

BOOK REVIEW:

Ghulam Ali, Ed, Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Contemporary Developments and Dynamics.
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Foreign policy is reflection of domestic and external outlook of a country which we show to an outside world while interacting with other powers in the world. Nations promote, secure, and advance their interests through their dynamic diplomats and ambassadors. In connection to foreign policy of Pakistan, several books and articles have been written. The focus of these academic writings has underlined Pakistan's engagement with the USA, East Asia (China), Middle East or West Asia (Saudi Arabia and UAE, Iran, Bahrain, Qatar etc), and South Asia.

The editor of this book is an Associate Professor at School of Marxism, Department of Political Science, Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, China. He is the author of *China-Pakistan Relations: A Historical Analysis* (2017), editor of *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Contemporary Developments and Dynamics* (2023) and has co-edited a book: *Perspectives on the Contemporary Pakistan Governance, Development and Environment* (2020). He has contributed several articles for newspapers and his academic research articles have appeared in well reputed research journals at international level.

The book under review is comprised of two parts: Foundation and Operationalization. Most of the scholars who have contributed their chapters in this edited book belonged to academia and think tanks mostly from Lahore and Islamabad. Some of these scholars have been educated in America and China. Interesting thing about this book is that it is based on contemporary developments and dynamics in Pakistan's foreign policy. Most of the themes of this book dilates upon how Pakistan's foreign policy has evolved. It attaches special attention to Imran Khan-the deposed Prime Minister of Pakistan, ties with Russia, China, USA, India, Iran, EU, and Afghanistan. However, there are few interesting chapters on role of military in foreign policy and Pakistan's 'middle power statuses.

In his first introductory chapter, the editor remarks that 'Pakistan has pursued a complex foreign policy since its independence'(p.3). He succinctly identifies and explains the reasons such as: fear of India, hasty partition, geography, balancing act in the region. While highlighting the importance of Pakistan's geography, the writer explains that Pakistan is located

at the significant junction which is surrounded by China, Iran, Russia, India Afghanistan, and the 3rd largest littoral states in the Indian ocean. Keeping in view the geopolitical relevance of Pakistan for great powers, Islamabad has played a key role in War on Terrorism and containing religious militancy. History shows that access to warm waters of the Indian ocean was one of the obstacles for the spread of communism (USSR). The editor recalls the military alliance (SEATO and Cento) with the USA in 1954 and 1955. The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was basically a collective security which was also called as 'Manila Pact', while the Central Treaty Organization (also called Baghdad Pact) was an outcome of military alliance during the Cold War. Its members were: Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and UK. The objective behind making these military alliances was to deter the spread of communism (China and USSR). For Pakistan, it was an opportunity to develop its defense and economy.

However, such military alliances or agreements also entails challenges too. For instance, Pakistan was asked by America to establish an intelligence facility at Peshawar. Its purpose was to spy and get information of the Russian military. But, later it was destroyed by Russia. In this way, Islamabad has also come under the wrath of great powers. In contrast to this, Russia and China had increased their ties with India. But after 1955 and 1962, the alignments in the region radically changed. Given the border conflict and Tibet factor, Chinese amity turned into enmity with New Delhi. This development also had a deep impact on the US-Pakistan relations. India fought wars with Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and during these conflicts, China came forth to the support of Pakistan. In addition to this, Pakistan, US, and Chinese interests converged on Afghanistan, and in 1980s, Islamabad was asked by US to provide training and launch a Jihad in Afghanistan in order to contain the Soviet invasion and influence in Afghanistan.

The editor further recalls that though we were fighting war externally but at the domestic level, political parties were fighting with each other, and elected parties failed to even complete their five years tenure. These internal political disputes provided a space to army to intervene. In this way, Pakistan's military began to take strong hold of security and foreign policy. Since Pakistan willingly jumped to the American bandwagon after 9/11 incident. Islamabad was given a non-Nato ally status, and, in this way, Pakistan army engaged in WoT and continued its resolve and fight against terrorists and extremists.

In 2008, elections were conducted, General Pervez Musharraf resigned, and power transferred to civilians. Two major parties, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan's Muslim League- N (PMLN) completed successfully their five years tenure. In 2018, Imran Khan's party (Pakistan Tehreek Insaf) came out victorious at the centre and provinces thus

became the 22nd Prime Minister of Pakistan. Consequently, this edited book offers contemporary developments in the foreign policy of Pakistan.

In the following sections, I would like to offer my brief but critical review of chapters.

In chapter two, the author Syed Ali Zia Jaffery explains foreign policy of Imran Khan regime. He argues that 'regional connectivity and conflict diffusion are not possible without economic stability'. The author recalls that during Imran Khan's government, our country was faced with several problems while keeping a fine balance in relations with the regional countries. Though in the beginning of his regime, he criticized Chinese projects in Pakistan and asked to revisit Chinese investment. Further, he was reluctant to openly criticise America but praising India for its balanced approach in the region. During his government, the civil-military relations remained cooperative and friendly. However, this cordial relationship could not live longer and slowly turned into awkward situation. No doubt, Imran Khan's image, credibility, and leadership charisma in addition to fight against corruption had an overwhelming impact on the people of Pakistan. But these favourable rankings also had some ramifications and wrath. The political parties at home gave a tough time due to Imran Khan's approach towards his opposition parties. Sadly, Khan is confronted with multiple challenges, for instance unstable Afghanistan, India-America factor, and economic insecurity at home.

Chapter three Samee Lashari is very interesting in terms of Pakistan's status as 'Middle Power' in the region. The author agrees that several books and articles have been written on Middle Powers in the world, yet these studies lack direction and cohesion. He also realizes that it is difficult to measure the power exactly, but he believes that two factors are crucial for determining Middle Power status: identity and self-realization coupled with potential of a country. He argues that robust foreign policy behavior is important in terms of Middle Power status. He agrees that 'Pakistan is a Middle Power due to its identity and strong ideology. Given geopolitical significance in the region, with its 9th military power out of 142 countries, and 5th largest population, Pakistan appears to be a pivot for regional and global powers. The author admits that 'Pakistan had facilitated USSR disintegration in collusion with America in Afghanistan in 1980s'.

In chapter four, the author Ejaz Hussain deeply focuses on the military and foreign policy. He acknowledges vehemently that Pakistan's foreign policy has alternated between 'defective democracy and autocracy'. He blames for such oscillation on civil bureaucracy rather than on military. According to the author, civil bureaucracy had determined if relations with America rather than the USSR. To him, military acted like a 'junior partner' with the

appointment of General Ayub Khan as Commander in Chief of Pakistan Army. He then dilates upon how Pakistan embraced Seato and Cento organizations in 1950s thus sided with the Western powers (America) against increasing communism. The author acknowledges that with the American support in addition to Saudi money, Pakistan trained Taliban to fight against USSR ARMY IN Afghanistan. In 1962, India-China fought a border war. The later tilted towards Pakistan whereas the former looked towards US and USSR. As history of Indo-Pakistan relations show, they have fought four wars (1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999). In these conflicts It was China not America who came forward to help Pakistan. America adopted the path of sanctions despite Pakistan's role in 1980s against Soviets in Afghanistan. In this way, American relationship with Pakistan have often drifted and remained reluctant in embracing completely. In fact, mistrust and Indian factor in Pakistan-US relations have loomed large through out the decades of relations. The writer succinctly reviews the relevant literature on foreign policy and observes that 'security-centric, structural issues, system approach, identity construction (Islam), liberal-secular, legal aspects of the studies have been conducted previously. However, these studies or approaches have in one way or the other have failed to address the agency factor in framing foreign policy of Pakistan.

The author explores the role of Pakistan's military, and it also discusses briefly problems confronting civilian regimes (Z.A Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, and Imran Khan). He wisely presents the juxtaposition of events, interactions and policy choices of civilian rulers while explaining the external relations of Pakistan with countries like, India, China, America, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan.

Similarly, in chapter five, the authors Gul-i-Hina Shahzad-Van Der Zwan and Rabbiya Kamal Nagra focuses on China-Pakistan relations from 2010 to 2020. This chapter again looks at the civilian rulers (political parties in ruling: Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), and Tehreek-e-Insaf). The author tries to justify economic development and Pakistan's relations with other countries in the region. The authors discussion in their chapter is more or less explanation of the previous chapters. He terms War on terrorism, conflict in Afghanistan, CPEC project and closeness with China and America, as a major transformation in diplomacy. The authors are of the opinion that during the regime of PPP, the Chinese CPEC project was initiated, it was accelerated by PML (N), while in PTI- regime, it was supposed to have reaped fruits. Moreover, Asif Ali Zardari was President of Pakistan in 2010, but after the assassination of his wife, ex-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari took the helm of affairs after his victory in 2008 General Elections in Pakistan. His first state visit was China. In

China, Zardari met with President Hu Jintao. In this meeting, both the leaders made several strategic agreements including 11 agreements for economic cooperation, , infrastructure development, agriculture, and telecom sector, which put the foundation of China-Pakistan partnership. Beside this, new security centric issues were raised from both sides in which Xinjiang came under discussion. Terrorism and militancy were a hot issue in bilateral relations. Both countries tried to resolve their issues by identifying a common threat like, separatism, terrorism, and militancy. However, Zardari was also successful in removing inter-provincial disparities through National Financial Award (NFC).

In this NFC award, horizontal distribution of resources was done in which 82 percent of population, 10.3 percent, 5 percent revenue collection, 2.7 percent inverse population density was set as a criteria for distribution of NFC award. This pattern pushed decentralization and fiscal federalism which was fairly needed for Pakistan. Moreover, after the withdrawal of the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA), agreement was won by China's overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC). After this historical agreement, Pakistan-China relations further witnessed a trade and economic activity at the Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Baluchistan region.

But this growth and economic activity was further accelerated when he took his office as Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2013. In 2013, Li Keqiang, the Chinese Prime Minister visited Pakistan and officially China-Pakistan-Economic Corridor was launched. MoU was signed in which short-term and long-term policies were introduced. CPEC basically is a flagship project of BRI which connects Pakistan with different regions in the Asia and beyond. Interestingly, a \$46 billion dollar projected initially was launched now has turned to more than \$60 billion dollars. In connection to this, a Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) was formed. Its objective was to look after the progress done in the wake of CPEC. President Xi Jinping also visited Pakistan in 2015 after which several MoU were signed. Hence the first Phase of CPEC began. During the period of Nawaz Sharif government, a new issue cropped up based on the plan for various routes in Pakistan. There were four routes: Northern, Western, Central and Eastern route/corridor. More focus was given on the already developed regions of Punjab, but questions were raised in which government was asked to divert it towards underdeveloped parts of Pakistan. While the western route was also controversial because India had raised concerns.

In chapter six, the author Muhammad Azam discusses India's ocean strategy and suggests that Pakistan needs to show some practical measures in developing a cohesive policy with regard to maritime security in the Indian ocean region. While in chapter seven, the author Shahzad Akhtar and Arshad Ali very comprehensively discuss about Indian factor in

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. India has, since decades, remained a security threat for Pakistan from its eastern and western side. Their presence in Pakistan's backyard has been a constant headache for Islamabad. Indian incessant support to some Taliban factions and their undue interference in Pakistan's Baluchistan is one of the issues in triangular ties in this turbulent region.

In chapter eight, the author, Rizwan Zeb, very beautifully synchronizes geopolitics, the Thucydides Trap, and China-Pakistan-India ties. He argues that these trilateral relations are very complicated. He argues that there is a possibility of conflict between rising and established powers. This appears to him as a real threat in the region. In chapter nine, Khurram Abbas discuss about conservative administration in Iran and future of Pakistan-Iran relations. He believes that conservative administration in Iran likely to have more complications for Pakistan. However, American sanctions, Indian factor has put gas pipeline project into pipedream. While in chapter ten, author, Rabia Akhtar, analysed the trajectory of Washington-Islamabad ties and identifies the core challenges to these ties. She strongly believes that both the countries have a potential to explore and engage in other areas where both the states have a mutual trust and cooperation. In chapter eleven, Adeela Ahmed underscores the contours of Pakistan's relations with Russia. The author acknowledges the role of Russia in the region and suggests for more engagement and development in strategic relations of Russia and Pakistan. Subsequently, in chapter twelve, Najimdeen Bakare explains relations between Pakistan and European Union and make a critical review of strategic engagement and its implications for Pakistan's foreign policy. The author argues that Pakistan has to strive more for strengthening its ties with EU in order to secure its economic and security interests. However, the editor of this book warns Pakistan for future challenges in foreign policy. Overall, authors of each chapter in this book identify problems and suggest some measures which needs to be tackled at war footing bases while engaging with outside world. Interestingly, this book updates readers about past, present and the future of Pakistan's foreign relations within and beyond the region.