

# Changing Power Dynamics and Pakistan's foreign policy

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## The Essay

Since the inception of concentration of power in few hands, the power continuously remained in a struggle to change its position. There is not a single instance of any dynasty, ethnicity, and state that can claim of having power in their domain till now. Simply, it is because of changing power nature of the power. To elaborate it more specifically, nineteenth-century was under the domination of British.

Similarly, twentieth-century witnessed the influence of mighty power of USA. Currently, the twenty-first century has begun to marginalise USA and started its search for new power-holders. The unipolar world, dominated by USA, is shifting towards multipolar world, dominating by different power-holders. This paradigm shift of changing power has also transitioned the global power dynamics.

The shifting global power to Asia, declining USA influence, and rising China are the manifestations of changing global power dynamics. Moreover, the intensified influence of Russia, and the quest of European countries for strategic autonomy are also contributing to it. Apart from this, the growing hybrid warfare and cross-border threats like climate change are also shifting the balance of power. Amid these changing global trends, Pakistan is devising its foreign policy in accordance with this shift of power. The country is pursuing interest-based foreign policy. Under the influence of its interest-based foreign policy, the State has shifted its focus from geo-politics to geo-economics. Despite this, ~~the~~ Pakistan is facing many foreign policy challenges due to changing worldly trends. These challenges include

the issue of US-China rivalry, Taliban-India nexus, and Indian opposition against Pakistani membership of BRICS. However, few prudent steps like pursuing balanced foreign policy, mitigating hybrid threats and elucidating internal problems for improving national image can reduce foreign policy challenges of Pakistan. Hence, the shift in global power ~~is~~ has changed the global power dynamics. Although, Pakistan pursues its foreign policy in accordance with the changing global trends, it still faces many foreign policy challenges. However, few prudent steps can create a win-win situation for Pakistan.

An overview of current power dynamics entails that the global power dynamics are shifting from west to East. More specifically, the ~~country's~~ power is moving towards the East, leaving behind the west.



The unipolar order of USA is in constant decline. On the contrary, Eastern powers such as Russia and China are rising significantly. A major magazine has summarised this situation by terming it "it seem post world war II liberal Order is in decline. [The Economist]"

As far as Pakistan is concerned, it is also feeling the heatwaves of changing world order. It is attempting to devise its foreign policy according to changing trends.

To begin with, the first manifestation of changing global trends occurs in shifting of power to Asia. Previously, western world has dominated the whole of the world through its hegemony. Now, the Eastern countries has challenged the western hegemony completely. The rise of Russia, China, and India are is a example of this. Moreover, a renowned author Parag Mehta has argued that "twenty-first

"Century belongs to the East" [The Futures in Asian]. Therefore, the shifting of power is an indication of changing global practices.

Another prominent factor in changing world order is a decline in influence of USA. USA, has remained a sole master of the world after world war II. It has intervened in many countries like Afghanistan and Iraq for pursuing its interests [Noam Chomsky, How the world works]. In present scenario, the USA has <sup>been</sup> deprived of its prior influence due to the rise of other powers. The US-led dollar hegemony is in constant decline. The BRICS countries are preferring trade in their local currencies, ending dollar hegemony. This shows that the USA decline is prompting other powers to dominate. Hence, declining influence of USA is a reason of changing world order.

Apart from this, the unbelievable rise of China is also shifting global power dynamics. The Chinese economy has grown significantly. Its economy has been reached to 18.5 trillion dollars, just few steps behind USA. Moreover, China is converting itself into a global power by resolving the long-standing issues of many countries. One such example is of resolving Saudi-Iran concerns. This is a major blow to western liberal order, preferring conflict over peace. Hence, the rise of China is also a decisive factor in changing global affairs.

Similarly, the rise of Russia is <sup>also</sup> another reason in changing global trends. Russia, under the leadership of President Putin, has started to expand its influence. Firstly, it has challenged the supremacy of western world

in Ukraine war. Secondly, it has intensified its influence in Russia Middle East. Syria, a middle Eastern country, is directly under the influence of Russia. Moreover, Russia, through Iran and, Syria is challenging the USA dominance in the region. Therefore, the Russian rise is also contributing in changing the already existed world order.

Along with this, the quest of European countries for strategic autonomy is also converting global power dynamics to Asia. The western countries are feeling helpless under western world. The exit of Britain from European Union is based on this. Similarly, other European countries are also looking towards the East for enhancing their strategic autonomy. According to the report of World Economic Forum, the trade between European and Chinese has crossed the volume of 850 billion dollars.

The divergence of European countries is a major blow to European order. Thus, the convergence of European countries in Asia is a shift in global power dynamics.

Apart from this, the growing hybrid threats are also changing the relations between contested global powers. The hybrid threats based on propaganda, misinformation, and cyber threats are maligning relations between global powers. For instance, the Russian propaganda against USA has strained the relations. ~~But~~ Under this, both the countries are trying to secure their national image. Similarly, the relations between China and America has also been strained due to cyber threats. Hence, the increasing hybrid threats are intensifying the rivalry between major powers, which is a clear indication of changing world order.

In the same manner, the cross-border threats like climate change are also contributing in enhancing global enmity. The disagreement on tackling these threats results in global rivalry. For instance, the western and Eastern countries have obvious disagreement on cutting carbon emissions. China, Canada, India, USA, and Russia are not reducing carbon emission due to disagreement. The politics of blame is rampant over this issue. China blames USA for more carbon emission while USA blames Russia for more emission. This led to global power rivalry. Hence, the global power rivalry over cross-border threats is a contributing factor in dividing power.

The changing global trends have also forced Pakistan to shape its foreign policy according to ongoing trends. Consequently, the country has

the changing trends in its economy.

Firstly, Pakistan is pursuing interest based foreign policy. The state is looking for fulfilling its national interest in developing foreign relations with other states. It is aiming at fulfilling its projects despite the pressure of its allies.

The prominent example is of CPEC projects. The country is fully committed to complete it despite facing western pressure. The commitment is due to pursuing national interests as this project is in better interest of the country. Therefore, the country has adopted interest based trend in its foreign policy.

Secondly, Pakistan has shifted its focus from geo-politics to geo-economics. The state has learnt a bitter lesson by focusing on geo-political benefits. The war on terror had resulted in losing 156 billion dollars and seventy-thousand

precious lives. As a result, the country is looking for geo-economic benefits. The National policy of 2021, crafted during Imran Khan government, is an obvious example of this changing trend. Hence, the state is adopting changing foreign policy trends.

Despite the successful implementation of changing trends, Pakistan still faces many foreign policy challenges. These challenges are posing serious threats to the foreign relations of the country.

First comes the challenges of USA-China rivalry. Pakistan has good relations with both of the rival global powers. If Pakistan aligns with the one power, it will lose another power. As far as Pakistan is concerned, it can not bear the loss of a single power.

The US is a large export destination of the country. On the contrary, China is developing road and industrial



projects in the state. Therefore, the foreign policy of Pakistan is facing a dilemma due to US-China enmity.

Another foreign policy challenge is of Taliban-India nexus. Since India is a arch rival of Pakistan, the Pakistan fears the infiltration of non-state actors through Afghanistan. Moreover, India can use Afghan soil for fulfilling its heinous aims against Pakistan. Despite this, Taliban support to Pakistani Taliban is also a problem of concern. Due to the Taliban support to Tehreek Taliban Pakistan, the instability has surged in the country. Currently, establishing good relations with Taliban is a paramount challenge for Pakistani foreign ministry.

Similarly, the challenge of Indian opposition regarding BRICS membership of Pakistan

is also a major foreign policy challenge of Pakistan.

BRICS, a group of newly emerging economies, has gained a huge importance.

It can provide many benefits to

Pakistan such as reducing its dependency on western institutions. However, the

traditional rival India is a biggest hurdle in joining BRICS. As India

is violating the image of the

country among BRICS members.

Therefore, presenting good image of

the country before BRIC members,

and countering Indian opposition

is a huge challenge for Pakistan.

Since these foreign policy challenges have not been descended from the heavens, these can be resolved by adopting practical steps.

First of all, Pakistan should pursue a balanced foreign

policy. The balanced foreign policy

approach can stabilise the relations

Of the country with USA and China. In this regard, the case study of Indian foreign policy serves as a best example for Pakistan. On the one hand, India is a strongest ally of USA for countering China. On the other hand, it is sitting in BRICS with China. In this way, India is pursuing a balanced foreign policy. This shows that Pakistan must pursue a balanced foreign policy.

Coming to another solution, Pakistan should work for the mitigation of hybrid threats. The hybrid threats paint a negative national image of Pakistan as the country is full of instability and terrorism. This strains the relations of Pakistan and creates foreign policy challenges. To counter these threats, Pakistan should employ AI-technology and fact-checking mechanisms. The implementation of these steps

can improve the national image of Pakistan. Recent implementation of Firewall on social media will also assist the country in country digital propaganda. To sum up, the successful countering of hybrid threats can improve foreign relations of Pakistan and mitigate foreign policy challenges.

The last but not the least strategy is eradication of internal problems for improving national image. The internal problems such as instability, terrorism, and economic meltdown restrict foreign countries to establish relation with Pakistan. Resultantly, it creates many foreign policy challenges for the country. The restriction in the way of BRICS membership is also somehow linked to internal problems of the country. Therefore, there is a dire need of conducting operation against terrorist like Zarb-e-Arab and expanding

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experts for managing stifling economy.  
Hence, the eradication of internal  
problems can solve foreign policy  
challenges of Pakistan.

To conclude, it becomes  
abundantly clear that foreign policy  
trends and global trends are changing.  
The shift of global power, <sup>the</sup> rise of  
Asian powers, and <sup>the</sup> rise of multipolarity  
are manifestations of changing trends.

These changing trends also create  
foreign policy challenge for Pakistan  
due to its internal and external  
problems. However, the successful  
steps can mitigate the foreign  
policy challenges of Pakistan. Fortunately,  
Pakistan is taking wonderful steps  
such as prioritising interest-based  
foreign policy and shifting to geo-economics.  
This entails that the day is not  
far enough when the country will  
able to mitigate its foreign policy  
challenges.