
**Pakistan's Foreign Policy and Eastern Border Security
Threats (1947-55)**



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Abstract: *Since Independence in 1947, Pakistan's foreign policy has been indo-centric. There were two main goals that drove foreign policy decisions during the 1947-55 period: security and foreign economic aid. Rather than going to the Soviet Union to achieve its goals, Pakistan turned to the West and offered conditional support against the spread of communism throughout South Asia. In the end, Pakistan joined the U.S.-backed anti-Soviet alliances without receiving any guarantees of security from the United States. Pakistan's foreign policy was radically altered as a result of this. Strategic, political, and economic implications of this new overture are the focus of this paper. These two phases of foreign policy are examined in terms of their costs and benefits. Pakistan's security and economic affairs will also be examined in light of this development. Relations between the United States and Pakistan and Pakistani institutions will also be considered.*

Key Words: Soviet Union, Foreign Policy, India, Alignment, US, Pakistan

Introduction

Defending its eastern border against Indian aggression while also ensuring stability along its western border with Afghanistan has been at the heart of Pakistan's foreign policy since its founding in 1947. 1 In order to protect its territorial integrity and national sovereignty from Indian leadership's hegemonic plans, Pakistan had no choice but to find an outside balancer. 2 Pakistan's western neighbour, Afghanistan, was also at odds with the former. Immediately following Pakistan's establishment in 1947, the Afghan government raised the issue of Pakhunistan 3 and attempted to question the validity of the Pak-Afghan border (the Durand line). 4 The Afghan government voted against Pakistan's admission to the UN General Assembly in 1947 in an attempt to keep Pakistan from joining the international community.

For Pakistan's foreign policy elites, India's hegemonic challenge was even more dangerous than the Soviet Union's expansionist strategy at the time. Pakistan and India were at war over ideologies and territory with the Soviet Union, which was only interested in gaining access to the warm waters off Pakistan's coast. Pakistan was a communist country, but China was not.

Since 1947, India has taken a hegemonic approach to foreign policy. If not a superpower, the Indian leadership thought of India as an important regional power. From the Hindu Kush Mountains to the Mekong River, or wherever else Hinduism has been present in the past, they imagined Indian

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borders. At the time, they were hoping for an agreement between themselves and China on the scope of each other's influence in Asia, hence their earlier friendly overtures to the country. This Indian claim 5 was assumed to be recognised and endorsed by China. Towards this end, the Indian leadership was in a state of tolerance for Pakistan's stability and prosperity. They threw a slew of problems at this fledgling state in order to sabotage its future stability. The Pakistani leadership's hopes of peaceful coexistence were dashed to the ground in the wake of the attack. When he saw how the Indians acted, Pakistan's founder said:

“It is very unfortunate that vigorous propaganda has been going on that Pakistan is merely a temporary madness and that Pakistan will have to come into the Indian Union as a penitent, repentant, erring son. It is now clear beyond doubt that it was well-planned, well-organized, and well-directed and the object of it all was to paralyze the new born Dominion of Pakistan.”⁶

It was primarily a security issue for Pakistan in a volatile environment. India-centricity and regional constraints led Pakistan in the 1950s to join U.S.-sponsored agreements.

As soon as Pakistan and India became sovereign states in 1947, two factors sparked animosity. One must keep in mind first that the Congress never fully embraced the 3rd June plan, which had as its primary goal the eventual union of Pakistan and India. These fears were bolstered by statements made by Indian Congress leaders shortly after Pakistan's independence from British rule. The reunification of India and Pakistan was discussed by several members of Congress. 8 This was concerning enough for those living on the other side of the border to worry. First and foremost, the issue of Kashmir proved to be the apple of the new neighbours' eye. The princely state became a source of contention between the two parties, resulting in a state of war. Pakistan took the occupation of Kashmir very seriously, given the strategic importance of the region to the country's defence. 9 Immediately following the 1948 Indian-Pakistani war over Kashmir, Pakistan needed both military and economic assistance. 10

Fear of Indian hegemony influenced Pakistan's domestic politics and foreign policy decisions. 11 Pakistan's national security is in jeopardy because of a weak defence and a hostile Indian attitude. Although Pakistan's armed forces were its mainstay of defence, they lacked adequate equipment and were chaotically organised. Both of those issues would soon arise for these forces as they had to deal with the mass exodus of refugees and then fight against Indian troops. They didn't have time to properly organise their units, acquire the most up-to-date equipment, or stockpile ammo. Each and every aspect of the plight was evident. The Pakistani military was convinced that a well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led army was essential to the country's survival. A state-of-the-art army was built by the military's top brass in an effort to make the defence invincible and deter any aggression in the region. 12 The civilian leadership also agreed with the army that Pakistan's security challenge from India must be met at all costs if it is to remain on the world map. Security concerns prompted policymakers to focus on the reorganisation of Pakistan's armed forces after the British Indian military was split in two. Re-organization of nearly every military unit was carried out. For the modernization of Pakistan's armed forces, the country obtained some weapons and military equipment from several Western countries. However, until 1954 and 1955, the pace of modernization was extremely slow. 13

Because of these dangers, Pakistan invited the United States to serve as its primary external ally and source of military assistance. As a result of this request, nearly \$2 billion was requested. In return, Pakistan agreed to join the United States in an effort to prevent the spread of communism in the region. 14

Pakistan was forced to look outside the region for security assistance due to the deteriorating state of its armed forces and the country's concern for its borders due to territorial disputes with India

and Afghanistan. 15 Because of its desperate efforts to secure American military aid, Pakistan was embargoed from August 1947 through April 1949. The United States and Pakistan held talks from June to September 1949. The Pakistani delegates "informally but repeatedly declared their readiness to associate themselves closely with the U.S. in long-range defence planning." during these meetings. "sturdy bulwark against Communism." said one of the visitors, referring to Pakistan. Requests for an estimated US\$125 million in military aid accompanied these statements. 16 However, the United States refused to meet Pakistan's demands.

With regard to regional issues, Kashmir proved to be America's most challenging one. The United States hoped for a peaceful resolution to the conflict because any instability in South Asia would aid the communist cause. However, the stubbornness of the Indians did not inspire the United States to play its proper role in this dispute. The United States viewed India as a geopolitical powerhouse because of its position as the economic and political centre of South Asia. Pakistan's strategic value to the United States was based solely on its location. 17 The United States remained neutral in the South Asian conflict. At a time when global tensions were rising and demands on limited American resources were increasing, South Asia simply did not rank highly among American priorities. 18

The communist victory in China in 1949 compelled the United States to reevaluate its South Asian strategy. We can see the United States' preference for India. India was seen as a potential bulwark against Communist expansion on the Asian continent by US policymakers. When Nehru arrived in the United States in October 1950, his long-awaited state visit quickly put an end to such hopes. India's nonaligned policy will not change under any circumstances, he assured his American hosts. 19 As the only other viable candidate, Pakistan was selected to fill the void.

During a bipolar world, Pakistan had a choice, and the Soviet Union took the lead in inviting Pakistan's Prime Minister to Moscow in June 1949. With its proximity to Pakistan and strong economic and military base, this wasn't a bad choice. It could have helped Pakistan weather the recent difficult times. In any case, the Pakistani government had already decided to distance itself from Russia due to the belief that the two countries held opposing ideologies and interests. It wasn't just Russia that was sending a message of friendship and cooperation to the United States at the same time as this was happening. A difficult decision had to be made. The government of Pakistan was at a crossroads. When Pakistan's prime minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, visited Washington in May 1950, he made the most important decision in Pakistan's foreign policy. During the three-week trip to the United States, Pakistan's foreign policy was set in motion. President Obama's first trip to Pakistan was a significant step toward strengthening ties between the two countries in the Middle East and South Asia. Each country has enormous responsibilities for the well-being of the human race, which it cannot fulfil to the fullest extent without the assistance and advice of the other, even though they may be geographically and culturally apart (Christian Science Monitor, 1950, May). His first ever visit to the United States, Pakistani Prime Minister emphasised his country's desire for American aid and investment in the economy. 20 A better understanding of Pakistan, its politics, and its problems was gained during this trip but the demands for military assistance and private capital and investment were not met. 21 It turned out to be a misunderstanding, as the Cold War conflict in Asia played out over the years.

North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950. United Nations action was swiftly taken by the United States in response to North Korea's provocative actions (UN). When Washington asked for more tangible assistance, Pakistan regretted it because it felt threatened by India and could not devote its limited resources to other causes while it felt threatened by North Korea. 22 The Prime Minister faced fierce opposition at home if he agreed to the US demand. Pakistan was undoubtedly pro-Western under Khan's leadership, but he refused to fully align his

country with the United States without assurances of security against India. Alignment with the United States had been a constant theme in Pakistani diplomacy since the country's partition. 23

Middle East Defense Organization: A bargaining Idea

The British Conservative Government came up with the idea of the Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) and asked Pakistan to join it. Despite this, Pakistan refused to participate. Experts in the United States feared that Pakistan's leaning toward the West might change its foreign policy if it failed to achieve its foreign policy goals at this point. The leaders of Pakistan were well-placed to take advantage of people's anxiety and exploit it for their own ends. In July of that year, a high-ranking Pakistani military delegation requested more military supplies from the United States. In order to supply Pakistan's army and air force, Pakistani officials requested \$200 million in military supplies. 24 When rumours started circulating that Pakistan would be joining the proposed organisation, the United States was still debating whether to proceed with the deal. By claiming that the weapons would be used against India instead of communist Russia, India openly voiced her disapproval of the proposed deal. In addition to giving Pakistan the ability to use force to settle the Kashmir dispute, India argues that such an alliance would spark an arms race in South Asia. As a result, the United States withdrew from any such agreement. Egypt's cool demeanour also scuppered the idea of a Middle East-wide organisation.

U.S.-Pakistani Military ties during the Eisenhower Administration

The Eisenhower doctrine became the official US policy after the Korean War ended. Its goal was to provide aid to all countries fighting communism. At least a dozen security and aid agreements were worked out during Eisenhower's tenure in office. In order to deter communist aggression, the primary goal was to establish a military presence. In order to follow in the footsteps of India, American policy promoted alliances with countries that either felt threatened by communist expansion or volunteered their services to the interests of the capitalistic block for whatever reason.

Dulles made his first trip to New Delhi and Karachi in May 1953 as Secretary of State. Dulles had formed a favourable impression of Pakistan against India while boarding the plane back because the latter had condemned communism and expressed a willingness to play an anti-communist role. He opined that forming a military alliance with Pakistan to counter the communist threat should not be delayed any longer. Mr. Dulles' positive view of Pakistan aided the two countries in their relationship.

Global geostrategic and geopolitical changes have increased Pakistan's importance in containing communist expansion. 26 Political circles in Washington feared that if Pakistan didn't get the response it wanted from the United States in the foreseeable future, it would look elsewhere for assistance. In spite of a lukewarm initial response from the US, shifting geographic and political circumstances brought the two countries closer together in the early 1950s.

General Muhammad Ayub Khan, Pakistan's Army Chief, travelled to the United States in September 1953 in order to expedite the policy decision in the United States. In his meeting with the Secretary of State, General Ayub made it clear that his only goal was to secure military aid for Pakistan's military. US State Department records show that "the Secretary observed smilingly that it was none of his business but he hoped that Ayub would get what was coming for" (unquote). 27 Ghulam Muhammad, then Governor General of Pakistan, and Foreign Minister Zafrullah Khan rushed to Washington after General Ayub's departure from the United States. They simply carried out the orders of the army chief. A long-standing Pakistani demand for military assistance was honoured by the American administration without regard to the Indian reaction. Due to the time needed to define the scope and feasibility of arms aid, there was some delay.

The President of the United States made the announcement in February, 1954, that Pakistan's request for military aid had been granted. Following this, Pakistan and Turkey signed the Turko-Pakistan Pact on 2 April 1954 at the behest of the United States. 28 For the sake of their people's well-being and safety, the pact recognised the importance of consultation and cooperation in every area possible. Turkey and Pakistan were to benefit from military assistance and cooperation. 29

The Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MDAA) was signed by the United States and Pakistan on May 19, 1954. When the United States and Pakistan agreed to provide Pakistan with military equipment and training, as well as other related services, they were allowing Pakistan to participate in the defence of a specific area or in the United Nations' global efforts to maintain global peace and stability in the region. As part of this agreement, Pakistan was not allowed to use the aid it received to carry out "any act of aggression against any other nation." 30 Pakistan was happy with this arrangement because it had no plans to launch an offensive against any country, including India. For Pakistan, the MDAA's provisions serve as an example of genuine concerns and a way to implement corrective measures.

In the wake of the MDAA, military and economic aid began to flow, but there was a huge discrepancy between what Pakistan expected and what it received. Americans proposed \$30 million in annual aid, but the recipient wanted as much as Turkey had received. While geographically Pakistan is not part of East Asia, the United States attempted to fill the void by offering her membership in the recently formed South East Asia Treaty Organization.

Pakistan and the United States signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement in May of 1954. SEATO (the South East Asian Treaty Organization) was established later that year, and it now includes Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand as members. In 1955, it also became a member of the Baghdad Pact, a similar alliance of mutual defence involving the United Kingdom, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. Later, the Central Treaty Organization was given its current name (CENTO). Since its inception, the United States has maintained a close relationship with this organisation, despite not being a member. In addition to SEATO and CENTO, it was the only Asian country to be a member of both organisations. 31 The primary goal was achieved, but at a cost, through these mutual defence agreements.

The Year of Agreements and Pacts, 1954

During this time, Pakistan's foreign policy transitioned into its second phase. From an independent to more complicated relationship with the West, it was marked by this shift. This policy of alignment was prompted by a deep sense of unease in the region, particularly in light of the security threats posed by India. 32 Pakistan had expressed an interest in American weapons in the past, but only if it received assurances that India would not be targeted. Without any assurance from the United States, Pakistan changed its previous stance and aligned itself with the West more closely after being included in US-backed anti-communist agreements. Government officials in Islamabad had hoped that this alliance would provide Pakistan with the much-needed arms assistance. 33 During the Cold War, Pakistan was swayed by this kind of thinking to join the United States' camp.

Both SEATO and CENTO improve Pakistan's chances of receiving assistance from the United States. America's most trusted ally in Asia is now Pakistan. 34 When Pakistan joined US-sponsored alliances, India reacted angrily, warning that Pakistan's military might be strengthened to the point where it could threaten it. Although Pakistan is only one-fifth the size of India, there is a large disparity in military strength between the two countries. As a result, Pakistan is unable to pose a threat to Indian national security. As a result of various treaties, Pakistan received military assistance aimed solely at deterring communist advances into South Asia. Before the Sino-Indian border clashes, Pakistan's armed forces were only one-third of India's strength. 35

Between 1954 and 1965, Pakistan reaped substantial benefits from its alliance with the United States. This relationship had a noticeable effect on Pakistan's military. The armed forces, navy, and air force were all modernised and outfitted with cutting-edge weapons systems. Pakistan's armed forces were reorganised along American lines as a result of the country's close ties with the United States, and the United States trained hundreds of Pakistani officers. Additionally, Pakistan received millions of dollars in concessional sales and defence support aid. A few loopholes in the alliance system were still present, but Pakistan's military emerged as a disciplined and well-equipped force.

The inclusion of Pakistan in the anti-communist bloc led by the United States was never a win-win situation. The United States and Pakistan had a brief but tumultuous relationship from 1947 to 1955. For the American cause, Pakistan gave up a great deal of its own resources, but the latter proved to be an untrustworthy friend, letting the former down from time to time. The decision to align with the United States was left with many unanswered questions as a result of this roller-coaster approach.

Mr. Nehru and Pakistan's Prime Minister reached an agreement in August 1953 to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people after a long period of bilateral negotiations. To ensure a fair vote in the valley, a neutral Plebiscite Administration was appointed. A pretext for retracting his remarks was provided by Pakistan's inclusion in the US-backed military alliance. 36

It was also during this time that Soviet policy toward Kashmir changed dramatically. Until Pakistan signed the Baghdad Pact in 1955, Moscow remained neutral and had abstained from voting whenever the Kashmir issue was brought up in the UN Security Council. However, due to Pakistan's anti-communist stance, the Soviet leadership was unable to have a soft spot for the former. According to Indian claims, there is no need for a plebiscite and Kashmir is an integral part of India. 37 Pakistan's foreign policy suffered greatly as a result of this. When it came to resolving the long-standing Kashmir dispute, the Soviet Union aided India while the United States – Pakistan's supposed ally – did nothing to help resolve it.

Contrary to popular belief, India's non-alignment policy resulted in a significant increase in US economic assistance after the signing of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement in 1951. It was only when the Sino-Indian war began that America's cold war ally Pakistan and non-aligned India began to blur together. 38 Pakistan became more vulnerable and insecure in the face of the Indian threat in such a situation.

Conclusion

Economic aid and security against Indian aggression are Pakistan's foreign policy milestones. There was no response from the West in Pakistan's efforts to accomplish both of these goals. Following the US-backed anti-communist pacts, policymakers agreed to join the anti-Soviet bloc. It was clear that Pakistan's military was the most disciplined and equipped, but it was unable to achieve its stated goals in the real sense. It was impossible for Pakistan's military to prevent the 1965 Pakistan-India war from erupting. Similarly, it was unable to stop India from severing East Pakistan from the rest of the country. When Kashmir, Pakistan's lifeline, could not be a part of it, the dream of territorial integrity was further tarnished. Due to Pakistan's support for India during the Cold War, the Soviet Union considered Pakistan an enemy. Pakistan's economic aspirations were also left unfulfilled. The entire truth is revealed by Pakistan's economic predicament.

In other words, the expense outweighed the benefit. For Pakistan's foreign policy, this was a futile exercise in the history of Pakistan's decision-making process.

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