

Dynamics of Pakistan-Türkiye Relations in a Challenging Global Order

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Abstract

The prevailing global order is facing a significant crisis, compelling nations to explore innovative collaboration methods and adopt distinct roles within the international framework, leading to a notable shift in the global balance of power. In response, numerous states, particularly middle and regional powers, are actively seeking fresh avenues for collaboration, eager to enhance bilateral relations with counterparts that share mutual interests. A prime illustration of this dynamic is the burgeoning partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye — two pivotal regional forces that have risen as significant contributors on the global stage over the past decade. Leveraging their profound cultural and historical connections, alongside aligned interests in recent years, both nations have consistently fortified their bilateral engagements across various domains, including diplomacy, economy and defence. This evolving alliance merits close examination due to its profound implications not only for the nations involved but also for its potential to influence regional affairs and the future balance of power significantly. This article aims to offer a comprehensive review of the Türkiye-Pakistan bilateral relationship with a particular emphasis on the economic, military, and cultural dimensions. Special consideration will be given to the impact of President Erdoğan's political ideology and approach towards Pakistan, which has been instrumental in advancing these ties in recent years. Moreover, the article will explore prospective areas of collaboration between the two countries that could further solidify their relationship.

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Introduction

The prevailing global order is facing a significant crisis, compelling nations to explore innovative collaboration methods and adopt distinct roles within the international framework, leading to a notable shift in the global balance of power. In response, numerous states, particularly middle and regional powers, are actively seeking fresh avenues for collaboration, eager to enhance bilateral relations with counterparts that share mutual interests. A prime illustration of this dynamic is the burgeoning partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye, two pivotal regional forces that have risen as significant contributors on the global stage over the past decade. Leveraging their profound cultural and historical connections, alongside aligned interests in recent years, both nations have consistently fortified their bilateral engagements across various domains, including diplomacy, economy and defence.

This paper provides a thorough analysis of the economic, military and political dimensions that underpin the relations between Türkiye and Pakistan, positing that three principal factors have catalysed their increasingly close cooperation. At the international level analysis, the paper identifies the prevailing crisis within the global system as a pivotal driver. At the state level analysis, notably the ascension of Erdoğan to power alongside the significant growth of Türkiye's defence industry, are highlighted as critical milestones shaping the trajectory of bilateral relations between Türkiye and Pakistan.

By examining these dimensions, the paper elucidates how the interplay of global systemic challenges and domestic political and industrial advancements in Türkiye have fostered an environment conducive to deeper bilateral engagement with Pakistan. This multifaceted approach offers insights into the complex interdependencies that characterise Türkiye-Pakistan relations, underscoring their strategic partnership against the backdrop of shifting geopolitical landscapes and shared objectives.

Pakistan-Türkiye Relations: An Historical Overview

Diplomatic ties between Türkiye and Pakistan were formally established in 1947 following Pakistan's emergence as an independent nation. However, the roots of their relationship extend deeper into history, tracing back to the British colonial era when Indian Muslims revered the Ottoman Empire's Sultan as a beacon of Islamic solidarity.¹ This sense of kinship persisted even after Türkiye transitioned to a Republic in 1923, with Türkiye being among the inaugural nations to acknowledge Pakistan's sovereignty and to set up diplomatic channels with the new state in 1947. In this context, Yahya Kamal and Mian Bashir Ahmed were appointed as the first ambassadors of Türkiye to Pakistan and Pakistan to Türkiye, respectively.² During a notable address on March 4, 1948, Pakistan's founding father Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, when receiving Türkiye's first ambassador articulated the profound admiration and camaraderie felt by the Pakistani people towards Türkiye by stating: "Türkiye has been in our thoughts constantly and has drawn our admiration for the valour of your people and the way in which your statesmen and leaders have struggled and fought almost single handed in the midst of Europe for your freedom and sovereignty which have been happily maintained. I can, therefore, assure Your Excellency that the Muslims of Pakistan entertain sentiments of affection and esteem for your country, and now Türkiye and Pakistan both as free, sovereign and independent countries, can strengthen their ties more and more for the good of both."³

The diplomatic bond between Türkiye and Pakistan was significantly strengthened through a series of bilateral agreements, including a landmark

¹ Munir Hussain, "Pak-Turkey Relations: On the Common Ties," *Alternatives*, vol. 7, no. 2-3 (2008): 68.

² Muhammad Almas and Gulzar Ahmad, "Pakistan Turkey Cordial Entente (1947-2013): A Diachronic Review," *Global Regional Review*, vol. VI, no. III (Summer 2021): 37-44, <https://www.grrjournal.com/fulltext/pakistan-turkey-cordial-entente-19472013-a-diachronic-review>

³ Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, "Türkiye-Pakistan Friendship: From Past to Present," *Daily Sabah*, February 13, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2020/02/13/Turkiye-pakistan-friendshipfrom-past-to-present>; Philip Kowalski, "Turkish-Pakistani Relations: A Burgeoning Alliance?," *Middle East Institute*, May 22, 2019, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/turkish-pakistani-relations-burgeoningalliance>

Permanent Friendship Agreement in 1951.⁴ Türkiye extended its support to Pakistan in various domains, notably assisting in the establishment of its currency printing system. The alliance between the two nations was further solidified when both joined the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO, previously known as the Baghdad Pact) in 1955, enhancing their geopolitical collaboration.⁵

Furthermore, the establishment of the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964 served as a watershed moment in strengthening the ties between Pakistan, Türkiye and Iran, marking a significant stride towards bolstering economic, cultural, and technical cooperation among these nations. This initiative not only brought these states, which share a common cultural and geographical heritage, closer together but also reflected a growing disillusionment with the West at the time.⁶ Furthermore, the evolution of the RCD into the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1985 underscored the deepening relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye within this framework. The creation of the RCD, and its eventual transition into the ECO, was instrumental in fostering a sense of unity and collaborative spirit among its member states, emphasising their shared aspirations and challenges.

Throughout the 1960s and beyond, the countries shared a strategic consensus on key international issues, including the situations in Cyprus and Jammu and Kashmir. Türkiye stood by Pakistan during its conflicts with India in 1965 and 1971, openly supporting Pakistan's stance and critiquing India's actions. The 1970s saw continued political and strategic cooperation, with Ankara providing unwavering diplomatic and military support to Islamabad during the East Pakistan crisis. Pakistan reciprocated with all out support and backing for Türkiye regarding the Cyprus conflict.⁷ The partnership faced challenges, such as the U.S. arms

⁴ Selcuk Colakoglu, "Turkey-Pakistan Security Relations Since 1950s," *Middle East Institute Turkey Faces Asia Series*, November 25, 2013,

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/turkey-pakistan-security-relations-1950s>

⁵ Almas and Ahmad, "Pakistan Turkey Cordial Entente (1947-2013)," *Global Regional Review*, <https://www.grjournal.com/fulltext/pakistan-turkey-cordial-entente-19472013-a-diachronic-review>

⁶ Hussain, "Pak-Turkey Relations."

⁷ For detail on the Cyprus Conflict, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus-_historical-overview_.en.mfa

restrictions imposed on Türkiye in 1975,⁸ which Pakistan's Foreign Minister Aziz Ahmad openly condemned. Additionally, Pakistan opposed a UN resolution concerning Cyprus in 1979. Similarly, both countries maintained a unified front on other international issues, including their stance on the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and opposition to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan later that year. The 1980s further cemented Pakistan-Türkiye strategic relations through joint military exercises in 1987 and the establishment of the Military Consultative Group (MCG) in 1988, showcasing the depth and resilience of their alliance.⁹

Despite their aligned policies and viewpoints on numerous global matters, Pakistan and Türkiye have encountered moments of divergence, particularly in their approaches to specific international issues. A prominent example of this divergence was their differing stances on Afghanistan during the 1990s. In the midst of the civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal in February 1989, Pakistan extended its support to the Taliban, while Türkiye backed the Northern Alliance. This period also saw both countries prioritising their unique strategic interests: a. Islamabad was deeply involved in the unfolding situation in Afghanistan, whereas Ankara directed its focus towards engaging with the newly independent states of the Balkan region and b. Eurasia, reflecting their respective geopolitical strategies and concerns during that era.

The 2000s heralded a renaissance in the partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye spurred by a confluence of significant developments. This era of renewed collaboration was catalysed by Pervez Musharraf's ascent to the presidency in Pakistan in 2001, the transformative impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S., and the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) in Türkiye, led by the then Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. These events collectively set the stage for a deeper, more strategic alignment between the two nations, opening avenues for enhanced cooperation and mutual support in navigating the complexities of the post-9/11 geopolitical landscape.

⁸ Mahmut Durmaz, "The U.S. Arms Embargo of 1975-1978 and Its Effects on The Development of The Turkish Defense Industry," Master of Arts Thesis, the Naval Postgraduate School, September 2014, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA619498.pdf>

⁹ Durmaz, "The U.S. Arms Embargo of 1975-1978," 73.

First, the ascension of President Pervez Musharraf to power in Pakistan marked a significant turning point in Pakistan-Türkiye relations, primarily due to his favourable outlook towards Türkiye. This era was distinguished by a succession of high-level diplomatic engagements that substantially fortified the bilateral connections between the two countries. The momentum began in 1999 with a visit from Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to Türkiye setting the stage for a reciprocal visit by Turkish President Necdet Sezer in 2001. The diplomatic engagement deepened with visits from Türkiye's then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Pakistan in May and June 2003, respectively, during which discussions spanned a variety of crucial topics including security enhancements, regional issues, and the amplification of economic ties.¹⁰ These interactions were pivotal in bridging the gaps that had formed due to previous divergences, particularly regarding Afghanistan, and rekindled the warmth in the bilateral relationship. The engagement saw another high point in 2004 when President Musharraf addressed the Turkish parliament, a first for a Pakistani head of state, reinforcing the commitment to elevating the partnership across multiple domains like counter-terrorism, economics, defence, health and banking.¹¹

Continuing this tradition of high-level visits, President Asif Ali Zardari travelled to Türkiye in 2009 for the Third Tripartite Summit which was closely followed by the Turkish Prime Minister's visit to Islamabad.¹² These meetings were instrumental in reaffirming the nations' commitment to fortifying their political relationship and cooperating closely on counter-terrorism efforts. Additionally, they underscored the mutual desire to boost trade volumes and encouraged the Turkish private sector to invest in infrastructure development in both countries, highlighting a shared vision for a prosperous and interconnected future.

Secondly, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. marked a critical juncture that further unified Pakistan and Türkiye, introducing new dimensions of

¹⁰ "Cooperation with Turkey," *Dawn Editorial*, June 19, 2003, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1064680>

¹¹ "Pakistan, Turkey Talk Security," January 20, 2004, *CNN*, <https://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/01/19/security.turkey.pakistan.reut/>

¹² "Zardari Arrives in Turkey," *Business Recorder*, April 1, 2009, <https://www.brecorder.com/news/3620601/zardari-arrives-in-turkey-2009040114917>

security and strategy into their relationship which had previously been shaped mainly by cultural, religious and political affiliations.¹³ In the wake of these events, the U.S. launched the War on Terror, beginning with the invasion of Afghanistan, a campaign that saw Pakistan align with the U.S. This shift in Pakistan's stance not only facilitated its international relations but also paved the way for improved bilateral relations with Türkiye.

Türkiye, facing its own set of challenges from al-Qaeda, including multiple attacks on its territory, was propelled to seek a robust international counter-terrorism strategy. In response to the escalating threat, Türkiye prioritised the formalisation of security agreements with Pakistan, a move that symbolised a deepening of their strategic partnership. These agreements were significant in bridging divergences between the two nations and drawing them closer in their collective fight against terrorism. The collaborative efforts and shared objectives in counter-terrorism underscored a pivotal phase in Türkiye-Pakistan relations, enhancing their alliance and setting a foundation for future cooperation in addressing global security challenges.

The ascendancy of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) under the leadership of the then Prime Minister and now President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan significantly intensified the political affinity between Pakistan and Türkiye. Distinguishing himself from his predecessors, Erdoğan demonstrated a pronounced openness towards engaging with other states, including those beyond Türkiye's traditional alignments with the West. This shift was evident immediately upon his coming to power, as Erdoğan and his cabinet members embarked on numerous visits to Pakistan, thereby laying the groundwork for heightened bilateral cooperation.

Erdoğan's tenure has been marked by an exceptional level of engagement with Pakistan, with a total of 11 official visits, underscoring the premium he places on the relationship between the two nations. These visits have not only been symbolic gestures of friendship but have also facilitated a broad spectrum of cooperative ventures across various sectors. Erdoğan's proactive approach and the emphasis on Türkiye-Pakistan

¹³ Rahat Shah and Wang Li, "Rationales behind Pakistan-Turkey Relations since September 11, 2001," *The Round Table The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 109, no. 5 (2020):1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2020.1819630>

relations reflect a strategic vision that transcends mere diplomatic formalities aiming instead to forge a deep and enduring partnership.

These gestures of mutual support and solidarity have consistently highlighted the deep-seated alliance between Pakistan and Türkiye, reflecting positively in various circumstances where both nations have unwaveringly backed each other's policies. Notably, Pakistan's unwavering support for Türkiye during and following the July 15, 2016 Turkish coup attempt,¹⁴ and the support both nations extended to their mutual ally Azerbaijan amid the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, underscore their shared principles and commitments. Moreover, the humanitarian assistance provided by each country to the other further cements this bond.

This relationship was particularly evident following the devastating earthquake in 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir in 2005, when Prime Minister Erdoğan's administration promptly offered a comprehensive relief package to Pakistan, valued at US\$150 million, along with essential supplies.¹⁵ This act of kindness profoundly touched the Pakistani people, earning Erdoğan esteemed admiration within Pakistan.

Similarly, when South-Eastern Türkiye was rocked by severe earthquakes on February 6, 2023, which tragically claimed over 50,000 lives in Türkiye and Syria, Pakistan quickly organised a robust response. The immediate dispatch of 50 emergency personnel, along with 100 tonnes of relief goods comprising food and medicine, and the establishment of an air bridge to send additional resources, exemplified Pakistan's solidarity with Türkiye.¹⁶ The deployment of two Pakistan Army units to assist in the earthquake relief efforts, coupled with the generous contributions from Pakistani philanthropists, religious leaders

¹⁴ Arwa Ibrahim, "What was Turkey's Failed Coup about and What's Happened since?" *Aljazeera Explainer*, July 15, 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/15/turkeys-failed-coup-attempt-explainer>

¹⁵ "The Biggest Aid Comes from Turkey," *Milliyet*, October 22, 2005,

<https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/en-buyuk-yardim-turkiyeden-254038>

¹⁶ Asif Mehmood, "Relief Supplies from Pakistan Arrive in Earthquake-Hit Turkey," *Express Tribune*, February 11, 2023, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2400654/relief-supplies-from-pakistan-arrive-in-earthquake-hit-turkey>; "Türkiye thanks Pakistan for humanitarian assistance in wake of earthquake," *Pakistan Today*, February 21, 2023, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/02/21/turkiye-thanks-pakistan-for-humanitarian-assistance-in-wake-of-earthquake/>

and the business community, demonstrated the profound bond between the two nations. Additionally, the collective decision by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his cabinet to donate their monthly salaries to the relief efforts further showcased the depth of Pakistan's commitment to supporting Türkiye during its time of need.¹⁷

The establishment of stable and close political relations between Pakistan and Türkiye has laid a robust foundation for multifaceted cooperation, encompassing economic and cultural exchanges among other areas. Of particular significance in recent times has been the burgeoning cooperation in the defence sector which has emerged as a critical cornerstone of the bilateral relationship between the two nations. This domain warrants special attention, not only because of its intrinsic importance to both countries but also in light of the evolving dynamics on the international stage. The defence cooperation between Pakistan and Türkiye underscores the depth of their strategic partnership reflecting a shared commitment to security and mutual interests amid the changing global geopolitical landscape.

Economic Cooperation

Pakistan and Türkiye, both recognised as burgeoning market economies, have seen their relationship evolve into a dynamic economic partnership. This transformation is underscored by substantial Turkish investments in Pakistan's private sector, with prominent companies such as Bayinder, Enka, Tekser, Albayrak Group, Arçelik etc. undertaking various projects across the country.¹⁸ By 2021, Turkish investments in Pakistan had reached approximately US\$2.7 billion, highlighting the deepening economic ties between the two nations.¹⁹ Given the prevailing global trends, it is anticipated that economic engagement will become increasingly central to the relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye, positioning it as a pivotal

¹⁷ Ali Ahsan, "Turkey-Pakistan Relations," *Blog Post*, September 14, 2023, <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/blogs/al-ahsan/turkey-pakistan-relations/>

¹⁸ "Pakistan Continues to Attract Investment," *DEİK*, <https://www.deik.org.tr/press-releases-pakistan-continues-to-attract-investment>

¹⁹ Anas Haroon and Yunus Özcan, "Economic Relationship between Turkey and Pakistan," *bİşletme The Business Journal*, 2(2) (2021): 3, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1918561>

aspect of their bilateral interactions. This growing economic collaboration is not only a testament to the mutual confidence and trust between Pakistan and Türkiye but also signals a promising future for their partnership, with economic interdependence poised to spearhead their relations into new heights of cooperation and prosperity.

Over recent decades, Pakistan and Türkiye have diligently worked to bolster their economic ties, recognising the myriad benefits and opportunities stemming from such collaboration. Notably, during Erdoğan's visit to Pakistan in June 2003, his delegation included 110 businessmen, signalling Türkiye's keen interest in expanding trade and strengthening economic connections with Pakistan.²⁰ This commitment to deepening bilateral ties was further evident in 2010 when Erdoğan's visit resulted in the signing of 18 more MOUs between the two countries.²¹ In a significant move to enhance business and tourism, Pakistan included Türkiye in its visa-free travel list in 2019.²²

By 2020, the leadership of both nations had set an ambitious goal to elevate bilateral trade to US\$5 billion annually, although achieving this target hinges on overcoming geostrategic challenges.²³ To tap into the full economic potential of their relationship, Türkiye and Pakistan have embarked on initiatives like the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF), designed to increase trade volume and foster cooperation across a wide array of sectors, including science and technology, defence, tourism, education and health. During the sixth meeting of the Türkiye-Pakistan High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council in February 2020, both countries committed to enhancing bilateral trade, economic engagement and cultural ties, pinpointing sectors like customs, postal services, railway,

²⁰ "Turkish PM Praises Pakistan Reforms," *Aljazeera*, June 16, 2003, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/6/16/turkish-pm-praises-pakistan-reforms>; Editorial, "Cooperation with Turkey," *Dawn*, June 19, 2003, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1064680>

²¹ "The Turk Comes to Town," *Dawn*, October 14, 2010, <https://www.dawn.com/news/571770/the-turk-comes-town>

²² "Pakistan Adds Turkey to Visa-Free Travel List," *Anadolu Ajansi (AA)*, March 12, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-adds-turkey-to-visa-free-travel-list/1416282>

²³ Madiha Afzal, 2020.

military training, e-commerce, hydrocarbons, and joint ventures in exploration and production as key areas of focus.²⁴

In a further push to strengthen their economic relationship, Pakistan and Türkiye signed six bilateral MOUs in June 2022, encompassing areas such as public debt management, SME financing, housing, public-private partnerships in transportation and health, economic and social policy planning and highway engineering.²⁵ The Pakistani government also extended an invitation to Turkish investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's growing hydropower and renewable energy sectors. These strategic initiatives highlight the deepening economic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye, setting the stage for a future of mutual prosperity and collaboration.²⁶

As illustrated in Graph no. 1, the bilateral trade between Türkiye and Pakistan has notably increased since 2015, with the exception of 2023. The trade volume surged from US\$600 million in 2015 to its zenith of US\$1.2 billion in 2022.²⁷ This upward trajectory underscores the growing economic engagement between the two nations. However, it is crucial to highlight that the trade balance has predominantly favoured Türkiye, while Pakistan's exports to Türkiye have shown remarkable consistency over the years. Despite these advances, it is essential to acknowledge that Türkiye and Pakistan do not rank among each other's top 15 trading partners. This fact emphasises the potential and necessity for deeper economic collaboration between Türkiye and Pakistan in the future, aiming to enhance their mutual trade relationships.

²⁴ "Strong Will to Take Turkish-Pakistani Trade, Economic Ties to New Heights," *Daily Sabah*, February 14, 2020,

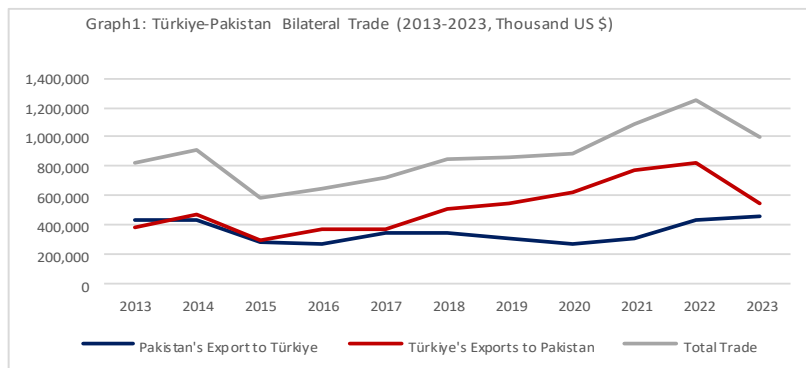
<https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2020/02/14/strong-will-to-taketurkish-pakistani-trade-economic-ties-to-new-heights>

²⁵ "Pakistan, Turkey Sign Agreements, MOUs for Enhanced Cooperation in Diverse Areas," *APP Digital*, <https://www.app.com.pk/global/pakistan-turkey-sign-agreements-mous-for-enhanced-cooperation-in-diverse-areas/>

²⁶ *Syed Irfan Raza, "Pakistan, Turkey to Shore Up Strategic, Economic Ties," Dawn*, 2 June 2022, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1692714/pakistan-turkey-to-shore-up-strategic-economic-ties>

²⁷ "Foreign Trade Statistics," *Newsletter*, Turkish Statistical Institute, January 2024, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Dis-Ticaret-Istatistikleri-Ocak-2024-53534>

Graph No. 1
Türkiye-Pakistan Bilateral Trade
(2013-2023, Thousand US \$)



Source: Authors' own graph using Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) data.

Although the recent upturn in trade between Pakistan and Türkiye is promising, there remains substantial room for growth, given the vast potential for enhanced cooperation across sectors like economy, trade, tourism and science and technology. Both nations are rich in natural resources and possess significant pools of scientific talent and skilled labour. The current modest levels of bilateral trade are attributed to the overlap in their economies, with both countries competing in similar markets for products like cotton, rice, leather and textiles.

Yet, the potential for diversifying their trade is significant. For example, Pakistan already imports wheat from Türkiye, while it benefits from Pakistani rice and textiles. There are opportunities for Pakistan to broaden its imports to include Turkish dairy products, electronic home appliances, automobiles and other durable items. This diversification could serve as a catalyst for deepening economic ties and exploring new avenues of mutual benefit, highlighting the need for strategic initiatives to tap into the untapped potential of their economic relationship.

In concluding, it is pivotal to underscore the recent upsurge in defence collaboration between the two states, which has had a positive spillover effect on their bilateral trade. Military assets have increasingly become a significant component of the trade dynamics between Türkiye and Pakistan, a trend that will be explored in greater detail in the

following section. This evolving facet of their partnership not only highlights the multifaceted nature of their relationship but also points to the strategic diversity being developed, particularly in areas of defence and security, further cementing the ties between these two nations.

Defence Cooperation

Türkiye has historically held a prominent position among the world's foremost military powers. In recent years, it has ascended to the forefront of arms exports, notably distinguishing itself in the production and export of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), among other military hardware. This transformation from a primarily arms-importing nation to a significant arms exporter is attributed to a revolutionary shift within its defence sector. The advancement and innovation in Türkiye's defence capabilities have not only enhanced its strategic autonomy but have also positioned it as a key player in the global arms trade, reflecting its growing influence and expertise in the field of military technology.²⁸ This transformation has significantly broadened Türkiye's horizons in forging and deepening defence relationships with its allies, including Pakistan.

According to the most recent figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2023, Türkiye emerged as Pakistan's second-largest arms supplier, accounting for 11 per cent of Pakistan's total arms imports.²⁹ This marks a historic peak in their defence relations, positioning Türkiye just behind China in terms of arms supply to Pakistan. This represents a significant rise from 2007, when Türkiye constituted merely 3.5 per cent of Pakistan's total arms imports.³⁰ From Türkiye's standpoint, Pakistan emerged as the principal recipient of its arms exports in 2023, accounting for an impressive 37 per

²⁸ Gloria Shkurti Özdemir, "Conceptualising the Rise of Türkiye as a Drone Power," *Strategic Paper* No. 5, The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies Qatar, September 19, 2022, <https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/Lists/ACRPS-PDFDocumentLibrary/conceptualizing-the-rise-of-turkiye-as-a-drone-power.pdf>

²⁹ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <https://armstransfers.sipri.org/ArmsTransfer/CSVResult>

³⁰ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <https://armstransfers.sipri.org/ArmsTransfer/CSVResult>

cent of Türkiye's total arms export volume.³¹ This substantial growth underscores the deepening defence ties between Türkiye and Pakistan and highlights Türkiye's expanding role and influence within the global arms trade, especially in its strategic partnership with Pakistan.

In recent years, the defence cooperation between Türkiye and Pakistan has notably accelerated, reinforcing a historically significant dimension of their bilateral relations. This partnership has deep roots, dating back to the Turco-Pakistan Treaty of 1954, which formally bonded the two nations in matters of defence.³² Further strengthening this alliance, the formation of the Pakistan-Türkiye Military Consultative Group (MCG) in 1988 aimed to enhance cooperation and facilitate the exchange of experiences in military training and defence production. Additionally, the MCG plays a crucial role in assessing the geopolitical dynamics of the region, showcasing the enduring and evolving military collaboration between Türkiye and Pakistan.³³

Nonetheless, as previously discussed, Erdoğan's ascent to power marked a pivotal moment for relations between the two nations, especially in the military domain. This shift was exemplified in 2003 with the creation of the High-Level Military Dialogue Group (HLMDG) during Erdoğan's visit to Pakistan.³⁴ Shortly thereafter, in January 2004, Ankara and Islamabad ratified a significant treaty aimed at Combating International Terrorism and Organised Crime (FACTOR).³⁵ Counterterrorism emerged as a key element of this treaty, with both countries pledging a steadfast commitment to eliminating organised crime. For Türkiye, this agreement was particularly crucial due to its provisions for intelligence sharing, underlining the strategic significance and mutual trust in the defence partnership between Türkiye and Pakistan.

³¹ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <https://armstransfers.sipri.org/ArmsTransfer/CSVResult>

³² Munir Hussain, "Pak-Turkey Relations: On the Common Ties," *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, vol. 7, no.2 & 3 (Summer & Fall: 2008), <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/19513>

³³ Hussain, 73.

³⁴ Hussain, "Pak-Turkey Relations," <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/19513>

³⁵ Hussain, "Pak-Turkey Relations," <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/19513>

Besides Erdoğan's ascent to power, the transformative progress in Türkiye's defence industry stands as the cornerstone and a critical turning point directly influencing the defence relationship between Türkiye and Pakistan. This evolution is highlighted by several key collaborations, notably the 2017 agreement, wherein Türkiye was going to receive 52 MFI-17 Super Mushshak Trainer Aircraft produced by Pakistan. The production and delivery of these training aircraft experienced delays, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, by the end of 2022, the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) successfully delivered three Super Mushshak training aircraft to the Turkish Air Force (Tur AF), marking a significant milestone in the ongoing military cooperation between Türkiye and Pakistan.³⁶

Another notable instance of defence collaboration between the two nations is exemplified in 2018 when the Pakistani navy introduced a fleet tanker constructed in Karachi in partnership with STM — Türkiye's premier defence manufacturer.³⁷ Additionally, in July 2018, Türkiye secured a significant contract, valued at US\$1.5 billion, to provide Pakistan with 30 T-129 attack helicopters for the Pakistan Navy. Nonetheless, the delivery of the T-129 helicopters faced setbacks due to the U.S. sanctions on Türkiye, underscoring the complex geopolitical factors that can impact defence agreements and collaborations.³⁸ Simultaneously, in July 2018, the Pakistan

³⁶ Tayfun Özberk, "Deliveries of Super Mushshak Trainer Aircraft to Turkish Air Force commence," *Shephar Media*, November 11, 2022, <https://www.shephardmedia.com/news/training-simulation/deliveries-of-super-mushshak-trainer-aircraft-to-turkish-air-force-commence/#:~:text=Deliveries%20of%20Super%20Mushshak%20trainer%20aircraft%20to%20Turkish%20Air%20Force%20commence,-11th%20November%202022&text=The%20Turkish%20Air%20Force%20has,by%20the%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic>

³⁷ "PNS MOAWIN, Built By STM For Pakistan, Races To Türkiye's Aid, *STM*, March 29, 2023, <https://www.stm.com.tr/en/media/news/pns-moawin-built-stm-pakistan-races-turkiyes-aid>

³⁸ To deter Türkiye from deploying the S-400 Russian missile systems, the U.S. Congress has taken measures to withhold export licenses for American-manufactured engines that power the T-129 attack helicopters. Turkish companies, licensed to domestically produce the T-129 and its engines, collaborate with Agusta Westland, an Anglo-Italian aerospace company, for the helicopter's manufacture. The helicopters are equipped with CT800 engines, initially developed by the Light Helicopter Turbine Engine Company, a joint venture involving Honeywell from the U.S. and Rolls-Royce from the U.K. In Türkiye, Tusas Engine Industries (TEI) holds the license for domestic production of these engines. Given that the engines originate from the U.S., Türkiye

Navy entered into a contract with ASFAT, Türkiye's state-run defence firm, for the procurement of four MILGEM-class ships. As per the agreement, the construction of the first two corvettes is to take place in Turkey, while the subsequent two are to be built in Pakistan.³⁹

Furthermore, in 2023, STM, successfully completed the modernisation of the second AGOSTA 90B Class submarine for the Pakistan Navy, following the delivery of the first upgraded submarine in 2021. This refurbishment included the integration of modern and cutting-edge systems, enhancing the operational capabilities of the submarine. According to a press release from STM, plans are already underway to commence the modernisation of a third submarine, indicating a continued and strengthening partnership between STM and the Pakistan Navy in advancing their submarine fleet's capabilities.⁴⁰

Simultaneously, Pakistan has expanded its defence cooperation with Türkiye through the acquisition of TB2 and Akıncı drones,⁴¹ showcasing the strengthening military and technological partnership between the two nations. Additionally, Pakistan has taken a keen interest in Türkiye's indigenous fighter jet project, KAAN, and aspires to become a

must obtain an export license from the U.S. government for the sale of T-129 helicopters or any arms systems incorporating these engines. Currently, TEI is endeavouring to develop an alternative to the CT800 engine for the T-129 helicopters. As a gesture of goodwill and understanding of the situation, Pakistan has postponed the delivery deadline for its order, acknowledging Türkiye's challenges in acquiring the necessary American export licenses for the deal with Pakistan. For details see: "Pakistan & Türkiye: Brothers in Arms," *Pakistan Politico*, September 10, 2018, <http://pakistanpolitico.com/pakistan-turkiye-brothers-in-arms>, Burak Ege Bekdil, "Pakistan Extends Türkiye's Deadline to Deliver T129 Helos," *Defense News*, January 14, 2020, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2020/01/14/pakistanextends-turkiyes-deadline-to-deliver-t129-helos/>

³⁹ Aamir Latif, "Turkey, Pakistan Begin Constructing Modern Warship," November 5, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/turkey-pakistan-begin-constructing-modern-warship/2412826>

⁴⁰ "STM Delivers Second Submarine In Pakistan Navy Agosta 90B Project," *STM*, January 25, 2023, <https://www.stm.com.tr/en/media/news/stm-delivers-second-submarine-pakistan-navy-agosta-90b-project>

⁴¹ "Emphasis on AKINCI TİHA and Bayraktar TB2 SİHA from Pakistan," December 25, 2023, <https://www.savunmasanayist.com/pakistandan-akinci-tiha-ve-bayraktar-tb2-siha-vurgusu/>

contributing partner in its development.⁴² This move not only signifies the deepening of defence ties but also represents a mutual commitment to enhancing technological collaboration and sharing strategic capabilities. The collaboration on such advanced defence projects underscores the trust and synergy between Pakistan and Türkiye, positioning them as key allies in regional security and defence innovation.

In addition to these advancements, both countries have regularly engaged in joint military exercises, with the most recent one taking place in February 2023 in Tarbela, Northern Pakistan. This exercise, named ATATURK-XII 2023, saw the participation of Turkish Special Forces and Pakistan's Special Service Group (SSG), focusing on counterterrorism.⁴³ During this engagement, both forces exchanged valuable experiences and adopted best practices from each other, enhancing their counterterrorism capabilities. These developments underscore the strengthening of defence ties between Türkiye and Pakistan, illustrating that military collaboration has become a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship between the two nations.

The Erdoğan Effect

The tenure of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, beginning in 2002, marks a transformative era in Türkiye-Pakistan relations, both politically and later in defence collaborations. Under Erdoğan's leadership, initially as Prime Minister and subsequently as President, Türkiye has pursued a distinctive policy aimed at asserting its independence from external influences, thereby facilitating a more autonomous and national interest-focused foreign policy.⁴⁴ This strategic pivot is evident in Türkiye's efforts to diversify its diplomatic engagements beyond traditional

⁴² Alperen Aktas, "Türkiye's KAAAN Stealth Fighter Jet Dominates Global Headlines with Maiden Test Flight," March 1, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkiyes-kaan-stealth-fighter-jet-dominates-global-headlines-with-maiden-test-flight/3150857>

⁴³ Ali Ahsan, "Turkey-Pakistan Relations," *Blog Post*, September 14, 2023, <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/blogs/al-ahsan/turkey-pakistan-relations/>

⁴⁴ Muhittin Ataman, "The 'Century of Türkiye': A New Foreign Policy Vision for Building the Türkiye Axis," *Insight*, vol. 25, no. 3, (Summer 2023), <https://www.insightturkey.com/author/muhittin-ataman/the-century-of-turkiye-a-new-foreign-policy-vision-for-building-the-turkiye-axis>

Western alliances to include nations of strategic, cultural and historical significance.

Furthermore, in recent years, Türkiye has solidified its status as a formidable military power, spurred by a revolutionary overhaul of its defence industry. This shift, envisioned by Erdoğan, aims at reducing dependency on external actors, particularly the U.S. which has occasionally been at odds with Türkiye's security concerns. The move towards domestic production in defence has not only fostered new avenues of cooperation with allies but also empowered Türkiye to adopt a more proactive, pragmatic and independent stance in its foreign policy.

The convergence of Pakistan and Türkiye has been significantly influenced by these policies, laying a fertile groundwork for bilateral cooperation. Since assuming power, Erdoğan has placed a special emphasis on strengthening ties with Islamabad, resulting in regular exchanges of official visits and the development of personal relationships between Erdoğan and successive Pakistani leaders. This diplomatic engagement has enhanced political ties between the two nations.

Furthermore, Erdoğan's foreign policy approach, characterised by what some scholars term "proactive moral realism," underscores a commitment to humanitarian principles alongside pragmatic diplomacy.⁴⁵ This approach has resonated deeply in the bilateral relations between Türkiye and Pakistan, especially in their unified stance on issues such as the status of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Palestine-Israel conflict, and particularly the Jammu and Kashmir issue. Erdoğan's outspoken support for Pakistan's position on Kashmir, including his criticism of India's revocation of the Article 370 and his advocacy for the Kashmiri cause on international platforms, illustrates the depth of bilateral relationship nurtured under his leadership.

In summary, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's strategic vision and policy initiatives have played a pivotal role in enhancing the bilateral

⁴⁵ E. Fuat Keyman, "A New Turkish Foreign Policy: Towards Proactive Moral Realism," *Insight Turkey*, vol. 19, no.1 (January 2017): 55-69, <https://www.insightturkey.com/articles/a-new-turkish-foreign-policy-towards-proactive-moral-realism>

relationship between Türkiye and Pakistan, making it a multifaceted partnership that spans political, defence, and humanitarian dimensions.

Pakistan-Türkiye Relations: Quo Vadis

The contemporary US-led international system is facing significant challenges, manifesting itself across multiple dimensions. This period of crisis is characterised by the resurgence of great power rivalries, the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent economic turmoil, and ongoing conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine wars. Unlike the post-Cold War era, which saw a unipolar world order where most states aligned their foreign policies with the US-led framework, we are now witnessing the rise of ‘middle powers’, such as Pakistan and Türkiye adopting foreign policies that prioritise their national interests and security considerations.

These middle powers are capitalising on the current global upheavals to diversify their foreign policy approaches and forge stronger ties with states that share similar interests, often starting with their regional neighbours. From an international perspective, this shift is one of the key dynamics facilitating the growing partnership between Türkiye and Pakistan. Both nations, in response to recent global and domestic developments, are poised to solidify their relationship. This strategic alignment is anticipated to yield mutual benefits, underscoring a shared commitment to enhancing their bilateral ties in the face of a transforming international landscape.

Delving into more details, economic collaboration emerges as a vital cornerstone for bolstering the relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye, presenting a wealth of opportunities for both nations to harness their strategic positions for mutual advantage. With Türkiye serving as an accessible gateway to Europe and the Central Asia, and Pakistan providing a pivotal conduit to the Indian Ocean, China, and the Far East, their joint efforts could significantly enhance each other’s economic interests in both Europe and Asia. There exists a significant potential for Türkiye and Pakistan to collaborate in unlocking the trade and economic opportunities within the expansive Euro-Asian market. This market could extend further to include North Africa and Southern China, potentially growing to

encompass South Asia and the Far East. Such an extensive market, stretching from Casablanca to Seoul, could serve as a catalyst for development across a region that, with few exceptions, remains largely outside prosperous economic or trade blocs.

This vision for a vast interconnected market represents not only an opportunity for economic growth and development for Pakistan and Türkiye but also for numerous countries within this geographical span. Most of these countries are currently in various stages of development and stand to benefit immensely from the increased trade, investment and economic cooperation that such a partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye could facilitate. By forging ahead with this initiative, Pakistan and Türkiye could play pivotal roles in reshaping the economic landscape of a broad swath of the globe, offering a model of cooperative development which prioritises mutual benefit and regional prosperity.

Türkiye has expressed interest in participating in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) aiming to strengthen its ties with both Pakistan and China. By planning investments in CPEC, especially in the development of free trade zones, Türkiye seeks to enhance its connectivity and access to international markets, leveraging Pakistan as a strategic hub linking to the Central Asian states. This move not only demonstrates Türkiye's commitment to deepening its economic and strategic partnership with Pakistan but also highlights the potential benefits of such collaboration for the broader region.

Incorporating Türkiye into the CPEC initiative aligns with Pakistan's interests, as it would significantly contribute to the project's success and the overall economic viability of the region. Türkiye's involvement is expected to bring additional investment, expertise and an expanded market reach, thereby enriching the CPEC framework and fostering a more integrated Eurasian economic landscape. For Pakistan, welcoming Türkiye as part of the CPEC project represents a strategic opportunity to enhance the corridor's functionality and attract further international collaboration, positioning itself as a pivotal economic gateway between Asia and Europe.

Defence collaboration stands out as a crucial avenue of partnership between Türkiye and Pakistan, particularly as Türkiye cements its position

as an ascending force within the global defence industry. Türkiye's advancements in this sector offer a blueprint for nations aiming to cultivate a more autonomous foreign policy while simultaneously bolstering their defence capabilities. In this context, collaboration between Türkiye and Pakistan aligns with the strategic interests of both countries.

The intensification of defence ties over recent years, as previously discussed, underscores the potential for further cooperation in this realm. Given their aligned positions on various international issues, the prospect for increased defence collaboration is strong, likely to draw Türkiye and Pakistan even closer. This partnership not only enhances their military capabilities but also supports a shared vision for greater independence and strategic autonomy on the global stage.

Furthermore, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project represents a significant opportunity to further strengthen the relationship between Pakistan and its regional partners, while also promising to boost Pakistan's economic prospects. Initiated by the government of former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif through an agreement with Turkmenistan in 1997, the project's feasibility hinged on the premise of stability in Afghanistan, given the pipeline's proposed route through Afghan territory. However, the project encountered substantial hurdles, primarily due to lack of stability in Afghanistan and the Turkmen government's reservations about the Taliban's governance. Compounded by the withdrawal of Unocal, a key Western financier, in 1998, the project was put on indefinite hold. Türkiye, viewing the pipeline project not as a competition but as a complementary venture, recognised the strategic value in facilitating energy transport from the Central Asian-Caspian Sea region to Pakistan's port of Gwadar. The envisioned pipeline was seen as a conduit for supplying energy to Southeast Asian and Far Eastern markets, aligning with broader regional economic and energy security goals.

In light of the evolving strategic landscape, there is a renewed imperative for Pakistan to seek the revival of the Turkmenistan-Pakistan gas pipeline project. Doing so would not only cement economic and energy cooperation with Türkiye and Turkmenistan but also serve as a linchpin for regional stability and prosperity. The project's realisation would enhance Pakistan's role as a critical energy corridor, potentially

transforming its economic landscape while contributing to the energy needs of the wider region. The changed geopolitical dynamics and potential for collaboration present a compelling case for Pakistan to re-engage with its partners and stakeholders to explore pathways for bringing this visionary project to fruition.

Moreover, Pakistan has the potential to benefit significantly from Türkiye's experience in cultivating a thriving tourism sector. Türkiye, recognised as one of the top ten tourist destinations globally, showcases the immense economic benefits which a well-developed tourism industry can offer. Drawing on Türkiye's successful strategies could provide Pakistan with invaluable insights into enhancing its own tourism appeal, thereby contributing substantially to its economy. Exploring joint tourism projects between Pakistan and Türkiye could serve as a catalyst for this development, leveraging each country's unique cultural, historical, and natural attractions to draw a wider international audience. By actively implementing the agreed frameworks for tourism development, Pakistan can unlock new opportunities for economic growth, job creation and international visibility. Such initiatives would not only strengthen bilateral relations but also position Pakistan as an attractive destination on the global tourism map similar to Türkiye's esteemed status.

The potential for cooperation between Pakistan and Türkiye across various sectors — including economic collaboration, defence, energy projects, and tourism — highlights the breadth of opportunities to strengthen their strategic partnership. Yet, realising the full potential of these bilateral relations necessitates overcoming several challenges and roadblocks.

One of the foremost challenges in bolstering economic ties between Türkiye and Pakistan lies in the inadequate transport and logistics infrastructure connecting the two countries. To advance bilateral economic relations, the establishment of a direct cargo line or regular charter vessel service between Karachi and Istanbul is imperative. This need for improved direct transportation links is well recognised within policy circles, underscoring its importance for the enhancement of trade relations. There is immense potential of improvement in bilateral trade relations and the obstacles hindering achieving the true potential of the bilateral trade

must be identified and removed.⁴⁶ These challenges encompass a range of issues, including insufficient market exploration, the need for more accessible trade finance, banking access, a complex structure of import duties, the harmonization of standards, and the alignment of export products to encourage intra-industry trade. However, the lack of direct shipping and logistics services was highlighted as a critical barrier. Addressing these challenges is essential for facilitating smoother trade flows, reducing costs and ultimately driving economic growth between Türkiye and Pakistan.

Lastly, in navigating the complexities of international relations, Pakistan faces the essential task of balancing its foreign policy and diplomatic engagements. The Kuala Lumpur Summit in 2019, initiated by former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, serves as a poignant example. This summit, aimed at convening a group known as M-5, comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, Qatar, Pakistan, and Türkiye, was perceived by some as a challenge to the traditional Saudi-led order within the Muslim world. Despite initial enthusiasm, both Pakistan and Indonesia ultimately withdrew from participating in the summit, reportedly due to pressure from Saudi Arabia.⁴⁷

This scenario underscores the delicate nature of maintaining strategic partnerships while ensuring they do not conflict with other vital diplomatic relationships. For Islamabad, fostering a strategic partnership with Türkiye — a move that aligns naturally with Pakistan’s interests — requires careful navigation to avoid undermining its relations with other

⁴⁶ Aneel Salman and Basit Ali, “Pakistan’s Trade Potential with Türkiye,” *IPRI Policy Brief*, May, 2023, <https://ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pakistan-Trade-Potential-with-Turkiye.pdf>

⁴⁷ “UAE vs Türkiye: The Regional Rivalries Pitting MBZ against Erdogan,” *Financial Times*, October 25, 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/990f13cf-613f-48a5-ac02-c8c73741a786>; Talmiz Ahmad, “Diplomatic Challenges from the Muslim World,” *Livemint*, March 25, 2020, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/diplomatic-challenges-from-the-muslimworld-11585154238694.html>; “Qureshi Asks OIC to Stop Dragging Feet on Kashmir Meeting,” *Dawn*, August 6, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1572857/qureshi-asks-oic-to-stop-dragging-feet-on-kashmir-meeting>; also see; Madiha Afzal, “The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Relationship Hits a Bump in the Road,” *Brookings Blog*, August 24, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/08/24/thepakistan-saudi-arabia-relationship-hits-a-bump-in-the-road/>

key partners, including Saudi Arabia. It is imperative for Pakistan's foreign office to manage these dynamics, striving to uphold a balanced foreign policy that accommodates its diverse international commitments and strategic interests. This balance is crucial for Pakistan to safeguard its relationships and enhance its standing on the global stage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolving partnership between Türkiye and Pakistan stands as a testament to the dynamic interplay of global, regional, and national factors that shape bilateral relations. This paper has delineated the economic, military, and political dimensions of their relationship, identifying the crisis in the international system, the rise of President Erdoğan to power, and the sprouting defence industry in Türkiye as critical catalysts for the deepened ties observed between the two nations.

The international system's ongoing upheavals have necessitated a reevaluation of traditional alliances and the forging of new partnerships, within which the Türkiye-Pakistan axis emerges as a significant development. The leadership of Erdoğan and the strategic pivot towards a more autonomous and assertive foreign policy, coupled with Türkiye's impressive strides in defence capabilities, have not only enhanced its partnership with Pakistan but have also set a precedent for middle powers seeking greater independence in the international arena.

As we look towards the future, it is evident that the Türkiye-Pakistan relationship is poised to ascend to new heights, driven by mutual interests, shared cultural and historical ties, and the pursuit of regional stability and economic prosperity. However, the path forward will require the careful navigation of existing challenges and the strategic leveraging of opportunities to ensure that this partnership not only endures but flourishes.

The paper underscores the necessity for both nations to continue exploring areas of potential collaboration, particularly in sectors like energy, infrastructure, and technology, to bolster their economic ties still further. Additionally, the importance of maintaining a balanced approach in foreign policy engagements is highlighted, ensuring that the

strengthening of ties with one nation does not come at the expense of other critical relationships.

In essence, the Türkiye-Pakistan alliance reflects a broader shift towards multi polarity in the global order, signifying the growing influence of middle powers in shaping the international landscape. As Türkiye and Pakistan continue to navigate the complexities of the 21st century together, their partnership not only holds promise for their respective national interests but also offers a model of cooperation that other states might look to emulate.