

## Summary

*This paper explores the deep-rooted bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye through the lens of public diplomacy, emphasizing on shared cultural values, historical ties, and strategic cooperation. It traces the origins of this connection to the Mughal era, highlighting Babur's innovative role in creating Urdu—a language that epitomises the fusion of Turkish and South Asian cultural elements. The paper examines early diplomatic and humanitarian engagements, such as Türkiye's War of Independence and notable contributions by figures like Abdul Rahman Peshawari, as well as the intellectual bond forged between poets Allama Muhammed Iqbal and Mehmed Akif. Following Pakistan's independence in 1947, the exemplary diplomatic relations, institutionalized cooperation, and symbolic milestones underscore a relationship built on mutual respect and shared purpose. In today's complex global landscape, this enduring alliance is presented as a model of public diplomacy that promotes sustainable development, economic growth, and regional stability. The study reaffirms that the strength of Pakistan–Türkiye partnership lies in its commitment to cultural, social, and ethical commonalities, guiding collaborative efforts towards a secure and prosperous future.*

## Strengthening Pakistan–Türkiye ties through shared Values and Cultural Bonds; Public Diplomacy Perspective.

*H.E. Dr. Yousaf JUNAID - Ambassador of Pakistan in Ankara, Türkiye*

Pakistan and Türkiye are often referred to as “One Nation, Two States,” a phrase that encapsulates a profound and enduring bond extending beyond mere political alliances. This relationship is not a modern construct but a deep-rooted connection forged through centuries of shared history, cultural exchange, and mutual influence. At its core, this bond reflects a synthesis of diverse traditions and values, ranging from linguistic and artistic endeavours to political and humanitarian engagements.

### Historical Background and Linguistic Legacy

Historically, the subcontinent—home to the ancestors of modern Pakistan—was predominantly a Hindu-dominated region before it was transformed by successive Muslim invaders and rulers. Among these, the Mughal Dynasty reached the pinnacle of power and cultural influence. Founded by Babur—a Turk from the Khawarizm region and a Turkic-speaking visionary—this dynasty not only established control over a land then known as Bharat but also encountered the challenge of unifying a predominantly Hindu society with its minority Muslim community. As a devout Muslim, Babur understood that language could serve as a bridge between diverse cultures and belief systems. Collaborating with some of the era's most eminent intellectuals, he pioneered the development of a new language—Urdu, derived from the Turkish word “Ordu” (meaning “army” or “camp”).

Urdu soon became the language of administration and communication, symbolising the fusion of Turkish cultural elements with local traditions. With the advent of the Mughal Empire, Turkish traditions, cuisine, and cultural practices were introduced and assimilated into the region. Today, Urdu contains approximately 6,500 words of Turkish origin—a testament to the fact that roughly 75 to 80 percent of its vocabulary is linked to Turkish. This phenomenon is not a coincidence but the outcome of a deliberate process initiated during Babur's era and the establishment of the Mughal Empire.

### Early Diplomatic and Humanitarian Engagements

The Muslims of the subcontinent now Pakistan had a very strong sense of reverence and attachment for the Ottoman Empire. Time and again, they stepped up to extend all possible support to thwart any threat against the Ottomans. When the Ottoman Empire was attacked by Russia in 1877, Hassanally Effendi, the founder of Sindh Madressatul Islam, came forward to support his Turkish brethren. Sultan Abdul Hamid was so impressed of his contributions towards the Turkish people, that he granted him two of the highest Turkish titles of ‘Effendi’ and ‘Bey’ in 1889.

During the Balkan war, the Muslims of the subcontinent sent a medical mission, led by Dr. Ansari to Istanbul in December 1912. This was neither the first nor the last act of its kind, Muslims of South Asia now Pakistan always stood with their Turkish brothers. They defied their colonial rulers, left their homes and donated their belongings in support of cause of Turkish independence. Hundreds of South Asian Muslims like Abdur Rehman Peshawari abandoned their homes to spend the rest of their lives for the defence of Turkish people and their land during the war of Turkish Independence. Abdul Rehman Peshawari was later appointed as Türkiye's first ambassador to Afghanistan, illustrating how early interactions laid the foundation for enduring Pakistan Türkiye bilateral relations.

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### **Cultural and Intellectual Bonds**

At that time, when Pakistan was still a subjugated part of the British Empire, poets and intellectuals played a pivotal role in fostering the connection between the two peoples. The spiritual and political thought of national poet of Pakistan, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, was inspired from great mystic poet Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, as well as the great historical upheavals faced by Ottoman Empire in his times. He wrote poems on Ottoman Turkiye. In 1912, he recited one of his poems 'Jawab-e-Shikwa' at a gathering in Lahore to raise funds for Turks wounded in the war. Such gatherings became platforms for expressing shared values and for mobilising support for Turkiye's liberation. One of the greatest poems of Iqbal Tule-e-Islam (Dawn of Islam) was inspired in 1923 by Turkish victories and is effused with the sense of great optimism and hope for the future of Turkish nation.

Moreover, the close friendship between Mehmed Akif and Allama Iqbal further cemented these ties. Both thinkers, through their regular exchanges and mutual respect, advocated for the renaissance of Islam, independence from imperial domination, and the unity of Muslims. Their intellectual camaraderie not only inspired their contemporaries but also symbolised the broader cultural and political bond between Pakistan and Turkiye.

### **Post - Independence Diplomatic Relations**

Turkiye was among the first countries to recognize Pakistan. When the two countries established diplomatic relations after the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the centuries old legacy of friendship and brotherhood acquired a new vigor and set the tone for the future relations between modern states of Pakistan and Turkiye. Malik Feroz Khan Noon visited Turkiye as a special envoy of the then Governor General Quaid-e-Azam and represented Pakistan at the National day celebrations in Ankara on 29 October 1947. The importance given to diplomatic ties between the two countries can be easily inferred from the fact that renowned Turkish poet Yahya Kemal Beyatli was appointed as Turkiye's first ambassador to Pakistan. Also, Mian Bashir Ahmed, the first ambassador of Pakistan to Turkiye, was a leading luminary of Urdu literature.

In essence, the diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Turkiye are a manifestation of a unique friendship, marked by the convergence of views and perspectives on issues of regional and international importance. Both countries laid the foundation for a common regional approach for peace and development, by constituting Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), between Pakistan, Iran and Turkiye in

1964. The RCD became Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1985, with the joining of other member states from Central Asia. Both countries have consistently and unequivocally supported each other on issues of national security as well as core national interest including Jammu and Kashmir dispute and the Cyprus issue. In continuation of the abiding tradition of always standing by each other, the leadership and people of Pakistan conveyed their strong support and solidarity for the democratic institutions of Turkiye and was amongst the first countries to unequivocally condemn the coup attempt on 15th July 2016. Likewise, Turkiye has always supported Kashmiri right to self-determination at all international fora.

The mutual affection of our countries is deep, sincere and abiding. Be it floods in Pakistan or an earthquake in Turkiye, both countries are the first to respond with unprecedented support. In case of floods in Pakistan, support was not limited to the official assistance, spontaneous outpouring of sympathy, compassion and solidarity of people from all walks of life was noteworthy. President Erdogan was the first foreign leader to visit areas affected by 8th October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. In 2023, when earthquakes known as 'disaster of the century' hit Turkiye, Pakistani search and rescue teams, were the first international teams to reach Adiyaman, one of the worst hit city by earthquake. All resources in Pakistan were immediately mobilized to the help of our Turkish brothers and the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif himself visited earthquake hit region to console the Turkish brothers. Also, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had visited Turkiye in August 1999 to personally convey condolences on behalf of people of Pakistan after earthquake in Yolova and Izmit.

### **Institutionalised Cooperation and Symbolic Milestones**

Building on strong foundation, both countries have successfully transformed their historic and unparalleled ties into a strategic partnership with the formation of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) in 2010, co-chaired by leadership of Pakistan and Turkiye. HLSCC aims to deepen bilateral cooperation in areas including trade and investment, culture, tourism, health, energy, IT, transport, agriculture and other.

This connection is further symbolised by milestones such as the issuance of commemorative stamps featuring dignitaries from both brotherly countries, roads named after Jinnah in Ankara and Ataturk in Islamabad, Recep Tayyip Erdogan interchange in Islamabad and Iqbal Mosque in Konya, Istanbul square in Lahore and Pakistan Turkiye Friendship School in Van.

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### **Contemporary Context and Public Diplomacy**

Today, as the world faces unprecedented polarisation and complexity—with countless stakeholders, diverging national interests, and competing superpower agendas—both Pakistan and Türkiye continue to occupy strategically important positions. Despite turbulent neighbourhoods and global uncertainties, the two countries enjoy a harmonious relationship built on heartfelt diplomacy. In this context, public diplomacy transcends mere statecraft; it is an expression of a purposeful, sustained commitment to the development of both nations. The goals are clear: to foster economic, social, cultural, and linguistic strength; to bolster international defence; and to work together for a secure and prosperous future.

### **Conclusion**

Friendships between nations, like those between individuals, are founded on common values, a shared history, and mutual support. The bond between Pakistan and Türkiye goes beyond mere diplomatic ties—it is a relationship built on trust, affection, and unwavering solidarity. From the early 20th century and even before Pakistan's independence, Türkiye has remained one of Pakistan's staunchest allies. Their mutual advocacy in international forums, cultural exchanges, and educational collaborations has strengthened this enduring friendship. The growing number of Pakistani students in Turkish universities and numerous academic partnerships reflect a shared commitment to investing in a common future. The strategic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye extends to defence and trade, with both countries collaborating on various projects that contribute to regional stability. Yet, despite longstanding ties, there remains untapped economic potential, as trade volumes have not reached optimal levels. The future of Pakistan and Türkiye is deeply intertwined, with the prosperity of each nation linked to the other. In today's multidimensional world—shaped by shifting alliances and complex international dynamics—the shared vision for their partnership must prioritise sustainable development, economic growth, and robust international defence strategies.

Ultimately, the true strength of the Pakistan–Türkiye alliance lies in its selfless, mutual commitment, which fosters resilience and unity in an unpredictable global landscape. Anchored in cultural, social, ethical, and linguistic commonalities, this deep-rooted fraternity will continue to guide collaborative efforts toward shared progress and collective security. Long live Pakistan Türkiye Friendship.

### **About the Author**

**H.E. Dr. Yousaf JUNAID** - *Ambassador of Pakistan in Ankara, Türkiye*

Ambassador Yousaf Junaid was born in Lahore, Pakistan. He holds an MBBS degree from Allama Iqbal Medical College in Lahore. He served as a captain doctor in the Pakistan Army before joining the Commerce and Trade Group of the Central Superior Services of Pakistan. Since 1986, he has held various positions in the Ministry of Commerce and other departments, including: Director General, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, Director, Commercial Trading Corporation of Pakistan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Chairman, Punjab Board of Investment and Trade, Commercial Secretary at Pakistan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Consul General of Pakistan in Istanbul (2009-2017). Since 2022, he has served as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Pakistan to the Republic of Türkiye. He is proficient in English, Urdu, Punjabi, and elementary Turkish. In addition to his distinguished professional achievements, the ambassador is also a proud father of three sons.

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Throughout history, shaping the perceptions of societies has been one of the most fundamental elements of domestic and foreign policy. As the nation-state structure became widespread and nation-states emerged as the main actors in international relations, public diplomacy along with traditional diplomacy began to play a crucial role in shaping these relations.

Diplomatic relations between states are conducted by diplomats, including ambassadors and consuls. These diplomats also engage in public diplomacy, which serves a vital function in interstate relations. Public diplomacy activities have a significant impact not only on the citizens of a state but also on its leaders. Public diplomacy plays a pivotal role in shaping the relations between states alongside other diplomatic activities.

The aim of the project Public Diplomacy in Foreign Policy conducted in collaboration with Cappadocia University and Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM) is to discuss the principles for implementing public diplomacy, identify key activities and highlight public diplomacy efforts undertaken by foreign diplomats in Türkiye. The ultimate goal is to contribute to shaping Turkish Foreign Policy and influencing decision-making processes.

For detailed information about the project;  
<https://commonhorizon.kapadokya.edu.tr/> You can reach us from the address.

**Prof. Dr. Şafak OĞUZ**

Prof. Dr. Şafak OĞUZ became an Associate Professor in 2019 and a full Professor in 2024. He retired in 2021 after 23 years of service in the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). During his time there, he also worked for the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). His expertise lies in Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism (WMD), International Security, International Organizations and Peace and Conflict Studies. Prof. Dr. Şafak OĞUZ currently serves as the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences at Cappadocia University. He is fluent in English and German.

**Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin EROL**

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin EROL graduated from the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University (BU) in 1993. After completing his Master's Degree at BU in 1995, he was accepted to the PhD program at BU in the same year. After completing his PhD at Ankara University in 2005, Prof. Erol became an Associate Professor in 2009 in the field of "International Relations" and a full Professor in 2014. His areas of expertise are "Geopolitics", "Crisis Management", "Security", "Turkish Foreign Policy" and "Central Asia".

Prof. Erol has published numerous scientific articles and books on these subjects. He is the author and editor of various journals such as Eurasia File, Black Sea Studies, Gazi Akademik Overview, Journal of Regional Studies, International Crisis and Political Studies and contributor for national radio-television programs such as TRT, A HABER, TV NET, CNN TÜRK and HABERTÜRK.

Prof. Erol, whose opinions have been published in Turkey's leading magazines and newspapers has been deemed worthy of many awards, including Writers and Artists Foundation of the Turkic World (TÜRKSAV) in 2007, "Turkish World Service Award" in 2015 and Writers' Union of Turkey (TYB) "Press-Intellectual Award".

Prof. Erol has lectured at Ufuk, Ankara and Gazi Universities. As a faculty member in the Department of Relations at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, he served as an expert, coordinator and founder president in Türkiye's leading think tanks (ASAM, SDE, GSAM, USGAM). He has been the founding chairman of Ankara Crisis and Politics Research Center (ANKASAM) since 2016.