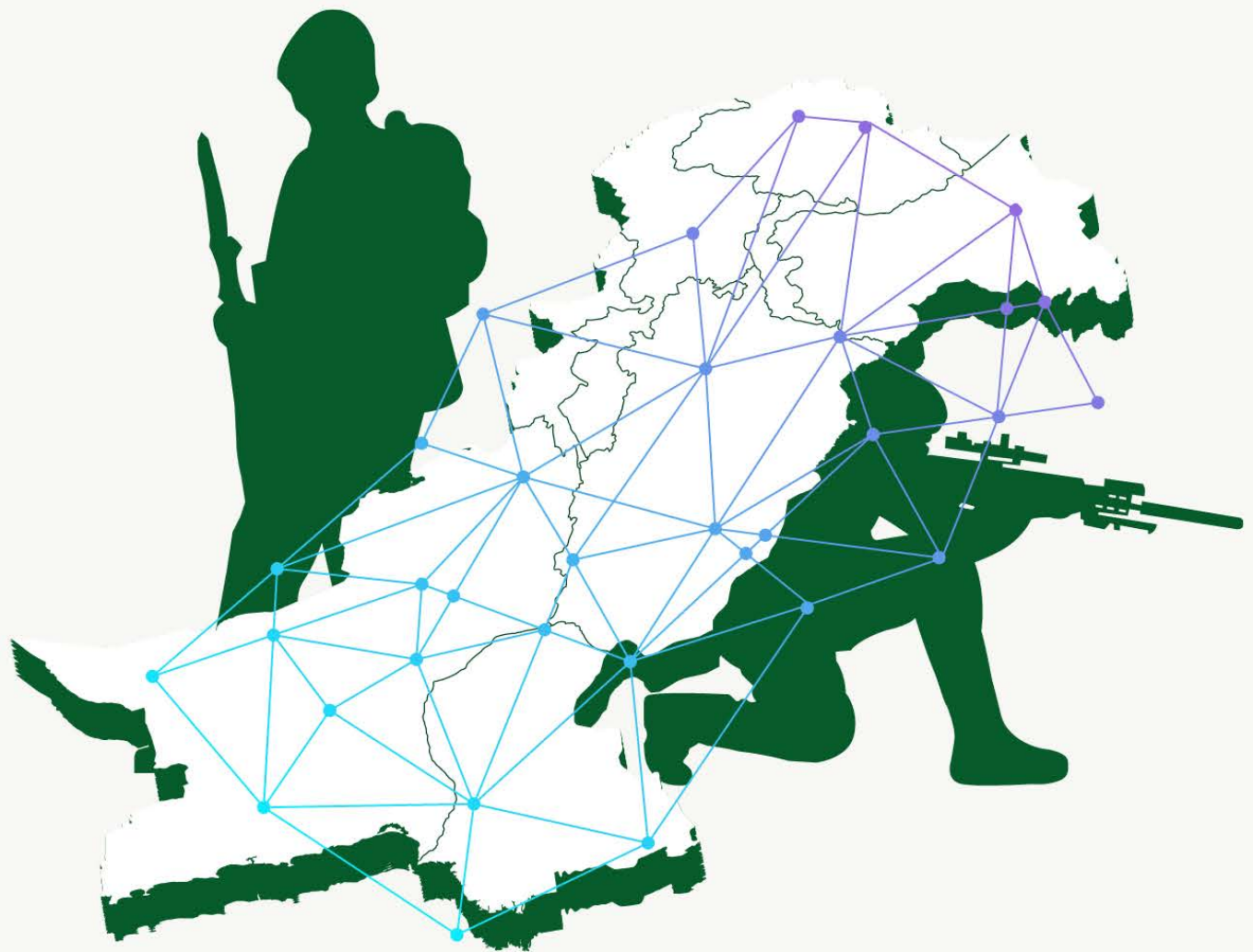


Crossroads & Confrontations

Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2024

Decoding Diplomacy: Navigating Pakistan's Strategic Pathways from Independence to Today



AGHA ZUHAIB KHAN



THE CSS POINT
Yes We Can Do It!



THE CSS POINT

Yes We Can Do It!

**DOWNLOAD
FREE
CSS/PMS
BOOKS**



+92 (333) 604-2057

www.thecsspoint.com

Contents

1947 - Independence and Partition: The Dawn of Pakistan's Foreign Policy Challenges.....	4
1954 - Alignment with the West: The Genesis of Pakistan's Strategic Partnership with the United States	6
1955 - The Baghdad Pact/CENTO: Pakistan's Strategic Alignment with Western Powers	8
1965 and 1971 - Wars with India: Defining Moments in Pakistan's Foreign Policy	10
1972 - The Simla Agreement: A Pivotal Moment in Indo-Pak Relations	12
1974 - Nuclear Development: A Shift in Pakistan's Defense Strategy	14
1979 - Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: Pakistan's Strategic Role and Its Implications	16
1989 - Withdrawal of Soviet Troops from Afghanistan: Pakistan's Role in the Ensuing Power Vacuum.	18
1998 - Nuclear Tests: Pakistan's Assertion as a Nuclear-Armed State.....	20
2001 - Post 9/11 Alignment: Pakistan's Strategic Pivot in the War on Terror	22
2008 - Democratic Transition: Shifting Dynamics in Pakistan's Foreign Policy.....	24
2013 - The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A New Era in Sino-Pakistani Relations	26
2014 - Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Pakistan's Decisive Strike Against Terrorism.....	28
Pakistan Foreign Policy 2019 to 2024	30

1947- Independence and Partition: The Dawn of Pakistan's Foreign Policy Challenges

The year 1947 marked a pivotal moment in South Asian history as the Indian subcontinent gained independence from British colonial rule. This historic event led to the partition of British India into two independent dominions: India and Pakistan. The creation of Pakistan was driven by the ideological vision of providing a separate nation for Muslims, spearheaded by the All-India Muslim League under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. However, the joy of independence was overshadowed by the communal violence that ensued and the daunting foreign policy challenges that Pakistan faced, particularly in its relations with its larger neighbor, India.

From the outset, the primary focus of Pakistan's foreign policy was managing its relationship with India. The partition had been bitter and bloody, accompanied by large-scale communal violence and a massive migration of populations across the newly drawn borders, with Muslims moving to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs to India. This migration was one of the largest in human history and set the stage for a fraught relationship between the two new nations.

One of the most immediate and enduring disputes between India and Pakistan was over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. At the time of partition, the princely states, which were semi-autonomous under British rule, were given the option to join either India or Pakistan. The Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, initially wanted to remain independent. However, following an invasion by tribal militias from Pakistan and the Maharaja's eventual accession to India under duress, the conflict over Kashmir escalated into the first Indo-Pak war in 1947-1948.

The Kashmir dispute has been the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy challenges since independence. The United Nations intervened in 1948, resulting in a ceasefire and a resolution that called for a plebiscite to determine the region's future. However, the plebiscite was never held, and the state remained divided along the Line of Control, with Pakistan administering one part and India another. The unresolved status of Kashmir has led to several wars between the two nations and remains a significant source of tension.

Moreover, the partition also set a precedent for Pakistan's foreign policy orientation towards a security paradigm. Faced with a larger and conventionally stronger India, Pakistan felt the need to seek strategic depth and alliances to balance India's power. This

led Pakistan to align itself with various international actors over the decades, most notably with the United States during the Cold War.

The early years following independence were also marked by internal challenges, including the need to establish a functional government, integrate diverse regions, and manage millions of refugees. These domestic issues were deeply interconnected with Pakistan's foreign policy, as the stability of the new state was paramount to maintaining its international standing and security.

In summary, the events of 1947 laid the foundation for Pakistan's foreign policy, characterized by its complex and often contentious relations with India, particularly over Kashmir. The legacy of partition has continued to influence Pakistan's foreign policy decisions, shaping its regional and global alignments to this day. The initial years were not only about survival and establishing sovereignty but also about navigating a challenging geopolitical landscape that continues to evolve.

1954- Alignment with the West: The Genesis of Pakistan's Strategic Partnership with the United States

The year 1954 marked a pivotal turning point in Pakistan's foreign policy with the signing of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with the United States. This agreement was not merely a bilateral military pact; it symbolized Pakistan's strategic orientation towards the West during the Cold War era, fundamentally shaping its international alliances and domestic policy directions for decades to come.

In the aftermath of World War II, the global political landscape was rapidly transforming. The emergence of the Cold War saw the world being divided into two major blocs: the Soviet-led communist bloc and the U.S.-led capitalist bloc. Countries around the world were often compelled to choose sides as a matter of survival and strategic advantage. For Pakistan, whose foreign policy was deeply influenced by its security concerns, especially regarding its larger neighbor, India, aligning with the United States offered several perceived benefits.

Strategic and Military Benefits

The primary motive behind Pakistan's decision to align with the United States was the enhancement of its national security. Pakistan was acutely aware of its military disparity with India. The U.S. alliance promised substantial military aid, which Pakistan sought to leverage to bolster its defense capabilities. Between the 1950s and 1960s, Pakistan received millions of dollars in U.S. military assistance, which included advanced weaponry and training for its military personnel. This military strengthening was crucial for Pakistan as it sought to assert its sovereignty and regional influence.

Economic Considerations

Beyond military aid, economic considerations also played a significant role. The U.S. emerged from World War II as an economic powerhouse capable of providing substantial aid and fostering economic development. For a newly independent country like Pakistan, grappling with the challenges of nation-building and economic development, American financial aid and investment were attractive incentives. These economic ties complemented the military assistance, helping to stabilize Pakistan's fledgling economy.

Political and Diplomatic Dimensions

Politically, the alliance with the United States helped Pakistan to elevate its international standing. Being aligned with a global superpower provided Pakistan with a diplomatic leverage in international forums such as the United Nations. It also provided a counterbalance to India's leaning towards the Soviet Union during much of the Cold War. This geopolitical alignment was crucial in a time when non-aligned movements were also gaining traction in other parts of the developing world.

Implications and Criticisms

However, the alignment with the U.S. was not without its criticisms and consequences. Critics argued that this heavy reliance on American support compromised Pakistan's autonomy in making foreign policy decisions. It also entangled Pakistan in the broader strategic interests of the United States, sometimes at odds with its own regional interests, particularly in relation to Afghanistan and later during the Soviet-Afghan War.

Moreover, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has been characterized by fluctuations, with periods of close cooperation followed by significant strains, reflecting changes in global and regional geopolitics. These shifts often left Pakistan in precarious positions, needing to recalibrate its strategic priorities.

In conclusion, the 1954 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement was a cornerstone event in Pakistan's foreign policy, laying the groundwork for a complex, sometimes contentious, yet strategically significant relationship with the United States. This alignment shaped Pakistan's military strategy, economic policies, and international diplomatic engagements, underscoring the intricate interplay between national security imperatives and foreign policy choices in the Cold War context.

1955- The Baghdad Pact/CENTO: Pakistan's Strategic Alignment with Western Powers

In 1955, a year after establishing a formal alliance with the United States, Pakistan further solidified its position in the Western bloc during the Cold War by joining the Baghdad Pact. Later renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), this alliance represented a significant step in Pakistan's foreign policy, designed to counter Soviet influence in the Middle East and South Asia. The pact included Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and the United Kingdom, with the United States playing a supporting role.

Strategic Context of the Pact

The Baghdad Pact was initially proposed by the United Kingdom as a means to establish a Middle Eastern defense organization akin to NATO, aimed at containing the spread of Soviet influence in the strategically vital region. For Pakistan, joining the pact was motivated by several factors, primarily its ongoing security concerns regarding India and the desire to strengthen ties with Western powers, especially the United States, which was perceived as essential for military and economic aid.

Security and Military Implications

By aligning with CENTO, Pakistan aimed to bolster its security apparatus against perceived threats not only from the Soviet Union but also from neighboring India. The organization facilitated military cooperation, joint exercises, and a platform for sharing intelligence among member countries. It also provided Pakistan access to advanced military technology and financial aid, crucial for building its defense capabilities during the early years of its independence.

Economic and Political Gains

Beyond security, the Baghdad Pact had significant economic and political dimensions for Pakistan. Economically, it connected Pakistan with oil-rich Middle Eastern countries, opening avenues for energy cooperation and trade. Politically, it enhanced Pakistan's diplomatic stature on the global stage, aligning it with countries under the Western influence, which was vital for its international legitimacy and support in the United Nations.

Impacts and Challenges

However, the alliance with CENTO also brought challenges. Domestically, it was met with criticism from those who believed it compromised Pakistan's sovereignty and entangled the country in the geopolitical games of more powerful nations. Moreover, Pakistan's involvement in CENTO did little to mitigate its tensions with India, as the organization was more focused on the threat from the Soviet Union rather than addressing regional conflicts.

The effectiveness of CENTO as a military alliance was also questioned, as it lacked the cohesion and the clear strategic purpose that characterized NATO. The alliance struggled with differing priorities among its members, and its military initiatives were often hampered by logistical and political complications.

Legacy and Dissolution

The Baghdad Pact was renamed CENTO in 1959 following Iraq's withdrawal after a coup. The organization limped on through the 1960s and 70s but gradually lost its relevance as regional dynamics shifted. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was the final blow to CENTO, leading to its dissolution as the new Iranian regime rejected Western alliances.

In retrospect, Pakistan's participation in the Baghdad Pact/CENTO is seen as a foundational element of its Cold War foreign policy, reflecting its alignment with the West and its broader strategic calculations. While it provided Pakistan with certain military and economic benefits, it also showcased the complexities and limitations of such military alliances in addressing regional security issues. The experience with CENTO highlighted the challenges small states face in navigating the currents of global power politics, balancing between gaining support from powerful allies and maintaining national autonomy.

1965 and 1971- Wars with India: Defining Moments in Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The conflicts between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 were pivotal events that not only shaped the bilateral relations between these two South Asian neighbors but also had profound implications for Pakistan's foreign policy. These wars underscored the significance of military strength and strategic alliances and led to a reevaluation of Pakistan's international relations and defense strategies.

The 1965 War: Causes and Consequences

The 1965 war between India and Pakistan was primarily triggered by disputes over the territories of Kashmir and the Rann of Kutch. Pakistan, seeking to capitalize on what it perceived as a moment of Indian vulnerability, launched Operation Gibraltar, which aimed to incite an insurgency in Indian-controlled Kashmir. However, the plan failed to achieve its objectives, prompting a broader military conflict between the two nations.

The war saw intense fighting along the border and culminated in a United Nations-mandated ceasefire. Militarily, the war ended in a stalemate, with neither side able to claim clear victory. The conflict led to the Tashkent Agreement in January 1966, brokered by the Soviet Union and the USA, where both nations agreed to withdraw forces back to pre-war positions. For Pakistan, the war not only exposed the limitations of its military strategy but also highlighted the need for robust international alliances and modernized military capabilities.

The 1971 War and the Creation of Bangladesh

The 1971 conflict had more dramatic and lasting consequences. It originated from political strife within Pakistan, which consisted of two geographically and culturally distinct regions: West Pakistan and East Pakistan. The political neglect and economic exploitation of East Pakistan by the western ruling elite led to rising discontent and demands for autonomy. This escalated to a full-blown conflict when the Pakistani military launched a military operation in East Pakistan in March 1971 to suppress the rebellion, leading to severe humanitarian crises and mass displacement.

India intervened in December 1971, after millions of refugees fled to India from East Pakistan. The intervention led to a swift military conflict and the subsequent surrender of Pakistani forces in Dhaka on December 16, 1971. This resulted in the creation of the

independent nation of Bangladesh. The 1971 war was a significant blow to Pakistan, leading to a loss of territory, a diminished international standing, and a need to fundamentally reassess its foreign policy and military strategy.

Impact on Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The wars of 1965 and 1971 had several critical implications for Pakistan's foreign policy. Firstly, they underscored the importance of developing a more robust and self-reliant defense capability. The reliance on foreign aid and military support, particularly from the United States, had proven unreliable during times of need, especially in 1971 when the U.S. did not intervene decisively on behalf of Pakistan.

Secondly, these wars highlighted the need for diplomatic engagement not only with global powers but also with regional neighbors. The realization that military conflict with India was costly and unsustainable in the long run prompted efforts (albeit inconsistent) towards initiating dialogue and reducing tensions.

Lastly, the loss in 1971 catalyzed a shift in Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy, emphasizing the need to integrate political solutions with its military strategies. It led to a greater focus on internal political stability, economic development, and the nuclear program, which eventually culminated in Pakistan becoming a nuclear-armed state in 1998.

In conclusion, the wars of 1965 and 1971 were watershed moments in Pakistan's history, compelling a comprehensive overhaul of its foreign policy and defense posture. These conflicts demonstrated the limitations of military power alone and highlighted the critical need for balanced and pragmatic foreign policy strategies.

1972- The Simla Agreement: A Pivotal Moment in Indo-Pak Relations

The Simla Agreement, signed on July 2, 1972, between India and Pakistan, was a critical juncture in the tumultuous relationship between the two countries. Coming after the devastating 1971 war, which resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh, the Agreement was a diplomatic endeavor aimed at restoring normal relations between the newly realigned neighbors and setting a framework for peaceful coexistence.

Background to the Simla Agreement

The 1971 Indo-Pak war had profound implications for Pakistan. It not only led to significant territorial and military losses but also severely damaged Pakistan's international standing and morale. The war culminated in the creation of Bangladesh, after East Pakistan seceded with Indian military support. Following the cessation of hostilities, the leaders of India and Pakistan recognized the urgent need to establish a new framework for bilateral relations to avoid future conflicts and stabilize the region.

Negotiations at Simla

The negotiations were held at Simla, India, where Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi met to discuss the terms of peace. The talks were marked by a tense yet hopeful atmosphere as both leaders were under immense domestic pressure to secure favorable outcomes. Bhutto, dealing with a fractured Pakistan, needed to prove his diplomatic skills in salvaging respect and sovereignty for his country, while Gandhi aimed to leverage India's military victory to secure lasting peace and stability.

Key Provisions of the Agreement

The Simla Agreement covered various aspects of the bilateral relationship:

Respect for Sovereignty: Both nations pledged to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other, aiming to eliminate conflict and confrontation in their relations.

Bilateralism: A significant clause stated that all issues affecting the two countries would be resolved bilaterally without third-party intervention. This principle was aimed at managing disputes internally rather than seeking external mediation.

Line of Control (LoC): The Agreement transformed the ceasefire line of December 17, 1971, into the Line of Control, which, unlike an international border, was a military demarcation line that both armies would respect until a final resolution was reached, especially concerning the Kashmir issue.

Return of Prisoners of War (POWs): The Agreement also facilitated the return of over 90,000 Pakistani POWs in India and the repatriation of Indian POWs in Pakistan.

Impact and Legacy

The immediate aftermath of the Simla Agreement saw a thaw in Indo-Pak relations, with the reopening of diplomatic missions and initiation of direct flights between the two countries. However, the long-term effectiveness of the Agreement in preventing future conflicts has been mixed. While it established a framework for dialogue, underlying issues, particularly the dispute over Kashmir, remained unresolved and continued to cause friction.

The principle of bilateralism established by the Simla Agreement has been a cornerstone of Indo-Pak diplomatic relations and has been invoked by both nations in times of dispute. However, the challenge of maintaining peace and avoiding escalation has necessitated frequent international attention despite the bilateral framework.

In conclusion, the Simla Agreement was a significant attempt to reset relations between India and Pakistan post-1971. While it provided a temporary framework for peace and cooperation, the persistent underlying disputes and mutual distrust have continued to test its strength and resilience. The Agreement remains a pivotal reference point in the complex diplomatic dance between India and Pakistan, embodying both the hopes for peace and the challenges of geopolitics in South Asia.

1974- Nuclear Development: A Shift in Pakistan's Defense Strategy

In 1974, following India's surprise nuclear tests, Pakistan embarked on a transformative journey in its defense policy by initiating its own nuclear program. This pivotal decision marked a strategic shift, positioning nuclear capability at the core of Pakistan's defense strategy, a move driven by the imperative of maintaining a deterrent against perceived existential threats, particularly from its larger neighbor, India.

Background and Impetus

India conducted its first nuclear test, codenamed "Smiling Buddha," on May 18, 1974. This test not only altered the strategic balance in South Asia but also sent shockwaves across the international community, particularly impacting Pakistan, which shared a history of contentious and often violent relations with India. The test was perceived in Pakistan as a direct threat to its national security, creating a compelling urgency to develop its own nuclear capabilities to ensure a credible deterrent against potential Indian aggression.

Pakistan's Response

The response from Pakistan was swift and decisive. Under the leadership of then-Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan began to lay the groundwork for its nuclear program. Bhutto famously declared that Pakistanis would "eat grass, even go hungry" but would acquire their own bomb. This rhetorical commitment underscored the depth of Pakistan's resolve in pursuing a nuclear deterrent.

The development of Pakistan's nuclear program involved mobilizing the country's best scientific minds, led by nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, who later became synonymous with Pakistan's nuclear endeavors. Khan's role was instrumental in developing the uranium enrichment technology that would eventually enable Pakistan to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Challenges and International Reaction

The path to developing nuclear capability was fraught with numerous challenges. Pakistan had to navigate the complex terrain of international non-proliferation norms and sanctions. The international community, particularly Western powers, was apprehensive

about the proliferation risks associated with an expanding nuclear arms race in South Asia. Consequently, Pakistan faced significant diplomatic and economic pressures, including sanctions aimed at impeding its nuclear development.

Despite these challenges, Pakistan's strategic calculations prioritized the acquisition of nuclear weapons as essential for its national security, believing that only a nuclear deterrent could ensure its survival against a conventionally superior India.

Culmination and Aftermath

Pakistan's nuclear development efforts culminated in its successful nuclear tests in May 1998, shortly after India conducted its own series of tests. These tests, conducted in the Chagai Hills of Balochistan, officially declared Pakistan as a nuclear-armed state, achieving its goal of establishing a credible deterrent and restoring strategic balance in the region.

The declaration of nuclear capability had far-reaching implications for Pakistan's foreign policy and defense posture. It significantly altered the regional security dynamics, leading to increased efforts to manage nuclear risks and stabilize military relations between India and Pakistan. Domestically, it bolstered national pride and political standing of the government, though it also escalated the arms race in the region.

Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

Decades after the decision to initiate nuclear development, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal remains a central element of its national defense strategy. It has shaped the strategic calculations of both Pakistan and India, influencing their diplomatic, military, and economic interactions. While the nuclear capability has provided Pakistan with a sense of security, it has also imposed a continuous obligation to manage and secure its nuclear assets responsibly, amidst ongoing international concerns about proliferation and security.

In conclusion, the initiation of Pakistan's nuclear program in 1974 was a defining moment in its defense history, reflecting a strategic determination to maintain sovereignty and security in a challenging regional context. This development has had lasting implications for South Asian security architecture and continues to influence Pakistan's strategic policies and international relations.

1979- Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: Pakistan's Strategic Role and Its Implications

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 marked a critical juncture in the Cold War, reshaping the geopolitical landscape of South Asia and the Middle East. Pakistan, sharing a long and porous border with Afghanistan, found itself thrust into the center of this global conflict, playing a pivotal role that would have profound and lasting impacts on its foreign policy and regional dynamics.

Background of the Invasion

The Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan to support the faltering communist regime, aiming to secure a friendly government on its southern border and prevent the spread of Islamic insurgency. This move was perceived by the United States and its allies as a significant threat to the balance of power in the region, particularly concerning the access to and control of Middle Eastern oil supplies.

Pakistan's Involvement

For Pakistan, the Soviet invasion represented both a threat and an opportunity. The threat was immediate and existential, as a Soviet-controlled Afghanistan could potentially embolden Pakistan's rival, India, and lead to strategic encirclement. However, the opportunity lay in aligning more closely with the United States, which was keen to counter Soviet influence in the region.

Under the leadership of General Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistan became the frontline state in the U.S.-led effort to support the Afghan mujahideen, the groups of Afghan resistance fighters battling the Soviet forces. This involvement was facilitated by significant financial and military assistance from the United States and Saudi Arabia, part of a broader strategy to engage in a proxy war against the Soviet Union.

Support to the Mujahideen

Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) played a crucial role in organizing, training, and supplying the mujahideen. Training camps were established in the border regions of Pakistan, where Afghan fighters were not only trained in guerrilla warfare tactics but also indoctrinated with Islamist ideologies, which were seen as effective in mobilizing resistance against the atheist Soviet forces.

The CIA collaborated closely with the ISI, funneling arms, funds, and intelligence through Pakistan to the mujahideen. This cooperation included the provision of sophisticated weapons like the Stinger missiles, which significantly enhanced the capabilities of the mujahideen.

Impact on Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The war had a transformative impact on Pakistan's foreign policy. By aligning with the United States against the Soviet Union, Pakistan not only secured vital military and economic aid but also reinforced its strategic importance in global geopolitics. This relationship, however, was complex and fraught with challenges, including the U.S. concerns over Pakistan's nuclear program and the unpredictability of Pakistan's military and intelligence operations.

Regional Implications and Legacy

The involvement in Afghanistan had profound implications for Pakistan. It led to the influx of millions of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, a demographic shift that has had lasting social and economic impacts. The conflict also contributed to the proliferation of weapons and the rise of militancy in Pakistan's tribal areas, issues that continue to pose security challenges.

Moreover, the end of the Soviet occupation and the subsequent civil war in Afghanistan left a power vacuum that contributed to the rise of the Taliban, whom Pakistan initially supported. This has led to a complex relationship with the subsequent governments in Kabul, influencing Pakistan's security and its relations with other powers, including the United States and China.

In conclusion, Pakistan's strategic response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 significantly shaped its foreign policy and regional dynamics. The legacy of this period continues to influence Pakistan's domestic and international policies, reflecting the enduring complexities of its strategic choices.

1989- Withdrawal of Soviet Troops from Afghanistan: Pakistan's Role in the Ensuing Power Vacuum

The year 1989 marked a significant turning point in the geopolitical landscape of South Asia and the broader region, as Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan after a decade of grueling conflict. This withdrawal not only signified the end of one of the Cold War's fiercest battles but also initiated a period of profound uncertainty and instability in Afghanistan. Pakistan, given its strategic interests and geographical proximity, played a crucial role in the unfolding scenario, deeply influencing and being affected by the subsequent developments.

Background and Context

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 had prompted a fierce resistance, known as the mujahideen, backed vehemently by the United States, Pakistan, and several Arab nations. For Pakistan, the Afghan jihad was not just a facet of its alliance with the West against the Soviet Union but also a critical element of its own security and foreign policy strategy, aimed at ensuring a friendly or at least a non-hostile government in Kabul.

The Withdrawal and its Immediate Aftermath

When Mikhail Gorbachev decided to pull Soviet forces out of Afghanistan, the decision was influenced by the unsustainable cost of the war and the intense international pressure. The formal withdrawal in 1989 left behind a fractured Afghan state and various mujahideen factions vying for power, leading to a brutal civil war. Pakistan, which had hosted millions of Afghan refugees and had been a conduit for military support to the mujahideen, found itself deeply enmeshed in the subsequent power struggles.

Pakistan's Strategic Calculations

The power vacuum in Afghanistan posed both an opportunity and a challenge for Pakistan. On one hand, there was the potential to influence the formation of a government in Kabul that could be favorable to Islamabad's interests, particularly concerning the strategic depth against India. On the other hand, the instability had the potential to spill over into Pakistan, exacerbating internal security issues and impacting its socio-economic fabric.

Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) continued to play an influential role during this period, supporting particular factions of the mujahideen. The eventual emergence of the Taliban in the mid-1990s was also a development that saw significant Pakistani involvement. The Taliban, consisting mostly of Afghan students (Talibs) from madrassas in Pakistan, quickly established themselves as a formidable force, capturing Kabul in 1996.

Implications for Pakistan and the Region

Pakistan's deep involvement in Afghan affairs had a series of long-term consequences. The proliferation of arms and militant ideologies during the Soviet-Afghan war had already altered the security landscape of Pakistan's tribal areas, fostering an environment where extremism could thrive. The continuation of these dynamics after 1989 further entrenched these elements within Pakistan, contributing to internal security challenges that persist to this day.

Moreover, the refugee crisis did not abate with the end of the conflict, as continued violence in Afghanistan meant that repatriation of Afghan refugees was slow and fraught with difficulties. This had significant social and economic impacts on Pakistan, straining its resources and affecting community relations.

Evaluating the Legacy

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the subsequent period of civil war represented a critical chapter in Pakistan's foreign policy and its regional security strategy. The decisions made during and after this period have had lasting impacts, shaping Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, its domestic security policy, and its position in regional geopolitics.

In conclusion, the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was a moment laden with both risk and opportunity for Pakistan. The manner in which Pakistan navigated the ensuing power vacuum has left a complex legacy, illustrating the intricate interplay between foreign policy objectives and domestic security concerns.

1998- Nuclear Tests: Pakistan's Assertion as a Nuclear-Armed State

In May 1998, Pakistan conducted a series of nuclear tests, codenamed Chagai-I and Chagai-II, in the Balochistan province. This monumental event marked Pakistan's official entry into the exclusive club of nuclear-armed states. The tests were a direct response to India's nuclear tests earlier that month, which had altered the strategic balance in South Asia. Pakistan's decision to conduct these tests was driven by a complex interplay of regional security dynamics, national pride, and the imperative to maintain strategic parity with India.

Background of the Nuclear Ambition

Pakistan's journey towards nuclear capability began in the early 1970s under the leadership of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who famously vowed that Pakistanis would eat grass if necessary to fund their nuclear program. The impetus was significantly amplified by India's first nuclear test in 1974, which challenged Pakistan's security perceptions and intensified its commitment to developing nuclear deterrence. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, a key figure in Pakistan's nuclear program, facilitated significant advancements in uranium enrichment technologies, pushing Pakistan closer to its goal.

The Catalyst in 1998

The immediate catalyst for Pakistan's nuclear tests was India's series of tests in May 1998, branded as "Operation Shakti." These tests were a clear demonstration of India's advanced nuclear capabilities and were perceived in Pakistan as a direct threat to its national security. The Indian tests galvanized Pakistani leadership, which argued that a strategic balance in the region could only be maintained through a credible nuclear deterrent of its own.

Execution and Global Reaction

Pakistan conducted five nuclear tests on May 28, 1998, followed by an additional test on May 30. These tests were met with jubilation domestically, as they were seen as a symbol of national achievement and a guarantor of security. However, internationally, the reaction was overwhelmingly negative. Major powers, including the United States, Japan, and countries of the European Union, imposed economic sanctions on Pakistan, citing

violations of non-proliferation norms and concerns about escalating nuclear arms race in the region.

Despite these repercussions, the Pakistani government, led by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the time, defended the decision as necessary for national security, especially in the face of perceived existential threats from India.

Strategic and Security Implications

The 1998 nuclear tests significantly altered South Asia's security architecture. Pakistan's status as a nuclear power reshaped its military and strategic policies, providing it with a deterrent against conventional military threats from its larger neighbor. However, it also ushered in a new era of nuclear diplomacy and brinkmanship in the region. Both India and Pakistan have since had to navigate a complex landscape of international pressure to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), neither of which they have signed to date.

Long-term Consequences and Challenges

The decision to go nuclear has had profound implications for Pakistan beyond immediate security concerns. It has influenced Pakistan's international relations, attracting both criticism for proliferation risks and strategic partnerships with other countries balancing against Indian power. Domestically, the nuclear tests boosted national pride and political capital for the ruling government but also initiated a challenging era of managing the economic fallout from subsequent sanctions.

In conclusion, Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests were not merely a response to India's nuclear advancements but a strategic decision influenced by decades of security dilemmas and regional rivalries. While successfully establishing a nuclear deterrent, Pakistan also faced new diplomatic and security challenges, navigating its role as a nuclear power in an increasingly complex global environment.

2001- Post 9/11 Alignment: Pakistan's Strategic Pivot in the War on Terror

The catastrophic events of September 11, 2001, had a profound and immediate impact on global geopolitics, triggering the United States to launch the War on Terror. Pakistan, due to its strategic location and historical ties with militant groups in the region, found itself at the epicenter of this new geopolitical reality. The decision by Pakistan to align with the U.S. in the War on Terror marked a significant pivot in its foreign policy, deeply affecting its domestic landscape and international relations.

Background and Immediate Response

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. demanded cooperation from Pakistan in combating the Taliban and al-Qaeda, who were primarily based in Afghanistan but had significant operational linkages within Pakistan. Led by General Pervez Musharraf, who was the President and military ruler at the time, Pakistan faced a stark choice: support the U.S. in its global fight against terrorism or face potential diplomatic isolation and economic repercussions.

Choosing to join the U.S.-led coalition, Pakistan's role became crucial in providing logistical support, intelligence sharing, and facilitating military operations. This decision was articulated by Musharraf as being in Pakistan's best interest, primarily to avoid international isolation and to secure economic and military aid crucial for the country's struggling economy.

Domestic Implications

The alignment with the U.S. had profound domestic implications. Firstly, it led to significant internal security challenges. Extremist groups within Pakistan, some of which had previously been tacitly supported by the government for strategic purposes in the region, now viewed the Pakistani state as a betrayer for siding with the West against Islamic groups. This shift resulted in a surge of terrorist attacks within Pakistan, targeting military and civilian installations and resulting in thousands of casualties over the years.

Moreover, the decision to support the U.S. war effort was controversial among the Pakistani populace, with significant opposition from various political and religious factions who viewed this alignment as compromising Pakistan's sovereignty and pandering to

Western interests. This sentiment fueled anti-American sentiment and led to political instability.

International Relations

On the international front, Pakistan's decision enhanced its strategic importance to the U.S. and garnered substantial financial and military aid, including debt relief and support for economic reforms. However, it also complicated relations with neighboring Afghanistan and strained ties with other Muslim countries, which were skeptical of the U.S. intentions in the region.

Furthermore, Pakistan's relationship with its long-standing ally, China, also needed careful handling, as the increased U.S. presence and influence in the region were viewed with suspicion by Beijing. Balancing these relationships became a critical aspect of Pakistan's diplomatic strategy.

Long-term Effects

The long-term effects of Pakistan's post-9/11 alignment with the U.S. are complex and multifaceted. While it brought significant military and economic support, it also entrenched the military's role in governance and policymaking, given the security-centric approach to both internal and external threats. The period also saw an erosion of civil liberties under the guise of national security, impacting the democratic process and governance structures.

In conclusion, Pakistan's strategic alignment in the post-9/11 era was a defining moment in its history, deeply influencing its security doctrine, political landscape, and international relations. This decision not only shaped the country's policy trajectory in the ensuing years but also highlighted the intricate balance of domestic priorities and international diplomacy in a globalized world. The legacy of this alignment continues to influence Pakistan's policies and its regional and global standing.

2008- Democratic Transition: Shifting Dynamics in Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The year 2008 marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's political history with the transition from military to civilian rule, heralding a new era in the country's governance and foreign policy. This democratic transition was not merely a change of leadership but represented a profound shift in the administrative dynamics and the overall approach to international relations that had been predominantly under military influence for several years.

Background and Political Shift

Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan had experienced several cycles of military coups and civilian rule. The latest military regime, led by General Pervez Musharraf, began in 1999 when he ousted the elected government. However, mounting domestic and international pressure, exacerbated by issues such as economic challenges, security concerns, and a growing demand for democratic governance, led to Musharraf's resignation and the subsequent national elections in 2008.

The elections brought the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), led by Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, to power. This transition was significant as it marked a move towards strengthening democratic institutions and reshaping Pakistan's foreign policy that had been largely shaped by military interests, especially concerning India, Afghanistan, and the United States.

Impact on Foreign Policy

Under civilian rule, Pakistan's foreign policy began to exhibit a greater emphasis on economic diplomacy and a balanced approach towards its neighbors. One of the early signs of this shift was the improvement in trade relations with India, with both countries granting each other the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to enhance bilateral trade.

Furthermore, the civilian government sought to diversify its foreign relations, reducing the over-reliance on the United States by strengthening ties with other regional powers, particularly China. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which was agreed upon during this period, is a testament to this strategic realignment. CPEC promised substantial investment in infrastructure and energy in Pakistan, bolstering its economy and underscoring China's role as a key strategic partner.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite these shifts, the civilian government faced significant challenges in fully asserting control over foreign policy, a domain traditionally dominated by the military, especially in matters related to security and defense. The military's entrenched role in these areas, particularly concerning Afghanistan and counterterrorism operations, meant that civilian governments often had limited room to maneuver.

The relationship with the United States presented another complex challenge. The discovery of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad in 2011 and the U.S. operation to kill him severely strained relations, as it highlighted the complexities of Pakistan's security policies and its partnership with the U.S. Navigating this relationship, while also addressing internal pressures from a populace that was increasingly skeptical of American intentions, was a delicate task for the civilian administration.

Long-term Implications

The democratic transition in 2008 had lasting implications for Pakistan's approach to governance and international diplomacy. While the military still retains significant influence over security and defense policies, the civilian government's role in shaping economic and diplomatic strategies has grown. This period marked the beginning of a more balanced foreign policy approach, striving to align Pakistan's strategic interests with its development goals.

In conclusion, the democratic transition of 2008 significantly altered the dynamics of Pakistan's foreign policy, introducing a new phase of economic priorities and diversified international relations. While challenges remain, particularly in balancing civilian and military influences, this transition represents a critical step towards a more autonomous and balanced foreign policy framework, crucial for Pakistan's long-term stability and regional integration.

2013- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A New Era in Sino-Pakistani Relations

In 2013, the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) marked a groundbreaking evolution in the bilateral relations between China and Pakistan. As a cornerstone project under China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC not only aims to enhance economic cooperation through a network of transportation, energy projects, and special economic zones but also solidifies China as a major strategic partner of Pakistan. This multi-billion-dollar initiative has significant implications for regional connectivity, economic development, and geopolitical dynamics.

Background and Overview

CPEC is envisioned as a corridor stretching from the Chinese border through Pakistan's rugged north all the way to the Gwadar Port on the Arabian Sea. The project includes a sprawling network of highways, railways, and pipelines. Additionally, it encompasses numerous energy projects intended to relieve Pakistan's chronic energy shortages. The total estimated cost of the project is around \$62 billion, making it one of the most ambitious international development and economic projects of the 21st century.

Strategic and Economic Implications

From a strategic standpoint, CPEC provides China with a direct trade route to the Middle East and beyond, bypassing the longer maritime route through the Strait of Malacca, which is susceptible to piracy and geopolitical rivalries. For Pakistan, the project promises significant economic benefits, including job creation, infrastructure development, and an overall boost to the economy. The development of Gwadar Port is particularly strategic, as it is set to become a crucial hub for import and export activities, enhancing Pakistan's connectivity with global markets.

Deepening Bilateral Ties

The implementation of CPEC has led to a deepening of ties between China and Pakistan, which have historically been allies. The project has elevated this relationship to a "Strategic Partnership," reflecting a high level of trust and cooperation. This partnership is not limited to economic dimensions; it also extends into political, military, and security domains. China's involvement in Pakistan through CPEC has brought substantial

Chinese investments and a visible Chinese presence in various sectors of Pakistan's economy.

Challenges and Controversies

Despite the promising outlook, CPEC is not without its challenges and controversies. There has been criticism regarding the transparency and terms of loans provided by China, with concerns over Pakistan's debt sustainability. Additionally, some local communities have expressed fears of displacement and environmental damage due to construction projects. There is also apprehension about the potential for creating an economic imbalance in favor of Chinese-owned companies at the expense of local businesses.

Regional and International Reactions

CPEC has also altered regional dynamics, particularly with India, which views the corridor with suspicion, especially since it passes through regions disputed by India and Pakistan. The United States and other Western countries have also eyed the project cautiously, considering it a part of China's broader strategic ambitions to assert its influence globally through the BRI.

Long-term Outlook

Looking ahead, CPEC has the potential to transform Pakistan's economic landscape dramatically. If managed well, it can stimulate economic growth, improve infrastructure, and reduce energy deficiencies, which are crucial for Pakistan's socio-economic development. On the international stage, CPEC will continue to be a critical element of China's strategic ambitions, embodying the growing influence of China in the global economic and geopolitical order.

In conclusion, the launch of CPEC in 2013 has been a transformative development for Pakistan's economy and its relations with China. By fostering deeper economic ties and strategic cooperation, CPEC stands as a testament to the robust partnership between the two nations, while also posing as a beacon of regional connectivity and development challenges.

2014- Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Pakistan's Decisive Strike Against Terrorism

In June 2014, Pakistan launched Operation Zarb-e-Azb, a comprehensive military campaign targeting militant groups in North Waziristan, part of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) along the Afghan border. This operation was a significant turning point in Pakistan's internal security policy and marked a decisive moment in its fight against terrorism. It not only aimed to purge the region of terrorism but also sought to demonstrate Pakistan's commitment to combating extremism at a time when its efforts were under intense scrutiny both domestically and internationally.

Background and Rationale

Prior to the operation, North Waziristan had become a notorious haven for a myriad of terrorist groups, including the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Haqqani Network, and various other affiliated factions. These groups not only launched attacks within Pakistan but were also involved in cross-border terrorism affecting Afghanistan. The area's complex geopolitical and tribal dynamics had previously made it difficult for Pakistani forces to establish control. The decision to launch Zarb-e-Azb came after a series of particularly devastating terrorist attacks, including the horrific attack on Karachi Airport and the tragic Peshawar school massacre later that year, which collectively galvanized public and military resolve against terrorism.

Execution of the Operation

Operation Zarb-e-Azb was named after a sword used in battle by the Prophet Muhammad, symbolizing the military's resolve. It involved a full-scale offensive combining ground troops, artillery, tanks, and air support. The operation aimed to destroy terrorist bases, recover caches of weapons, and reclaim territory long held by militants. It was conducted with an emphasis on minimizing civilian casualties and ensuring a comprehensive approach to eradicating terrorist networks.

Impacts and Achievements

The operation had significant immediate and long-term impacts on the security landscape of Pakistan and its relations with neighboring countries, particularly Afghanistan. Militarily, it was highly successful in disrupting militant networks in North Waziristan, significantly reducing the capacity of terrorist groups to operate. Hundreds of militants were killed, and

large caches of weapons were seized, leading to a noticeable decline in terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

Moreover, Operation Zarb-e-Azb improved Pakistan's image internationally, demonstrating its commitment to fighting terrorism. The operation received global acknowledgment, including from the United States and Afghanistan, although Kabul continued to express concerns about the sanctuaries for militants across the border.

Challenges and Criticisms

Despite its successes, the operation also faced criticisms and challenges. The displacement of over a million civilians raised humanitarian concerns, with substantial efforts required to manage internally displaced persons (IDPs). The long-term success of the operation was also questioned in terms of the state's ability to hold and rebuild the recovered areas and integrate them into the national mainstream, ensuring the non-recurrence of militancy.

Regional Dynamics and Future Outlook

Operation Zarb-e-Azb had broader implications for regional stability. It was crucial in terms of Pakistan's efforts to secure its borders and reduce cross-border militancy, which is a significant concern for Afghanistan. The operation also played a part in shaping the strategic dialogues between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the United States, focusing on cooperation in the war against terror and stabilizing the region.

In conclusion, Operation Zarb-e-Azb represented a critical milestone in Pakistan's fight against terrorism, showcasing a strong military response to a chronic security threat. While the operation addressed the immediate tactical challenges posed by militant groups, it also highlighted the enduring strategic need for comprehensive policies that address the root causes of extremism and ensure the long-term stability and integration of FATA into the broader fabric of Pakistan.

Pakistan Foreign Policy 2019 to 2024

From 2019 to 2024, Pakistan's foreign policy has been shaped by several key factors and events, navigating complex regional dynamics and global issues. Here's an overview:

1. Relations with India

One of the most significant aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy has been its relationship with India. Tensions have historically been high, and this period has seen fluctuating relations, particularly following the Pulwama attack in February 2019 and subsequent air strikes. The revocation of Article 370 by India in August 2019, which changed the status of the Jammu and Kashmir region, also escalated tensions.

2. Relations with China

China remains a steadfast ally of Pakistan, with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being a cornerstone of this relationship. This multi-billion-dollar project is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative and has seen continued development over these years. Pakistan has relied heavily on economic and military support from China, especially as it faces economic challenges.

3. Engagement with the United States

Pakistan's relationship with the United States has been complicated, influenced by factors such as the Afghan peace process and counterterrorism. The U.S. demands for Pakistan to do more in combating terrorism and its role in facilitating the Afghan peace talks have been central. The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in 2021 further impacted this dynamic, with Pakistan playing a critical role in the region.

4. Involvement in Afghanistan

Pakistan's policy regarding Afghanistan has been critical, especially in light of the U.S. withdrawal and the subsequent takeover by the Taliban in August 2021. Pakistan has sought to manage the refugee flow and security concerns, while also positioning itself as a key player in future regional stability.

5. Economic Diplomacy

Economically, Pakistan has been struggling with significant challenges, including high external debt and a need for IMF bailouts. Its foreign policy has increasingly focused on economic diplomacy, seeking investments and financial aid from various countries, including Gulf states and traditional allies like China.

6. Islamic World and the Middle East

Pakistan has maintained and sometimes strengthened its relationships with Islamic countries, particularly in the Middle East. It has navigated complex relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran, trying to balance ties with both. The Kashmir issue and the treatment of Muslims globally (e.g., Rohingyas, Palestinians) remain significant in its diplomatic engagements within the Muslim world.

7. Handling of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The global COVID-19 pandemic also influenced Pakistan's foreign policy, particularly in terms of how it managed health diplomacy and aid. The crisis required balancing domestic health needs with international relations, including managing border closures with neighbors like Iran and Afghanistan.

Throughout this period, Pakistan's foreign policy has been adaptive, navigating multiple challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing global environment.