

Qno: What role have ideological factors played in the conceptualization of Pakistan's foreign policy?

Answer

① Introduction:

Pakistan was created not by geography, ethnicity and religion alone. Rather, it emerged out of a strong ideological roots based in the Two-Nation theory. It laid the intellectual and later the political groundwork in the form of Lahore Resolution (1947) for the creation of Pakistan. Thus, its foreign policy goals reflect these ideological factors. Islam has always been used as a unifying factor in foreign policy to gain moral and political legitimacy. However, Pakistan often took pragmatic turns in its foreign policy decisions for strategic purposes. This shows a hybrid foreign policy wherein ideology sets the tone, but pragmatism sets the course.

② Ideological Factors in Foreign Policy

(i) TNT as the Guiding Principle

TNT was a unifying domestic ideology around the Islamic identity of Pakistan.

Muslims of the Indian subcontinent were a distinct nation with the right to a separate homeland.

"Pakistan was created the day

the first Hindu converted to

Islam" — Jinnah.

(ii) Islamic solidarity and Pan-Islamism

Pakistan's foreign policy goal is to maintain peace within and without.

Pakistan as a nation stands with not only the Muslims in Islamist states, but also the ones in non-Muslim states.

Thus, Islamic solidarity transcends divides of all kinds whether physical or virtual.

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11 Karachi hosted the 1951 Asian
Muslim conference to strengthen
Muslim unity" — Ayaz Ali Jilani.

(iii) Ideological opposition to communism

As an Islamic state, Pakistan opposed
atheistic communism. It joined
SEATO and CENTO partly out of
ideological, and partly out of strategic
reasons.

"Pakistan became a faithful ally of
the US in Soviet-Afghanistan War" — K.K. Aziz.

(iv) Kashmir Accession to validate TNT

Kashmir is not a piece of land that
Pakistan wants to capture. Rather,
it is, by extension, an ideological
imperative and culmination of TNT.

Pakistan as a leader of Muslim world
wants to save its ideological
commitments from all kinds of aggression.

Strategic Divergence in Ideology

(1) Joining US-led Military Pacts (1954-55)

Initially, Pakistan avoided entanglements in great-power rivalries. However, later it took a strategic decision to counter India after Pak-Indo 1947-48 war. It went with the western bloc against the communist Russia.

(2) Bilateral Ties with China (1963)

China, despite being a non-Muslim, communist state, developed strong bilateral ties with Pakistan after the 1962 Sino-Indian war. Despite ideological incompatibility, Pakistan tilted towards China against to counterbalance Indian hegemony in the South Asian politics.

(3) US-China Rapprochement (1971)

Despite its clear foreign policy of non-interference in bloc politics

It facilitated backchannel talks between the two rival global political powers (US and China). The secret Henry Kissinger's visit to Beijing was mediated by Pakistan, despite knowing it would antagonize the USSR.

"Politics of survival has always been at the forefront than that of ideology" — K.K. Aziz.

(4) Support for Afghan Mujahideen (1979-1989)

Despite its ideologically-driven foreign policy goal of non-interference in its neighbors, it acted as a frontline ally in the US-led anti-soviet campaign. It became deeply entangled in power politics among global players to ensure its survival in the changing security landscape.

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(5) Pakistan's Participation in US' WOT (2001)

Pakistan became a frontline ally of the US in the WOT. The so-called global war against terrorism exposed Pakistan to multifaceted geopolitical pressures. Despite being ideologically driven to Islam, it supported a secular country fully by fighting against Islamist terrorism of Al-Qaeda.

"Pakistan compromised its territorial sovereignty by allowing foreign military operations from its soil." —

(6) Security-First Foreign Policy Mindset

Pakistan has been perceived as a security state. While Pakistan's foreign policy was born from the TNT's ideological vision, in practice, strategic security, alliances, and survival imperatives shapes its direction for

Critical Analysis

Pakistan's foreign policy has emerged to be more proactive than reactive over time. It has blended ideology and strategy to navigate the changing winds of geopolitical, geo-economic, and geo-strategic world landscape. Being strategically positioned between South Asia, Middle East, and Central Asia, it has been exposed to a number of challenges. Thus, Pakistan has adopted a realist foreign policy approach.

Conclusion

Thus, it could be concluded in the end that foreign policy is shaped by ideology, but wholly determined by it. Pakistan has time and again put its national

interest over and above everything else.
Thus, there are a number of determinants
of the foreign policy of Pakistan and
the country does not merely focus on a
single determining factor at the cost of
others, as it has developed that political
maturity with past bitter bilateral,
regional and multilateral experiences.

