
Foreign Policy of Pakistan

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is the **deliberate, rational, and dynamic set of principles, decisions, and actions** adopted by a state to **regulate its relations with other states and international actors**, with the primary objective of **protecting national interests, ensuring security, and maximizing power and influence in the international system.**

Scholarly Definitions

- **According to George Modelski:**
 - *“Foreign policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment.”*
- **Joseph Frankel states:**
 - *“Foreign policy is a dynamic process of interaction between a nation and its external environment.”*
- **Felix Gross defines:**
 - *“Foreign policy consists of decisions and actions which involve relations between one state and others.”*

Key Elements of Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is not random; it is built upon **core structural elements** that guide a state's behavior in the international system.

1. National Interest (Central Element)

- The **primary objective** of foreign policy

- Includes:
 - 🛡 Security (territorial integrity)
 - 💰 Economic prosperity
 - 🏛 Political sovereignty
 - 🌐 Global influence ⚖ **2. Ideology**
- Beliefs shaping external behavior (e.g., democracy, Islam, socialism)
- Influences alliances and rivalries

3. Decision-Making Structure

- Institutions involved:
 - Executive (President/PM) 👤
 - Foreign Office 🏛
 - Military Establishment 🏢
- Determines how policy is formulated .

4. International Environment

- Global system (unipolar, bipolar, multipolar)
- Role of institutions like United Nations

5. Economic Factors

- Trade, aid, sanctions, and globalization
- Economic strength enhances diplomatic power .

6. Military Capability

- Defense strength and deterrence
- Influences war, peace, and alliances

7. Leadership & Public Opinion

- Leaders' personality and vision 
- Role of media and public support 

Foreign Policy of Pakistan — Elements

Pakistan's foreign policy is rooted in the **vision of its founding leadership** and is **constitutionally guided**, particularly by the **Objectives Resolution (1949)** and **Article 40 of the 1973 Constitution**.

1. Foundational Vision of Leadership

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

- Advocated:
 -  **Peaceful relations with all nations**
 -  **Non-interference & sovereignty**
 -  **Balanced and independent foreign policy**

Reference (Speech, 1947):

→ *“Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world.”*

Liaquat Ali Khan

- Emphasized:
 -  **Security and survival of the state**
 -  **Alignment based on national interest**

- Example: Tilt toward the **United States** during early Cold War

📖 **Reference:** Objectives Resolution (1949) guiding ideological direction.

📖 2. Constitutional Foundations

📖 Objectives Resolution (1949)

- Provides ideological base:
 - 🕌 Sovereignty belongs to **Allah**
 - ⚖️ Justice, equality, and Islamic principles
 - 🌐 Respect for international peace

📖 Article 40 — Constitution of Pakistan 1973

The state shall:

- 🤝 Promote **unity among Muslim countries**
- 🌐 Strengthen **international peace & security**
- 📜 Encourage **settlement of disputes peacefully**
- 🌐 Foster **friendly relations among nations**

📖 3. Core Elements of Pakistan's Foreign Policy

🎯 A. National Security

- Due to rivalry with India
- Focus on:
 - 🛡️ Defense strength
 - 🛡️ Nuclear deterrence

 **Reference:** Strategic doctrine shaped post-Indo-Pak Wars

B. Islamic Solidarity

- Strong ties with:
 - Organization of Islamic Cooperation
- Support for Muslim causes (Palestine, Kashmir)

C. Peaceful Coexistence

- Based on:
 - UN Charter principles
 - Jinnah's vision

 Linked with United Nations norms

D. Economic Diplomacy

- Trade, aid, and development focus
- Modern initiatives:
 - China Pakistan Economic Corridor

E. Non-Alignment / Strategic Balance

- Initially aligned with West (Cold War)
- Now:
 - Balanced relations with:
 - China 
 - United States
 - Saudi Arabia

F. Sovereignty & Territorial Integrity

- Core issue:
 - Kashmir
- Emphasis on:
 - Self-determination
 - Anti-interference

“Pakistan’s foreign policy is a synthesis of ideological commitments, constitutional directives, and pragmatic national interests, shaped by security imperatives and guided by the founding vision of peaceful coexistence and Islamic solidarity.”

Principles of Pakistan’s Foreign Policy

Pakistan’s foreign policy operates on **well-defined principles** derived from the vision of its founders and constitutional guidance, especially **Article 40 of the 1973 Constitution**.

Core Principles

1. Peaceful Coexistence

- Maintain **friendly relations with all countries**
- Avoid conflict and promote diplomacy

 Rooted in vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

➔ Emphasis on *goodwill and non-hostility*

2. Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

- Resolve conflicts through:
 - Dialogue 
 - Negotiation 
 - International mediation 

📖 Based on:

- United Nations Charter
- Article 40 (Constitution of Pakistan)

🛡️ 3. National Security & Sovereignty

- Protect:
 - Territorial integrity
 - Political independence
- Strong defense policy

📖 Influenced by regional dynamics (especially relations with India)

🕌 4. Islamic Solidarity

- Promote unity among Muslim countries
- Active role in Organization of Islamic Cooperation

📖 Constitutional basis: Article 40

🌐 5. Support for Self-Determination

- Advocate rights of oppressed nations
- Key example:
 - Kashmir issue

⚖️ 6. Non-Interference in Internal Affairs

- Respect sovereignty of other states
- Oppose interventionism

📖 Aligns with international law norms

💰 7. Economic Cooperation

- Promote:
 - Trade
 - Investment
 - Regional connectivity

📖 Modern example: China Pakistan Economic Corridor

🌐 8. Global Peace & Collective Security

- Support international peace efforts
- Participation in UN peacekeeping missions

📖 Linked to United Nations role

👉 ***“Pakistan’s foreign policy principles reflect a blend of ideological commitments, constitutional obligations, and pragmatic considerations, aimed at ensuring security, promoting peace, and strengthening international cooperation.”***

Foreign Policy of Pakistan (1947–2026)

Pakistan’s foreign policy has evolved through **distinct phases**, shaped by **security concerns, global power shifts, leadership choices, and economic needs**. Below is a **verified, phase-wise analytical account**.

📅 Phase 1: Early Orientation & Security Concerns (1947–1958)

🔑 Key Features

- Immediate focus on **survival & security**
- Hostile relations with India (Kashmir issue)
- Weak economy → need for external support

🌐 Major Developments

- Alignment with the West:
 - Joined SEATO (1954)
 - Joined CENTO (1955)
- Close ties with United States

Analysis

➔ Security-driven policy; dependence on Western bloc for military and economic aid.

Phase 2: Ayub Era & Diversification (1958–1969)

Key Features

- Continued Western alliance but with **diversification**
- Beginning of relations with China

Major Events

- 1962: Sino-India War → Pakistan-China closeness
- 1965: War with India

Analysis

➔ Shift toward **strategic balancing**; realization that US support was conditional.

Phase 3: Bhutto Era & Islamic World Pivot (1970–1977)

 Leadership: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Key Features

- Independent foreign policy

- Strong tilt toward **Muslim world**

🌐 Major Developments

- 1971: Separation of East Pakistan (Bangladesh)
- 1974: Hosted OIC Summit 1974 Lahore
- Nuclear program initiated

🧠 Analysis

➔ Emphasis on **Islamic unity + strategic autonomy**

🛡️ Phase 4: Zia Era & Afghan Jihad (1977–1988)

👤 Leadership: Zia-ul-Haq

🔑 Key Features

- Frontline state in **Cold War**
- Strong alliance with United States

🌐 Major Events

- 1979: Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
- Pakistan supports Afghan Mujahideen

🧠 Analysis

➔ Strategic importance increased; heavy military & economic aid.

🕒 Phase 5: Post-Cold War Isolation (1989–2001)

🔑 Key Features

- End of Cold War → reduced US interest

- Economic and diplomatic challenges

🌐 Major Events

- 1998: Nuclear tests by Pakistan & India
- Sanctions imposed

🧠 Analysis

➔ Shift toward **nuclear deterrence**, but diplomatic isolation.

✂ Phase 6: War on Terror Era (2001–2010s)

👤 Leadership: Pervez Musharraf

🔑 Key Features

- Pakistan becomes frontline ally of United States

🌐 Major Events

- 2001: 9/11 attacks
- War in Afghanistan

🧠 Analysis

➔ Gains in aid but **internal instability & security challenges**

🔄 Phase 7: Regional Connectivity & China Pivot (2013–2020)

🔑 Key Features

- Shift toward **economic diplomacy**
- Strengthening ties with China

🌐 Major Development

- Launch of China Pakistan Economic Corridor

Analysis

→ Focus on infrastructure, trade, and regional integration.

Phase 8: Geo-Economic & Multi-Alignment Policy (2020–2026)

Key Features

- Shift from **geopolitics** → **geoeconomics**
- Balanced relations with:
 - China 
 - United States
 - Saudi Arabia

Emerging Trends

- Focus on:
 - Trade & investment 
 - Regional peace 
 - Afghanistan stability

Analysis

→ Attempt to maintain **strategic autonomy in multipolar world**

Visual Timeline

1947–58 →  Security & West Alignment

1958–69 →  Diversification (China entry)

1970–77 → 🕌 Islamic Unity & Autonomy
1977–88 → ✕ Afghan Jihad (US Alliance)
1989–01 → ● Isolation & Nuclearization
2001–10s → ✕ War on Terror
2013–20 → 💰 CPEC & China Pivot
2020–26 → 🌐 Geo-economics & Balance

🔑 “Pakistan’s foreign policy has transitioned from security-centric alliances to a more nuanced geo-economic and multi-alignment strategy, reflecting shifts in global power structures and domestic priorities.”

Critical Evaluation of Pakistan’s Foreign Policy (1947–2026)

A high-quality CSS answer requires **balanced, evidence-based critique**. Below is a **multi-dimensional critical evaluation** grounded in established International Relations scholarship.

⚖️ 1. Security-Centric Orientation — Strength or Limitation?

✓ Positive

- Ensured **state survival** in a hostile regional environment
- Developed **credible deterrence** (especially post-1998)

✕ Criticism

- Overemphasis on security (especially vis-à-vis India)
- Neglected **economic diplomacy and human development**

📖 Scholarly Insight:

Hans Morgenthau supports national interest focus, but excessive militarization distorts policy balance.

💰 2. Dependency Syndrome (External Reliance)

✓ Positive

- Secured economic & military aid from:
 - United States (Cold War, War on Terror)
 - China (CPEC era)

✗ Criticism

- Created **aid-dependent economy**
- Limited **policy autonomy**

📖 Analytical Lens:

Immanuel Wallerstein → Pakistan often functioned in a *peripheral/semi-peripheral* role.

🔄 3. Inconsistency & Policy Fluctuations

✓ Positive

- Flexibility allowed adaptation to global changes

✗ Criticism

- Frequent **policy shifts**:
 - Pro-US → Anti-US → Balanced
- Weakens **credibility and trust internationally**

📖 Reference:

Henry Kissinger emphasizes consistency as key to effective diplomacy.

🌐 4. Limited Regional Integration

✓ Positive

- Some cooperation via SAARC

✗ Criticism

- Poor regional trade integration
- Tense relations with neighbors:
 - India
 - Afghanistan

📖 Theory:

Robert Keohane → cooperation enhances mutual gains, which Pakistan underutilized.

🏰 5. Ideology vs Pragmatism

✓ Positive

- Islamic solidarity strengthened ties with Muslim world
- Active role in Organization of Islamic Cooperation

✗ Criticism

- Ideological goals sometimes conflicted with **pragmatic national interests**
- Limited tangible gains from OIC leadership

✗ 6. Role in War on Terror — Mixed Outcomes

✓ Positive

- Major non-NATO ally status
- Financial and military support

× Criticism

- Internal instability, terrorism, economic losses
- Negative global image

📖 Event Context: 9/11 attacks

💡 7. Shift to Geo-Economics — A Positive Turn

✓ Positive

- Focus on trade, connectivity, development
- China Pakistan Economic Corridor as game changer

× Criticism

- Implementation challenges
- Debt and governance concerns (cannot fully confirm extent without specific data)

🧠 8. Institutional Weakness & Civil-Military Imbalance

× Major Criticism

- Foreign policy often influenced by:
 - Military establishment
 - Weak civilian continuity

📖 Analytical Perspective:

Samuel P. Huntington → imbalance affects policy coherence

P K FOREIGN POLICY — CRITICAL MATRIX

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
🛡️ Strong Security 🌐 Strategic Location 🤝 China Partnership ☒ Nuclear Deterrence 💡 Geo-economics	🔄 Policy Inconsistency 💰 Aid Dependency 🌐 Weak Regionalism 👤 Institutional Gaps 🏛️ Ideology Conflicts

Critical Conclusion

👉 “Pakistan’s foreign policy reflects a persistent tension between security imperatives and developmental needs; while it has ensured survival and strategic relevance, its effectiveness has been constrained by inconsistency, external dependence, and limited regional integration.”

📖 Renowned Book References

1. 📖 *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy*

By Hasan-Askari Rizvi

📌 Key Themes & Arguments

🎯 1. National Security as the Core Driver

- Pakistan’s foreign policy revolves around:
 - Survival
 - Territorial integrity
- Major factor:
 - Rivalry with India

📖 Rizvi highlights that **security concerns dominate decision-making**, often overshadowing economic goals.

🗣️ 2. Role of Ethnicity & Internal Diversity

- Pakistan is ethnically diverse:
 - Punjabis, Sindhis, Baloch, Pashtuns
- These groups influence:
 - Policy priorities
 - Regional relations (especially Afghanistan)

📖 Key Idea:

➔ Internal instability weakens foreign policy effectiveness.

🗣️ 3. Civil-Military Relations

- Military plays a **dominant role** in foreign policy
- Especially in:
 - Security
 - India policy
 - Afghanistan policy

📖 Rizvi argues that **institutional imbalance** leads to:

- Lack of continuity
- Strategic inconsistency

🌐 4. External Alliances & Dependency

- Pakistan aligned with:
 - United States (Cold War, War on Terror)
 - China (strategic partnership)

📖 Argument:

→ Foreign policy shows **dependency patterns**, limiting autonomy.

⚖️ 5. Ideology vs Pragmatism

- Islamic identity influences:
 - Relations with Muslim world
 - Role in Organization of Islamic Cooperation

📖 However:

→ Practical needs often override ideology.

💰 6. Neglect of Economic Diplomacy

- Economic goals historically under-prioritized
- Focus remained on:
 - Security
 - Strategic alliances

📖 Rizvi suggests:

→ Sustainable foreign policy requires **economic strength**.

📖 *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics*

By Ayesha Jalal

🧠 Central Thesis

Ayesha Jalal examines Pakistan's **creation, ideological foundations, and its trajectory in global politics**, arguing that:

"Pakistan's foreign policy and domestic politics are inseparable from its historical struggle as a Muslim homeland and the geopolitical realities of South Asia."

□ Key Themes & Arguments

🏰 1. Ideological Foundation

- Pakistan created as a **Muslim homeland** to safeguard:
 - Religious and cultural identity
 - Political rights of Muslims in South Asia
- Emphasis on **two-nation theory** shaping early foreign policy

📖 Jalal links:

- Jinnah's speeches → Peaceful coexistence, minority rights in India
- Bhutto → Islamic solidarity in 1970s

✂ 2. Security & India Rivalry

- Historical rivalry with India defines policy:
 - Kashmir dispute
 - Military-first strategy
- Wars of 1947, 1965, 1971 shape diplomatic posture

📖 Insight: Jalal emphasizes **security as a constant driver**, while ideology and political instability influence execution.

🌐 3. Foreign Alliances & Global Positioning

- Cold War:
 - Alignment with United States
 - Strategic support against regional threats
- China relations began in **1960s** for strategic depth
- Shift toward Islamic world for diplomatic identity

📖 Jalal critiques:

- Over-reliance on superpowers
- Weak independent decision-making

🧠 4. Domestic Politics & Civil-Military Balance

- Civil-military interplay directly affects foreign policy:
 - Military regimes → more aggressive/security-oriented
 - Civilian governments → more diplomatic, ideologically balanced
- 1971 East Pakistan separation → failure in strategic foresight

💡 5. Ideology vs Pragmatism

- Pakistan's Islamic identity guides:
 - Relations with OIC nations
 - Support for Muslim causes globally
- BUT pragmatism (economic aid, strategic alliances) often overrides ideology

💰 6. Economic Constraints

- Early focus on defense and security → neglected economic foundations
- Weak economic base limited foreign policy options
- Jalal emphasizes that **geopolitical strategy requires economic strength**