

PAKISTAN-IRAN RELATIONS

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Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan as sovereign state under Raza Shah Pahlvi, but in 1979 with Islamic Revolution, the relations between the two changed. After Iranian revolution, strong shia regime emerged making Iran theocratic Islamic republic.

With formation of this theocratic state, Iran changed the foreign policy for Saudi Arabia on sectarian basis on Shiaism and Wahabism which ultimately affected Pakistan's position as Pakistan was friendly with both the states.

On the other hand, closeness of Pakistan with Saudi Arabia and Iran with India brought another cause escalating distance between Pakistan and Iran relations. Moreover in global politics, Pakistan became close to United States, China and Saudi Arabia and Iran remained closed to India and Russia. This also created a negative effect on Pakistan and Iran relations.

After 1971, when Bhutto came into power, he desired closeness to US offering the US to establish air and naval bases in Balochistan made Shah of Iran reluctant because it could directly affect Iran.

As mentioned above, Pakistan and Iran relations can be divided into two parts, Shah Period and Post-Shah period. During Shah Period, both countries were important countries in the global and regional politics and both became members of SEATO and CENTO and both continued bilateral relations even during the cold war.

But after 1979 revolution, the relation changed. The orthodox policy of Iran concentrated on Shiaites faith and looked at other Muslim world with sectarian values constitutently relations between Iran and Pakistan started changing. The major reason was Pakistan's relations with Saudi Arabia when Pakistan joined Saudi Arabia hand on Islamic Military Alliance to fight terrorism. Pakistan had given assurance to Iran that it will not be party to any Anti-Iran activity but Pakistan Saudi Relations created deep mistrust of Iran against Pakistan.

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Iran believed that the alliance between Saudi Arabia was of sectarian character of Sunni Majority against Shia majority as Iran and Iraq, both were not its members. However Pakistan Army Chief General Raheel Sharif after retirement secured the command of this alliance which added the Iranian apprehension of sectarian thinking in the region.

Iran also noted that the US support to Saudi Arabia government for alliance of Arab and other Muslim countries left a counter Iranian influence in the region. The Saudi Arabia government had announced that it cannot get along with Iran as it had an extremist ideology and also profound wish to dominate the Muslim world and spread the Shiaite faith.

The relations between Iran and Pakistan became more strained with the rise of terrorism in Balochistan and Kashmir. On the other hand, Iranian border guards were killed by a religious militant group for terrorist activities.

Iran claims that this militant group has a base in Balochistan and gets the support of the Gulf and the West.

However, the relations between the two countries need to be friendly for economic and friendly reasons. Both countries' government agreed to take care of terrorist attack making them arrested and prosecuted.

Iran declares that it looks for Pakistan's safety, progress and growth saying that Iran never wishes to be against its neighbors including Pakistan.

The relation between the two are getting both with exchange of visit of leaders from both the countries with common view of taking action against terrorist involvement attacks. Both the sides agreed to ensure coordination of intelligence sharing and frequent meetings of military, political and society leaders. Both emphasize on friendly relations with each other for the security and economic progress. In their relations they must handle their bilateral policy with great care to safeguard and promote their shared political, security and economic interests. They have made several mistakes in the past which have affected their security and economic well-being. They cannot afford to repeat these mistakes. They must also beware of the intrigues and mechanization of their common enemies who would like to create division and dispute between Muslim countries thereby weakening them and slowing towards their progress. Their differences must be resolved through diplomacy. It is in the interest of Pakistan to respond positively to the Iranian institutions and take all possible steps by strengthening bilateral relations and mutual differences amicably.