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PAKISTAN-TURKEY RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: NAVIGATING MAJOR ISSUES WITH COMMON COLLABORATION

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a thorough examination of Pakistan-Turkey relations in the twenty-first century, highlighting important issues such as the peace in Afghanistan and the Middle East crises. Also, the Cyprus issue, the Kashmir dispute, how constructed bonds between both Muslim states while supporting each other. Also, some other relevant variables influencing bilateral ties are discussed. This research explores the complex nature of Pakistan-Turkey diplomatic relations against the backdrop of evolving geopolitical dynamics and regional issues. The paper explores how Pakistan and Turkey have coordinated their diplomatic efforts to address the long-standing dispute, showing common objectives in promoting stability and resolving disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The study will concentrate on the Cyprus and Kashmir concerns. In a similar vein, the Kashmir dispute is examined in the context of the two countries' historical endorsement of one another's stances on territorial integrity and self-determination, emphasizing the function of bilateral cooperation in furthering their respective foreign policy goals. Pakistan and Turkey are actively working together to promote communication and peace in Afghanistan, and the Afghanistan Peace process stands out as a crucial area of cooperation between them. Pakistan and Turkey have protected their own security interests and the stability of the area by participating in international efforts to establish a peaceful and stable Afghanistan through cooperative measures and diplomatic engagements. Pakistan and Turkey have been closely coordinating during the Middle East crises, which include the conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Palestine, and they have been pushing for humanitarian aid and diplomatic solutions. This study evaluates how well their viewpoints on important issues overlap and looks into ways to improve cooperation in tackling regional problems. To sum up, this study provides insightful analysis of the potential and complexities present in Pakistan-Turkey relations in the twenty-first century. A comprehensive understanding of the dynamics influencing bilateral contacts is provided.

Keywords: Pakistan-Turkey Relations, Regional Problems, Bilateral Contacts, Diplomatic Engagements,

Introduction

The relationship between Pakistan and Turkey can be better understood considering their international relations and the historical factors that connect them. Pakistan and Turkey, two historically connected states, have forged along a path of understanding and cooperation especially in removing major regional impediments. This paper addresses the Pakistan-Turkey relations in the 21 Century with a focus upon the historical context of the relationship that has led to their partnership while indicating key areas of their understanding and collaboration. Pakistan and Turkey have enjoyed good relationships throughout history driven by respect, cultural ties and diplomacy. Pakistan emerged as a state and Turkey underwent a radical change with the leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; these two countries have had ties that are friendly in nature that involve trade, defense, and education. The sturdy foundation of this partnership has been established by a historical basis.

Pakistan and Turkey have an important bilateral partnership which is based on shared positions on some vital regional issues. A clear example is the long standing Kashmir and Cyprus problem. The Kashmiris and Cypriots have been the subjects of focus and concern for Pakistan and Turkey Hence, there is a perceived importance to resolve these issues peacefully and in accordance with international standards. Their endorsement in these issues indicates their concern for equity and respect for individual freedom and respect for territorial boundaries. As well, Pakistan and Turkey are now considered as important players in the Afghan peace processes. They have been able to understand the strategic need for Afghanistan which is stable and developed and as such participated actively in dialogue, reconstruction efforts and regional cooperation. (Kaya, 2013). Their joint approach clearly indicates mutual objectives which include an Afghanistan which is free from threats of extremism, violent conflicts, and one that is inclusive and peaceful. Apart from those common efforts towards Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey have also expressed their unity on a wide range of issues with particular reference to the crises in the Middle East, the Israeli Palestinian crisis, and the Syrian war. They have advocated the peaceful resolution of disputes and humanitarian assistance through diplomatic means and multilateral organisations which has underscored the need to observe international norms and human rights. (Gilley, 2015)

In addition, the foothold of the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Turkey has been their military cooperation. Both states have cooperated with each other in regard to cooperation ranging from military exercises to defence purchase agreements aimed at augmenting their defence capacities and dealing with common security issues. Their military cooperation in one way or the other enhances their relations and contributes towards security and stability in the region. As the Pakistan and Turkey respond to the dynamics of the twenty-first century, there are core values of companionship, collaboration and unity among them. The disadvantaged Pakistan and Turkey are in a

good position to overcome the challenges and capture the opportunities for mutual benefit through their long standing relationship and common interest. Pakistan and Turkey have formed alliance and are exchanging thoughts aimed at also enhancing peace, stability and interconnectivity of the world.

Problem Statement

The present day partnership between Pakistan and Turkey appears to have unmistakable strands of geopolitics and regional over the recent history which places it into a sensitive stage. There is a history of interactions within the two Muslim states which warrants consideration. While there are clearly past memories and cultural resemblance, there are a number of bilateral issues which are profound. Also with the continuing peace initiatives in Afghanistan and the complexities of the issues in Middle East, both countries' political and strategic posture faces constraints and therefore needs careful maneuvering and synchronised action towards conflict resolution. One of the central themes of this article is, how which regional issues and geopolitical transformations in the regions in the last two decades overcast the relations between Pakistan and Turkey and what does the relations entail regarding the political dynamics and equilibrium in the region?

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism's theoretical framework provides an important perspective on the role of shared norms, identities and social constructions in interstate relations with specific case studies such as the relations between Pakistan and Turkey (Onuf 2013). Constructivist theory suggests that states' identities and interests are not respondents of objective material conditions, but rather constructions of meaning as perceptively and socially defined (Wendt , 1999).

Constructivism stresses the importance of common historical narratives and cultural affinities to foster understanding and cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey. For instance, the Islamic identity and the historical links that Pakistan and Turkey have affect their perceptions and their foreign policy's attitudes considerably (Ahmad, 2000). Dialectic approach of constructivism describes the significance how state actions, discursive practices and diplomatic contacts contribute to international relations (Checkel 1998). International relations between two or more nations can be understood through why there are contact, and diplomatic acts and gestures between nations, and how they establish joint values and perceptions of them. In this case, diplomatic gestures and contacts are identifying factors of relations between Pakistan and Turkey. Accordingly, this study seeks to explain the social and ideational aspects which shape the interactions between Pakistan and Turkey using the constructivist sensitive lens. In particular, it also brings about how international norms, identities of regional actors and discourse are constructed in determining the regional order and cooperation.

Methodology

The study examines the development of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Turkey using a qualitative research methodology in conjunction with historical analysis. By means of published articles in national and international journal, official papers, and literature review, the writers evaluate the variables that propel these relationships' evolution over time. The study also looks at a variety of datasets to identify opportunities and problems that arise in the twenty-first century. Its primary objective is to derive conclusions about these ties on Constructivists perspective.

Past Upbringing

According to projections that surpass 241 million, Pakistan's population currently ranks fifth amongst the world's largest (Ali, 2023). Pakistan's demographic makeup highlights the country's importance in terms of its socioeconomic dynamics and geopolitical influence on a regional and global scale. The majority of Pakistan's population, 96% of whom identify as Muslims, according to the most recent census statistics, reflects the country's predominately Islamic nature (Ibid). This sizable majority highlights how Islam has played a pivotal role in forming Pakistan's political, social, and cultural landscape, impacting many facets of public life and policymaking. Similarly, 99% of Turkish people identify as Muslims, according to a research on the world's religious landscape (Yilmaz, 2023). Given Turkey's historical and cultural ties to Islam, this figure highlights the religion's pervasive influence within Turkish society.

The Khilafat Movement was started by Muslims in the Indian subcontinent to put pressure on the Allied Powers to keep the Ottoman Empire from being divided (Zaman, 2024). Based on pan-Islamic beliefs, this movement aimed to protect Muslim unity and the caliphate's institution (Shamshad, 2021). Muslims in the Indian subcontinent felt united because of their strong historical ties and sense of solidarity with Muslims around the world, especially with regard to the Ottoman Empire as the home of the Khilafat-i-Uthmaniya.

This shared identity aided in the founding of the Khilafat Movement, which sought to uphold Muslim unity globally and maintain the Ottoman caliphate. The long-lasting relationship among Muslims on the Indian subcontinent was seen in political unrest as early as 1897, when demonstrations against the British government's backing of Greece in the Greco-Turkish War broke out throughout Aligarh (Sepetcioglu, 2015). This protest demonstrated Indian Muslims' support for the Ottoman Empire and their resistance to British policies that they believed to be against Muslim interests (Özcan, 1997).

The Indian subcontinent's Muslim agitations after the Greco-Turkish War were interpreted in light of the unfavourable conditions Muslims encountered during the 1857 War of Independence (Ejaz, 2021). Muslims, working with the Indian National Congress under M.K. Gandhi, were incensed at the actions of the British and other Allied countries, which drove them to launch the Khilafat Movement (Tejani, 2007).

One example of the solidarity among disparate communities in the Indian subcontinent is the cooperation between Muslims and Hindus during the Khilafat

Movement (Khan, 1986). Muslims continued to pursue justice and empowerment even after the Congress withdrew from the movement (Qureshi, 1999). At the July 1919 Erzurum summit, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk demonstrated his leadership in opposing foreign mandates (Zhantiev, 2012). Atatürk's reputation was cemented worldwide, especially among Muslim populations, due to his ability to withstand both external and internal challenges.

The Khalifa's power transcended national borders since Muslims living in different nations and empires looked up to him as their leader (Khan, 2020). It was believed that the Khalifa had a responsibility to respond to the cries of Muslims all across the world and take steps to ensure their freedom. The Khalifa's belief in the ideological unity of Muslims as a one nation drove him to remain steadfast in fighting persecution, even in the face of frequent battles with other empires. Preserving Muslim rights was an important factor in determining foreign policy. The Khalifa stressed that Turkey's foreign policy will be shaped in accordance with its needs and capabilities as he laid out the course for it.

Foreign Policy of Pakistan towards Muslim states including Turkey

Pakistan's foreign policy is steered by its ideology, which prioritizes amicable ties with the Muslim world (Murad, 2023). Pakistan came into being on 14th August 1947, and Turkey not only recognised Pakistan, but also consider a friendly and brother nation (Ismail, 2023).

On March 4, 1948, Jinnah welcome the Turkish Ambassador in Pakistan, highlighting Pakistan's respect for Turkey's heritage and governance (Wasti, 2011). Pakistan and Turkey, as autonomous and independent nations, are well-positioned to expand their cooperation in a number of areas. Pakistan has encountered high-risk security difficulties, most notably the Indian military's occupation of Kashmir, which has created a serious security dilemma. Pakistan faced an existential threat from the intentions of Indian. Furthermore, Pakistan arose in the midst of a global bipolar world in which nations were split into blocs supporting capitalism and communism. Pakistan, an Islamic ideology state, attempted to navigate these difficulties by taking into account the concerns of the Muslim Ummah. This forced Pakistan's government to look for friends and supporters abroad in order to resolve these issues. Article 40 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan emphasizes the state's commitment to preserving and strengthening fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic unity, in accordance with the directives of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the country's founding father (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973).

Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize Pakistan after its independence, hence diplomatic ties were quickly established (Awan, 2023). When the Turkish Embassy opened its doors in 1947 in Karachi, the Pakistani capital at the time, diplomatic relations were established. Prior to discuss about security matters, it is critical to look at both nations' viewpoints about two of the biggest conflicts; Kashmir and Cyprus.

Common stance on Kashmir and Cyprus

The shared interests and unity in resolving regional problems have been evident in the mutual support and alignment of viewpoints that have defined Pakistan and Turkey's cooperation over Cyprus and Kashmir. In these divisive matters, both nations have pushed for fair settlements and universal recognition of the rights of the impacted communities.

Pakistan's solid support for the rights of Turkish Cypriots has been stated on international platforms in relation to the Cyprus issue, which is located in the Eastern Mediterranean (Butler, 2001). In addition to discussing its concerns with Turkey in bilateral meetings, Pakistan encouraged immediate consideration of a peaceful resolution during the UN General Assembly sessions in 1954 and 1957 (Yorgancioğlu, 2019). President Ayub Khan of Pakistan received praise from President General Sunay of Turkey in 1962 for his assistance to Turkey in opposing Greek Cypriot President Makarios' attempts to violate Turkish Cypriots' rights (Ahmad, 1981).

Leaders from Pakistan and Turkey have frequently discussed the Cyprus problem during their trips, with Pakistan continuously endorsing Turkey's position. Pakistan has reaffirmed its steadfast support for Turkey as it takes against the military government that carried out the coup in Cyprus. Pakistan's authorities compared the situation to his country's own challenges and categorically declared Pakistan's support for Turkey's activities in Cyprus. Pakistan's governments have consistently backed Turkey's stance on Cyprus and its counterterrorism initiatives. The way Pakistan feels about Cyprus for Turkey is similar to how Pakistan feels about Kashmir, indicating the intensity of the emotional bond.

The desire for Pakistan began with the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which was founded on Allama Muhammad Iqbal's concept of a distinct country. Following the end of British administration on August 14, 1947, Muslims living on the Indian subcontinent gained their own nation, Pakistan; however, the rulers of the Princely States were free to choose whether or not to join India (Copland, 1991). Even after they joined Pakistan, the Indian occupation of Hyderabad and Junagadh increased tensions, especially in light of the Kashmir dispute (Ashraf, 1990).

A protracted struggle between Pakistan and India resulted from tribesmen from Pakistan entering the Kashmir Valley to help the Muslim people in response to Raja Hari Singh's harsh administration in Kashmir (Reynolds, 2016). Three wars between the two nations in 1948, 1965, and 1999 have resulted from this conflict (Iqbal, 2018). On August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949, the United Nations Security Council enacted resolutions requesting the demilitarization of the area and the holding of a plebiscite under UN supervision (Das, 1950). Although India has been hesitant to comply, Pakistan has consented to these resolutions, thereby solidifying Pakistan's foreign policy's fundamental concern the Kashmir issue.

Pakistan's approach, has been remain to persistently push for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations. India's

oppressive rule over Kashmir has been criticized for violating human rights, a point that Pakistan, the world media, and human rights organizations have brought up time and time again (Kuszevska, 2022).

Turkey has consistently supported Pakistan's just position on the Kashmir dispute and supported Pakistan during good times and bad. During their visits to Pakistan and at international fora like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations, Turkish officials have voiced support for Pakistan in the dispute over Kashmir. During his formal visit to Pakistan in 1996, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan underlined the significance of the issue and reiterated Turkey's support for Kashmir (Moin, 2022). Additionally, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has supported Pakistan's stance on the matter by reiterating Turkey's support for Kashmir on multiple occasions (Anas, 2017).

In his speech to the joint session of the Pakistani Parliament during his official visit, the President of Turkey said, "Our Kashmiri brothers and sisters have suffered from inconveniences for decades, and these sufferings have become graver due to unilateral steps taken in recent times" (Rashid, 2021).

Turkey and Pakistan's Shared Role in the Peace Process in Afghanistan

Significant changes in international diplomatic relations resulted from the 9/11 attacks, which forced countries to adjust their foreign policies to take into account the evolving security environment. Pakistan's close proximity to Afghanistan and its unstable border regions made it one among the most affected nations. Pakistan joined the US in the war on terrorism as a response to the threat posed by Al-Qaeda. But in order to promote peace in Afghanistan and the wider region, Pakistan has continuously pushed the US to give priority to discussion with Afghan stakeholders (Idrees et al, 2019). Pakistan has hosted multiple high-level discussions between pertinent stakeholders, demonstrating an unshakeable commitment to peace and stability in Afghanistan. The international community has acknowledged Pakistan's critical involvement in the peace process in Afghanistan, confirming its importance in regional diplomacy. Pakistan has actively participated in dialogue facilitation between the US and the Taliban and has mediated intra-Afghan issues to bring opposing factions to the bargaining table because of its varied interests in promoting peace and stability. Furthermore, Turkey and Pakistan have cooperated in the peace process via programs like the Istanbul Process and the Trilateral Summit, demonstrating their shared commitment to bringing about a durable peace in Afghanistan (Shaukat et al, 2023). Since Pakistan's creation in 1947, there has been a long history of mistrust and tense ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan (Gartenstein-Ross, 2012). Henry Mortimer Durand, a British ambassador, drew the 2430 kilometres Durand Line between the two countries in 1893, which further strained relations between them (Omroni, 2009). After Pakistan gained its independence, tensions remained high, made worse by the overflow of Afghans into Pakistan during the US-led War on Terror, which resulted in an increase in terrorist activity in the early years of the twenty-first century. Pakistan

started building a border fence in 2005 to reduce cross-border terrorism as a reaction to security concerns (Oztig, 2021). Conflicts can also emerge over trade routes, such as the one that passes across Pakistan's Wagah border and connects Afghanistan and India, in addition to border security. These problems have made ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan tense, which is why Turkey proposed holding a trilateral summit between Pakistan and Afghanistan (Kiran Nayyar et al, 2022). In an attempt to ease tensions stemming from counterterrorism measures against the Taliban's comeback, Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer summoned General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan and Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan (Chesser, 2007).

The declaration placed a strong emphasis on improving Pakistan-Afghan bilateral ties by upholding the values of good neighbourliness, reciprocal respect for each other's territorial integrity, and non-interference in domestic matters. Abdullah Gul became President of Turkey after Ahmet Necdet Sezer's term, while Asif Ali Zardari, the husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, became President of Pakistan. Cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan increased under Turkish President Abdullah Gul's direction, resulting in agreements on a number of areas. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan have demonstrated a constructive attitude by not formally ending their collaboration. Regular meetings are necessary for the process to be effective, though. Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan underlined the importance of the process and indicated interest in seeing it through during a recent visit to Turkey (Tahsin, 2019).

Since Pakistan's strong participation in the Afghan Jihad against the Soviet Union in the 1980s, Pakistan has been a key player in the peace process in Afghanistan. Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism have been acknowledged by the international community, which also recognizes Pakistan's assistance in the peace process in Afghanistan. Role of Turkey in bringing peace in Afghanistan while motivating Pakistan and Afghanistan can not be neglected.

However, there are historical, religious, and cultural ties between the people of Pakistan and the Afghan government. Pakistan's connections with the people of Afghanistan have strengthened as a result of the convergence of these elements. Pakistan has had the opportunity to assist several conversations with the Taliban due to its historical ties to the Taliban administration and its close proximity to Afghanistan. Pakistan has actively supported peace initiatives using these ties, even in the face of criticism from the Afghan government about its ties to the Taliban. By including Afghanistan's neighbours, the Heart of Asia Conference, sometimes referred to as the Istanbul Process, enhances the trilateral summit process. The group was founded in Istanbul, Turkey, with the goal of promoting cooperation, stability, and peace in the area (Quie, 2014). The Heart of Asia Conference, which has 15 participating nations, 17 supporting nations, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations, provides a forum for discussion and cooperation amongst countries concerned with the stability of Afghanistan and its neighboring areas (Kazemi, 2013).

Common stance on Middle East issues

The Arab Spring significantly altered politics and governance throughout the Middle East, contributing to the current crisis. Regarding the Palestine problem, Pakistan has remained steadfast in its refusal to acknowledge Israel as a state and to forge official diplomatic ties. Pakistan has consistently demonstrated its unflinching support for the Palestinian cause in international fora, a position that is maintained by its cohesive leadership. Before considering Israel's recognition, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah made it plain that a reasonable settlement which included giving the Palestinian people a homeland as necessary. Along with other Muslim countries, Turkey and Pakistan have strongly presented reservations the Trump administration's policy for Palestine, especially the moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem. Another major security problem that is attracting close cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey is the Syrian war. Pakistan's call for a diplomatic solution to the Syrian issue is consistent with Turkey's efforts to promote stability and peace in the Middle East. The main targets of Turkey's engagement in the area are Kurdish organizations; Ankara wants to oppose both the PKK and the YPG, which is the PKK's Syrian affiliate (Kaválek, 2018). Pakistan emphasizes the need for negotiation over military action in order to resolve conflicts in the Middle East, even as it denounces the actions of ISIS. Pakistan has offered Turkey its full support in preserving its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Given their longstanding defence connections, Pakistan and Turkey's defence collaboration transcends words.

Pakistan-Turkey Military cooperation

Turkey is Pakistan's second-largest arms supplier behind China, and multiple accords have been inked to enhance defence and military ties. Pakistan and Turkey work closely together to maintain and upgrade F-16 fighter jets, and Pakistani Army Officers benefit from an exchange program for military training (Chawla, 2019). The Pakistan Navy and its Turkish counterparts have also collaborated on projects, such as the commissioning of a 17,000-ton fleet tanker (Khalid, 2021). Pakistan's underwater defence capabilities have improved thanks to the active assistance of Turkish authorities in modernizing three submarines. Pakistan and Turkey have a close working relationship when it comes to aerial defence, which includes pilot training programs and the provision of aircraft, helicopters, and other equipment to support the Pakistan Air Force. Furthermore, Pakistan and Turkey have a strong defence cooperation, as evidenced by the sale of ATAK helicopters (Oxford Analytica, 2023) and the delivery of MILGEM corvettes by Turkey (Murphy, 2020). The latter transaction is considered the biggest one between the two countries.

Conclusion

The primary priority for national leadership has always been the necessity of protecting against both internal and external dangers. Following the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan requested defence cooperation to address its critical issues over terrorism, economic hardships, and the scourge of poverty. Turkey became a major ally in Pakistan's

counterterrorism endeavours, promoting fruitful collaboration in the fight against terrorism. A brighter future appears to be in accumulation for Pakistan and Turkey thanks to their continued collaboration, which is supported by their insightful leadership.

To conclude, the 21st-century relationship between Pakistan and Turkey exemplifies a robust cooperation based on mutual historical experiences, shared values, and strategic objectives. Both countries have demonstrated unity and mutual support on important topics ranging from Kashmir and Cyprus to Afghanistan and the Middle East through their cooperative efforts to navigate difficult regional dynamics. The extent of their collaboration, specifically concerning military affairs, highlights their dedication to augmenting peace and security in the region.

The relationship between Pakistan and Turkey has a great deal of room to grow and diversify in the future. As international relations continue to change, both countries are well-positioned to take advantage of new chances for collaboration in commerce, investment, technology, and people-to-people interactions. Pakistan and Turkey can play a crucial role in promoting peace, prosperity, and stability not only in their own areas but also on the larger world stage by strengthening the foundation of trust and understanding that has been established over decades. Their collaborative efforts as strategic partners and unwavering allies promise future generations a more promising and interconnected world.

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