

Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Abridgement Of Internal And External Determinants

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Abstract

Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by a myriad of internal and external determinants that influence its strategic decisions and diplomatic engagements. Internally, factors such as the country's history, geography, domestic politics, economy, ideology and societal dynamics play a crucial role in shaping its foreign policy objectives. Externally, global and regional geopolitical dynamics, bilateral and multilateral relationships, and security concerns also significantly impact Pakistan's foreign policy choices. This article provides an abridged overview of the key internal and external determinants that shape Pakistan's foreign policy. It delves into the historical context of Pakistan's formation and how its early years as a newly independent state influenced its foreign policy outlook. The article further discusses Pakistan's domestic political landscape, including the role of civilian and military leadership, political ideologies, and public opinion, in shaping its foreign policy decisions. It explores how regional dynamics and security concerns, including the Kashmir dispute with India and the threat of terrorism, impact Pakistan's foreign policy choices. Moreover, the article analyzes Pakistan's economic considerations and how they influence its foreign policy, including trade and investment relationships, development aid, and international financial institutions. It also discusses Pakistan's societal dynamics, including religious and cultural factors, and their impact on its foreign policy objectives.

Key Words: Foreign Policy, Pakistan, Determinants, South Asia, Geo-Politics.

Introduction

Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by a complex interplay of internal and external factors. As a country located at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, Pakistan's foreign policy decisions are influenced by a variety of determinants that are both domestic and international in nature. Internal determinants refer to the factors within Pakistan, such as its historical and cultural context, domestic politics, economic considerations, and national security concerns. External determinants, on the other hand, encompass the regional and global dynamics that impact Pakistan's foreign policy

choices, including relations with neighboring countries, major powers, international organizations, and global trends. This article provides an abridged overview of the internal and external determinants that shape Pakistan's foreign policy, highlighting the interplay between these factors and their impact on Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives, alliances, and international engagements.

Pakistan's foreign policy has evolved over the years in response to various internal and external challenges and opportunities. The country's strategic location, as well as its geopolitical, economic, and security interests, have shaped its foreign policy priorities and

objectives. Internal determinants, including its domestic political landscape, societal norms, and economic conditions, influence Pakistan's foreign policy decisions, while external determinants, such as regional conflicts, international alliances, and global power shifts, also play a significant role.

This article provides an overview of the key internal and external determinants that shape Pakistan's foreign policy. It examines how historical, cultural, political, economic, and security factors within Pakistan, as well as regional and global dynamics, impact its foreign policy choices. It highlights the intricate balance between internal and external determinants that Pakistan navigates to pursue its national interests in a complex and ever-changing global environment. Understanding these determinants is crucial for comprehending Pakistan's foreign policy decisions and its role in the international arena.

Internal challenges and factors

Pakistan's foreign policy is influenced by a variety of internal factors that shape its strategic outlook and diplomatic relations with other countries. These internal factors can be categorized into political, economic, and social dimensions, which interact and shape Pakistan's foreign policy decisions. Here are some key internal factors that influence Pakistan's foreign policy:

Political Factors: Pakistan's political landscape plays a significant role in shaping its foreign policy. The political stability, government structure, and leadership style of the ruling party or coalition have a direct impact on Pakistan's foreign policy decisions. For example, during periods of political instability or frequent changes in government, Pakistan's foreign policy may lack consistency and coherence.

Political factors play a crucial role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy, which refers to the strategies, decisions, and actions taken by the government of Pakistan in its interactions with other countries and international organizations. Some of the key political factors that influence Pakistan's foreign policy are:

Government Structure: Pakistan's government structure, which includes the President, Prime

Minister, Cabinet, and Parliament, shapes its foreign policy. The President and Prime Minister play important roles in formulating and implementing foreign policy decisions, while the Cabinet and Parliament provide oversight and approval. The political dynamics and power struggles among different branches and levels of government can impact Pakistan's foreign policy decisions.⁶

National Interests: Pakistan's national interests, such as safeguarding its sovereignty, security, and economic development, are critical determinants of its foreign policy. The government formulates foreign policy decisions that align with these national interests, which can include maintaining friendly relations with neighboring countries, securing economic partnerships, and protecting its territorial integrity.⁷

Domestic Politics: Domestic political considerations, including public opinion, interest groups, and electoral politics, also impact Pakistan's foreign policy. Public opinion and interest groups can influence policymakers' decisions, especially on issues such as security, human rights, and relations with specific countries. Electoral politics, including political parties' ideologies and campaign promises, can also shape Pakistan's foreign policy direction.⁸

Leadership and Personalities: The leadership and personalities of Pakistan's political leaders, including the President, Prime Minister, and key government officials, play a significant role in formulating foreign policy. The personal beliefs, values, and diplomatic skills of leaders can impact Pakistan's foreign policy decisions and relations with other countries. Leadership changes and shifts in government can also result in changes in foreign policy direction.⁹

Geostrategic Considerations: Pakistan's geostrategic location, as a nuclear-armed nation situated in a volatile region, influences its foreign policy. Pakistan shares borders with India, Afghanistan, Iran, and China, and is located at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. These geopolitical factors shape Pakistan's foreign policy decisions, including its relations with neighboring countries,

⁶ Haqqani, H. (2017). *Reimagining Pakistan: Transforming a Dysfunctional Nuclear State*. Harper Collins.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Khan, M. A. (2019). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal*. Oxford University Press

⁹ Ibid.

engagement in regional organizations, and responses to regional conflicts.¹⁰

International System: The international system, including the evolving global political landscape and international norms, also impacts Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan's relations with major powers such as the United States, China, and Russia, as well as its engagement in regional and international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, are influenced by the changing dynamics of the international system.¹¹

These are some of the political factors that contribute to the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy. It's worth noting that foreign policy decisions are often shaped by a combination of these factors, and the priorities and strategies of Pakistan's foreign policy may change over time depending on the evolving political landscape and national interests.

Furthermore, the perception of the external threats faced by Pakistan, such as security challenges from neighboring countries, can also influence its foreign policy. For instance, the ongoing conflict with India over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir has a significant impact on Pakistan's foreign policy, with efforts to internationalize the issue and seek support from other countries.

Economic Factors: Pakistan's economic conditions and priorities also shape its foreign policy. Economic considerations, such as trade, investment, and development assistance, play a crucial role in determining Pakistan's relationships with other countries. For instance, Pakistan's dependence on foreign aid and financial assistance from international donors, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and China, can influence its foreign policy decisions.

Pakistan's foreign policy is influenced by various economic factors that shape its international relations and diplomatic decisions. These economic factors

play a crucial role in guiding Pakistan's foreign policy priorities and actions, including trade, investment, aid, debt, and economic cooperation with other countries.

Trade is a significant economic factor that influences Pakistan's foreign policy. As an agrarian economy, Pakistan relies heavily on international trade for its economic growth and development. Pakistan's foreign policy is formulated to promote trade relations with other countries to enhance its export potential and reduce its trade deficit. For example, Pakistan has traditionally maintained close economic ties with countries like China, the United States, and the European Union, which are its major trading partners.¹²

Pakistan also seeks to diversify its trade relations by exploring new markets and expanding its trade partnerships with countries in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. This is evident in Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its trade relations with countries like Turkey, Iran, Russia, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. These trade relationships are often guided by Pakistan's foreign policy objectives, such as enhancing its export potential, attracting foreign investment, and reducing its trade imbalance.¹³

Foreign investment is another crucial economic factor that shapes Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan actively seeks foreign investment to boost its economy, create employment opportunities, and upgrade its technological capabilities. Pakistan's foreign policy is designed to attract foreign investment by offering incentives, creating a favorable business environment, and promoting economic cooperation with other countries. For instance, Pakistan has pursued policies to attract foreign investment from countries like China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, which have

¹⁰ Rizvi, H. A. (2015). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Historical Analysis*. Routledge.

¹¹ Ziring, L. (2017). *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*. Oxford University Press.

¹² Javid, R. (2019). Economic Diplomacy: Pakistan's Experience. *Journal of Political Studies*, 26(2), 29-47.

¹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan. (2021). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.mofa.gov.pk/pakistans-foreign-policy/>

made significant investments in Pakistan's energy, infrastructure, and manufacturing sectors.¹⁴

Pakistan's foreign policy also focuses on engaging in economic cooperation forums and regional organizations to enhance its economic ties with other countries. For example, Pakistan is a member of regional organizations like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Pakistan's foreign policy objectives within these forums are often aimed at promoting economic cooperation, regional connectivity, and trade facilitation among member countries.¹⁵

Furthermore, Pakistan's foreign policy is influenced by its external debt and financial obligations. Pakistan has faced challenges in managing its external debt in the past, and its foreign policy often takes into consideration the need to secure financial assistance and debt relief from international financial institutions and other countries. Pakistan seeks to manage its external debt through negotiations, bilateral and multilateral aid, and debt rescheduling. These efforts are often reflected in Pakistan's diplomatic engagements and foreign policy decisions to secure favorable financial terms, debt relief, and economic assistance.¹⁶

Economic factors play a significant role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy. Trade, foreign investment, economic cooperation, and debt management are key considerations that influence Pakistan's diplomatic decisions and foreign policy priorities. Pakistan's foreign policy seeks to promote trade relations, attract foreign investment, engage in economic cooperation forums, and manage its external debt to achieve its economic objectives and enhance its economic development.¹⁷

Social Factors: Social factors, such as domestic public opinion, societal values, and cultural norms, can also influence Pakistan's foreign policy. Public opinion

and societal values play a role in shaping Pakistan's stance on various international issues, such as human rights, terrorism, and religious diplomacy.¹⁸ For example, the views of the general public and influential interest groups within Pakistan on issues like relations with the United States or Israel can impact Pakistan's foreign policy decisions.

Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by various social factors that influence the country's diplomatic decisions and interactions with other nations. These factors can be broadly categorized into four main areas: historical, cultural, religious, and domestic politics.

Historical Factors:

Pakistan's foreign policy is heavily influenced by its historical context, including its creation as an independent nation in 1947 after the partition of British India, which resulted in deep-seated tensions with its neighboring country, India. The legacy of partition, which led to violence, mass migrations, and unresolved territorial disputes, continues to shape Pakistan's foreign policy approach towards India, with a focus on security concerns, including the longstanding conflict over the disputed region of Kashmir. Pakistan's historical experiences of conflict with India, including several wars and ongoing border disputes, have led to a deep sense of insecurity and a desire to safeguard its national interests, which often shapes its foreign policy decisions.¹⁹

Cultural Factors:

Pakistan's foreign policy is also influenced by its rich and diverse culture, which includes a mix of various ethnicities, languages, and traditions. Pakistan's cultural identity is shaped by its Islamic heritage, as it is an Islamic republic with a majority Muslim population.²⁰ Islam plays a significant role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy, with a focus on protecting the rights and interests of Muslims worldwide, especially in regions such as the Middle East and South Asia. Pakistan's cultural ties with other

¹⁴ Javid, R. (2019). Economic Diplomacy: Pakistan's Experience. *Journal of Political Studies*, 26(2), 29-47.

¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan. (2021). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.mofa.gov.pk/pakistans-foreign-policy/>

¹⁶ Javid, R. (2019). Economic Diplomacy: Pakistan's Experience. *Journal of Political Studies*, 26(2), 29-47.

¹⁷ Rizwan, Muhammad, and Nazia Nawaz. "Pakistan's Trade Policy: A Critical Review." *South Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (2014): 349-362.

¹⁸ Kux, Dennis. *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001.

¹⁹ Talbot, I. (2016). *Pakistan: A Modern History*. C. Hurst & Co.

²⁰ Raza, M. (2017). Cultural Factors Shaping Pakistan's Foreign Policy. *Pakistan Horizon*, 70(2), 135-152.

Muslim-majority countries, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and China, have a significant impact on its foreign policy decisions, as it seeks to build and maintain alliances with countries that share similar cultural and religious values.²¹

Domestic Politics:

Domestic political factors play a crucial role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan has experienced periods of military rule and democratic governance, each with its own foreign policy priorities. Domestic political dynamics, including the role of the military, political parties, interest groups, and public opinion, shape Pakistan's foreign policy decisions. For example, the military has historically played a significant role in Pakistan's foreign policy, and its interests and preferences often shape the country's diplomatic engagements.²²

Ideological and religious factors:

Religion, particularly Islam, has a strong influence on Pakistan's foreign policy. As an Islamic republic, Pakistan's foreign policy is often influenced by its perception of protecting and promoting the interests of Muslims worldwide. This includes issues such as the rights of Muslims in other countries, support for Muslim causes and organizations, and efforts to promote Islamic solidarity.²³ Pakistan has historically positioned itself as a champion of Muslim causes, such as the Palestinian issue, and has played an active role in regional and international forums to support Muslim rights. Additionally, Pakistan's foreign policy is also shaped by its relationship with other Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, which have significant implications for its diplomatic decisions.²⁴

Pakistan's Islamic identity and its ideological orientation influence its foreign policy, particularly in relation to issues such as Kashmir, Palestine, and the

Muslim world. This may involve diplomatic efforts, advocacy, and support for causes that align with Pakistan's ideological and religious beliefs.²⁵

Ideological and religious factors play a significant role in formulating Pakistan's foreign policy. These factors shape Pakistan's perceptions, priorities, and actions in the international arena, and are often reflected in its diplomatic engagements, alliances, and policy decisions. Several key ideological and religious factors influence Pakistan's foreign policy, including Islam as a state religion, historical experiences, national identity, and strategic imperatives.²⁶

One of the major ideological factors that influence Pakistan's foreign policy is its Islamic identity. Pakistan was founded as a separate state for Muslims in 1947, with Islam enshrined in its constitution as the state religion. This Islamic identity shapes Pakistan's foreign policy, as it seeks to project itself as a leader of the Muslim world and promote the interests of Muslims globally. For example, Pakistan has been an active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and has advocated for issues such as the rights of Muslims in conflict zones, including Palestine and Kashmir.²⁷

Pakistan's historical experiences also play a role in shaping its foreign policy. The country has a complex relationship with India, its neighbor and rival, which has historical and religious dimensions.²⁸ Pakistan's foreign policy towards India is influenced by its desire to protect the rights of Muslims in India, as well as its longstanding dispute over the region of Jammu and Kashmir, which has a Muslim majority population. This historical animosity has shaped Pakistan's foreign policy stance towards India, including its support for separatist movements in Kashmir and its

²¹ Khan, F. (2015). Historical Background and Evolution of Pakistan's Foreign Policy. *Journal of Political Studies*, 22(2), 65-78.

²² Haqqani, H. (2005). *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

²³ Cohen, Stephen P. *The Idea of Pakistan*. Brookings Institution Press, 2004.

²⁴ Khan, Ali S. "Pakistan's Foreign Policy: The Ideological Dimension." *Asian Survey* 28, no. 10 (1988): 1033-1051.

²⁵ Rizvi, Hasan Askari. "Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities." *Pakistan Vision* 15, no. 1 (2014): 25-42.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Dossal, Mariam Abou-Zahab. "Pakistan's Multilateral Diplomacy: An Analysis of Its Role in the United Nations." *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 3 (2012): 87-102.

²⁸ Akhtar, S. (2015). Religion and Pakistan's foreign policy: the interplay of ideology and national identity. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 23(3), 316-333.

pursuit of nuclear weapons as a deterrent against perceived Indian threats.²⁹

National identity is another key ideological factor that influences Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan sees itself as a proud Muslim nation, with a unique culture, history, and values. This national identity influences Pakistan's foreign policy choices, as it seeks to protect and promote its distinct identity in the international arena.³⁰ For example, Pakistan has pursued policies to safeguard its cultural heritage, promote its language (Urdu), and protect its national sovereignty against perceived Western cultural influences.

Strategic imperatives also shape Pakistan's foreign policy, with religious considerations playing a role. Pakistan's security concerns, such as its rivalry with India and its challenges with terrorism and extremism, influence its foreign policy decisions.³¹ Religion is often invoked in Pakistan's foreign policy discourse as a justification for its strategic imperatives. For example, Pakistan has pursued strategic alliances with other Muslim-majority countries, such as Saudi Arabia and China, based on shared religious and strategic interests.³²

Thus, ideological and religious factors play a significant role in formulating Pakistan's foreign policy. Islam as a state religion, historical experiences, national identity, and strategic imperatives are key ideological and religious factors that shape Pakistan's foreign policy choices. These factors are reflected in Pakistan's diplomatic engagements, alliances, and policy decisions, and are essential to understanding Pakistan's foreign policy behavior.

Role of Political Parties:

The foreign policy of Pakistan, like that of any other country, is shaped by various factors, and political parties play a significant role in its formulation. Political parties in Pakistan not only participate in the electoral process but also have a substantial impact on

the direction and priorities of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Firstly, political parties in Pakistan play a vital role in shaping the foreign policy agenda. During elections, political parties often include foreign policy priorities in their manifestos, which reflect their vision and objectives on key issues related to external relations. These manifestos outline the foreign policy goals and strategies that a political party intends to pursue if it comes into power. For example, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in its manifesto for the 2018 general elections, emphasized the need to have a balanced foreign policy, focusing on regional peace and economic diplomacy.³³

Secondly, political parties in Pakistan, especially those in power, are responsible for making decisions related to Pakistan's foreign policy. Once a political party forms the government, it has the authority to make decisions on various aspects of foreign policy, such as diplomatic engagements, treaties, alliances, and international agreements. For instance, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), during its tenure from 2013 to 2018, pursued policies that emphasized economic diplomacy, increased engagement with neighboring countries, and pursued regional cooperation through initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).³⁴

Thirdly, political parties in Pakistan, through their elected representatives in the parliament, play a crucial role in the formulation and approval of foreign policy initiatives. The parliament serves as a platform for political parties to discuss and debate foreign policy issues, and decisions on key foreign policy matters are often made through consensus or voting. For example, the approval of key foreign policy initiatives, such as agreements with other countries or international organizations, requires parliamentary approval, and political parties and their representatives in the parliament play a pivotal role in these processes.

²⁹ Raza, A. (2019). Pakistan's foreign policy: Historical perspectives, strategic imperatives, and future directions. *Strategic Studies*, 39(1), 11-32.

³⁰ Hussain, Z. (2019). Islam, Identity, and Pakistan's Foreign Policy. National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research.

³¹ Rizvi, H. A. (2017). Pakistan's national identity and foreign policy: A study of ideology and statecraft. Routledge.

³² Ahmed, I. (2016). Religion and Pakistan's Foreign Policy: The Reversal of the Bhatti Doctrine. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 37(1), 23-43.

³³ Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). (2018). PTI Election Manifesto 2018. Retrieved from <https://insaf.pk/election-manifesto>

³⁴ Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). (2013). PML-N Manifesto. Retrieved from https://www.pmln.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/pmln_manifesto_2013_english.pdf

Fourthly, political parties in Pakistan also play a role in shaping public opinion on foreign policy matters. Political parties use their platforms, including media, public rallies, and other forms of communication, to articulate their stance on foreign policy issues and seek public support. This, in turn, can influence public opinion and generate debates and discussions on foreign policy matters. Public opinion, to some extent, can impact foreign policy decisions and priorities of the government, as political parties often gauge public sentiment and adjust their policies accordingly. For example, public opinion and debates shaped by political parties played a role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy approach towards the war on terror and its engagement with the United States.

So, political parties in Pakistan play a significant role in formulating the country's foreign policy. They shape the foreign policy agenda through their manifestos, make decisions related to foreign policy when in power, participate in the parliamentary process for foreign policy approvals, and influence public opinion on foreign policy matters. The role of political parties in Pakistan's foreign policy is complex and dynamic, and it reflects the evolving domestic and international context in which Pakistan operates.

External challenges and factors

Geopolitical factors: The geopolitical dynamics of the region and beyond, including Pakistan's relationships with neighboring countries such as India, China, and Afghanistan, as well as major powers like the United States, Russia, and the Middle Eastern countries, can greatly influence Pakistan's foreign policy decisions. This may include considerations such as border disputes, security threats, and regional alliances.

Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by a variety of external geopolitical factors that influence its strategic outlook and diplomatic relations with other nations. These factors play a significant role in

formulating Pakistan's foreign policy and determining its foreign relations priorities.

Regional Security Dynamics: Pakistan's foreign policy is significantly influenced by the regional security dynamics of South Asia. Its relations with neighboring countries, such as India, Afghanistan, and Iran, are shaped by geopolitical factors such as border disputes, security threats, and regional power struggles.³⁵

Great Power Politics: Pakistan's foreign policy is also influenced by the geopolitical interests of major global powers such as the United States, China, and Russia. These powers often seek to shape Pakistan's foreign policy to align with their own strategic objectives in the region, including counterterrorism cooperation, regional stability, and trade relations.³⁶

Economic Interests: Economic interests also play a significant role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan seeks to build economic partnerships and secure investments from various countries to promote its economic growth and development. For example, its relations with countries like China and Saudi Arabia are influenced by economic factors such as trade, investment, and energy cooperation. **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Challenges and Prospects.**³⁷

International Organizations and Multilateralism: Pakistan's foreign policy is also shaped by its engagement with international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Pakistan's participation in these multilateral forums influences its foreign policy decisions on issues such as Kashmir, counterterrorism, and regional cooperation.³⁸

Security Threats: Pakistan's foreign policy is also influenced by security threats emanating from various sources, including terrorism, extremism, and border conflicts. These security threats shape Pakistan's

³⁵ The Geopolitical Context of Pakistan's Foreign Policy. In M. M. Aminuzzaman, & F. Rehman (Eds.), *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Dilemmas and Options* (pp. 21-38). Routledge).

³⁶ Ali, A., *The US Factor in Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Critical Analysis*. *Journal of Political Studies*, 25(2), 187-204).

³⁷ A. Salik (Ed.), *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal* (pp. 41-60). National University of Sciences and Technology)

³⁸ M. A. Bukhari, & M. A. Salik (Eds.), *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 179-192). Palgrave Macmillan).

foreign policy decisions, including its engagement with other countries and regional organizations to address these challenges. Pakistan's national security concerns, such as counterterrorism efforts, nuclear weapons policy, and regional security threats, play a crucial role in shaping its foreign policy. This may include cooperation with other countries, participation in international security arrangements, and managing conflicts and tensions.³⁹

In Short, Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by a complex interplay of external geopolitical factors, including regional security dynamics, great power politics, economic interests, international organizations and multilateralism, and security threats. These factors influence Pakistan's strategic outlook, diplomatic priorities, and foreign relations decisions. Understanding these external factors is crucial in analyzing and comprehending Pakistan's foreign policy choices in the global arena.

International and regional organizations: Pakistan's participation and engagement with international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and others can shape its foreign policy. This may include seeking support for its positions, building alliances, and addressing global challenges.

The role of international and regional organizations in formulating Pakistan's foreign policy has been significant. These organizations play a crucial role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy decisions and actions, as they provide opportunities for bilateral and multilateral engagements, facilitate diplomatic negotiations, and influence policy-making processes.

International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) have been a key platform for Pakistan to engage with other countries and shape its foreign policy. Pakistan has been an active member of the UN since its inception in 1947, and has participated in various UN forums, including the General Assembly, Security Council, and specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO). The UN has provided Pakistan with a platform to raise its concerns, seek support for its foreign policy objectives, and participate in decision-making processes on global issues such as peacekeeping, disarmament, and human rights.⁴⁰

Regional organizations also play a significant role in Pakistan's foreign policy. For example, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been a platform for Pakistan to engage with its neighboring countries in South Asia, including India, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, among others. SAARC provides a forum for dialogue, cooperation, and regional integration on various issues such as trade, economy, and security. Pakistan has actively participated in SAARC summits and ministerial meetings, and has used this platform to strengthen its bilateral relations, resolve regional disputes, and promote regional cooperation.⁴¹

Moreover, organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also play a role in Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan, being an Islamic country, has actively engaged with the OIC, which is a multilateral organization representing the interests of Muslim countries. The OIC has provided Pakistan with a forum to raise issues related to Islamophobia, Kashmir, and Palestine, and seek support from other member states. Pakistan has also played an active role in the OIC's decision-making processes and has utilized this platform to promote its foreign policy objectives in the Muslim world.⁴²

In addition to the UN, SAARC, and OIC, there are other international and regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Commonwealth of Nations, among others, which also play a role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy.⁴³

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) play significant roles in Pakistan's foreign policy, shaping its engagement with regional and international actors. The SCO and ECO provide platforms for Pakistan to enhance its diplomatic, economic, and security

³⁹ S. A. Khan, & W. Arif (Eds.), *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Challenges and Prospects* (pp. 141-154). Springer).

⁴⁰ United Nations. (n.d.). *Pakistan and the United Nations*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.int/pakistan/>

⁴¹ South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). (n.d.). *About SAARC*. Retrieved from <https://www.saarc-sec.org/>

⁴² Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). (n.d.). *About OIC*. Retrieved from <https://www.oic-oci.org/>

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan. (2018). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.mofa.gov.pk/foreign-policy>

cooperation with member states and contribute to its foreign policy objectives.

The SCO, founded in 2001, is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising eight member states, including China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan. The SCO aims to promote regional security, economic cooperation, and cultural exchanges. Pakistan's membership in the SCO has expanded its avenues for diplomatic engagement and cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism, energy, trade, and infrastructure development. The SCO also provides a forum for Pakistan to strengthen its ties with major powers like China and Russia, which have strategic implications for its foreign policy.⁴⁴

ECO, established in 1985, is a regional organization that includes ten member states, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. ECO focuses on promoting economic cooperation and development in the region through initiatives related to trade, transportation, and energy. Pakistan's membership in the ECO allows it to engage in economic and trade cooperation with regional countries, and it has participated in various ECO initiatives to enhance its connectivity, trade, and energy cooperation with member states.⁴⁵

Pakistan's foreign policy toward the SCO and ECO is guided by its national interests, which include ensuring regional stability, promoting economic development, and enhancing diplomatic relations with member states. Pakistan seeks to leverage its membership in these organizations to enhance its strategic partnerships, expand trade and economic ties, and address security challenges in the region. These organizations serve as important platforms for Pakistan to strengthen its diplomatic efforts and pursue its foreign policy goals in regional and global forums.⁴⁶

To conclude, the SCO and ECO play significant roles in Pakistan's foreign policy, providing platforms for diplomatic engagement, economic cooperation, and addressing regional security challenges. These organizations contribute to Pakistan's efforts to enhance its relations with member states, expand trade and economic ties, and pursue its national interests in the region.

Conclusion

To cut it short, Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by a complex interplay of internal and external determinants. Internal factors such as the country's history, culture, politics, and economy influence its foreign policy decisions. The need to safeguard national sovereignty, maintain internal stability, and address domestic challenges play a crucial role in shaping Pakistan's external relations.

External determinants, including global and regional dynamics, geopolitical considerations, strategic alliances, and economic interests, also impact Pakistan's foreign policy. As a nuclear-armed nation located in a volatile region, Pakistan's foreign policy is influenced by its relationships with neighboring countries such as India, China, Afghanistan, and the United States. Balancing competing interests and maintaining strategic autonomy are key considerations in Pakistan's foreign policy decision-making.

Pakistan's foreign policy also reflects its commitment to the principles of sovereignty, self-determination, and multilateralism. The country has traditionally pursued a policy of seeking diplomatic solutions to regional and international conflicts and has been an active participant in regional and global forums such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. However, Pakistan's foreign policy faces challenges and constraints, including internal political instability, economic constraints, terrorism, and strained relations with neighboring countries.

⁴⁴ Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). (2021). About SCO. Retrieved from https://eng.sectsc.org/about_sco/

⁴⁵ Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). (2021). About ECO. Retrieved from http://www.eco.int/about_eco.jsp?lang=en

⁴⁶ Siddiqui, M. A. (2019). Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Challenges and Options. *South Asian Studies*, 34(2), 379-390.

Achieving a coherent and consistent foreign policy that balances internal and external interests remains a significant task for Pakistan's policymakers. To conclude, Pakistan's foreign policy is a complex mix of internal and external determinants, shaped by historical, cultural, political, economic, and strategic

factors. Navigating these dynamics to safeguard national interests, promote regional stability, and maintain strategic autonomy poses challenges and opportunities for Pakistan as it seeks to position itself in the global arena.