to 1979

Iran's Support in 1971 Crisis

- Iran backed Pakistan during 1971 Indo-Pak war.
- Shah Pahlavi: ***“We are 100% behind Pakistan”*** (Paris interview).
- PM Hoveida: India guilty of ***“violence and force.”***
- Fear: breakup of Pakistan might fuel **Kurdish, Baloch separatism** in Iran.
- **Iran supplied arms, equipment, diplomatic cover against India.**

Post-War Reassessment in Tehran

- **Dec 1971 dismemberment shocked Iran's leadership.**
- **Questions in Tehran:** could West Pakistan survive as a viable state?
- Sattar: Iran worried about **regional instability and spillovers.**
- Husain: **Pakistan's reliance on Iran reflected its search for anchors after defeat.**
- **Iran concluded Pakistan's stability = Iran's own border security.**

Balochistan Insurgency & Iranian Aid (1973–77)

- **Armed insurgency erupted in Balochistan, 1973.**
- Shah feared spillover into Iranian Sistan-Balochistan.
- Iran provided:
 - **30 AH-1 Cobra helicopters**
 - **\$200 million financial aid**
 - Extensive intelligence & hardware
- **Both states blamed Indian hand in unrest; India denied.**
- By 1977, uprising largely suppressed with Iranian help.

Development Aid & Regional Role

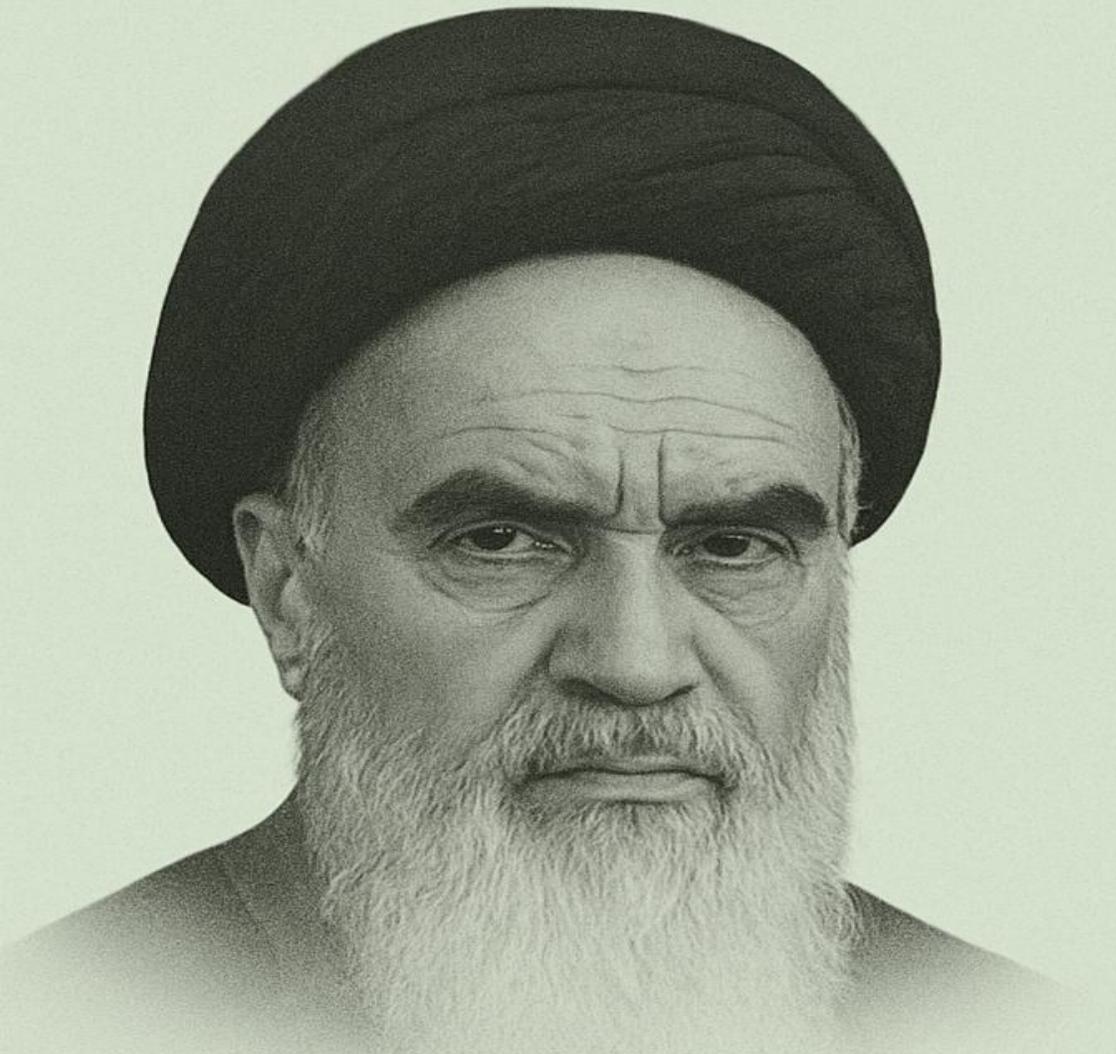
- Iran provided oil/gas on concessional terms; major aid packages.
- **By 1970s, Iran had 5th largest military globally.**
- **Iran perceived as regional superpower, Pakistan as dependent ally.**
- 1974 Lahore Islamic Summit: **tensions as Shah boycotted due to Gaddafi's presence.**
- 1976: Iran brokered Pakistan–Afghanistan rapprochement, showing regional clout.

Nuclear Issue & Political Change

- India's 1974 **Smiling Buddha** nuclear test alarmed Pakistan.
- **During 1977 visit, Bhutto urged Shah to back Pakistan's clandestine nuclear project → Shah refused.**
- **July 1977 coup:** Bhutto ousted, Zia-ul-Haq came to power.
- **Shift: secular Iran (pre-1979) vs Islamic conservatism under Zia.**
- Husain's view: **Pakistan–Iran closeness was structural but fragile, reliant on personalities and US alignment.**







1971 to 1979

Revolution & Early Warmth (1979)

- 1977: Bhutto ousted → Zia's military rule begins.
- Feb 1979: Iranian Revolution → Shah overthrown.
- **Pakistan first to recognize new regime (Feb 1979).**
- FM Agha Shahi's visit (10 March 1979); met **FM Karim Sanjabi + Khomeini.**
- Zia hailed Khomeini: *“symbol of Islamic insurgence”*.
- Khomeini: *“Ties with Pakistan are based on Islam.”*
- **Early pan-Islamic rhetoric masked future divergences.**

Divergence: Sectarianism & Proxy Rivalry

- **1980s: Zia's Sunni-biased Islamization alienated Pakistani Shi'a.**
- Iranian Revolution inspired Pakistani Shia mobilization (e.g., TJP, Shia militias).
- **Saudi–Iran rivalry exported to Pakistan → proxy battleground.**
- Javid Husain: **Pakistan's tilt to Saudi/US bloc deepened mistrust.**
- Sectarian clashes surged: **Iran accused Gulf states of backing anti-Shia militancy.**

Afghanistan & Taliban Factor (1980s–1990s)

- **Soviet invasion (1979) → Pakistan aligned with US + Saudi.**
- Iran opposed Soviet presence **but distrusted Pakistan's CIA-Saudi axis.**
- 1990s Taliban rise: **Pakistan supported Taliban; Iran backed Northern Alliance.**
- 1998: **Taliban killed 11 Iranian diplomats in Mazar-i-Sharif → near war.**
- Abdul Sattar: **Afghan issue** became major irritant in bilateral ties.
- **Strategic warmth of 1979–80 gave way to sectarian-political rivalry.**

Critical Evaluation & Lessons

- **Initial Islamic solidarity (Zia–Khomeini letters, Eid greetings) lacked durability.**
- Proxy wars (Saudi vs Iran) destabilized Pakistan internally.
- Husain: Pakistan's dependence on US/Saudi aid eroded balance with Iran.
- **Sattar: Iran's revolution shifted its focus inward, reducing external alliances.**
- Warmth reduced due to: **sectarianism, Afghan Taliban policy, US alignment.**
- **Lesson: Religious symbolism cannot substitute for strategic convergence.**

1990s–2000s

- Efforts to normalize ties despite Afghan differences.
- Cooperation on ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization).
- Energy diplomacy: Iran–Pakistan Gas Pipeline proposal.
- Abdul Sattar notes: relations pragmatic but constrained by US sanctions and sectarian mistrust.



DIMENSIONS
OF
PAK-IRAN TIES

PAK-IRAN MILITARY TIES



Early Military Cooperation (1960s–1970s)

- Iran supplied US spare parts & weapons to Pakistan after US aid cuts (1965).
- Strong defense ties during Shah–Bhutto period.
- CENTO & SEATO → joint defense alignment.
- Abdul Sattar: Iran was **“natural ally”** against India & USSR.

Balochistan Insurgency Phase (1973–77)

- Joint suppression of insurgency in Balochistan.
- **100,000 Pakistani & Iranian troops involved (1974–77).**
- Iran supplied **30 Cobra helicopters, \$200m aid.**
- Movement suppressed by 1978–80 → **cemented military ties.**

Post-1971 Alliance Shift

- Bhutto withdrew Pakistan from CENTO/SEATO (1972) → disillusioned.
- Yet Iran stayed Pakistan's primary military backer in region.
- Husain: **reflected Pakistan's overreliance on allies for security gaps.**

Modern Defense Cooperation (2000s–2010s)

- May 2014: agreement for joint ops vs terrorists, drug traffickers.
- 2014 naval exercise in Arabian Sea.
- Iran purchased **25 Mushshak trainer aircraft from Pakistan.**
- 2019: Adm. Zafar Abbasi & Adm. Khanzadi discussed maritime security.

Regional Security Platforms

- Both members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).
- China–Pakistan–Iran trilateral consultations on terrorism.
- Regular naval drills in Arabian Sea.
- Iran–Pakistan military hardware co-production projects agreed.

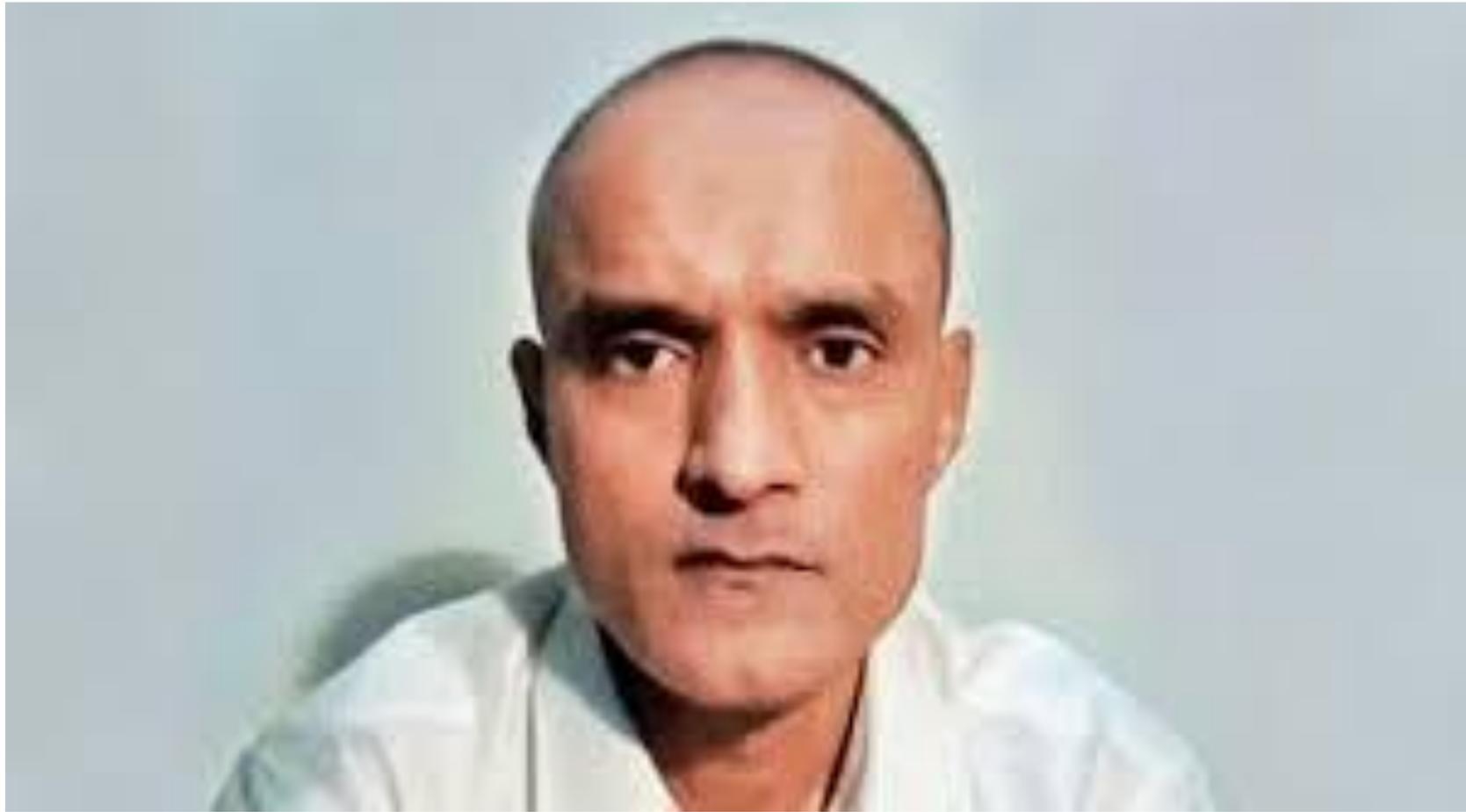
Escalation: Israel–Iran Conflict (2025)

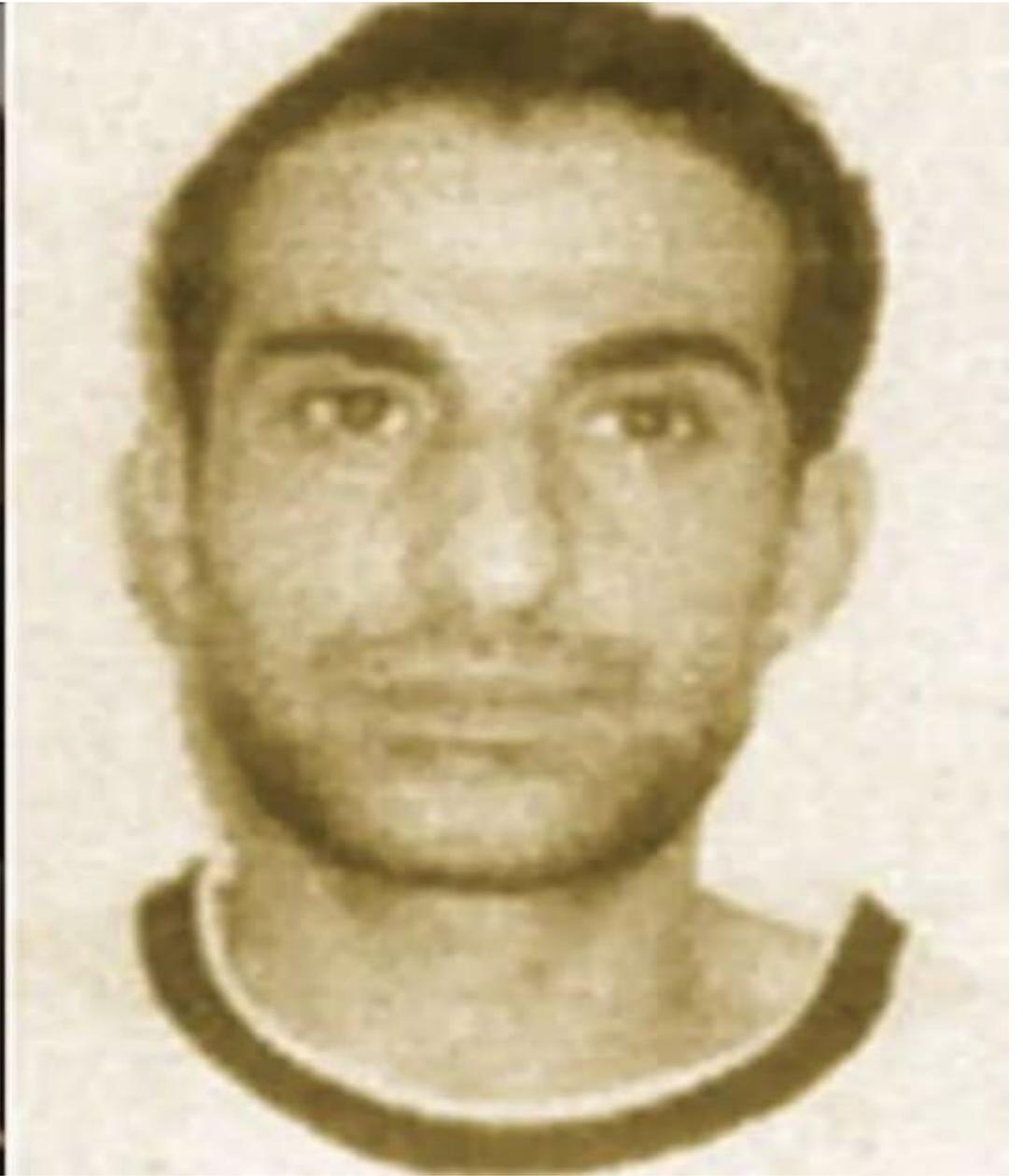
- 16 June 2025: Mohsen Rezaee claimed Pakistan would nuke Israel if Israel nuked Iran.
- Pakistan's Def. Minister Khawaja Asif rejected claim.
- Same day: Pakistan closed border crossings with Iran.
- Example: military ties strained by regional geopolitics.

Shared Balochistan Challenge

- Both face cross-border Baloch insurgents (BLA, Jaish ul-Adl).
- Militants exploit porous terrain, underdeveloped region.
- Reciprocal accusations: **“terrorists operating from your soil.”**
- Husain: **Balochistan = chronic irritant undermining trust.**







Recent Border Clashes (2019–2023)

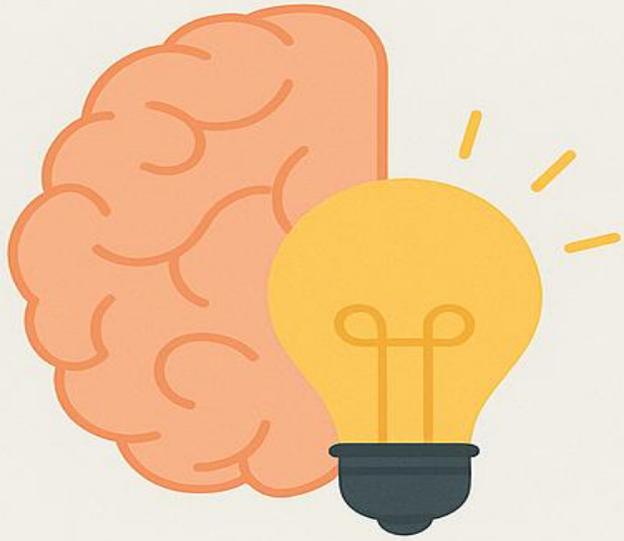
- **2019:** suicide bombing (27 IRGC killed) → Iran blamed Pakistan.
- **2020:** border attack killed 6 Pakistani soldiers.
- **2021:** Pak soldier killed by fire from Iran.
- **2023:** multiple deadly border attacks on both sides.
- Abdul Sattar: **historic pattern of mistrust resurfaces under pressure.**

2024 Missile Crisis & Retaliation

- 6 Jan 2024: **Iran struck Jaish al-Adl sites in Pakistan → 2 children killed.**
- **18 Jan 2024: Pakistan launched Operation Marg Bar Sarmachar, hitting Sistan. (*Marg Bar Amrika*)**
- Ambassadors recalled, ties dissolved temporarily.
- Later: Pakistan claimed responsibility for explosions inside Iran.
- Example of worst military crisis in decades.

De-escalation & Joint Operations (2024–2025)

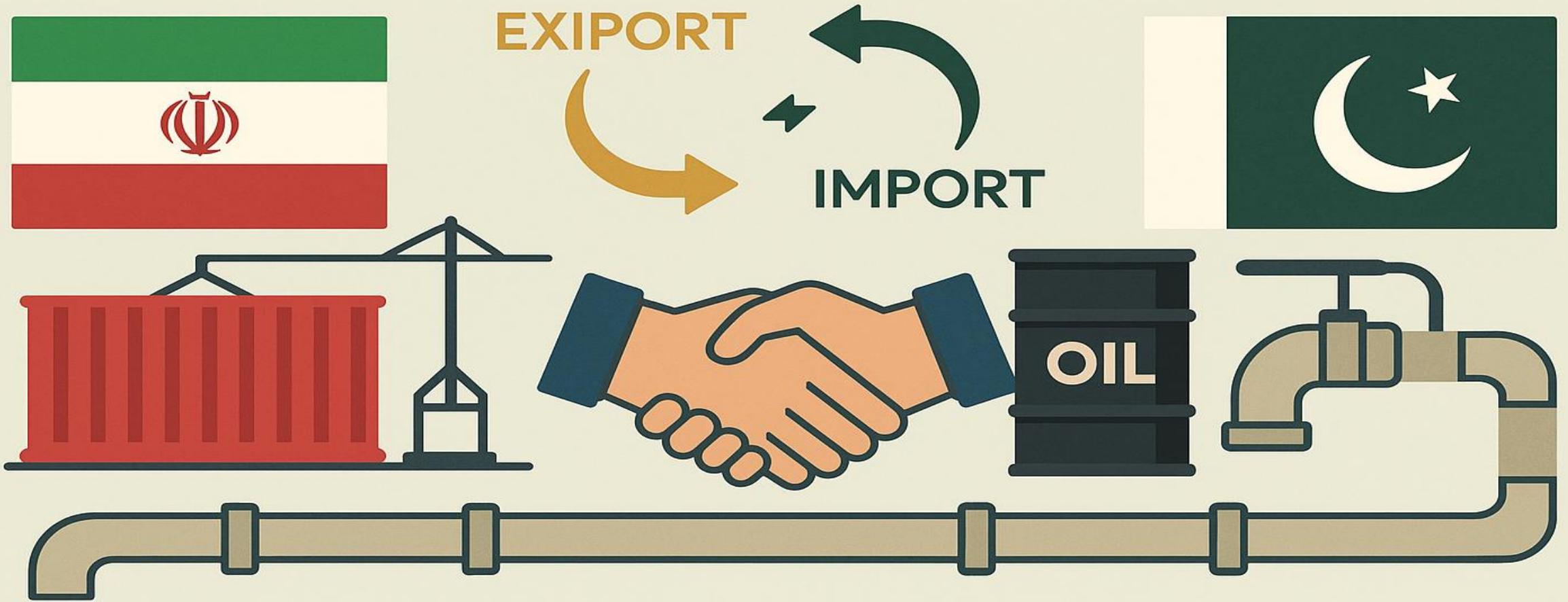
- Late 2024: both agreed on joint action vs Baloch militants.
- 5 Nov 2024: joint operation killed 12 militants incl. Salahuddin Farooqui (leader of Jaish e adl).
- Apr 2025: 8 Pakistanis killed in Sistan–Baluchistan, claimed by Baloch National Army (BNA)
- **Despite tensions, both realize security cooperation is unavoidable.**
- Husain: geography compels pragmatism after confrontation.



Did You Know?

Balochistan acceded to Pakistan on 27 March 1948, but officially became a province on 1 July 1970.

IRAN-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC TIES



Limits & Challenges of Trade

- Border trade hampered by **sanctions + poor infrastructure**.
- Smuggling & drug trafficking dominate Taftan border economy.
- 2005 trade volume: **\$500m; potential far higher**.
- WTO (2007–08): **\$256m imports, \$218m exports**.
 - *2025 data:*
 - **Iran's export to Pakistan: \$2.42 billion**
 - **Pakistan's Export to Iran : \$ 706 million**
 - **India –Iran: \$1.64 billion (2025)**
- **Husain: sanctions + lack of banking channels = chronic underperformance.**

Bilateral Trade & Preferential Agreements

- **2001:** Pakistan–Iran Joint Business Council established.
- **2005:** PTA signed → oil & electricity through Taftan.
- **2009:** trade rose to £1.4b; 2012 > \$3b.
- **2015:** collapse to < \$50m (State Bank).
- **2025:** commitment increasing trade from \$3.1 b to \$10 b.
 - **Efforts are underway to finalize a FTA and improve border infrastructure and logistics to facilitate this growth.**
- **Iran → 2nd largest market for Pakistani Basmati rice.**

Sanctions Impact & Lost Markets

- **US sanctions** blocked Iran–Pakistan formal banking trade.
- IPI Gas Pipeline stalled → India withdrew (security concerns).
- Pakistan lost \$10m mango exports; 30k tons unsold.
- Sanctions disrupted Pakistani fruit/industrial exports.
- Abdul Sattar: sanctions = *“structural barrier to natural trade.”*

New Connectivity & Border Markets

- **2020 COVID** closure halted Pak–Iran trade; limited reopening July.
- Dec 2020 Rimdan–Gabd border gateway opened for trade.
- 2023: First Pak–Iran border market launched; 12 planned.
- Sept 2021: **First trucks via Islamabad–Tehran–Istanbul corridor (TIR).**
 - **TIR: Transports Internationaux Routiers (International Road Transport)**
 - **TIR slashes 80% off transit time with new Pakistan-Iran-Turkey corridor**
 - **New Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) trade corridor.**
- Regional observers: Iran seeks closer ties amid Pak–Saudi tensions.

China Factor & CPEC Linkages

- Both partners in Belt & Road Initiative (BRI).
- **China–Iran 25-year strategic deal (2021) welcomed by Pakistan.**
 - **China is to invest US\$ 400 billion in Iran's economy over the time period in exchange for steady and heavily discounted supply of oil from Iran.**
- Iran's integration with CPEC → **Gwadar–Chabahar potential synergy.**
- Husain: **Pak must balance Saudi concerns with Iran's BRI role.**
- **Economic geography favors connectivity over rivalry.**

Emerging Sectors & Future Outlook

- Techno-entrepreneurship cooperation (2016–present): ScienceTech+ Center.
- KarafarinShow events (Iran–Pakistan–Turkey) promote innovation.
- **2025 Pezeshkian–Shehbaz talks: railways, highways, transit integration.**
- Lufthansa & EU flights through Tehran attract Pak business travelers.
- **Future: economic integration depends on sanctions relief + regional stability.**



PAKISTAN-IRAN ENERGY COOPERATION



Origins & Early Agreements

- Talks began 1994, PM Benazir & Pres. Rafsanjani.
- 1995 preliminary agreement: South Pars → Karachi pipeline.
- Extended proposal to India → became IPI Pipeline.
- 1999 Iran–India deal, but political/security issues slowed progress.
- India worried about pipeline security + pricing disputes.

India's Withdrawal & Peace Pipeline (2000s)

- 2007: India–Pakistan–Iran agreed price = **\$4.93 per MMBTU.**
- 2008: India quit → signed US civil nuclear deal.
- 2009: Zardari–Ahmadinejad signed Pak–Iran initial agreement.
- **Pipeline reduced from 56" to 42" diameter.**
- **Husain: US sanctions pressure made Pakistan "hesitant partner."**

Strategic Partners & Delays

- **China expressed interest (2008): Trans-Himalayan pipeline option.**
- Iran invited Bangladesh (2010); diversification attempt.
- Project stalled due to US sanctions + financing limits.
- Abdul Sattar: project symbolized Pakistan's energy desperation.
- Feb 2024: Pakistan finally approved construction to avoid penalty.
 - \$18 b penalty.
 - Pakistan approved the construction of an 80 km segment within its territory,
 - But the project is complicated by the US sanctions

Electricity & Energy Cooperation

- 2009: **Tehran gave €50m for 170 km transmission line.**
- 1,000 MW potential; **Pakistan already imported 34 MW daily.**
- Cheaper than IPP power → subsidized Iranian oil/gas.
- **May 2023: Raisi & Shehbaz inaugurated Polan–Gabd line → 100 MW to Gwadar.**
- Future: **pipelines + electricity trade = energy security lifeline.**



**CULTURAL
TIES**

Shared Heritage & Education

- **Deep cultural & religious affinity; Indo-Persian legacy.**
- Persian influence strong in Urdu, literature, names (e.g., Pakistan = Land of the Pure).
- Balochi culture central to cross-border exchanges.
- Thousands of Pakistanis study culture, science, religion in Iran.
- Pakistan International School & College, Tehran, supports diaspora.
- Divergence: Arab influence & radicalism reshaping Pakistan's identity.

Cultural Exchange

**Balochi culture
plays a special
role in cultural
exchanges at
the border**





Language, Sports & People-to-People Links

- Persian shaped linguistic + cultural foundations of South Asia.
- Shared sports culture in borderlands: football & cricket.
- 1981: Pakistani nationals introduced cricket in Iran's Sistan–Baluchistan.
- Iranian national cricket team mostly Balochi origin.
- Cross-border ties: Chabahar–Gwadar, Zahedan–Quetta, Saravan–Panjgur.
- **Husain: cultural diplomacy = soft power stabilizer amid political strain.**

گر فنا خوابی ز خود آزاد شو
گر بقا خوابی به خود آباد شو

Way Forward & Policy Recommendations



Adopt a Balanced Approach



Enhance Border Security Cooperation



Revive Energy Projects



Strengthen Economic & Cultural Ties



Collaborate in Afghanistan Peace Process

The Middle East

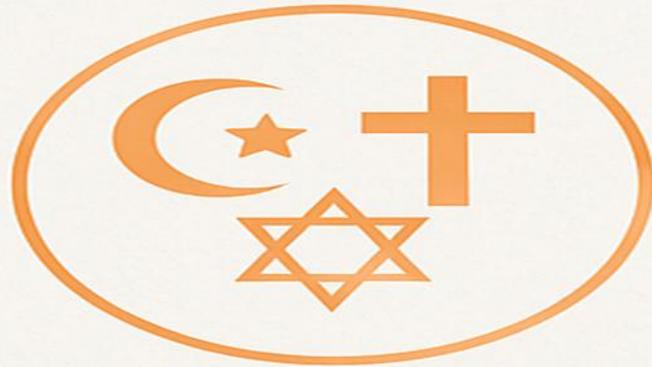


THE MIDDLE EAST



Geostrategic Location

Junction of Asia, Africa,
and Europe



Cradle of Civilizations & Religions

Birthplace of Islam,
Christianity, and Judaism



Resource-Rich Region

Vast reserves of oil
and natural gas

BRITISH CONTROL & RISING TENSIONS (1916-1917)



SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT (1916)

SECRET DEAL BETWEEN BRITAIN
& FRANCE DIVIDED THE MIDDLE
EAST INTO SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

BRITISH RULE IN PALESTINE (1917)

BRITAIN TOOK CONTROL OF
PALESTINE AFTER DEFEATING
THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN WWI



BALFOUR DECLARATION (1917)

BRITAIN SUPPORTED A JEWISH
HOMELAND, FUELING TENSIONS
WITH ARAB NATIONALIST ASPIRATIONS



RESULT:

DEEPENING JEWISH-ARAB
CONFLICT AS BOTH
COMMUNITIES CLAIMED
RIGHTS OVER PALESTINE

Ahmad Malik

Current Situation (2025) & Future Prospects

Current Tensions (as of 2025)

- Israel continues occupation of West Bank and blockade of Gaza

2023–2025 Gaza war has escalated violence and devastation

90% of Gaza's infrastructure damaged or destroyed

55,000 Palestinians killed, including more than 17,000 children



- UN agencies and multiple Western human rights groups have labeled Israel's practices as "apartheid," citing discriminatory laws and segregation

Future Outlook

- Two-state solution remains the internationally endorsed framework
- Settlement expansion, mutual mistrust, and extremist violence hinder progress
- Diplomatic efforts by Egypt, Qatar, U.S., and UN continue with limited success

Ahmad Malik

PALESTINIAN DEMANDS



**End occupation
(West Bank,
East Jerusalem)**

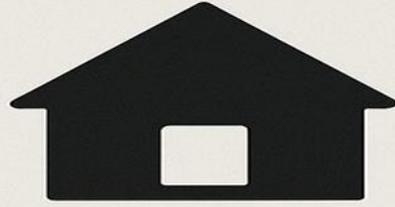


**Right of return
for refugees**



**Sovereign state with
East Jerusalem as
capital**

ISRAEL'S STRATEGY & AGENDA



**Settlements
to create facts
on ground**



**Prevent
Palestinian
statehood**



**Regional
normalization,
military
dominance**

Ahmad Malik

Mahmoud Darwish on Palestinian Resistance

- If you are **not rain**, my love
- **Be tree**
- Sated with fertility, be tree
- If you are **not tree**, my love
- **Be stone**
- Saturated with humidity, be stone
- If you are **not stone**, my love
- **Be moon**
- **In the dream of the beloved woman, be moon**

POST-WWI MANDATES & GROWING DISCONTENT



LEAGUE OF NATIONS MANDATES (POST-1918)

Former Ottoman territories
divided between Britain
and France



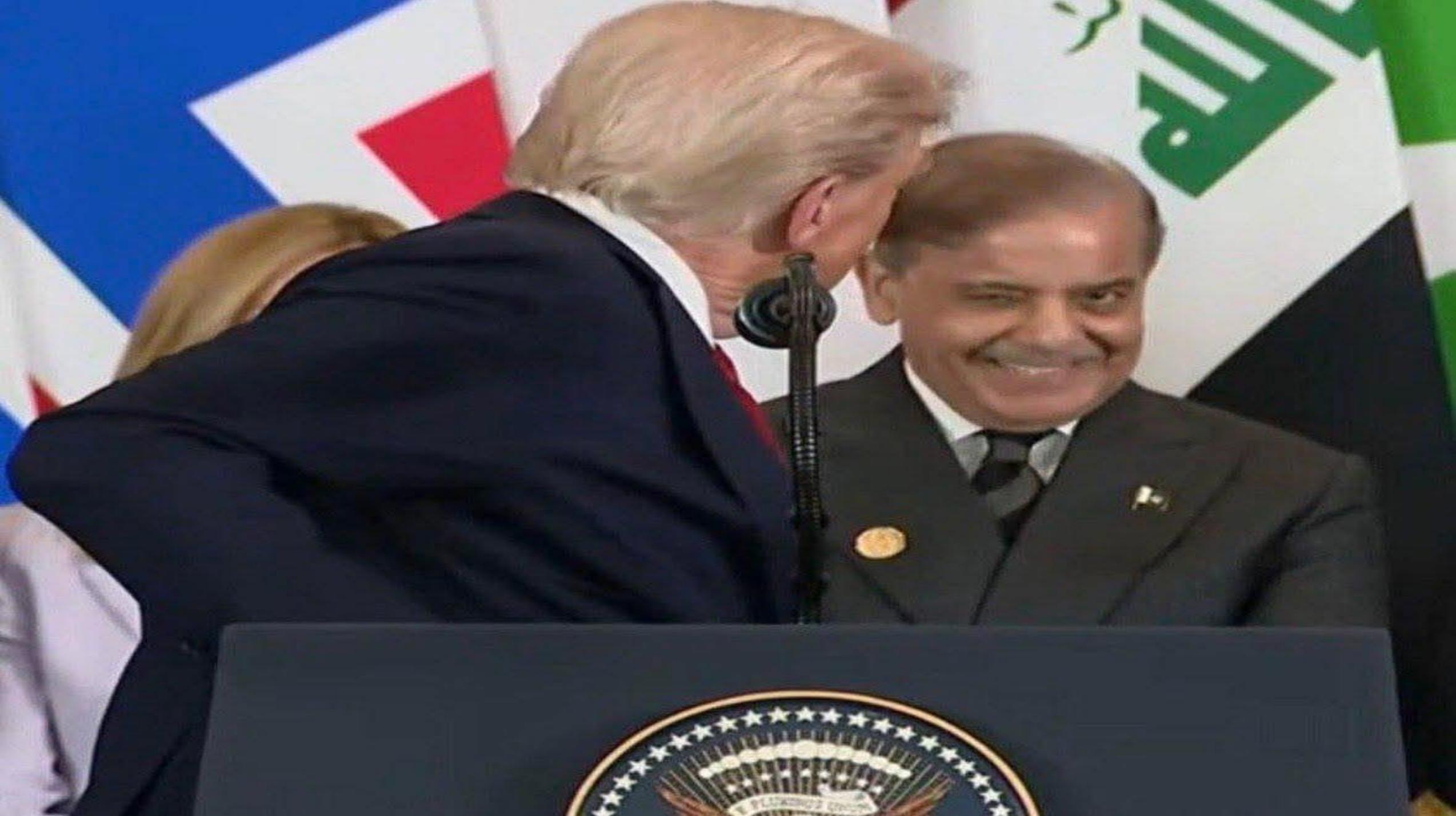
BRITISH MANDATE FOR PALESTINE

Britain took control over
Palestine, where Jewish-Arab
tensions intensified



ARAB BETRAYAL & RESENTMENT

Arabs felt betrayed, having
supported Britain in WWI
in return for promised
independence



Gaza Governance & Security Structure

1 New Governing Setup

- A **committee** to govern Gaza — **Hamas excluded** from any role.
- “**Board of Peace**” chaired by **Donald Trump** to oversee redevelopment and reconstruction.

2 Security Arrangements

- **Hamas demilitarization** : all weapons and military sites to be dismantled.
- **International Stabilization Force (ISF)** : temporary deployment with Egypt & Jordan’s consultation.
- ISF to **train Palestinian police** and **secure Gaza’s borders** .

Political & Long-Term Framework

1. Path to Palestinian Statehood

- Plan acknowledges **Palestinian right to self-determination**, but offers only a **“credible pathway”** to statehood **after reforms and redevelopment**.

2. Israeli Commitments

- Israel pledges **no annexation or occupation** of Gaza.

3. Underlying Logic

- Economic reconstruction first → political process later.
- Prioritizes **security and Western oversight** over **immediate sovereignty**.
- Critics see it as **conditional, Israel-centric, and control-oriented rather than true peace.**

ہم آہ بھی کرتے ہیں تو ہو جاتے ہیں بدنام
وہ قتل بھی کرتے ہیں تو چرچا نہیں ہوتا

PERSPECTIVES IN PAKISTANI DISCOURSE ON NOT RECOGNIZING ISRAEL

1

Moral Position

Recognition is seen by many as a betrayal of Palestinian suffering under occupation.

2

Kashmir Analogy

Accepting Israel might undermine Pakistan's stance on Kashmir, by appearing inconsistent on self-determination.

3

Ideological Identity

Recognition is often viewed as conflicting with Pakistan's founding values and alignment with oppressed Muslim communities.

4

Regional Strategy

Establishing ties with Israel could strain diplomatic relations with Iran, a key neighbor.

Israel's Regional Military Expansion (2025)

- **Big Picture**

- 2025 marks a shift from a **localized Gaza conflict** to a **region-wide confrontation**.
- Israel engaged directly or indirectly with **Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Gaza, and beyond**.

- **Iran (June 2025):**

- 12-day direct Israel–Iran war.
- Large-scale Israeli airstrikes on military & missile infrastructure.
- U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.
- Iran now rebuilding ballistic missile capacity.

Continued...

- **Syria (Ongoing):**

- Power vacuum after Assad's fall (late 2024).
- Nearly daily Israeli strikes in 2025.
- Targeting military HQs, Damascus sites, and southern Syria.
- Signs of a de facto Israeli buffer zone.

- **Lebanon (Ongoing):**

- Despite 2024 ceasefire, Israel continued strikes.
- Targeting Hezbollah fighters & alleged rearmament.
- Civilian reconstruction equipment also hit.

Peripheral Fronts, Gaza & Strategic Meaning

- **Yemen (May–Sept 2025):**
 - Israeli strikes on Houthi positions.
 - Sanaa Airport bombed multiple times.
 - Hodeidah Port targeted to block arms supply.
 - Assassination of senior Houthi leadership.
 - *Ahmed Ghaleb Nasser al-Rahawi (P.M)*
- **Gaza & West Bank (Ongoing):**
 - October 2025 ceasefire in Gaza remains fragile.
 - Continued drone strikes & West Bank raids (Jenin, Nablus).
- **Is Israel pursuing pre-emptive regional deterrence or gaining regional hegemony?**

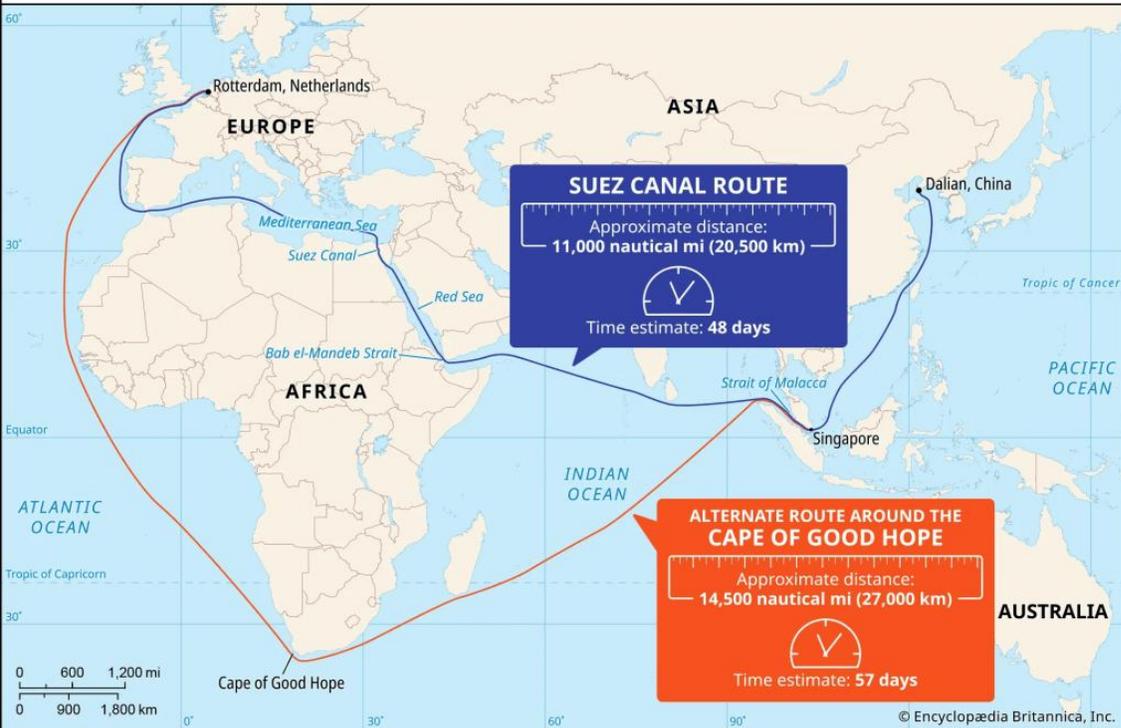
Israel strike On Doha

- **Israel Strike on Doha, Qatar (Sept 9, 2025)**
 - First-ever Israeli strike on Qatar's capital (Doha)
 - Target: Hamas political leaders during Gaza ceasefire talks
 - Location: Leqtaifiya, Doha
 - Method: Missiles fired from outside Qatari airspace
- **Outcome**
 - Hamas leaders survived 6 killed, incl. a Qatari security officer
- **Reactions**
 - Qatar condemned it as violation of sovereignty
 - UN & U.S. condemned despite Qatar being key U.S. ally
- **Impact**
 - Undermined Gaza ceasefire mediation
 - Expanded Israel's conflict to neutral mediator states
- **Aftermath**
 - 30 Sept 2025: Netanyahu expressed regret, promised no repeat

Red Sea Crisis & Yemen Escalation (2025):

- Conflict Expansion: 2025 saw the Red Sea crisis escalate from Houthi maritime attacks to direct Israel–Houthi war, despite a fragile Gaza ceasefire late in the year.
- Israeli Campaign: Under *Operations Black Flag & Ringing Bells*, Israel carried out **decapitation strikes (killing Houthi PM Ahmed al-Rahawi), destroyed Sanaa airport, Hodeidah port, and power plants, and conducted its first long-range naval strike.**
- Houthi Retaliation: Houthis entered a “**fifth phase**” of attacks—**sinking cargo ships, hitting near Ben Gurion Airport, striking Eilat, and expanding targets to all Israel-linked shipping.**
- **Global Economic Shock: Suez traffic fell >50%, shipping rerouted via Cape of Good Hope, adding \$1 million per voyage and 10–15 days—turning a regional war into a global trade disruption.**
- Unstable Present (Dec 2025): Limited shipping resumed (Maersk transit), but security remains fragile as Yemen fractures further, with UAE-backed STC seizing 80% of oil reserves, **risking a new intra-Gulf proxy conflict.**

**GLOBAL SHIPPING ROUTE THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL:
DALIAN, CHINA, TO ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS**



SAUDI-IRAN CONFLICT





Root of Conflict



Sectarian Divide

Iran (Shia) vs. Saudi Arabia (Sunni)
claim leadership of the Muslim world.



Ideological Rivalry

Iran promotes political Islam and
resistance movements; Saudi Arabia
promotes monarchy and Wahhabi
conservatism.



Regional Hegemony

Both seek dominance over the Middle
East post-US invasion of Iraq (2003).



Historical Grievances

Saudi support for Saddam Hussein
in Iran-Iraq war (1980s); Iran's
regional expansion post-1979 revolution

YEMEN CIVIL WAR



Yemen Crisis



Historical Background

- Yemen's unification in 1990
- Oncoming north-south tensions
- Early Houthi rebellion
- Houthi-Saleh alliance action



Civil War and Foreign Intervention (2015–2024)

- Internal actors: Houthis, Hadi loyalists, Southern separatists, AQAP
- External actors: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, US



Recent Developments (2023–2025)

- Houthi-Red Sea tensions, US-UK airstrikes, ceasefire
- Fragmented authority issues include



Critical Analysis

Proxy war. Iran-Saudi
Global inaction
Continued arms sales
For local reconciliation



The Arab Spring and Political Shift (2011–2014)

- Resignation: Saleh, Hadi
- Transition issues: Hadi, and Houthi-Saleh alliance
- Houthi captures Sanaa, Saudi-led Operation Decisive Storm. AQAP
- External actors: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, US



Humanitarian Catastrophe

- Over 300,000 deaths
- 4.5+ million IDPs
- Millions at risk of famine



Future Prospects

Sustained ceasefire, power-sharing (optimistic)
Renewed fighting and partition
Frozen: conflict with proxy management

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EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

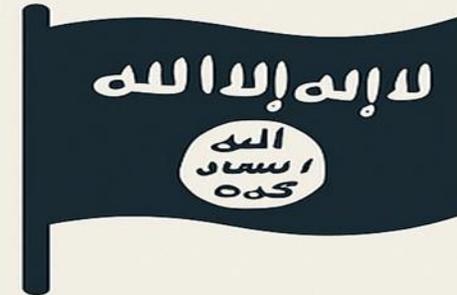


2012–2014

Syria descended into a multi-front civil war involving regime forces, opposition groups, Kurdish militias, and jihadist factions.

RISE OF ISIS

Exploiting the chaos, ISIS captured large areas of Syria and Iraq (2014–2019), declared a caliphate, and introduced global jihad into the conflict



KURDISH ROLE

Kurdish YPG forces became a dominant force in northeast Syria, forming an autonomous administration and receiving US support

Assad Regime

Supported by; Iran, Hezbollah, and Russia.



Held onto power through brutal counterinsurgency, chemical attacks, siege warfare (e.g. Aleppo, Ghouta).

ISIS

Created from remnants of al-Qaeda in Iraq.



Infamous for brutality, executions, and cultural destruction

Opposition Groups

Fragmented between moderates (FSA), Islamists (HTS), and foreign fighters.



Initially backed by: Turkey, Gulf States, and the West

Kurds (YPG/SDF)

Controlled northeast Syria.



Fought ISIS with US support
Tensions with Turkey due to PKK links.



Russia

- Major military intervention from 2015
- Saved Assad regime through airpower, advisors, and political cover
- Gained long-term access to bases (Tartus naval base, Khmeimim airbase)



Iran & Hezbollah

- Viewed Syria as a strategic corridor to Lebanon and Hezbollah
- Deployed IRGC and militia support for Assad
- Suffered heavy losses
became target of Israeli airstrikes



Turkey

- Opposed Assad, supported rebels
- Concerned about Kurdish autonomy on its border
- Carried out multiple incursions (Euphrates Shield, Afrin)



United States

- Initially supported rebels but shifted to defeating ISIS
- Backed the Kurdish-led SDF
- Maintained a small military presence in the northeast

FALL OF ASSAD REGIME (2024)



Syrian opposition launched surprise offensive.



HTS captured Aleppo, Hama, Homs; Southern and Eastern rebels captured Damascus.



Assad fled to Moscow; transitional government established



Israel declared 1974 disengagement agreement null, invaded buffer zone

Ahmad Malik

Pakistan and the Muslim World: Dynamics with the Middle East

- Why Middle East is critical for Pakistan
 - Religious ties (Islamic identity, OIC, two holy mosques)
 - Economic ties (oil, remittances, trade)
 - Geostrategic importance (energy routes, security, diaspora)
- Pakistan's ideological roots linked to Muslim unity.

Palestine–Israel Issue & Pakistan’s Stance

- Key milestones
 - 1974 Lahore OIC Summit (Palestine recognition).
 - Pakistan’s refusal to normalize despite pressure (e.g., Abraham Accords).
 - Public opinion strongly pro-Palestine.
- Analysis
 - Strategic dilemma: balancing between West/US and Muslim unity.
 - Israel’s growing ties with Gulf states (UAE, Bahrain, KSA possibly).
 - Pakistan caught between ideological solidarity and realpolitik.

Syria: Post Assad Transition

- **Current Status:** Following the collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024, Syria is in a fragile transitional phase.
- **Transitional Government:** Ahmed al-Sharaa, leader of the formerly al-Qaeda-linked Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), serves as transitional president.
- **Challenges:** The new government struggles with centralizing control over various militias. Significant sectarian violence has targeted Alawite, Druze, and Christian minorities throughout 2025.
- **Reconstruction:** The World Bank estimates reconstruction costs at over \$216 billion

Israel: Expansion and Strategic Shifts

- **Golan Heights Expansion:** Israel has seized the UN-monitored buffer zone and established a "sterile defense zone" in southern Syria, effectively expanding its footprint beyond the 1967 lines.
- **Direct Conflict with Iran and Qatar:** 2025 was marked by a 12-day direct war with Iran in June and a first-ever direct airstrike on Doha, Qatar in September targeting Hamas leadership.
- **Domestic Allegations:** Critics and international monitors have labeled the current Israeli administration's policies as an "expansionist agenda" characterized by increased settlement activity and military incursions in the West Bank and Syria

Iran-Saudi Arabia Rivalry

- **Status:** Despite a long-standing rivalry, the 2023 China-brokered rapprochement remains resilient in late 2025.
- **Defense Cooperation:** In late 2024 and 2025, the two nations conducted joint naval exercises and exchanged high-level military visits to discuss defense diplomacy.
- **Economic Ties:** Both nations are exploring common investment in energy and infrastructure, though significant sticking points remain regarding regional proxies.

Palestine Issue

- **Gaza:** A fragile ceasefire went into effect in October 2025. However, the death toll from the preceding conflict has surpassed 70,000, and the humanitarian situation remains catastrophic due to continued aid obstructions.
- **West Bank:** Violent raids by Israeli forces continue daily, particularly in Jenin and Nablus.
- **International Legal Standing:** In 2025, various international bodies and countries have reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to an independent state, though Israel continues to expand settlement units.

Yemen Crisis

- **The "Two-and-a-Half Yemens"**: The country is effectively partitioned into three zones: Houthi-controlled North, STC-controlled South, and an impotent internationally recognized government in small pockets like Marib.
- **Southern Secession**: The Southern Transitional Council (STC), backed by the UAE, launched major offensives in late 2025 to capture oil fields in Hadramout and Al-Mahra, aiming to declare an independent Southern Arabian state.
- **Red Sea Front**: Following the Gaza ceasefire, Houthi maritime attacks have paused, though the group remains heavily armed and has conducted long-range missile strikes against Israel throughout the year



THE ROLE OF UN



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Pakistan–Saudi Arabia Relations

- **Basic facts**

- Largest remittances to Pakistan. **More than 27 lac overseas are in KSA**
- Oil supply on concessional rates.
- Strategic defense cooperation (joint exercises, training)

- **Issues**

- Strains over Yemen war (Pakistan's neutral stance).
- 2019–2020 tensions: OIC Kashmir statement delays → Pakistani criticism.
- Recent reconciliation with financial bailouts & investment promises.

- **Analysis**

- Pakistan highly dependent but losing monopoly as "closest ally" to Saudis (India also deepening ties).
- Must balance economic dependence with independent foreign policy.

Pakistan- Saudi Arab Defence Pact 2025

- **Mutual Defence Commitment**

- Both countries pledge to assist each other in case of external aggression or major security threat.

- **Joint Military Cooperation**

- Regular joint exercises, training exchanges, and sharing of counter-terrorism experience.
- Enhanced collaboration between armed forces, intelligence agencies, and defense industries.

- **Security Assistance Framework**

- Establishment of a bilateral Defence coordination committee to oversee implementation.
- Possible deployment of Pakistani military advisors and trainers in Saudi Arabia.

- **Defence Technology & Arms Cooperation**

- Agreements on technology transfer, weapons manufacturing, and joint research in defense production.

- **Counterterrorism & Border Security**

- Cooperation to combat terrorism, extremism, and cyber threats within and beyond borders.

Continued...

- **Nuclear Deterrence Umbrella (Implicit)**

- Pakistan's nuclear capability adds strategic depth for Saudi Arabia, serving as a security hedge against Iran and Israel.
 - However, Iran welcomed it.

- **Economic & Strategic Dimension**

- Linked with Saudi investments in Pakistan's Defence industry and infrastructure projects.
- Reinforces energy and trade partnerships under a broader strategic framework.

- **Regional Stability Role**

- Designed to help mediate regional disputes, especially involving Iran, Afghanistan, and Gulf tensions.

- **Long-Term Vision**

- The pact is institutionally expandable, aiming for a future collective Islamic security alliance ("Islamic NATO").

- **Symbolism & Message**

- Symbolizes Muslim world unity and independent Gulf security, reducing reliance on Western military protection.

Why SMDA is not NATO? (YET)

NATO (1949)	SMDA (2025)
Multilateral Alliance (32 members)	Bilateral agreement
Trigger: “Armed attack” (clearly defined)	Nuclear role implicit, not codified
Explicit nuclear umbrella (US–UK–France)	Nuclear role implicit, not codified
Permanent institutions: joint command, secretariat, budget	No joint command or permanent HQ
Deep military integration & interoperability	Cooperation-based, not integrated
Ideological + global security mandate	Regional, pragmatic, hedge-driven

Strategic Logic & Why It Is Not an “Islamic NATO” Why SMDA ≠ NATO

- **Why SMDA ≠ NATO**

- No treaty-based multilateralism
- No automatic military response mechanism
- No standing forces or shared command
- Nuclear deterrence remains **de facto**, not **de jure**

- **Why It Still Matters**

- Signals **Saudi hedging** against U.S. reliability
- Elevates **Pakistan’s strategic status** as the only Muslim nuclear power
- Expands the concept of collective Defence to **non-conventional threats**
- Could evolve modularly—but **only if political trust deepens**

- **Key Insight**

- **SMDA is not an “Islamic NATO” — it is a strategic insurance policy, designed for ambiguity, flexibility, and regional deterrence rather than institutional permanence.**

KSA and UAE

- **Saudi Arabia**

- **Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA)** – Sept 2025
- Deep military cooperation: joint training & exercises
- **\$25 billion Saudi investment** (energy, mining)
- Signals Saudi search for **strategic autonomy** beyond US

- **United Arab Emirates**

- Bilateral trade crossed **\$10.9 billion** (target: \$40 bn by 2030)
- Simplified visas → remittances above **\$7 billion**
- Investments in **energy, banking, aviation**
- UAE as Pakistan's **economic gateway to Gulf**

Expanding Horizons: New & Revived Partnerships

- **Bangladesh (Paradigm Shift)**
 - Diplomatic reset after 15 years
 - Direct maritime trade (Karachi–Chittagong)
 - Intelligence sharing & Bay of Bengal surveillance
 - Visa facilitation for officials
- **Qatar**
 - **\$3 billion investment** via QIA
 - Infrastructure, energy, health projects
 - Recruitment of Pakistani doctors & professionals
- **Bahrain & Libya**
 - **Bahrain:** health education, port connectivity
 - **Libya:** Defence industrial collaboration, military training

Iran & Wider Muslim World Engagement

- **Other Muslim States**

- **Iraq:** high-level visits, religious tourism, strategic engagement
- **Turkey & Azerbaijan:** defence + economic partnerships
- **OIC:** Pakistan active in joint diplomatic initiatives on regional conflicts

- **Overall Impact**

- Pakistan repositioning as:

- **Economic partner**
- **Security contributor**
- **Bridge between rival blocs in Muslim world**

- **One-Line Conclusion:**

- **Pakistan's 2025 Muslim-world policy reflects a shift from emotional solidarity to calculated geo-economic realism—without fully abandoning strategic and ideological anchors**

Challenges in Relations

- Overdependence on remittances and aid.
- Sectarian divides influencing foreign policy.
- Balancing ties with Saudi–UAE vs Iran–Turkey bloc.
- US and China factor in Middle East diplomacy.

Way Forward & Policy Recommendations

- Diversify foreign policy: less reliance on one or two Gulf states.
- Proactive role in mediation (Iran–Saudi rapprochement, Yemen peace).
- Stronger economic diplomacy (trade, investment beyond remittances).
- Use of diaspora as soft power in Gulf.
- Support Palestine issue while engaging with changing realities.
- Build credibility through internal strength (economy, governance).

Conclusion

- Middle East remains central to Pakistan's identity, economy, and diplomacy.
- Pakistan's future relations depend on balancing ideological solidarity (Palestine, Muslim unity) with pragmatic interests (economy, security).
- Need for shift from dependency → strategic partnerships.

Questions:

- **1. Pakistan–Iran Relations**

- When and why did the warmth between Pakistan and Iran reduce over time, and how have shifting geopolitical realities shaped this trajectory?

- **2. Pakistan’s Foreign Policy Amidst Sanctions**

- How should Pakistan navigate its foreign policy with Iran in the context of U.S.–Iran tensions and sanctions, while safeguarding its own strategic and economic interests?

- **3. Sentiments vs. National Interest in the Muslim World**

- Is Pakistan’s foreign policy towards the Muslim world more sentiment-driven than grounded in national interest, and what are the implications of such an approach?

- **4. Recognition of Israel**

- Why has Pakistan not recognized Israel to date, and what are the pros and cons of maintaining this stance in the changing Middle Eastern and global context?

The Poem (My Brilliant Image – Hafez)

- One day **the sun** admitted,
- **'I am just a shadow.**
- I wish I could show you
- **The Infinite Incandescence**
- That has cast **my brilliant image!**'
- I wish I could show you,
- **When you are lonely or in darkness,**
- **The astonishing Light**
- **Of your own Being!**

