

made first and the duty of the Foreign Office has merely been to produce the rationale for such decisions subsequently. This has distorted and even negated the very concept of policy-making. Not surprisingly, Pakistan's foreign policy has suffered as a consequence.

However, in all fairness it needs to be said that over the past fifty years, the majority of Pakistani diplomats, despite the many constraints imposed upon them and their own occasional failures, have performed well in the pursuit of Pakistan's national interests. This is shown, among other factors, by the high reputation that many of them have enjoyed in the international arena. That Pakistan has been able to hold back a much larger adversary over the years, by itself, speaks well of its diplomatic efforts.

One oft-repeated line of criticism of Pakistan's foreign policy should also perhaps be rejected at the outset. There are some cynical observers, both inside and outside Pakistan, who argue that Pakistan has never had a foreign policy of its own or that its foreign policy has generally been made in the USA. Any careful scrutiny of the record would show that this is a flawed argument. If this accusation had been true, then, for instance, it would not have been possible for Pakistan to have maintained a solidly pro-Arab and anti-Israel stance throughout its history, in total contrast to the US attitude. How could one explain Pakistan's befriending China, prior to 1971, when that country was regarded as an enemy by the US; or how could Pakistan have remained very friendly with Iran, after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, despite Iran's strained relations with Washington. For that matter, how could one explain Pakistan's solidly pro-Islamic stance in general; its persistently anti-India policies including two wars which were fought in disregard of American advice; the development of its nuclear and missile programmes in total rejection of US wishes that Pakistan sign the NPT and the CTBT? Surely, Pakistan could not have pursued these policies if it were taking dictation from Washington. In fact, the record shows that, in the last fifty years Pak-American relations have seen several highs and lows. Such vicissitudes

could not have arisen if Pakistan's foreign policy had been tailored in the US.

Actually, this kind of criticism can be traced back to the era of the Cold War when Pakistan's membership of the US-sponsored military pacts in the mid-1950s brought a howl of disapproval from the pro-Moscow leftists and supporters of non-alignment, as also from India. These circles would taunt that Pakistan's membership of the pacts meant that it had become an American stooge and was left with no option but to take orders from Washington. Later on, the more hardline Islamic parties in Pakistan also joined in this criticism. They tended to see the hand of the US in all that was wrong with the Islamic world, citing in particular its support for Israel against the Arabs. In the context of Pakistan, the Islamists along with the leftists have been critical of the US for its perceived failure to come to Pakistan's assistance in the wars against India even though, at that time, Pakistan was a military ally of the US. In more recent years, the US has been criticised for the pressures on Pakistan's economy—bordering on dictates—from the World Bank and the IMF, which are considered to be US-dominated bodies. Based on this logic, Islamabad's often close relations with the US have been viewed as a case of subservience to Washington.

In addition, over the years, a cynical view has grown in Pakistan which holds, without being able to advance much by way of credible evidence, that the all-powerful USA must be behind not only all changes of regimes and policies in Pakistan but also behind all that is wrong with it since, in their view, nothing could happen here without US blessings. America-bashing, rather than a realistic understanding of the situation in Pakistan, is clearly responsible for this kind of criticism of Pakistan's foreign policies.

In reality, an objective study would show that Pakistan's foreign policy, even during the phase when the military pacts were relatively vibrant (1954-61), had always reflected Pakistan's preoccupations with India, and could not be described as subservient to the US. In the years that followed, Pakistan's relations with the US lost much of their earlier warmth. The



*military pacts were, in fact, more or less dead even before they were dissolved in the 1970s. Thus, there remained little possibility of American dictation. However, around 1980, it was a convergence of interests between the US and Pakistan in the wake of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, which induced the two countries to work together to dislodge the Soviets from Pakistan's neighbouring Muslim country. Incidentally, in this bid a similar anti-Soviet position was taken by Iran as well, despite its known hostile attitude towards the US. Moreover, China, Saudi Arabia, Japan, and most other countries in the world were also opposed to the Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan. It was, without doubt, a case of mutuality of interests that had brought Pakistan and these diverse countries together on the Afghan issue and not any kind of dictation from Washington.*

Nonetheless, it can be said that over the years, a degree of American influence on Pakistan can be traced in certain instances. But there have been similar influences on Pakistan by certain other countries that have had close relations with Pakistan like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, China, etc. For instance, Pakistan's policy towards Taiwan and Tibet has been influenced by the desire to keep China happy. Pakistan's stance on Northern Cyprus has been influenced by Turkey. Pakistan's policy towards Israel has been influenced by the sensitivities of the Arab countries. Pakistan's stance towards Iraq in the Gulf War of 1991 was influenced by its close friendship with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Similarly, Pakistan had eschewed all contacts with South Africa before 1993 to show solidarity with black Africa. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that Pakistan too has in certain situations influenced the foreign policies of friendly countries, including that of the US (e.g. during the 1971 War, President Nixon 'tilted' in favour of Pakistan). Similarly, many of Pakistan's friends have remained cool towards India, mainly so as not to ruffle Pakistan's feelings. For instance, Turkey and Iran would have drawn much closer to India but for the considerations of friendship with Pakistan. The same applies to some of Pakistan's closest friends in the Arab world, including

Saudi Arabia. In fact, bilateral influences are not uncommon in international relations and do not necessarily prove the subservience of one country to another country. There have been historical instances of subservience, such as those of the East European countries after 1945 who became vassals of the Soviet Union. But probably few leftists, while accusing Pakistan of toeing the American line, have ever been willing to admit that reality.

The fact of the matter is that Pakistan, like most other states, has had to chart out its own course in international relations based on the evaluation of its national interests by the various governments which have ruled the country. Their decisions might or might not have been sound in all cases, but it is misleading to say that Pakistan has had no foreign policy and that its policies were made in Washington or elsewhere.

Reviewing the past fifty years of Pakistan's foreign policy as objectively as possible, it can be said that the over-riding motivation in determining Pakistan's foreign policy has been the desire to safeguard the country's independence and territorial integrity. For Pakistan, the main danger has come from India. Thus, the quest for security *vis-à-vis* India has been an unvarying, and almost obsessive, dimension of Pakistan's foreign policy from the very beginning. Much that Pakistan has done in its foreign relations has been influenced greatly by its perception of a mortal threat from India. At the same time, there has also been a kind of sibling rivalry with India resulting in an abiding competition even in areas unrelated to a security threat. Apart from India, until 1991, the former Soviet Union and, in a lesser way, Afghanistan as well, posed a potential threat.

In addition to considerations of security, the other motivations of Pakistan's foreign policy have revolved around its ideological yearnings, as also its economic interests. Being a new state on the world map, having liberated itself from British colonialism and owing its origin to its Islamic identity, Pakistan's foreign policies have reflected a certain ideological orientation. In the first place, the Pakistani people have always shown a genuine commitment to the concept of Islamic solidarity and have been



keen, from the very beginning, to foster unity among Islamic countries. Pakistan has, therefore, always taken a deep interest in Islamic issues around the globe, foremost of which has been the Palestinian problem. However, apart from ideological reasons, Pakistan's rivalry with India has been a contributing factor, in establishing friendly relations with Islamic countries — an important plank of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Similarly, Pakistan's colonial past also influenced it to sympathize with other Third World countries on issues relating to the struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and racial discrimination. Moreover, being a developing country, Pakistan has common interests with the countries of the South in their negotiations with the North. Pakistan has sought to promote an equitable international economic system, which does not discriminate against countries producing raw materials.

Arising out of its preoccupation with security as well as ideology, an important dimension of Pakistan's foreign policy has been the maintenance of special relationships with certain countries in the region like Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Iran and Turkey as also with China. With Saudi Arabia, Pakistan developed a very close relationship motivated by common strategic interests, ideological affinity as well as the pull of its enormous oil wealth. The same applies to the other Gulf countries.

On the other hand, China, though not an Islamic country, emerged around 1960 as one of Pakistan's best friends. A mutuality of interests, particularly with respect to India, originally brought these two very diverse countries together. In the 1960s, China was also a very isolated country in the international arena and it welcomed an opening to the rest of the world via Pakistan. On the other hand, China's position as one of the great powers of the world, apart from being an immediate neighbour, enhanced its importance in Pakistan's eyes. Friendship with China has remained a pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy and has withstood the test of time. It has, moreover, enjoyed enormous public support in Pakistan.

In addition, economic interests have strongly influenced the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy. The Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, have had a strong economic pull for Pakistan. During the period of the oil boom (1974-84), Pakistan received substantial financial assistance from these countries. With the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis in search of jobs, this region has become pivotal for Pakistan's economic well being.

However, the main trading links have always been with the US, UK, Western Europe, and Japan. The western way of life has also been a powerful influence on many Pakistanis, especially the ruling elite. Their ideas on politics and commerce have been influenced by the West. Even after the departure of the British, a kind of colonial hangover has persisted, which is not unlike the attitude found in many former colonies in other parts of the world. A kind of love-hate relationship has prevailed for the greater part between Pakistan and Britain, and — in a wider context — with the USA and Western Europe. The latter have, however, shown a preference for India over Pakistan, mainly because India is a bigger power and has remained eager to attraction. For its part, Pakistan has always remained paid win over the sympathies of the West and has perhaps paid preponderant attention to these countries, though the results have not been commensurate with the efforts made. Nonetheless, the bulk of the economic aid to Pakistan over the years has come from western countries. Japan too has been a principal aid-giver. Special attention has, therefore, always been paid to bilateral relations with these countries.

Multilateral diplomacy has also been an important preoccupation of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan has always been quite active at the UN and its various subsidiary bodies as well as in the OIC, the Non-Aligned Movement, SAARC, and the ECO. Motivated largely by the desire to find an equalizer against India, Pakistan's foreign policy has focused a great deal on the UN and the OIC, the latter being the main political body of Muslim countries since it was set up in 1969. Moreover, Pakistan has sought to promote the regional grouping, formerly



known as the RCD, consisting of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. It has since been renamed as the ECO and expanded to include seven other Central Asian countries.

Pakistan has also been active in seeking friendship with its immediate neighbours in South Asia viz. Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and, since 1975, with Bangladesh. While SAARC, the grouping of South Asian countries, has made slow progress mainly due to the political tensions between two of its larger members, Pakistan has been able to achieve a good understanding with all of its other South Asian neighbours. Relations with these countries have always been given considerable attention by Pakistan.