

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY PERCEPTION: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRE AND POST 9/11 MILIEU

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ABSTRACT: *As a member of the nation-state society, foreign policy remains the first and foremost tool that countries use to interact with each other throughout the history of international politics. This paper will analyze Pakistan's foreign relations vis-à-vis four different countries, the United States as the major international power, Israel as the only country Pakistan has never accepted as a country at any international forum, and two troubling neighbors India and Afghanistan. The paper will address the determinants of Pakistan's foreign policy and critically analyze the 'to be reconsidered' orientation of Pakistan's foreign policy. A brief analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy towards aforementioned four countries in pre and post 9/11 scenario will be carried out based on peoples' perception towards the foreign policy of Pakistan.*

Key words: Pakistan, foreign policy, dilemmas, 9/11, India, US, Afghanistan

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND:

Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has been facing numerous tumultuous challenges both internally and externally encompassing the issues of democracy, social equality, political stability and economic development [1]. The very idea of the creation of Pakistan came under questions from different quarters within and outside. The creation of Pakistan was criticized by many from litterateurs [2] religious ideologues and political analysts [3] who declared it a creation as a result of pathological politics which is empowered by basic elements such as exclusion, subjugation, threats and use of force etc. Oldenburg quotes critically renowned Salman Rushdie's argument regarding Pakistan's creation and declare it a place which was just insufficiently imagined [4]. Within the very first years of its independence Pakistan had to go through sour relations with two of its immediate neighbors India and Afghanistan. It was just few months after the partition of subcontinent that Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan emerged in October 1947, which resulted in first proper war between India and Pakistan in the spring of 1948 [5]. Again within the very first year of independence Pakistan on its North West frontier encountered with another neighboring country Afghanistan being the only country which voted against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations for its claims on Durand Line [6]. Pakistan, geographically located thousands of miles away in two different parts which were known as East Pakistan and West Pakistan before celebrating its first silver jubilee, tragically disintegrated in the wake of 1971 third Indo-Pak war [7]. Oldenburg goes to an instinct and declares this division of East and West Pakistan as inevitable. India played its role during 1971 that resulted in Pakistan's disintegration apparently on humanitarian grounds to stop the genocide in East Pakistan which was rightly challenged by Cordera who claims that India waged a full-fledged war on the basis of realpolitik calculations [8].

Whether it was Kashmir dispute, the 1971 disintegration of Pakistan or the period followed afterwards, Pakistan, in one way or the other remained in the limelight of international community. At international stage, Pakistan had twice proved its successful foreign policy, primarily at the United Nations Security Council's resolution to hold plebiscite, removal of troops and establishment of interim government in Kashmir, which was based on Pakistan's proposals. Second success of

Pakistan's foreign policy was from 1969 to 1972 when Pakistan played its role for the rapprochement between Peoples Republic of China and the United States [9]. According to the declassified documents of the US department of state Pakistan played active role in backtrack diplomacy between the US and China that resulted in re-establishing Sino-US relations. Initiatives taken by the then president of Pakistan Yahya Khan and Pakistan's ambassadors to the United States and China paved the ways for both the US and China to resume the [10].

THE COLD WAR AND INDIAN FACTOR:

Pakistan's involvement in international politics and active foreign policy resulted in changing the world system from bipolarity to unipolarity by the end of cold war [11]. Pakistan had its own international, regional and domestic reasons for joining the cold war. Thus Pakistan played its active role for the proxy war fought in Afghanistan to contain the then USSR from expanding to southern flanks [12]. After the partition of subcontinent in 1947, American policies towards both Pakistan and India were clear to see both the states oriented towards west and not to be influenced by communist threats internally and externally [13]. As discussed earlier, Pakistan's successful foreign policy towards US begun from 1969 to 1972 when Pakistan played its role in Sino-US rapprochement [9]. Pakistan which had fought three wars within first twenty five years of independence was looking for balancing Indian threat which was greatly imbalanced after 1971 war which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. It was therefore in Pakistan's interest to join American led cold war for gaining military aid and procurement of arms and defense equipment from the US. Therefore, throughout the history US influence on Pakistan's foreign policy formation left unforgettable prints till today [14].

NUCLEAR PAKISTAN AND THE US FACTOR:

The 'peaceful nuclear explosions' of 1974 by India were alarming for Pakistan which resulted in Pakistan's traditional approach of creating balance of power in the region [15]. During seventies and eighties when the United States was engaged in the Cold War against the then USSR with Pakistan as the front line state, the US did not pay much attention to Pakistan's nuclear program and its development. United States, primarily because of its own political and economic interested continued to aid Pakistan for playing its role as a front line ally of the US during the cold war [16].

Soon after the culmination of the cold war in 1992, United State imposed both economic and military sanctions on Pakistan through Pressler Amendment on the basis of Pakistan's nuclear program and its development and requested the President to personally verify if there was any development on Pakistan nuclear program. The US aid was now conditional to the developments of Pakistan's nuclear program [16]. Pakistan which had developed its nuclear program and capabilities to make nuclear weapons during eighties, had no options to compromise on its nuclear program to balance the developments in Indian nuclear program which was at very advanced stages during same period of time [17]. After Pakistan's nuclear tests in response to Indian nuclear test in 1998 [18] the United States imposed another set of sanctions in its efforts to denuclearize Pakistan and the region [19] [20].

THE 9/11 AND PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY:

In the wake of 9/11 attacks almost three years after 1998 nuclear tests, Pakistan once again had to play an active role as front line state in the US led war against terrorism [21]. Pakistan, compelled by the United States to once again play its role as frontline state in another US led war on terrorism (WOT) chose to be the part of WOT because of its regional and international situation [22]. Pakistan in order to counter Indian efforts to make international community recognize Indian crisis as terrorism not the fight for liberation joined American led war on terrorism. Pakistan has always declared to have strategic depth in Afghanistan, joined the war against its own homegrown Taliban regime which was yet another major shift in Pakistan's foreign policy because of international power's pressure towards both India and Afghanistan (Pattanaik, 2008). Change of regime in Afghanistan as a result of WOT has once again put Pakistan in an awkward situation where successor government was opposition to the Pakistan's homegrown Taliban government. Nonetheless, Pakistan played as an active frontline state of the US during WOT. As in past, the strains of deficit of trust existed between the triangular relations as Pakistan being the most critical player in these relations. Pakistan was continuously asked for doing more in order to fight against terrorism and on the other hand the new regime did not trust Pakistan for its favorable role towards Taliban in the past [14].

FOREIGN POLICY; AN ANALYSIS:

An inquiry into the problems, their causes and outcomes that Pakistan is facing can help understand the dilemmas of its foreign policy. Stephen P. Cohen has very rightly pointed out different dimensions of failure in Pakistan including the failure to live up with past expectations, failure of vision, failure of leadership, failure of vision and economic failure. The study is based on empirical evidences as well as perceptive in nature. However, after extensive research on Pakistan professor Stephen P. Cohen has not painted a total gloomy picture, rather has left some advices for Pakistan and appreciated the resilience of Pakistani society [23]. As a matter of fact, since its inception Pakistan remained in trouble internally and externally both. What caused this, wrong choice and wrong decision making in different situations where Pakistan's leadership whether political or military, was put to test, most of the time it failed [24]. On the other hand,

during first two decades, Pakistan did pursue a proactive foreign policy, particularly vis-à-vis India and Kashmir dispute (Cohen, 2004). However the Pakistan was unable to pursue proactive policy making approach in the coming decades. The major reason responsible for Pakistan's failure to deliver minimum expectation of the social contract was intermittent military coups or the legacy of military dominance over civil leadership [25]. A commentary on foreign policy of Pakistan aimed at educating Pakistan's parliamentarians by Professor Hasan-Askari Rizvi has very briefly and precisely discussed various phases of Pakistan foreign policy from 1947 till the 9/11 [26]. However, it lacked addressing the dilemmas of Pakistan's foreign policy which need to be understood to reconsider the orientation of Pakistan's foreign policy making, its process and mindset. Shankar's Indian perspective on Pakistan's foreign policy seems interesting where he points out the internal division within Pakistan over the issues of strategic and policy level significance which has roots in the history, and primarily Indian foreign policy making mindset has made Pakistan keep 'deficit of trust' as basic and fundamental principle in its foreign policy vis-à-vis India [27].

Shah in his detailed and objective commentary of Pakistan's foreign policy argues that there are three basic dilemmas of Pakistan's foreign policy. Firstly, the situations and challenges that Pakistan has faced during the past haunt Pakistan even today. For example, in the wake of Cold War a huge influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan has left unforgettable influence on Pakistan's policy making while restricting Pakistan's options in foreign policy. Secondly, the international powers' interests from Pakistan also have visible impact on its foreign policy. For example, Pakistan enjoyed very good relations with the United States and the Western powers during the Cold War, the time when Pakistan's role was inevitable for the West and the US. Once Pakistan played its role to fulfill its allies' interests, Pakistan was left alone in the middle of nowhere with number of problems to be fixed. Thirdly, what Shah argues is that Pakistan and Pakistanis generally defy logic. For example, Pakistan's commitment to the Muslim countries, and not accepting Israel from the very beginning whereas Israel was later welcomed by Pakistan's friendly Muslim countries. On the top of that, the countries that Pakistan has supported in the past like Iran, Jordan and Turkey, showed indifference in return to Pakistan [28]. One of the fundamental problem with Pakistan's foreign policy or in general the policy making mindset is the role of military in the political process of the country. The military leadership in Pakistan shapes, reshapes and deforms public opinion. Since such public opinion is usually engineered and populist, thus has a very short life and when the opinion takes natural shape, it adds to the problems of Pakistan [29]. Throughout the years one element of Pakistan's foreign policy remained consistent and that is Pakistan's ability to manage its relations with the United States but at the same time not to keep all eggs in one basket with overdependence on the US for rescuing Pakistan at the time of difficulties (Shankar, 1982) (Cohen, 2004) [30].

RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS: The quantitative approach used in this paper reflects the perception of the people of Pakistan towards its foreign policy. The data are analyzed using SPSS basis statistical tools followed by a brief discussion on the response of people. The research tool used is primarily a questionnaire and the data was collected from three strata namely the working professionals, students and government employees. The instrument used was derived from two similar researches in few other countries and the data collected and analyzed below suggests that this research paper enriches the existing body of knowledge [31,32].

Summary of Data:

Table No. 1 shows a brief summary of the collected data including sample design, mode of data collection, language, sample size, margin of error, language and representation. As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire was driven from few previous studies therefore in order to establish a connection with such researches, the language used in the questionnaire was English and respondents were those who had good understanding of English Language. It was a long questionnaire with 26 questions, but because of the limitation of research paper, only the most relevant questions and their tabular description and brief analysis will be given in this part of the paper. Table No. 2 reflects that as many as 65 percent of the respondents expressed either extreme or partial interest in the politics.

In Table No. 3 more than 55 percent of respondents claimed to have better understanding of Pakistan’s foreign relations. Table No. 4 & 5 suggest that peoples’ perception regarding Indo-Pak relation with reference to 9/11 remains almost same with 70 percent of them declaring hostile relations with India. What is note-able here is decline in the percentage of those who considered friendly relations with from around 7 percent before 9/11 to 3 percent after 9/11.

Table No. 6&7 and reflect that perception regarding nature of Pakistan’s relations with US, whether hostile or friendly was greatly changed. Around 40 to 45 percent of the people perceived that Pakistan enjoys friendly relations with the US both before and after 9/11. However, there was great difference in the perception of those who considered Pakistan’s relations with the US as hostile from 20 percent before 9/11 to 40 percent after 9/11.

Table No. 8&9 show that respondents’ perception about Pak-Afghan relations had a major shift. Those who perceived to have friendly relations with Afghanistan before 9/11 were 50 percent which decreased to just 16 percent after 9/11. Likewise, those who perceived that Pakistan enjoyed hostile relations with Afghanistan increased from 19 percent before 9/11 to around 55 percent after 9/11.

Table No. 10&11 show that peoples’ percentage of the people who perceived to have hostile relations with Israel remained almost the same in pre and post 9/11 scenario with more than 60 percent.

Table Number: 1
Q1: Do you have interest in politics?

Sample Design:	Probability
Mode:	Face-to-Face Adults 18 Plus
Language	English
Sample Size	125
Margin of Error	+/- 10 %
Representative:	Disproportionately Urban

Table Number: 2
Question 2: Do you have interest in Pakistan’s foreign affairs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Extreme	27	21.6	21.8
Partial	54	43.2	43.5
Least	30	24.0	24.2
Not At All	13	10.4	10.5
Total	124	99.2	100.0
Miss System	1	.8	
Total	125	100.0	

Table: 3

Indo-Pak Pre and Post 9/11 Relations:
Q2: Please scale the level of your understanding about Pakistan foreign relations?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Extremely Well	5	4.0	4.0
Very Well	17	13.6	13.6
Well	49	39.2	39.2
Don't Know	9	7.2	7.2
Not extremely Well	15	12.0	12.0
Not very Well	16	12.8	12.8
Not Well	14	11.2	11.2
Total	125	100.0	100.0

Table Number: 4

Q3a: How do you see Pakistan's relations with India before 9/11?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Hostile	84	67.2	68.9
Friendly	8	6.4	6.6
Neutral	23	18.4	18.9
Don't know	7	5.6	5.7
Total	122	97.6	100.0
Missing Svstem	3	2.4	
Total	125	100.0	

Table Number: 5

Q5b1: How do you see Pakistan's relations with India after 9/11?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Hostile	83	66.4	69.7
Friendly	3	2.4	2.5
Neutral	22	17.6	18.5
Don't know	11	8.8	9.2
Total	119	95.2	100.0
Missing Svstem	6	4.8	
Total	125	100.0	

Table Number: 6

Pak-US Pre and Post 9/11 Relations:
Q5a2: How do you see Pakistan's relations with USA before 9/11?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Hostile	24	19.2	19.8
Friendly	51	40.8	42.1
Neutral	39	31.2	32.2
Don't know	7	5.6	5.8
Total	121	96.8	100.0
Missing System	4	3.2	
Total	125	100.0	

Table Number: 7

Q5b2: How do you see Pakistan's relations with USA after 9/11?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Hostile	47	37.6	39.8
	Friendly	52	41.6	44.1
	Neutral	10	8.0	8.5
	Don't know	9	7.2	7.6
	Total	118	94.4	100.0
Missing	System	7	5.6	
Total		125	100.0	

Table Number: 8

Pak-Afghan Pre and Post 9/11 Relations:

Q5a4: How do you see Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan before 9/11?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Hostile	22	17.6	18.5
	Friendly	59	47.2	49.6
	Neutral	24	19.2	20.2
	Don't Know	14	11.2	11.8
	Total	119	95.2	100.0
Missing	System	6	4.8	
Total		125	100.0	

Table Number: 9

Q5b4: How do you see Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan after 9/11?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Hostile	63	50.4	53.4
	Friendly	19	15.2	16.1
	Neutral	25	20.0	21.2
	Don't Know	11	8.8	9.3
	Total	118	94.4	100.0
Missing	System	7	5.6	
Total		125	100.0	

Table Number: 10

Pakistan-Israel Pre and Post 9/11 Relations:

Q5a3: How do you see Pakistan's relations with Israel before 9/11??

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Hostile	76	60.8	63.9
	Neutral	26	20.8	21.8
	Don't know	17	13.6	14.3
	Total	119	95.2	100.0
Mining	System	6	4.8	
Total		125.0	100	

Table Number: 11

Q5b3: How do you see Pakistan's relations with Israel after 9/11?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Hostile	72	57.6	61.0
	Friendly	3	2.4	2.5
	Neutral	22	17.6	18.6
	Don't know	21	16.8	17.8
Mining	System	7	5.6	
Total		118	94.4	100.0

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

An objective analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy throughout after the independence in 1947 reveals primarily three innate issues in policy not just with process but also with mindset of policy makers. Firstly, chronological, objective and empirical

analysis suggests that Pakistan's foreign policy the stems from policy making mindset in all spheres of the state seems to be more 'reactive'-'ad hoc' and event or situation based. This needs to be replaced with well thought-out proactive policy making mindset. Secondly, historical events suggest that Pakistan's foreign policy is overwhelmingly influenced by the international power, particularly the US. This needs to be replaced with more of indigenous policy making mindset which serves the national interests of Pakistan than those of the international powers. Finally, Pakistan's foreign policy has hardly been appreciated by its people. Therefore, the policy makers should take into the considerations the aspiration of its people for example, recent decision not be the part of Saudi led forces in Yemen is plausible which was taken while taking into the consideration the national interests of the country as well as peoples' aspirations.

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