

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY¹

/ Vladimir Moskalenko

The crash of the world colonial system caused dozens of new sovereign states to appear. The peoples of these states, who had formerly been merely objects of the policy of the imperialist powers, began to take an active part in the decisions of the world's destiny. The position of the young states of the "Third World" has an important significance today in the fundamental problems of the modern age; their foreign policy constitutes a substantial part of today's international relations. On the other hand, for these very countries, foreign policy has become an important means of solving the gigantic problems involved in strengthening their independence, breaking old and establishing new relations with former parent states, and developing many-sided relations with the other countries of the world, as well as being important in the sphere of internal reorganization.

The course of Pakistan's foreign policy has been complex, and has passed through several stages during its development. In the early years it generally adhered to a neutralist course. Then, however, it departed from this course, concluded military agreements with the United States, entered into blocs (SEATO and the Baghdad Pact). In this period Pakistan developed its foreign policy and foreign economic ties, mainly with the Western powers. Subsequently, at the turn of the 1960s, Pakistan's foreign policy strategy began to be reviewed. Courses directed toward strengthening its independence, renouncing the onesided orientation toward the Western powers, and extending cooperation with the socialist states and the Afro-Asian countries began to gather momentum in its foreign policy. Such periodization in the development of Pakistan's foreign policy, with certain deviations, is widespread and acknowledged. The author of this article is, in general, with certain reservations which will be dealt with below, also its advocate. A considerable variety of opinions is observed, however, in regard to the reasons for the changes in Pakistan's foreign policy. Many foreign scholars feel that major reasons for these changes are phenomena of an external order, sometimes not even directly connected with Pakistan, as, for example, the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, the changes in the policy of the United States with respect to the countries of the Subcontinent which accompanied the coming to power of the Kennedy administration, etc. To regard the external factors

¹This article reviews the historic period from August 1947 to December 1971.

as the determinant, and what is more, as the only reason for the turn in the course of Pakistan's foreign policy, does not seem correct to us.

Foreign policy is a part of the over-all policy of a given state or, to be more precise, of the classes which are in a position of authority. The foreign policy of a state, its goals and basic directions are determined precisely by the interests of the ruling classes. The Marxist-Leninist conception of the process by which the policy of a state, particularly the foreign policy, is formed, does not reject but, on the contrary, assumes that this process is influenced by various internal and external factors such as the specific condition in the country at a given moment, the degree of political activity of the broad masses of the population, the personal qualities of the statesmen, etc. There is great significance for developing countries in external factors—the policies of the great powers, the position of the neighboring states, the former parent state's attitude toward them, etc. Therefore, for correct understanding and true evaluation of a course of foreign policy, the factors which influence it should be taken into consideration as far as possible. Here, however, it should be remembered that no matter how much these factors influence the foreign policy of the state, diverting it from a course in the "pure form," in the last analysis it remains an expression of the interests of the ruling classes in the external sphere, the sphere of international relations.

In Pakistan, all during the period of its existence which is being reviewed in this article, the ruling classes were the bourgeoisie and the landowners. This general situation, however, did not exclude the fact that at various times the determining influence on state policy was exerted by various strata and groups of these classes.

Soviet Pakistanists, especially Professor Yury Gankovsky, have come to the conclusion that by virtue of the special features of the historical development of colonial India, there was an immediate appearance at the helm of authority in independent Pakistan of numerically insignificant leaders of the ruling classes—the land magnates of West Pakistan (chiefly the Punjabis and Sindhis) and the upper bourgeoisie, which had come from India to settle here after 1947. The economic activity of the latter was mainly in the sphere of distribution, where it operated in close contact with the foreign monopolies; the chief sources of its income were the trade-financial operations, and it therefore had little interest in the development of rational production or in the growth of a home market. As far as the West Pakistan major landlords were concerned, they tried to preserve their semi-feudal privileges and huge estates. Both of them were interested in whatever state policy (and actually conducted it) would favor the reinforcement of their economic and political power, and the satisfaction of their narrow group interests, which in practice meant the maximum possible preservation of the structure of Pakistan society which had been formed by 1947. It is not surprising that these groups, which determined the state course of Pakistan during 1947-1958, did not carry out during this period any substantial reorganiza-

tion in the various spheres of domestic life of the society. The policy of the ruling circles in this period not only ran counter to the interests of the broad masses of the population in the country and the objective requirements for developing the society, but was also to a certain extent at variance with the interests of other groups of the ruling classes, which were more closely connected with entrepreneurial activity, and strove for a forced development of capitalism and elimination of the survivors of the colonial and feudal past who hindered this—i.e., strove for a certain modernization of society. (Specifically, the growing industrial bourgeoisie and the quite considerable strata of landowners connected with entrepreneurial activity were the foremost of these groups. It was precisely these strata of the ruling classes, economically strengthened, which, in spite of all the obstacles in the more than ten year period of Pakistan's existence, began to exert a decisive influence in drawing up the state's policy after the events of October 1958.)

The state of Pakistan which was formed in 1947 inherited from the colonial era an extremely backward economic system and acute socio-economic and political problems. The ruling bloc of the country, weak in economic and political respects, which had no firm position in the state, and a certain part of which was not even genetically connected with the population of the country, was from the very beginning greatly in need of various forms of support and assistance from outside in order to consolidate its position. Pakistan's ruling circles also needed support in connection with the tension that had arisen in relations with India, as well as with Afghanistan. Therefore, the chief driving force of Pakistan's foreign policy for many years was an attempt by its ruling groups to have, in the words of M. Ayub Khan, "friends—powerful friends, who are interested in our security, who are interested in our freedom, and who are interested in our progress."² "That is the reason why," stressed M. Ayub Khan, "we are in military alliance with the United States of America."³ In reality, this striving by the ruling circles for several years after achieving independence led Pakistan to a onesided orientation toward the Western powers, and especially toward the most powerful of them—the United States of America—to concluding military agreements with them and entering into the military pacts created by them. In the early years, however, when the "search for friends" was going on, Pakistan's foreign policy *objectively* (we stress this word) was of a neutralist nature. An important factor influencing the state's foreign policy line in this direction was the mood and the emotions of the people, who had just been liberated from foreign domination.

In the "search for friends" the ruling group first turned to England and the British Commonwealth. This was conditioned by the British influence

²Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Speeches and Statements*, Vol. IV, July 1961-June 1962, Karachi, p. 86. (Quote taken from a speech made August 25, 1961 at the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, in Karachi).

³*Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

in economics, the state machine, the armed forces of the country, and by the Pakistani elite's longtime associations with England, as well as by Pakistan's position as a British dominion and member of the Commonwealth. An important role was also played here by the fact that Pakistan did not yet occupy the place in the Asian policy of the United States which was subsequently assigned to it; in the early postwar years, the United States' attention was riveted on events in the Far East. England, however, weakened during the Second World War, was not in a position to supply Pakistan with any considerable economic and military aid. Moreover, England was interested in strengthening its position in India, and therefore did not come to occupy the position with respect to it that Pakistan wanted. All of this caused dissatisfaction in Pakistan.⁴ Active attempts were made by the Pakistani leaders to create an alliance of Muslim countries in which Pakistan, as the major Muslim state, would occupy the ruling position. The realization of these plans should have strengthened Pakistan's foreign policy position and its positions in the disputes with India. In the domestic life of Pakistan, progress in rallying the Islamic states could have intensified the feelings of Muslim unity among the population, could have distracted their attention from internal difficulties, stabilized the country's internal political situation, and thus strengthened the position of the ruling classes. The implementation of these plans, however, proved to be no easy matter, and in the end it was impossible for many reasons (one of them was the fact that the other states had no desire to recognize Pakistan's pretensions to the role of leader in the Muslim world).⁵

As a result, from the beginning of the 1950s, Pakistan's leaders began all the more to pin their hopes on the strongest of the Western countries, the United States.⁶ In turn, the latter, after the conclusion of the civil war in China and the proclaiming of the PRC, began to assign a special place in their policy to South Asia. Pakistan's significance in this policy especially increased after it became clear that India would not take part in the plans to establish blocs in this region, and would pursue a policy of nonalignment. The large role assigned to Pakistan in the plans of the United States was determined by its important strategic position at the junction of the countries

⁴See *Foreign Policy of Pakistan. An Analysis*, Karachi, 1964, pp. 66-68.

⁵For more detail, see Yu. V. Gankovsky, L. R. Gordon-Polonskaya, *A History of Pakistan*, Moscow, 1964.

⁶The Pakistan ruling group was interested in such alliances as would further strengthen its position within the country in the face of the growing opposition movement; would grant them substantial means for overcoming economic (specifically food) difficulties (which would make it possible to delay the carrying out of reforms and reorganizations of various spheres in the life of the society), for consolidating and expanding the state and military bureaucratic machine, the police, and the army. Pakistan's orientation in the process of "searching for friends" was to no small extent determined by the anti-communism and anti-Sovietism of the Pakistan leaders at that time. Obligated to proceed in that period to develop ties with the Soviet Union, it did this unwillingly, making use of any possibility of slowing down the process. See I. Kompantsev, *Pakistani Sovetskij Soyuz* (Pakistan and the Soviet Union), Moscow, 1970, pp. 26-27.

of the Middle East and Southeast Asia, in direct proximity with the borders of the USSR and the PRC, and by its considerable human and natural resources. Pakistan was conceived as a means of putting pressure on India, in order to make her give up the policy of nonalignment. Finally, with the aid of this Muslim country, the Western powers counted on strengthening their influence over the other Muslim states, and even on influencing the Muslims of the Soviet Union and the IRC.⁷

In 1950-1953, a series of agreements were signed on American aid to Pakistan. Already these agreements imposed definite obligations on Pakistan. The agreement of May 19, 1954, "The Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement," bound Pakistan to United States policy seriously.

Simultaneously, at the beginning of the 1950s, the elements of neutralism in Pakistan's foreign policy were weakening; Pakistan was more and more oriented toward the Western powers, especially the United States. The actual entrance into the bloc was therefore no turning point in Pakistan's foreign policy, but an action ensuing logically from the process of onesided orientation which had already begun, and in turn, naturally reinforcing this process. Therefore, with Pakistan's entrance into the bloc, one can speak authoritatively of the end of its period of formal neutralism in the sense that in the entire preceding period it had been a formally nonaligned country. The neutralist elements in Pakistan's foreign policy were, however, significant only in the early years of its existence (although there were strong opposing elements), when the "search for friends" was going on. It seems to us that this search, in fact, to a considerable extent also determined Pakistan's neutrality, causing it at that time to be quite restricted, and chiefly obligated (even in the literature of Pakistan this period is sometimes called the period of "uncertain," "passive" neutrality).⁸ At the beginning of the 1950s, in the foreign policy of Pakistan, the elements opposed to neutralism grew stronger. It does not, therefore, seem reasonable to us to single out the initial period as an independent period in Pakistan's foreign policy, although it of course occupies a special place in the history of Pakistan's foreign policy up to the beginning of the 1960s, when an important change took place in the line of Pakistan's foreign policy under the influence of a combination of internal and external factors, chief of which were the changes in the social structure of the ruling group.

The foreign policy activity of the Pakistan state attests to the fact that its foreign policy was not only the complex result of the action of a set of values of varying significance, but was never uniform, and was a complex phenomenon in which, along with the elements predominating at a given stage, there also existed different, opposing elements. The transition to a new period of

⁷George J. Lerski, "The Pakistan-American Alliance: A Reevaluation of the Past Decade," *Asian Survey*, VIII:5, May 1968, p. 46.

⁸See, for example, Samin Khan, *Pakistan: Ideology, Constitution, Laws, Foreign Policy*, Karachi, 1961, p. 102.

foreign policy was accomplished gradually; the elements which were in opposition to the leading trend grew stronger and, in the end, turned into the chief course of foreign policy, while the elements which had determined it before became secondary, but did not disappear, causing the complexity and multifarious nature of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Let us examine the foreign policy of Pakistan in the 1950s after the agreement with the United States and entrance into the bloc. The fact that in these years Pakistan followed the course of the Western powers is generally acknowledged. M. Ayub Khan, for example, in his political autobiography, *Friend not Masters*, notes that by the time of its coming to power, the "political identification of the country [Pakistan] with the West was complete."⁹ The well known scholar K. B. Sayeed considers Pakistan to have been practically in the position of a satellite of the United States during these years.¹⁰ But, if one simply states the onesidedness of Pakistan's orientation in this period and restricts oneself to this, it will indicate that this question has not been considered in all of its complexity and variety. For even in this period elements existed in Pakistan's foreign policy which differed from its general tendency. This was caused by such factors as the unpopularity in the country of the onesidedness of its foreign policy; the intensification of the competition between the Western monopolies and the growing national bourgeoisie and its interest in the diversification of Pakistan's foreign ties and in additional sources of aid; the difference in the positions of Pakistan and the Western powers with respect to the trend of the blocs; Afro-Asian solidarity; the growth of the power of the socialist system, etc. All of these factors were precisely those which in the final analysis led to the change in Pakistan's foreign policy in the 1960s. Pakistan's attitude on a number of problems did not coincide with that of its Western allies. Especially significant were the divergences on problems which were disturbing the whole "Third World." Despite the general negative attitude toward the development of multiple ties with the socialist countries, the Pakistani ruling circles, in this period, proceeded to extend those ties. In 1956, for example, Pakistan signed trade agreements with a number of socialist countries. On June 27, 1956, the first trade agreement was concluded between Pakistan and the USSR (up until then trade between them had been carried on through individual contracts), which provided for a mutual concession of most favored nation status; the item in the agreement which stipulated that all trade payments should be made in Pakistani rupees was extremely important. Pakistan had as a rule carried its accounts for trade transactions with other countries in foreign currency. For several years after this agreement was concluded, the volume of Pakistan-Soviet trade somewhat increased, remaining, however, extremely

⁹M. Ayub Khan, *Friends not Masters: A Political Autobiography*, Lahore, Karachi, Dacca, 1967, p. 116.

¹⁰K. B. Sayeed, "Southeast Asia in Pakistan's Foreign Policy," *Pacific Affairs*, XLI:2, 1968, pp. 233, 240.