



ROLE OF ISLAM IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF PAKISTAN – FROM PAST TO PRESENT

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Abstract

This research study focuses on understanding the role of Islam in the foreign policy of Pakistan. Pakistan's statecraft has been influenced by Islam. Hence, the influence of Islam was also felt within Pakistan's foreign policy. In order to understand Islam's role in Pakistan's foreign policy three interviews were conducted with experts on the subject. Afterward, a thematic analysis was conducted from the interviews. Firstly, this study explores the influence of Islam on Pakistan's foreign policy. It is argued that Pakistan's initial economic needs compelled Pakistan to use Islam in its foreign policy. It is also argued that despite the existential threat from its arch-rival India, Pakistan was not kept away from having a pragmatic foreign policy by Islam's role in its foreign policy. Secondly, theocratic perception's impact on Pakistan's foreign policy is also analyzed. It is analyzed how theocratic perception within Pakistan led Pakistan to face the curse of extremism. Military-Mullah nexus and the use of non-state actors as a foreign policy tool are also discussed. Thirdly, Pakistan's relations with Islamic countries, mainly Saudi Arabia and Iran are also explored within this research. It is argued that Pakistan has warily tried to maintain balance in its relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, Pakistan's joining of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) and its role in the Yemen conflict are also discussed. It is concluded that Pakistan remained under the influence of hybrid theocracy which consequently influenced its foreign policy. However, quite contrary to common belief, Pakistan has successfully maintained a pragmatic foreign policy.

Keywords: *Pakistan, Foreign Policy, Islam, Saudi Arabia, Iran, IMCTC*



Introduction

It is commonly proclaimed that Pakistan was founded to provide a separate homeland to the Muslims residing in the Indian subcontinent in 1947. It is also believed that it was envisaged as a homeland where only Muslims would live freely from the majority domination of the Hindus of the Indian subcontinent. However, Pakistan's founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision for Pakistan was not only to create a country for Muslims to exercise their religion, develop their culture and live according to their customs but also for minorities, other than Muslims living in the Indian subcontinent, who would enjoy equality of citizenship and basic human rights. Jinnah's objective was not to create an Islamic state ruled by theocracy but over the years Pakistan deviated from the course set by the founding father and it assumed characteristics of an Islamic state. Such reality has been manifested in the foreign policy of Pakistan in reaction to external events as well as domestic forces over the years since its independence decades ago (Delvoie, 1995/1996).

Pakistan remains an enigma after being carved out of British-ruled India almost eight decades ago. It rejected theocracy even though it was born as the first self-professed Muslim state in 1947. Although it aspired to the constitutionalism of the West yet it remained vulnerable to the appeal of political Islam. It yearned for democracy yet it remained prone to dictatorship. Being unsure of what it really stood for; Pakistan has been left with holding an identity affected by an equivocal relation to Islam. Historically, ideological uncertainty has deep roots in Pakistan. Though strongly contested, Islam largely informed building blocks i.e., nation, power, and community, which gave shape to the idea of Pakistan (Shaikh, 2009) in which we live today.

After partition, most Pakistan's leaders seemed to envisage Pakistan based on an "Islamically informed constitutional order", even though most of them were secular in their private lives. They propagated that Islam had a modernist role in Pakistan on the basis of social and ethical concerns rather than stringent Islamic law. Many of these elitist leaders were part of Pakistan's movement and like Jinnah, they were also secular nationalists. Moreover, religious parties, which initially were antagonists to the creation of Pakistan, demanded the implementation of Islamic law in newly created Pakistan right after its creation. Islam's influence on Pakistan's statecraft began with Objective Resolution, passed in 1949, which provided twelve guiding principles for future constitutions. Though vague, the Objective Resolution was a balanced document. Islam got mentioned in three of its clauses which dealt with the sovereignty of God, enabling Muslims to live their lives based on Islamic principles and the significance of ethical, democratic, and social principles of Islam. The resolution was passed but it was opposed by non-Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly who argued that the resolution contained an enabling clause focusing on Muslims only as opposed to all religions of Pakistan. The guiding principles of the resolution formed the preamble of Pakistan's first constitution of 1956 in which Pakistan officially became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Afzal, 2018). However, the word 'Islamic' was initially missing from its second constitution given by the then-military dictator General Ayub Khan in 1962 in which Pakistan was named as the republic of Pakistan but only for a short while. Since its 1973 Constitution, Pakistan is officially an Islamic Republic.



Islam influenced Pakistan's foreign policy like it influenced other policies since its inception in 1947. Forces within Pakistan wanted the propagation of Islamic agendas in the country's foreign policy. Immediately after the creation of Pakistan, they wanted to advocate Muslim causes such as Indonesian liberation from Dutch colonization and the cause of a Palestinian state. Pakistan constantly remained in a vulnerable situation due to existential conflict with India because of which Pakistan retained some pragmatic approach in its foreign policy. In order to search for its security, Pakistan, however, sought alliances with great powers. The most important allies of Pakistan have never been Muslim-majority or even Islamic countries. Nevertheless, Pakistan looked for their support and had questionable success in its strong relations with them. Pakistan had strong relations with the US in the 1950s, 1980s, and 2000s and with China since the 1970s (Cornell, 2006).

Research Problem

This research undertakes to understand the role of Islam in the foreign policy of Pakistan. Islam is the declared state religion of Pakistan as it is in its national blood, and it influences the decisions of statecraft. Islam also influences its decision-making related to the foreign policy. In this research, foreign policy is defined as the strategy of the state (Pakistan in this case) in dealing with other states.

Research Questions

This research aims to find out answers to the following questions:

1. How and to what extent does Islam influence the Foreign Policy of Pakistan?
2. How does theocratic perception impact the Foreign Policy of Pakistan?
3. How strong Pakistan's relations are with Muslim countries, mainly Saudi Arabia and Iran?

Research Objectives

This research has the following objectives:

1. To understand the influence of Islam on the Foreign Policy of Pakistan
2. To examine the impact of theocratic perception on the Foreign Policy of Pakistan
3. To identify the strength of Pakistan's relations with Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia vs Iran)

Significance of the Research

Islam has played a significant role in the decisions vis-à-vis Pakistan's foreign policy. From the issue of Palestine in 1948 to the issue of Afghanistan (first in the 1980s and then in 2001) and Yemen in recent times, Islam has had an impact on state decisions regarding foreign policy. The significance of this research is that it helps understand the role of Islam in Pakistan's Foreign Policy. It aims to seek an understanding of the influence of Islam on the Foreign Policy of Pakistan. This research attempts to examine the impact of theocratic perception on a country's foreign policy. Moreover, the research aims to identify the strength of Pakistan's relations with Muslim countries mainly, Saudi Arabia and Iran.



Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the role of Islam in Pakistan's Foreign Policy. Thus, its scope is limited to the understanding of the role Islam plays only in the foreign policy of Pakistan. It does not address other areas of Pakistan's statecraft.

Literature Review

During the second half of the twentieth century, as a form of culture, religion gained popularity as a vital explanation of political entities and states' foreign policies. Religion (as a form of Culture) is frequently used as a key variable to predict and explain lines of conflict and alliances by journalists and policymakers. In order to comprehend a state's expected behavior, government analysts and diplomats are trained to learn the religious and cultural values of the state that they are going to serve (Shaffer, 2006). The influence of religion in states' foreign policy is one of the greatest and at the same time least comprehended security challenges in the twenty-first century (Warner & Walker, 2011). Even though, during the last few decades, Islam has been a major focus of policy analysis and scholarship. Yet, Islam's influence on states' conduct of foreign policy has not been given much attention. Islam plays an important role in almost every Muslim-majority state that aspires to have its influence globally as well as regionally. As an ideological currency, Islam seems to be the only currency that blends effectually with Realpolitik for most of the Muslim-majority states (Mandaville & Hamid, 2018). Similarly, Islam has played an influential role in Pakistan's foreign policy since its inception in 1947.

Islam's influence within the statecraft of Pakistan began after the objective resolution that was passed in 1949 which provided the guiding principles for three future constitutions of Pakistan i.e., the constitutions of 1956, 1962, and 1973 (Afzal, 2018). The broad outlines of the structure and foundation of the future constitutions of Pakistan were laid by the objective resolution of 1949. The declaration of the state as the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan" by its all constitutions is the formal aspect of the state establishment of religion (Khan, 2009). Khan (2009), however, argues that Pakistan cannot be considered a theocratic state by these declarations alone. Throughout its history, Pakistan has been committed to its Islamic ideology and narrative during both civilian governments and military regimes irrespective of its leaders' personal religious as well as secular beliefs. Secular ruler General Ayub Khan (1958-1969) called Pakistan "a fortress of Islam" and considered religion (Islam) as the solitary basis of national unity. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977) adopted Islamic socialism as his governing philosophy. He prominently brought Islam's role in the foreign policy of Pakistan and created a linkage between Pakistan and the Islamic world. General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988) ruthlessly used Islam for his strategic and political ends. He was a believer of the fact that Pakistan would fail without Islam. Moreover, he used Islam in anti-Soviet Afghan jihad during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Other rulers also used Islam in their governing and political philosophies. In the sense of foreign policy and its position in the world, Pakistan has relied on Islam in multiple ways (Afzal, 2018).

National Identity and Foreign Policy of Pakistan



The flaring debate for the association of the Islamic identity of the newly created state of Pakistan started with its creation. Similarly, the same debate ensued regarding the implications of Islamic identity for the structure of foreign policy that Pakistan would pursue (Cornell, 2006). A state's national interests determine its foreign policy. However, in the case of Pakistan, the issue of its national identity has dictated its foreign policy. Pakistan's foreign policy has served as a key compensation for its unclearly defined sense of nationhood (Shaikh, 2009). In order to distinguish itself from India, Pakistan has been in search of separate legitimacy and identity since 1947. Pakistan constructed a separate identity than that of India to get a place and recognition in the world. Such aspiration directed Pakistan towards the construction of an identity based on Islam i.e., Islamic identity. During times of grave political turmoil, the term "Pakistan Ideology" was propagated. During the time of crisis between East and West Pakistan, religion as an ideology was used to strengthen the bond between the two parts of Pakistan (Ali, 2017). Since Pakistan's establishment in 1947, state institutions, especially the institutions of national security such as intelligence and military services, have played an important part in building a national identity of Pakistan based on religion (Haqqani, 2005).

Islam in Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Since its creation Pakistan is said to be obsessed with India, thus its foreign policy is often described in this context. However, Pakistan's foreign policy had dual imperatives after its inception. As per the promise during the struggle for freedom, the leadership of Pakistan pursued a pan-Islamist policy actively. From 1953-1955, owing to the threat from India, Pakistan tilted towards the West for Support. It, nevertheless, maintained a policy of Pan-Islamism simultaneously (Dhulipala, 2016). On contrary to this argument of Islam influencing Pakistan's foreign policy in its early years, Delvoie (1995/1996) argues that for the first twenty-five years of its independence, the influence of Islamic ideology is difficult to discern in elements of the foreign policy of Pakistan. Delvoie further adds that the elements of Islamic ideology started to manifest in the foreign policy of Pakistan during the era of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who came into power after the separation of East Pakistan in 1971. It is pertinent to highlight here that the priority objective of Pakistan's early foreign policy was to support just causes of Muslim nations cannot be denied. At different forums including the United Nations, Pakistan advocated and raised its voice for the causes of independence of Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Morocco, Indonesia and other colonies (Sattar, 2017).

Pakistan Creating Equilibrium in its Relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran

Despite various contradictions, Pakistan is a significant player in South Asia as well as the Middle East. Had Pakistan refused to become party to it, the so-called 'Islamic Alliance' would have been declared dead right after its inception. Moreover, had Pakistan joined Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries in their severing of ties with Qatar, the issue of the Qatar Crisis would have been more critical. In addition to this, had Pakistan agreed to send its military troops to Yemen, Saudi Arabia would have evaded its bungle in the state of Yemen. Pakistan has mastered the art of creating an equilibrium in its relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran and cleverly avoided getting into the conflict



between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Iran, however, dominated the agenda for Pakistan in the 1950s and 1960s during Raza Shah's regime. Pakistan, nevertheless, played on both sides even after the 1979 Iran Revolution which created a rift between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan allied with Saudi Arabia during the Soviet invasion of Pakistan and curried favour with the Saudis in terms of Saudi funding. To balance it off, Pakistan supported Iran in its war against Iraq. Even though Pakistan sided with Saudi Arabia on various occasions yet it did not take any anti-Iran stance. In 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the "Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism". Pakistan silently became part of the alliance even after the announcement of maintaining neutrality in the Yemen issue. Nevertheless, Pakistan has avoided giving any negative impression about the alliance as an anti-Iran alliance. Furthermore, Pakistan has treaded carefully on the issue of Syria and tried to maintain positive neutrality. Pakistan could not be persuaded by Saudi Arabia to retrieve its ambassadors from Syria. In Saudi-Iranian confrontations, Pakistan refuses to be partial and take sides. Yet, the fear of sectarian issues keeps looming within Pakistan (Aslan, 2017).

Despite various direct and indirect indications of the role of Islam in Pakistan's foreign policy by academicians and research scholars, there clearly remains a research gap addressing the role of Islam in the foreign policy of Pakistan. Pakistan's leadership after the independence sought to have a strong relationship with every state. However, the Islamic national identity is said to have heavily influenced Pakistan's early foreign policy decisions. Pakistan tried to keep a balanced foreign policy in order to address the Indian factor which dominated its foreign policy decisions since its foundation. It is also argued that Islam did not play much role during the first three decades of independence in its foreign policy decisions. Such a trend started during the era of Bhutto the argument further adds. In order to cover the research gap, this research explores the influence of Islam on Pakistan's foreign policy. It examines how theocratic perception has impacted the foreign policy decisions of Pakistan. Moreover, the research identifies the strength of relations that Pakistan maintains with Muslim-Majority countries, especially, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative research based on primary data as well as secondary data. It is exploratory in nature and has an inductive approach. Since this research sought to explore the role of Islam in Pakistan's foreign policy, thus qualitative research method was appropriate to achieve the research objectives. Additionally, an interview questionnaire was used to collect the primary data to develop a better understanding of the questions under research.

Research Design

With an inductive approach, this research is an exploratory study of the role of Islam in the foreign policy of Pakistan. Various available resources including books, research papers, and articles were analyzed in order to review the existing literature, and the primary data was collected through an interview questionnaire. A research objective-based thematic analysis is conducted of the collected data which helped to reach the conclusion and give futuristic suggestions for the future research areas relevant to the question under research.



Analysis Technique

Primary data was analyzed to highlight the themes. Out of all three interviews, one was conducted face-to-face and was recorded in an audio recorder. Moreover, responses for two interviews were received via e-mail. Recorded Interview was transcribed and edited while; responses received through email were edited only. Themes were highlighted from the data collected. Conclusive remarks were drawn from the thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Influence of Islam on the Foreign Policy of Pakistan

Regarding Islam's influence on Pakistan's foreign policy, Dr. Riaz Shaikh (Dean of Social Sciences and Education at SZABIST Karachi) opined that Pakistan had a very confusing origin because at one stage it was said by the political leaders that they were going to create a state for Muslims of South Asia but literally it was meant to be a theocratic state. When Pakistan was created there was a bi-polar world either you were supposed to join USSR or the US. Pakistan opted to join the US-led Western bloc. Pakistan's relations with the US were based on religion because the US was trying to take over space which was earlier taken by the British Empire. The actual problem was in the Middle East. When the US wanted to replace Britain in the Middle East then ultimately it had to create goodwill among the Muslims as well as the newly emerging countries such as Pakistan. Pakistan's government joined the US group and for this purpose, it was thought that the creation of an Islamic cooperation group would provide the space to negotiate. Pakistan was the most populous Muslim country and quite advanced than many Muslim Majority countries. Moreover, it was Pakistan's security requirements that compelled it to bandwagon with the Western bloc where Muslim-majority states stood. Financial needs were another reason. The Eastern/Communist bloc was not that liquid and could not provide much of the required financial aid. Thus, the Islamic bloc backed by the West was a viable option to bandwagon with. Once the doors were opened then ultimately religious clerics found their own place and captured all this space. In the context of financial support, Babar Ayaz (Author of *What's Wrong with Pakistan*) views support Dr. Shaikh's views. He said that the only benefit Pakistan has achieved by pursuing the Muslim countries' alliance is that it got some financial aid from the Islamic Development Bank, which was formed under the OIC. However, the Muslim-majority countries support Pakistan because of their national interests and not because Pakistan is an Islamic country. However, contrary to Dr. Shaikh's argument on Islam's influence on Pakistan's foreign policy, Babar Ayaz argues, "Islam has not influenced the foreign policy, but rather Pakistan has used Islam as a tool to further its national security objectives." He argues that Islam was not instrumental in forming Pakistan's foreign policy because of the India factor. The main platform of Pakistan has been that it has always been afraid of its re-annexation with India. Pakistan-India relations have been overshadowed by the fact that the Muslim-majority Kashmir was not made a part of Pakistan at the time of partition and the conflict in Kashmir is still going on between India and Pakistan. He further added that Pakistan's foreign policy was always dictated by its national security needs because of the existential conflict with India which has always been perceived as the main security



threat. This leads us to the question of pragmatism in Pakistan's foreign policy.

Question of Pragmatic Foreign Policy

With Islam's influence on the foreign policy of Pakistan, the question of pragmatism arises. In this context, Dr. Ayesha Siddiq (Author of *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*) argued that Pakistan has not been kept away from having a pragmatic foreign policy because of Islam's influence. She, however, added that the narrative in the military establishment is increasingly tilted in a way that divides the world into a Muslim versus an Anglo-Saxon world. She added that Islam is part of Pakistan's identity but that in itself has not stopped the country from engaging with other non-Muslim states. In fact, Pakistan's long dependency on the US and later on China indicates the same level of pragmatism as one can see in any developing, post-colonial state. In addition, Mr. Ayaz supports the argument that Islam has not kept Pakistan from having a pragmatic foreign policy. Pakistan's foreign policy has been pragmatic in its own sense because it believes that its national security is threatened by its big Eastern neighbor – India.

Contrary to these arguments, Dr. Riaz Shaikh remarks that Pakistan could not create a balanced foreign policy because, in Pakistan's foreign as well as domestic policies, religion played a role as the foreign policy of a country is a reflection of its internal policies. He argued that whenever there was a debate on Pakistan's pragmatic foreign policy, the policymakers justified their actions by saying, "All our actions are to safeguard our Muslim brotherhood." Therefore, foreign policy has become a very limited option for Pakistan as a nation. That is why, there were some political forces within Pakistan who opposed Pakistan's tilt towards the US and the Middle East initially. They were asking to go away from this option and try to create a balanced foreign policy but we failed to do so. He, however, agreed on the point that Pakistan's relations with the Muslim countries were also because of the economic support Pakistan needed.

Pros and Cons of Islam's Influence on Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Dr. Shaikh was of the view that owing to Islam's influence on Pakistan's foreign policy, there are more negative impacts as compared to positive impacts. Pakistan had the option to remain neutral and get rid of dependency. India opted to remain neutral and played its part in the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which helped India receive benefits from the West as well as from the Socialist bloc and other countries. Pakistan could opt for such a policy as it was not a small country in the 1950s-60s. Fortunately, Pakistan had two parts: East Pakistan and West Pakistan which linked Pakistan with Far East Asia which it could utilize to have more pragmatism in its relations with other states. Pakistan of course received economic support from Muslim countries as well as from the West. Moreover, on the issue of Palestine, He maintained that supporting Palestine issue brought some confidence level within the state.

Dr. Siddiq added to this debate and said that Pakistan's own desire to posit itself as a prominent Muslim state gives it an Islamic color. "The appropriation of an identity as a major Muslim state had an impact on Pakistan's relations with countries like Egypt during the first two decades of



Pakistan's creation," she remarked.

Impacts of Theocratic Perception in Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Pakistan has never been a theocratic state and it was never meant to be a theocratic state. Mr. Ayaz in this regard quoted from his book, "What's Wrong with Pakistan" and argued that Pakistan's clergy never ruled the country; therefore, Pakistan has never been a theocratic state. However, he accepted that Pakistan was made by exploiting religious ideas, but once after the partition of the Indian subcontinent, it never established a theocratic system in the country.

Regarding theocratic perception, Dr. Shaikh debated that Pakistan was created as the result of the amalgamation of five provinces that had their own different history, cultures as well as languages. These provinces were promised that they would receive more provincial autonomy and devolution of power. After the creation of Pakistan, when these provinces started demanding their due share in federal resources and political processes, the establishment of Pakistan got scared. The establishment believed that by obliging to these demands there would be more demands for further devolution. Therefore, in order to counter these demands, the establishment created a narrative that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam which is the unity point of Pakistan. Thus, everything needs to move around this narrative. In Pakistan's case, theocracy was just to counter the provincial autonomy demands. Such narrative building led to the creation of One-Unit in 1955 which in essence meant to deny the individual identity to the provinces. Provincialism became an anathema for the establishment. In this context, Dr. Siddiq argued that because of Pakistan's internal political dynamics, it has evolved into a hybrid theocracy. However, the reasons for the tilt towards a pronounced Islamic identity are internal.

Theocratic Perception and Curse of Extremism

Theocratic perception remained intact in Pakistan since its inception. It has long roots within Pakistan's statecraft. However, it was during General Zia's era that it led to the curse of extremism. Dr. Shaikh argued that when the issue of national language arose, Islam became a tool at the hands of the establishment which used it to deny individual identity to provinces. In the case of Bengal, it demanded Bengali should be another national language. Mr. Ayaz added to this argument that every nation needs some kind of ideology for national security. In order to exploit the sentiments of common people, Pakistan used Islam as an ideology during Zia's era which is still going on. Moreover, Dr. Riaz Shaikh believes that Objective Resolution has long roots. Jinnah himself was confused about several things but people just refer to him in the shape of his 11th August speech which had many aspects. On several occasions, he promoted the same concept of the theological state. For example, when he inaugurated the State Bank of Pakistan's new office in Karachi in March 1948, he said that we needed to discover something because Pakistan had a model which had been working for 1300 years which was a more effective and more successful model. So, in his mindset, there was a huge confusion, on one hand, he wanted a liberal state and on the other hand, we had a country created in the name of religion. It was dependent on religious scholars. Millions of people were killed in the name of religion in Bengal and Punjab. There was an anti-



Hindu and anti-Sikh mindset which was promoted there. Jinnah was sick and he had no other option. His successor Liaquat Ali Khan and other leaders were very mediocre leaders compared to Jinnah. They had no option. Also, nationalist movements were becoming very strong which began even during Jinnah's time as Bengal demanded Bengali to be a national language. He replied that we are all Muslims; we have the same religion so we should have the same language. Things were not so simple. Therefore, Objective Resolution has long roots. Dr. Siddiq's argument that the tactical use of religion dates back to Muhammad Ali Jinnah validates the fact that Jinnah had also some tilt toward the use of religion in Pakistan's initial statecraft.

Nexus between the Military and Mullahs

Dr. Siddiq was of the view that mainstreaming of the mullahs happened in phases. General Ayub Khan's period is one period but the most significant increase in importance of the mullahs started during General Zia's era. "If the religious ideology is to be used it will certainly increase the importance of the clergy," she maintained while highlighting the role of the clergy. Mr. Ayaz, however, argued that the military-mullah nexus was already very strong as the government exploited religious freedom, but it got very strong during General Ayub Khan's era in the 1960s.

Dr. Shaikh, however, held a different but detailed opinion regarding the military-mullah nexus. He argued that during the 1954 elections in Bengal, the Muslim league could manage to win hardly ten seats out of more than three hundred seats and the rest were won by a United Front. Pakistani establishment realized that if it allowed it to happen then it would go against a strong center. In this case, there was no other option than to promote religious parties and One-Unit. Initially, it was civil leadership that used military and mullahs for their own purposes because the Pakistani bureaucracy of that time comprised of immigrants and they were fond of citing religion as a uniting force. From there, the military-mullah nexus started. Also, it was done to counter the socialist movements as there was a socialist government in the Indian side of Bengal so they were afraid that it could happen here as well. Moreover, it was also not favorable to the US. It became part of internal as well as external requirements. Thus, the mullahs were promoted. Later on, the military-mullah nexus remained functional during different times in Pakistan's political history.

Non-State Actors as a Tool of Foreign Policy

Dr. Siddiq believed that the use of non-state actors is not going to stop and they would be used as proxies. Such a situation is not going to change because Pakistan's military considers the non-state actors as its first line of defense. Contrary to this belief, Mr. Ayaz believed that the role of non-state actors being used as proxies is changing because some of the non-state actors created by the military establishment have revolted against them, so they had to be crushed. The India-specific non-state actors are being reigned in because of the international community's and Indian pressure. Dr. Shaikh's views are the amalgamation of both arguments. He argued that there seemed to be no chance of change in the use of non-state actors as a foreign policy tool. It is hardly ever going to change. The creation of these non-state actors was in General Zia's own interests. Pakistan got insecure because of the refugee influx from Afghanistan. Pakistan thought to use proxies as they would be the assets in future. Pakistan also believed that Afghanistan could be a friendly country



towards Pakistan after the Soviet forces' withdrawal from Afghanistan in the late 1980s.

Pakistan's Relations with Muslim Countries – Saudi Arabia versus Iran

As discussed earlier that Pakistan has tried to maintain good relations with Muslim countries since its inception in 1947 due to various political as well as economic reasons. Dr. Siddiqa in this context highlighted that Saudi Arabia is Pakistan's main link at the moment. The link, according to her, is both personal as well as institutional ranging from military generals to politicians. In Saudi Arabia versus Iran debate, Pakistan is more inclined towards the former. However, Pakistan's relations with Iran were stronger before 1977. In fact, Pakistan considered Iran as its strategic depth. Over the years, this relationship got lost and got replaced by Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's contemporary relations with Iran are more tactical and it does not want to have any tensions with its southwestern neighbor but suspicions between the two remain there.

Mr. Ayaz maintained that Pakistan's relations with Saudi Arabia and most Muslim countries are strong. Pakistan is trying to have balancing relations with both Saudi Arabia and Iran and the US sanctions have made the balancing job easier.

Pakistan's decision to join Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC)

Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) is a Saudi Arabia-led coalition. Pakistan's decision to join this coalition gave rise to a question that why Pakistan became part of it when the coalition is generally presumed to be an anti-Iran coalition. According to Dr. Siddiqa, Pakistan became part of IMCTC because of its military's desire to carve out a role for itself in the Middle East. Such desire has developed over the years, mainly from Bhutto's era which desired for Pakistan to play a leadership role in the Muslim world. "Since Pakistan's own troubles have cost it its significant place in the world, especially the Muslim world, it now wants to piggybank on Saudi Arabia and the coalition to play a vital role," she remarked. Dr. Shaikh in this context argued that Pakistan joined it because Pakistan received financial support from Saudi Arabia. Pakistani army desperately wants to take sides vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia and that is why immediately retired military personnel (General Raheel Sharif) was given an NOC on their own because civilian governments are weak as they have no authority to question military leadership. Mr. Ayaz argued that Pakistan joined the coalition because of pressure from Saudi Arabia. He, however, added that Pakistan joined the coalition with the condition that its forces would not be used against any third country. Pakistan would only defend if Saudi Arabia is attacked by another country.

Pakistan's Role in Yemen Conflict

In 2015, Pakistan's parliament took the decision to remain neutral in the Yemen conflict (Aslan, 2017). However, Dr. Shaikh believed that Pakistan is offering different types of facilities to Saudi Arabia. He further maintained that we are indirectly involved like providing training to the forces, providing them with weapons and use of weapons and there can be other things as well. Dr. Siddiqa concurred with this view that Pakistan's role is limited to training Yemeni fighter fighting in support of Saudi Arabia or providing for Saudi Arabia's protection. However, she firmly believed



with confirmation from Yemeni experts and diplomats that Pakistan was not fighting inside Yemen. Furthermore, Mr. Ayaz, in this context said that Pakistan's closeness with and financial dependence on Saudi Arabia shows that it is tilted towards Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has offered to mediate between the Yemeni rebel groups and Saudi Arabia despite the fact that there is little room for Pakistan to do so.

Conclusion

Pakistan was carved out as a nation-state from British India in 1947. Pakistan was never meant to be a theocratic state and it has never been a theocratic state in the last 76 years of its creation. However, Pakistan has remained under the influence of hybrid theocracy which in a way has influenced Pakistan's statecraft and so its foreign policy. Islam has played an influential role in Pakistan's foreign policy and it helped Pakistan receive economic support from the US and Middle Eastern countries during the early years of its establishment. It is, nevertheless, debatable. It is believed that Pakistan has used Islam to further its objectives of national security vis-a-vis its arch-rival India. Islam's role in Pakistan's foreign policy, nevertheless, did not keep Pakistan away from having a pragmatic foreign policy. However, the military narrative within Pakistan's foreign policy has divided the world into Anglo-Saxon versus the Muslim world. Islam has not impeded Pakistan to develop relations with other non-Muslim states even though Islam is part of Pakistan's national identity. The pragmatism in Pakistan's foreign policy can be witnessed in its relations with the US and then with China. However, Pakistan's relations with the US and then with China are because of its financial dependency which can be observed in any post-colonial developing state and Pakistan is no exception. Pakistan had an option to remain neutral and get rid of dependency but inherited problems from partition compelled Pakistan to join the Western bloc where most of the Muslim-majority countries already stood.

Pakistan has never been ruled by clergy even though Pakistan's creation is based on the exploitation of religion. Theocratic perception came to play its role within Pakistan's foreign policy because of the issue of provincialism in the early days of Pakistan. Religion and religious parties were promoted to counter the provincial autonomy demands. Such internal political dynamics led Pakistan to evolve into a hybrid theocracy, a term used by Dr. Siddiq. Among other issues, Pakistan faced the issue of the national language at the time of its origin. Pakistan's establishment used Islam as a tool to deny individual identity to provinces. Theocratic perception within Pakistan's internal decisions remained influential since the foundation. Military as well civil leadership of Pakistan had to give up to theocratic perception but during Zia's era in which the concept of Islamic ideology was supported to expedite the process of Islamization, Islam was used as an ideology to exploit the sentiments of common people. The use of religious ideology increased the significance of clergy within the country. When clergy started getting support from the establishment, a nexus came into existence which is termed as Military-Mullah nexus. This nexus was built up in different phases but during General Ayub's era, it got stronger. However, it was during General Zia's era, non-state actors were used as proxies which became a foreign policy



tool. The views regarding getting rid of non-state actors are negative as these non-state actors are considered the first line of defense by Pakistan's military establishment. However, given the international pressure mainly from Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Pakistan has been putting efforts to control the non-state actors.

Pakistan has tried to maintain good relations with the Middle Eastern countries as it sought to justify its creation on the basis of Islam. Pakistan has tried to maintain balanced relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran. Nevertheless, Pakistan is tilted towards Saudi Arabia more even though historically Iran was a strategic depth for Pakistan. Pakistan's decision to join Saudi Arabia-led Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) is based on the condition that Pakistan's forces will be used only in case of an attack on Saudi Arabia from another country. Moreover, the Pakistan military's desire to be part of the coalition is because of its desire to have a role for itself within the Middle East. The issue of Yemen and Pakistan's role in it gave rise to many questions. Pakistan is not directly involved in the Yemen conflict. Pakistan's role is limited to protecting Saudi Arabia and providing training to Yemeni fighters who are fighting in support of Saudi Arabia. Pakistan does not have its forces inside Yemen fighting for Saudi Arabia.

Recommendations

Islam's role within Pakistan's foreign policy should be limited. Pakistan should remain neutral and should not take sides within the Middle East as well as anywhere else. Neutrality can be the best course of action for Pakistan in the case of the Saudi Arabia versus Iran issue. Pakistan should also strengthen its ties with Iran which has great potential to help Pakistan meet its energy needs. Moreover, Pakistan needs to give up its support for non-state actors which is not doing any good for Pakistan's international image. Pakistan should take the US into confidence and mend its ties with it. China is an all-weather friend of Pakistan which should be utilized properly. Pakistan should make the most of its relationship with China and achieve its economic goals. Long awaited Kashmir issue cannot be solved without dialogue. Pakistan should start its dialogue with India and resolve the Kashmir issue. The Role of Islam within Pakistan's foreign policy has not created any hindrance for Pakistan to have a pragmatic foreign policy. Therefore, Pakistan must avail all foreign policy options pragmatically leaving its religious sentiments aside.

Areas of Further Study

This research study is focused on Islam's role in Pakistan's foreign policy. It is strongly believed that Islam influences the decision-making process in Pakistan because of Pakistan's creation based on religion. Further studies can be conducted on Islam's role in the internal decision-making of Pakistan. Moreover, regarding the role of Islam in Pakistan's foreign policy, a research study focusing on the role of Islam in foreign policy decisions during different phases in Pakistan can also be conducted. Since Pakistan's history is divided between civilian governments and military regimes, thus, a study with a similar theme can be conducted with a focus on civilian governments and military regimes separately.



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