

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR TO COUNTER SECURITY CHALLENGES IN COLD WAR ERA

Prof. Dr. Mussarat Jabeen*

Abstract:

In today's globalized world, states adopt foreign policy according to their needs and interests. They define their role keeping in view their explicit goals in international affairs and describe their position through certain facts and factors. Moreover, each state has its own priorities and proclivities in policy-making, which are rooted in its territorial location, historical traditions and political culture. In the cold war years, Pakistan's security concerns led it to search and test various options. The rival surrounding and the threat perception forced it to pursue defense-oriented policies. From the early days of independence, threats were being faced even to the very existence of the country. The initial clashes with India occupied central place in determining the dimension of foreign policy and complete range of outward ties circulated around it. The objective of the paper is to analyze the foreign policy of Pakistan, viewing the setting of the cold war, which determined its behavior and direction. Pakistan had to join the defense alliances to secure its position against hostile environment. However, it has to opt for non-alignment and nuclearization. Here is the question about those circumstances, which compel Pakistan to pick the specific options, paying a high cost for security. Reviewing available literature and viewing the empirical evidences, the paper has hypothesized that in quest of security, weaker states have been forced by the powerful states to pursue policies under their instruction, which are directly or indirectly secure the interests of powerful actors with rare chances of free options. It is recommended that in search of security, Pakistan has to determine its own direction, without compromising on its policies as the rational choice minimize the loss.

Key Words: Security, cold war, alliance partnership, Soviet invasion, Afghanistan.

Introduction

Policy-making involves certain ideological, philosophical, historical, and domestic factors and standards. Additionally, the geostrategic setting, economic resources, military power, political culture, and global environment all have an impact on the policy at a given time. All of these factors act independently or in collaboration, resulting in a perplexing blend of coordination and conflict in the formulation of foreign policy. Due to diverse state systems of

* PhD & Professor (IR) in University of Sargodha

today's world, it is challenging to generalise the effects of a single element or a set of related factors. One must have to distinguish between worldwide trends and national interests in order to gauge a factor's relative influence on policy decisions.

In world politics, skillful dealing of state's external relations are crucial for survival and security, whereas economic resources and political stability might support in attainment of foreign policy agenda. The purpose of the paper is to analyze the policies chosen by Pakistan in the cold war era, examining the decisions of the policy-makers in apprehending the global milieu. To look into those circumstances, which push Pakistan to follow these policies, the paper has reviewed the literature to assess the state of affairs, which has been cited. It has employed interpretative qualitative approach to get a broader view of the policy of cold war years. This approach is in contrast to positivism and explains that reality is socially constructed, subjective, and a compound of various viewpoints. The paper is divided into twelve headings. First is "seeking security and policy choices," the second covers "Pakistan's Partnership in Security Alliances and Indian Factor." The third is about "NAM and the Sino-India War of 1962." The fourth is about "Development of China-Pakistan Friendship," while "Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971" are at six number. The seventh is "secession of East Pakistan 1971 and Simla Agreement of 1972." The eighth is "Communist attack at Afghanistan" and ninth is "Afghan Crisis and Pakistan's Offer of no War Pact to India." "Afghan issue and Pakistan" is the tenth heading and "End of Cold War with Disenchanted Allies" is at eleventh number, whereas last heading is conclusion.

In Quest of Security and Policy Choices

Examining Pakistan's foreign policy over the years, it is observed that security issues and defence perspectives remained fundamental dynamics. As a result, Pakistan's external relations

focus on the pursuit of security, which led to boost the defence capabilities against threats resulting from the uneven distribution of material resources, military might, and high-tech. Defense policy plays a crucial role in state security and helps in articulating regional and international interests. It is greatly influenced by defence strategy, which also helps in expressing national, regional, and global objectives.

Dominant factor in Pakistan's policy-making remained the defence against the arch-enemy with hegemonic designs. This inherited weaknesses forced Pakistan to follow a defense-oriented policy since its independence. Burke identified this aspect and wrote that throughout Pakistan, only four aircrafts were available to participate celebration of independence-day in 1949. East Pakistan, located closer to India was, almost an island. It had two infantry battalions, but not properly equipped with weapons and even maps of the region were not available to them.¹

As a nascent state, Pakistan was struggling for survival. Formulating a balanced foreign policy with rational choices was an uphill task. This period had viewed an extraordinary turmoil, marked by many ups and downs. The Indian leaders never aspired for a divided India due to their cultivated ambitions of a greater power and this wishful thinking had been remained on priority agenda since the birth of the political party, All Indian National Congress in the late 19th century. The aspiration for making India a world power was cherished long before the independence. Its aim was not only to gain prestige but also a hidden design for dominate over the neighbors.² Moreover, relations between the Hindus and the Muslim were unfriendly and their mutual dealing was characterized with hostility as was evident from their political parties; Indian

¹ S.M. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

² M. Mukherjee, *Situating India in Asia: The Nehru Years* (2009).

http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/rp/publications/no09/09_09_Mukherjee.pdf

National Congress (Hindus) and Muslim League (Muslims). This legacy was inherited by both states, which threw them in conflicting and confrontational relations. Moreover, India's partition for creation of a new Muslim state intensified the animosity, which added bitterness to their relations persistently. The prime cause was the controversial territories, particularly Jammu and Kashmir, which took the center place in Pakistan's foreign policy, forcing the country to join the western block and its security alliances CEATO (Central Treaty Organization) and SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty Organization) for security purpose and monetary benefits. Keeping this trend in foreign policy, it is noticed that contours of early policy were characterized by security threats, mainly arising from a hostile India and somewhat unfriendly Afghanistan. The policy-makers had no choices, but to focus on these spheres while defining policies. This situation led to embrace those strategies, which were appropriate to counter these security threats. Pakistan's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan received invitation from the Soviet Union, but he preferred American visit at a time when alliance partnership was not formally accepted. He expressed a desire for goodwill and friendly relations with the US and explained Pakistan's cooperation with the West as its duty to stabilize the region due to its geo-strategic significance.³ This trend became an inherent part of the policy in the following years.

Pakistan's Partnership in Security Alliances and Indian Factor

To understand the direction and behavior of Pakistan's foreign policy, it's important to assess the country's relations with India. At the same time, the security threats, challenges to the state's integrity and accessible options require to be examined thoroughly. The disputed territories pushed the two countries into war within one year of partition in 1948. A mandated ceasefire was gained in Kashmir in 1949 through the United Nations. This ceasefire line divided

³ Liaquat Ali Khan, *Pakistan: the Heart of Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

Kashmir, creating a constant source of conflict. India continued the hostilities, aggregating its military strength in all areas. This military imbalance forced the country to strengthen its defence competencies. Both countries continued blame game, accusing each other for conflicts on disputed territories, creating a turbulent and volatile security environment in South Asia. These circumstances less or more paved the way for joining the US-designed security alliances. The subsequent parts of the paper highlight policy choices and options.

The post-World War II era brought about a polarization with superpowers' search of gaining unique control, testing their defense capabilities, and competing for global influence. This antagonism pushed the world towards the Cold War. The superpowers' rivalry also led to cooperation and conflict among their allies, creating an atmosphere of insecurity. States with strategic locations could not have a risk-free choice and were forced to join one power or sided with the other. This environment not only created constant competition for the big players but also dragged the other countries in arena. Generally, when a neighbouring or any other state is perceived as enemy, defensive measures or political coercion are applied to deter it on a comparatively stronger way or at least with equal power. The rival also senses to be attacked or it must withstand the external pressure at the same moment.⁴ Indo-Pak mutual mistrust paints a similar image, making them contestants in all fields.

Pakistan joined the US-designed alliance system for a better status with a stronger military and financial position. Ostensibly the US was leaning towards Pakistan, but at the same India was viewed as a major power. Pakistan accepted the alliance offer, despite knowing the fact that India's refusal forced the US to include Pakistan. The declassified documents of later

⁴ Mussarat Jabeen & M. S. Mazhar, Security Game: SEATO and CENTO as Instrument of Economic and Military Assistance to encircle Pakistan. *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, vol. 49, no.1 (2011), 132.

years showed that India was more alert regarding Stalin-inspired communist threats in comparison to Pakistan.⁵ Pakistan's participation in the security alliance infuriated and angered the Soviet Union. It had to make some compromises on the non-aligned position, but the allies' lack of freedom of action and their identity was distasteful. Without offering any aid package or security assurance to Pakistan to keep it away from alliances, the Soviets viewed Pakistan as a rival state. It was observed that the Soviet Union was satisfied with Pakistani position, which provided it an opportunity to strengthen relationship with India as the later was already posing threat from the American aid to Pakistan. The US wanted to get rights of Pakistani military bases to secure its position in South Asia.⁶ The Soviet Union warned Pakistan and expressed its apprehensions about providing military bases to the US, allowing the later to establish "a military offensive bloc in the Middle East."⁷ Pakistan clarified its position, but Soviet leaders persisted in charging Pakistan for ceding rights to the Americans for utilizing Makran coast. Even Radio Moscow broadcasts accused the US of having a covert agreement to secure access to Pakistani air, naval, and military bases.⁸ However, Pakistan reiterated its decision of taking all measures for its security, and in the fulfilment of this fundamental duty and other obligations imposed upon it, Government would take all those actions that might be fit and adequate. In return, the Soviet Union showed its displeasure by supporting India in its disputes with Pakistan, especially Kashmir. It vetoed almost every resolution supporting a plebiscite in Kashmir in the UN Security Council, notably one in 1957. The Soviet vetoes jeopardized all attempts for

⁵ Stephen P. Cohen, *India Emerging Power* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001).

⁶ R. Sardar, *Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan and its Implications for Pakistan* (Doctoral Dissertations 1985), Published in February 2014. 1985865. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/1865.

⁷ Hafeez-ur-Rehman, Pakistan Relations with the USSR, *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1961): 42

⁸ Mehrunnisa Ali, Pakistan Foreign Policy: Trend and challenges of the eighties in Mehrunnisa Ali Ed. *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1998* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 258.

resolution of Kashmir dispute.⁹ Prior to security alliances, the Soviet Union remained neutral in the UN Security Council resolution on Indo-Pak War was in 1949.¹⁰ In the changing scenario, the Soviet Union not only sided with India but also favoured Afghanistan on its demand for Pakhtoonistan.¹¹ The demand in its extreme form was the question of integrity of Pakistan, which challenged the present status of the North-West Territories. In contrast, the Americans were mildly supportive of these issues, and extended verbal support on recognizing the Durand Line as the international border between the two states. Regarding Kashmir issue, a generous neutrality was displayed by it. Additionally, during the border war with China in 1962, India enjoyed huge American military and economic benefits, despite having pro-Soviet inclinations.¹² Adding the negative impression, Moscow showed its resentment on Islamabad's position and role in Kabul, criticizing and condemning its involvement in Afghan crisis, which only served to exacerbate the already embroiled situation. Explaining the cause of tense relations, the Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan, Valiliy S. Smirnov expressed the three barriers in Pak-Soviet ties and the major one was the backing of counterrevolutionaries in Afghanistan. He claimed that direct talks between the two neighbours were necessary and Islamabad had the key to resolve the Afghan problem, not Moscow or Kabul.¹³ Moscow further charged Pakistan of aiding rebel armed groups fighting against the Afghan government. Despite these allegations and warnings, Pakistan received Soviet economic assistance and cooperation in various projects and trade was also offered beside cultural exchange programmes at public and private levels.¹⁴ Simultaneously,

⁹ S. Mehmood, *Pakistan Political Roots & Development 1947-1999* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁰ K. S. Hasan, Ed., *Documents on the Foreign Relations of Pakistan: The Kashmir Question* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1966).

¹¹ Mahmood, *Pakistan Political...*

¹² Sardar, *Soviet Intervention...*

¹³ Soviet Envoy Optimistic about Solution of Afghanistan issue, *Dawn*, (March 10, 1983).

¹⁴ K. Quraish, Pakistan and USSR. *Horizon*, no. 27, (University of Karachi, 1974).

the Soviet propaganda and allegations continued and it never missed any opportunity of showing its displeasure and annoyance towards Pakistan.

American bond was full of dangers, having its own consequences. Pakistan attempted to follow the least risky path. Instead of standing beside the US for checkmating the Soviet expansionism, it sought to focus on its own security, distancing itself from power politics and rivalry of superpowers. It improved relations with neighbours.¹⁵ Nevertheless, peace in the region was not possible in presence of main territorial disputes.

The aid-oriented nature of foreign policy pushed Pakistan towards security alliances. The nascent country's weak economy and security required a steady flow of funds from friendly countries and international institution like the World Bank, the IMF, etc. In coming times, the leadership did not pursue those policies, which could help in getting out this quagmire, citing a number of factors such as rapid population growth and underdeveloped infrastructure. Consequently, heavy reliance on foreign funding and loans pressurized the policy-makers. Uninterrupted flow of aid was ensured by each government, which resulted in compromises on various levels of state policies. Moreover, all governments, either civil or military, kept defence at top priority in budget, linking it to the South Asian security situation. This trend led to a multifold increase in defence expenditure, which had been accounted for 30 to 70 percent of the total budget since Pakistan's inception.¹⁶

NAM and Sino-India War 1962

India was included in those countries, which were desirous of keeping distance from the superpowers due to their hostile perspectives. Yugoslavia, Egypt, Indonesia and several other countries followed this policy and started the NAM (Non-Alignment Movement), a bloc of

¹⁵ Ali, Pakistan Foreign.

¹⁶ Pakistan Military Expenditure 1956-2018. <https://tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/military-expenditure>.

neutral countries. NAM was aimed to distance from both superpowers, making a bloc of neutral countries with a colonial past. The bloc was willing to prevent the imperialistic designs of the West. Former Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin called it a hoax, while Chinese leader Mao-Tse Tung was not convinced with the third path. Even before July 1948, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had described neutralism as “immoral” and India as “fence sitter.”¹⁷ However, the influence of other powers was secondary due to domination of superpowers in world politics.

In 1962, a border war broke out between China and India. The US, Soviet Union along with Canada, Britain and Australia equipped India with significant military and economic aid.¹⁸ Every defense component of the Indian Army was modernized and upgraded. It seemed that the West was overtaking the Soviet Union in supplying the modern arms to India against China. India and the US developed close intelligence and tactical ties to control Chinese nuclear program and its access to nuclear technology.

India shifted its focus away from economic growth and preferred defense procurement and launched a 5-year defence strategy to modernise its armed forces and increase its ability to produce weapons. With the assistance of Western experts, the project undergone numerous updates and revisions. The militarization of India disturbed the regional strategic balance and weakened Pakistan's defence capability. Islamabad was convinced that New Delhi would deploy the acquired military hardware against Pakistan, and that China was only a "bogey" for Western-made stockpiles of highly advanced weapons.¹⁹

¹⁷ Kilaru Ram Rao, *India, United States and Pakistan: A Triangular Relationship* (Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1985), 36.

¹⁸ A. Goswami, *3D, Deceit, Duplicity, Dissimulation of US Foreign Policy towards India, Pakistan and Afghanistan* (Bloomington: Author House, 2012), 146.

¹⁹ Mohammed Ayub Khan, *Friends' not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

Despite tense relations between the two nations, John Foster Dulles pleaded for aid to India out of worry for the 350 million people, who would be lost to communism, making it the ideology of the half of world's people. A letter from American President Eisenhower was forwarded to Indian Prime Minister Nehru by American ambassador to India George Allen who was in contact with Indian authorities. Allen was given instructions to ensure that Pakistan would not employ US military assistance against India. Furthermore, the US was not seeking to make Pakistan the dominant state of South Asia. At Indian Ambassador Mehta's request, financial assistance under PL-480 was also provided.²⁰ Under this project, Washington supplied thousands tons of food grains and food products to India during the famine. However, American shipment of arms to India, was resented by Pakistan, arguing that weapons would trigger enmity in already tense situation between the two states.²¹ Disappointed by the circumstances, Pakistan strove to strengthen its ties with the Soviet Union and refused to back the American position in Vietnam. The border conflict favoured India in securing significant amount of American aid. By 1959, the total US assistance was \$1,705 million, of which US\$93 million came in the form of food and cereals.²² Additionally, it gave \$120 million of military assistance. In 1964, the US agreed to provide \$2.9 billion to Pakistan and \$5.2 billion to India, under a long-term programme.²³ Cohen confirmed that Pakistan received less aid in comparison to India from 1954 to 1965.²⁴

²⁰ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Africa and South Asia, (Part 2). Eds. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, Document 628, 1983). <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v11p2/d628>

²¹ Goswami, *3D, Deceit...*, 145

²² A.H. Syed, *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of Entente Cordial* (New York: Oxford University Press 1974), 81.

²³ CIA (September 30, 1965). <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79R00904A001200010011-8>.

²⁴ Cohen, *India Emerging...*, 170

Development of China-Pakistan Friendship

Sino-Soviet rapprochement ended in the decade of sixties, surfacing their respective versions of communism that moved them to logger heads.²⁵ Changing situation brought India closer to the Soviets, strengthening mutual ties and funding for the Indian military. This courtship indirectly benefitted Pakistan, increasing its friendship with China. In 1963, demarcation of 300 miles long border was settled in favour of Pakistan. Both countries decided to construct a parallel road to the old silk route, which was to link Pakistan with China's autonomous region named Xingjian-Uygur. In 1978, Silk Road was officially inaugurated after its completion and was opened for traffic.²⁶ In addition, trade agreements and civil aviation projects were signed, making Pakistan International Airline (PIA) as the first non-communist airline to operate between the two countries.²⁷ All these efforts were to counter the growing military imbalance in South Asia. Pak-China relations also cast a shadow on Pak-Soviet relations. China ignored the US reservations and provided aid to Pakistan during the period of arm embargo imposed during 1965 war. At that time, the US did not formally recognized China.

Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971

An Indo-Pak war started in September 1965. The US stopped aid to both countries and imposed an arms embargo. It severely undermined Pakistan's power as the US was its major source of military hardware. On the other hand, the Soviet Union stopped supplying arms to India during the war, but within weeks, it resumed arms supply, raising its embargo. President

²⁵Hasan Askari Rizvi, Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Overview 1947-2004. *Pildat Briefing Paper 11* (April, 2004), 15.

²⁶ Mussarat Jabeen, Developments in Pak-China strategic alliances. *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2012, February), 2.

²⁷ A. R. Malik, *Pakistan-Japan Relations: Continuity and Change in Economic Relations and Security Interests* (London: Routledge, 2008).

John declined Ayub's request for becoming mediator after the war. American embargo continued and ban was partially eased on spare parts and non-lethal materials in 1967. The US also refused to sell one hundred more A-7 jet fighter to Pakistan.²⁸ The US was plunged in domestic discontent at that time due to Vietnam War, which forced Johnson to abstain from involving in distanced regions.

The Soviet Union acted as a broker and facilitated dialogues between India and Pakistan, moving to the Tashkent Declaration in 1966. The decreased American role in the reconciliation, increased the Soviet impact in South Asia. Additionally, American demand for the renewal of the lease of Badeber base (Peshawar) in 1968, was rejected by Pakistan.²⁹ The Americans misused the base in the name of a communications center. The truth came out in 1962 when spy plane U-2 and its pilot Francis Geary were captured by the Soviet Union. The plane flew from Peshawar airfield and was taking pictures of Soviet atomic installations. Soviet Premier Khrushchev warned Pakistan, but diplomatic efforts normalized the relationship.³⁰

During the years of 1956 to 1965, about economic aid of six billion dollars was received by India from the US, while it provided half of it to Pakistan. After becoming an ally in security alliances of SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan received American arms, while India received huge military aid without allying to any power and purchased large quantities of military hardware from other sources such as Britain.³¹ Ayub Khan attributed the position of alliance as an outcome of the circumstances, which forced Pakistan to follow this policy. He further explained the geographical location and shared borders with China, India and indirectly with the Soviet

²⁸ *The New York Times*, January 2, 1980, p. A12.

²⁹ K. Hyder, United States and the Indo-Pak War of 1971, in Ali (Ed.), *Readings in...*9-10.

³⁰ Jabeen & Mazhar, *Security Game...*

³¹ Cohan, *India Emerging...*

Union.³² Thinking about normal relations with India was a far-fetched idea. Despite efforts, improved relations with other neighbours could not be maintained. However, the US remained on the priority agenda, but it was walking on a tight rope due to situation.

In August 1971, Treaty of Friendship was signed by India and the Soviet Union. Its Article nine ensured aid to India, not merely a promise. In the later years, declassified documents showed that the US had no doubts about poor defence capabilities of Pakistan and was aware of the reality that an arms embargo would have serious implications for Pakistan's defence because of its reliance on the US as a prime source of supply.³³ It was the American policy that forced Pakistan to buy arms and required material from other sources. China helped Pakistan and became a major supplier of arms after the 1965 war. Pakistan bought arms from Iran and Turkey, while in coming times, weapons from the Western markets were acquired like Britain, Germany, Italy and France. The Soviet Union also supplied helicopters, tanks and other equipment to Pakistan from 1968 to 1970.³⁴ The separation of East Pakistan in 1971 made Pakistan even more resentful and alienated from the military alliance.

Secession of East Pakistan 1971 and Simla Agreement 1972

In 1971, Pakistan had to lose its eastern wing due to internal difference and grievances. India exploited the situation and interfered in Pakistan's domestic crisis and a war started between the two countries. Pakistan military was trapped in eastern wing, which was one thousand miles away from the West Pakistan. The military and other persons were imprisoned by India after fall of Dhaka. Pakistan had to bring back these 90,000 soldiers/civilians from Indian prison. Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto went to India and held several rounds of

³² Khan, Friends' not...

³³ CIA.

³⁴ H. Malik, *Soviet-Pakistan Relations and Post-Soviet Dynamics, 1947-92* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 291.

talks for release of prisoners and solutions to other issues. Finally, the prime ministers of the two countries signed the Simla Agreement on July 2, 1977. This agreement was to release the prisoners, but it caused a fundamental change in two-way relations. Efforts were made to resolve several conflicting aspects of the past relations, focusing on long-lasting cordial relations for regional peace and stability. In accordance with this agreement, India steadily decreased its support for rebels and opposition groups in KPK (Western Frontier Province) and Balochistan provinces of Pakistan.³⁵ Furthermore, regarding the LoC (line of control), Simla Agreement (1972) said, “resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side and neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations.”³⁶

Additionally, both sides agreed to avoid threatening or using force against one another or violation of the LoC. The Article four stated that the representatives of the two parties would meet to further examine the terms and concerns relating to the settlement of the disputed matters like the return of “prisoners of war and civilian internees.” The solution to Kashmir dispute and renewal of diplomatic relations were also discussed. Exploiting the situation in the wake of agreement, India called Kashmir issue as a mutual matter to be settled through bilateral talks. Clarifying its stance, Pakistan declared that accord was an outcome of Indo-Pak wars, and could not abrogate the Kashmiris’ right of self-determination and the commitments made by the UN forum remained intact.

³⁵ Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2005: a Concise History* (Karachi: Oxford University press, 2007).

³⁶ Agreement on Bilateral Relations between the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan (Simla: Simla Agreement, July 2, 1972).

https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IN%20PK_720702_Simla%20Agreement.pdf

Communist Attack on Afghanistan

In December 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan completely transformed the geo-strategic situation of South Asia. Since the World War II, for the first time, Soviet military power was used outside the Iron Curtain against a non-aligned state. The issue took center stage in world politics when 80,000 to 100,000 Soviet troops stormed in Afghanistan, killing the President of Afghanistan Hafizullah Amin, who succeeded Nur Muhammad Taraki after his assassination in October 1979. A revolutionary communist politician of Afghanistan Babrak Karmal became the president.³⁷ Despite the pro-Soviet Afghan regime, the march of Soviet troops was resented. The attack also brought Red Army at Pak-Afghan border. It also eroded buffer status of Afghanistan between Pakistan and Soviet Union.³⁸

In some circles, the attack was viewed as a part of Soviets' grand strategy, intended to gain access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and energy reserves of Gulf region. Looking into the past of Central Asian and Kabul, there were understandings and perceptions that their tramp would never stop after capturing one territory and move to control the next would continue. However, the post-World War II order, the United Nations and other forums changed the situation and defined borders, making it difficult to alter or interfere within a sovereign territory. The major impact of attack was revival of Pak-US friendly relations as the US showed great concerns about the Soviet intervention, considering it a threat to its vital interests in the Indian Ocean and the Middle East. Shah of Iran, a staunch US ally, was no more to support and

³⁷ Hafizullah Amin and Noor Muhammad Taraki were rival to each other. After becoming the president of Afghanistan, Taraki tried to kill Amin, when the later made attempts to reduce his status to the figurehead. To retaliate it, Amin imprisoned Taraki and later killed him. Taraki and Soviet President Brezhnev had very closed ties and news of his murder shocked Brezhnev and he burst into tears, calling his death a slap on his face, which must be responded. This response was Soviet attack of 1979. Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghan Communism and Soviet Intervention*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³⁸ Mussarat Jabeen, M. S. Mazhar & N.S. Goraya, *US Afghan Relations: A Historical Perspective of Events of 9/11*, *South Asian Studies*, vol. 25, No. 1 (January-June, 2010).

Pakistan was available option. After getting American security assurance against any Communist threat, Pakistan worked as a frontline state.³⁹

In 1981, Reagan entered in White House with his staunch anti-communist views. Soviet military superiority was viewed by him as an outcome of détente and arms control policies, particularly the SALT-II. He was desirous of getting heavy cost from Moscow for its intrusion in Afghanistan. In 1981, six-year military and economic aid package of US\$ 3.2 billion was offered to Pakistan. The US Senate's legislation also permitted the abolition of the sanctions. In lieu of this funding, a proxy war was launched by Pakistan, funneling the weapons and financial assistance to the Mujahideen (holy warriors). Zia-ul-Haq, president of Pakistan consented for this operation, but Soviet retaliation was not ignored and he shared his apprehensions with Reagan.⁴⁰ Pakistan's strategic interest and adjacent border of 1640 miles led it to accept American offer and the later had no other choice.

The centerpiece of this newly-developed relationship was the early delivery of forty F-16s planes, despite protest of Pentagon. This delivery showed American commitment to Pakistan's security as it was a test for Washington and Zia called it a new partnership. Zia further clarified that military bases would not be provided as a quid pro quo of this aid package. Regarding Pakistan's policy, he showed his commitment to non-aligned status and declared that he was no longer eager to become an ally and valued its non-alignment.⁴¹ In India, American offer generated concerns and its Prime Minister Indira Gandhi raised objections. Zia received a message from her, expressing concerns over the delivery of F-16s and other weapons. She viewed this delivery to be not used against the communism, but India, increasing tension in

³⁹ Z. Brezezinski, President Carter's Address to the Nation. *The New York Times*, (January 5, 1980).

⁴⁰ Mussarat Jabeen, US Policy towards the Taliban (Unpublished MPhil Dissertation), (Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University, 2002).

⁴¹ Mussarat Jabeen et al, US Afghan Relations.

South Asia.⁴² This aid package helped Pakistan in developing modern weapons and military equipment. Indira accused the US of rearming Pakistan, citing the past precedent, when the arms were used in war with India. She said, “We do not want Pakistan to be a weak state, but who can tell against whom it will use these arms.”⁴³

Offer of No War Pact to India during Afghan Crisis

The Soviet intervention changed the geopolitical conditions in South Asia. The military government was troubled by a rival and uneasy India and looked upon the Afghan crisis as an opportunity to seize and avail. Pakistan wanted to consolidate its security and offered India a no war pact in 1982. This offer came almost after a decade of Simla Agreement, but India still repeated its previous practice, taking one step forward and two back. The friendship offer was viewed with a different perspective in India, looking it as a weakness of Pakistan due to security threat coming from the western border, forcing for reconciliation. In Pakistan, this state of affairs was seen conversely and there were apprehensions that a non-combat agreement or a friendship treaty might lead to a settlement of the Kashmir dispute and might force Pakistan to accept the Indian position to “preponderance in the subcontinent.”⁴⁴

It was never meant that India was unconcerned with the Soviet troops’ attack in Afghanistan. However, its relationship with Moscow led it to follow different positions. At first place, it avoided to cost vote on UN resolutions for Afghanistan and next time, India stood with the few countries called as the cluster of the Soviet satellites, which viewed Soviet intervention in response to President Amin’s request. Indira refrained from criticizing the attack, describing it

⁴² Mrs. Gandhi voices concern in message to Pak President, *Kabul New Times*, (July 6, 1981), 1:5.

⁴³ US arms for Pakistan, threat to India: Mrs. Gandhi, *Kabul New Times* (April 7, 1981), 4:2.

⁴⁴ Ahmed (1982) used this term and was cited by Sardar (1985: 287). Preponderance is more likely to bring peace and stability instead of military balance. India has disputes with other South Asian countries, but absence of military balance did not lead it to war as was the case of Kashmir with Pakistan.

as ‘similar act’ taken by other states in various regions.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, on different forums, she called for Soviet troops’ withdrawal from Afghanistan. Earlier, the attack was condemned by the Indian Prime Minister Charan Singh, who was in office at that time. He did not change his country’s non-aligned status and insisted for withdrawal of Soviet forces.⁴⁶ In spite of looking the threatening aspects of attack for regional security, India did not move to sign the ‘no war treaty’ with Pakistan.

Many efforts were initiated by the UN to resolve the Afghan problem. The first visit of the UN Secretary General was in 1981 and he received a positive response from Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also held meeting with Brezhnev at Moscow, who complained about Pakistan’s avoidance of holding talks with Afghanistan due to American and Chinese pressure. A political solution was the desire of Brezhnev. In August 1981, Diego Córdovez became UN Under-Secretary-General. He toured the region several times to address the disputed matters. His efforts of the years of 1981-82, outlined what was later known as the Geneva Accords. For the first time, in July 1982, the Afghan issue was discussed by the superpowers in Moscow.⁴⁷ Brezhnev was in hope of a lenient stance from Reagan, but his hopes ended in fiasco.⁴⁸ Brezhnev passed away in 1982 with unresolved issue.

For the American global strategy, the Afghan crisis was crucial and policy-makers in Pakistan were compelled to keep it alive. The UN-sponsored Geneva talks were not sufficiently supported by the Reagan administration. It intended to prolong the Afghan stalemate for a number of reasons. The first was to divert the Soviet's attention from other strategic matters,

⁴⁵ Michael J. Berlin, India Supports Soviets Afghan Position in UN Debate, *The Washington Post*, January 12, 1980 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/01/12/india-supports-soviets-afghan-position-in-un-debate/17dd1eb5-93f9-44bf-9f95-ecda7285843c/>

⁴⁶ Sardar, *Soviet Intervention...*

⁴⁷ Jabeen, *US Afghan Relations...*, et al., 160

⁴⁸ Barnett R. Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1996), 249.

plunging it in Afghanistan. Secondly, exploiting the situation in the wake of Soviet invasion, the US admonished the Soviet leadership at every international forum and further tarnished its image, which was already distorted due to its intrusion in Afghanistan.⁴⁹ The third was the Soviet economic loss as its huge resources were burnt in a futile war. Finally, despite restricted media houses, the news of unrest in Soviet society and reports of mothers' crying for the return of their sons were circulating globally, favouring the American designs.⁵⁰

Yuri Andropov was the successor of Brezhnev and took position of General Secretary of the Communist Party. He was well-aware of Reagan's intransigence and had little hope for a solution to the Afghan problem. He was against the attack and confessed his country's mistake, declaring that troops would be brought back home, if the West would cooperate.⁵¹ At this stage, Pakistan did not show any haste in handling the crisis, knowing the reality of internal situation of the Soviet Union, which was too weak to advance towards the Gulf region or involving in any direct conflict. Nevertheless, the US was carrying out the Soviet threat to Pakistan by alleging it of having plans to conquer the Gulf, Iran, and the Indian Ocean.⁵² However, Washington informed the UN Secretary General of its willingness to step in as a guarantor for a resolution of the crisis. On the other hand, in 1985, the US equipped the resistance with Stinger missiles, indicating its intent to inflict further bloodshed on the 'evil empire.'⁵³ The missiles played their role, ending Soviet air superiority and turning the situation in favor of the resistance.

Finally, on April 14, 1988, all parties signed the Geneva Accords. The withdrawal of Soviet troops was to be completed within nine months. No step was taken to establish an Afghan

⁴⁹ Ali, (Ed.), *Readings in...*253

⁵⁰ Jabeen, *US Policy...*

⁵¹ Ahsanur-Rehman Khan, *Latent Angles of the Afghan War 1989* (Rawalpindi: Izhar Sons Printers, 1989), 107.

⁵² Jean Kirkpatrick's statement, *The Pakistan Times*, (March 13, 1985).

⁵³ Rubin, *Fragmentation of...*

interim government and only verbal promise was made by Cordovez through a vague statement, offering his good office to negotiate the establishment of an Afghan regime.⁵⁴ After the decline of communist threat, the US lost interest in the region. In changing situation, no convergence of interests was there, which reduced Pakistan's leverage and request for an Afghan political setup was not heeded.

Zia was intensely interested in post-war settlement, but abandoned his efforts and unwillingly accepted the agreements. He doubted that the superpowers had made an agreement in his absence.⁵⁵ Washington facilitated Moscow on the bargaining table, and provided those choices, which it failed to gain on the battlefield. The US had no interest in the region after withdrawal of Soviet troops. A few months after the Geneva Accords, on 17 August 1988, General Zia was killed in a mysterious air crash along with several senior officers. The Soviet withdrawal was completed on February 15, 1989.⁵⁶

End of the Cold War and Disenchanted Allies

After the Soviet decision of withdrawal, disagreements emerged between the two allies. On a number of subjects, the US began to oppose Pakistan. Congress refused to relax nuclear regulations since it had already given a non-proliferation waiver for six years following the Soviet invasion. Congress approved a thirty-month extension in December 1987. However, going forward, the Pressler amendment required an annual presidential certificate of non-proliferation in order to deliver the aid.⁵⁷ Pakistan was not pleased with this amendment, but avoided to make complaints.

⁵⁴Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1993), 271.

⁵⁵Rubin, *Fragmentation of...*, 86.

⁵⁶Jabeen, *US Policy...*

⁵⁷Shirin R. Tahir Kheli, *India, Pakistan, and the United States: Breaking with the Past* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1997).

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the cold war came to an end. Due to American lack of interest in Pakistan's strategic importance, funds for modernization of military and economic development were discontinued. The allies were no longer required to control communism. Afghanistan mired in civil war with large numbers of refugees and displaced people, overburdening economy of Pakistan and other neighbours.

India-Pakistan relations could not be normalized in presence of Kashmir resistance movement. The future changes in Afghanistan like interim government or the emergence of the Taliban, had implications for regional security. Pakistan's security choices add several dimensions to its policies. Simultaneously, the quest of security and need of a refine policy were still there. In these circumstances western and eastern borders were equally important and Pakistan had to focus on Durand Line as well LoC.

Conclusion

The policies opted and adopted by Pakistan during the cold war era, were not fully supportive to its security concerns. The study has observed that the goal of security was not achieved in reality. The major reason was poor economy, which had been inherited by Pakistan at the time of independence. Both countries plunged into war only after a few months of independence due to disputed territories. Looking for security and economic support, Pakistan had to choose desperate options and joined US-led defence alliances, ignoring the fact that these were outlined to contain Soviet expansionism. In this choice, Pakistan even ignored the fact that it was second option as Indian refusal led the US to offer alliance partnership to it. Despite Indian refusal, American inclination were clear and the US was cautious about Indian resentment, while providing aid to Pakistan. Conversely, India opted for non-alignment and avoided to side any superpower. However, it exploited the situation during the border war of

1962. It amassed huge military aid and funding from both superpowers. Here the policy-makers of Pakistan were responsible for their short-sightedness and did not devise strategies, appropriate to country's needs.

Pakistan had to pay a heavy price of its policies. Indo-Pak war of 1965 brought an American arms embargo for the both countries, but Soviet aid to India was resumed after two months of war, whereas the US took two years in lifting the embargo and provided spare parts only. The communist takeover in Afghanistan created a security dilemma for Pakistan. Its frail status made it a frontline state for American proxy war. No doubt, Soviet incursion was immoral and unlawful, while Afghan resistance was just, but decision of fighting a proxy war on Pakistan's part was unwise. After the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, the US interests faded away and differences surfaced between the two allies. The limited objectives of Geneva Accords did not bring peace and stability or a broad-based government in Afghanistan. The country trapped into internal strife, influx of displaced people and piles of arms. Pakistan had to face the weapons culture, economic sanctions, drug trafficking and above all terrorism. In its quest for security, it went too far, ignoring the unintended consequences, which were results of the Afghan war. Its insecurity intensified in the post-Cold War era. If the choice of policies would be rational, the losses can be minimized with a better status at the regional and international levels.