

PAKISTAN-TURKEY RELATIONS: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT

Ties between Turkey and Pakistan are believed to be long before the establishment of Pakistan. Historically, in the sub-continent Muslims had shown a softness and sympathy towards the Sultanat-e-Usmania (Ottoman Empire). Since the independence of Pakistan both Turkey and Pakistan have been enjoying cordial relations politically and economically. This paper focuses on the historically deep rooted legacy of Pak-Turkish relationship and the strengthened diplomatic and economic linkages between the two. It also covers current development in the relations of the two countries, such as the role of both states on combating terrorism across globe in general and in the Muslim world in particular. This paper is a qualitative based approach and descriptive methods have been used to develop understanding about the given topic. The facts and figures of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Turkey are concrete and accurate for the readers' information.

Keywords: Economic, Political, Convergence, Agreements, Cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

Bilateral relations between Turkey and Pakistan trace back to the time of sub-continent and Ottoman Empire when Muslims of sub-continent started agitation *against the Great Britain* for preserving the Ottoman Empire, which was considered by Indian Muslims a spiritual leadership and an emblem of world-wide Islamic harmony (Hussain, 2008).

After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the troubles of the Turks at the hands of the allied powers made the Indian Muslims worried about their brothers. The violence and inhuman carnages perpetrated on Turkish people, such as the subjugation and damage of

the sacred sites of Islam in Turkey, the occupation of Morocco by France and the executions of the Islamic scholars of Meshad by Russia created a wave of anger and lament among the Muslims in the sub-continent. Muslims of the sub-continent alleged Britain for all these sufferings of Turkish people and conspiracies against Ottoman Empire. All great Muslim political figures of the sub-continent like Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Shibli N'umani, and Abul Kalam Azad condemned the atrocities committed against the Turks by the western powers (Ahmed, 1981). This historical affinity was maintained by Pakistan and Turkey after their independence. They not only extended complete support to each other throughout the hardships of their history but successfully cemented their cordial ties through arranging regular high-level diplomatic visits.

This article puts light on the movement incepted in subcontinent in favour of the Ottoman Empire and it did not die with the disintegration of the empire. This thread of history tied Pakistan and Turkey together on diplomatic, political and economic arenas after their independence. Having common culture, religion and geo-political interests both the countries intended to maintain and boost up cordial relations. This article delineates a detailed account of the political as well as economic relations between Turkey and Pakistan, which display the win-win approach for the two nations. Additionally, this article presents the detailed account of those regional and global issues where these two countries share a mutual understanding.

POLITICAL DIMENSION OF PAK-TURKEY RELATIONS

Reviewing in-depth diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Turkey, Mehrunisa (2001) writes that after independence the countries which were on the priority list of Pakistan for building up relations, among them Turkey was one of the top five favorite countries.

Turkey and Pakistan established their relations in 1947 immediately after the independence of Pakistan. Turkey recognized Pakistan as a sovereign state on the forum of the United Nations and also started to help politically and financially to stabilize this Muslim brother country. This is one of the main reasons behind the strong Pak-Turkish affinity from the day one. Advancing close ties of friendship in the context of the identical foreign policy interests they signed an accord of collaboration on 2nd April 1954. The agreement was laid to

promote the existing all-weather friendship and mutual cooperation. The provision of the agreement was related to the matter of defense attempted to protect the right of the parties and meet the need to produce arms and ammunition. In this concern the agreement tried to determine such terms, which could be affiliated to 'Article 51 of the UN Charter' and both the countries could make it effective for them to encounter the outside attacks against them. Consistent with the Article 2 of the agreement, "both the countries will consult on international matters of mutual interest, and taking into account international requirements and conditions, they will cooperate to the maximum extent". The Article 3 of the agreement binds the two parties to promote cultural exchange and economic as well as technical cooperation. It allows the parties to conclude other agreement in case of further need (Ahmad, 1981).

In April 1955, Turkey and Iraq signed another pact of mutual cooperation. On 2nd July 1955, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Ali of Bogra, announced Pakistan's decision to accede to the Baghdad Pact. The relations between Pakistan and Turkey became even stronger after they signed this pact of mutual understanding and interests. Both these countries were founder members of Baghdad Pact. Rest of the members included Iran, Iraq and Britain. USA participated in Bagdad pact but did not ratify it. Prime aim of the Baghdad Pact was to initiate a treaty with reference to security and defense collaboration among the respective members. Specifically, Bagdad pact was planned to counteract the Russia's policy of southward enlargement to the Black Sea, the Caspian and the Central Asia. In 1959, after the withdrawal of Iraq from Bagdad Pact it was renamed as Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) (Qadri, 2016).

Both Turkey and Pakistan were also part of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), which was recognized in July 1964 by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Initially, RCD faced many challenges and it was a byproduct full of disappointments with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan in terms of their cooperation with the Western countries. During 1970s, Turkey and Pakistan supported each other both politically and militarily. Turkey helped Pakistan politically and militarily during the Indo-Pak war in 1971, and it did not accept Bangladesh as independent state until Pakistan recognized it. Similarly, on the Cyprus issue, Pakistan supported Turkey and

provided full military sustenance. Turkey and Pakistan also observed the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and invasion of Afghanistan by Russia as a threat to their security interests (Mehrunisa, 2001).

Afghan war of 1979-1989 was set back to RCD. In this duration Soviet Union collapsed and new Central Asian states came into being. With the establishment of new Asian states after the breakdown of Soviet Union, a new reality was faced by Pakistan, Turkey and Iran. Turkey was interested in the Central Asian region to make strong the new Central Asian states. The relations between Turkey and Pakistan remained cool on the matter of internal politics of Afghanistan during 80s and 90s politics because Pakistan was supporting and Turkey was backing up Northern Alliance. The ice melted when Musharraf assumed the charge as Chief Executive of Pakistan in October 1999. He made many high level visits to the Turkey and bilateral ties caught speed (Hussain, 2008). Since then, both the countries are engaged in high functionary visits and exchange of views on various regional and global issues during meetings.

Twenty first century has begun with many positive steps in terms of Pakistan-Turkey relations. In June 2003 Turkish president Tayyip Recep Erdoğan paid an official visit to Pakistan to boost up economic political relations by signing three MoUs on transport, drug, trafficking and environment (Hussain, 2008). Currently, both the countries are enjoying cordial political relations. In the last five years frequent high-level fruitful visits have clearly specified strong political relations between Turkey and Pakistan. From 23-24 December 2013 the then Prime Minister of Turkey visited Pakistan at the invitation of the then Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. A high level delegation also accompanied him. The major outcome of the visit was the materializing of three MoUs and one Cooperation Protocol. Turkish Prime Minister agreed to enhance the educational cooperation by increasing the number of scholarships for Pakistani students to pursue higher education in Turkey. Promoting cooperation for tourism and restoration of historical and archeological sites were the main issues of discussion (MOFA Pakistan 2013). On 5th January 2019 visiting Turkey, the Prime Minister of Pakistan pledged cooperation and collaboration with Turkey in the context of economic, commercial, trade and investment (Dawn, 2019).

The current president of Turkey Tayyip Erdoğan seems unsatisfied with the current Muslim block being led by Saudi Arabia, he is intending to form a new Muslim bloc in order to resolve the issues of the Muslim countries and to make up an economic platform to resolve the economic problems of the Muslim world. In this regard, he fully supported Kuala Lumpur Summit, but Pakistan could not attend the summit for political reasons, which created a hindrance for a joint collaboration in the region. Despite this unexpected step from government of Pakistan Malaysia and Pakistan still expect to instigate a triangular relation between Pakistan, Malaysia and Turkey. This will not only benefit both states, but the cooperation and engagement would positively impact the region.

ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF PAK-TURKEY RELATIONS

Pak-Turkey economic relations are developing with time. Both countries are founding members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). They are also members of the Developing 8 (D-8) as well as the founding members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). They have endorsed several MoUs and agreements to strengthen bilateral economic relations, which included the Free Trade Agreement (1965), Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (1976), Prevention of Double Taxation Agreement (1988), and Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreement (1997). According to the Agreement of 1976, both states founded the Turkey-Pakistan Joint Economic Committee Mechanism. After that they have remained involved in several agreements in Ankara and Islamabad intending to grow bilateral economic and commercial relations (Qadri, 2016).

Both Countries revitalized Business terms in 2011 by establishing Turkey-Pakistan Business council, s Territorial Summit in 2007 to bring up collaboration and cooperation on regional level. The member countries of the summit include Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This Summit has strengthened mutual economic relations (Gul, 2014). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, the economic relations improved after the establishment of High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) in 2009, which aimed to boost trade and economic cooperation between both countries. The first meeting of HLCC took place on December 2010 in Ankara where eighteen MoUs and

agreements were signed between Pakistan and Turkey. The Second HLCC round took place in May 2012 in Pakistan (Hadi, 2015).

Third round was held in 2013 in Ankara. In both rounds twelve MoUs were signed in terms of trade, energy, security, education, culture, science and technology. Whereas, fourth round of HLCC took place in Islamabad in 2015, wherein both countries agreed to sign eleven MoUs regarding trade, security and terrorism (Ali, 2017). In this meeting, both the countries decided to start negotiation on Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Since 2015, three rounds of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) have taken place so far, two in Ankara and one in Islamabad. Both countries have signed the Terms of References (ToRs) for negotiations on bilateral Free Trade Agreement in the first round of talks in October 2015. In 2016 Prime Ministers of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu and Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif decided to start negotiations on Free Trade Agreement with the target to eliminate 85% of tariffs and taking the bilateral trade to US \$10 billion by 2022 (Tribune, 2016).

Turkish investment exceeded US \$1 billion in Pakistan by 2017. FTA would also enhance tourism between the two countries as Turkey is trying hard to promote this industry. In this connection, Turkey offered an understanding on tourism to Pakistan, which was gladly accepted by Pakistan. During first visit to Turkey in 2018, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Imran Khan signed the MoU on tourism making considerable advancement on Strategic Economic Framework (SEF). Following the MoU, Turkey would provide all technical assistance to Pakistan for enhancing tourism advancing activities of Pakistan Turkish Tourism Council (PTTC). Both the governments are negotiating visa-free travel to make the tourism smooth and easy (Kowalski, 2019). To facilitate tourism, business and investment, recently Erdoğan' proposed the implementation of dual nationality for the nationals of both the states (Ashraf, 2020).

The SEF consists of certain 71 significant items such as; a free trade agreement, technology transfer, capacity building and defense cooperation. Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan stated that, "We will utilize the sources of Türk Eximbank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to finance those projects". To make the economic zone viable Pakistan has invited Turkey to be part of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Turkey itself is also interested to become the part of CPEC in order to advance

relations with China and Pakistan. Turkey intends to invest on CPEC to make the economic zone strong. In this connection, Turkey will open flight pathways to connect Pakistan with Central Asian Countries (Hayat, 2010).

Commercial ties are at the most preferential task to extend the future relations. In this connection, Pakistan intends to invite health, surveillance and agriculture related investment from Turkey (Ashraf, 2019). Currently 158 Pakistani companies are investing in Turkey with around US \$100 million investment. However, 17 firms of Turkey are operating in Pakistan in multiple fields including food, energy, and construction.(Daily Sabah, 2020).

The sixth meeting of the HLCC was co-chaired by Erdoğan in February 2020 in Islamabad. The meeting was attended by a number of senior cabinet members and politicians from both the countries. The two countries inked a sequence of MoUs aimed at furthering the current bilateral economic activities, cultural ties and communication linkages. The MoUs include cooperation between two countries' state-run broadcasters – TRT and PTV, boosting steps for educational cooperation, promoting each other's culture, facilitating and developing tourism, assessment, conformity and accreditation of halal food. Moreover, they signed a MoU for power and energy. In this concern, they will cooperate to explore and produce hydrocarbons and will mutually share the practices about the distribution of natural, transmission and marketing of natural gas and petroleum. Both the countries also decided to cooperate in the fields such as railway, postal service, military and e-commerce (Syed, 2020).

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ISSUES OF CONVERGENCE IN PAK-TURKEY RELATIONS

Turkey and Pakistan have identical stands on several regional and global issues. Political ideology of both countries is different as Turkey was founded on secular principles and Pakistan was established on Islamic principles. This ideological difference could not hinder the closeness between the countries. Establishment of Israel is an only area where the interests and opinion of both countries diverge. Both countries have different perception regarding establishment of Israel. Turkey recognized establishment of Israel in Middle East and grew cooperation with this controversial state in the years ahead. whereas, Pakistan did not accept State of Israel due to occupation of Palestine by Israel. This difference of foreign policy towards Israel never affected bilateral relations of Turkey and Pakistan (Ahmed,

2008). Perception of both states on Palestine issue is same they support the creation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state. The convergence of ideas and policy between Pakistan and Turkey on some issues includes Terrorism, Kashmir, Cyprus and the Muslim World.

Turkey and Pakistan had always played a vital role to maintain peace at the regional and global level. That is a fact that on the matter of Afghanistan's politics both the countries had diverse stand, but after 9/11 the situation changed when Pakistan played front role in US led war against terrorism in Afghanistan against Taliban. Since 9/11, Turkey and Pakistan are at the same page against terrorism (Qadri, 2016). In January 2004, during the visit of then President of Pakistan Pervez Mushraf to Turkey the two countries signed anti-terrorism agreements and paved the way to each other for sharing information on fighting terrorism and organized crime (Zee Beareu, 2004). Pakistan admires role of Turkey against terrorism and supports its concerns on such global issues that upset peace. In this term, both the countries have so far signed cooperation agreements to counter terrorism in all its manifestations, and to enforce law and security (Alhas, 2019). In 1989 when Pakistan was retained in the terrorists financing "Grey List" no country opposed that decision other than Turkey. Also, Turkey supported stand of Pakistan against New Delhi's membership to the Nuclear Supplier Group (Ashraf, 2019).

The Cyprus is of great importance to Turkey as the Kashmir remains of great concern for Pakistan. Since 1954 Pakistan is supporting stand of Turkey on Cyprus issue. Pakistan urges over United Nations and international community to fulfill the legitimate aspirations of Turkish Cypriots. Pakistan express complete solidarity with Turkey over this issue. Pakistan believes that any solution of the Cyprus issue must be based on the international agreements and full respect to the communal status of Turkish community. Pakistan believes that Cyprus must be determined by the creation of bi-zonal and bi-communal state with political equality of the community of two islands. Turkey appreciates support and stand of all Pakistani governments on Cyprus issue (Hasan, 2001).

Kashmir issue is the most sensitive issue in the history of Pakistan. Turkey has showed all support to Pakistan on this matter. Turkey fully supports stand of Pakistan on this issue and condemns all Indian viciousness in the Indian occupied Kashmir. Turkey suggests

the resolution of this issue giving thorough right of self-determination to Kashmiris. Turkish president Erdoğan also condemned and revoked the Article 370 and 35A on occupied Kashmir at the forum of UN general Assembly for Kashmir. He urged international community for settlement of this issue through dialogues (Gunerigok, 2019). Erdoğan believes that: "events that happened 100 years ago in Çanakkale in Turkey are being repeated in the Indian Occupied State of Jammu and Kashmir and Turkey will continue to raise its voice against the oppression. How can we forget those (Pakistanis) who prayed for Turkey? Our friendship is not based on vested interests but in love".

Turkey and Pakistan are both leading the Islamic world and also are the founding members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Pakistan has the status of being the only Nuclear Islamic country and 13th powerful military in the world, whereas, Turkey is known to be an emerging economic power in the Middle East region. Turkey has a strong military along with 19th largest Gross Domestic Production (GDP) in the world. Therefore, both the countries entertain an importance in the Muslim world. Both of the countries have capabilities to work together to settle civilian conflicts and sectarian conflicts in the entire Muslim world because they retain identical faith, mutual history and cultural connection. Both are working closely in the UN and other global and regional bodies. Both of the countries have supported each other on issues like Kashmir, Cyprus and will continue to support. Currently, Syria and Yemen are the two burning issues in the Middle Eastern region. In 2015 during the Joint press conference Turkey and Pakistan issued a statement regarding Yemen "both the leaders of Turkey and Pakistan urged the necessity for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Yemen, and showed their concerns over the removal of legitimate government in Yemen by Houthis. Both the countries insist Saudi Arabia to play a positive role to resolve the issue (Dawn, 2015). Turkey-Pakistan relationship may contribute for resolving the issues and crisis prevailing in the Islamic world.

CONCLUSION

Turkey and Pakistan are enjoying well established political and economic relations. Since 2002 they are taking advantage of stronger bilateral economic relationship. The economic relations have had the

significant turn with the rounds of Free Trade Agreements and HLCC. Both countries improved their economic relations in terms of trade, transports industry. Both of these countries are active globally for elimination of political conflicts among Muslim factions and sectarian divide which has harmed Muslims in the World. Both must play their effective role in making peace in Middle East and elsewhere because both states have got importance as regional powers.

Pakistan and Turkey understand very well the significance and potential of this bilateral relationship on regional and global level. This relationship can be strengthened specially through economic dynamics such as foreign investment, trade and commerce. Pakistan lacks infrastructure, however, Turkey is rich with infrastructure facilities, and intends to help Pakistan. Turkey can also be helpful for Pakistan in the field of Information Technology. Having fertile lands for agriculture with less technique to use water for irrigation purpose, Pakistan can learn these techniques from Turkey. Pakistan should also take help of Turkey in research sector relevant to science and technology, trade, business and energy. This kind of collaboration will be beneficial for both the states.

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