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PAKISTAN'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY — A DILEMMA OF PASSION AND INTEREST

Introduction

Pakistan was carved out of the Indian Sub-continent to become a "homeland" of the Indian Muslims where they would be able to pursue an Islamic way of life.¹ The heterogeneous regions and ethnic groups that made up Pakistan had only one thing in common i.e., their common Islamic identity. When Pakistan came into being it was the most populous Muslim country. Despite its relative backwardness, it was more advanced than most of the Arab and Muslim countries with a big supply of skilled and professional people and a big standing army. Since its inception, Pakistani leaders aspired a leading role for their country in the pan-Islamic movement and claimed Pakistan to be the "fortress of Islam". Despite the religious background of its creation and a perception of a leadership role in

1. India was partitioned along religious lines and Muslim majority North-west and Northeast constituted Pakistan, the two parts of which were separated by a thousand miles of Indian territory. The creation of Pakistan was on the basis of the "two-nation" theory of M. A. Jinnah. According to this theory, the Hindus and the Muslims of India comprised two nations and these two could not live together in one political unit. For a detailed analysis of the "two-nation" theory, see Hafeez Malik, *Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan* (Washington : Public Affairs Press, 1963).

the Muslim world, Pakistan's relationship with the Middle Eastern countries has been less than uniform. The initial enthusiasm for strong Islamic ties and cordial relations with the Middle East was often marked by its preoccupation with regional balance of power with India that steadily drove Pakistan to the Western alliance system in the 1950s. Pakistan's perennial search for security restricted its foreign policy options to such an extent that it had to compromise its zealous efforts of solidarity of the Islamic community. As a result, Pakistan remained largely isolated from the mainstream of the Arab world until late 1960s. Following the independence of Bangladesh, Pakistan has increasingly turned to the Middle East and has identified strongly with the Islamic and Arab nations. In this paper, I will examine Pakistan's Middle East policy and will try to explain the underlying reasons for different turns in Pakistan's policy toward the Middle East.

Background : Islamic Passion as a Source of Foreign Policy Preference

Islam was the *raison d'être* for the creation of Pakistan and its leaders have always emphasized the role of religious identity in its domestic and external affairs. The Indian Muslims' interest in the Muslim Middle East is well known and they have heavily influenced the British policy toward the Middle East, even before the independence of Pakistan.² Islam and the solidarity with the Arab world constituted and continue to constitute important elements of the identity of the Indian Muslims. This Islamic passion has been translated into various political movements of the Muslims of the Sub-continent in the pre-independence era. The All India Muslim League (AIML), the political party of the Indian Muslims in British India that led the successful Pakistan movement, denounced the Balfour Declaration as early as December 1917 in its Calcutta session. The Indian Muslims along with the Congress Party vigorously launched the Khilafat movement in support of Turkey after World

2. See Brinton C. Bush, *Britain, India and the Arabs* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1971).

War I.³ Time and again M. A. Jinnah, the undisputed leader of the Pakistan movement, and the other leaders of the Muslim community protested against the partition scheme of Palestine and even observed Palestine Day on August 26, 1938 to express solidarity with the Palestinians.⁴ Jinnah emphatically declared, "I am sure, I am echoing the feelings and sentiments of the Muslims of India and Bengal when I say that we stand by the brave struggle that is being carried on by the Arabs of Palestine for their independence and freedom of their country and that we will do all that we can in their struggle."⁵ Support for the Arab brethren was periodically affirmed by the AIML in its annual sessions and policy statements. Jinnah warned President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Atlee against the activities of their governments under pressure of the world (Jewry).⁶

Due to the salience of Islamic passion and the religious logic of the creation of Pakistan, it is clear that Islam was to be of paramount significance in the foreign relations of the Islamic state of Pakistan⁷.

Islamic passion and the religious logic of the creation of Pakistan were of paramount significance in its foreign relations. Moreover, the importance of Islam in the political life of Pakistan was the central place of Pakistan's Middle East policy.

Corollary to the importance of Islam in the political life of Pakistan was the central place of the "Middle East in the foreign policy of the new state of Pakistan. "Islam is", it was forcefully stated, "to us

3. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, "Quaid-i-Azam and Islamic Solidarity", *Pakistan Horizon*, 29(4), 1976, pp. 60-63.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
5. Quoted Pirzada, in *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-68.
7. The role of Islam in Pakistan is elaborately discussed in Freeland Abbot, *Islam and Pakistan* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1968), and Anowar Hussain Syed, *Pakistan : Islam, Politics and National Solidarity* (New York : Praeger, 1982).

the source of very life and existence and it has linked our cultural and traditional past too closely with the Arab world that there would be no doubt whatsoever about our fullest sympathy for the Arab cause."⁸ However, no matter how powerful the passions are, they are not the only or principal determinant of foreign policy behaviour. Interest or national interest comes to the fore, and in many instances passions and interests may not be complementary but competitive.⁹ In a competitive scenario, national interests are likely to override the considerations of passions and emotions. The relative significance of Islamic passion and national interest¹⁰ in the shaping of Pakistan's Middle East policy over the years needs to be evaluated in this context. The understanding of foreign policy behaviour is often blurred by not taking into account of the different levels of analysis.¹¹ The international system level, regional level, and the domestic level will be coupled in the analysis of Pakistan's policy in this paper.

Now let us turn to a discussion of Pakistan's Middle East policy. In order to do so, it is necessary to focus attention on overall foreign policy orientation of Pakistan since 1947. Taking the major trends in its policy into account, a discussion of Pakistan's foreign policy can be divided into four phases :

1. The Non-aligned Years, 1947-53
2. The Aligned Years, 1954-62
3. The Years of Re-evaluation, 1962-71
4. The Years of Bilateralism since 1972

8. Pirzada, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

9. Albert O. Hirschman has introduced the concepts of passions and interests. See his, *The Passions and the Interests : Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

10. The concept of national interest is very unclear and still debated in the literature of international relations. I use the term here to denote the interest of the nation as seen by the regime in power.

11. J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem", in Klaus Knorr and Verba, (eds.), *The International System : Theoretical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 77-92.

In each phase of Pakistan's major foreign policy shifts, it will be observed that the Middle East had a varying degree of importance.

The Non-Aligned Years, 1947-53

The international system that emerged after the Second World War was characterized by Cold War and tight bipolarity. The foreign policy of the first few years of the existence of Pakistan can be labeled as the non-aligned years, because Pakistan was essentially trying to maintain neutrality in the ongoing Cold War during this period. Both the USA and the USSR were wooing Pakistan for support in the Cold War alignments. However, Pakistan was itself beset with the stupendous task of putting things together in the promised land. It was confronted with all sorts of economic, political and religious problems. So it was not in a position to set for itself an important role in the international arena. Pakistan's biggest concern from the very inception was its security vis-a-vis India. Indian leaders were very hostile to the very creation of Pakistan, and many of its leading elements including Nehru believed that Pakistan was bound to collapse. Pakistani foreign policy makers were wary of Indian design and expressed their deep rooted suspicion of a "well-organized and well directed" plot to force Pakistan to come into (Indian) Union as "a repentant, erring son".¹² This sense of insecurity was reinforced by the first Kashmir war of 1948 and the forcible integration of the princely states of Hyderabad, Junagar and other recalcitrants into the Indian Union.

Under the prevailing circumstances, Pakistan was looking for friends abroad. The first logical choices were the Muslim and Commonwealth countries. However, its turn to the Middle East was not entirely motivated by its security needs. One of the avowed aims of foreign policy of Pakistan was "to promote and strengthen fraternal ties with the Muslim peoples of the world in general and of the

12. Quoted in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, "Bilateralism: New Directions", *Pakistan Horizon*, 29(4), 1976, p. 12.

Middle East in particular."¹³ Religious passion and the domestic input were crucial in its pro-Islamic external relations decision.

Pakistan's very first diplomatic mission was sent to the Middle East in October 1947 to Palestine and to reiterate its support for foster friendly relations with the Muslim countries. Motivated by its aspiration to establish itself in a leadership role of the Muslim world, Pakistan was probing the possibility of convening a conference of the Muslim countries.¹⁴ It strongly opposed the partition of Palestine at the UN and Jinnah sent cables to President Truman urging him to stop it.¹⁵ It was also very much interested in expanding its economic ties with the Muslim countries and hosted a 21-country Islamic Economic Conference in 1949 which proposed to set up a permanent secretariat of the Muslim countries of the present day Organization of Islamic Conference style. It also signed treaties of friendship with Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Syria.¹⁷ It also tried in vain to convene an Islamic summit to form a third Muslim bloc.¹⁸

However, the Muslim nations of the Middle East were not very responsive to the grand designs of Pakistan's supposedly Islamic foreign policy. Israel had already been created and the Arabs had already fought the first war with Israel in an abortive attempt to prevent its birth. The creation of the Jewish state pushing the Arabs of Palestine away was viewed by the mainstream Arab nations as an ominous sign to subvert the Arab interest by the Western powers. Western 'conspiracy' was clearly perceived by them in 'planting' Israel. Thus Israel instantaneously became the overriding concern for the Middle Eastern nations. In such an atmosphere, it was

13. *Five Years of Pakistan* (Govt. of Pakistan Press, 1952), p. 225.

14. Pirzada, *op cit.*, p. 70.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-8.

16. *Five Years of Pakistan, Ibid.*, p. 226.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Keith Callard, *Pakistan's Foreign Relations* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1959), p. 28.

understandable that they would not see it too kindly the friendly gestures toward the US and its alliance partners by any Muslim country. Pakistan and Turkey, both non-Arab Muslim nations, showed considerable interest in the proposed US-sponsored Middle East Defence Organization in the early 1950s. Consequently, Pakistan was viewed with suspicion by the Middle East despite its zealous advocacy of the Muslim cause. Moreover, most of the Arab countries were ruled by monarchs at that time who saw themselves as the saviors of Islam. These forces did not appreciate Pakistan's ambitious enthusiasm for Islamic leadership. Despite the apparent unwillingness

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of the Arab leaders to foster closer ties with it Pakistani support for the Palestinians remained steady all through this phase. Another aspect of Pakistan's policy was its leaning toward Turkey. Pakistan saw a lot of commonality with Turkey—both being modernist in outlook and orientation. Among the Muslim countries, it had strained relations with its immediate neighbour, Afghanistan, over the issue of the disputed Durand line that sets the international boundary between them. Also, Afghanistan claimed the allegiance of the Pakhtoon population of the North West Frontier Province in Pakistan and opposed its entry into the United Nations on that ground. The foreign policy of Pakistan toward the Middle East during this phase was able to win only a few hearts there despite its avowed pro-Islamic policy. Its enthusiasm for a leading role in the Muslim world was undermined by its increasing tilt toward the West.

The Aligned Years, 1954-62

Due to its insecurity vis-a-vis India and the lack of response from the Arab countries, Pakistan was seriously looking for a protector in

early 1950s.¹⁹ Its search for a protector was matched by the global search of the US for allies in the Cold War and its policy of containment. The year 1954 was the beginning of a series of US-Pakistan military pacts which resulted in Pakistan's membership of both SEATO and CENTO (former Baghdad Pact). As a reward, millions of dollars of economic and military aid poured into Pakistan in the following years. A Pakistani Prime Minister was so overwhelmed that he declared Pakistan to be the "most allied ally" of the United States.²⁰

Pakistan's membership of the Baghdad Pact put it to a difficult test of its Islamic fervour vs national interest. The entire Arab world (excepting Iraq under Nuri Said) kept safe distance from the Pact because they perceived the United States and Britain to be the powers behind Israel. Pakistan's decision to join the Pact isolated it from the major Arab nations which was further reinforced by its support of the British and French in the Suez crisis of 1956.

During this phase, its relations with the Arab world were at the lowest ebb. Its decision to go for an alliance with the United States was prompted by its fear of India and the corresponding impatience to increase its military capabilities to deter Indian threats to its own security. Although Pakistan knew that the alliance would cost its relations with the Islamic countries, its national interest prevailed over its Islamic solidarity considerations. Moreover, the Islamic countries especially Egypt, Syria, and Indonesia showed very little interest in Pakistan's dispute with India over Kashmir. They saw the Kashmir issue as a distant problem which was remotely related to their foreign policy concerns. In the meantime, Nasser emerged as one of the most

19. The question of security in Pakistan's foreign affairs is discussed in detail by Aslam Siddiqi, *Pakistan Seeks Security* (Karachi: Longmans, 1960).

20. H. S. Suhrawardy, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, described the intensity of Pakistan-US relations in those terms. M. A. H. Ispahani, "The Foreign Policy of Pakistan 1947-64", *Pakistan Horizon*, 17(3) p. 231.

important leaders of the non-aligned movement and valued India's support more than friendship with Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan did not want to throw its own fate in the embryonic non-aligned movement, because it could not satisfy Pakistan's security needs. Again, the movement under the leadership of Nehru was against the psychological requirements and mood of the Pakistani leaders. Thus, it opted to stay away from the non-aligned movement. Furthermore, Pakistan was also experiencing spectacular economic growth following the "Korean boom" and was looking for markets abroad. Given the meagre economic outlook of the Middle East as a prospective area for expansion of market, it looked toward the West for greater opportunities in expanding trade relations. Therefore, economic considerations were not in favour of the Middle East in the Pakistani calculation of national interest.

The signing of the Baghdad Pact clearly drifted Pakistan away from the Arabs. Although the Suez crisis attracted great popular support for Egypt in Pakistan, its leaders did not see the logic of offending the new allies whose military and economic aid was so essential for its security. Pakistan's perennial preoccupation with its security problem can be illustrated by a statement of a former Prime Minister of Pakistan. When he was asked about a possible alliance with the Muslim countries, he remarked: "zero plus zero plus zero still equals zero."²¹ Moreover, Pakistan's decision to support the British was also shaped by sheer economic considerations. Its 56 per cent exports and 49 per cent imports passed through the Suez Canal, so economic interests were to play an important role in the decision-making process.²² Despite its strained relations with the Arabs, its friendship with Turkey and Iran, two other non-Arab countries of the region, continued to grow during this phase due to their common pro-Western policies. Even during this period, however, it consistently supported the cause of the Palestinians in all international forums.

21. Quoted in Bhutto, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

22. S. M. Burki, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 182.

The Years of Re-evaluation, 1962-71

Pakistan's alliance with the United States began to show signs of increasing tenuousness since 1962. The principal source of Pakistani disillusionment stemmed from its perception of inadequate US support in its dispute with India. In Pakistani strategic thinking, the SEATO and CENTO were instruments of its security vis-a-vis India. On the other hand, Pakistan's geostrategic importance was valued by the United States in its policy of containment during the heights of the Cold War. However, Pakistan's conflict with India was not high on the agenda of the alliance partners, especially of its chief patron, the United States. The CENTO and SEATO treaties were interpreted by the US to apply to resist communist expansion only.

Pakistani disagreement with the United States became open on the issue of US support of India in the 1962 Sino-Indian war. China was still perceived by the West as the threatening communist monster of Asia that ought to be checked. Pakistan was very unhappy with massive US and Western arms supply to India during the war and protested against India's arms build-up. It apprehended that the pouring of Western arms to India would give it a definite edge over Pakistan and regional balance would be jeopardized. Turned down by its original international patron, Pakistan slowly but steadily tilted toward China as an alternative source of support against India. Its reappraisal of the pro-western foreign policy orientation was carried further during the second Indo-Pakistan war of 1965. The United States pursued an "even-handed" policy toward the belligerents and subsequently suspended military assistance to both countries.

During this phase, Pakistan was looking for new friends in the international arena because the old alignments appeared inadequate in terms of its security requirements. It responded to Soviet gestures of friendship and its relations with the Soviet Union improved considerably. Also, it once again turned to the Middle East. Its relations with the Arab world started to grow stronger. During the 1967 Arab-Israeli war it extended all out support for the Arabs.

Although its relations with the radical Arab leaders including Nasser remained less than intimate, they could not but express sympathy for Pakistan during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. Pakistan tried to cement its traditional friendship with Iran and Turkey outside the framework of the CENTO and formed the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964. Besides the RCD, it cultivated close relations with Saudi Arabia and Jordan, two important pro-western monarchies of

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the Middle East. Along with others, it joined the first Islamic Summit Conference in Rabat in 1969. Gradually, Pakistan was getting involved in intra-Arab affairs. During the Yemeni war, Pakistan sided with Saudi Arabia. It also helped King Hussein of Jordan to fight the PLO (President Ziaul Huq was in charge of the operation) in 1970. Pakistan was slowly overcoming the alienation of the Arab countries caused by its membership of the CENTO. During the Bangladesh crisis of 1971, it received substantial political, moral and material support from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan. The other Arab countries excepting Iraq were in sympathy with Pakistan. During the years of reevaluation, Pakistan sought to improve its relations with the Middle East which was not uniformly cordial before. Its diplomatic efforts brought tangible results which were manifested during its third round of war with India in 1971.

The Years of Bilateralism since 1972

With the independence of Bangladesh and the assumption of power by Bhutto, Pakistan charted a new course in its foreign relations. The new trend has been called 'bilateralism' by its chief

architect, Bhutto. The transformation of the international system from the Cold War scenario to detente, Sino-Soviet rift, growing influence of the Non-aligned Movement, and the emergence of the Third World bloc, and more importantly, the lack of firm commitment of the US to help Pakistan against India, led it to opt for this new direction in its international relations. Bilateralism lies, according to Bhutto, in the "idea of conducting and developing relations with each of the great (super) powers on a bilateral basis, identifying areas of cooperation with one without repudiating alliance with another..."²³

With this new direction in its foreign policy, Pakistan turned more toward the Middle East. Pakistan was diplomatically isolated and politically weakened after the loss of its eastern wing in 1971. The "Middle East option" was the logical step for the Pakistani policy makers to try. This new option coincided with the increasing economic muscles and political influence of the Arab world. Immediately after coming to power, Bhutto took a whirlwind tour of 20 Muslim countries of the Middle East which he called "a mission of renaissance of relations with the Muslim world".²⁴ Bhutto's fervent wooing of the Arab leaders won him diplomatic support.

Bhutto missed no opportunity to extend total support for the Arabs during the 1973 war²⁵ and readily exploited the situation to enhance Pakistan's role in the Islamic world by hosting the second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore in 1974.²⁶ By taking frequent political pilgrimage to the Middle East, by hosting the Islamic Conference, and by enlisting total support for the Arabs against Israel,

23. Bhutto, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

24. *Dawn* (Karachi), April 15, 1972.

25. See Saeduddin Ahmed Dar, "The Ramazan War and Pakistan", *Pakistan Horizon*, 29(2), 1976, pp. 59-63. This war greatly helped remove Egyptian misapprehension of Pakistan for its role during the Suez Crisis.

26. Meherunnisa Ali, "The Second Islamic Summit Conference, 1974", *Pakistan Horizon*, 27(1), 1974, pp. 29-49.

Pakistan fostered closer relations with the Arabs. This trend continued throughout the Bhutto years and he also enhanced his own stature as a leader of the Islamic and Third World.²⁷ His extraordinary diplomatic skills helped Pakistan to cement friendly ties with both the conservative and radical Arab countries, and perhaps he was the only Muslim leader who could have boasted of very cordial relations with often antagonistic figures like King Hussien and Saddam Hussien, Colonel Qaddafi and the Shah. Pakistan being a non-Arab country could be trusted by heterogeneous Arab countries.

The increasingly pro-Middle East turn of Pakistan's foreign policy has continued even after the exit of Bhutto from power in 1977. The extent of Pakistan's Middle East connections can be illustrated by the fact that during the political turmoil following the 1977 elections in Pakistan, emissaries of several Arab countries intervened to bring about a dialogue between Bhutto and the opposition PNA. Since Bhutto developed personal friendship with many Arab leaders, they resented the trial and subsequent hanging of Bhutto. After coming to power, General Zia sent emissaries to the Middle East to obtain support for the new regime. It was reported that his emissaries returned home without achieving the desired results in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Kuwait. Subsequently, Zia had to take political pilgrimage of the Middle East to explain his position and to secure additional financial support. The endorsement of his regime by the Middle East was also needed for home consumption to legitimize his regime.²⁸

Pakistan's complete turn to the Middle East after 1971 was motivated by a host of factors. First of all, Pakistan was militarily vanquished and truncated, diplomatically isolated, and politically weakened in the aftermath of the Bangladesh crisis. It urgently needed diplomatic, economic, and political support to come out of

27. For details, see Zubaida Mustafa, "Recent Trends in Pakistan's Policy Towards the Middle East," *Pakistan Horizon*, 28(4), 1975, pp. 1-18.

28. Meherunnisa Ali, "General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq's Visit to Muslim Countries", *Pakistan Horizon*, 30 (3&4), 1977, pp. 103-107.

this full circle. After the loss of the eastern wing of the country, it readily exploited the "Middle East option". Bhutto won diplomatic support of the Arab world to come out of Pakistan's isolation and to put pressure on India to negotiate the withdrawal of troops and the repatriation of the 90,000 POWs held in India. The Middle East countries excepting Iraq withheld the recognition of Bangladesh for nearly two years to express solidarity with Pakistan.

Secondly, Pakistan's economy was devastated by the 1971 war and needed an urgent rehabilitation. Pakistan's need for financial recovery coincided with the emergence of the Middle East as a new economic power following the 1973 war. Prior to 1971, economic aid to Pakistan by the Arab countries was non-existent. During the four years preceding 1977, it received \$ 971.35 million from the Middle Eastern countries, primarily from Libya, Iran, UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. It also received a \$ 21.5 million interest free loan from OPEC's special fund and \$ 44 million credit from Kuwait based Arab Fund during the same period.²⁹ Arab economic assistance to Pakistan has multiplied many fold since 1977. Zia developed even closer ties with the wealthy Gulf States over the years.³⁰ One of the main reasons that Zia sharply turned down Carter's \$ 400 million aid offer in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, was the assurance of continued Saudi help. Instead of US "peanuts" as Zia called the aid proposal, gigantic Saudi assistance was forthcoming. Until 1980, Pakistan had already received \$ 7.5 billion from Saudi Arabia and was promised another \$ 5 billion.³¹ Along with Syria and Egypt, Pakistan is one of the largest recipients of aid from the Arab world. Several Arab countries, notably Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, and UAE, are involved in joint industrial projects.³²

29. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

30. *Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia Yearbook 1984*, p. 238.

31. *The Economist*, September 13, 1980.

32. M. G. Weinbaum and Gautam Sen, "Pakistan Enters the Middle East", *Orbis*, 22, Fall, 1978, p. 603.

Thirdly, after the loss of its biggest market in former East Pakistan, Pakistan has turned to the Middle East for the exports of its agricultural and industrial goods. Prior to 1971, the Middle East's share of Pakistan's export was less than 20 per cent, now it accounts for more than one third.³³ Pakistan is also supplying the peninsular Arab countries with their growing demand for agricultural products. It has agreements with a number of Gulf States for farm supply and is competing with the United States for farm market.³⁴

Its oil expenditure has increased from \$ 60 million a year in early 1970s to more than \$400 millions during 1976-77.³⁵ So it needs oil from the Middle East at a low price, and both Bhutto and Zia obtained oil at a preferential price.

Fourthly, Pakistan has surplus of technical expertise and manpower that most of the Arab countries urgently need. Pakistan is also a benefactor of economic prosperity of the Arab world through the remittances from Pakistanis working in the Middle East. Home remittances of Pakistani workers in the Middle East rose sharply after

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1973 and amounted to \$ 1.1 billion in 1977-78 which was roughly equal to its three-fourths of export earnings.³⁶ Remittances amounted to \$ 2.1 billion in 1982. Remittances accounted for about 112 per

33. Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

34. Arif M. Mahmoud, "Pakistan Ups Farm Sales to the Middle East," *Foreign Agriculture*, 17(5), January 8, 1979, p. 10.

35. Weinbaum and Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 603.

36. *Ibid.*

cent of Pakistan's merchandise exports and 50 per cent of its growing merchandise imports in 1982.³⁷

Fifthly, the Middle East countries after acquiring economic muscles want to increase their military capabilities. Pakistan can and does offer them a variety of services. It supplies Saudi Arabia with its efficient but badly equipped army. It also provides training facilities for defense personnel of Kuwait, Libya, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, UAE, Turkey, and Iran (during the rule of the Shah). After the fall of the Shah of Iran, the Gulf States are increasingly nervous about their security. The growing threat to their security has been reinforced by the dragging of the Gulf war. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States view the strength of Pakistan as a source of security of the Gulf region. Growing security ties between Pakistan and the Gulf States can be illustrated by the security agreements signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Saudi Arabia is linked with other smaller states of the region through the Gulf Cooperation Council). The Arab countries are helping Pakistan with economic assistance to develop an Islamic nuclear bomb. Saudi assistance in buying arms for Pakistan and in convincing Washington regarding the \$ 3.2 billion aid and package is believed to be substantial.³⁸

Lastly, but not least, Pakistani leaders have consciously emphasized the importance of Islamic identity to keep the ever increasing ethnic and class cleavages contained.³⁹ Motivated by this domestic need, even a secular leader like Bhutto had to promise to make Pakistan a truly Islamic state.⁴⁰ In post-1971 Pakistan, the place of Islam

37. M. G. Quibria, "Migrant Workers and Remittances : Issues for Asian Developing Countries", *Asian Development Review*, 4(1), 1986, pp. 87-88.

38. W. Howard Wriggins, "Pakistan's Search for a Foreign Policy After the Invasion of Afghanistan," *Pacific Affairs*, 57(2), Summer 1984, pp. 292-293.

39. For a detailed discussion of the cleavages in Pakistan politics, see Shahid Javed Burki, *Pakistan Under Bhutto, 1971-77*, (New York : St. Martins Press, 1980).

40. William L. Richter, "The Political Dynamics of Resurgence in Pakistan" *Asian Survey*, June 1979, pp. 547-57.

as the 'core of national identity' has been renewed and reinforced because of the hegemonic position of India in the region. The resulting insecurity has reinforced the role of Islam to hold the country together. Because the Pakistani leaders realize that if the Muslims of Arabia, Turkey, or Iran give up Islam, they still remain Arabs, Turks, or Iranians respectively. But if Pakistan gives up Islam, they simply become second class Indians—a possibility that they hate with a passion. Thus, domestic political and psychological needs of Pakistan reinforce its new turn to the Middle East.

The Afghan Crisis and the Changing Framework of Pakistan's Policy

The Marxist coup in Afghanistan in the spring of 1978 and the Soviet invasion in the following year have radically changed Pakistan's importance in the global context. The Soviet deployment of troops in Afghanistan has prompted sharp reaction from Washington as manifested in the declaration of the Carter doctrine emphasizing the strategic significance of the Gulf region.⁴¹ Pakistan now occupies an important place in both US and Gulf security concerns. The Gulf states and Iran are seriously concerned about the presence of the Soviet troops on the western flank of Pakistan. The Afghan crisis has not only halted the deteriorating US-Pakistan relations, it also acted as a catalyst for a new round of *affaire d'amour* between Pakistan and the United States. The newly elected US President Reagan lifted the embargo on resumption of economic aid and military sales to Pakistan in 1981. The newly acquired strategic importance of Pakistan can be illustrated by the \$ 3.2 billion US military and economic aid package to Pakistan. Under the terms of this package Pakistan acquired F-16 fighters, tanks, self-propelled artillery, radar, missiles and other sophisticated US weapons.

The Soviet presence in Afghanistan and the influx an estimated 3 million Afghan refugees have presented Pakistan with profound security dilemma. Pakistani policy makers perceive a much deteriorated security environment emanating from a three-pronged challenge of (a)

41. For a changed perception of the US policy, see Christopher Van Hollen, "Leaning on Pakistan," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1980, pp. 35-50.

Soviet invasion, (b) refugee problem, and (c) India factor.⁴² Phenomenal US aid to Pakistan has been criticized by India arguing that it would jeopardize regional balance. Pakistan is overwhelmed by threat scenario, a coordinated Soviet, Afghan, and Indian attack to bring about the disintegration of Pakistan along ethnic lines is the worst of all. Motivated by ominous threat perception, Pakistani security planners enthusiastically welcomed the US offer of military aid. Since the Afghan crisis, it has remarkably modernised its defence forces and is believed to have acquired substantial military capability with US help. Not only that, it is seriously trying to mend its fences with India to minimize Indian threat. It is on a "peace offensive with India" as it is claimed by President Zia.⁴³ For the last five years, Pakistan has been wooing India to sign a "No War Pact" which has been met with half-hearted Indian response. India's apprehension of Pakistani arms build up and reported development of a nuclear bomb are believed to be the formidable obstacle in the normalization of relations between the two neighbours. Despite steady efforts by both parties to improve bilateral ties, Indo-Pakistani relations did not show signs of cordiality and understanding. Rather, Indo-Pakistani relations worsened and Pakistan feared a possible Indian attack on its nuclear installations at Kahuta near Islamabad in late 1984.⁴⁴ This trend continued in 1985 despite the modest success achieved through the holding of the first summit conference of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

As the Afghan crisis continues, Pakistan is moving back to the US fold in the fashion of the 1950s. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states endorse Pakistan's increasing security relations with the United States. The Gulf states extended full support to Pakistan on the issue of acquiring sophisticated US weaponry. The security of Pakistan is viewed by them as too closely related to their own security

42. For Pakistan's security concerns, see. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "The Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistan's Security Dilemma," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 23(3), March 1983, pp. 227-243.

43. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Asia Yearbook 1986*, p. 212.

44. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 4, 1984.

given the Soviet presence in the area.⁴⁵ However, Pakistan's increasing tilt to the United States has also caused some apprehension among some Middle Eastern countries, notably Iran and Libya. It has been increasingly difficult for Pakistan to maintain its traditional cordial relations with Iran and Libya, although it can boast of strong ties with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. The Afghan crisis seems to have opened a new era in Pakistan's international relations which are characterized by the renewal of its strong pro-US foreign policy orientation. In the Middle East, it is still maintaining precariously balanced relations.

Conclusions

It is clear from the above discussion that although Islamic identity is very deep rooted and played an important role in the shaping of Pakistan's policy toward the Middle East, its national interest prevailed over religious passions in the decisional process. In its quest for security and friends, Pakistan turned to the Muslim Middle East in the non-aligned years. When the weak and unwilling Muslim brothers failed to satisfy its needs, it turned to the United States and the West. This alignment was not supportive of the Islamic cause in the Middle East as evidenced in cases of the Baghdad Pact and the Suez crisis. The process of return to the Arab world in the mid-1960s was initiated by its disillusionment with the United States. The process was completed in the post-1971 period by a set of diplomatic, economic, political, and psychological factors. With the advent of the Afghan crisis, Pakistan's foreign policy orientation seems to have taken a new turn toward alliance with the United States. This new trend is a marked departure from the policy of bilateralism pursued in the post-1971 era. As a result, its relations with some radical Middle Eastern countries, notably Libya and Iran, are at the crossroads at present. Its increasingly pro-Western policy may produce alienation on the part of the more radical Arab nations

45. Deiter Braun, "Changing Framework of Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Some Contributing Elements," in M. A. Hafiz and Iftekharruzaman, (eds.), *South Asian Regional Cooperation* (Dhaka: BISS, 1985), p. 167.

in the future. However, no clear trend is perceptible yet due to the early stage of the changing framework of Pakistan's policy in the aftermath of the Afghan crisis. Despite its uneven relations with the Middle East during the past four decades, Pakistan always remained an eloquent advocate of the Arab case against Israel, and championed the cause of Arab decolonization.

Perhaps, a reason for Pakistan's ambiguity in its Islamic identity vis-a-vis national interest can be traced back in the writings of Iqbal, the philosophical father of the Pakistan movement. This poet-philosopher in his famous *Tarana-i-Hind* is seen as an ardent nationalist. *Tarana* opens with the line *Hamara Hindustan Sabse Khub Surat Jahan* (Our India-the loveliest land on earth)—a clear evidence of favoring territorial nationalism. But he repudiates nationalism when he declares in another poem *Muslim hein hum wattan hai sara jehan hamara* (We are Muslims, our motherland is the entire world). This dilemma of Islamic passion and nationalism is often a characteristic of the Pakistan Muslims.

In any case, Pakistan's present strong emphasis on its Middle East policy is in no way one sided. The trade link between them is a two-way traffic and still favours the Middle East. Moreover, the Arab countries need Pakistani military talents, the supply of relatively less expensive technical, professional skills and manpower. So does need Pakistan Arab money and support. Pakistan needs Arab finance to produce the "Islamic bomb" which will ensure its security against India. The Arabs can perhaps utilize Pakistan's bomb as a leverage against their arch enemy, Israel. More importantly, with the Russian presence in Arghanistan, the Gulf states are equally interested in the national integrity of Pakistan. They are worried about the irredentist tendencies in Baluchistan and Pakhtoon-speaking North-West Frontier Province which the Soviets might exploit to stretch out. The domestic imperatives of the narrowly based military regime will force it to use Islamic symbols to attract and broaden its support in the international arena. Thus, it is expected that Pakistan's Middle East relations will continue to grow due to the convergence of Arab and Pakistani interests.