

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.

Pakistan's Quest for Security

India's efforts immediately after independence to undo Pakistan, particularly its attempt to seize Kashmir, were the main causes for the bitterness and sense of insecurity which gripped the Pakistani policy-makers from the very outset. This perception was to have a profound influence on the formulation of their defence and foreign policies. In the years that followed, the Pakistani policy-makers remained convinced that India, which is several times bigger than Pakistan in size and resources, was conspiring against Pakistan's very independence and territorial integrity. In their perception, India's hostile designs not only consisted of the conventional methods of warfare (to begin with in Kashmir) but also included diverse political and other pressures, including a psychological war of relentless propaganda questioning the very *raison d'être* of Pakistan's creation.

In addition to applying direct pressures, India also sought to isolate and encircle Pakistan with the help of other countries. On Pakistan's western border, Afghanistan, its Muslim neighbour, entertained irredentist claims against Pakistan, and was willing to collude with India, and later on with the USSR, against Pakistan's security. Thus, the possibility of a pincer movement always worried Pakistani strategists.

More ominously for Pakistan, from around 1954, the Soviet Union adopted a hostile posture towards Pakistan and extended a more distant but nevertheless a real threat to Pakistan's security due to the perceived expansionist nature of Soviet Communism

and the old Russian ambitions of reaching the warm waters of the Arabian Sea.

To overcome these grave challenges to Pakistan's security, the first task of Pakistani diplomacy was, therefore, to somehow find an equalizer against India. This has, ever since, remained the most important preoccupation of Pakistan's foreign and defence policies. However, through the years, Pakistan's quest for security went through various phases. In the early years after independence, Pakistan had banked its hopes on the UN to protect it against any Indian aggression and, at least, to help to resolve the dispute with India on Kashmir. The UN began positively enough but as time passed India managed to frustrate the implementation of the various UN Resolutions on Kashmir. Since then the UN has seemed impotent in the face of Indian intransigence.

Similarly, Pakistan also placed its hopes in the British Commonwealth and Britain, in particular, for assistance in resolving the Kashmir dispute and Pakistan's other problems with India. However, Pakistan found the British unhelpful and even leaning towards India. For instance, at the UN the British tried to water down the resolutions on Kashmir in favour of India.¹ Furthermore, the British decision in 1949 to make a special allowance for India to remain in the Commonwealth, even after it became a republic, convinced Pakistani policymakers that India would always get its way with the British. In fact, Pakistan found out soon enough that the Commonwealth, under British patronage, was not willing to discuss any bilateral disputes between member states.

Soon after independence, Pakistan also explored Pan-Islamism to see if it could bring the weightage of the numerous Islamic states behind it with respect to India. However, it drew a blank and its call for an Islamic bloc even aroused uneasiness in countries like Egypt which were seemingly worried that Pakistan would become a rival for leadership in the Islamic world. Pakistan's efforts thus brought the sneering comment from Egypt's King Farouq² that the Pakistanis held that 'Islam was born on 14 August 1947', the date of Pakistan's indepen-

dence. Egypt's opposition to the formation of an Islamic bloc was reiterated as late as April 1960 by President Nasser, who, on a visit to Pakistan said: 'I do not wish to use Islam in international politics.'³ In the meanwhile, a Pakistani Prime Minister himself was to deride the leverage of the Islamic world by arguing that 'zero plus zero is after all equal to zero.'⁴

This left Pakistan with the option of turning to either of the two global power blocs. It needs to be remembered that in the gathering Cold War of the late 1940s, Pakistan had started with an open mind. Three days after Pakistan's independence, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan had declared that Pakistan would take no sides in the conflict of ideologies between the nations.⁵

As it turned out, under Stalin, the Soviet policy towards both India and Pakistan showed certain ideological reservations. The Soviet Union saw the hand of imperialism behind the developments in the subcontinent and treated both India and Pakistan as bourgeois pro-West states. Moscow thus showed little interest in getting close to either India or Pakistan. However, two developments took place in 1949, which brought new thinking in Moscow as well as in Karachi. The US extended an invitation to Indian Prime Minister Nehru to visit the United States and this was readily accepted. Also, India decided to stay on in the Commonwealth even after becoming a republic. Both of these moves drew criticism from the Soviets who now looked more supportively towards Pakistan.

Reacting to these developments, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan declared that 'Pakistan can not afford to wait. She must take her friends where she finds them.'⁶ Contacts were initiated with Moscow and Liaquat Ali Khan promptly received an invitation to visit the Soviet Union. However, for reasons which have remained obscure, the Soviets could not mutually settle convenient dates for the visit. Some time later, an American invitation was received and Liaquat Ali Khan went on to visit the US in May 1950. While on US soil he declared his intention to visit the Soviet Union after the dates had been finalized. However, there was no further progress on the matter and Liaquat Ali Khan was tragically assassinated in 1951.

Later, a myth developed in some Pakistani circles, particularly amongst those with left leanings, that Moscow had turned against Pakistan in the years that followed because of Liaquat Ali Khan's failure to visit the Soviet Union whereas he did go to the US. (Incidentally, Moscow itself has hardly ever put forward such reasoning.) This lobby further argued that the alleged rebuff to the Soviet Union inevitably led to profound adverse consequences, as subsequently seen. A careful appraisal, however, shows that there were no noteworthy strains in Pakistan's bilateral relations with the USSR between 1949 to 1953.⁷ Most importantly, the Soviet Union did not veto any Security Council Resolution on Kashmir. Moreover, Pakistan and the Soviet Union exchanged Ambassadors. In fact, relations with the Soviet Union turned sour only around 1954 when Pakistan decided to join the US-sponsored military pacts. That was the cause of Moscow's displeasure with Pakistan and not the inability of Liaquat Ali Khan to visit the Soviet Union for which he could not, in any case, be held personally responsible. It should also be noted that in international diplomacy, invitations are often extended but not always availed. Failure to visit a country in response to its invitation has hardly ever become the cause of long-term estrangement.

Indo-Pakistan relations kept on deteriorating, with serious war scares during 1950 as also 1951 when India amassed its troops on the Pakistani borders while putting forward No War proposals.⁸ This was to become a trademark of Indian diplomacy with Pakistan for many years to come. Pakistan's response from the beginning was that it welcomed such a proposal in principle but it must, at the same time, contain a provision for a fair settlement of the disputes between the two countries. This was never accepted by India thereby making the whole proposal, in Pakistani eyes, no more than a propaganda ploy.

Thus the Pakistani policy-makers found themselves in a dilemma. Tensions with India showed no signs of abatement. The Pakistani efforts to mobilize the UN as well as the Commonwealth against India's intransigence in Kashmir were making no real headway. The Islamic countries were quite weak

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and, in any event, were not responding to Pakistan's suggestions for an Islamic bloc. The Soviet Union was not forthcoming and was not really in a position to extend large-scale assistance to anyone. Pakistan was in desperate need to somehow find an equalizer against a belligerent India.

It was under these circumstances that Pakistan decided to join the US-sponsored military pacts—the Baghdad Pact (later renamed CENTO) and SEATO. This was not an unnatural alliance. In ideological terms, Pakistan felt closer to the West rather than to Communism. Moreover, the Russians had been on an expansionist course southwards since the previous two centuries and had annexed vast Muslim territories in Central Asia with which the Pakistani people had age-old links. This had aroused a negative perception in Pakistan about Russian intentions. Moreover, Communist involvement in an abortive *coup d'etat* bid in 1951, known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case, had added to these concerns. Pakistan's closest friends in the Islamic world, Iran and Turkey, were keen to join these pacts as both of them felt directly threatened by the Soviet Union; and their attitude clearly influenced Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan was quite eager to secure a military alliance with these two Muslim countries that gave it a sense of security against India and was in harmony with its Pan-Islamic approach.

Thus, the reality was that the decisive factor for Pakistan in joining the military pacts was the need to find an equalizer against India. The Pakistani army chief, General Ayub Khan, was particularly keen to secure the latest American military equipment for the Pakistani armed forces with the conviction that whereas Pakistan had the manpower to take on India, it was only deficient in military equipment. By January 1957, Ayub Khan could declare: 'We are no more short of men and material.'⁹ Only a year later, he made the confident claim that 'the Pakistan Army today is the sharpest instrument of peace or war and the greatest deterrent against aggression.'¹⁰

When Ayub Khan seized power in Pakistan in 1958, he was at first inclined to accept the Western argument that communism was a direct threat to the subcontinent as well. The early rifts in

Sino-Indian relations on the border issue had also become known. Thus in early 1959, Ayub Khan came forward with the proposal for 'Joint Defence' of the subcontinent against any encroachment from the north. He evidently meant both the Soviet Union as well as China. However, Ayub Khan did put a pre-condition with this proposal that the Kashmir dispute should be resolved in a just manner. This might well have been Pakistan's main objective in making this proposal. However, India immediately rejected the idea and Nehru even asked ingeniously as to 'against whom'¹¹ was there need for a joint defence. Ironically, the emphatic reply came three years later when China dealt a big blow against India during a brief border war. In the meantime, Pakistan had moved away from any possibility of a joint defence with India, as it embarked upon a major effort to improve relations with the two Communist giants in its neighbourhood.

On the whole, it was the quest for arms and aid to be used against India, rather than any real fear of communist aggression, which was Pakistan's main motive in joining the Western-sponsored military pacts. It is also a fact, though now largely forgotten in Pakistan, that these pacts did undoubtedly secure very substantial US military and economic assistance for Pakistan in its nascent years and significantly strengthened it in facing India, as seen in the 1965 War. During that war Pakistan made full use of US-supplied military arms and equipment. In fact the use of US military aid for Pakistan's 'legitimate self-defence' was permitted under Article I(2) of the US-Pakistan Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement of 19 May 1954. According to the then US Ambassador to Pakistan, Horace Hildreth, 'the only limitation' on the use of US military aid was that it would not be used for the purpose of aggression.¹²

Nevertheless, from the very beginning, there was a basic disagreement between Pakistan and the US about the *raison d'être* of these defence pacts. The latter held that the pacts were meant to defend the member states against Communist aggression only. For instance, after joining the Military Committee of the Baghdad Pact, the US had stated that its

participation was 'related solely to the Communist menace and carries no connotations with respect to intra-area matters.'¹³ The British Defence Minister had added that both Britain and the US had promised to defend the Baghdad Pact region against Communist aggression only.¹⁴ In the case of SEATO, the US had actually entered a reservation in the Treaty, that her obligation under Article IV would extend only to cases of Communist aggression.¹⁵

On the other hand, Pakistan continued to insist that these pacts should also be applicable in the case of aggression against Pakistan by India. It held that India was almost a camp follower of the Soviet Union in most matters and in turn enjoyed wholehearted Soviet military and diplomatic support. This was particularly the sentiment in Pakistan because its membership of the pacts had alienated Moscow to the extent that it had made a common cause with both India and Afghanistan in their respective disputes with Pakistan. In particular, Pakistan was hurt that the Soviet veto was being applied at the UN Security Council on any resolution on Kashmir which displeased India. This in effect marginalized the UN's role in the context of the Kashmir dispute. Indeed, in 1960, Pakistan's relations with the USSR reached an all-time low when Soviet leader Khrushchev threatened to wipe out a Pakistani city, Peshawar, from where a US spy U-2 plane had taken off and was shot down over Soviet territory. In the words of the *New York Times*, the Pakistanis realized with a shock that 'such incidents as the U-2 flight could touch off a war, that Pakistan could be a prime target and that the Soviet Union nearly touches Pakistan's northern border while the United States, her ally, is 9000 miles away.'¹⁶

Pakistan's standing in the Third World had also suffered because of its military alignment with the US. Pakistan was thus unable to join the Non-Aligned Movement where India became a leading player, despite its close military links with the Soviet Union. Many Pakistanis resented becoming camp followers of the US, which was viewed as the main supporter of Israel. Thus there was a perception that Pakistan had paid a heavy price for joining the Western-sponsored military pacts.