

# Essay Topic : changing global dynamics and Pakistan's foreign policy

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## I. Introduction

**Thesis statement** : Pakistan's foreign policy evolved with changing global dynamics. However, there are certain constants in Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan has faced multi-faceted challenges in pursuing an independent foreign policy. Some reformative steps are needed for making pace with altering global dynamics.

## II. Overview of Pakistan Foreign Policy

### III. Constants in Pakistan Foreign Policy even in changing global dynamics

(a) Pakistan's foreign policy remained consistently pro-west

(b) Foreign largess kept as the lifeline in Pakistan's foreign policy

(c) Pakistan's foreign policy was shaped by keeping in view the Muslim world

(d) Pakistan's foreign policy was constantly India centric

#### IV. Factors in making of Pakistan's foreign policy and changing global dynamics

(a) Geo-political factor plays a significant role in making of Pakistan's foreign policy in dynamic world

(b) Role of ideology in shaping the foreign policy in altering global dynamics

(c) Changing global dynamics and role of technological factor in the formulation of foreign policy

(d) Economic empowerment is the source of designing an independent foreign policy in fluctuating global dynamics

#### V. Pakistan's foreign policy and changing global dynamics

(a) Foreign policy of Pakistan in the Cold War era

(b) After the dismemberment of the USSR and Pakistan's foreign policy

(c) Shift in the foreign policy of Pakistan after 9/11

(d) Rising China, resurging Russia and dwindling the hegemony of the USA are producing seismic shift in the Pakistan's foreign

policy outlook

(e) Massive change in the attitude of the Middle eastern countries and the foreign policy of Pakistan

## vi. Challenges in the way of pursuing a vibrant foreign policy in the changing global dynamics

(a) Dwindling economy

(b) Political instability an obstacle in the formation of a strong foreign policy

(c) Imbalance in civil military relations

(d) Resurgence of militancy and terrorism

(e) Realignment of geostrategy with  
geo-economy

VII. Way forward

VIII. Conclusion

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In this world, there is nothing permanent. Same is the case with countries' foreign policies and their power status. It keeps on changing. History witnessed dearest friends becoming worst enemies and worst enemies becoming best friends. Pakistan is not an exception, its foreign policy is also moulded with changing global dynamics. However, Pakistan's foreign policy was constantly pro-west, prone to Muslim world and India centric. But it is evolved with altering world realities by keeping in view its geo-political position, ideological basis, cultural factors and economic standing. Moreover, its design changed according to the world realities like Pakistan framed its foreign policy differently in the Cold War, post cold war time and

after the 9/11 attacks. Nonetheless, many obstacles hindered its way in the formulation of an independent foreign policy like dwindling economy, wobbling political realities and engulfing foreign loans. Sum and substance of the whole discussion is that Pakistan's foreign policy evolved with changing global dynamics. However, there are certain constants in Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan's foreign policy is facing multi-pronged challenges. However, curative measures can make it strong in the changing global dynamics.

Pakistan's foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world. Pakistan does not cherish aggressive designs against any country. It believes in the

principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings. However, there are certain determinants which shape the foreign policy of Pakistan like national security, financial factor, ideological element, psychological factor and historical element. In spite of all these factors, the guiding principles of Pakistan's <sup>foreign policy</sup> are unity of Muslim world, good relations with neighbours, establishment of peace, support to right of self-determination, cooperation with the UNO and independent and neutral policy. In a nutshell, Pakistan's foreign policy is friendly towards all nations, and it is based on honesty and fair play in national and international dealings.

First and the foremost constant

in the Pakistan's foreign policy is it remained pro-west. From the inception of Pakistan, the tilt of Pakistan's politicians and leaders was towards the Western bloc. They have not shown the same warmth to the USSR. For instance, after the initial few years of non-alignment, Pakistan became the member of the Western bloc by joining SEATO and CENTO. Even the betrayal of the USA by not providing the logistical support to Pakistan in the 1965 war and 1971 war did not change our tilt towards the west. This was because of the USA influence on the International monetary bodies. And Pakistan was a weak economy. Likewise, Pakistan became the partner of the USA in the



Afghan war, and then fought the War on Terror along with the USA. Even today, Pakistan has keen interests with the USA economically as well as politically. Therefore, Pakistan's foreign policy predominantly remained the pro-west because of its dependency on the foreign largess.

Foreign largess was kept as the lifeline during the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy. Foreign loans have saved Pakistan many times from economic default. The reasons behind the over-dependency of Pakistan on foreign loans are its balance of payment crisis, poor reserves, trade deficit and the circular debt. So in order to provide oxygen to the paralyzed economic body of Pakistan, Pakistan needs loans.

The conditionalities of lenders influence the foreign policy of Pakistan. For example, Pakistan is highly dependent on the IMF and WB. These bodies are under the influence of the USA. Likewise Pakistan looks toward the friendly countries like China, KSA and the other Middle Eastern countries. Therefore Pakistan has to design in such a way its economic gains should be secured by delighting and accepting the demands of the friendly specifically Muslim countries.

Pakistan's foreign policy is prone to the Muslim world. It is because Pakistan was created in the name of Islam, there is a concept of **'Muslim Ummah'**. So it is not in Pakistan's interest to show a cold shoulder to

the Muslim countries while formulating its foreign policy. Furthermore, Qaid-e-Azam stressed on friendly relations with the Arab world in his speeches. Along with this, Pakistan's constitution binds the foreign policy makers to design the foreign policy in such a way, the brotherly relations with the Muslim world will not be disturbed. That's why the foreign policy of Pakistan is prone to the Muslim world as well as the India centric.

Pakistan's foreign policy constantly remained India centric from the inception of Pakistan. India presents existential threat in many ways. Both countries are arch rivals of each other. For instance, if India makes any kind of weapon deal with the USA or any other European country,

it creates sense of insecurity in the South Asian countries specifically Pakistan. Pakistan tries to balance it by mending ties with China and Russia. So Pakistan always tries to formulate the foreign policy in such a way that the balance of power remains intact. Therefore it constantly remained India centric.

In spite of all above mentioned constants, there are different factors which play significant role in strengthening or formulating the foreign policy of Pakistan. These factors bind Pakistan to change its foreign policy according to changing global dynamics.

The first factor is the geo-political position of

Pakistan, which pushes Pakistan to adopt a specific kind of foreign policy which fits in the global dynamics. It means that what kind of government is present in Pakistan, and what is the strategic position of Pakistan on the global map. For instance, there is democratic system in Pakistan, and it has parliamentary form of government. So the democratic norms are kept in mind while making the foreign policy. Moreover, Pakistan has very short strategic depth. It is sandwich between rising China, resurging Russia, threatening India and terrorizing Afghanistan. Therefore, security is the main focus along with making Pakistan a transit corridor. So it is crystal clear Pakistan's foreign policy is highly influenced by its

geo-political position along with its ideological basis in the changing global dynamics.

Ideology also plays a pivotal role during the formulation of foreign policy of Pakistan. Pakistan is an ideological state. It was created in the name of Islam. Islam gives certain principles while dealing with other countries including the Muslim world. For instance, in Pakistan, there is a significant number of Sunnis and Shias in Pakistan. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran have influence in Pakistan on the ideological grounds. Iran has significant influence on Shia population while the KSA has influence on the Sunni population. Therefore, in the bloc politics, Pakistan cannot show its tilt toward only one of them.

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Like in the past, the KSA had strong inclinations towards the western bloc while the Iran had tilt towards China and Russia. But now fortunately, the world realities are changing. The KSA revived its talks with Iran after a long gap. This is a positive sign for Pakistan in the global politics. So Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped on the basis of ideology along with technological quest in the altering global dynamics.

Pakistan has quest for technological advancement, the technological enrichment is the priority in Pakistan's foreign policy. Technology encompasses the advanced weapons, modernized IT sector, and well equipped youth with the digital devices. Because these things can revolutionize

the economic as well as the governance structure of Pakistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan is facing the economic crisis these days. It needs friendly but technologically advanced countries like China and Russia. China and Pakistan all are all weather friends, while the USA did not care about Pakistan many times. Therefore, Pakistan is more interested in strengthening relations with China and Russia while maintaining the relations with the USA. In this way, technological advancement as well as economic prosperity is the main priority of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Economic interests are important in the foreign policy of Pakistan. Pakistan is at the brink of default, it cannot afford the annoyance of



the country who has strong control on the world monetary bodies. Due to this reason, Pakistan's foreign policy oftenly jolted with the conditionalities of the lenders. The lenders are monetary bodies as well as the countries.

For instance, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan had to attend the 'Davis in the desert' summit on the call of Muhammad Bin Salman, while the whole world was boycotted it on the issue of killing of Jamal Khashoggi - Saudi Journalist. It was due to economic interests of Pakistan with the KSA. The KSA provided soft loans along with oil on the deferred payment to Pakistan many times. Thus economic interests play important role during the designing of Pakistan's foreign policy.

However, Pakistan steered its foreign policy very carefully in the changing global dynamics, it made its foreign policy according to the bloc politics which was taking place during the cold war. After the world war II, the cold war started between the USA and the USSR. Pakistan remained non-aligned in the initial few years. Then it preferred to become the ally of one global power. For example, Pakistan joined the SEATO and the CENTO to ensure its security against India. Then it emphasized the importance of bilateralism between 1963 and 1969. After the debacle of ~~the~~ the East Pakistan, it had brought the strategic shift in its foreign policy. That was the era when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was ~~striving~~ to create

an Islamic bloc along with other Muslim countries to counter balance the west and the USSR. But unfortunately his government was toppled down by Zia, then Pakistan had to go with the USA and the KSA to fight against the USSR in Afghanistan. In this way Pakistan's foreign policy passed from the non-alignment phase to bilateralism and alignment zone.

After the dismemberment of the USSR, there were new world realities for Pakistan, so it had formulated its foreign policy according to them. After the break down of the Soviet Union, the world became a unipolar world. The USA emerged as the sole super power. Then Pakistan had

to pass through a worst scenario. The USA imposed economic sanctions on Pakistan. Pakistan's woes were increased when the nuclear tests were conducted by Pakistan in response to India. Moreover, the Kargil war added fuel to the fire. Foreign policy of Pakistan was under immense pressure. But the policy makers of Pakistan tried their best to reconcile with new ground realities. In this way, Pakistan tackled the mess through its vibrant foreign policy.

Unfortunately, after the 9/11 attacks, war against terrorism was placed on the top list of Pakistan's foreign policy. The USA wanted to counter terrorism not only from the region but also from the world. But was

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left with no choice except to join hands with the USA. For example; the USA said to Pakistan that it would fight along with it otherwise, Pakistan would face the American wrath. Therefore, during this era, the war against terrorism was highly focused in the foreign policy of Pakistan. In this war, Pakistan had to face the human loss of more than 80 thousand and billions of dollars in capital according to the Ministry of Defense of Pakistan. Thus the foreign policy of Pakistan was predominantly security ridden after the 9/11 attacks to till 2008.

After the initial ten years of 'war against terror', Pakistan's foreign policy brought a shift

in its priorities, it tried to find the economic avenues. Along with fight against terrorism, Pakistan made economic agreements with the friendly countries in order to come out of the trap of the west. For instance, CPEC was a magnanimous development which put Pakistan on the track of economic well being and prosperity. Now the situation is that the world is moving towards the multi-polarity. Like the economy of China became the number one and it has replaced the USA. Similarly, there is resurging Russia. In this change, Pakistan is actively using its foreign office to convince that Pakistan will not become the member of any bloc. However, it has strong tilt towards

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China and Russia Because India is in the western bloc. But Pakistan's foreign policy is disturbed by many domestic challenges

Multiple challenges are constraining Pakistan's foreign policy to tap its dividends, the most prominent challenge is economic one. Pakistan is present at the verge of the economic default. Foreign reserves of Pakistan are very low. Inflation is sky-rocketing. Circular debt along with trade deficit are further suffocating Pakistan's economy. For example, Pakistan is overly dependent on the IMF and WB along with other monetary bodies. The USA has great influence on these lenders so Pakistan is bound to maintain its

stable relations with the USA. Here the foreign policy of Pakistan is compromised. Like the USA condemned the visit of the former prime to Russia. Even there was hue and cry in the different circles that there was American conspiracy. But then it was cleared by the former PM himself that the USA was not involved. But the whole happening shows that there is a great influence of the USA on Pakistan in the pursuance of its foreign policy. And Pakistan is not in a position to stand on its own feet. Therefore, Pakistan's foreign policy is facing challenge in the form of economic crisis along with political instability.

Political instability in Pakistan



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is another setback to Pakistan's foreign policy. There is political polarisation which is clearly visible nowadays. This is weakening Pakistan's foreign policy internally. For example, there is political victimisation which is not allowing the political leaders to come together and sit in the parliament. Even election date is turned into a controversial matter these days. Three main organs of the state are in clash ~~on~~ among one another. All these factors are adversely impacting the foreign policy of Pakistan. In this way political instability is posing a biggest challenge to foreign policy of Pakistan along with imbalance in the civil-military relations.

Imbalance in the civil-military relations is affecting the security point of Pakistan's foreign policy. Due to absence of consensus between the civilian government and the military, the security of Pakistan is challenged by the exploiters. For instance, there is a rise in the insurgency of Tank Taliban Pakistan along with other terrorist groups. They are conducting brazen and deadly attacks throughout the country even the Pakistan's foreign front failed to convince the Afghan Taliban that the TTP is using Afghanistan as a launching pad. Due to false calculations and unhealthy agreements with the TTP by the former government provided the oxygen to the monster of TTP.

Now it is disturbing the peace of Pakistan. All this was because of the lack of consensus between the civilian government and the military establishment. In this way, imbalance of relations between the military establishment and the government is another challenge of Pakistan's foreign policy in addition to rise of terrorism in Pakistan.

Terrorism is posing a massive threat to the foreign policy of Pakistan. After a short respite, Pakistan is again trapped in the terror world. These elements are posing security threat to not only the civilians but also the law enforcement agencies. Therefore, Pakistan is spending more

and more on its defense in spite of its weak economy. For instance, a grand operation is launched all over the Pakistani state to weed out the terrorism. Moreover, Pakistan is now again more focused on its security angle instead of focusing on the dream of becoming a transit corridor. So it is making choices in the foreign policy according to its security angle. For instance, Pakistan ~~was~~ approached the USA to help her to fight against the terrorism. And the USA ensured Pakistan that it would help her out in countering terrorism. So the foreign policy choices are contained by terrorism and militancy.

Another challenge to the foreign policy of Pakistan is the realignment of geostrategy with geo-economy. Pakistan is a security ridden state. Since its inception it was threatened by India. Moreover, terrorism remained a major concern along with insurgency in Pakistan. But Pakistan decided to realign its geostrategy with geo-economy.

In this regard, a comprehensive document was published in the name of 'National Security

**Policy of Pakistan'** in 2022.

In this document, there is clearly mentioned that Pakistan will try to explore more ~~and~~ and more economic avenues along with keeping in mind the security element. But it seems very difficult because terrorism is increased in Pakistan India



measures can help Pakistan to come out of the mess created by different internal and external issues. These effective measures include the economic reforms, political settlement, governance reforms and many more. In economic reforms, Pakistan should increase its production base, increase its tax-net, ensure transparency and tap the potential of youth when Pakistan will come out of the economic dependency. It will allow Pakistan to implement a vibrant and independent foreign policy. Furthermore, democratic process should be continued. Sane minds should sit together and end this political victimization game which is going on nowadays. Political stability will help Pakistan in the formulation of a strong foreign policy. In a nutshell, pragmatic steps will help

Pakistan to come out of this quagmire.

Sum and substance of the whole discussion is that Pakistan's foreign policy is evolving with the changing global dynamics. However there are certain constants in the foreign policy of Pakistan like tilt towards the west, dependency on the foreign largesse, prone to the Muslim world, and India centric. But certain factors play a significant role in the formulation of foreign policy, these factors include geo-political factor, ideological basis, technological element and economic empowerment. However, Pakistan steered its foreign policy wonderfully during the cold war, after the cold war, after the 9/11 attacks and 2008 onward. Although many loopholes



were in the foreign policy in the past, these loopholes led to the debacle of the East Pakistan. But then Pakistan's foreign policy stabilised wonderfully by the stakeholders, though there were ups and downs. Furthermore, many challenges hinder the way of an independent foreign policy like economic crisis, political instability, clash between the civilian government and the military establishment, and the realignment of geo-strategy with the geo-~~economy~~ economy. However, reformative steps can help Pakistan to pursue an independent and vibrant foreign policy in the changing global dynamics. And Pakistan is going on that way, and will see the bright future soon.