

## ABSTRACT

Pakistan established political and diplomatic links with France soon after its creation in 1947. Therefore, this study covers the period which starts from 1947 and ends in 2000. This is an in-depth research work of existing political, economic, defence and cultural relations between these two countries in the historical perspective. Pakistan-France reprocessing plant deal is also a part of this research and a whole chapter is reserved for this purpose. The theoretical framework of this study is Realist based on national interest approach combined with the balance of power theory. This study traces and analyses the political relations of Pakistan and France on three levels i.e., Domestic (Local/bilateral), Regional and Global. Initially, during the period from 1947 to 1962, the two countries did not come closer to each other politically at domestic (bilateral) level due to colonial aspect of French foreign policy. This situation changed when the French President, Charles de Gaulle, adopted the policy of decolonization and gave independence to Algeria in 1962. This new dimension of French Foreign Policy gave an impetus to Franco-Pakistan relations. Therefore, during the period 1962-2000, their relations improved significantly in all spheres of cooperation. Although the French decision about cancelation of nuclear reprocessing plant deal put some strain on these relations yet the two countries wisely restrained their differences to a certain extent and continued their cooperation in other fields. The political relations of Pakistan and France in the regional context have been discussed in the light of their interaction with India, Middle East and the Third World (Less Developed Countries). Their relations at global level have been dealt in the Cold War context. In a bipolar world, Pakistan was forced to ally herself with the United States due to security, economic, geo-strategic and geo-political reasons. France also stood on the United States' side during the Cold War. This common alliance of Pakistan and France with the United States was helpful in the promotion of their mutual interaction. These relations strengthened when both the countries became disillusioned with their common ally, United States, and tried to find new areas of cooperation out of the US sphere. French cooperation in the field of defence is also a significant and positive aspect of Franco-Pakistan relations. Pakistan has been facing constant external threats to its security since its independence. Therefore, in order to ensure its sovereignty and territorial integrity, it required foreign military assistance. France was one of the major sources in this regard. France, unlike the United States, sold its arms to Pakistan without imposing any political conditions. It continued the supply of arms and equipment even when the United States imposed an embargo in 1965, during India-Pakistan war of September 1965 and during 1990s. France also opposed the US efforts to introduce a

resolution in the UN Security Council to impose sanctions against Pakistan and declare it *aggressor* during 1965 war. This study also presents a detailed survey of Pakistan-France economic relations. The history of these economic relations reveals that the trade volume between them was too small during the first twenty years due to the fact that France was focusing more on 'Zone Franc' and European Economic Community (EEC) countries. Instead, Pakistan mostly linked economically to 'Dollar or Sterling' area. From the fiscal year 1965-66, these trade relations started changing when France concentrated more to take interest in trade with the countries other than 'Zone Franc'. Thus, from a modest start in the early 1950s, the volume of trade between Pakistan and France enhanced substantially at the end of the twentieth century. In dollar terms, the increase in the volume of trade between the two countries was 1267.93%. The French financial and technical support to Pakistan was also a noteworthy aspect of Franco-Pakistan economic relation. France has participated in the development process of Pakistan bilaterally as well as through the instrumentality of multilateral agencies since 1950s. It has provided financial aid to Pakistan mostly in the form of credits and loans. This French economic assistance to Pakistan has greatly helped in Pakistan's economic development. The cultural interaction of Pakistan and France binds somehow the two countries in this complex international arena. It is certainly a weak area of their relations which needs to be addressed. This study concluded that the relations between Pakistan and France were friendly in nature throughout the twentieth century because their national interests were converged during this period. The convergence of national interests of the two countries always resulted in a relationship of *Entente Cordiale*. Pakistan needed French support for its core issues like Kashmir, Afghanistan, relations with India, deteriorating economy, security and territorial integrity, acquisition of arms and equipment, and, in the recent years, war on terrorism. On the other hand, France knew well Pakistan's influence on Middle Eastern states especially Arab countries. Therefore, France extended her influence through Pakistan in these countries and became able to get contracts from them regarding her sales of arms and equipment and exports of industrial and agricultural goods and products. Pakistan also played mediator's role between France and Middle Eastern countries. This comprehensive study of Pakistan-France relations, covering the period 1947-2000, also testifies that even when the difference of opinion regarding world issues sometimes reached at superlative degree, both the countries tried to protect their bilateral relations consciously due to convergence of their respective national interests.