

REJUVENATING PAK-TURK TIES: AN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

Every nation state strives to protect its interests through its external relations with other states. Pakistan and Turkey have traditionally enjoyed cordial relations embedded in shared history, religion, cultural linkages as well as political interests. Both have taken up common causes and stood by each other in their trying times. Over recent years, both are forging closer ties to strengthen economic, diplomatic and defence cooperation. They have expressed deep concerns over rising Islamophobia and boosted counter-terrorism collaboration. They have also strongly supported the struggling people of Kashmir and Palestine and made efforts to resolve Afghan and Syrian crises. The article examines the dynamics of growing Pak-Turk bilateral ties in the realms of economy, military, infrastructure development and cooperation in the international political arena. It argues that changing global context and shared political, security and economic challenges are bringing them closer. The bilateral ties are poised to grow further as political leadership on both sides find it mutually beneficial.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Counter-terrorism, Military Cooperation, Trade, Kashmir, Afghanistan

Introduction

Pakistan and Turkey have a long shared history. Both are Muslim countries and support unity among Muslim Ummah. Even before the independence of Pakistan both countries had been cooperating on different fronts. The Muslims of the sub-continent extended moral and financial support to Turkey in the nineteenth century Crimean War.¹ They

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¹ "Turkey-Pakistan Friendship: From Past to Present," *Daily Sabah*, February 20, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2020/02/13/turkey-pakistan-friendship-from-past-to-present>.

also extended support to Turkey in its war of independence following World War I. They launched the Khilafat Movement to support Turkey. Hence, the foundation of present-day relations and the growing strength of goodwill and brotherhood between their peoples can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Even today, there are roads across Pakistan's major cities named after the founding father of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Reciprocally, in Ankara there is a major road named after Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In 1947, Turkey and Pakistan established diplomatic ties as Turkey quickly recognized creation of Pakistan and supported its membership of the United Nations.

After independence when Pakistan issued its own currency in 1948, it was Turkey that printed Pakistani money in the early months.² Turkey and Pakistan have many things in common like both were close allies of the US during the Cold War era and signatory to Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), Regional Cooperation for Development Organization (RCD), and shared many other international platforms.³ During the dismemberment of Bangladesh, Turkey extended full political, diplomatic and even military support to Pakistan. Pakistan has always supported Turkey on Kurdish and Cyprus issues. The two states share the membership of important international organisations like Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation. Although during 1990s, both diverged on Afghanistan as Pakistan backed Afghanistan-based Taliban and Turkey supported the Northern Alliance. This caused a rare misunderstanding between the countries but after 9/11 their perspectives converged in the context of Afghanistan. In addition, both states hold unique geostrategic position in their respective geostrategic milieu. Significantly, Pakistan is the only Muslim-majority country to possess nuclear weapons while Turkey has NATO membership. The relationship has become stronger in the recent years as there has been greater convergence of interests between the two countries spanning over economic, military and political arena. This paper examines the dynamics of growing ties between the two countries and argues that they are likely to become stronger in the coming decades.

² Thomas Clayton, "Afghanistan: Background and US Policy in Brief," Congressional Research Service 1 April, 2018, <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1157192/>

³ Abdul Aziz Ahmet Yasar, "Now Is the Time to Strengthen Turkish-Pakistani Relations," *TRT WORLD*, January 4, 2019, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/now-is-the-time-to-strengthen-turkish-pakistani-relations-23075>.

Forging Ahead: Growing Convergences and Partnership

In the recent years, the area of shared interest has grown between the two countries. There have been high-level official exchanges between the two countries, including top political leadership. Recep Tayyip Erdogan has visited Pakistan several times officially, since he became Turkish prime minister in 2002. Similarly, Pakistan's Presidents and premiers have paid official visits to Turkey. The high levels official visits and meetings have created deeper understanding of each other's concerns and interests, which has promoted greater cooperation between the two countries, particularly on international issues. As a corollary, today both the states are witnessing an ever high level of cooperation and collaboration on multiple issues and fora. This cooperation has burgeoned in the area of counter-terrorism, fighting against Islamophobia, economic and defence cooperation and most importantly on Kashmir issue.

Counter Terrorism Cooperation

In the post-2001 world, global terrorism brought Pakistan and Turkey together in terms of mutual interests and shared responsibilities. Both countries have been facing the threat of terrorism to their internal security. The then Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in his maiden visit to Pakistan in the summer of 2003 laid the foundation of renewed cooperation between both states. In return, the president of Pakistan Pervaiz Musharraf visited Turkey the following year that expanded bilateral cooperation of issues including terrorism and organised crime. Responding to international terrorism, Turkey and Pakistan, in January 2004, signed a treaty of 'Fight against International Terrorism and Organized Crime' (FAITOR).⁴ The agreement highlighted counter-terrorism and organised crime as major areas of concern for both countries. The two sides also agreed to have closer cooperative arrangements to counter organised crime and international terrorism.⁵

In December 2013, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and visiting President Erdogan agreed to increase cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism and security. In this context, a protocol signed by the two countries provided for the framework for security and counter-terrorism

⁴ "Compendium of Bilateral and Regional Instruments for South Asia: International Cooperation in Criminal Matters," *UNODC Regional Office* 2015, https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/SAARC%20compendium/SA_Compndium_Volume-1.pdf.

⁵ "Anti-Terrorism Accord Signed, Pakistan-Turkey Talks Focus on Defence Cooperation, Trade," *Dawn*, January 21, 2004, <http://www.dawn.com/news/403813>.

cooperation.⁶ In August 2015, President Erdogan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a meeting in Islamabad agreed to expand cooperation in countering terrorism by including possible threat from militant group Islamic State and other such organisations.⁷ Subsequently, in June 2019, Turkish and Pakistani officials met in Ankara and reviewed threats posed by international terrorism at regional and global level. They “reiterated their resolve to jointly combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.”⁸

In a statement, it was avowed that the fight against terrorism and extremism requires a comprehensive approach at global and regional levels whereas eradicating the root causes was deemed essential for combating extremism. They also agreed “to explore further avenues of cooperation between the two countries including the exchange of best practices in areas such as law enforcement/security, criminal justice and rule of law, countering financing of terrorism and prevention of radicalization.”⁹ Turkey and Pakistan also discussed the threat posed by terror group such as Daesh in the Middle East and other parts of the World. In addition, both the states put forward strong condemnation of “the vicious acts of terrorism” in Sri Lanka and New Zealand. It was also accentuated that terrorism cannot and should not be portrayed as an ascribed trait of a single nation, religion, civilisation or an ethnic group.

Another episode of significant cooperation and friendly ties between both the states was reflected at Financial Action Task Force (FATF) forum when Turkey, among two other states resisted the move by the US and the UK to put Pakistan on the Black List alleging its failure to curb terror financing from its soil. However, in an unprecedented second discussion on Pakistan, FATF placed Pakistan on its ‘grey list’ in June 2018, where Turkey was the only state that withstood with Pakistan and opposed the move. Turkey along with China and Malaysia has continued their support to Pakistan on FATF issue. In his speech in the Pakistan Parliament in June 2020, President Erdogan reiterated that Turkey would stand by Pakistan against any political pressure by the intergovernmental FATF. He appreciated “Pakistan’s efforts to combat terrorism.” He underscored: “Pakistan is a country that has suffered from instability, terrorism and conflicts in its region. As a country that has been fighting

⁶ “Pakistan, Turkey to Bolster Counter Terrorism Cooperation,” *Dawn*, December 25, 2013, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1076292/pakistan-turkey-to-bolster-counter-terrorism-cooperation>

⁷ Mateen Haider, “Pakistan, Turkey Agree to Enhance Counter-Terrorism Cooperation,” *Dawn*, August 1, 2020. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1197821>

⁸ Ali Murat Alhas, “Turkey, Pakistan Discuss Counter Terrorism Efforts,” *Anadolu Agency*, June 2, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/turkey-pakistan-discuss-counter-terrorism-efforts/1495200>

⁹ Ibid.

separatist terrorist organizations including Daesh (ISIS), the PKK and Fetullah Terrorist Organization(FETO) for 35 years, we understand the challenges Pakistan faces and we will continue to support Pakistan in its efforts against terrorism.”¹⁰ He appreciated Pakistan for supporting Turkey in times of crisis, as a true friend. Pakistani government handed-over the administrative control of FETÖ-sponsored schools to Turkish Government¹¹ and backed Turkey’s anti-terror operations in northern Syria to secure its borders.¹² Pakistanis also launched a support Turkish Lira campaign by buying the Turkish currency when the US slapped sanctions on two Turkish ministers over the issue of an American pastor being detained in Turkey on terror charges.

Convergence on Afghanistan

Since 9/11, Pakistan and Turkey are on the same page in Afghanistan. The cooperation started in September 2006 with the Ankara Declaration, where Afghan and Pakistani leaders agreed to build their relationship in the future on the basis laid down in their joint statement. Terrorism was considered a "common threat" and they vowed to "deny sanctuary, training, and financing to terrorists and to elements involved in subversive and anti-state activities." Commitments were also made to enhance confidence building measures by forming a "Joint Working Group". This was further consolidated by Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit Process (2007) and Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (2011). Turkey also took many initiatives towards Afghanistan’s economic development and stability. Turkey’s development assistance program for Afghanistan was launched in 2004, which was worth 1.1 billion dollars.¹³ Besides, a pledge of 60 million dollars for sustaining Afghan security forces was made at Warsaw NATO Summit in 2016.¹⁴ These initiatives further strengthened Pak-Turk ties.

¹⁰ Sibel Morrow and Faruk Zorlu, "Kashmir is as Important to Turkey as it is to Pakistan," *Anadolu Agency*, February 14, 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/-kashmir-as-important-to-turkey-as-it-is-to-pakistan-/1733770>.

¹¹ "Turkey takes over FETO-linked Schools in Pakistan," *Anadolu*, January 03, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/turkey-takes-over-feto-linked-schools-in-pakistan/1354576>.

¹² "Turkey to Stand with Pakistan on Kashmir Issue, Erdoğan Says," *Daily Sabah*, February 14, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2020/02/14/turkey-to-stand-with-pakistan-on-kashmir-issue-erdogan-says>.

¹³ "Turkey-Afghanistan Bilateral Political Relations," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_afghanistan-bilateral-political-relations.en.mfa, last accessed January 16, 2020.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Shared Concern on Islamophobia

Pakistan and Turkey have raised their shared concerns regarding rising Islamophobia in the western world. After the attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand at an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Turkish President Erdogan said: "Just as humanity fought against anti-Semitism after the Holocaust disaster, it should fight against rising Islamophobia in the same determined fashion."¹⁵ Similarly, Prime minister Imran Khan while addressing the reporters at a news conference at the United Nations General Assembly in 2019, talked of taking effective steps against incidents based on religious discrimination, especially faced by Muslims in the Western countries.

Muslims living in the western societies are being subjected to Islamophobia. This is because on the international stage terrorism and Islam have been forcefully associated. Yet truthfully, no religion has anything to do with terrorism, but all religions have fanatics.¹⁶ In the same vein, President Emmanuel Macron's outlook on Islam and France's strict policies for Muslims have time and again forced President Erdogan to respond in harsh terms and stand up against Islamophobia. In addition, in September 2019, Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia agreed to jointly launch an English language television channel dedicated to counter Islamophobia. This offered Muslims a dedicated media presence for raising awareness on Islam and fighting the phenomenon of Islamophobia internationally.

Support on Kashmir

Both Turkey and Pakistan have advocated Muslim causes. Islamabad has always supported Ankara's position on Cyprus, while the latter has supported Islamabad's stance on Jammu and Kashmir.¹⁷ Turkey has traditionally stood by Pakistan's position on Kashmir, which calls for a free plebiscite in Kashmir under the supervision of the United Nations as envisaged in UN Security Council Resolutions on Kashmir. Ankara was quite critical of abrogation of the Article 370 by India in August 2019, according limited special status to Kashmir under Indian control. Turkey

¹⁵ "Erdogan Calls For Fight Against Islamophobia Like Anti-Semitism," *Aljazeera*, March 22, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/3/22/erdogan-calls-for-fight-against-islamophobia-like-anti-semitism>

¹⁶ Ayaz Gul, "Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia to Jointly Launch Anti-Islamophobia TV," *Voice Of America*, September 26, 2019. <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/pakistan-turkey-malaysia-jointly-launch-anti-islamophobia-tv>

¹⁷ EurAsian Times Desk, "Khan-Erdoğan Further Deepen Historic Turkey-Pakistan Relations," *EurAsian Times*, February 14, 2020, <https://eurasianimes.com/khan-erdogan-further-deepen-historic-turkey-pakistan-relations/>.

not only supported Pakistan's stance but also strongly criticised India for taking steps that have only complicated the problem and emphasised that any solution that can only be reached through dialogue in line with UN resolutions and - the will of people of Kashmir.¹⁸ Erdogan also underscored that Kashmir is the key to the stability and peace of South Asia.

At the 74th General Assembly, Erdogan said that "in order for the Kashmiri people to look at a safe future together with their Pakistani and Indian neighbours, it is imperative to solve the problem through dialogue and on the basis of justice and equity, not through clashes." He said residents of Jammu & Kashmir are "virtually under blockade with 8 million people, unfortunately, unable to step outside of Kashmir."¹⁹ In February 2020, while addressing a joint session of Pakistan's parliament, President Erdogan stated that the issue of Kashmir is as important to Turkey as it is to Pakistan. "It was Canakkale [Gallipoli] yesterday and it is Kashmir today, [there is] no difference."²⁰ He was referring to a critical battle in the Turkish War of Independence. He observed that the suffering of the Kashmiris had worsened in recent years due to India's taking of "unilateral steps" and "this approach, which aggravates the current situation and revokes the freedom and vested rights of the Kashmiri people, benefits no one". He observed that "the Kashmir problem can be solved not by conflict or oppression, but on the basis of justice and equity."²¹

Economic Collaboration

In the past 72 years, Pakistan and Turkey have joined hands in various economic and defence treaties. Turkey, Pakistan and Iran formed Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in July 1964 to enhance socio-economic cooperation between the three countries. In 1985, the RCD was converted into Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The ECO was also expanded, and Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were included in its fold.

Pakistan and Turkey have enhanced their cooperation in the economic, health, energy and defense sectors, ever since Justice and

¹⁸ "No Difference Between Gallipoli and Occupied Kashmir: Erdogan Stands by Pakistan in Parliament Speech," *Dawn*, February 14, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1581209>

¹⁹ Zehra Nur Düz, "Turkish Leader's Remarks on Kashmir Win Wide Acclaim," *Anadolu Agency*, September 25, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/74th-un-general-assembly-2019/turkish-leaders-remarks-on-kashmir-win-wide-acclaim/1594264>

²⁰ Sibel Morrow and Faruk Zorlu, "Kashmir as Important to Turkey as It Is to Pakistan."

²¹ Ibid.

Development (AK) Party headed by Erdogan came into power in Turkey. Turkish company, Zorlu Enerji Holdings set up a 100 MW solar project at Quaid-i-Azam Solar Park in the Bahawalpur district of Punjab in 2019. Turkey's Coca Cola company has also shown interest to invest \$200 million in Pakistan in next two to three years. The Recep Tayyip Erdogan Hospital Trust has been running four major hospitals and two blood transfusion centres in Punjab. Besides, the trust is running a hospital in Muzaffargarh district of Punjab since 2014. Turkey also provided substantive assistance to Pakistan in its rehabilitation efforts for the victims of 2005 massive earthquake in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) that killed over 80,000 persons, and during devastating floods of 2010 and 2011. Turkish government provided housing facilities to over 2000 flood victims in Thatta district in Sindh province. According to Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Mustafa Yurdakul, Turkish companies are interested in investing in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) to be set up under CPEC in Pakistan. He suggested visit of a delegation of Turkish businessmen to Pakistan to explore business opportunities in SEZs.²²

Turkey is a developing business economy, and as indicated by CIA World Factbook, it is a recently industrialized nation with the thirteenth biggest GDP by purchasing power parity.²³ If we trace the beginnings, post 1999, there is a dynamic augmentation of trade relations between the two states. In this context, the activity of High-Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) has been indisputable, a couple of social events have been held since 2010. Currently there are seventeen Turkish firms working in Pakistan. Turkish investment is mainly coming in infrastructure, energy projects, and financial sector. Construction is emerging as a major sector for Turkish investors in Pakistan.²⁴ The bilateral trade has slowly grown over the past decade or so. The volume of trade, which was 133 million in 1990 increased marginally to 136 million in next ten years.²⁵

The existing bilateral trade between Turkey and Pakistan is around \$800 million which is far less, keeping in view, the potential of

²² Amir Latif, "Overview of Unconditional Turkey-Pakistan Relations," *Anadolu Ajansı*, January 3, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/overview-of-unconditional-turkey-pakistan-relations-/1354618>.

²³ "The World Factbook: Turkey," *Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)*, February 1, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>.

²⁴ "Turkey-Pakistan Economic and Trade Relations," *Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, accessed June 25, 2020, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-pakistan.en.mfa.

²⁵ "From Rep. of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, accessed May 15, 2020, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_pakistan-high-level-cooperation-council-meeting-was-held-in-islamabad.en.mfa.

common market of both countries which is billions of dollars. Exports from Turkey to Pakistan over the past 11 years have risen from \$155 in 2008 to \$352 million in 2017. Similarly, Turkey's imports from Pakistan in the same period declined from \$586 million to \$323 million.²⁶ In fact, both countries need a long term Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to ensure sustainable growth in their trade turnover. The bilateral trade is likely to increase with the signing of a Strategic Economic Framework in February 2020, which will boost the bilateral trade from a current volume of 800 million USD to eventually 5 billion USD. Many Protocols and Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) were signed in the fields of trade, energy, tourism, defence, and infrastructure development. 450 Business-2-Business (B2B) meetings were conducted between the business communities of engineering, energy, tourism, construction, automotive, chemicals, defence, and information technology.²⁷

Table: 1
Turkey's Trade with Pakistan: 2014-2019 (In million US\$)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Export	259	289.1	347	352.3	462	550.1
Import	436	310.5	262	323.1	330	306.3
Volume	695	599.6	610	675.4	792	865.4
Balance	-177	-21.4	+84	+29.2	+132	+243.8

Source: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-pakistan.en.mfa

Major export items of Turkey are communication instruments, cameras, machines, etc., while major import items to Turkey include textile fiber, plastic, cotton, polyester and natural synthetic substances.²⁸ The five identified potential items include semi or entirely processed rice, medicinal instruments, fresh and dry dates, men's pants, and stick or beet sugar, that are further exportable to Turkish market. In such manner, an exhaustive investigation of these items needs to be done with regard to Pakistan's rivals in Turkish market based on ECI positioning, to send out offer, Average unit value, trade advancement methodologies, levy and non - tax boundaries. Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, President, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed has urged that Pakistan and Turkey should

²⁶ Turkish Statistical Institute (Turk Stat) data.

²⁷ Syed Baqir Sajjad, "Pakistan, Turkey to Transform Ties into Economic Partnership," *Dawn*, February 16, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1534568>.

²⁸ Filiz Sekerden, "Status of Textile and Clothing Imports and Exports in Turkey," *Fibres & Textiles in Eastern Europe* 3, no. 86 (2011): 7-9.

sign FTA as early as possible that would increase bilateral trade to US\$ 2 billion in a couple of years.²⁹

China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Economic power is moving towards East and Pakistan is a gateway for Asia. Pakistan through CPEC is striving towards infrastructure and connectivity. The economic potential for Pakistan will be realized only when trade is prioritized. In case of Turkey, currently companies have invested around \$1.5 billion in Pakistan. The investment opportunities in CPEC and other sectors in Pakistan are lucrative especially keeping the access to the Central Asian and other markets. Turkey itself offers to the equation as it can connect China with Europe, where Pakistan connects China's western landlocked province of Xinjiang to the Middle East, Africa and beyond. This makes Pakistan-Turkey economic and commercial relationship of utmost significance. Turkey has shown great interest in the 9 Special Economic Zones (SEZ) in CPEC in Pakistan. With its recent economic growth, it has expertise and technology to offer Pakistan which would accelerate industrialization, exports and economic growth. It generates \$35-36 billion revenue annually from tourism alone which is also an up and coming industry of Pakistan.³⁰ The demand for joint partnerships, ventures and business to business relations in the industrial, agricultural, tourism, construction, education, human resource development and healthcare sectors as well as CPEC in Pakistan make for a profitable relationship for Turkey.

Defence and Military Cooperation

Pak-Turk military ties became even more significant when Pakistan confronted hurdles on the upkeep of F-16s it was given by the U.S. In 2015, Turkey and Pakistan agreed to arrange crucial unmanned airborne vehicles. Turkey would equip Pakistan with 34 T-37 contender cum-preparing flying machine and its extra parts on a complimentary reason. Pakistan and Turkey expressed long-term interest by cooperating in the defense sector under framework of strategic partnership act signed in 2016. In 2016, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) consented to modernize the Pakistan Air Force's team of F-16s at the cost of \$75 million.³¹ Turkish firm STM also signed contract with the Pakistani Navy

²⁹ "Turkey is Willing to Explore SEZs under CPEC," *CPEC INFO*, March 13, 2020, <http://cpecinfo.com/turkey-is-willing-to-explore-sezs-under-cpec/>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Omer Aslan, *The United States and Military Coups in Turkey and Pakistan*, (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

for the upgradation of Pakistan's submarines in 2016.³² The modernization will include "entire sonar suite of the submarine ship, periscope systems, and command and control system, as well as the radar and electronic support systems, and command and control system, as well as the radar and electronic support systems" which will be replaced by Turkish military software developed by HAVELSAN.³³

In 2017, Turkey obtained 52 MFI-17 Super Mushshak training planes from Pakistan and it remains the second most conspicuous member (after China) in Pakistan's International Defence Exhibition and Seminar.³⁴ In 2018, Turkey agreed to sell 30 Turkish-made Advanced Attack and Tactical Reconnaissance (ATAK) helicopters worth \$1.5 billion to Pakistan, thus strengthening the military relations between the two.³⁵ ATAK helicopters are indigenously produced by the TAI under permit from the Italian-British Agusta-Westland and are great resources for the Turkish Army. Ankara also agreed to sell four MILGEM Ada Corvettes to the Pakistan Navy.³⁶

Another area of collaboration could be based on Pakistan's interest in understanding the operational dynamics of the Russian S400 missile defence system, which Turkey purchased. It is extremely significant for Pakistan to understand its operational framework and map out a strategy. Yet there are issues in the way that would have to be resolved such as Pakistan's relations with certain Arab states that see Turkey as a major threat. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia are getting uneasy about Pakistan's close relationship with Turkey.

³² Capt HPS Sodhi, "Pakistan Navy's Emerging Underwater Threat," *Center for Air Power Studies*, July 8, 2016, http://capsindia.org/files/documents/CAPS_Infocus_HPS_12.1.pdf

³³ "Despite French Sanctions, Turkey Making Progress in Pak's Agosta 90B Sub Upgrade," February 26, 2020, https://www.defenseworld.net/news/26416/Despite_French_Sanctions_Turkey_Making_Progress_in_Pak_s_Agosta_90B_Sub_Upgrade#.YCunsWgzayI

³⁴ Franz-Stefan Gady, "Pakistan to Sell 52 Military Aircraft to Turkey," *The Diplomat*, May 12, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/05/pakistan-to-sell-52-military-aircraft-to-turkey/>

³⁵ Saim Kurubas, "Turkey-Pakistan Military Relations Reach New High," *TRT World*, June 7, 2018, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-pakistan-military-relations-reach-new-high-17910>.

³⁶ Bilal Khan, "Pakistan Inks Contract for 4 MILGEM Ada Corvettes from Turkey," *Quwa Defence News & Analysis Group*, July 7, 2018, <https://quwa.org/2018/07/07/pakistan-inks-contract-for-4-milgem-ada-corvettes-from-turkey/>.

Shared Vision on Climate Change

Turkey and Pakistan have also prioritized climate change since both are highly vulnerable. Natural disasters such as frequent earthquakes and floods, have caused increased water stress and land degradation. Both countries are experiencing economic losses from flooding and landslides. On both sides remedial efforts have centered on cleaner production, waste management, green initiatives and efficient and sustainable use of water and other natural resources. The National Rural Development strategy initiated in Turkey 2006 centers on natural resources based rural development as a key to overcoming rural and urban disparities. Turkey's Ninth Development Plan (2007-2013) emphasizes its commitment to climate change. Pakistan has also achieved the UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 for protecting the environment well before the 2030 deadline. Key initiatives like "Billion Tree Tsunami" and clean-green Pakistan programs have helped achieve this target, which proves the seriousness of efforts to tackle climate change. Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy adopted in 2012 and a framework for implementing this policy in 2013 as well as Pakistan Vision 2025³⁷ all prioritize climate change for action, identifying it as a compounding challenge for providing food, energy and water security for a large population. Currently, there are funded adaptation programs focused on water resource management, agriculture, and disaster risk management.

Challenges and Future Prospects

In recent years, geopolitics has forced both countries to re-align themselves according to emerging situation in their respective regions; and globally; as both nations have become victim of terrorism, intolerance and insecurity. The contemporary leadership in both countries has thus resolved to coordinate and take the partnership to new a diplomatic height which has also sent a message of solidarity to the international fraternity, paving a way for integration of Muslim Ummah.

Pakistan and Turkey are trying to play a leadership role for the Muslim countries in the world and within this context the speeches made in the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019 are very significant. The emerging partnership can play a pivotal role in reviving the unity of the Muslim Ummah. However, Turkey has longstanding issues with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has to maintain a balanced relationship with both Muslim countries. This dynamic was reflected during Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur Islamic Summit in 2019 where Pakistan withdrew its participation after accepting the invitation. The controversy further

³⁷ "Pakistan 2025: One Nation - One Vision," Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, <https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/vision2025/Pakistan-Vision-2025.pdf>.

escalated as President Erdogan alleged that Pakistan backed out under Saudi pressure. Pakistan has been a long-term ally of Saudi Arabia which viewed the summit as a challenge to its leadership role in the OIC and the Muslim world.

Besides, forging politico-strategic ties, both countries have started the negotiations for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to actualize the dreams of optimizing bilateral trade volumes for mutual benefits. The two countries have signed about dozen MoUs while the Strategic Economic Framework aims at enhancing the trade from \$700 million to \$6 billion by 2022-23. The agreements include standardization, conformity assessment, development and training, development and facilitation of tourism, custom cooperation matters, railway infrastructure and much more.

Expanding economic and trade relations would remain a big challenge, as concrete steps are still somewhat lacking between the two countries. There are several contributing factors such as the safeguard duties that Turkey has laid on Pakistan's textile products since 2011, contributing to decline in exports.³⁸ The additional duties were also imposed on carpets and rugs, compounding the adverse effect on exports. While for the longest time Pakistan was excluded from the GSP-Plus facility, but its inclusion since January 2014 has encouraged progress in enacting new laws and developing new institutions for implantation of 27 core conventions of GSP-Plus, especially the National Action Plan (NAP) for human rights.³⁹ In comparison to Turkey's trade with India, Pakistan has not been able to reap the benefits of Turkey's economic boom.

Another underutilized area of cooperation is a softer angle, but extremely important to rejuvenate relations, i.e., is the people to people contact. It is necessary to build on the warm feelings the citizens have for each other. As seen in the case of Turkish drama 'Ertugul' and how it created a bridge of communication in spite of language barrier between the people of both countries, media will play an important part in this goal. The lack of knowledge and information about each other, absence of cultural centers and dearth of academic exchanges need to be remedied.

Some important areas of future prospects are given below:

1. In the education sector the opportunities are vast: educational and professional training opportunities, educational scholarships etc. Turkey can open campuses of their universities in Pakistan, whereas Pakistan can fill Turkey's gap of providing education in English language. Moreover, an exchange program for area studies,

³⁸ Shahbaz Rana, "Pakistan Wants Cut In Custom Duty on 35% of Tariff Lines," *The Express Tribune*, August 6, 2016, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1156527/fta-talks-turkey-pakistan-wants-cut-customs-duty-35-tariff-lines>.

³⁹ Mubarak Zeb Khan, "Pakistan Wins GSP-Plus Extension," *Dawn*, March 7, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1538967>.

better understanding of each other through research, learning of Turkish language in Pakistan and Urdu in Turkey are also some possibilities worth exploring.

2. The public on either side receives news on each other through third parties, this gap can be filled by media outlets either syndicating their news channels or setting up journalists reciprocally in Pakistan and Turkey.
3. As Turkey focuses on industrial economy and is a member of G-20, it can consider relocating its industries to Pakistan especially home appliances. Pakistan can import Turkish dairy products and refrigerators, washing machines, electronic goods, automobiles etc., which are said to be qualitatively better and cheaper than the Western and Japanese products. Turkey can import dry fruits handicrafts from Pakistan. Similarly, Turkish agro-based industries could help Pakistan in milk processing and meet our needs of imported cheese from the EU.

Conclusion

Pakistan- Turkey relationship that is rooted in their history has grown phenomenally in recent years. Convergence of interests is reflected in cooperation in the fields of counter-terrorism and Islamophobia, joining hands in stabilising Afghanistan, growing military and economic collaboration, and extending support to just struggles of the Muslims. Further, CPEC offers vast possibility to expand Turkish investment in Special Economic Zones in Pakistan. An early conclusion of FTA can also boost bilateral trade between the two countries. There are also shared perceptions on taking effective measures to tackle climatic threats faced by the two countries. Cultural and educational exchanges can further promote friendly ties between the two counties. Politically, however, Pakistan will have to maintain a balance in its relationship with its traditional Arab allies and Turkey.

