

Afghan policy with the cause of Islam for domestic political and international purposes, but also in securing substantial financial support from the oil-producing states of the Persian Gulf.¹⁷ In so doing, he demonstrated the political and economic advantages which Pakistan and its leaders could derive from pursuing foreign policy initiatives based on Islamic ideology and Muslim solidarity. This lesson was not to be lost on his successors.

ADJUSTING TO NEW REALITIES

The death of General Zia in 1988 and the restoration of democratic government in Pakistan coincided with a number of significant regional and international developments which were to have a profound effect on the environment in which Pakistani governments would have to formulate their foreign policies. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the end of the Cold War, and the final collapse of the Soviet Union all had implications for Pakistan's geostrategic situation and for its foreign relations. Collectively, these events were in one sense highly beneficial to Pakistan. They meant the end of the threat posed by the presence of the armies of a hostile superpower on Pakistan's western border. They also meant that Pakistan would be faced with fewer difficult choices in its relations with the United States and the former Soviet Union, as well as with China. Finally, they were to curtail the political, economic, and military support which Pakistan's traditional adversary, India, had for over two decades received from the Soviet Union.

But if regional and international events between 1988 and 1991 contributed in one sense to improving Pakistan's security situation, they also produced distinctly negative impacts. On the one hand, the geostrategic importance to the West of Pakistan as a Cold War ally dwindled and then vanished. On the other hand, Western countries liberated from the threat of military confrontation with the Soviet Union began to attach higher

¹⁷ See J. Lévesque, *L'URSS en Afghanistan* (Brussels: Editions Complexe 1990), 152-7.

priority to other aspects of their foreign and security policies, most notably in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and human rights and good governance. On both fronts Pakistan was to suffer adverse consequences.

In October 1990 the president of the United States refused to certify that 'Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device' and thus triggered the Pressler amendment to the 1985 International Security and Cooperation Act, which stipulated that without this certification all American economic and security assistance to Pakistan should be terminated and that no military equipment or technology should be sold or transferred to the regime.¹⁸ At the same time, a number of other Western countries, most especially Germany, Canada, and the Netherlands, began to lay heavy emphasis on Pakistan's record in the field of human rights and good governance in determining the nature and quantity of the aid they were prepared to provide Pakistan. Pakistani delegations to the annual meetings of the aid consortium for Pakistan were subjected to more or less subtle pressure on subjects such as discrimination against women and minorities, the size of the resources devoted to defence, the inadequacy of budgetary allocations for health and education, corruption in government, and so on. But perhaps most galling and worrisome of all from a Pakistani perspective was the speed with which both the United States and China made highly visible overtures to an India now freed from its close political and security ties to the Soviet Union.¹⁹

¹⁸ The full text of the Pressler amendment is to be found in Section 902 of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act 1985 (Public Law 99-83; 99 Stat 268). The most immediate effect of the entry into force of the amendment was to interrupt the transfer of F16 fighter aircraft to Pakistan. Since Pakistan had already paid substantial sums for these aircraft, the issue rapidly became a major irritant in United States-Pakistan relations.

¹⁹ These concerns are particularly well highlighted in the writings of an influential former chief of the army staff, General Aslam Beg. See for example his 'Balance of power paradigm and Pakistan's security problems,' in T. Jan, ed, *Pakistan: Foreign Policy Debate* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies 1993), 123-42.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, Pakistani politicians, officials, academics, and journalists tended to dwell more on the downsides than the upsides of these post-Cold War realities. Throughout 1991, conference and seminar proceedings and newspaper editorials were replete with images of Pakistan as a loyal ally of the United States and the West that had been unceremoniously discarded once it had outlived its usefulness. The sense of betrayal was real, if often exaggerated for effect.²⁰ Beyond bemoaning the unreliability of Western countries, Pakistan more or less deliberately adopted two tacks in responding to the demands of the new situation. The first was to try to mend fences with the United States and secure the revocation of the application of the Pressler amendment. Pakistan in fact made very little headway on this front because while it was prepared to appeal to old friendships and to explain at great length the necessity of its nuclear weapons programme vis-à-vis a nuclear armed India (and Israel), it was not prepared to accept any effective and verifiable reversal or even curtailment of the programme. The second tack involved trying to find new sources of support in the Muslim world not only to further Pakistan's economic development and bolster its position in its ongoing confrontation with India, but also in resisting the pressures being brought to bear on it by the United States and other Western countries.²¹

ISLAMIC ISSUES AND CAUSES

At times hesitantly, at times enthusiastically, the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (1990-3) embarked on a path to make Pakistan's foreign policy more Islamic in character, spurred on in part by the fact that the Jamaat-I-Islami was a

²⁰ A review of editorials in 1991 in newspapers such as *Nawa, Dawn* (Karachi), *Muslim*, and the government-controlled *Pakistan Times* reveals a constant recurrence of these sentiments.

²¹ See, for example, S. M. Koreshi, 'Counteracting the New World Order,' in Jan, *Pakistan*, 45-77.

member of the governmental coalition. This movement in Pakistani policy became particularly evident in the government's response to the crises in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kashmir and was to be carried over into the policy of the successor government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, which came to office at the end of 1993.

When the United Nations finally intervened militarily in the long-standing and bloody civil war in Somalia, there was no evident political, economic, or military reason why Pakistan should have become heavily involved in the United Nations action. Pakistan's links with Somalia and the Horn of Africa were not strong and its interests in the region were negligible. Yet the government of Nawaz Sharif decided to make a major contribution of troops to the United Nations peacekeeping force in Somalia and did so in the name of Muslim solidarity, invoking the terrible sufferings being endured by fellow Muslims. This rationale was deemed sufficient to warrant building up the Pakistani contingent to 7,200 troops, making it the largest national contingent in the United Nations force. Moreover, the government decided to maintain the contingent in Somalia even after 26 Pakistani soldiers were killed by Somali fighters in a single encounter – the most serious incident of violence in the history of United Nations peacekeeping. Pakistan's role in Somalia became the first instance of the country making a contribution out of all proportion to its geostrategic interests and its financial resources in an effort to demonstrate its dedication to the cause of the international Muslim community.²²

If Pakistan's connections to the situation in Somalia were tenuous, those to the situation in far-off Bosnia were even more so. Yet here again Pakistan sought to carve out a special role

²² Some Pakistani leaders expressed the hope privately that Pakistan's contribution and sacrifices in Somalia would help to improve relations with the United States, while others suggested that they would bolster Pakistan's credentials in the United Nations and thus make the world body more amenable to intervening on Pakistan's side in the Kashmir dispute. These motives never surfaced, however, in the Pakistani government's public explanations of its Somali policy.

within the community of Muslim nations. In the first instance, the government of Nawaz Sharif offered the equivalent of several million dollars of humanitarian assistance to the Bosnian Muslims and then welcomed to Pakistan a contingent of 300 Bosnian Muslim refugees. Although fairly symbolic in nature, these gestures were ones which a country as poor as Pakistan could not readily afford. But as the war in Bosnia progressed, Pakistan endeavoured to play a more prominent political role in countering what it saw as a campaign of genocide by the Bosnian Serbs against the Bosnian Muslims. Pakistan managed to secure for itself the chairmanship of the OIC's contact group on Bosnia and in that capacity became the principal spokesperson for the Muslim countries. Whether at the head of OIC delegations or acting in its own right, Pakistan put forward to the United Nations and other international organizations a succession of demands: the lifting of the United Nations arms embargo against Bosnia, the bombardment of Serb positions by NATO aircraft, the creation of 'safe areas' for Muslims, the deployment of forces from Islamic countries to defend Bosnian Muslim enclaves, and the participation of Islamic countries in the Geneva peace talks on Bosnia.²³ Pakistan also gave concrete evidence of its support for the Bosnian Muslims by contributing 3,000 troops to the United Nations peacekeeping force serving in the former Yugoslavia.

It was, however, over Kashmir that the governments of both Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto gave the strongest evidence of their inclination to rest at least one major part of their foreign policy on Islamic ideology and Muslim solidarity. Always central to Pakistan's foreign policy concerns, the confrontation with India over Kashmir took on a new character with the outbreak of an armed insurgency in the Valley of Kashmir in 1990. On the one hand, the Indian government greatly increased the number of its security forces in Kashmir and these progressively

²³ See, for example, *Muslim*, 25 February 1994, 8, and 6 March 1994, 8; *News*, 29 April 1994, 8.

became involved in almost continuous counter-insurgency operations, characterized by widespread human rights violations. On the other hand, the Pakistani government came under pressure from the United States to terminate its support to the Kashmir insurgents in the interests of regional stability while at the same time the Jamaat-I-Islami urged the government to increase that support and if necessary declare war on India to liberate Kashmir.²⁴

Whereas Pakistani governments had traditionally pursued their interests in Kashmir as a political and territorial issue in their relations with India, they began in the 1990s to lay far heavier emphasis on the religious character of the dispute, portraying it as a struggle for and of abused and downtrodden Muslims against the overwhelming might of a brutal Indian security apparatus. As one commentator put it: 'Islamabad believes its Kashmir policy to be an emblem of Muslim politics in a world hostile to Islam.'²⁵ In appealing for support from other Muslim countries the government's hand was greatly strengthened by two quite separate Indian actions. The first was the destruction in 1992 of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu extremists associated with the opposition Bharatiya Janata party. The second was the siege in 1993 by Indian security forces of the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. Both incidents evoked strong reactions in various parts of the Muslim world, and Pakistan did its utmost to exploit them. In the event, Pakistan enjoyed only limited success in mustering effective support from Muslim countries for its positions on Kashmir, as was evident in its unsuccessful efforts to have the United Nations adopt resolutions condemning Indian human rights violations in

²⁴ See the statements of Jamaat leaders as reported in *News*, 12 September 1993, 12.

²⁵ P. Newberg, 'Indo-Pak relations: old diplomacy must be laid to rest,' *Friday Times (Lahore)*, 9 June 1994, 21. In a statement in Cairo, the Pakistani foreign minister, Sardar Assef Ali, said that 'Kashmir today is the Bosnia of Asia. There are half a million Indian troops who are killing a hundred people every day, burning houses, raping women.' See *News*, 2 June 1994, 1.

Kashmir in 1993 and 1994.²⁶ And Pakistan got nowhere with the idea of having the OIC impose economic sanctions against India, despite the fact that India steadfastly rejected the OIC's proposal to send an official delegation to Kashmir to investigate charges of human rights abuses by Indian security forces.²⁷

CENTRAL ASIA AND THE ECO

Pakistan's growing sense of isolation in the post-Cold War world combined with the emergence of the newly independent republics of central Asia to give yet another Islamic dimension to Pakistan's foreign policy in the early 1990s. In reflecting on Pakistan's future orientations and prospects in international trade, Pakistani policy-makers and business people were very conscious of the development of major regional economic blocs (the European Community, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Association of South-East Asian Nations) and of the fact that Pakistan did not belong to any regional organization that could effectively serve its economic interests. On the one hand, the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation had not developed any operating mechanisms to foster economic co-operation, was more often than not paralysed in its efforts by differences of view among its members, and was in any event totally dominated by India. On the other hand, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) linking Pakistan to Iran and Turkey was a largely moribund body which owed its existence to earlier partnerships with the United States (CENTO and Regional Co-operation for Development) in the fields of security and economic development. Under these circumstances, it was perhaps not surprising that Pakistan saw the collapse of the Soviet Union and the accession to independence

²⁶ For its own reasons, it was Iran that took the lead in persuading Pakistan to withdraw its Kashmir resolution at the 1994 session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

²⁷ The suggestion that the OIC might impose sanctions against India first surfaced at a press conference given by Foreign Minister (now President) Farooq Leghari. See *Dawn*, 28 October 1993, 14.

of six Muslim republics in central Asia as creating a target of opportunity.²⁸

Placing heavy emphasis on Pakistan's religious, cultural, and historical links to central Asia, the government of Nawaz Sharif launched a series of bilateral and multilateral initiatives in the direction of the newly independent republics. While vaunting the merits of the port of Karachi as an access to the sea for the exports of central Asia, Pakistani delegations toured the republics with offers of credit and technical assistance, always on the look out for market opportunities. The state-owned Pakistan International Airlines started services to the capitals of some of the republics, and central Asian leaders were invited to visit Islamabad. At the same time, the government took the lead in exploring the possibilities for revitalizing and expanding the ECO. These efforts came to partial fruition in November 1992 when Nawaz Sharif hosted a foreign ministers' meeting in Islamabad at which six central Asian republics plus Afghanistan officially joined the ECO. This meeting was followed by political and technical gatherings at which the representatives of the enlarged ECO mapped out ambitious plans for increased co-operation in trade, investment, communications, scientific research, and education.²⁹

If the initial motivations and manifestations of Pakistan's overtures to the central Asian republics were primarily economic and commercial in nature, they were also firmly grounded in politico-religious considerations. Thus one Pakistani commentator spoke of 'Pakistan's hopes and expectations for a convergence of the independent states of Central Asia as a strategic rear area against India' and of the 'vision of a united belt of Islamic states capable of playing a strategic role.'³⁰ But a

²⁸ See S.A. Khan, 'Pakistan's relations with central Asian states,' *Strategic Perspectives* (Islamabad: Institute of Strategic Studies) (no 2, 1994), 1, 44-54.

²⁹ See, for example, M.A. Ali Beg, 'Pak-ECO rail and road links,' *Pakistan and Gulf Economist*, 25 June 1994, 35.

³⁰ Z.A. Khan, 'Options in post-Cold War era,' *Dawn*, 2 June 1994, 18. For a Pakistani perspective on the politico-strategic dimensions and potential of this sort of alignment, see H. Gul, 'ECO's strategic significance in the context of Islamic resurgence,' Jan, *Pakistan*, 183-99.

series of factors accounts for the paucity of both political and economic results which Pakistan has so far derived from its central Asian policy. These include: the continuation of the civil war in Afghanistan, which is a barrier to increased trade; the reluctance of the central Asian republics to abandon their secularist heritage and inject Islamic elements into their foreign relations; the domestic politico-religious conflicts which continue to beset several of the republics; the strength of the links to, and the influence of, Russia; the competition for influence in central Asia among Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan; and finally the interest which certain central Asian republics have manifested in developing their relations with India.

UNIVERSALIZATION AND BEYOND

At the intellectual level at least, the process of Islamization of Pakistan's foreign policy has not been confined to individual issues or regions but has shown signs of trying to encompass the interests of the whole community of Muslim countries. Beyond identifying Pakistan's national interests with those of the Islamic world, there has been a tendency to suggest that they are interchangeable,³¹ and that only through the creation of a strong and unified Muslim world can Pakistan and other Muslim states hope to promote and defend their interests in an international system dominated by one superpower and various regional economic blocs. Thus one leading Pakistani scholar and politician has advanced the view that the enlargement of the ECO should be seen as only one of several building blocks in the construction of a Muslim economic union, encompassing all Muslim countries and endowed with a single currency, capital market, and development agency, as well as joint banking, communications, and insurance services.³² More recently Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was reported to have directed some of

³¹ For example, in addressing an army gathering in 1994, President Leghari declared that 'the defence of Pakistan is the defence of Islam.' See *News*, 25 April 1994, 4.

³² See K. Ahmad, 'Some thoughts on Muslim economic union,' *Muslim*, 13 May 1994, 7.

her ministers and officials to develop a proposal for the creation of a New Islamic Social Order whose long-term goal would be 'the economic uplift and defence of the 50 Islamic countries.'³³

The process of Islamization of the country's foreign policy, including the evocation of such ambitious schemes as those cited immediately above, has evoked relatively little direct opposition or overt criticism in Pakistan. There have, of course, always been a number of politicians, officials, and scholars ready to remind participants in seminars and conferences that Islamic ideology and Muslim solidarity are no substitute for military and economic strength in defending and promoting the nation's interests, and to point to Pakistan's continuing heavy dependence on the West and Japan for trade, investment, and aid. Rare, however, have been the expressions of such views in parliament and in the media. Even rarer have been direct attacks on the whole notion of Islam as an integral element of Pakistan's foreign policy. Only one small Islamabad weekly newspaper took the unusual step of publishing a lead editorial entitled 'Who cares for our Islamic credentials?' in which the author argued that Pakistan's constant references to Islamic themes in its international relations were not taken seriously by other Muslim countries and that Pakistan had derived no benefits whatever from the support it had given and the sacrifices it had made on behalf of other Muslim countries. He went on to suggest that Pakistan should emulate most of the Arab and other Muslim countries which founded their foreign policies on pragmatic considerations of national interest.³⁴ Another small weekly newspaper was quick to publish a satirical and sarcastic attack on Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's proposal for a New Islamic Social Order.³⁵ But such public expressions of opposition have been few and very far between.

In the absence of concerted domestic opposition, is the process of Islamization of Pakistan's foreign policy likely to con-

³³ See *News*, 2 July 1994, 1.

³⁴ See *Diplomatic Times* (Islamabad), 8 May 1994, 2.

³⁵ S. Husain, 'The magic wand,' *Friday Times*, 7 July 1994, 10.

tinue? Projecting the historical record of the past 25 years into the future would seem to suggest an affirmative answer, but much will depend on the answers to four other questions. First, will Pakistan be able to achieve a degree of internal political stability which will make governments less susceptible to the pressures of the *ulema* and the religious political parties? Second, will Pakistan's still essentially pragmatic foreign policy establishment be able to define coherent new foreign policy directions which take account of post-Cold War and post-Soviet realities? Third, will it prove possible for Pakistan to make the policy adjustments necessary to bring about a significant improvement in both the atmospherics and the substance of its relations with the United States and other Western countries? Finally, will the influence of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics, as exemplified by the current status of the Bharatiya Janata party, continue to grow and thus accentuate Islamic reactions in Pakistan? The answers to these questions lie well outside the purview of the present discussion, but they will all in different ways be highly relevant to the future of the process. What does already seem clear, however, is that the extent to which Pakistan's foreign policy has become Islamized in recent years will render far more difficult all future international efforts to control nuclear weapons proliferation in south Asia and to foster a peace process aimed at improving relations between Pakistan and India and at resolving the Kashmir problem.