

## FOREIGN POLICIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO AND IMRAN KHAN

Shagufta Mosam<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Mansoor Ahmed<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Awais<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MS Political Science, International Islamic University, Islamabad

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of History, Government College University, Faisalabad,

<sup>3</sup>PhD History Student, Department of History, Government College University, Faisalabad.

<sup>3</sup>[awaism21@gmail.com](mailto:awaism21@gmail.com)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15478719>

### Keywords

Foreign Policy of Pakistan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, SEATO, CENTO, Imran Khan, Naya Pakistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan

### Article History

Received on 24 February 2025

Accepted on 24 March 2025

Published on 31 March 2025

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: \*

Dr. Mansoor Ahmed

### Abstract

The roles of key actors in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy have been pivotal throughout history, with figures like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan leaving lasting imprints. Bhutto as Foreign Minister, Presidential Administration, and Prime Minister, he steered the nation away from Western alliances, withdrawing from SEATO and CENTO. Bhutto prioritized closer ties with China and the Muslim World. Imran Khan's "Naya Pakistan" vision prioritized autonomous foreign policy, particularly about the West and the US, with strengthening ties with China as well with neighbors. This study seeks to bridge the literature gap by conducting a comprehensive comparative analysis of the foreign policies of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan, with a specific focus on their approaches to foreign policy towards Afghanistan, drawing neo-classical realism theory on the analysis of the foreign policies of the both leaders. In conclusion, the comparative analysis presented in this case study contributes to a better understanding of how the internal and external factors affect the foreign policies of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan influenced Pakistan's foreign policy choices and the implications of these choices on the nation's strategic interests. To achieve the objectives, the study employs a qualitative research method.

### INTRODUCTION

The world became a global village, the distance between now did not feel due globalization, due to which incident in one state impact on other state. According to different aspects of foreign policy like national interests, culture, state identities, sovereignty, and historical factors, it includes also historical, cultural, and economic factors through one state knot tie with other state. After the cold war it was difficult but brought changes in the international system and in the foreign policy of every state. However, international actors start examining their system and policies one more time. For this reason, national identity, national interest, and political, economic, and

social systems were adopted and were under debate. The purpose of foreign policy remains to get closer relations with other states to protect peace, stability, sovereignty. Any incident and conflict in any states influence other state (Erbaş, 2013).

In the twentieth century a notable disaster came to the globe after WW2. Start decolonization and no one remains untouched from war lost. However, in this region Pakistan came into being on third world map, faces various problem from outside. The founder of Pakistan foreign policy Muhammad Ali Jinnah made and shaped Pakistan foreign policy, who stated:

Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make us Utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world, Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world, and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Chart.

This investigation delves into the foreign policy strategies of Pakistan under the stewardship of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan. The formative years of Pakistan's foreign policy were characterized by significant volatility, witnessing numerous fluctuations for the nation. During this period, Pakistan predominantly aligned itself with the Western Bloc, forging alliances such as SEATO and CENTO, while also maintaining membership in the Commonwealth. These alliances were primarily sought to acquire military assistance, bolster its economic standing, and safeguard its sovereignty (Ahmad, 1968).

During this period, Pakistan did not prioritize building strong ties with the Muslim world. In 1965, the nation confronted Indian aggression, revealing the limitations of its Western alliances as Pakistan found itself isolated. His administration has placed emphasis on regional connectivity, peace-building initiatives, and economic diplomacy, while advocating for a policy of non-interference and neutrality in external conflicts. In contrast, during Imran Khan's tenure as Prime Minister, Pakistan adopted an independent foreign policy stance with a focus on forging a "Naya Pakistan" (New Pakistan) narrative. Khan's administration adopted a bilateral policy towards Muslim countries and emphasized stronger ties with the West, particularly the United States. Notably, Pakistan's relationship with China was deepened under Khan's leadership, with the initiation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) policy.

This study endeavors to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Foreign Policies of Pakistan under Zulfiqar Bhutto and Imran Khan, focusing on the internal and external factors that significantly influence the Pakistan's foreign policy concerning towards Afghanistan. The research aims to dissect the trends and patterns employed by these influential leaders,

shedding light on their strategies in shaping Pakistan's diplomatic relationships within these crucial geopolitical spheres.

This research holds paramount significance in the realm of international relations, offering a nuanced understanding of Pakistan's foreign policy dynamics under the leadership of two pivotal figures, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan. By delving deep into their policies and strategies, the study illuminates the intricate web of internal and external factors that shape Pakistan's relationship Afghanistan. Understanding these historical context and decision-making, process not only enriches academic discourse but also provides invaluable insights for policy makers, diplomats, and analysts. By discerning the pattern and trends in Pakistan's foreign policies, this research serves as a vital resource for predicting future diplomatic approaches, fostering regional stability, and guiding international interactions. Moreover, it contributes significantly to the boarder understanding of how leadership changes influence a nation's global positioning, making it essential for scholars, practitioners, and stakeholders invested in international diplomacy and strategic affairs.

## Literature Review

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was prominent leader in the Pakistan history and play significant role in Pakistan and Afghanistan relations. Bhutto desired for connecting with Afghanistan on the Islamic heritage, when he was foreign minister of Pakistan. Bhutto effort was continued after he became the president and paid visit to Kabul n stance but Afghanistan stance was continued on Durand line, that it has loss validity after British Empire. However, Durand line issue continued until Afghanistan government cannot recognize Pakistan, while create unrest among the tribe along the border. However, Bhutto try to continue good relation with the Muslim world on the bilateral policy but Afghanistan stance over separatist movement was remain continued (Khatoon, Khan, and Shabir 2023).

Imran khan in his era wants to make economic, cooperative, and diplomatic and trade connection with neighbored Afghanistan. Rather than commonalities between the two states had face the crucial relation in history. Tensions and cooperation mostly on the Durand line issue and external invasion

over Afghanistan affect relations. However, experts emphasized to improve clashes over these issues will improve the diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, challenges increased due to geographical issues in KPK, Baluchistan, while also increased due to presence of Afghan mujahid since 1980's. Therefore, experts emphasize to come over these challenges will bring peace and security. However, from Pakistan side during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan try to avoid these issues and bring solution but in ZA Bhutto era Daoud regime stand on Durand line validity issue after British withdrawal, while in Imran Khan Era Doha talk between Afghanistan and the US was succeeded.

### Theoretical Framework

Kenneth Waltz (1959), father of structural realism. However, according to another realist thinker like Kenneth Waltz (1979), Organski and Kugler (1980), and Gilpin (1981) views that international politics is mediated by the power capabilities between states (Ripsman, 2011). Neoclassical realism emerges from the examination of foreign policy by considering both the structure of the international system and domestic factors, and the complex interplay between them. Its primary objective is to understand how the distribution of power in the international system, as well as the motivations and subjective characteristics of states in relation to the international system, influences their foreign policy choices. Neoclassical realists share with structural realists the view that states shape their foreign policies based on the threats and opportunities present in the international system. However, they diverge from structural realists in several keyways (Firoozabadi & Ashkezari, 2016).

The examination of foreign policy decisions, their formulation, and the impact of national leadership on a state's global interactions constitute a vital area of study within the realm of international relations. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan, two distinct leaders of Pakistan, have left a lasting imprint on the nation's foreign policy landscape. Their respective tenures, separated by several decades, provide a unique vantage point for the application of theoretical frameworks that seek to understand the complexities of foreign policy decision-making. This paper adopts the theoretical lens of neoclassical realism, as elucidated by Rose (1998), to assess and compare the

foreign policies of these two leaders. Neoclassical realism integrates classical realist principles with a focus on internal state dynamics, leadership, and the influence of domestic factors on foreign policy. Within this framework, we delve into the leadership styles, the role of national identity, and the strategic considerations that shaped Pakistan's foreign policy during Bhutto's era and continue to influence it under Imran Khan's leadership. This comparative analysis aims to shed light on the evolving foreign policy objectives of Pakistan and the role of leadership therein, drawing insights from the neoclassical realist perspective (Rose, 1998).

Throughout the literature, we see the significant influence of leaders like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Imran Khan, and their foreign policy decisions. Neo-classical realism emphasizes the role of leaders in shaping a state's foreign policy. Bhutto's efforts to accommodate domestic political parties and Imran Khan's approach to managing relations with significant actors, such as the United States, China, and India, are examples of leadership-driven foreign policy (Ziring, Year; Ali, 2022).

Bhutto's emphasis on Pakistan's Islamic identity and Imran Khan's approach to soft diplomacy and the Kartarpur corridor highlight the importance of national identity and soft power in international relations. Neo-classical realism recognizes the role of ideational factors in influencing state behavior (Faheem et al., 2020; Shah, 2020b).

The literature discusses Pakistan's interactions with major global players like the United States, China, and India, as well as its participation in regional organizations like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Neo-classical realism emphasizes the calculation of strategic considerations and overarching objectives in shaping foreign policy, considering both regional and global factors (Husian, 1977).

The literature highlights the impact of economic factors on foreign policy. Bhutto's economic policies and Imran Khan's emphasis on economic security are in line with neo-classical realism, which acknowledges the role of economic considerations in shaping state behavior (Korson, 1974; Ali, 2022). Bhutto's efforts to challenge the established power dynamics, including seeking a nuclear umbrella, align with neo-classical realism's focus on state security and power-seeking

behavior (Amin, 2022). The text references Pakistan's efforts to balance relationships with major powers and manage multifaceted threats. Neo-classical realism recognizes the need for states to balance power and navigate complex international relationships (Ali, 2022).

## Research Methodology

The nature of the study determines the types of data and methods of data collection. In this study, primary and secondary data are used to explore the foreign policy of two prominent leaders of Pakistan Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan in their respective eras. In this study, the comparative model and analytical methods of the research methodology are used to compare the foreign policies of two democratic leaders of Pakistan Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan. The nature of this study determines that primary and secondary data is used and that is qualitative data.

## Pakistan Afghanistan Relations under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1971-1978)

Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, emphasized the deep bonds between Afghanistan and Pakistan, highlighting their shared historical, religious, cultural, economic, ethnic, and linguistic ties. However, relations between the two countries have often been tumultuous, with occasional periods of cordiality, especially during the Taliban regime. Both countries have predominantly Sunni Muslim populations and have shown religious solidarity during significant conflicts, such as the Indo-Pak War in 1948 and the Afghan Jihad from 1979 to 1989.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are connected by significant ethnic ties, particularly with their large Pashtun populations. Despite these connections, tensions arise over issues like the Durand Line and Pakhtunistan, with Afghanistan refusing to recognize the Durand Line and supporting Pakhtunistan. These tensions are exacerbated by geostrategic factors, external influences, and regional power dynamics, including rivalry with India.

Attempts to resolve tensions during Z.A. Bhutto's era were disrupted by the 1978 coup in Afghanistan and the 1979 Soviet intervention. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan increased Pakistan's security concerns, resulting in millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Despite shared ties, internal politics, external

pressures, and regional conflicts have hindered stable and friendly relations between the two countries.

After Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto became President of Pakistan in 1970, relations with Afghanistan improved due to Afghanistan's neutral stance during the 1971 Indo-Pak war. Bhutto shifted Pakistan's policy towards stronger ties with Muslim countries, including Afghanistan. Bhutto's visit to Afghanistan and First Lady Nusrat Bhutto's visit in 1972 resulted in economic cooperation, although Afghanistan maintained its stance on Pakhtunistan.

Mohammad Daoud Khan overthrew King Zahir Shah in 1973 with Soviet support, declaring Afghanistan a republic. Despite denials of Soviet involvement, suspicions arose due to Soviet opposition to the King's efforts to improve relations with the US and Pakistan. Daoud, a strong advocate of Pakhtunistan, aimed to leverage Pakistan's internal issues for discussions on the Durand Line. (Rehman, 2012b).

## Internal Factors

### The 1970 elections

The 1970 elections in Pakistan were historic as the first where voters could directly elect National Assembly members. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Bhutto in West Pakistan and the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in East Pakistan were the main contenders. Bhutto's nationalist and leftist platform promised essential needs and a strong stance against India. In East Pakistan, the Awami League's six-point program, driven by neglect after a cyclone, won overwhelming support. The Awami League secured almost all seats in East Pakistan, while the PPP performed well in the West. Despite the Awami League's victory, the National Assembly never convened due to opposition from Yahya and Bhutto to Mujib's demands for a confederated Pakistan. This conflict led to increased tensions, Mujib's call for a general strike, and Yahya's indefinite postponement of the assembly, eventually paving the way for the independence of Bangladesh. (Hays, n.d.).

### Pakistan-Bangladesh Liberation war and India Stance

The 1971 war, resulting in Bangladesh's independence, is remembered differently by each country involved. Bangladesh views it as a liberation struggle against Pakistan's oppression, with a focus on

the Awami League's role under Sheikh Hasina's leadership. India celebrates it as a military triumph linked to national identity, despite refugee-related tensions. Pakistan largely ignores the war, seeing it as a defeat, but it has significantly influenced its defense strategies and regional policies. The war's legacy continues to shape regional dynamics and national identities, reflecting diverse perspectives of liberation, victory, and loss (Zakaria, 2019).

### **Durand Line and Pashtun Issue**

Pashtun nationalism, initiated by Afghan leader Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan against British rule, aimed to unite the Pashtun people. The movement, known as "Khudai Khidmatgar" or "Red Shirt," continued until Pakistan's formation. Despite efforts by the Afghan government to create an independent Pakhtunistan, these efforts were complicated by the USSR's expansion in Afghanistan, leaving the dream unrealized.

Pakistan fought two wars with India, in 1965 and 1971, during the presidencies of General Ayub Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, respectively. Afghanistan remained neutral, easing Pakistan's western border tensions. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan improved, aided by Iran's diplomatic efforts through the Tehran Accord of 1963, which resumed commercial and trade relations.

In 1973, a coup in Afghanistan led by General Sardar Daud overthrew King Zahir Shah. Daud revived the Pakhtunistan issue and used "Azadi Radio" to promote it. Despite tensions, both countries made diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue, with Prime Minister Bhutto and Daud agreeing to respect each other's sovereignty during mutual visits. The issue persisted, but mutual discussions continued during General Zia Ul Haq's presidency in Pakistan (Kayathwal & Kayathwal, 1994).

### **External Factors**

One of the participant views that, externally Pakistan was dependent on United State, as ZA Bhutto wants balance relationship with West and East and even normalizes and balance relation with neighboring countries and also want to secure Pakistan's nuclear ambitious toward nuclear program to secure and also wanted to have more Islamic front as he convent the second OIC conference in 1974 at Lahore, at that

time Pakistan was the leader of Muslim world and these were the external factors reduce the Pakistan total dependency on Russia and on the Western nations, however. Just to make Pakistan out from the trauma was caused by the creation of Bangladesh by the fall of Dhaka.

### **II- Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations under Prime Minister Imran Khan**

In 2018 Pakistan Terik e Insaf takes government in Pakistan and there in Afghanistan, US decide to withdraw from Afghanistan after long twenty years presence there. However, Taliban were willing to talk with Afghan government for peace development. However, Pakistan for long time remain the part of problem as Pakistan claimed itself as Pakistan support US and west against the Afghanistan and irritate Afghan peace, support to Taliban. After a while, Pakistan diverts their stance as Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan supposed to facilitate in Afghan Taliban peace talk in Doha. Pakistan Afghanistan relation moves once again towards good willing.

Afghanistan's President, Ashraf Ghani, extended an invitation to Imran Khan, the Pakistan's Prime Minister, to visit Kabul. Khan accepted the invitation and expressed his intention to visit Kabul shortly after assuming office. During the conversation, both leaders emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral ties in various areas such as politics, economics, culture, and social affairs. Ghani lauded Khan's contribution to cricket in Afghanistan, where he is considered a hero, and expressed his appreciation for Khan's stance on promoting peace and stability in the region. President Ghani also highlights their mutual commitment to overcoming past differences and forging a new path towards prosperity for both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Khan, known for his opposition to the U.S.-led military intervention in Afghanistan, has advocated for resolving the Afghan conflict through intra-Afghan dialogue. He reiterated his support for peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, emphasizing the need for stability in the region.

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have experienced strained relations in the past, with accusations of supporting militant attacks against each other. However, both leaders expressed their commitment to fostering peace and cooperation between their

countries. Khan's vision for the future includes open borders and free trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, like the European Union model. He believes that such a relationship would benefit both nations economically and contribute to regional stability. Despite challenges such as border security issues and diplomatic tensions, both leaders are hopeful that increased cooperation and dialogue will lead to a brighter future for Afghanistan and Pakistan. They aim to work together to address mutual concerns and promote peace and prosperity in the region (Gul, 2018).

Second visit paid by Shah Mahmood Qureshi on 15 Dec 2018 for Afghanistan-China-Pakistan trilateral foreign minister's dialogue. In China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan committed once again to improve relations, deepening cooperation and develop connectivity the one road belt initiative (BRI), collectively encounter terrorism, while support Afghanistan in security building, and support Afghan peace and prosperity. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, along with the foreign secretary, traveled to Afghanistan, Iran, China, and Russia in December 24-26, 2018, where they informed Afghan leaders about Pakistan's endeavors to foster cooperation among various regional and international parties to support an intra-Afghan dialogue.

## Internal Factors

### Political Instability

The Khan's administration due to internal weaknesses and external pressures, leading to a grim outlook, this reflects the broader theme of political instability and the difficulties of maintaining control and coherence in government.

### Power Dynamics

The passage underscores the importance of political alliances and power dynamics in shaping governance. It depicts how the PTI's coalition with diverse partners, influenced by various factors including alleged persuasion by intelligence agencies and opportunism, affects the government's ability to function effectively.

### Legislative Constraints

Another theme is the challenge posed by institutional barriers, such as the PTI's lack of control over the

Senate, which impedes Khan's ability to implement his legislative agenda fully. This highlights the theme of political constraints and the limitations faced by leaders in pursuing their policy objectives.

### Economic Uncertainty

The uncertain economic situation and external factors impacting the economy contribute to the challenges faced by Khan's administration. This reflects the theme of economic instability and its implications for governance and political decision-making.

### Opposition Dynamics

Lastly, the narrative touches upon the dynamics of opposition politics and its role in shaping governance. Despite facing a fragmented and discredited opposition, Khan's government still grapples with challenges, suggesting the significance of oppositional forces in the political landscape. Overall, the passage explores the multifaceted nature of governance, highlighting the interplay of political, economic, and institutional factors in shaping the leadership and governance of Pakistan under Khan's tenure (Nawaz & Nawaz, 2023).

### Economic Crises External Assistance

The serious economic crisis exacerbated by COVID-19 internally and externally. While corona impact the economy and health widely. However, Khan imposed smart lockdown nationwide while support nation through programs like Ehsas Emergency Cash, Ehsas Savings Wallet, and the Corona Relief Tiger Force. However, Pakistan support neighbors to gain international and regional image, and protect its economy (Shah & Ma 2023).

### IMF Program and Budget Challenges

The IMF's program for Pakistan is currently on hold, with the 6th and 7th reviews combined. A significant challenge lies in Pakistan's ongoing poor fiscal situation and its struggle to increase revenues to support its growth-oriented budget. The expansive budget, seen by many as a departure from past austerity measures, is perceived as an attempt to bolster chances in the next election through increased spending. However, it relies on questionable assumptions regarding revenue increases amidst a global drop in energy prices. Sustained growth and

visible spending on development projects could pave the way for an early election.

### **Political Uncertainties and Army Leadership**

Pakistan's volatile political landscape, especially if the economy faces downturns, could alter the succession scenario. General Bajwa oversees the reshuffling of the army's top brass in October as several generals retire. The events unfolding in the next six months will shape the future leadership of the army and influence the prospects for Imran Khan's re-election (Nawaz & Nawaz, 2023).

### **External Factors**

#### **Economic Prospects and International Views**

Despite some hopeful signs, international experts are less optimistic about Pakistan's economic prospects. The country expects temporary relief with a \$2.8 billion allocation of Special Drawing Rights from the IMF in August, contributing to an increase in foreign exchange reserves. Remittances have also surged, although constraints on air travel have slowed the flow of illegal currency, prompting greater use of official banking channels. While remittances are estimated to reach around \$31 billion in 2022, there is already evidence of a slowdown. Foreign direct investment has declined, and Pakistan remains on the Financial Action Task Force's grey list, despite addressing most of the concerns that initially led to its inclusion. Political motivations may influence its continued placement on the list, with future developments likely to shed light on the outcome (Nawaz & Nawaz, 2023). However, economic issue faces the dependency on foreign aid and loan, which limited Pakistan independent foreign policy pose. While lying balance between economic interest and geopolitical interest was tricky challenge (Ismail, 2024).

#### **Importance of US Relations**

The dynamics of Pak-US played a pivotal role, particularly in the context of Taliban control over Afghanistan. This development poses domestic challenges for the Biden administration, potentially leading to continued accusations against Pakistan for supporting the Taliban. The United States and other Western powers withholding diplomatic recognition and economic aid from a Taliban-led government

could present Pakistan with a difficult dilemma (Nawaz & Nawaz, 2023).

### **Khan's Decision on Taliban Recognition**

Imran Khan faces the dilemma of whether to recognize a Taliban-led government and risk international isolation once again. However, political cover for such recognition may come from Russia, China, and Arab states. The completion of the IMF review in late September or early October served as the first test of tacit US support for Pakistan. Approval of the IMF program continuation may indicate acknowledgment of Pakistan's assistance in Taliban negotiations and the US withdrawal from Kabul, even if the US stance is lukewarm or opposed (Nawaz & Nawaz, 2023).

### **III-Comparison of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan Foreign Policies towards Afghanistan**

Bhutto's Legacy Bhutto was a multifaceted politician known for his shrewdness, charisma, and competence. He rose to power through strategic alliances and founded the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), winning a majority in the 1970s general elections, while Imran Khan's Journey Khan embarked on his political journey in 1996 with the creation of Pakistan Tahreek Insaf (PTI), challenging the established bipartisan political landscape.

#### **Political Legacies of ZA Bhutto and Imran Khan**

In 1970, this administration conducted the initial general elections with universal adult suffrage. However, it failed to address East Pakistan's demands for equitable political representation and socio-economic parity. Consequently, East Pakistan seceded from Pakistan in December 1971, leading to a military disaster. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's political administration managed to establish a consensus constitution in 1973. Nevertheless, it didn't effectively dismantle the centralized power structure, which primarily served his personal interests. Bhutto's governance lacked inclusivity, and the Pakistan People's Party operated undemocratically, relying on patronage rather than principles. His treatment of opposition parties and socio-economic reforms paved the way for the military to reassert its influence in Pakistan's political landscape. As a result, despite being elected, the PPP-led government missed the opportunity to address

political, economic, and social challenges, failing to establish a stable political system or lay the groundwork for enduring political institutions (Talib, 2018).

Imran Khan's Pakistan Terik-e-Insaaf (PTI) gained significant political traction, partially attributed to backing from the military establishment, amid ongoing clashes between the military and other major parties like Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The military saw PTI as a viable alternative to mainstream parties due to its pro-state stance and regional influence in strategic provinces. PTI's anti-corruption narrative resonated with the military's objectives. Despite winning the 2018 elections with a narrow majority, PTI's government faced challenges, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Khan's reluctance to enforce strict COVID-19 measures, especially regarding religious congregations, strained relations with the military. Economic repercussions of the pandemic further eroded PTI's popularity. Khan's failure to deliver on promises to regional allies and disagreements over projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) worsened relations with the military. This discord, coupled with opposition movements like the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), led to a political crisis culminating in Khan's government being the first in Pakistan's history to be ousted through parliamentary means. Consequently, there's been a resurgence of military influence in Pakistani politics, alongside the strengthening of Islamic opposition forces (Abenante, 2023).

#### **Charisma and Support gained by ZA Bhutto and IK**

Both the leaders have one similarity that is the charismatic personality of both the leaders. On the charisma they get fame and political existence. However, Z A Bhutto get fame through his socialist policy to bring the poor mass from poverty and they he gets much support from mass in 1970s elections; however, Imran Khan was a celebrity and have much fame before entering politics. While the second point is that both were visionary leaders, Z. A Bhutto vision was socialism which was about to give basic needs to mass and that was: food, shelter, and cloth. However, Imran Khan was New Pakistan that was about to give basic rights to mass, like education, health, and justice (Tribune, 2014).

While both leaders enjoy vibrant support and possess charisma, their approaches to governance, handling of opposition and responses to political crises differ significantly, highlighting the distinctiveness of their leadership styles and legacies (Inam, 2019).

#### **Populism of Z.A Bhutto and Imran Khan**

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a prominent figure in Pakistan's political landscape, extensively utilized populism to garner support from the majority against the elite and the establishment. His political platform, encapsulated in the slogan "Islam is our religion; democracy is our politics; and socialism is our economy," aimed to redefine Pakistan's identity by blending Islamic principles with socialist ideology. While Bhutto's ideology leaned towards a populist egalitarianism rather than strict Marxism, his adoption of socialist rhetoric was strategic, given the socio-economic dynamics and global political context of the time.

Imran Khan leveraged his popularity from cricket and charity work, notably establishing Pakistan's first cancer hospital, to launch his political party, PTI, in 1996. Initially, Khan's political identity was less defined, but over time, he adopted populist rhetoric, rallying against corrupt elites, particularly mainstream politicians, positioning himself as an alternative to the status quo.

Khan's populist ideology, characterized by what Panizza terms the "politics of anti-politics," targets entrenched political dynasties, framing them as the root of Pakistan's governance issues. Despite the military's historical influence, Khan's criticism focuses primarily on civilian political parties like the PPP and PML-N, whom he labels as "political mafias." This populist stance resonated with disillusioned voters and propelled Khan to power in 2018, promising to break the cycle of corruption and mismanagement (Batool, 2023).

#### **Conclusion**

Pakistan's foreign policy via a vis Afghanistan during ZA Bhutto and Imran Khan, in ZA Bhutto there was the threat of Pashtun nationalist and the threat of USSR support for Afghanistan, but in Imran Khan era the main there was issue of terrorism with Afghanistan and the Ashraf Ghani total dependence on the West while there were not having good

relations of Pakistan with the West regarding Afghanistan, so there was also a bone of contention between Ashraf Ghani and Imran Khan. Both leaders they tried to have good relations with Afghanistan, but both the leaders ZA Bhutto and Imran Khan did not remain much successive, that Pakistan could not enjoy cordial relations with Afghanistan during both the leaders. Pakistan faces tough time and both prime minister's offices and period from Afghanistan, that both states have not had good terms with one another. ZA Bhutto era there was the issue of Pakhtunistan from Afghanistan, and issue of Baloch militancy and support from Afghanistan to Baloch but during Imran Khan there was the issue of Durand line with Afghanistan, border fencing with Afghanistan, issue of terrorism, and closer of border with Afghanistan. So, in such a way Pak-Afghan relations were going on.

#### References

- Amin, Muhammad. "Foreign Policy of Pakistan: 'Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Era.'" *Research Mosaic* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 36-49. <https://researchmosaic.com/index.php/rm/article/view/1>.
- Azam, Mohammad. "Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations." In Routledge eBooks, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003250920>.
- Batool, Fizza. "Populism in Pakistan: The Exclusionary-Inclusionary Divide in the Politics of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 46, no. 2 (March 4, 2023): 265-82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2023.2181535>.
- Erbaş, İsa. "The Role of Foreign Policy and Its Purpose in World Politics." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 2, no. 11 (October 1, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2013.v2n11p40>.
- Faheem, Farrukh, Abida Bano, and Wang Xingang. "Reinventing the Identity and Interests: Pakistan and the Middle East (1971 to 1979)." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)* 4, no. 2 (December 27, 2020): 242-55. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/4.2.19>.
- Firoozabadi, Jalal Dehghani, and Mojtaba Zare Ashkezari. "Neo-Classical Realism in International Relations." *Asian Social Science* 12, no. 6 (May 20, 2016): 95. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v12n6p95>.
- Ghulam. *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Contemporary Developments and Dynamics*, 2022.
- Husain, S. Irtiza. "Strategic Dimensions of Pakistan's Foreign Policy." *Strategic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1977): 19-35. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45181205>.
- Hussain, Shakir, Asma Hussain, Muhammad Ismail, Noorunneasa, and Ali Akbar Amiry. "Imran Khan's Foreign Policy Doctrine: Challenges and Prospects on the Global Stage (2018-2022)." *The International Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Learning* 31, no. 1, 2024 (2024). <https://doi.org/2327-915X>.
- Inam, Hafiz. "Bhutto and Khan: A Fair Comparison?" *Global Village Space*, May 20, 2017. <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/bhutto-and-khan-a-fair-comparison/>.
- J. Henry Korson. *Contemporary Problems of Pakistan*. Routledge eBooks. Informa, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429041723>.
- Kayathwal, Mukesh Kumar, and Mukesh Kamar Kayathwal. "PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS : DURAND LINE ISSUE." *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 7, no. 2 (1994): 37-46. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41950383>.
- Khatoon, Sahera, Muhammad, and Rahat Shabir. "Between Allies and Adversaries: A Critical Appraisal of Pak-Afghan Relations during PTI Tenure (2018-2022)." *Global International Relations Review* VI, no. IV (December 30, 2023): 11-22. [https://doi.org/10.31703/girr.2023\(vi-iv\).02](https://doi.org/10.31703/girr.2023(vi-iv).02).
- Nawaz, Shuja. "Reality Bites for Imran Khan's 'New Pakistan' Published: 06 September 2." *EASTASIAFORUM*, 2021.
- Ripsman, Norrin M. "Neoclassical Realism." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, June 13, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.36>.

Rooh Ul Amin, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Awan, and Dr. Faryal Raheem. "Critical Analyses of Pak-Afghan Transit Trade Agreement: Pakistan's Perspective." *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Economics Review (RJSSER)* 1, no. 4 (January 8, 2021): 418-26. [https://doi.org/10.36902/rjsser-vol1-iss4-2020\(418-426\)](https://doi.org/10.36902/rjsser-vol1-iss4-2020(418-426)).

Talib, Mehwish. "POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT in PAKISTAN: CONTINUITY and CHANGE during ZARDARI PERIOD." *Www.academia.edu*. Accessed July 22, 2024. [https://www.academia.edu/37745674/POLITICAL\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_IN\\_PAKISTAN\\_CONTINUITY\\_AND\\_CHANGE\\_DURING\\_ZARDARI\\_PERIOD](https://www.academia.edu/37745674/POLITICAL_DEVELOPMENT_IN_PAKISTAN_CONTINUITY_AND_CHANGE_DURING_ZARDARI_PERIOD).

Shah, Rahat, and Xiaolin Ma. "An Inquiry into the Pakistani Statecraft in Tackling COVID-19." *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, February 19, 2023, 205789112311574. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20578911231157447>.

Tarar, Muhammad Fahad Khan. "Imran Khan versus Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: Who Was the Better Leader?" *The Express Tribune*, August 27, 2014. <https://tribune.com.pk/article/23824/imran-khan-versus-zulfikar-ali-bhutto-who-was-the-better-leader>.

Zakaria, Anam. "Remembering the War of 1971 in East Pakistan." *www.aljazeera.com*, December 16, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/12/16/remembering-the-war-of-1971-in-east-pakistan>.

