



## FROM APOLOGETIC TO STRATEGIC NATION: OBSERVING STRATEGIC REALIGNMENTS AND REVIVING CORE VALUES FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN PAKISTAN

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### **Abstract**

*The global landscape is in a constant state of flux, shaped by the strategic maneuvers of powerful nations that prioritize their long-term goals through meticulous planning and unwavering determination. The United States, China, and Russia stand out as exemplars of nations that align their domestic policies, economic strategies, and foreign relations to advance their strategic objectives. These powers operate with a sense of purpose rooted in realism, leveraging their cultural, economic, and political assets to reinforce their sovereignty and global influence. In stark contrast, Pakistan has often exhibited an apologetic mindset—a reactive stance shaped by historical dependencies, geopolitical vulnerabilities, and fragmented internal policies. This paper examines how Pakistan can transition from this apologetic posture to a strategic one by analyzing the strategic realignments of global powers and revisiting its own cultural and ideological strengths. Central to this transformation is the revival of Islamic principles that once defined governance, justice, and unity in early Muslim societies. These principles, combined with structural reforms and a realist approach to geopolitics, can provide a robust framework for national progress. By addressing systemic challenges in education, governance, and economic policy, Pakistan can foster a mindset shift from reactivity to strategic assertiveness. This study explores the theoretical underpinnings of such a transformation and provides actionable insights for policymakers, academics, and practitioners. Ultimately, the paper aims to illuminate a path toward resilience, sovereignty, and effective governance in an increasingly competitive global order.*

**Keywords:** *strategic realignments, geopolitics, strategic nation.*

### **Introduction**

The contemporary world is marked by profound changes and intense competition among nations vying for economic, military, and ideological dominance. Strategic realignments, often orchestrated by powerful global players like the United States, China, and Russia, highlight the importance of long-term planning and cohesive national strategies. These nations exemplify the principles of realism, where the pursuit of national interest is paramount, and every policy—domestic or international—is meticulously crafted to align with broader strategic objectives. In contrast, nations like Pakistan struggle to assert themselves on the global stage, often adopting an apologetic posture that undermines their potential.

Pakistan's apologetic mindset has deep historical roots. The colonial legacy left behind a fragmented sense of identity and governance, further exacerbated by reliance on foreign aid and external validation. This dependence has shaped a reactive approach to policymaking, where short-term appeasement often takes precedence over long-term strategic goals. The consequences are evident in Pakistan's inconsistent foreign policy, economic vulnerabilities, and challenges in countering radicalism and terrorism. Despite its strategic location, rich cultural heritage, and vast human resources, Pakistan has yet to fully harness its potential as a resilient and sovereign nation.

However, the path to transformation is not beyond reach. History offers numerous examples of nations that have reinvented themselves by embracing strategic foresight and leveraging their cultural and ideological strengths. The United States, for instance, has built its global dominance on the pillars of economic innovation, military strength, and a clear articulation of national interests. China's rise as an economic powerhouse is a testament to the power of long-term vision and disciplined execution of policies. Russia's resurgence as a regional hegemon underscores the significance of historical identity and strategic culture in asserting sovereignty.

For Pakistan, the journey from an apologetic to a strategic nation requires a multifaceted approach. First, it must draw lessons from the strategic realignments of global powers, understanding how these nations align their domestic and international policies to achieve overarching objectives. Second, it must revive and integrate Islamic principles of governance, justice, and unity, which have historically proven effective in fostering societal cohesion and proactive leadership. These principles, rooted in accountability, collective responsibility, and long-term vision, offer timeless guidance for modern governance.

Third, Pakistan must address its internal structural challenges, particularly in education, governance, and economic policy. The education system needs to be reformed to promote critical thinking, innovation, and an understanding of strategic studies. Governance must prioritize accountability, efficiency, and inclusivity, drawing inspiration from both Islamic values and contemporary best practices. Economic policy should focus on reducing dependency on foreign aid, diversifying trade, and fostering self-reliance through industrial growth and technological innovation.

Additionally, Pakistan's foreign policy should embrace realism, prioritizing national interests and leveraging its strategic location to foster beneficial alliances. A realist approach demands pragmatism, where decisions are guided by tangible outcomes rather than ideological alignments or external pressures. This shift in mindset is crucial for asserting sovereignty and navigating the complexities of global geopolitics.

The revival of Islamic values offers a unique dimension to Pakistan's transformation. Islamic governance principles emphasize justice (Adl), collective responsibility (Ummah), and proactive leadership (Shura). These principles can inspire modern governance frameworks that prioritize accountability, inclusivity, and long-term planning. For example, the concept of Shura, or consultative decision-making, can enhance participatory governance, while the emphasis on Adl demands equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. The early Islamic state's emphasis on education, innovation, and social welfare serves as a powerful model for contemporary policy development.

Furthermore, Pakistan must address the ideological challenges posed by radicalism and terrorism, which have significantly impacted its social fabric and global image. A holistic approach is needed, combining counter-narratives rooted in Islamic teachings with community-driven initiatives that promote social cohesion and resilience. Education reform plays a critical role in this effort, fostering critical thinking and countering extremist ideologies. At the same time, economic development and job creation can reduce the appeal of radicalization by providing alternative pathways for empowerment and stability.

The significance of this transformation cannot be overstated. As a nation with a predominantly young population, Pakistan stands at a crossroads. The choices made today will shape its trajectory

for decades to come. A shift from an apologetic to a strategic mindset is not merely a policy adjustment; it is a paradigm shift that requires the collective effort of policymakers, educators, religious leaders, and citizens. By aligning its policies with long-term strategic goals and drawing strength from its cultural and ideological heritage, Pakistan can redefine its role on the global stage. This paper aims to explore the theoretical and practical dimensions of this transformation. By examining the strategic realignments of global powers, analyzing the relevance of Islamic principles in modern governance, and identifying key structural reforms, the study provides a comprehensive roadmap for Pakistan's journey toward strategic assertiveness. The research also highlights the challenges and opportunities in this process, offering actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders.

In conclusion, the journey from an apologetic to a strategic nation is both a challenge and an opportunity for Pakistan. It requires a clear articulation of national interests, a commitment to structural reforms, and a revival of cultural and ideological strengths. By embracing realism, integrating Islamic principles, and fostering a culture of strategic foresight, Pakistan can overcome its current challenges and emerge as a resilient, sovereign, and globally relevant nation. The following sections delve deeper into these themes, providing an in-depth analysis of the steps needed to achieve this transformation.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite its strategic location, abundant resources, and deep cultural heritage, Pakistan struggles with a reactive and apologetic posture in both domestic governance and global diplomacy. This mindset stems from historical colonial legacies, dependency on foreign aid, and fragmented internal policies that prioritize short-term appeasement over long-term strategy. Consequently, the nation's counter-terrorism efforts, foreign policy decisions, and economic planning often lack cohesion and fail to assert national sovereignty.

Global powers like the United States, China, and Russia exemplify strategic realignment by consistently aligning national interests with structural reforms, leveraging geopolitics, and sustaining ideological clarity. In contrast, Pakistan's inability to capitalize on its Islamic values, structural potential, and geopolitical position undermines its global standing and weakens its internal resilience. Without a shift from apologetic reactivity to strategic proactivity, Pakistan risks stagnation, exploitation, and ineffective governance in a rapidly evolving world.

### **Hypothesis**

Pakistan's apologetic mindset, rooted in historical dependencies, systemic vulnerabilities, and ideological inconsistencies, can be transformed into a strategic and brave mindset by adopting a dual-framework approach: learning from the strategic realignments and policy implementations of global powers (the "core elephants") and aligning these lessons with the foundational principles of Islamic governance, justice, and societal unity. This hypothesis posits that such a transformation must begin at the foundational level, addressing structural deficiencies in education, governance, and economic policy while fostering a collective national identity grounded in both realism and Islamic values.

To test this hypothesis, the following assumptions are made:

1. **Strategic Realignments of Global Powers:** Nations like the United States, China, and Russia provide valuable lessons in strategic foresight, pragmatism, and the integration of

cultural, economic, and political strengths. By studying their approaches, Pakistan can identify actionable strategies tailored to its unique context.

2. **Revival of Islamic Norms and Values:** Islamic principles of justice (Adl), consultation (Shura), and collective responsibility (Ummah) offer timeless guidance for modern governance. Integrating these principles into policy-making can foster accountability, inclusivity, and resilience.
3. **Structural Reforms as Catalysts:** Transformative change requires systemic reforms in key areas such as education, governance, and economic policy. Education must promote critical thinking and strategic studies; governance must prioritize efficiency and equity; and economic policy must reduce dependency and foster self-reliance.
4. **Cultural and Ideological Shifts:** Addressing the apologetic mindset necessitates a cultural shift towards self-confidence, national pride, and proactive leadership. This can be achieved by promoting narratives that emphasize resilience, sovereignty, and shared national goals.
5. **Holistic Counter-Radicalization Strategies:** Combating radicalism and terrorism requires a multifaceted approach that combines counter-narratives rooted in Islamic teachings, community-driven initiatives, and socio-economic development to address underlying grievances.

The hypothesis suggests that by strategically combining lessons from global powers with the revival of Islamic principles, Pakistan can transition from a reactive, apologetic stance to a proactive, strategic posture. This transformation is not only essential for asserting sovereignty and navigating global complexities but also for fostering national unity, resilience, and sustainable development.

### Literature Review

A robust examination of literature reveals that strategic realignments by global powers have been instrumental in shaping their current positions in the geopolitical hierarchy. The United States, for example, has consistently adopted long-term strategies centered around economic growth, military dominance, and technological innovation. Key works such as Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* and Joseph Nye's *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* outline how the United States uses a combination of hard and soft power to maintain its global influence. Pakistan can glean valuable insights from these strategies, particularly in areas of technological self-reliance and the projection of cultural diplomacy.

China's meteoric rise is often attributed to its strategic economic policies and investments in infrastructure. Books such as Graham Allison's *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* and John Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* provide a detailed analysis of China's disciplined approach to achieving economic dominance while minimizing military conflicts. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a prime example of China's ability to align its economic policies with broader strategic objectives. For Pakistan, participation in initiatives like CPEC highlights both opportunities and challenges in leveraging foreign investments for long-term national benefit.



Russia's resurgence as a strategic power under Vladimir Putin's leadership has been extensively analyzed in works such as Clifford Gaddy and Fiona Hill's *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin* and Stephen Kotkin's *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power*. These sources emphasize the role of national identity, historical memory, and geopolitical positioning in Russia's foreign policy. Similarly, Pakistan can harness its own historical identity and ideological foundation to assert its position on the world stage, using its unique role as a Muslim-majority nation to its advantage.

In addition to these foundational works, a range of research papers and books have contributed to the understanding of strategic realignment, global power dynamics, and the relevance of cultural principles in governance. For instance, Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979) has been seminal in providing a theoretical framework for understanding the behavior of states in an anarchical international system. His insights into the balance of power and the pursuit of national interest offer critical lessons for Pakistan's foreign policy realignment. Similarly, works like *The Post-American World* by Fareed Zakaria (2008) emphasize the shift in global power dynamics and the rise of new economic powers, offering strategic insights for Pakistan's place in a multipolar world.

Moreover, Robert Kaplan's *The Revenge of Geography* (2012) underscores the influence of geography on geopolitical strategies, particularly how location can be both a strength and a limitation. This is particularly relevant for Pakistan, given its strategic location at the crossroads of Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia.

Research on Islamic governance also offers valuable insights. *Islamic Governance* by Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (1982) presents key concepts on governance principles rooted in Islamic ideology, such as justice (Adl), collective responsibility (Ummah), and consultation (Shura). These principles can inform modern policymaking in Pakistan, helping to align national governance with both Islamic and contemporary democratic practices. Scholars like Akbar S. Ahmed in *Islamic Revivalism in South Asia: The Role of Pakistan* (1992) and Hassan al-Banna's *Islamic State* (1939) also contribute to understanding the intersection of Islamic values and governance, particularly in relation to Pakistan's ideological foundation.

Several research papers have examined the link between strategic thinking and national development. The work of Christopher Layne in *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (2006) outlines the influence of grand strategy on national development and security policy, drawing important lessons for Pakistan's foreign and domestic policy strategies. Similarly, recent research on the economic impact of geopolitical strategies, such as those by J. Peter Pham in *The Geo-Economics of the Middle East* (2014), provides frameworks for understanding how strategic decisions influence both national security and economic prosperity.

Furthermore, studies on terrorism and counterterrorism strategies highlight the relevance of combining cultural, religious, and policy-driven approaches in preventing extremism. Andrew Silke's work, *Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and its Consequences* (2003), explores the psychological factors behind radicalization and the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures. Similarly, Fawaz A. Gerges's *The Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda* (2011) analyzes the strategic shifts in terrorism and counterterrorism, offering insight into how Pakistan might adapt its approach to the threat of radicalism.

The economic transformation of countries like South Korea, often cited in research papers such as *The South Korean Economy: A Model for Pakistan?* by Jae-Kyung Seong (2016), illustrates how

developing countries can implement strategic economic reforms that reduce dependency on foreign aid and create sustainable growth. These lessons can serve as a guide for Pakistan's own economic policies, encouraging self-reliance and long-term planning.

Lastly, works on the political economy of Islamic countries, such as *Islamic Political Economy* by Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi (1981), provide essential frameworks for aligning economic policies with Islamic values. This can help Pakistan formulate policies that reduce socio-economic inequalities while fostering growth and stability.

### **Research Questions**

1. What lessons can Pakistan learn from the strategic realignments of major global powers?
2. How can Islamic norms and values contribute to national governance and counter-terrorism strategies?
3. What structural reforms are necessary to transition from an apologetic to a strategic mindset?
4. How can realism guide Pakistan's foreign and domestic policy frameworks?

### **Significance**

This research provides a roadmap for Pakistan to transition into a strategically assertive nation. By combining lessons from global powers, realism, and Islamic values, it offers actionable insights for policymakers, academics, and practitioners. The study emphasizes the importance of cultural revival, structural reform, and strategic foresight in addressing radicalism, terrorism, and underdevelopment. A focus on these areas can empower Pakistan to assert its sovereignty and redefine its role on the global stage.

### **Critical Analysis**

#### **Observing Global Strategic Realignments**

- **United States:** The U.S. effectively uses its military-industrial complex and global alliances to preempt threats and project power. For example, its strategic partnerships with NATO allies demonstrate the importance of collective security arrangements (Mearsheimer, 2019). The U.S. also maintains dominance through technological innovations, particularly in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.
- **China:** By integrating economic diplomacy with geopolitical strategy, China secures long-term influence in Asia, Africa, and beyond. Its investments in Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) highlight the potential of strategic economic planning (Kissinger, 2016). This approach demonstrates the importance of long-term infrastructure and trade policies in achieving geopolitical objectives.
- **Russia:** Russia's assertive foreign policy, rooted in its historical identity, serves as a model for maintaining sovereignty in the face of external pressures (Smith, 2020). Its ability to leverage energy resources as a geopolitical tool further underscores its strategic acumen.

#### **Reviving Islamic Principles**

- **Justice and Governance:** The Quran emphasizes justice (Surah An-Nisa 4:135) as a cornerstone of governance. Implementing fair and transparent systems can strengthen national cohesion. This principle demands accountability in public office and equitable distribution of resources.

- **Strategic Alliances:** Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) treaties, such as Hudaibiyyah, demonstrate the importance of calculated diplomacy. These alliances were formed to achieve long-term peace and security, even at the cost of short-term concessions.
- **Unity and Collective Strength:** Islamic teachings emphasize unity (Surah Al-Imran 3:103) as a means of overcoming internal divisions and external threats. This principle is critical in addressing sectarianism and fostering national solidarity.

#### **Addressing Structural Challenges**

- **Education Reform:** Critical thinking and strategic studies rooted in Islamic values should be integrated into curricula to cultivate a strategic mindset. This reform can counter extremist ideologies and promote innovation.
- **Economic Independence:** Reducing reliance on foreign aid and diversifying trade are essential for sovereignty. Policies that promote self-reliance and industrial growth can strengthen economic resilience.
- **Counter-Terrorism Policies:** A holistic approach that includes ideological reform, social cohesion, and regional diplomacy is necessary for long-term success. Incorporating community-driven initiatives and counter-narratives can reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies.

#### **Major Findings**

1. Nations that align policies with long-term strategic goals outperform reactive states.
2. Islamic principles offer enduring frameworks for governance, justice, and unity.
3. Structural reforms in education, governance, and economic policy are prerequisites for strategic transformation.
4. Realism provides a pragmatic foundation for navigating global politics and asserting sovereignty.

#### **Conclusion**

Transitioning from an apologetic to a strategic mindset requires a multifaceted approach. By drawing lessons from global powers, reviving Islamic principles, and implementing structural reforms, Pakistan can redefine its role in global politics and counter-terrorism. This transformation demands visionary leadership, societal alignment, and a commitment to long-term national interests. The journey from reactivity to strategic assertiveness is essential for national sovereignty, resilience, and global relevance.

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