



RESEARCH PAPER

Challenges and Opportunities to the Foreign Policy of Pakistan in the Contemporary Era

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan came into existence in 1947 and faced plenty of challenges and troubles. Therefore, the country has been striving hard to get on the right track with domestic and foreign policies due to insufficient and ineffective policies leading to further grave issues. The chequered civil-military relations always led to a divergent stance over the country's strategic interests. In Pakistan, normative ideals, corporate elites, and public opinion played a role in their interest in the country's foreign policy. Moreover, the information revolution also profoundly affects policy, which sometimes poses a threat rather than an opportunity, such as in hybrid warfare, anti-narrative building, and radicalizing the youth. Besides, non-traditional security threats such as climate change, its shocking effect, terrorism, national disasters, political uncertainty, and financial predicament are significant challenges to Pakistan's foreign policy in the current scenario. On the other hand, the world order is turning into multipolar, and regional economies are emerging, creating valuable opportunities if Pakistan can secure its national interest through an effective foreign policy.

Keywords: Challenges and Opportunity, Civil-Military Divergence, Contemporary Era, CPEC, Foreign Policy, National interest, Sovereignty

Introduction

Pakistan has been struggling to transform itself into a potentially stable democratic state in the contemporary era as a third democratic transition smoothly took place in 2018 (Voluntary National Review, 2019). The 2020 decade is emerging with numerous challenges and opportunities, particularly for Pakistan's foreign policy. In the current scenario balancing the relations between the United States (US) and the Afghan Taliban is the gravest challenge to the foreign policy of Pakistan. At the same time, Pakistan has always been blamed for playing a double standard game with US and Afghan governments on a retaliation course. During the diplomatic and humanitarian crisis, Pakistan has been considered the championed cause of Muslims and other developing nations on the international prospect and is looked up to. For the most part, the country has remained in the eye of the storm for its existence, as situated at the strategic crossroads and connecting the significant regions of South and Persian and Arabian Gulf, Central Asia, and the Muslim world bloc with the rest (Møller, 1998).

Domestic factors such as the normative ideals of Pakistan's corporate elites and public opinion determine the country's foreign policy. Furthermore, Pakistan has seen extended periods of autocratic military rule as a dynamic that considerably limited democratization in policy formulation and influenced the decision-making process. Hence, resultantly foreign policy of Pakistan had by and largely remained hostage to the civil-military divergence over the idea of Pakistan's strategic interests. Historically, the

overarching objectives have remained sovereignty, within and without, along with achieving economic stability. The military and financial fragility, specifically eastern neighbour, have come to a crossroads, lending its external outlook a security-oriented approach (Raashed & Anwar, 2020).

The emerging global leadership and rapid change in the geopolitical environment have affected foreign policy's drivers and determinants. Such advanced communication systems, disruptive technologies, and artificial intelligence have created many challenges and opportunities for foreign policies. Moreover, narratives built using the virtual space of the internet and social media have shrunk response time to foreign policy events. The hybrid warfare environment compels the determinates which need to be reviewed and modify policy options to address existing threats, perceptions, and reality

To trace challenges and explore the opportunities in Pakistan's foreign policy. A Qualitative Research Method has been adopted as the nature of the study is explorative. In addition, in-depth critical analyses have taken place by reliable and authentic primary and secondary sources. The research has attempted to incite scholarly opinions over the policies and their procedures in international relations as interviewed various fields and academic scholars. The study has highlighted the importance of a state's self-reliance and freedom to have an independent foreign policy in a developing country like Pakistan.

The common objectives of foreign policy in today's world's affairs are to flex its muscles in order to protect its national interests, such as safeguarding integrity, sovereignty ensures perpetual peace, promoting the legitimate aspirations of their people and flourishing the economic and social progress as well live with dignity and respect in the comity of nations. In the past, the evolution of Pakistan's foreign policy reflected adjustments and compelled the imperatives of the changing global and regional environment with every passing day. The world power structure changes and new priorities lead to fresh claims and attention requiring a novel policy, formulation, and implementation. Appraisal of Pakistan foreign policy 1947-2009 A look back at the history of Pakistan's foreign policy demonstrates the continuity of aims and changing strategies. In the beginning, Pakistan was compelled by Indian hostility to make significant policy decisions manifest in refusing to respect the principles of the partition and transfer Pakistan's share of British India's assets, weapons, and armed arsenals. Since that, Pakistan has sought solid alliances and faced grave war consequences as they fought with India. Subsequently, an unfavourable international environment and irrational decisions led the country to a myriad of challenges which kept the country lagging on the global stage. The post-9/11 era was the most destructive phase for the masses and policymakers of Pakistan as the country lost its credibility and was crippled with economic and political instability. However, the new international environment is rapidly changing, demonstrating a ray of hope for developing nations such as Pakistan and posing new challenges and threats that need fresh troubleshooting muscles to tackle them adequately (Sattar, 2010).

Pakistan is fortunate to be at the crossroads where it can benefit from emerging geopolitical and geo-economics dynamics. The vast opportunity bestowed upon Pakistan was the flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative, named China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In addition, Russia's warming up to Pakistan has to be figured in the success story for Pakistan and an appreciation of the evolving geopolitical alliances in the region and showed interest in improving economic ties with Pakistan. Russia has supported Pakistan in joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which provides Pakistan with yet another international ally and supporter to become an NSG member. Iran's improving and growing economy will create an opportunity for Pakistan to bring lucrative paybacks to the country. The United States' evacuation from Afghanistan will open an independent pathway and create new opportunities at the expense of regional powers (Aman, 2019).

Literature Review

According to the author, foreign policy is executed at a two-level game, but various segments of domestic society are reflected in foreign policy. However, it does not work on the hard and fast rule pattern for any distinction between foreign and domestic. At the same time, it's a two-way flow, such as domestic policy has its foreign influences and foreign policy has its domestic source. Therefore, the entire state's political and socio-economic structures link domestic inputs and unfamiliar outputs (Putnam, 1988). The most significant challenge to foreign policy is the massive gap between foreign policy initiatives and the international arena of politics, which paves the way for the gradual decline. At the same time, Pakistan is severely a victim of it. Therefore, the primary challenge to Pakistan's foreign policy is the unembellished institutional imbalances and leadership crises that lead to economic decay and political instability (Haqqani, Pakistan's Narrative Problem, 2022).

Due to the state's geographical location, Pakistan has faced numerous security and strategic problems since its inception. Therefore, currently, Pakistan is confronting many traditional and non-traditional challenges such as narcotics trafficking, climate change, terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the separatism movement, disarmament, and the legal protection of gender and personal issues. The 9/11 incident further triggered the problem of traditional internal threats to cultural terrorism, nationalist terrorism, and sectarianism. At the same time, the various form of terrorism emerging, such as the practice of violence and political objectives as a violent act, symbolizes tussle against the system (Ministry of Interior , 2014).

According to various scholars, globalization bred numerous opportunities for the developed world and posed multiple challenges to developing countries. Strong economics and a stable political system can only avail the advantages of globalization. Therefore, international financial institutions came into existence with the strict principles of monetary policy: fiscal limpidity insurance, secure payment, and governance system. Hence, the so-called transparency propaganda is the shackle for the developing countries where they ever get rid of it with name market competition and liberal economy. In this context, Pakistan needs to stabilize its political system and enhance its economic performance and good governance to keep up-to-date with the new challenges of globalization. In South Asia, India is an emerging financial giant after China. The policy matters of Pakistan have been affected horizontally and vertically by the process of globalization, where Pakistan is still unable to utilize its benefits.

The author has highlighted significant dimensional challenges to Pakistan's foreign policy and raised the concern of a trend of propaganda campaigns against Pakistan. Therefore, international media is influenced by the nexus of Israel-Indian and the US. According to Mearsheimer and Stephen, "pro-Israel organizations work hard to influence the media, think tanks, and academia because these institutions are critical in shaping popular opinion." While India is the leading player in this game against Pakistan, building a misperception to damage Pakistan's global image. Moreover, India and the West are in a full-fledged effort, including non-kinetic resources, to push Pakistan towards difficult political and economic positions. Pakistan is confronting hybrid warfare where the focus shifts to subversion social issues, ethnic, religious, and sectarianism (Nadeem, 2021)

The author has highlighted that internal and external challenges, such as economic uncertainty and political vagueness due to severe incompetency and inexperienced leadership, impedes Pakistan from independent foreign policy formulation. Moreover, the most challenging task is dealing with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and getting rid of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Both international organizations have been encroaching upon Pakistan's sovereignty and economic independence. On the international front, Pakistan has a significant vision in its geography to become a hub of economic, trade, and communication activity, linking the neighboring countries of West Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia. In addition, Pakistan's region is the shortest access to the sea

for landlocked countries such as Western China and Central Asia. Pakistan is eager to build oil and gas pipelines and electricity grids to ensure the energy need and become an energy corridor for China and India, as well as is quite ambitious about promoting peace, stability, and development (Khetran, 2016)).

Contemporary Regional and Domestic Challenges to Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Pakistan is faced with multidimensional complications regarding the foreign policy of the state. The region faces the worst financial crisis in modern nation-state history due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is facing severe economic and trade consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while Pakistan has no exception. It is in dire need of a bail-out in the current financial crisis as the country is almost on the edge of bankruptcy due to immense pressure of payments on the economy. Pakistan had already lost sympathies and trust of the West due to its alignment with China and alleged empathy for the Afghan Taliban that helped them to win a 20-year-long war against the western coalition. The US is posing the most significant aberrant to Pakistan's foreign policy, and the sole superpower in the world seems to be distancing itself from Pakistan. Repairing America and its allies' trust in the country is the most prolific challenge Pakistan faces regarding its foreign policy.

On the other hand, India is quickly flexing its economic and diplomatic muscles as a regional hegemon; in contrast, Pakistan is under pressure from its eastern sphere as India is becoming more belligerent with each passing day. In recent years, India has triggered Pakistan not only militarily but also diplomatically as well. India altered the status of disputed Kashmir territory and violently exercised force against the Kashmir masses. This certainly makes Pakistan uncomfortable, and balancing foreign policy is a challenge with a neighboring country like India, which is performing very well economically, and Pakistan needs it the most currently. On the other hand, the factor is China and balancing the country's interests diplomatically and through negotiations avoids Beijing's debt traps diplomacy adequately. (Hamad, 2022)

Several challenges are emerging in the current scenario, such as balancing its relations with US and Afghanistan and its politico-economic ties with china and the US. Another challenge Pakistan faces regarding its foreign policy is balancing its stance on geo-economics and relations with India. Domestic Challenges: Political instability is increasing daily, while Civil-Military discrepancy also triggers the issue. Kashmiris are losing their autonomous status; it's a kind of threat to Pakistan's foreign policy where they can not prevent the autocratic precedence of the Indian government. In addition, Pakistan still could not achieve a place on the allowlist member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and stability in geo-economics and geopolitical. Hindu extremism in India, at the state level, is a daunting challenge to the entire region in general and particularly to Pakistan, while also a threat of using unstable Afghan soil against Pakistan (Shah A. R., 2021).

Threat to National and Strategic interest

A stable Afghanistan favors Pakistan as the Taliban has already shown its capabilities and capacities to rule over Afghanistan. It is now time for Pakistan to make the Taliban realize that they should abide by international laws and strengthen their governance through formal institutionalization to such a level that the international community recognizes them. Pakistan can use its influence on the Afghan Taliban for the said. On the other side, Pakistan needs to convey to the Americans that they, too, must recognize the Taliban as genuine rulers of Afghanistan and that their role is vital for the stability and progress of the region as a whole, including the essential state interests of the US. A perpetual and Sustainable peace in Afghanistan and connecting the region's countries in a productive economic partnership for the benefit of all Afghans is a dire need of South Asia, especially for Pakistan. Another critical step of Confidence Building Measures (CBM) should be adopted as soon as possible to settle the furious Afghans (Carll, 2021). Due to the weak economic structure and poor fiscal policies, Pakistan always neglects its financial necessities and benefits in formulating foreign policy.

Only this is the most secure way to safeguard national and strategic interests. Pakistan is relying on the old 1990s thinking pattern on Afghanistan, considering it a more trustworthy neighbor who always gives tough times to Pakistan, while it's in the interest of Pakistan to have more pragmatic relations with the US to secure its better interest

It is a concern not only for third-world countries but also for developing countries. Pakistan could not balance the free market and protectionist policies, which frequently pursue a scattered and grey policy direction. Jumping into isolation to deal abruptly with sovereignty in liberal markets is another impede which prevents economic flourishing. Still, these opened the ground for significant economies to fall into a dependency trap. Pakistan's economic sectors never focus on boosting domestic production more than the country's foreign policy. A balance in trade volumes between imports and exports is vital to resolving to deal with the issue. Therefore, one of the essential credentials for a third-world country like Pakistan to retain its sovereignty in this so-called globalized world is economic prosperity on the modern lines and models of sustainable connectivity with the world. On the other hand, political stability is also a significant part of keeping the country on track. Defense and strategic relations should be maintained with regional and international powers to preserve the state organs aligned and stable (Naseem, 2022).

China is the only reliable ally of Pakistan that can play a better role in its economic independence of Pakistan and political stability, which can lead to protecting the state sovereignty. This will strengthen Pakistan economically and strategically in the region, particularly against India. Pakistan's sovereignty has faced numerous problems, not due only to globalization but to adopting a hyphenation approach, indulging in other wars as fought several proxy wars. Pakistan was the victim of enormous destruction and lost lives while never utilizing the best area of its geography to address all these hybrid warfare and its threats. Hybrid warfare poses more threats to national security than to sovereignty. The lack of cyber laws implementation and execution also make the state sovereignty vulnerable. Needs to be introduced strong and stable cyber laws and conduct without curbing the fundamental freedom of the masses (Sattar, 2021).

The Civil-Military Divergence over Pakistan's Strategic Interests

In recent years, the military's role has been declining in state affairs, which Pakistan's national politics witnessed in its history. The Afghan issue is more or less resolved as foreign troops have already been lifted out of Afghanistan. The military has stayed out of the government for almost fifteen years from the direct rule and did not cash the situation for martial law imposition as the three civilian legislative parliaments have practically completed their terms. On the other side, the country faces a severe economic crisis, and the focus has shifted from security to stabilizing a collapsing economy. Pakistan is shifting its focus from geo-strategic to geo-economic, and relations with China are an example. China is investing billions of dollars in CPEC in Pakistan. The primary subject of the project is the economy. Particularly in foreign policy, Pakistan has shifted its approach from geo-strategic to geo-economics and tried maintaining bilateral relations with Turkey, China, and other key regional players. It somehow tried to eliminate US financial dependence but is still facing this issue.

Pakistan still relies on the Collision Support Fund from the US to fulfill its defense and economic expenditures. Per the geo-economics policy, Pakistan did its best to sign trade deals with Central Asian Countries, Russia, China, and United Arab Emirates (UAE) and search for solid allies to balance its strategic and economic relations with the rest of the world. Geo-economic has taken the epicenter of Pakistan's foreign policy; however, still, it did not take place fully. Instead, it remains to be seen whether civil and military leadership will accept these shifts or follow them collectively on the same page. On the other hand, one view is that, due to the country's geostrategic location, it cannot be cherished so quickly imperative of strategy will continue dominating foreign policy (Saleem, 2022).

There have always been pros and cons of the current decision-making system and approach to adopting Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan has also gained many benefits from this model approach, while it does have numerous drawbacks where Pakistan lost its interest on various fronts. When Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was in power, the foreign policy direction suddenly turned toward Iran, but at the cost of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), as there has been a historical, ideological conflict between Iran and KSA. Similarly, whenever Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) came into power, the focus shifted towards KSA and leaving Iran behind. Resultantly, corporate elites play games with the interest of Pakistan and secure and searching their benefits at the expense of the state card. This saw in adopting the country's foreign policy has always pushed Pakistan hard for a sustainable, more viable, balanced foreign policy in the region. National interest is a vague term; no doubt these ideals play an essential role in determining foreign policy, but there is an ever-widening skepticism that corporate elites will benefit a country's national interest less than protecting their own. There is serious apprehension at the domestic level due to plenty of issues widening the gap between mass interest and elite corporate such as poor education system and lack of comprehensive and practical economics. On the other hand, any foreign policy guided solely by ideological faculties will not guarantee the achievement of desired objectives which cannot survive or even does not accommodate the interest of the entire stakeholders of the state (IPRI, 2015).

Non-Traditional Security Threats affecting Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The South Asian region remains the most attractive hot spot to the international communities and forum due to its strategic location and some concerns. Remarkably, the major players such as China, Pakistan, and India are crucial to have an existential territory conflict and nuclear assets, which is the most genuine concern to the world. However, the region consists of a diverse society and divided states with different national interests and foreign policy priorities. Therefore, the area is grappling with numerous traditional and non-traditional security threats and challenges due to territorial disputes and the economic crunch, which have frightened most nations into grave poverty. Moreover, naturally, environmental disasters and pandemics are calamities that could lead to political consequences and instability in the states. Pakistan is on the top hit list of non-traditional security threats and implications as every year face a lot of flood devastation and other issues.

The country's most devastating non-traditional security threat is information warfare waged by India against Pakistan at various frontlines, aiming to destabilize and isolate Pakistan in the international arena. This poses a more significant threat to the country's foreign policy, and decision-makers need to put extra focus on repairing the tarnished image of Pakistan in the international community. Due to this blur image of the country, Pakistan faced many setbacks in international affairs and damaged the trust of foreign investors, which caused unprecedented harm to the country's economy. Some policymakers and climate experts believe Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries. At the same time, Pakistan is doomed to live in a permanent state of insecurity as afflicted by frequent disasters. Climate change is a significant threat to the entire globe. Still, Pakistan is among the most vulnerable countries significantly affected, especially by the current destructive flood, which displaced millions and damaged an extensive infrastructure. In addition, the water crisis is a severe dispute with India, which affects the agriculture sector and leads to the food crisis. A large population is an excellent blessing for economic prosperity and growth. Still, Pakistan is becoming more vulnerable with the passing day due to the population explosion. The state of Pakistan cannot adequately utilize its population even though it never planned to prevent the big blast. Pakistan needs to treat climate change and development as two sides of the same coin instead of waiting for foreign finance, new borrowing, or even hiding behind limited fiscal space, which never gets Pakistan rid of this lethal phenomenon. (Abdullah, 2022).

In general, effective foreign policy can enable the domestic and foreign stakeholders to collaborate for the interest of the vulnerable society of Pakistan. Another big challenge is

that Pakistan is gripped with a grave governance crisis as increasingly the policy has been made less out of concern about the national interest and more by leadership's priorities, principally the pursuit of political power. Because of the poor governance, it vacuumed the rest of the issues, such as terrorism and misinformation. It weakened the foreign policies' decision-making process, which often goes into the hand of the security establishment (Crisis Group Special Report, 2016).

The improving Economies of South Asia and the Multipolarity World order will create an opportunity for Pakistan

There is a more significant potential in South Asian countries to promote sound economic relations and adopt positive sum strategies. However, for this purpose, mending fences and rebuilding trust will be the fundamentals milestone to prosper their economies. Currently, it is one of the most significant challenges faced by almost all the countries in South Asia. Pakistan and India have a grim future due to disputes like Kashmir and water distribution. Pakistan and Bangladesh never came close to each other after the disintegration of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. India is in border disputes with almost all South Asian neighbors. Srilanka is on the verge of economic collapse. So the road is complex, but still, there is a ray of hope for connectivity and never impossible. Foreign policy decision-makers in these countries, mainly Pakistan, must realize and utilize these opportunities with their respective country's stability relies on regional stability. Pakistan can benefit immensely from adjacent countries in various domains, especially geo-economically. India is a market of 1.4 billion population and the 6th largest economy. Bangladesh is rising extraordinarily as an emerging economy and has a considerable market size. Therefore, Pakistan can benefit from these countries and will not have to rely on China and CPEC entirely.

If CPEC is utilized properly, it will pave the way for economic prosperity while can strengthen its industries and increasing trade volume with the rest of the world. Under this flagship project, economic zones and initiatives are being built. CPEC may be a transit trade corridor, a financial bridge from North to South, and CARs to ASEAN. This will benefit Pakistan as PAKISTAN will become the hub of trade-economic activity. However, what matters most is the attitude of south Asian economies helps Pakistan by developing economic corridors defined by geographic areas with modern transport and trade infrastructure, facilities, and policies that spur economic activity within the country and with its neighbors. Economic corridors involve infrastructure, industrial, and urban developments. Also, there can be fertile ground for investments and opportunities that will result in more economic activity, jobs, and faster movement of people and goods. On the other hand, Pakistan is also an observer state in ASEAN's important and more prominent organization. Moreover, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is essential for enhancing economic and trade relations.

The organization of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can play the role of the vehicle for the interstate to carry cooperation and mutual development. It could not get any meaningful fruitful result due to its ineffectuality caused by members conflicting relations and divergence over the interest of the states. Therefore, these severe issues can lead the states to soft to more complex security matrix where there is a dire need for cooperation to avoid future consequences of the dispute and wars. A practical and viable framework should be established to engage the thinkers and state experts for cooperation enhancement among the states and bridge the loopholes using perpetual and reliable approaches. Improving South Asian economies will not bring any direct benefit to Pakistan. If CPEC is conceived just as a network of roads, it will not secure any purpose for Pakistan; the absolute need is to industrialize the country and modernize its agriculture.

On the other hand, Pakistan is also an observer state in ASEAN's important and more prominent organization. Moreover, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is essential for enhancing economic and trade relations. Multipolarity in international politics and adopting good relations with all potential powers is always fruitful and in the more special interests of

the third world and developing countries like Pakistan. Pakistan needs to focus on good relations with all authorities. Currently, it relies more on China geostrategically, geopolitically, or geo-economically. Pakistan needs to rebuild its ties with the US and also with Russia. The US is one of its major trade partners in Pakistan regarding exports, and Pakistan needs it. Pakistan is faced with a severe energy crisis, and Russia can help Pakistan in this regard. Western European economies can potentially boost trade with Pakistan for the benefit of all. So Pakistan needs a more comprehensive and balanced foreign policy today than ever before due to multipolarity.

It is evident that multipolarity is the pool of benefits, and it would extend its opportunities in all domains. Multipolarity consists of many powers exerting their influence in one way or another. It opens up the chance for international-level small, significant, and medium capacities. One country can benefit according to its ability. Therefore, Pakistan's fragile political system, dwindling economy, and multipolarity will likely increase challenges for Pakistan's foreign policy on various fronts. In this regard, Pakistan must exert its capability at the international level to avail many benefits of the multipolar world order. In this regard, strategic relations will be cordial with various great power where Pakistan can quickly secure its national interest at the expense of others powers. Economic considerations will be strengthened, and political ties will also be advanced. The geostrategic location of Pakistan is entirely equipped with the immense potential to function as the "zipper" for connecting regional blocs and disparate Eurasia's integration, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAU). (Chowdhry, 2022)

Further, these regional organizations will play a critical role in providing the basis for expanding CPEC along all cardinal directions to bring together the supercontinent's many civilizations through a new transcontinental trade network. The first related project is the PAKAFUZ railway through Afghanistan, which could form the foundation for a more significant Central Eurasian Corridor (CEC). The world is moving towards multipolarity. It is witnessing that the world order will be multipolar, providing a more conducive environment for developing countries to flourish and secure their interest adequately. Geopolitically, Pakistan can improve its international relations by adopting a dehyphenation approach, as India demonstrated during the Cold War. Geo-economically, it has CPEC to offer, Gawadar port, and a trade corridor connecting the region. Geo-strategically, Pakistan will have to be cautious as this may drag Pakistan into another cold war (Khan, 2022).

The study's finding has been adequately extracted from the past literature analysis by examining the accurate data. The past literature relevantly identified key challenges incorporated in this study as the foundation for the opinions and comments of the interviewees. The massive flaws in domestic policies and the governance vacuum are the foremost issue in the policies that led to foreign policy. The unembellished institutional imbalances and leadership crisis seriously caused political instability and economic decay. However, the most challenging task in the current scenario for the state's foreign policy is to deal with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and tackle the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) demands accordingly. Unfortunately, both have been encroaching on Pakistan's political and economic sovereignty.

Furthermore, the hyphenated approach of policy always throws Pakistan into the myriad lost domains that need dehyphenate. Multipolarity is the bulge of opportunity, particularly for emerging economies, as Pakistan can also avail lucrative benefits as it has a precious platform in the form of CPEC. The new regional emerging powers giants are almost in favour of Pakistan's interest if Pakistan flexes its muscle to seek close ties with them in order to secure its national interest and strengthen the country in all spheres of life.

Conclusion

Pakistan has faced numerous challenges since its inception due to its flimsy system, massive deficiencies, and ineptitude in domestic and foreign policies. The research study has effectively concluded the analysis and scholarly opinions in light of past literature in the context of foreign policy and its challenges in Pakistan. In the current scenario, balancing relations with the US and Russia and pursuing the Afghan Taliban to secure the western border is a daunting challenge to Pakistan's foreign policy. In addition, safeguarding economic and political sovereignty in the international world to get rid of bail-out trap dependency is also a big race in the modern liberal economic world for Pakistan. Domestically Pakistan is facing various obstructions, such as political instability, financial and governance crunch, and climate changes effects, which need to be tackled with an adequate response and rational model approaches. However, the future paradigm raises many thresholds in the nearby region and the future multipolar world. The newly emerging markets of the area, such as Central Asian Republics, Bangladesh, and India, can provide an opening ground. Pakistan needs to employ its capability to avail of many benefits, strengthen its economy, secure national interest, and protect its sovereignty. Russia is warming up its relationship with Pakistan, and Iran is extending its hand. Thus CPEC provides a stockroom to the regional market as evidence of the most lucrative economic opportunity where Pakistan can exert more influence in the region and benefit from it for a long-lasting era.

Recommendations

- Pakistan needs to adopt a holistic approach while formulating the country's foreign policy.
- The institutions must seek inputs from independent and non-governmental think tanks regarding policies and suggestions.
- At a massive level, the government of Pakistan should launch policy dialogue forums to hold a conversation to counter the harmful elements and perceptions against the country's interest.
- The state of Pakistan needs to hire well-versed and skilled diplomatic staff who can play a vital role in branding the image of Pakistan in the international community.
- Academia and mass media must raise awareness among the masses to counter the negative perception and propaganda mainly propagated by India.
- The civil institutes need to play a role in minimizing the civil-military divergence over the strategic interest of Pakistan.

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