Pakistan Foreign Policy

The quest for security has been at the heart of Pakistan’s foreign policy since independence. Pakistan’s security environment derives its origins from the circumstances in which Pakistan was created. The violence accompanying the portion leading to the emergence of the two independent states of Pakistan and India generated hostility, which continues to afflict relations between the two countries mainly because of the unresolved issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The issue is the source of continuing tensions and conflict, and shaped the unstable and tense security environment in the region.

The historical perspective of Pakistan’s foreign policy falls in five broad phases. The first period covers the time from the UN enforced cease-fire of 1949 to the 1965 war over Kashmir. During this period Pakistan allied itself with the West by joining the Baghdad Pact and its successor, CENTO, and SEATO. The primary motivation underlying our membership of these alliances had been the need to redress our defence vulnerability and achieve a reasonable military equilibrium with India.

The second phase runs from 1965 to the 1971 crisis in East Pakistan. The 1965 war, which was sparked by the Jammu and Kashmir issue, had led to a drastic reduction in economic and military assistance to Pakistan. The increase in defence expenditure together with the decline in foreign assistance compounded economic difficulties and aggravated political problems led by a sense of alienations in East Pakistan. India played on this crisis and eventually imposed war on Pakistan.

During the third phase from 1971 to 1989 Pakistan remained engaged in rebuilding itself and facing the challenge of the Soviet military intervention in neighboring Afghanistan, which lasted for over a decade since 1979, and has spawned a conflict that continues to ravage Afghanistan.

The fourth phase covers the period from 1990 to the nuclear tests of May 1998. Two important events from the security perspective took place in 1990. USA clamped economic and military sanctions on Pakistan under the prissier Amendment (which widened the conventional gap between India and Pakistan). That same year the intensification of the freedom movement in occupied Kashmir.

The last two years, the current phase, have witnessed important developments in Pakistan’s foreign policy. These includes prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif’s initiative to resume bilateral dialogue with India soon after taking office, the nuclear tests that radically altered the security environment of South Asia last year, the security dialogue with the united States and the crisis in Kargil. These developments, together with the continuing conflict in Afghanistan, represent the major preoccupations of our policy makers. Meanwhile, trade and economy have acquired increasing importance in our foreign relations.

The Nuclear Challenge

The India nuclear test in early May 1998 posed one of the gravest security challenges to Pakistan since its independence. The Indian nuclear tests drastically altered the strategic balance. The hostile statements made by important Indian leaders following
thee tests verged on nuclear blackmail and underscored dangers to Pakistan in India’s latest bid to establish its hegemony in the region. The Indian media also started questioning the credibility of Pakistan’s nuclear capability. The Indian political analysts commented that by testing India had called Pakistan’s ?bluff?. This was a dangerous assertion, which could lead to miscalculation and misadventure against Pakistan.

In the wake of the Indian tests, Pakistan undertook consultations especially with major powers. It was evident that in the absence Of a nuclear umbrella, Pakistan was alone to face a nuclear India. It became imperative to discard the policy of nuclear ambiguity. Demonstrate our nuclear capability and therefore restore the strategic balance in the interest of peace and security in South Asia.

Pakistan consequently conducted nuclear test explosions on 38 and 30 May 1998. Thus establishing nuclear deterrence in the interest of its security and self-defence.

It is important to distinguish between the motivations of Pakistan and India in conducting nuclear tests. Since independence and until the first nuclear tests by India in 1974, Pakistan did not seek the nuclear options for the non-nuclear weapons states. India, however, challenged the nuclear paradigm of the day, betraying its own nuclear ambitions, which became evident in 1974. Pakistan could no longer ignore the threat to its security. Therefore, it started developing a nuclear programme. At the same time, however, Pakistan took initiatives to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons. These initiatives were pursued for a quarter of a century at multilateral and bilateral levels with India. The 1998 test by India however destroyed the prospects of keeping our region free of nuclear weapons.

Following its tests Pakistan declared a unilateral moratorium on testing and its desire to prevent a nuclear arms race in South Asia. During the Foreign Secretaries’ level talks in October 1998, under the agenda item for Peace and Security, Pakistan offered a Strategic Restraint Regime with India. This was based on the concept of preventing a nuclear arms race by maintaining nuclear deterrence at the minimum levels and desisting from introducing new and more destabilizing systems in the region. Pakistan’s offer for nuclear restraint has yet to evoke a positive response from India. Indeed the portents are discouraging as India shows every inclination to pursue an ambitious nuclear weapons and missile programme.

Clearly India’s tests and its nuclear ambitions are status driven and impelled by its hegemonic ambitions. Our tests were a response to our security needs. Pakistan does not pursue a policy of territorial aggrandizement, nor is it prepared to accept the dominance and dictates of any power. We desire stability and avoidance of conflict in our region.

It is for that reasons that Pakistan considers the sanctions imposed by the United States and other G-8 countries following the test as unjust and unwarranted. The sanctions damaged Pakistan’s economic and security interests when they were imposed in 1990 under the Pressler amendment. They were unjust then, as they are now, nor do they serve to promote the cause of either peace or non-proliferation in our region. Our point of view has gradually come to be appreciated and there has been an easing of sanctions. The international financial institutions have resumed tending to
Pakistan. However, Pakistan continues to maintain that all sanctions must be removed.

Kashmir, Kargil and Normalization with India

The nuclear dimension has added to the dangers that the long-standing Jammu and Kashmir dispute poses to peace and stability in South Asia. Kashmir has been the root cause of conflict and tension in the region, now it has become a nuclear flash point. The world recognizes the dangerous nature of the Kashmir dispute. The UN Security Council deliberating on the nuclear tests in South Asia, acknowledged, in its resolution 1172, Kashmir as the root cause of tension in South Asia.

Conscious of its centrality to peace and security in South Asia, soon after assuming office, the former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif offered a dialogue to India to address the Kashmir issue. India first agreed on a mechanism for an integrated dialogue in June 1997, but later it reneged on its commitment. Pakistan?s perseverance in search of a serious dialogue with India led to the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Lahore where the two sides agreed to intensify their efforts to resolve their outstanding differences including Kashmir remained stalled.

Meanwhile, the struggle of the Kashmiri freedom fighters which has been continuing for over a decade assumed a new intensity as they moved their operation to the Kargil sector, capturing Kargil heights and threatening the Srinagar-Leh road. India reacted violently and made large-scale military deployment to lodge the freedom fighters. India also mobilized its Air Force and heated up the entire Line of Control. Two Indian Mig aircraft were shot down on the Pakistan side of LoC in late May escalating matters further. The Indian leadership, with its eyes on the forthcoming Indian elections, whipped up war hysteria among the Indian population against Pakistan. This led to a highly dangerous situation in a nuclear environment.

While Pakistan pursued peace initiatives, India persisted in its intransigence and war mongering. The Kargil crisis also focused international attention on Kashmir. At the same time there was considerable international anxiety over the prospect of a wider conflict between the two nuclear capable states.

The Kargil crisis ended following hectic diplomatic activity, which culminated in a meeting between the then Prime Minister, and President Clinton on 4 July 1999. The Prime Minister appealed to the freedom fighters to vacate the Kargil heights to give negotiations and the peace process a chance. As part of the Washington agreement President Clinton gave an assurance of his personal interest in the resumption and intensification of efforts for resolving all issues including Kashmir. Thus Pakistan succeeded in engaging the US President in an unprecedented commitment aimed at facilitating a settlement of the Kashmir issue.

The long standing Kashmir issue represents a challenge to the international community both in its political and human rights dimensions. Politically, it is a nuclear flash point. Also, unless Kashmir is resolved, Kargil, like situations will reoccur and the security climate will continue to deteriorate. It is also a major obstacle in the path of the two countries devoting all their energies to socio economic development and well being of their people.
Kashmir is witness to the gravest human rights violation at the hands of over 700,000 security forces stationed in Indian occupied Kashmir. This is the largest military concentration anywhere in the world. The Kashmiri people are facing brutal repression on a daily basis. In the last ten years, more than 65,000 Kashmiris have been martyred and over 90,000 are missing. Hundreds of villages and thousands of houses have been destroyed and burned down. International Amnesty and Human Rights Watch and other reputable international humanitarian organizations have documented these human rights violations. The international community has to take a strong notice of this situation specially now that we are living in the world where individual human rights are also a matter of international concern.

Pakistan believes that the international community, in particular the United Nations and the major powers, have an important role to play in persuading India to stop its repression against the Kashmiris and respect human rights, and to engage in a meaningful and productive dialogue with Pakistan to resolve this dispute. Pakistan has proposed several confidence-building measures to address the human rights situation in Kashmir. First and foremost, the international community should ask India to thin out its military presence observers and human rights and media representatives to the Kashmir valley. At the political level, Pakistan is agreeable to international mediation and engagement for a result-oriented dialogue with India. Pakistan has also requested the UN Secretary General to appoint his representative to address the issue.

Kashmir is an obstacle both to peace in South Asia and normalization of relations with India. Progress towards the resolution of the Kashmir issue will have its dividends in improvement of relations between the two countries in a variety of areas including trade. In June 1997, Pakistan and India had agreed to identify all the outstanding issues in a structured and focused dialogue. They agreed to set up a mechanism of eight separate, working groups at the Secretaries level to address;

- Peace and security including confidence building measures,
- Jammu and Kashmir,
- Siachen,
- Wuller Barage project/Tulbul navigation project,
- Sir Creek,
- Terrorism and drug trafficking,
- Economic and commercial cooperation, and
- Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields.

The subsequent Lahore Declaration generated hope for progress. However, the dialogue has since remained stalled. Apart from commitment by both sides to intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, the Lahore Declaration and accompanying Memorandum of Understanding addressed the issues of peace and security in a nuclearized South Asia. This included CBMs for early warning in respect of missile tests, notification in case of accidental, unauthorized or unexplained incidents that could minimize unclear risks. These measures are necessary to avoid the risk of a conflict between the two nuclear capable neighbors. Pakistan is also ready to reach understanding for nuclear and missile
restraints. It has already proposed a strategic restraint regime to prevent nuclear arms in the region. However, past experience demonstrates that normalization of relations between the two countries will depend on progress towards the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

The shooting down by Indian military aircraft of an unarmed Pakistan Navy aircraft, inside Pakistani airspace on 10 August 1999, killing 16 naval personnel, further complicated the situation in the region. Pakistan lodged a strong protest with the Government of India, over the violation of its airspace as well as of the bilateral agreement on the Prevention of Airspace Violations of 6 April 1991. Pakistan also claimed compensation for the loss of life and aircraft.

**Afghanistan Conflict and Opening with Central Asia**

The conflict in Afghanistan has also been a continuing source of concern to us. Pakistan has suffered more than any other country from the continuation of the conflict there. For us, vital security interests are linked to stability on our western and northern borders. We therefore seek peace, stability and national reconciliation in Afghanistan. This will open new opportunities in our economic and commercial relations with the Central Asian States. At present the conflict in Afghanistan stands in the way of developing these ties. So far, however, all efforts for a peaceful settlement have been thwarted by factional and ethnic rivalries, and outside interests exploiting intra-Afghan differences.

In pursuit of the peace process in Afghanistan, Pakistan has employed a multi-pronged strategy including the active use of shuttle diplomacy, joint missions and close liaison with the Central Asian States, the UN and the OIC. We would like to see the installation of a multi-ethnic government in accordance with the wishes of the Afghan people, and have accordingly maintained contact with parties on both sides of the political divide in Afghanistan. When natural disaster struck in Afghanistan in areas held by the Northern Alliance, we were the first to provide humanitarian assistance.

It was due to Pakistan’s efforts that the Afghan parties met in a steering committee in April-May 1998 in Islamabad work out the modalities of convening an Ulema Commission to devise a solution to Afghanistan’s problems in accordance with Sharia. A near breakthrough was achieved, when the process was derailed by the Hizb-e-Wahdat of the Northern Alliance. Pakistan’s diplomatic efforts intensified in the later half of 1998 (after the fall of Mazar-I-Sharif to the Taliban) when the former Minister of State and senior officials paid two rounds of visits to the Central Asian States. Between then and now the Foreign Ministers of all the Central Asian States have visited Islamabad in connection with Afghanistan.

During this period, Pakistan also coordinated closely with neighboring Iran with which it launched a joint mission to promote an Afghan peace process in June - July 1998. The killing of diplomatic and other personnel at Iran’s Mission in Mazar-I-Sharif precipitated a grave crisis late last summer with the amassing of critical role in defusing the situation through the dispatch of special envoys, including the former Foreign Minister and the former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to Tehran, and a fruitful meeting between the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and
President Khatami at the United Nations last September. The two leaders decided that regular contacts between senior officials would promote understanding and improve relations further. The Foreign Secretary accordingly visited Tehran in the first week of January 1999 for bilateral consultations with his Iranian counterpart, during his visit he was also received by the Foreign Minister and the President.

The first regional meeting of the six plus two (Pakistan, Iran, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the United States and Russia) was held in Tashkent on 19-20 July, 1998 providing an opportunity for the representatives of Taliban and the United Front to sit together at the negotiating table. The Tashkent talks were important for brining the two sides together on the same platform, and for keeping the 6 + 2 process alive. Pakistan remains committed to working with the UN, the OIC, Afghanistan’s neighbors, and the Afghan parties to restore and promote peace in the war-torn country.

Pakistan aims to revive historical and cultural ties with the people of the newly independent Republics in Central Asia, (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan) and to develop mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation with them. We have been collaborating with them in the areas of transit routes, credit facilities, establishment of gas and oil pipelines, technical assistance programmes, and banking. The restoration of peace in Afghanistan will allow the potential for such collaboration to take off.

**Relations with Islamic Countries**

Pakistan attaches a special value to its relations with Islamic countries and is committed unreservedly to all Muslim causes and the strengthening of cooperation among Islamic countries. This has been an unshakeable pillar of our foreign policy. Pakistan has earned the esteem of the Islamic world for its consistent and effective advocacy of Muslim causes, specially at the United Nations. This year, Pakistan was the driving force behind the meeting in Geneva of OIC Foreign Ministers, on Kosovo. The then Prime Minister paid a visit to a Kosovar refugee camp in Albania as an expression of solidarity. The Islamic world stretches from the Far East Morocco in the West and provides Pakistan with special bonds that stretch half way across the globe and across cultures. The support of the Ummah has contributed to our success in having our resolutions adopted at the UN, and in elections to various UN bodies.

To celebrate the fiftieth year of its independence, Pakistan hosted an Extraordinary Session of the OIC Summit on 23 March 1997. The meeting was attended by all Member States of the OIC. Twenty-eight Presidents, Crown Princes, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers, as well as the Special Envoys of monarchs were present. Twenty-one countries were represented by their Foreign Ministers. For the first time, a member of the delegation representing the Kashmiri people was given an opportunity to address the plenary session. The Summit marked the solidarity of the Ummah with the people and Government of Pakistan.

The Islamic countries have extended consistent support to us on Kashmir. Pakistan is satisfied with the outcome of the OIC Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) held in Burkina Faso in Jue 1999. Our position emphasizing recourse to dialogue and negotiations was forcefully endorsed by the ICFM. The Conference reaffirmed the
right to self determination of the people of Kashmir and decided to appoint a special envoy on Kashmir. The support that we received from the Islamic countries during the Kargil crisis was a further source of satisfaction to us.

The special relations that Pakistan maintains with the countries of the Middle East have a historical, cultural, religious, strategic and economic basis. The relations are numbered by mutual trust and confidence that have stood the test of time. Over the years Pakistan and the Gulf states have shown marked awareness of each other security concerns. This has been a continuing process, unaffected by changes of government or other factors in the international environment. Pakistan?s support for Arab causes, beginning with the decolonization process in the Middle east and North Africa and our continuing commitment to Palestinian self determination, rooted in our national ethos, and dates back to Pakistan’s own creation. Similarly the Arab states have shown understanding and support for our position on Kashmir.

The reaction of Arab Governments to the nuclearization of South Asia and the recent crisis along the Line of Control in Kashmir reinforced the shared perceptions and commonality of interests that we have with them. Soon after the Indian tests in May 1998 several Arab states sent their special envoys to Pakistan as an expression of solidarity. When Pakistan faced sanctions after its own tests, many Islamic countries extended economic support to Pakistan. During the Kargil crisis, the GCC states renewed their call for the UN to take up its role to solve the dispute in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan?s principled stand on the Gulf crisis has won it respect and credibility. Pakistan has consistently declared its opposition to the use of force in the Gulf as this has a negative impact on the region?s stability, Pakistan instead advocates a diplomatic solution, and retains the hope that the international community will take steps to alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

High level bilateral exchanges during the period under review have been plentiful, the emphasis has been on trade and economic issues. Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Bin Adbdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia visited Pakistan last October as part of a tour of eight important countries, the highest-level visit from Saudi Arabia in fourteen years. Prince Sultan, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Saudi Arabia visited Pakistan this year, as did the Amir of Qatar and the Vice President of Yemen. Yasser Arafat, President of Palestine has visited Pakistan twice in the last two years.

Pakistan also has an active program of educational, cultural and technical assistance for students from Palestine and the Gulf region.

The historic, cultural and religious ties Pakistan has with Iran and Turkey have been reinforced by their partnership first in the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) and now in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Iran is an important strategic neighbour of Pakistan and a partner in regional peace and security, maintaining close ties with Iran is a major element of our foreign policy.

Bilateral relations between Pakistan and Turkey remain close and fraternal. The President of Turkey visited Pakistan for the inauguration of the construction by a Turkish company of the Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway, while the President of
Pakistan visited Turkey in October 1998 to attend the celebrations in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic.

**Relations with Major Powers and Regional Blocs**

Pakistan is committed to the continuous development of beneficial and strong ties with all major powers. Our friendly cooperation with China is exemplary. Our ties with the United States have a long history of cooperation, which need to be reinforced in the new post cold war situation. The transformed global environment must also define and strengthen our relations with Russia. The European union and Far East and South East Asia are emerging as new economic power centers and major partners of Pakistan in trade, economic and technological cooperation. Our foreign policy is designed to integrate Pakistan into the new global dispensation where trade, economic and technological development and the information revolution have assumed primacy.

Relations with China continue to be one of the pillars of our foreign policy. The breadth of this all weather relationship is exemplified by the numerous contacts at all levels and in all spheres. Pakistan and China have traditionally extended support to each other on matters of concern to them whether it is Kashmir, Taiwan or human rights.

From the security perspective our foreign policy is aimed at further promoting and strengthening our traditional, close and cooperative relations with China. The countries share perceptions on the international situation and our common reading of global strategic trends reinforces co-ordination and cooperation between Pakistan and China. China is the only major power that shares our concerns regarding India?s regional ambitions. China adopted a principled position on the South Asian nuclear tests expressing grave concern over India?s tests, and understanding for Pakistan?s, in the circumstances, Pakistan is fully supportive of China?s advocacy of a multi-polar world. We share China?s belief in the need for a just and equitable international economic order and reform of the international financial system.

Pakistan lays considerable premium on its relations with the countries in East and South East Asia. Japan has been the largest bilateral donor to Pakistan and a major trade partner. Japan reacted negatively to our nuclear tests and also imposed economic sanctions. Pakistan and Japan are engaged in a dialogue on security matters and export control regimes, which has considerably allayed Japanese concerns. The former Foreign Minister?s visit to Japan late in 1998 created a better understanding of our security concerns and compulsions.

Although the economic melt down in South East Asia and difficulties faced by Pakistan in the aftermath of the nuclearization of South Asia, did have a negative impact, we continue to make consistent efforts to strengthen our political and economic links with the ASEAN countries. Our ?Look East? policy remains an important aspect of our foreign policy. Pakistan enjoys sectoral dialogue partnership with ASEAN in several key areas and is looking forward to becoming a full dialogue partner. The ASEAN-Pakistan joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee was established in the recent past to institutionalize interaction with ASEAN.

Pakistan’s relations with United States suffered a setback following our nuclear tests but improved after the former Prime Minster?s meeting with President Clinton in
Washington in December 1998. As a consequence of this visit, the economic sanctions imposed by the US after the nuclear tests were eased, and the international financial institutions resumed their lending programmes for Pakistan. The visit also led to a better appreciation of our legitimate security concerns. A notable achievement was the amicable resolution of the F-16 issue. From the perspective of regional peace in South Asia, President Clinton acknowledged the need for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and expressed his willingness to play a role in reducing tensions between India and Pakistan.

After our nuclear tests, the US and Pakistan (and the US and India) embarked on a dialogue focused on nuclear related and security issues. Specifically it pertains to nuclear and non-proliferation benchmarks namely CTBT, the fissile material convention, nuclear and missile restraint and export controls. The fifth Benchmark is security related and refers to dialogue between Pakistan and India and the resolution of all disputes including Kashmir. The dialogue on the nuclear-related issues is a continuing process. On CTBT Pakistan’s position was authoritatively stated by the Prime Minister in his address to the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly in September 1998. Pakistan has no objection in principle to the treaty, for which it voted at the UN General Assembly in 1996. However, it is necessary to remove the coercive atmosphere caused by the sanctions before Pakistan can adhere to the treaty. On FMC Pakistan is participating in the negotiations for a convention at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The negotiations on the question of existing stock piles are a special concern for Pakistan. On nuclear and missile restraints Pakistan has already processed to India a strategic regime with a view to maintaining nuclear deterrence at the minimum level. Pakistan is clear that any restraints will have to be mutual with India. Our assurances to the world on the export of sensitive technologies have always been categorical.

Pakistan attaches great importance to its cooperation with the members of the G-8 and the European Union, with which it enjoys close and cordial relations. Mindful of the inherent strength of Europe and to take advantage of its new strategy towards Asia, Pakistan has endeavored to intensify relations with major European countries and increase our interaction with the European Union.

**Participation in International and Regional Organizations**

Pakistan has always played an active and constructive role in accordance with its commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. The stature that Pakistan enjoys as a champion of the developing countries and the Islamic world is manifested by its consistent success in elections to various UN bodies. During 1998 Pakistan was elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Non governmental Organizations Committee. The commission on Human Rights, the UNICEF Executive Board, the Commission on Human Settlements, the Inter-governmental Working Groups on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting, and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. During the period under review Pakistan ratified the international Convention on Nuclear Safety on 30th September 1997, and the Chemical Weapons Convention a month later. This year Pakistan ratified Amended Protocol 11 of the Certain
Conventional Weapons Convention, which regulates the use of landmines. Pakistan has been elected to two consecutive terms from 1998 to 2002, on the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It was elected to the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency in September 1997, for a two years term.

The issue of reform and the expansion of UN Security Council have far reaching implications for the global political order. Pakistan and a group of like-minded countries were successful in moving a resolution adopted by consensus in the General Assembly at its 53rd session, which calls for the support of two thirds of the UN membership for any decision relating to the expansion and reform of the Security Council. Pakistan remains committed to evolving a credible formula on this matter, which enjoys the general agreement of the UN membership.

Pakistan is an active member of the Non-aligned Movement, which represents the voice and political and economic interest, of the developing world. At this NAM forum, Pakistan has helped the evolution of consensus on important disarmament and arms control issues and the United Nations reform process.

Pakistan is member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Economic cooperation Organization (ECO), SAARC provides useful framework to its seven member states (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan) collectively to promote peace, stability, Cooperation, and progress in South Asia. At all SAARAC gathering, Pakistan has advocated its conviction that a peaceful and secure environment in the region is indispensable for the promotion of economic development, progress and Prosperity. Pakistan believes that SAARC would receive a tremendous boost were the underlying causes of tension removed. At the 10th SAARC Summit in Colombo in July 1998, Pakistan launched a Peace, Security and Development Initiative, which essentially underscore the need for promoting a regional process on security and cooperation. The concepts underlying the proposals are reflected in the Summit deceleration.

Pakistan, Iran and Turkey are the founding members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the successor organization of the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD). ECO has played an important role in the strengthening and promotion of multi-dimensional cooperation and sustained socioeconomic growth among the member states. The other members are Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. Besides strengthening the centuries old ties that exist between the people of these countries ECO is intended to build infrastructural links, and promote business exchanges and economic development. In terms of infrastructure the ECO is focusing on the development of a modern transport and communications system, a network of gas and oil pipeline and interconnection of power grids within the region.

Pakistan?s interest in ECO reflects its belief in regional cooperative arrangements, which foster regional development and economic progress and prosperity through collective endeavors. We aspire to make ECO an effective instrument of regional cooperation serving the needs of 340 million people in the ten member states spread over an area of over 7 million square kilometers.
Globalization and Economic Development

The end of the cold war signified the beginning of a new era in international relations in which the political and economic ideologies of the market economy gained ascendancy. Liberalization, privatization and monetary-fiscal discipline were promoted as a panacea for developing and developed countries alike. For a time globalization promised the spread of global prosperity. However, in some cases globalization prejudiced the economic growth of the countries. The East Asian crisis raised questions about the wisdom of rapid financial and trade liberalization and the social implications of globalization, particularly in the absence of sound macro-economic policies and regulatory mechanism.

The social and economic impact of globalization calls for a coherent approach to be adopted by the world community. An impetus must be given to economic growth in all parts of the world, and this growth must then be sustained. Conditionalities of the international financial instructions must not ignore the ground realities. Protectionism is incompatible with free trade policies and the global markets, particularly of the developed economies, must be kept open and new protectionism disguised as environmental concerns or labor standards, must be resisted. The debt burden which hinders the growth and development of a large number of countries must be addressed.

These are the objectives that Pakistan has been promoting in the international forums, particularly the World Trade Organization, and in our negotiations with regional organizations such as European Union. The driving force behind the economic and commercial policies devised by the government is to bring in foreign direct investment and diversify and enhance our export base. We are working to integrate ourselves in the regional and multi-lateral economic forums. So as to benefit from being part of larger economic zones.

With a view to realizing our broader economic objectives through greater equity in the international economic system. Pakistan has been actively co-coordinating with the developing countries to present united front in negotiations at the World Trade Organization. The developing countries need to take the initiative to place their own proposals on the WTO agenda, and suggest improvements in WTO procedures and mechanisms. What is required today is the realization that there is unity in the efforts of the South And the North for economic and social development. Globalization must also be given a human face to ensure that its opportunities and benefits can be shared by all under a new concept of global community where all human beings entitled to ?life of dignity? and to the right? to development.?

Security ? military and economic ? are the fundamental concerns of today’s Pakistan recognizes that a strong economy is indispensable for the promotion of its national objectives. This consideration dominates the new priorities of our foreign policy in today’s world. Pakistan’s missions abroad are Adjusting to this new reality, and developing a fresh orientation towards the promotion of the nation’s interests in the economic, commercial and Technological fields. Over the recent past concerted efforts have been made by the foreign Ministry to facilitate this objective through the exchange of information by Electronic means. As a first step the Foreign Ministry
established direct contact with the Chambers of Commerce, the Privatization Commission, the Export Promotion Bureau and other organizations dealing with financial and economic matters. Secondly, the Missions abroad have been brought just one step below the e-commerce level. Today almost sixty missions are equipped with e-mail. Some have set up web sites, and the others have been advised to set up home pages.

Another important responsibility of Pakistanis Missions abroad is the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. Overseas Pakistanis constitute an important instrument for achieving our economic and other objectives, they can play an important role in projecting Pakistan’s image abroad, encouraging foreign investment through their own investment in Pakistan, and in lobbying on behalf of their country, particularly in the Western democracies. Promoting a better understanding and knowledge abroad of Pakistan, and promoting progress and prosperity of its people through trade and development continues to be a major preoccupation of Pakistan’s foreign policy.