

## **Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Internal Challenges in New Millennium**

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### **Abstract:**

Pakistan's foreign policy has always been identified as policy of self-abnegation. It is blamed that external factors particularly USA play a vital role in the shaping of foreign policy of Pakistan but there are many internal factors pose challenges to Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan is an ideological state hence ideology has a special place in its foreign policy and it has been a central focus in the foreign policy for all time. There is a famous U-turn in Pakistan's foreign policy in recent era and this shift in policy has provoked an intense debate at home and abroad. Territorial integrity is the foremost important foreign policy goal of any country and it deals with the security that may be external or internal or both. Similarly, most important issue in Pakistan's foreign policy is security concerns because Pakistan has one of the most complex threat analyses of any state in the world. There are many problems at home related to grievances against foreign policy particularly on the issue and pattern of war on terrorism. This paper deals with the theoretical aspect of term foreign policy and analyzes the Pakistan's foreign policy with special reference to the issue of security. What are the threats and challenges to the security of Pakistan and what are modern trends adopted by Pakistan to counter these security threats. A detailed analysis has been given of domestic challenges in making an effective foreign policy like radical Islam and regional separatism, terrorism, WANA issue and remnants of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

### **Foreign Policy:**

Foreign policy can be said to have emerged when contacts between the earliest human societies took place<sup>1</sup>. Foreign policy behavior refers to the actions states take toward each other. It is important to note that these actions usually are not taken as ends in themselves but are tied in some way to larger purposes—from long run aspirations to more immediate aims—that national leaders hope to achieve in their dealings with other countries<sup>2</sup>.

There is a dire need for theory of foreign policy that is separate from the theory of international relations. A society constituted by the individuals and evolved with the

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<sup>1</sup> See Joseph Frankel,(1998) , International Relations in a changing world, Oxford University Press, London

<sup>2</sup> M. Imtiaz Shahid, International Relation, yesterday, today, tomorrow, Carwan Enterprises, 1995, P: 129

passage of time in a social organization and the individual cannot properly be understood without society, likewise international relations began with foreign policy and international relations of a state cannot be understood without understanding the foreign policy of that state. So it is very essential to understand the trends of modern international environment particularly in terms of foreign policies of major players of world politics<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes the two terms, foreign policy and diplomacy create perplexity. The most suitable way to differentiate between the two terms is to consider foreign policy as the legislative and diplomacy as the executive phase of the foreign relations of a country. Practically diplomats of a country play a decisive role in the legislative phase of foreign policy by accumulating and examining imperative information from all corners of the world and convey it usually with their own policy proposal and suggestions to their respective foreign office and maintain a regular exchange of information with policy makers at home regarding a variety of options available in a given situation to deal with a particular affair<sup>4</sup>. Foreign policy is an extension of internal or domestic policy. Indeed foreign policy is designed to protect and promote national interests of whom domestic policy is an integral part. Often domestic policies have to be made subservient to foreign policy because without success in foreign policy, there would be no domestic policy left to pursue. Similarly many domestic needs are to be fulfilled by pursuing a particular foreign policy in the light of those domestic needs<sup>5</sup>. Foreign policy arrangements become more multifaceted and complex in view of the crucial challenges that international politics is likely to pose in the new millennium. In recent days foreign policy is argued mostly post facto either in the circumstance of the rationale for its formulation or of the actions and results that it produces.

Territorial integrity is the foremost important foreign policy goal of any country and it deals with the security that may be internal or external security. Attempts of one state to achieve security precipitate a sense of insecurity in other states. When states seek the ability to defend themselves they get benefit and loss both. Benefit because they wanted to gain the ability to dictate other states by developing their weapons and loss because others states will increased their own arms to maintain the deterrence and it will reduce the security of the first state. So maintaining the territorial integrity without diminishing the integrity of other state is a unique but unpopular and uncommon art.

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<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Younas,(2003), Foreign Policy, A Theoretical Introduction, Oxford University Press, Oxford, P. 69.

<sup>4</sup> (Nicolson, Harold. 1963, Diplomacy, Third Edition. Oxford University Press, London.)

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Younas, Op.cit. P. 72.

### **Pakistan's Foreign Policy:**

Historian Paul Kennedy named Pakistan as one of the nine pivotal states whose future evolution would not only determine the fate of their region, but also affect international stability. He maintains in his article in the *Foreign Affairs Quarterly* that "progress by a pivotal state such as Pakistan would help not only the region but also promote US interests in trade and in investment"<sup>6</sup>. Pakistan has developed as a principal actor and a vital personality of its own. Now it is supposed to secure and protect its all vital interests at all cost. These interests are considered to be above individual morality and any other factor. Pakistan should demonstrate and follow an independent and principled foreign policy in the pursuit of its national interests. Being an ideological state, Pakistan did not only seek to promote closer links with Islamic countries but also played a leading role in championing the rights of the developing countries in general and Muslim countries in particular. In the economic development, Pakistan should not compromise on Islamic ideology in making its foreign relations. In the current phase of rapidly globalizing world, Pakistan's foreign policy is drastically needed a fresh look. The main features of the emerging global order to which our foreign policy has to be adjusted over the coming years in a manner best suited to secure our interest and security are identified below.

### **Security environment in Post Cold War Era:**

Military capability is considered as the most important mean of security of a nation. The militarization of the country is essential not only to deter the foreign powers but also to contain the domestic unrest which is growing with unprecedented speed as consequence of globalization and economic disparity. Though the domestic crises in the country are mainly the result of the failure of state institution yet cross cultural relationships among nation-states are being used maliciously to destabilize the other country or countries sometimes politically

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<sup>6</sup> Mahdi Masud, Time to crush terrorists , DAWN WIRE SERVICE 09 August 1997, Issue : 03/32, Available at <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/area-studies/SouthAsia/SAserials/Dawn/1997/09Aug97.html>. Accessed on 12-11-2010.

and sometimes economically. Security is the need of the time for every state whether powerful or weak. All the great post war settlements of modern times like Vienna in 1815, Versailles in 1919 and San Francisco in 1945 were based on the principles of international security. Although economists present the economic power as an important way to acquire security and they emphasize over soft power over hard power to get national interests. The post cold war is described as new world order or new world disorder when the security of smaller states has become more problematic than ever before<sup>7</sup>.

Washington is enjoying currently a hegemonic position in international politics and cannot be threatened by any other country. US air strikes and bombing of small countries on one pretext or another is the current example of violation of international norms and values. These acts show that UN, the world government, has now become a tool in the hands of the US. The war against Iraq and situation in Afghanistan shows that the UN has been by passed by US to achieve its economical, political and strategic interests in the region and created security problems for weak countries.

Nuclear powers used these weapons as deterrence by imposing threat against other nation states and sometimes in making strategic alliance for enhancement of security. West strategic alliance in the form of NATO with the objective of common security was result of nuclearisation of west. Only possession of nuclear weapons cannot maintain security or deterrence just as North Vietnam attack on American army in Vietnam war, Chinese attack on U.S forces in Korean war have proved that non nuclear states do not live in any nuclear security dilemma and when the national interest or territorial security is being threatened even by a nuclear power, a weak power can invade powerful state.

### **Strategic considerations for Pakistan:**

Pakistan has one of the most complex threat analyses of any state in the world. In the north is China, an emerging economic giant; in the east India, a state with vastly superior industrial resources and a much larger human base and intense conflicts with Pakistan over many issues particularly Kashmir issue; in the west lies Iran and Afghanistan, never friendly and source of internal tension and domestic instability; to the south positioned Arabian sea, a

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<sup>7</sup> Maqbool Ahmad Bhaty,(1996), Great powers and South Asia Post Cold Wars Trends, Islamabad Institute of Regional Studies, p.20.

gate way to Central Asian States through Gwadar Port. Further, two of Pakistani provinces with vast population have strong ethnic and tribal ties across the border in Afghanistan while on the Indian frontier there is unresolved dispute over the status of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan's domestic politics remains intimately linked to political relations with Pakistan's neighbours. Any analysis of threats to Pakistan's security must emphasis on this overlapping phenomenon between external and internal problem. The geographical shape of Pakistan and the distribution of its population complicate the defence problem. In its northern end there is cease-fire line controlled by UN peace keepers (UNMOGIP). It no longer has air superiority, it cannot raise new forces in course of short war and its army is still less than half of the size of the Indian army. The borders are always in great risks of escalation and above all there is a possibility of active India Israel cooperation which can place Pakistan in a hopeless strategic position.

Pakistan is the only ex-colonial state to have been divided by war. One part of it was dismembered in 1971 because of internal inequality, disparity and involvement of external element. Political the military regimes are playing havoc with the corridors of powers sometimes with the support of public and sometimes by misuse of power but in actual no capable civilian leadership has assumed power until now. Finally ethnic, regional, religious, economic, professional and class groups periodically expressed their unhappiness with continued military rule and sometimes with the elected democratic government because of corruption and mismanagement<sup>8</sup>.

Pakistan's security is gravely threatened in recent era as compared to previous threats. Previous governments identified the Kashmir dispute and Afghan civil war as an external threat. The threat today is not only from India but also from internal extremist elements. The threat from India does not now come from an attack that would seize and hold additional Pakistan territory, the threat today is an internal threat as well ranging from failed governance, mismanagement of the country's economy to the war against terrorism. There are a large number of issues which are constant threat to the security of Pakistan. These include environment, narcotic trafficking, terrorism, disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destructions, human right, gender issue etc. In addition to all these, the wave of economic liberalization and globalization has weaken the traditional authority and control of the state in policy making options even on important matters and issues of vital national interest.

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<sup>8</sup> See Stephen P. Kohan, Pakistan: Army, Society and security, Asian Affairs, Summer 1987

## **Internal Challenges:**

The present era is the age of low intensity conflicts rather than conventional wars. So, it is extremely important to understand our internal dynamics, challenges and threats such as national integration, ethnicity, sectarianism, drug mafia, political system, bad economic conditions and economic disparities, and geographic vulnerabilities. The main internal fronts which are directly affecting the foreign policy of Pakistan are the followings;

## **Drone attacks:**

US forces launched drone attacks on different villages of Bajour agency and other part of Waziristan and adjacent tribal areas. This area falls under the administrative control of Pakistan. Pakistan's territorial sovereignty has been violated by the US forces on the pretext of hot pursuit of Al-Qaeda and Taliban remnants and the casualties and death toll of civilians are rising day by day on the name of collateral damage. There has been strong public reaction in Pakistan against the recent US drone attack in Northern part of Pakistan which resulted in the killing of hundreds of people, including women and children. It is a flagrant violation of Pakistan sovereignty according to the norms of international law. People are of the opinion that any action against Al-Qaeda on Pakistani soil should be taken by the Pakistani authorities not by American forces or at least Pakistani authorities should be informed prior to any action. The response of Pakistani government in this matter has been inadequate and it is quite alarming to note that Washington does not care about tendering an apology for the blatant violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and loss of human lives instead Washington has defended its action on grounds of tracking down terrorist. These attacks are an eye opener for Pakistani government. It shows that government is proved as a failure in providing sovereignty to its citizens and territory and US announced that they will take such actions in futures if there is necessity. Public anger in Pakistan against both the US and the present government on this issue is mounting up as these unacceptable acts are questioning our national dignity and security.

## **Islamic Fundamentalism:**

The US and west view Islamic fundamentalism as a threat to its new hegemonic power. This is a self created and self motivated concept of West particular in the context of Muslim world. Suicide bombing, killing, terrorist attack and extremist has been present in every society since past and is present in every corner of the world. History of the world is full of many incidents and personalities who are involved in terrorist and extremists activities and did not belong to Islamic Society. Mostly persons blamed in recent extremist activities are those which belong to Muslim community but they are brought up in Western societies. We need to wash away the title of extremist from our faces while dealing in the comity of nations. Through our foreign policy we need to present a picture that we are a responsible and moderate Muslim country. Some fraction of society opposed president Musharraf's cooperation with Washington and the US presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This led some radical Muslim to call for Musharraf's assassination and an Islamic revolution in Pakistan. Benazir's assassination is also an episode of the same serial. These events lead towards the tarnishing image of Pakistan and portray like a rogue state, a supporter of terrorism that already possessed weapons of man destruction. Prevention of another India-Pakistan war, wider strategic cooperation and stronger economic ties with US, Pakistan's identity as a moderate Muslim state is challenges faced by Pakistani government on foreign policy front in new millennium. In addition to this, Pakistan continues to face tremendous pressure from western media, which critically examine the imagined links between Al-Qaeda and Pakistan. American media in particular tried to label Pakistani intelligentsia, intelligence agencies and nuclear scientists, collaborating and assisting to develop "dirty bomb". Pakistani scientist has also been labeled as fundamentalist. Lose Angels Times even declared Abdul Qadeer Khan "The man that could be called the Axis of Evil" expressing concern and suspicion regarding the link of Pakistan's nuclear program with some of the Islamic countries<sup>9</sup>. This is the biggest challenge of the time particularly in the environment where suicide bombing and killing of innocent human being have become the music of the day and major challenge in Pakistan.

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<sup>9</sup> Tahmina Rahid,(2003), Global Terrorism and counter terrorism: Pakistan's response to the emerging challenges, Pakistan Defence review ,Vol-17 No. 1 Winter,, P. 49.

## **Balochistan issue:**

Balochistan has assumed a serious dimension particularly in the post Gwadar Scenario. Akbar Bugti's assassination, mineral resources, reservoirs of natural gas and coal are the vital issues which caused feeling of discrimination among people of the area. External factors like India and Iran are reported to be further aggravating the situation. Since the US invasion over Afghanistan, Balochistan is tending to acquire importance in the American policy of South Asia. Balochistan enjoys extraordinary geostrategic importance since it is the hub between South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia. Another aspect of Balochistan's strategic importance to the US is the role of China in deep sea Gwadar Port. American are so concern on this internal matter of security of Pakistan that a Republican congressman, Thomas Tancredo in a letter sent to former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wrote. "It is my understanding that president Bush will be traveling to Pakistan in March 2006. Please urge him to raise the issue of Balochistan with president Musharraf so this dispute may come to conclusion and further losses of life may be prevented Mr. Tancredo claims that the operation in Balochistan divert important military resources that could be used to hunt Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups<sup>10</sup>. In actual, White House wants to delineate Chinese influence in the region by controlling the geostrategic location of Balochistan to access Central Asian states. It is also worthy to note that the forces of nationalism in Baluchistan are threats to national integration and federation.

## **Economic Factor:**

Robert McNamara in his book, "The essence of security: Reflections in office", has summed up the co-relations of national security and economic development by declaring that security is development and without development there can be no security<sup>11</sup>. The accuracy of this statement has been proved by the demise of Soviet Union. Pakistan's economic growth rate is rising since 2002-2003 in general and its peak at 8.4 percent in 2004-5 in particular. Trade deficit rose from \$ 1.3 billion in the first quarter of Fy 05 to \$ 2.6 billion during the

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<sup>10</sup> Dawn Feb 8,2006.

<sup>11</sup> See Robert S. McNamara, (1986), The essence of security: Reflections in office, Hodder and Stoughton,UK.

first quarter of Fy 06<sup>12</sup>. But economic growth (GDP) in Fy 2007 from 6.8 percent dropped to 2.5 percent in Fy 2010<sup>13</sup>. Index of economic freedom has placed Pakistan on the 110<sup>th</sup> slot in 2006, considerably higher than the 133<sup>rd</sup> position on which it stood in 2005<sup>14</sup>. While it again ranked on the 123<sup>rd</sup> in 2011 with 55.1 freedom score<sup>15</sup>. These worsening economic conditions are very hazardous for the stability of the state and even there is an understanding among the enlightened Pakistan's intelligentsia that the Pakistan's military force will not be strong if the country's economy and domestic health continue to deteriorate. U.S is currently undertaking a multi-billion dollar, multi faceted assistance programme in the field of education and other socio economic development programmes that will ensure the stable and balanced development of Pakistani society. This includes development assistance, balance of payment support, debt rescheduling and writ off, agricultural trade and investment support.

Pakistan coordinated with among intelligence, law enforcement, finance and military authorities successfully to apprehend well over 500 suspected al-Qaida and Taliban operatives to date, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammad and Remzi Bin Al Shibbi. US awarded cash grant of \$ 600 million forgiveness of \$ 1billion in government of Pakistan debt owed to the U.S government for financial year 2004. Washington announced \$ 200 million for economic support that will help to ease Pakistan's debt burden. \$ 75 million in development assistance, child survival, and health funds \$ 75 million in foreign military finance to support Pakistan's military and security preparedness, \$ 38 million to enhance the effectiveness of Pakistan's efforts in border security, law enforcement development and counter narcotics, \$73 million program to help Pakistan secure border with Afghanistan against trafficking in weapons, drugs and infiltration by terrorists \$ 24 million, for construction of road, to provide law enforcement access and promote economic development in currently in accessible areas<sup>16</sup>. During the last ten years, we have no doubt retained some expensive loan and slightly reduced the debt burden, but surprisingly the practice of

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<sup>12</sup> Dr. Mehnaz Fatima, Smugness about the economy, Dawn, Feb, 12,2006.

<sup>13</sup> Pakistan's economic growth to slow to 2.5%. available at [http://www.menafn.com/qn\\_news\\_story\\_s.asp?StoryId=1093368725](http://www.menafn.com/qn_news_story_s.asp?StoryId=1093368725). Accessed on 12-12-2010.

<sup>14</sup> Mahnaz Fatima, Op.cit.

<sup>15</sup>2011 Index of Economic Freedom. Available at <http://www.heritage.org/index/Ranking>. Accessed on 12-12-2010.

<sup>16</sup> Remarks by US ambassador to Pakistan, Nanci J. Powell in Karachi council of foreign relations Karachi, Pakistan Nov. 13,2002.

negotiating new loan without critically examining their needs, still continues. It seems to have broken on Kashkole<sup>17</sup> but created new ones<sup>18</sup>.

## **Nuclear Proliferation issue**

It has been rightly stated by Margaret Thatcher that huffing and puffing about test bans and non proliferation did not stop India and Pakistan and is not going to stop major states from getting nuclear weapon when their security interest<sup>19</sup>. IAEA pointed towards Pakistan for proliferating WMDs and no Muslim country supported us. It does mean that we should not delink ourselves from OIC but we should first seek our own national interest than we should look towards Umah. It is further alleged that Pakistan's nuclearization has contributed to international terrorism. The US expressed serious concern regarding the authenticity of the control and command system and Pakistan's ability to protect its nuclear assets. Daily Dawn reported the arrival of arms control Scientists in Islamabad to assess the foolproof measures for the protection and safety of nuclear installations. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan is also a victim of the same allegation that he has been involved in tranfering the nuclear technology to Iran and North Korea.

## **Kashmir issue:**

William E. Brown and Robert Windrem in their controversial book "Critical Mass" had maintained that because of the Kashmir issue south Asia is the most dangerous place on the earth<sup>20</sup>. Kashmir has always been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan for the last 63 years. Religious and emotional attachment of people of Pakistan with Kashmir always pursues the policy makers to take tough and non-flexible stance over Kashmir issue. On the other hand Kashmiries are angry on Pakistan's policy towards Kashmir because they have not rendered scarifies of their lives merely for the sake of a bus service, fairy service, train service, self governance and option like a "united states of Kashmir." But clearly their goal is Islam and Pakistan for which they are offering the precious sacrifice of their lives. So

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<sup>17</sup> The urdu term used in the meaning of a pot used by the beggars for begging.

<sup>18</sup> Tasneem Siddique, Beggars can't be choosers, Dawn, Feb, 5,2006.

<sup>19</sup> Gopal Singh, Prem R. Bhardwaj,(2003), *Nuclearization of India and Pakistan: challenges for India security in new millennium*, in BC Gupta, Mohen lal Sharma and S.N Kaushik, "India's foreign policy: emerging challenges and paradigm", Vol-II, Kalling Publications Delhi, P. 345.

<sup>20</sup> See cover story in the issues of India today, xix/4, 15<sup>th</sup>,Feb 1994, xix/15 March 1994.

Pakistan is facing a big internal challenge on this foreign policy front. The plight of Kashmiries have not changed so far as result of the useless talks, exchange of dancers and visits of self-styled intellectuals, traders seeking personal interests and opening of the LOC. Giving unilateral concessions to India is neither in the interest of Pakistan nor that of the Kashmiries.

### **Conclusion:**

These internal foreign policy challenges need to be addressed by the policy makers of Pakistan. These all issues, challenges and threats can tear the fabric of our society if not considered seriously. Although any past government whether democratic or dictatorial could not ignore these issues and challenges at all due to public pressure but a clear cut line has also never been drawn in formulating the foreign policy on these critical issues. The shift in Pakistan's foreign policy after September 11, has provoked an intense debate both at home and abroad. For Pakistan, joining the U.S led anti terrorist coalition reflected the major policy shift by withdrawing support from the Taliban government which has seen Pakistan as one of its leading allies. Pakistan shifted her policy and took U turn to preserve its strategic assets and national sovereignty. America is seeking important role of Pakistan's chief external supporter due to war on terrorism. This is an opportunity to correct old mistakes.

Pakistan should give the message to the outside world as a democratic country that if decisions are taken in isolation without considering and honouring the sentiments of Pakistani society, it will not only inflame public opinion but also create internal security problems. These problems can ultimately affect the nine years effort of coalition partners in Afghanistan. Pakistan can gain some benefits as the U.S has tried to balance its interests in South Asia by declaring Pakistan as its "strategic partner", "closest ally" and "Non-NATO ally". The fact of the matter is that without Pakistan assistance U.S will be unable to hunt the Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements. So it is the time to reconsider, reschedule and reframe the foreign policy of Pakistan in the context of internal needs and challenges.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan maintains a large diplomatic network across the world. Pakistan is the second largest Muslim-majority country in terms of population (after Indonesia) and is only Muslim majority nation to have tested nuclear weapons. Pakistan's economy is integrated into the world with strong trade ties to the EU and economic alliances and agreements with many Asian nations.

Pakistan's challenges in Post-cold war era. Pakistan foreign policy makers are faced with perpetually hostile India, near hostile Afghanistan, and the changed attitude of the US. Pakistan is faced with the threat of two-front war from east and west, inauspicious southwestern backyard, vulnerable seacoast, not so friendly Gulf States, together with internal war on terror and political instability. The newly appointed Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif in consultation with the new PM Khaqan Abbasi, CJCSC Gen Zubair Hayat, and Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa need to revisit the foreign policy at the earliest to make appropriate changes after correctly identifying friends and foes and accordingly diversifying the policy to meet the upcoming challenges. Pakistan's Challenges in the New Millennium | An examination of the Security imperatives that Pakistan will face in a post Kashmir resolved regional scenario. With the Pakistan-India Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. Collaboration with a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations results in a monograph by the Council recording US relations with India and Pakistan, respectively, by a key participant in the process serving as South Asia Director at the National Security Council. Read more. Article.