

Topic: Changing global dynamics and foreign policy of Pakistan

In a world where power is shifting from West to East, alliances are reshaping, and economic crisis loom large, Pakistan's foreign policy stands at a crossroads—either to adopt the winds of change or risk being swept aside in the tide of global transformation.

I. Introduction

Pakistan's foreign policy is at a critical juncture, facing the challenge of recalibrating its approach amidst shifting global alliances, economic crisis and geopolitical rivalries.

II. Changing global dynamics

a. Rise of multipolarity

Case in point: Decline of US unipolar dominance and emergence of China as a global superpower and leader in trade and infrastructure

b. Regional Resurgence

Case in point: India's growing alignment with US and its rising stature

in global politics (e.g. inclusion
in BRICS, QUAD membership)
→ Russia's assertive policies in
Ukraine and alignment with China

c. Shift in global alliances

Case in point: Expansion of BRICS
and implications of recent
BRICS summit

d. Globalization Vs. Protectionism

Case in point: Impact of Trump return
and shift towards economic
blocks and regionalism

e. Geopolitical challenges

Case in point: US-China rivalry in South
Asia and its impact on
regional actors like Pakistan.

- Climate change, terrorism
and economic decoupling

III. Foreign policy of Pakistan:

a. Core objectives of Pakistan's foreign
policy.

b. Contemporary foreign policy vision.

Case in point: Economic diplomacy and
regional connectivity through
CPEC.

- Countering India's regional hegemony
- Expanding ties with Russia, China and middle eastern states

IV. Impacts of changing global dynamics on Pakistan's foreign policy

a. Geopolitical Realignments

Case in point: Pakistan's position in

- China-US rivalry
- Strengthening ties with China through CPEC and BRI
- Challenges for balancing relations with US amidst shifting loyalties

b. Exclusion from BRICS expansion

Case in point: Consequences of BRICS

summit and India's influence which is potential for engagement with other platforms like SCO.

c. Regional Rivalries and India factor

Case in point: India's growing stature

in global forum and its implications for Pakistan.

d. Trump 2.0 and US-Pakistan relations

Case in point: Trump's continuation of protectionist and transactional policies which shed light on need of diversification of policies to reduce dependence on Washington.

e. Role of SCO and Regional alliances

Case in point: Significance of Pakistan holding SCO Summit 2024.

f. Economic and Climate changes in changing world.

Case in point: Reliance on IMF and world bank. Need for collaboration with international organizations.

V. Strategic re-orientation of Pakistan's foreign policy.

a. Strengthening Pak-China partnership.

Case in point: Importance of CPEC and expanding ties in trade, defense etc.

b. Engagement with Middle eastern states

Case in point: Relations with KSA, UAE

and Turkey.

c. Exploring ties with Russia

Case in point: Potential for defense cooperation and energy imports.

d. Leveraging Regional platforms

Case in point: SCO as a platform for economic connectivity and counter-terrorism.

e. Economic and Climate diplomacy

Case in point: Enhancing ties with ASEAN and African nations for economic opportunities.

VI Challenges to Pakistan's foreign policy in a multipolar world.

a. Internal political instability

Case in point: Domestic governance issues

b. Economic dependence on external factors

Case in point: Reliance on IMF loans.

c. Security concerns

Case in point: Terrorism resurgence and challenges in Afghanistan.

d. Perception Management

Case in point: Combating narratives of being a security state while projecting a positive image globally.

VII Way forward for Pakistan's foreign policy

- a. Adopting a pragmatic approach.
- b. Diversification of partnerships
- c. Strengthening economic resilience.
- d. Leveraging geopolitical location.
- e. Institutional Reforms in foreign policy.

VIII Conclusion.

In the aftermath of second world war, Winston Churchill famously described the global order as a "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma". For Pakistan, navigating this ever-evolving riddle of international politics has always been a delicate balancing act. From its inception in 1947, Pakistan's foreign policy has been shaped by pressure of its volatile neighbourhood, its precarious economic conditions, and the fluctuating dynamics of global power. Today, as the world moves away from US unipolarity towards a multipolar structure, Pakistan stands at a pivotal crossroads facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

Foreign Policy, the cornerstone of a nation's interaction with the world is a strategic framework through which states safeguard their sovereignty, promote economic interests and pursue security in an unpredictable global system. In this context, Pakistan's geostrategic importance cannot be overstated. Nestled at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East, Pakistan serves as a key transit hub for energy, trade and geopolitical influence. With a population of over 240 million and a nuclear arsenal, it

is a state that cannot be ignored in global politics. However, the current global environment is going under seismic shifts. Power is becoming more diffused, with the rise of China as an economic giant and Russia's resurgence as a strategic actor challenging the western-led liberal order. Multipolarity is replacing the unipolar dominance of the United States, while regional alliances such as BRICS and SCO are asserting their influence on the global stage. Recent developments including the **BRICS 2024 Summit**, hosted in Pakistan, ^{Russia} and **2024 SCO Summit** hosted in Pakistan, highlight the increasing importance of regional blocs. Meanwhile, the prospect of **Trump 2.0** with his America first and isolationist policies, cast a shadow over traditional alliances and global stability.

Amid these shifting dynamics, Pakistan's foreign policy must navigate a delicate path. It faces the challenge of recalibrating its approach to global and regional players while managing domestic, political and economic crisis. The need for adaptability, pragmatism and foresight have never been greater.

The global order is witnessing a transformative shift from unipolarity to multipolarity, significantly ~~implementing~~ impacting the geopolitical landscape and compelling countries like Pakistan to recalibrate their foreign policy strategies. For decades, the United States enjoyed dominance as the sole super power following the cold war, shaping international norms, institutions and alliances. However, this hegemony has been challenged by the emergence of new power centres. The decline of US unipolar dominance is evident in its inability to maintain influence in critical regions, exemplified by its withdrawal from Afghanistan in **2021**, the ongoing challenges in **Ukraine**, and its shrinking role in the **Middle East**. These developments indicate the erosion of Washington's ability to unilaterally dictate global affairs, paving the way for a multipolar world order.

China has emerged as a major player in the global dynamics. As the second-largest economy, its influence extends far beyond shaping global trade, infrastructure, and diplomacy. The **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, with projects spanning over 140 countries, exemplifies China's intent to establish itself as a global

leader Pakistan's partnership with China, particularly through the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**, highlights the deepening ties between two nations. Economically, China's focus on infrastructure investment and regional connectivity aligns with Pakistan's strategic needs. Militarily, China's assertiveness in South China Sea and its technological advancements in artificial intelligence and quantum computing demonstrate its ambition to rival US hegemony. For Pakistan, China's rise presents an opportunity to counterbalance India's influence while fostering economic growth through strategic collaboration.

The regional dynamics in South Asia further underscore the complexity of global shifts.

India, leveraging its economic growth and strategic partnerships, has positioned itself as a key ally of the United States.

Its participation in initiatives such as **QUAD** and closer defense ties with Washington signify its growing prominence in the Indo-Pacific strategy, aimed at containing China. India's active role in **BRICS** has also enhanced its international stature, especially with the bloc's expansion during

the recent summit. This expansion represents a challenge for Pakistan, as India's influence within BRICS has marginalized Pakistan's prospects of joining the group. For Islamabad, countering India's diplomatic maneuvers requires forging stronger regional partnership and asserting its position on issues like Kashmir and regional security.

Russia's resurgence on the global stage adds another layer of complexity to the shifting global dynamics. Despite western sanctions and isolation, Moscow has continued to assert its influence, particularly in its immediate neighbourhood. The invasion of Ukraine in **2022** signalled Russia's willingness to challenge Western dominance, pushing it closer to China and other non-western powers. This growing **Sino-Russian** alignment has created opportunities for Pakistan to diversify its foreign policy. Russia's willingness to engage with Pakistan, particularly in energy and defense cooperation, provides Islamabad with alternatives to its traditional reliance on western partners.

In addition to these global shifts BRICS expansion underscores the changing global

alliances and the recent summit signals a challenge to Western dominated institutions like the **IMF** and **World Bank**. The expanded BRICS bloc aims to reshape global financial governance by promoting local currencies and reducing reliance on US-dollar. However, Pakistan's exclusion from this expanded grouping highlights its weakened diplomatic position and India's growing influence within multilateral forums.

Pakistan's foreign policy has evolved over time, influenced by its unique geostrategic location, historical experiences and national priorities.

From its early years of independence to its current vision, the country's foreign relations have focused on safeguarding its sovereignty promoting economic development, and maintaining regional balance particularly concerning India. The early years of Pakistan's foreign policy were aligned by alliance politics and heavy reliance on the United States. Faced with limited resources and hostile relations with India, Pakistan joined US-led defence pacts like **SEATO** and **CENTO** to secure military and economic aid. These alliances were seen as a way to strengthen national defense and counterbalance

India, but they also made Pakistan dependant on western powers. During 1970s, a significant shift occurred under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. After the 1971 war and separation of East Pakistan, Pakistan moved towards a policy of non-alignment and focussed on strengthening ties with Muslim world. The

Islamic Summit conference of 1974

highlighted Pakistan's commitment to fostering unity among Muslim nations. Additionally, the country forged closer ties with China during this period, diversifying its international partnerships. Post 9-11 Pakistan's foreign policy entered a new phase as the country became a frontline state in US led global war on terror. While this partnership brought financial aid and strategic recognition, it also created internal instability, as Pakistan struggled with the domestic repercussions of terrorism and the complexities of balancing international expectations with its national interest.

The primary goals of Pakistan's foreign policy are rooted in safeguarding its sovereignty, maintaining regional stability, and ensuring economic growth. One of its key objectives is the protection of national sovereignty and

territorial integrity. This includes addressing external threats, particularly from India, and ensuring the country's independence remains intact. Another critical objective is to maintain a strategic balance with India, which has remained Pakistan's rival since independence.

The Kashmir conflict remains central to Pakistan's foreign policy, as it seeks to draw international attention to the issue while countering India's growing influence in the region. Economic development and trade are also central pillars of Pakistan's foreign policy.

In recent years, Pakistan's foreign policy has increasingly emphasized economic diplomacy and regional connectivity. A corner stone of this vision is China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a key component of China's Belt and Road Initiative. CPEC promises to transform Pakistan's infrastructure, boost trade, and enhance regional connectivity, positioning the country as a critical hub in South Asia.

Additionally, Pakistan seeks to counterbalance India's regional hegemony by fostering closer ties with major powers like China and Russia, as well as strengthening relations with Middle Eastern states. These partnerships aim to diversify

Pakistan's foreign relations and ensure it remains an active player in regional and global affairs.

The rapidly evolving global dynamics, shaped by geopolitical shifts, economic challenges, and environmental crises, have significantly influenced Pakistan's foreign policy. As the international order undergoes realignments, Pakistan faces both opportunities and challenges in navigating its foreign relations to secure national interests. Pakistan finds itself at the crossroads of the intensifying US-China rivalry. While Pakistan has historically maintained strong ties with the United States, its strategic partnership with China, especially through CPEC and BRI, has become a cornerstone of its foreign policy. Strengthening ties with China offers Pakistan critical economic and infrastructure benefits. However, balancing its relations with the US has become increasingly challenging, as Washington views Pakistan's growing reliance on Beijing with skepticism. The shifting loyalties in global power dynamics require Pakistan to carefully navigate this complex geopolitical environment to avoid alienating either super-power.

The BRICS 2024 summit marked a significant development in global multipolarity, with the expansion of the group to include new members. Pakistan's exclusion, largely influenced by India's opposition, highlights the challenges it faces in gaining recognition in major global forums. This exclusion underscores the need for Pakistan to engage actively with other multilateral platforms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). By strengthening its role within the SCO and similar alliances, Pakistan can enhance its regional and global presence while countering the influence of adversarial forces.

Similarly, India's growing stature on the global stage through active participation in forums like BRICS and the G20, poses a challenge to Pakistan's regional ambitions. India's expanding economic and global clout has enabled it to overshadow Pakistan's narratives, particularly regarding the Kashmir issue. In response, Pakistan continues to advocate for the resolution of Kashmir conflict, emphasizing human rights violations in the region. However, the polarized global order and declining international interest in the Kashmir issue demand

that Pakistan adopt innovative strategies to ensure its voice is heard on global patterns.

Also the potential return of Donald Trump to the US presidency could have profound implications for US-Pakistan relations. Trump's previous administration was marked by protectionist and transactional policies, emphasizing counter-terrorism and regional stability. Pakistan may face renewed pressure to deliver on counter terrorism objectives and ensure stability in Afghanistan. Recognizing the limitations of this transactional relationship, Pakistan must diversify its alliances and reduce its reliance on Washington by strengthening partnerships with countries like China, Russia and Gulf States. In this regard, Pakistan's growing role within the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** offers significant opportunities for regional collaboration. Hosting the SCO summit 2024 in Pakistan underscores Pakistan's commitment to fostering regional security, trade, and counter terrorism initiatives.

Amid global economic uncertainties, Pakistan continues to rely heavily on financial support from institutions like IMF and the World Bank. However, this reliance often came with stringent

conditions that hinders economic autonomy. To address these challenges, Pakistan must pivot towards regional economic cooperation by enhancing trade with China, Central Asia, and Gulf States. Initiatives like CPEC can serve as a catalyst for economic growth. Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change as evidenced by devastating floods in 2022, has brought human security and environmental diplomacy to the forefront of its foreign policy. Climate crisis threatens not only the country's economy but also its food and water security. Pakistan has increasingly collaborated with international organizations to secure funding for climate adaptation and disaster management.

The multipolar global order presents Pakistan with several challenges, ranging from domestic instability to external security threats. Navigating these complexities require pragmatic and adaptive approach. Frequent political turmoil within Pakistan has undermined the coherence and consistency of its foreign policy. Divisions between civilian and military leadership and unstable governance have weakened Pakistan's ability to project a unified stance on global issues.

Pakistan's reliance on loans from institutions like IMF has constrained its strategic economy. The stringent conditions attached to these loans often conflict with Pakistan's long term economic and foreign policy goals. Diversifying sources of financial support and reducing dependency on external actors is essential for greater independence. Also the resurgence of terrorism and instability in neighbouring Afghanistan pose significant security challenges. Pakistan's management of its relationship with the Taliban regime remains critical for ensuring regional stability. Additionally, internal and cross border security threats hinder foreign investment and economic growth.

Pakistan has long been viewed as a "security state" a perception that hinders its ability to project a positive image internationally. Countering this narrative by showcasing Pakistan's economic potential, cultural heritage and commitment to global cause is essential for improving its global standing. Pakistan must adopt a pragmatic and forward looking approach. This includes focusing on interests over ideology in forming alliances and building robust ties with non-traditional allies like ASEAN and

African nations. Strengthening economic resilience is crucial, and this can be achieved by reducing dependence on external loans and fostering trade and investment opportunities. Pakistan's geopolitical location offers a unique advantage, serving as a bridge between South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. By leveraging this position, Pakistan can play a pivotal role in regional connectivity and economic integration. Institutional reforms to enhance coordination between civilian and military leadership are also essential for coherent and effective foreign policy. Active participation in multilateral forums such as SCO and the UN can amplify Pakistan's voice on global issues, including climate change, economic development and security. Engagement in multilateralism will help Pakistan secure its interest and contribute to global stability.

In conclusion, Pakistan's foreign policy must adapt to evolving global order by embracing pragmatism, fostering diverse partnerships, and prioritizing economic resilience. While challenges such as internal stability, economic dependence and security threats persist, Pakistan has the potential to emerge as a responsible and influential player

in regional and global politics. By focusing on strategic reorientation and leveraging its unique geopolitical position, Pakistan can navigate the complexities of a multipolar world and secure a brighter future.