

A Retrospective Perspective on Pakistan-United States Relations: 1947-1977

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Abstract

The paper attempts to analyse the *raison d'être* of Pakistan's foreign policy, which principally has been to safeguard and sustain its sovereignty against Indian threats. Its bilateral relationship was basically constructed on tactical convergence in view of the peculiar global strategic structure. Pakistan had relied exclusively upon the dynamics of the Regional Security Complex, (RSC) without ostensibly understanding the intricacies of the transitory nature of the state's relationship with other states.

The paper concludes that in a conflict of interests between states, the strong state with global outreach would prevail against the weaker state reliant on the RSC, without thoroughly understanding the dynamics of the nature of world politics and that, in essence, no country betrays, rather it is the shifting goal-posts of interests that compel them to realign their policies. When the interests of the United States conflicted with Pakistan in the mid-1970s, their relationship too, came under stress on a number of issues, including nuclear non-proliferation.

Keywords: Pakistan-United States, Regional Security Complex (RSC), India, Kashmir, Russia, *raison d'être*, foreign policy, South Asia, Nuclear Non-proliferation.

Introduction

The paper attempts to analyse the *raison d'être* of Pakistan's foreign policy, which has been to sustain its independence and territorial integrity that was repeatedly threatened by its stronger neighbour, India. The decolonisation process after the Second World War and the emergence of Third World Regional Security Complexes (RSCs) within the ambit of the "Asian supercomplex" were generally premised on "interstate rivalry," which, too, had affected the South Asian region "during

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1947-8.”¹ In such a volatile situation, *prima facie*, Pakistan had viewed the situation through the “lens of security” perspective due to the structure of the “standard complexes” of world politics.² According to the RSC, the bipolarity is basically defined by the regional powers, in the South Asian context, by India and Pakistan.³ Pakistan’s India-centricism, regional constraints, and weaknesses led it to align with the United States-sponsored pacts in the 1950s. Pakistan and the United States (US) had developed close military and economic relations under the ‘Northern Tier of Defence’ idea of the Eisenhower Administration.⁴ Both countries signed the Pakistan-US Mutual Security Programme Agreement in August 1954; the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) agreement on September 7, 1954; the Baghdad Pact (later on renamed as Central Treaty Organisation - CENTO, after the departure of Iraq) on September 23, 1955 and the 1959 bilateral Executive Agreement of Cooperation. It is argued that the US had deliberately drafted the 1959 accord in an ambiguous and vague language in order to give the impression to the then Pakistani leaders that the US assurances of security also covered a threat from any direction, including India.⁵ Under the 1959 pact, the US was obliged to come to Pakistan’s assistance if it “became the victim of aggression.”⁶ The US aim in aligning with Pakistan was to reduce the chances of US participation in another Korea-type conflict and, instead to develop the indigenous potentialities of countries like Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Iraq as the “front-line” states against the Communists.⁷ In the 1950s, Pakistan’s ideal geographical and strategic location had earned Islamabad the status of a “most allied” ally of the US in Asia.⁸ On the other hand, the US viewed India’s non-aligned posture with scepticism.⁹ The South Asian “regional security dynamics” too became a part of the “overall constellation of security” architecture of the

¹ Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structures of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17, 99.

² *Ibid.*, 44-45, 55.

³ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴ See Herbet Feldman, *From Crisis To Crisis: Pakistan 1962-1969* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

⁵ Mohammed Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 130.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Shirin Tahir-Kheli, *The United States And Pakistan: The Evolution Of An Influence Relationship* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), 2.

⁸ Khan, *Friends*, 130.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

post-World War-II period.¹⁰ As Waltz writes, that balancing is an endeavour by the states to strengthen their security in an anarchic and competitive world.¹¹ For the weaker state, any enhancement in its power structure is “considered a positive development” from its national security perspective.¹² This was actually in the minds of the Pakistani policymakers while pursuing a regional-centric approach to the country’s security. On the other hand, the US had its own strategic imperatives — to contain the onslaught of the Communist ideology. So in essence, both countries had divergent viewpoints on the global and regional security dynamics and thus, they consistently focused on their respective areas of interest. This ostensibly premised the very basis of their strategic relations on tactical and fragile foundations that subsequently affected their alliance when the structure of the global and regional security underwent change. The global security structure, write Buzan and Waever, holistically covers “an aspiration, not a reality.”¹³ They further observed that the “globe is not tightly integrated in security terms” and that, on the other hand, Regional Security Complex (RSC) is distinctly based on the “fears and aspirations of the separate unit” – the region.¹⁴

Since the beginning of Pakistan-US *entente*, Pakistan's foreign policy towards the US has been quite consistent. On the other hand, the US has been interacting with Islamabad through the lens of its global security imperatives that at times have driven it to assume a convergent posture with Pakistan. This article intends to make a modest endeavour in assessing this inherent imbalance, which has frequently affected Pakistan-US diplomatic relations. As a result, Pakistan-US relations have been paradoxical, unreliable and mutable, in spite of extensive security agreements between them. Pakistan and the US have rarely seen eye to eye on their regional threat perceptions, particularly Pakistan’s concerning India due to the RSC structure, while Washington has all along perceived Islamabad's importance through the prism of its own international strategic interests and, in the 1950s particularly, its policy of forging a “containment alliance” structure around the Soviet-sponsored Eastern bloc.¹⁵ Despite US indifference,

¹⁰ Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 11.

¹¹ See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 74-77.

¹² Davide Fiammenghi, “The Security Curve and the Structure of International Politics,” *International Security* 35, no. 4 (Spring 2011), 132.

¹³ Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 43.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

Pakistan continued its endeavours to maintain continuity in its relationship with Washington, and explored ways to synchronise its foreign policy with the US global strategic interests. But Pakistan despite its unqualified dependence on the US could not succeed in arousing a sympathetic response from the latter. By the mid-1970s, both countries' relationship became troubled over the looming issue of nuclear proliferation,¹⁶ especially after the Indian nuclear test of 1974. It is argued that Pakistan, ostensibly, had not sufficiently appreciated the paradigm shift that had occurred and the dynamics of the international system¹⁷ while pursuing an unqualified alliance with the most dominant security bloc of the post-World War II period. By the mid-1970s, Pakistan's friendship with China had also matured which helped in reducing its over dependence on the US. The development of parallel friendship with China had enabled Pakistan to take some bold and independent decisions in the context of its French nuclear reprocessing plant deal. These decisions, later on, placed both countries' relationship on a divergent course.

Rationale for Alliance

Pakistan's significance to US policymakers had its origin in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, when the fear of communism and the danger of a shift in the global balance of power were quite palpable. In this period, Pakistan's diplomacy basically revolved around its domestic needs, its regional security environment, and its attempts to synchronise with the global dynamics of superpower rivalry. Hence, Pakistan's international alignments have evolved largely out of its regional constraints and its potential weaknesses vis-à-vis India. All the successive governments in Islamabad viewed the country's ties with the US as granting one central benefit: to enhance the country's defence potential and to strengthen its position in the regional interstate competitive landscape. This linkage of regional and global "Asian supercomplex" with the global dynamics of the "North American RSC,"¹⁸ kept Pakistan's foreign and security policy tied-down with the single power-sponsored bloc in the formative period of its independence right through to the 1970s.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Peter J. Katzenstein, 'Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security,' ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 11.

¹⁸ Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 27, 99, 266.

The US, in the early 1950s, had actively tried to contain communist expansionism, and intended to have a *cordon sanitaire* around the periphery of Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe. According to a US scholar, K. Alan Kronstadt, “US concerns about Soviet expansionism and Pakistan’s desire for security assistance against a genuine threat from India prompted the two countries to negotiate mutual defence assistance in 1954.”¹⁹ In this context, Pakistan's geographical and strategic location in the vicinity of both Soviet Union and China obviously attracted Washington's attention. According to Hans Morgenthau, the military might of Pakistan was considered to be the “measure of America's military power on that continent.”²⁰ Therefore, the enhanced military capability of Pakistan was considered by the US as an addition to its global power. For Pakistan, military support and economic assistance were an urgent requirement in the aftermath of the 1948 War with India over Kashmir. In that situation, the development of close relations with the US was viewed as natural and mutually beneficial.

The US started to value Pakistan and the South Asian region more after the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950. After the Korean War, Washington believed that this region was also being threatened by the Soviet Union and China. In May 1950, the Pakistani Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, visited the US on the invitation of President Truman, and it was at this juncture that the Pakistani Premier declared his country's alignment with the US.²¹ Another factor contributing to Pakistan's alignment with the US was the need to acquire protection from possible attack from India whose ostensible endeavours were to weaken and to diplomatically isolate Pakistan. Pakistan’s prime motive in aligning with the US from the very outset was to secure military and economic assistance that could enable it to protect itself from the Indian threat.

According to Sarwar Hasan, “the foreign policy of Pakistan has been dominated by considerations of security and independence from its

¹⁹ K. Alan Kronstadt, “Pakistan-US Relations,” *CRS Issue Brief for Congress* (Washington, D.C: The Library of Congress, 2005), 2.

²⁰ Hans Morgenthau, *The Impasse of American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 13-14.

²¹ During his visit, the Pakistani Prime Minister termed the Korean war as “communist menace” and had openly pledged Pakistani allegiance to the US strategy in Korea that was to him designed at “saving Asia from the dangers of world communism;” Liaquat Ali Khan, *Pakistan: The Heart of Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 28.

neighbour, India.”²² Another eminent Pakistani scholar, Dr. I. H. Qureshi, commented that, “Pakistan believes that Indian hostility poses a far greater problem to them than Chinese expansion or Soviet threats, neither country having a dispute with Pakistan. Besides, Pakistan is too small to worry them.”²³ Therefore, the *raison d’être* of Pakistan's foreign policy, as argued in the preceding paragraphs, was to sustain its territorial integrity that was repeatedly threatened by its bigger and potentially much stronger neighbour, India. Z. A. Bhutto, supporting Pakistan's close relations with the US stated that, “Pakistan situated as it is, surrounded by hostile neighbours, must seek arrangements guaranteeing its territorial integrity and permitting it to preserve its distinct ideological personality.”²⁴ Geoffrey Hudson commenting on this aspect writes:

Indian antipathy to Pakistan is the pivot of Indian foreign policy....India would be genuinely neutral in the cold war as long as Pakistan was also unattached, but any alignment of Pakistan with either bloc was likely to push India in the opposite direction....But as it was Pakistan which became a recipient of American military aid and signatory of the Manila Treaty, India became responsive to approaches from Moscow.²⁵

The Start of US Aid

The first package of US aid to Pakistan was given in December 1950 in parallel with that to Greece and Turkey under President Truman's four-point technical programme. Another package of US economic assistance to Pakistan came in February 1952. Later on, the very close links between both the countries flourished only after the election of General Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Presidency. This subsequently led to an era of close mutual ties. Pakistan-US relations received further positive impetus under Washington's establishment of a ‘Northern Tier of Defence’ that became a foreign policy goal of the Eisenhower Administration.²⁶ Under this concept,

²² K. Sarwar Hasan, *Pakistan and the United Nations* (New York: Manhattan Publishing Co., 1960), 49-50.

²³ I. H. Qureshi, “The Foreign Policy Of Pakistan”, in *Foreign Policies In A World of Change*, eds., Joseph E. Black and Kenneth W. Thompson (New York: Harper, 1963).

²⁴ Z. A. Bhutto, *Foreign Policy of Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1964), 27.

²⁵ G. F. Hudson, “Soviet Policy in Asia”, *Soviet Survey* 1957.

²⁶ Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis*.

the aim was to reduce the chances of US involvement in more Korea-type engagements, and to develop the indigenous potentialities of countries like Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Iraq as “front-line states” against the communist threat.²⁷ Besides, the Pakistani leaders, including its Premier, Liaquat Ali Khan, were inherently averse to the Soviet expansionism, and maintained that the US had no territorial designs and rather that it was “the world’s greatest philanthropist.”²⁸ It was on such optimistic foundations that the first phase of US-Pakistan cordiality was initiated in the early 1950s.

The two countries signed the Pakistan-United States Mutual Security Programme Agreement in May 1954, and later on, Pakistan joined the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) on September 7, 1954 and the Baghdad Pact on September 23, 1955.²⁹ As a consequence of signing these bilateral treaties, the Soviet Union openly started to support India on the Kashmir issue, and termed it as an “integral part” of India at all the international forums.³⁰ Pakistan-US relations were further cemented after General Ayub Khan’s coup of October 1958, because it was Ayub, who as the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army had visited the US in September-October 1953, to secure military assistance. Then, Pakistani defence forces and its faltering economy were in desperate need of assistance and, on the other hand, the US considered Pakistan worth cultivating, as it had an ideal “centrally positioned land-site” that could be used against the Soviets and China in time of crisis.³¹ Shirin Tahir-Kheli writes that:

Ayub was keenly aware that Pakistan needed its military for defence against India. The only way Pakistan could play this proxy role, in his view, was if Washington guaranteed Pakistan’s security against India.³²

The US leaders were naturally reluctant to accord such security guarantees to Pakistan against the threat emanating from India, and at the same time were not in a position to *openly* state that India was not a threat as this would have offended Pakistan, then an ally most *needed*. To overcome or accommodate these contradictions the US employed

²⁷ Tahir-Kheli, *The United States and Pakistan*, 2.

²⁸ Khan, *Pakistan: The Heart of Asia*, 76, 108.

²⁹ G. W. Choudhury, *Pakistan’s Relations With India: 1947-1966* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), 233.

³⁰ Khan, *Friends*, 132.

³¹ R. D. Campbell, *Pakistan: Emerging Democracy* (Princeton: Van Nostrand Co., 1963), 116.

³² Tahir-Kheli, *The United States And Pakistan*, 4.

ambiguous terms in drafting treaties that subsequently came to plague their bilateral relations since 1954.³³

After the October 1958 military coup, Ayub Khan's first foreign policy achievement was the signing of the Executive Agreement of Co-operation with the US in 1959. Under this accord, the US government pledged to consider vital to its national interests and to world peace, the preservation of the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan. In return, Washington was granted free access to the Peshawar Air Base for ten years. It was from there, in May 1960, that the US U-2 surveillance plane flew to the USSR and was subsequently shot down over Soviet territory.³⁴ This incident evoked adverse international reaction, and the Soviet leader Khrushchev threatened Pakistan with severe retaliatory action, if Islamabad did not stop the US military operations from Peshawar.

Reaction of India-Soviet Union

In direct retaliation to Pakistan's joining of SEATO and CENTO, the Soviet Union forged a closer relationship with New Delhi (which culminated in the signing of India-USSR Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in August 1971), and in 1955, the Chinese and Soviet Premiers visited India as a gesture of solidarity. The Soviet Prime Minister, Nikolai A. Bulganin, openly declared Kashmir as an integral part of India. Moscow furthermore assured the Indian envoy to the USSR of their support,³⁵ and the latter despatched Marshall Zhukov with a "message of sincere love and friendship from the Soviet peoples."³⁶ The Egyptian President Nasser too castigated Pakistan for joining the western-sponsored alliance and openly declared that "Suez is as dear to Egypt as Kashmir is to India."³⁷ Even a country like Saudi Arabia dubbed Pakistan's joining CENTO as "a stab in the heart of the Arab and Muslim states."³⁸

During the period from 1955 to the early 1960s, Pakistan enjoyed relatively cordial relations with the US. Additionally, the US continued military and economic assistance to Islamabad. This military support was not of a quantity and quality that could disrupt the conventional military

³³ Ibid., 4-5.

³⁴ Ibid., 4-5, 9.

³⁵ See Selig S. Harrison, "Troubled India and Her Neighbours", *Foreign Affairs* (January 1965).

³⁶ *Pravda*, 13 January 1954, cited in Choudhury, *Pakistan's Relations with India: 1947-1966*, 240-241.

³⁷ Ibid, 245.

³⁸ *Dawn*, September 26, 1955.

equilibrium of the South Asian rivals. However, it did sufficiently strengthened Pakistan militarily. But, at the same time the US was making overtures to India by allowing Delhi to purchase weapons from Washington. President Eisenhower assured the Indian Premier Nehru that the US was prepared to provide weapons to friends like India in parallel to allies, but this was not sufficient to convince New Delhi. Ayub Khan commenting on this development remarked that:

India demanded and, according to Mr Nehru, received a specific assurance from Washington that this pact 'could not be used against India'. Short of sophistry, this demand amounted to seeking an assurance that, if India should commit aggression against Pakistan or threatened Pakistan's security, the United States would not come to the assistance of Pakistan under this pact.³⁹

In spite of Ayub Khan's unequivocal reservations about the scope of Pakistan-US defence arrangements, Pakistan persistently followed a policy of unqualified alliance, right until the early 1960s.

The Decade of 1960s

Pakistan gradually commenced to re-orientate its foreign policy in the early 1960s, in view of President Kennedy's reversal of "Dulles policy and hailed the non-aligned nations as bridge builders between the two antagonistic military blocs — the NATO and the Warsaw Pact - confronting each other in the Cold War." Consequently, Washington air-lifted military weapons to India after the brief India-China War of 1962.⁴⁰ In June 1960, the Democrat Administration proposed to amend the US Mutual Security Act to facilitate the shipment of American weapons to India. Obviously, Pakistan had expressed its apprehensions that the supply of armament to New Delhi would further tilt the military balance in the latter's favour. In fact Pakistan did not fail to register its annoyance in this respect to Washington for treating India on a par with an ally.⁴¹ All these factors were ominous signals for the Pakistani government, and it thought that the newly elected Democrat Administration had downgraded Pakistan's significance and the

³⁹ Mohammed Ayub Khan, "The Pakistan-American Alliance: Stresses and Strains", *Foreign Affairs* (January 1964).

⁴⁰ Agha Shahi, "Pakistan's Relations with the United States", in *Soviet-American Relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), 164.

⁴¹ *Daily Telegraph*, July 11, 1961.

alliance, and that the US was moving towards forging closer political links with India. Furthermore, after the U-2 incident, the era of satellite espionage was about to render bases like Peshawar obsolete, marginally reducing Pakistan's usefulness in this respect. Islamabad interpreted this US attitude with dismay, and took it as a signal indicating an end to the special relationship that both countries had enjoyed since 1954. This perception drove Pakistan to explore other avenues to achieve alternative means for its security.⁴² Ayub Khan during his visit to the US in 1961 categorically stated that, in the absence of a solution to the Kashmir problem, Pakistan perceived US arms to New Delhi as "a tremendous strain on our friendship with the US."⁴³

Ayub Khan endeavoured to strike an advantageous deal for his country, but the US supply of sophisticated weapons to India had generated much nation-wide criticism of Washington. The common feeling was that the US had used Pakistan to contain the onslaught of the Soviet Union and China in Asia, not to strengthen its defence potential vis-à-vis New Delhi. The US knew that India was the only major threat to Pakistan's security in the area, and had deliberately relegated Pakistan's concerns in its regional security strategy. The Pakistani elite, including Ayub, reiterated that they had received unequivocal assurances at the highest level that Washington realised Pakistan's requirements against India, and that it would stand by Pakistan. Interestingly, US scholar, Herbet Feldman, writes that the changing dynamics were never understood by the Pakistani leaders. They could not understand why the US was now so worried about the Communist aggression in 1962, like the early 1950s, when the 'Northern Tier of Defence' policy was started.⁴⁴

Talking about the Pakistan-US relations, the former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, M. A. Bogra, who was a key policymaker behind Pakistan's entry into Washington-sponsored pacts, stated that "friends that let us down will no longer be considered our friends."⁴⁵ Even Ayub did not believe the US contention that armaments given to India would not be used against Pakistan, and thought that to be naive of the US to ignore the nature of the India-Pakistan conflict.⁴⁶ Soon after the Sino-India war, US tried to

⁴² Choudhury, *Pakistan's Relations with India: 1947-1966*, 245.

⁴³ Hasan, *Pakistan and the United Nations*, 76.

⁴⁴ Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis*, 86.

⁴⁵ *National Assembly of Pakistan: Debates*, Official Report (Karachi: Government Printing Press, 21 November 1962), 10.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Ziring, *The Ayub Khan Era: Politics in Pakistan 1958-1969* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 52.

assure Pakistan that its military assistance to India was only meant to “defeat Chinese communist subversion.”⁴⁷ Subsequently, the US together with UK facilitated “direct talks between India and Pakistan” in order to “resolve the outstanding difference,” including on Kashmir.⁴⁸ Ayub Khan writes that, after the issuance of a joint statement by himself and Nehru on November 29, 1962, in an observation in the Lok Sabha, Nehru expressed doubts about the outcome of holding a dialogue on Kashmir.⁴⁹ In addition, India’s ‘nonalignment collapsed during and immediately after the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962,’ which ultimately paved way for New Delhi to build ‘strong military’ relations with erstwhile Soviet Union and also with the ‘US and other western countries.’⁵⁰ Thus, the marriage of convenience that was cultivated during the heyday of the Cold War in the early 1950s began to come under stress due to change in US policy.

The gulf between Pakistan and the US further widened when the then US Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, declared that, “At President Kennedy's request, I had urged Mr Nehru to extend his leadership to other areas in South East Asia.”⁵¹ Johnson's statement provoked a strong outcry in Pakistan, and generated more criticism of the changing contours of the US foreign policy towards the former. Pakistani policymakers became apprehensive about the US strategy and designs in the subcontinent, which prima facie appeared to be the installation of New Delhi as the guardian of Washington’s interests in the region. Talking about it in November 1964 the US Vice — President, Hubert Humphrey referred to it as a “coalition of Asian powers with India as its main force to counter-balance Chinese power”. He further suggested that the US should make India “strong enough to exercise leadership in the area.”⁵² Islamabad maintained that although Pakistan may not have been zealous in countering the threat of international Communism, but, Islamabad had remained genuinely steadfast in its commitments to the US and the West. This obviously indicated that Pakistan-US friendship, that had its heyday during the Eisenhower-Dulles era, was now gradually shifting towards other directions. During this period, the Soviet envoy to Pakistan, Mikhail Kapitsa, commenting on this sudden change in the US foreign policy goals, remarked that:

⁴⁷ Khan, *Friends*, 148.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Farzana Siddique, ‘India Doctrinal Orientation: Causing instability in the Region,’ *CISS Insight* (February-March 2013): 13.

⁵¹ *Round Table* (1960-61): 409.

⁵² *Dawn*, September 15, 1961.

We support India and Afghanistan against you because they are our friends, even when they are in the wrong. But your friends do not support you, even when they know you are in the right.⁵³

'Changing Perceptions'

In such a changing dynamic of the regional security, Ayub Khan found it impossible to continue his unqualified loyalty to the US and started to restructure his country's foreign policy by normalising diplomatic relations with China, the Soviet Union, and the Afro-Asian states. This was necessary to counter-balance the erosion of relations with the US. Ayub Khan explains in his book: *Friends Not Masters* that the US, the Soviet Union, China and India were interested in Pakistan but the prospect of friendly relations with India was bleak due to the unresolved dispute over Kashmir. Therefore, it was imperative for Pakistan to re-orientate its relations with the three states: the US, Soviet Union and China. He maintained that, it was "like walking on a triangular tightrope," and therefore advocated a policy of "bilateral equations with each one of them, with the clear understanding that the nature and complexion of the equation should be such as to promote our mutual interests without adversely affecting the legitimate interests of third parties."⁵⁴

Ayub Khan's new approach in foreign policy began to affect upon Pakistan's relations with the US. After Kennedy's assassination in 1963, Vice President, Johnson, succeeded him. He tried to improve relations with Pakistan by inviting Ayub Khan to Washington but that was cancelled without assigning any convincing reason. Ostensibly, the grounds for the cancellation of the visit were President Ayub's scheduled state visits to Moscow and Beijing before proceeding to Washington. Understandably, the bilateral relations received a setback, which continued to further erode. Subsequently, Pakistan declined to attend the Manila SEATO meeting in April 1964 on the grounds that Islamabad was presently not able to make any positive contribution. Two months later (July 1, 1964), Ayub Khan, addressing the nation, announced that America's massive long-term military assistance to India was obviously putting the security of regional states in jeopardy.⁵⁵ As it was argued in the preceding paragraphs, the South Asian RSC structure was basically premised on a conflicting formation, and

⁵³ *Daily Telegraph*, July 11, 1961.

⁵⁴ Khan, *Friends*, 116-121.

⁵⁵ K. Arif, ed., *American-Pakistan Relations (Documents)*, vol. 1 (Lahore: Vanguard Books Ltd, 1984), 199-201.

furthermore both the countries in the words of Buzan and Waever “were born fighting each other in 1947.” These “conflict formation” policies of both states, since then, have persistently influenced their relations.⁵⁶ In this context, Thucydides wrote 2,400 years ago that states basically fight out of “fear, honour, and interests.”⁵⁷ The case of Pakistan-India relations was no different.

Incidentally, the total US economic assistance to India from 1949 to 1967 amounted to \$10 million; its military support was in addition to this figure.⁵⁸ Compared to that from 1953 to 1961, US provided \$508 million military assistance and \$2 billion economic assistance to Pakistan.⁵⁹ But, on the other hand, Pakistan had declined to support the US on its Vietnam policy in the mid-1960s. The increased involvement of the Johnson Administration in the Vietnam War, and America's overt hostility towards China and the latter's support to North Vietnam, combined with Pakistan's *rapprochement* with China, reluctance to participate in the CENTO and SEATO affairs as an ally of the US, further damaged the relations. Additionally, a brief war between India and Pakistan in September 1965 gave the US the excuse to impose an arms embargo on Pakistan, contrary to its earlier commitments to Pakistan's territorial integrity. However, the US also imposed similar sanctions on the supply of small-scale military hardware to India, as well. But, the US arms embargo hurt Pakistan more than India, because unlike Islamabad, New Delhi was not purely dependent upon the US. India was primarily dependent on the Soviet Union for military assistance. After the cessation of hostilities (in September 1965), the US, instead of itself mediating in the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, surprisingly encouraged the USSR to mediate between the belligerents at Tashkent in January 1966.⁶⁰ Earlier, Pakistan's relations had started to improve after the establishment of a direct contact with the Soviet Union in April 1965, and Ayub's and Soviet Premier Kosygin's formal meeting in Moscow.⁶¹ From then onward, Pakistan tried to “recover the lost

⁵⁶ Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 101.

⁵⁷ Cited in Colin S. Gray, *National Security Dilemmas: Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, Inc., 2009), 6.

⁵⁸ Richard Nixon, “US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: The Emerging Structure of Peace”, *Nixon's Third Annual Foreign Policy Report to the Congress* (Washington, D.C: 9 February 1972): 12.

⁵⁹ Kronstadt, “Pakistan-US Relations”, 2.

⁶⁰ Shahi, “Pakistan's Relations with the United States”, 164.

⁶¹ Khan, *Friends*, 169.

links” with the Soviet Union, wrote Ayub.⁶² However, the Tashkent Pact gave further forward motion to their bilateral relations.

The US restored Pakistan's normal economic aid in June 1966, on the tacit understanding that Ayub Khan would replace his Foreign Minister, Z. A. Bhutto, who was rightly or wrongly considered by Washington as “anti-America and anti-India.”⁶³ However, economic aid and the sale of spare parts for weapons already supplied by the US to Pakistan, was restored. Moreover, US closed down its Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) that had operated in Pakistan since 1956, because Washington had no intention of selling more military equipment to Islamabad.

In Pakistan, anti-US sentiments became very strong after the September 1965 War and their relations reached the lowest point when the US Information Service (USIS) library was set ablaze in Karachi by an angry mob. Subsequently, these anti-American demonstrations took the shape of an anti-Ayub Khan movement that ultimately led to the fall of Washington's most “allied ally” in Asia on March 25, 1969. It was after the ending of the Johnson and Ayub presidencies, and the ushering in of the Nixon and General Yahya Khan eras, respectively, that another phase of an ambiguous relationship began.

Turbulent Phase: December 1971-July 5, 1977

The new Pakistani President, General Yahya Khan, upon assuming office in March 1969, announced holding of fair elections, restoration of law and order, and the handing-over of the rein of government to the new elected Parliament. Yahya did honour his commitments by holding impartial elections on December 7, 1970. In these elections, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's Awami League and Z. A. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) gained majorities in East (now Bangladesh) and the West Pakistan (present day Pakistan), respectively. The issue of forming a consensus government in a united Pakistan plunged the country into internal anarchy in the former East Pakistan. Ultimately, Sheikh Mujib's Awami League formed a government in exile in Calcutta, under Indian auspices. At this juncture, the Soviet Union, which was already disenchanted with Pakistan due to its alliance with the US and role in bridging *rapprochement* between China and the US in July 1971, by organising Dr. Henry Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing, openly supported India against Pakistan. The US government

⁶² Ibid., 68.

⁶³ Najam Rafique, “Policy Studies: Impact of Democratic Administrations in the US on Pakistan-US Relations”, *Strategic Studies* XII, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 82.

viewed the increasing tension between India and Pakistan, not in a regional perspective, but rather “as a proxy confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union” in the former East Pakistan.⁶⁴ However, the US did nothing credible to assist its beleaguered ally - Pakistan at this critical juncture. While on the other hand, the Soviets fully sponsored its ally – India, in the 1971 War.

1971 Crisis

After Kissinger's secret visit to China in July 1971, India and the Soviet Union on August 9, 1971 signed the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, in which the contracting countries had reiterated their intention to come to the assistance of each other if any one of the “parties are attacked or threatened with attack.”⁶⁵ Prima facie, this was contrary to the US policy of containment of the USSR. In spite of Pakistan’s role in realising US-China *entente*, that subsequently paved the way for Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972, Pakistan’s position vis-à-vis India-Soviet alliance was not helped. Washington was thankful for Pakistan’s role but Nixon's efforts to lift the arms embargo against Pakistan as a reciprocal gesture, was thwarted by the US Congress. The reason for not lifting the arms embargo apparently was that the general US public had “massively turned in the favour of the independence of Bangladesh.”⁶⁶ According to reports, during the whole crisis, the Nixon Administration had been advising Yahya Khan to find a political solution for the East Pakistan crisis, to which the military leader had turned a deaf ear. Simultaneously, Washington without informing Islamabad had established direct contact with the Bangladeshi government in exile in Calcutta. Yet to show it was not abandoning an ally altogether the US continued a semblance of its diplomatic support to Pakistan during this traumatic period. India in the meanwhile aided and abetted the crisis situation to carve out Bangladesh. New Delhi created a Bangladeshi government in exile, which directly undermined the political process to complete its course. President Nixon, in a report to the US Congress, stated that “it is clear that a political process was in train, which could have been supported and facilitated by all parties involved,” but, obviously India had no such intention to subscribe to any peaceful

⁶⁴ Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 372-373.

⁶⁵ S. M. Burke, *Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), 209.

⁶⁶ Shahi, “Pakistan's Relations”, 165.

solution.⁶⁷ The US sent its Seventh Fleet carrier, USS Enterprise, into the Bay of Bengal on December 10, 1971, when the Indian forces had already achieved their strategic objectives – guaranteeing the creation of Bangladesh. According to Shirin Tahir-Kheli, “the US influence post-1971 was not commensurate with the crucial role Nixon played in preventing a widening of war” to the remainder of Pakistan.⁶⁸

The Bhutto Era

After the dismemberment of Pakistan in December 1971, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whom Washington considered as anti-US, became the new President. Bhutto was an adroit politician, who endeavoured to enhance Pakistan's influence by exploring new foreign policy options by reducing the country's dependence upon US. Besides, he cultivated friendlier relations with the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), and other Third World countries. He also organised the Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore in February 1974 in which he gave the call for Muslim unity.⁶⁹ However, the Pakistani role in the Sino-American *rapprochement* continued to be appreciated and recognised by the Nixon Administration. In fact, Nixon himself stated that, “No-one has occupied the White House who is friendlier to Pakistan than me.”⁷⁰ On the other hand, Kissinger was quite impressed with Bhutto's talent (who became Prime Minister in 1973 following the passage of the 1973 Constitution by the National Assembly), and considered him as an “architect of Pakistan's friendship with China” that had also proved useful for the US in 1971 and 1972.⁷¹ In spite of this, the US arms embargo continued until 1975, when the Ford Administration (after Nixon's resignation because of the Watergate scandal) restored the military assistance. At the same time, Bhutto continued to express his aversion to Islamabad's continued link with the SEATO and CENTO, and termed it “subservience to a great power on whose help it depended.”⁷²

⁶⁷ Nixon, “US Foreign Policy”, 145-146.

⁶⁸ Tahir-Kheli, *The United States and Pakistan*, 49.

⁶⁹ Feroz Hassan Khan, *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 113-114.

⁷⁰ Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 215.

⁷¹ Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1979), 907.

⁷² Z. A. Bhutto, *Marching Towards Democracy: A Collection of Articles, Statements and Speeches* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, 1972), 13.

The Defence Pacts

In spite of Bhutto's apparent aversion to a great power, in fact, he did realise the significance of continued US co-operation for the country's economic and security needs. He subsequently began to talk about CENTO and other defence pacts as an anchor in US-Pakistani relations. Bhutto, to prove his pro-US stance, later on offered Washington naval base facilities at Gwadar, on the Balochistan coast. As the US policymakers were sceptical and still regarded Bhutto with considerable suspicion for his known aversion to the US-sponsored global strategic alliance architecture, this offer was not taken up by Washington. Essentially, it was bad diplomacy and an unrealistic policy on the part of Bhutto. In fact, he had failed to craft a skilful balance between the dynamics of international power politics, diplomacy and real-politik in that phase of the Cold War. In the changing regional scenario, US regarded the Shah of Iran — a more reliable ally who could better serve their strategic and global interests in the Persian Gulf than Bhutto in Islamabad.⁷³ According to Tahir-Kheli, what Bhutto wanted was maximum US technological assistance in exchange for providing the US a berth in Balochistan which would be "a thorn in the side of the Indians." He was also well aware of how the US "tilt" in the crucial and traumatic period of 1971 had helped in preserving Pakistan's — that is present day Pakistan's — territorial integrity.⁷⁴ In addition, Pakistan's trusted friend and ally — China — then had approved of US presence in the region ostensibly to neutralise the effects of Russian hegemonic designs in the area. Therefore, in Bhutto's vision, the US still could play a crucially constructive role for Pakistan. This was the basis of his policy on Pakistan's relations with the US. In actual fact, sustaining equilibrium between the dynamics of global and regional power structures was the foremost imperative, which apparently was not effectively and realistically upheld. The world power structure nexus has existed since the times of Thucydides.⁷⁵ In modern times, it exists in parallel with the regional security complex under the umbrella of the superpowers.⁷⁶ Therefore, according to Waltz, it is imperative for the states, especially the weaker ones, to seek balance against the other powers,⁷⁷ and to neutralise the

⁷³ Tahir-Kheli, *The United States and Pakistan*, 56.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

⁷⁵ See Rex Warner, *THUCYDIDES: History of the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972).

⁷⁶ See Buzan and Waeber, *Regions and Powers*.

⁷⁷ See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

threats emanating from other states without bandwagoning.⁷⁸ In such a volatile situation, the most significant aspect is to understand the dimensions of other states' interests with a view to have a competent understanding of their behaviour to be able to exploit that to one's own advantage.⁷⁹

Z. A. Bhutto was fully aware that the arms embargo that the US had imposed on Pakistan, after the Pakistan-India War of 1971, was harmful to the security and territorial integrity of the country. Keeping this in view, he undertook an official visit to the US in 1973. The visit proved to be successful, and the US again emphasised the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan as the cornerstone of its foreign policy. This gesture was widely hailed and appreciated in Pakistan, and was interpreted as a prelude to resumption of military assistance to Islamabad.⁸⁰ The arms embargo was only lifted in March 1975 when Bhutto paid his second visit to US.

The Nuclear Issue

In the post-1971 period, Bhutto had tried to cultivate the US and had simultaneously signed the Simla Accord with India in 1972 to reduce tension with India. The Indian nuclear detonation of May 1974 proved to be the turning point in the strategic scenario of South Asia, which later on affected the very foundation of the US-Pakistan relations on the issue of nuclear proliferation. The Bhutto government's initial reaction was to seek assurances from the major nuclear countries against possible Indian nuclear blackmail, but, unfortunately, Bhutto's foreign minister, Aziz Ahmed, who visited London, Paris and Washington, failed to secure the necessary guarantees from these states. Many other bilateral proposals, including establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zone and bilateral signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), were also proposed by Pakistan to India, which were all rejected by the latter.⁸¹ Thus, dejected and genuinely frustrated, Bhutto decided to initiate Pakistan's nuclear option that he thought was imperative and compatible with the country's geostrategic requirements and status as one of the leading countries of the Third World

⁷⁸ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987).

⁷⁹ Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back in," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1994): 72-107.

⁸⁰ *The US Department of State Bulletin*, October 15, 1973 (Washington, D.C.), 482.

⁸¹ Zulfqar Khan, "The Politics of Nuclear Non-Proliferation with Particular Reference to South Asia," *IPRI Journal* V, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 86.

and the Muslim bloc.⁸² As a result, Bhutto started to increasingly identify Pakistan with the Muslim and the Third World countries. While in the bilateral context, Pakistan-India “mutual suspicion and the security dilemma”⁸³ was the fundamental underlying factor in the RSC. The regional security imperatives were so compelling that Pakistan had to initiate comparable measures to deter the adversary.⁸⁴

Bhutto's initial diplomacy was quite successful in countering Washington's pressure tactics on Pakistan's nuclear programme, in the aftermath of Indian nuclear test of 1974. Henceforward, the nuclear non-proliferation issue became highly important in Pakistan's relations with the US. In addition, US pressure made it difficult for the French government to renege from their contract for supply of nuclear reprocessing plant to Pakistan. However, it was after the fall of Bhutto on July 5, 1977, and the damage to Pakistan's international prestige that General Zia's coup caused that France cancelled its agreement in August 1978.

Internal Unrest and March 1977 Elections

After the controversial March 1977 elections, the nine opposition parties formed the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The PNA was formed to contest the elections against Z. A. Bhutto. The PNA movement finally culminated in the imposition of martial law by General Mohammed Zia-ul Haq on July 5, 1977. Although, Bhutto's removal was mainly attributable to internal factors, including the alleged ballot rigging by the PPP government, but another reason that analysts point out was the Pakistan-US tussle over the nuclear reprocessing plant that influenced Bhutto-Carter relations.⁸⁵ Carter had tried in vain to dissuade Bhutto from continuing his country's nuclear programme, and had even warned him that the Symington-Glenn Amendment could be invoked to cut-off all aid to Pakistan for pursuing a nuclear policy. Bhutto and his advisers, later on, openly began to accuse the US of supporting PNA's anti-Bhutto movement, saying that the PNA had supposedly secretly promised the Carter Administration to scrap the nuclear option after Bhutto's ouster.⁸⁶ It was basically due to these factors that the general public in Pakistan widely

⁸² Tahir-Kheli, *The United States And Pakistan*, 62-63.

⁸³ John H. Herz, “The Security Dilemma in the Atomic Age”, in *Classic Readings of International Relations*, David Goldfield et al. (Orlando: FL: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 236.

⁸⁴ Fiammenghi, “The Security Curve”, 128.

⁸⁵ Khan, *Eating Grass*, 137.

⁸⁶ Z. A. Bhutto's interview with *New York Times*, September 7, 1977.

blamed the Carter Administration for supporting the “non-elected leaders” and “undemocratic processes” — as the US had purportedly engineered and supported the PNA movement to overthrow the elected leader (Bhutto), who had rejected Washington's dictations to scrap Pakistan's nuclear reprocessing deal with France.⁸⁷

Conclusion

In this backdrop, Pakistan-US diplomatic relations were adversely affected during the Carter Presidency from 1977 to 1980. In the Pakistani perspective, *prima facie*, Carter had reconciled with the Indian nuclear detonation as a *fait accompli*. Carter instead pressurised Pakistan to sign the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to cancel its nuclear reprocessing plant's deal with France. Carter used different sorts of pressure tactics to force Islamabad to reverse its nuclear programme and, even to cut-off economic and military assistance to Pakistan in April 1977.⁸⁸ On the other hand, Carter allowed India to purchase uranium from the US for its nuclear reactor at Trombay (this reactor was supplied by US). Agha Shahi, Pakistan's former Foreign Minister, commenting on the attitude of the Carter Administration toward Pakistan said that Carter had visibly downgraded Islamabad's position in the region and, instead, patronised the “regional influentials” like Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iran and India. US Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, even went one step ahead and said that US was not concerned about the past ties between the two states. At this juncture, writes Shahi, the prospects of stable relationship between Pakistan and the US hinged on Pakistan's willingness to cap its nuclear programme.⁸⁹

This, Pakistan was not prepared to do due to the peculiar structure of the regional security complex (RSC) and its security dilemma vis-à-vis India. Pakistan ostensibly pursued a policy to balance the adversary's offensive capability with a comparable minimum measure in amalgam with the realist paradigm⁹⁰ and the offensive realism prism to accumulate sufficient power to neutralise security threats.⁹¹ Because any increase in a state's power increases its security.⁹² Subsequently, both countries' bilateral

⁸⁷ Tahir-Kheli, *The United States And Pakistan*, 71-72.

⁸⁸ Khan, *Eating Grass*, 129.

⁸⁹ Shahi, “Pakistan's Relations”, 166-167.

⁹⁰ Fiammenghi, “The Security Curve”, 128-129.

⁹¹ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 417.

⁹² Fiammenghi, “The Security Curve”, 128.

relations became hostage to the controversy over the French nuclear reprocessing plant, which was unilaterally cancelled by Paris in August 1978 under US pressure. From then on, their mutual interests came to be premised on divergent poles. Both countries' relations started to improve after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and right through to 1989 when the Soviet forces had completely withdrawn under the Geneva Accords of 1988. Yet, Pakistan and the US still had convergence of interest in prevention of nuclear terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, and extremism and terrorism.

In retrospect, it can be deduced that both countries' relationship was primarily constructed on a tactical convergence in consonance with the then peculiar global strategic environment and structure. Pakistan, a state that exclusively relied upon the dynamics of the regional security complex without ostensibly understanding the intricacies of the transitory nature of states' harmony over a single issue. In such a volatile situation, it is seen that states that rely heavily on RSC invariably are at a disadvantage. This demonstrates that when there is a conflict of interest between a state reliant on the RSC without thoroughly understanding the dynamics of the nature of world politics, and the role that extra-regional security complex play — like the North American RSC in the containment of Communism⁹³ — then in such a situation, it is the dominant state in global security complex that usually prevails due to its disproportionate military and economic power compared to the weaker state. Probably, this was not fully realised by the Pakistani elite, except that they persistently kept on complaining about the US betrayal. In essence, no country betrays in the anarchic international system, it is the shifting goal-posts of interests that compel them to realign their foreign and security policies. This *prima facie* was not sufficiently appreciated by the then policymakers in Pakistan. On the other hand, the Indian polity has continued to move towards unipolarity in South Asian RSC, except with Pakistan with which its rivalry remains unrelenting.⁹⁴ ■

⁹³ Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 266.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 118, 121.