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Pakistan's Diplomatic Reawakening: From Isolation to Influence

For the past few years, Pakistan has altered its diplomatic approach and is vying to enhance its relations with regional nations. The recent Pakistan-Turkey-Azerbaijan trilateral summit demonstrates Islamabad's success in reviving its diplomacy and expanding its diplomatic outreach.



From Diplomatic Passivity to Strategic Reorientation

Pakistan has long suffered from diplomatic crises. The country's image has been portrayed negatively by international disinformation campaigns and hostile forces. However, Islamabad's passive diplomats used to react only when the country's image had already been maligned by arch-rivals. This passive diplomatic posture has cost Pakistan significantly over the decades. The country not only suffered economically but also lagged behind its regional

competitors due to its diplomatic isolation. For decades, its relations with other countries had only geopolitical underpinnings.

The United States has coerced the country multiple times to make tough regional geopolitical decisions, to achieve its regional aspirations. However, once the storm was over, the former imposed sanctions on the country. However, the current establishment has turned the tide, transitioning its policy focus from merely geopolitics to geo-economics. Pakistan is vying to expand its diplomatic outreach around the globe.

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Diversifying Alliances in a Shifting Global Order

In the past few years, Islamabad emphasized its desire to maintain fraternal ties with all the countries and remain distant from bloc politics. In the rapidly changing global order, Pakistan is now looking for new allies. Islamabad's experience with Washington has always been bitter. Therefore, the country's political leadership seeks to establish cordial relations with the new superpowers of the world. In this pursuit, Pakistani officials are striving to enhance the country's relations with Russia, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and Central Asian nations. Pakistan's economy has largely been dependent on loans and aid over the last four decades.

The country seeks to establish economic relations with other countries. Central Asian markets provide Pakistan with a significant opportunity to revive its economy. The ongoing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor also holds the potential to make the country a gateway for the landlocked Central Asian nations to trade with the rest of the world, especially eastern Asian nations. However, Pakistan can only enhance its relations with the Central Asian countries by having fraternal ties with Russia, given the latter's influence over the region and Afghanistan. In the past few years, relations between Pakistan and Russia have improved to a great extent. Both sides have demonstrated their desire to strengthen their bilateral ties further.

The officials from the two sides have also exchanged visits to expand their bilateral ties. The recent [Pakistan-Turkey-Azerbaijan trilateral summit](#) was also part of Islamabad's policy to broaden its diplomatic outreach. All three countries have recognized each other as brotherly states. Pakistan and Turkey have always supported Azerbaijan diplomatically. Moreover, Baku and Ankara have always supported Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir issue. Their unequivocal support to Pakistan during its recent war with India reflects the strength of their trilateral relations.

The three countries also hold strong defense relations. Recently, Azerbaijan signed a contract with Pakistan to buy JF-17 Thunder fighter jets. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

highlighted the role played by Azerbaijan and Turkey during the recent Pakistan-India war. While addressing the summit, he stated, “In today’s unpredictable and volatile world, political security, architectures, connectivity, alignments, and emerging technologies are shaping the new reality. In such a situation, Pakistan is very fortunate to have sincere brothers like Turkiye and Azerbaijan who have stood together with us as impregnable rocks and whom we can trust without a second thought.”

He further stated, “The world we live in faces numerous grave challenges, including armed conflict, climate change, diseases, and economic crises. This is why the three of us have assembled here today, opting for compassion while rejecting conflict. We are confident that patience and wisdom will ultimately usher in peace and prosperity.” All three countries emphasized the need to strengthen their relations further. The summit is seen as a great diplomatic victory for Pakistan.

Navigating Regional Tensions and Building New Bridges

Beyond Turkey and Azerbaijan, Islamabad’s relations with Afghanistan have also seen a significant improvement. Pak-Afghan relations have been marred by distrust for over a year due to cross-border terrorism. Pakistan blamed the interim Afghan government for providing safe havens to terrorist organizations, while the latter held irredentist claims over some bordering Pakistani cities. However, due to Islamabad’s active diplomatic engagement and China’s mediation, the two sides have decided to normalize their relations.

The past few months have also seen an improvement in Pakistan’s relations with Bangladesh and Iran. Pakistan and Iran have reiterated their pledge to collaborate against cross-border terrorism. This demonstrates a positive trajectory in Pakistan’s diplomatic endeavors. Pakistan and China consider each other iron-clad brothers. However, regional and global adversaries, especially the United States and Israel, will attempt to sabotage Islamabad’s rising diplomatic engagement with regional countries. Moreover, the presence of non-state actors also poses a significant threat to Pakistan’s growing ties with neighboring countries. Therefore, the country needs to take strong action against regional terrorist organizations and should decrease its dependency on Western monetary institutions to pursue an independent foreign policy.

[Taut Bataut](#), June 02, 2025

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