

“Disintegration of Pakistan – The Role of Former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR)” An Appraisal

Abstract

The Pak-USSR relations have a much checkered history. Since independence there is an entanglement in relations of both the countries. Unfortunately, Pakistan tilted from the very beginning towards the West and failed to win the support of the neighboring countries. India, Afghanistan and China were the main countries with whom initially relations were not cordial. The former two countries never improved its relations with Pakistan however, with the direction of USA; Pakistan played a part of facilitator between China and USA. It was not acceptable to USSR, so it never hesitated to pressurize Pakistan for its pro-western policies and joining of security pacts. No doubt that as a super power USSR strengthened its relations with India and used it as a base against the pro-western Pakistan. Joining the western security pacts and its increasing dependence on China were the main causes for the resentment of USSR. That's why it signed mutual defense and security pact with India to fully equip her against Pakistan. Pakistan also committed blunders in the formulation of its foreign policy and avoid the principle of bilateralism. It could not maintain its non-alignment position which caused serious threats to its security and the result was the dismemberment of East Pakistan with the help of USSR by India, while no western super power supported Pakistan in its war against Indian aggression.

Introduction

Pakistan – Soviet Union relationship is marked more by the security concerns of each of the two nations than any other factor. Since fifties, the friendly relations between the two never got a chance to emerge. When the Cold War shifted from Europe to Asia USA established her airfields in Asia in the shape of treaty organizations such as SEATO and CENTO. Pakistan made the base camp for American activities against the containment of Russia.³

Pakistan needed a guarantor for her security and economic and technical aid. Instead of USSR a war torn country, the Pakistani bureaucracy saw USA more established and technically advanced to provide aid to Pakistan. It changed the nature and direction of Pakistan's external relations. The U-2 incident in May 1960 greatly annoyed USSR against Pakistan. To normalize the relations President Ayub Khan visited USSR in 1965 and USSR Prime Minister Alexi Kosygin visited Pakistan.

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³ Rouben Azizian and Peret Vasilieff, "Russia and Pakistan: the Difficult path to Reproachment," *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 2003. p. 36.

The Soviet sensing a pro-western tilt in the Indian attitude started cultivating better relations with Pakistan. The Soviet posture of neutrality during the Runn of Kutch dispute and specifically in the all out war in September 1965 was unprecedented. The Soviets seeing an opportunity to replace both the US and China, took initiative and offered its good offices for mediation between the warring parties. Besides, she also advanced loans and technical support to the weak economy of Pakistan. Moreover, USSR declared that Kashmir is a disputed territory and emphasized for bilateral talks between Pakistan and India for its solution.

Despite that, Pakistan could not get rid of the pro-Western posture. The USA Secretary Mr. Henry Kissinger's secret visit to Peking via Pakistan⁴ perturbed USSR. Keeping in view, the alignment of Pakistan with USA and China, USSR got highly agitated and the result was that in the 1971 Indo-Pak war in which East Pakistan was seceded and became Bangladesh – the role of USSR was not that of the year 1966 during the Tashkent conference. She openly supported India to take revenge from Pakistan and to teach lesson to her that how serious it is for a feeble country to take a tussle with a super power of the time and what could be its repercussions.

The British Legacy in India & Pakistan

The Post World War II period witnessed the ex-colonies problems linked with a number of factors. This include: i) colonial legacies in the realms of domestic politics as well as in the management of external relations, ii) border disputes emanating from the arbitrary partitions by the erstwhile colonial empires, iii) weak or non-existent political and juridical systems and iv) indigenious elites trained in the methods of the former colonial masters and left to serve their interests. The Civil-military-bureaucracy interlocking and military coups hampered the process of democracy in counties like Pakistan. Since independence its policies have largely been guided by its security concerns *vis a vis* its regional neighbors and the domestic instability. The major theme in its politics has been search for security and a guarantor who can furnish such guarantees.⁵ The British legacy of disputes created enormous problems for Pakistan in the formulation of its political, social and economic policies.⁶ Right from day 1 India* did all in her capacity to destabilize Pakistan⁷ posing serious threats to her security and

⁴ Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai, "Intricate Pak-US Relationship," Monthly *J. World Times*, Lahore: January 2015.

⁵ Ayaz Naseem, *Pak-Soviet Relations 1947-1965* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1989), pp. i-ii.

*For the Indian geographical location, population and area in 1971 see *The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. I (New Delhi: 1975), p. 1. *The Europa Year Book 1973 – A World Survey* (London: 1973), pp. 598-600. As quoted in Dr. S.S. Bindra, (1981), *Indo-Pak Relations – Tashkent to Simla Agreement* New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, p. 17.

⁶ M. Ikram Rabbani, 4th edn. (1999), *Pakistan Affairs* Lahore: The Caravan Press, p. 394.

⁷For disputes between India and Pakistan see Mehtab Akbar Rashidi, *Indo-Pak Relations* Karachi: Pakistan Study Centre, University of Jamshoro, 1988), pp. 13-20. For initial differences and the issues of colonial legacy see Dr. S.S. Bindra, *Indo-Pak Relations – Tashkent to Simla Agreement* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1981), pp. 84-102.

defense.⁸ This sense of insecurity compelled her to seek a safe and reliable guarantor.

Pak-USSR Relations since Independence

History of Pakistan – Soviet Union relations is rightly termed as “checkered”. The troubled relationship is due to the differences in the security and strategic perceptions and objectives.⁹ Earlier the Soviet attitude towards the partition of the sub-continent especially towards the “Two Nation Theory” was critical one.¹⁰ However, due to its concern over access to ‘Hot Waters’ i.e. Indian Ocean, Soviet Union was keen to develop friendly relations with Pakistan, which was of vital importance for the USSR for trade purposes and to establish links with the oil rich areas of the Middle East.¹¹

USSR Invitation to Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan

Initially the Soviets did not even send a message of felicitations to the newborn state of Pakistan.¹² In matters of economy,* industry, its agrarian nature, colonial character, and the British presence in the state were the reasons of apprehension for USSR.¹³ While Mr. Nehru as the foreign minister of the Interim Government, appointed his sister Vijay Laxmi Pandit as the ambassador of India to the Soviet Union, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan opposed any such appointment to Moscow.¹⁴ Stalin gave an invitation to the Prime Minister Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan to visit Moscow in 1949. This invitation was extended on 15th May 1949, when Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was on a visit to Tehran, by the Soviet *charge d’affaire*. Receiving his consent, on 2nd June 1949 the *charge d’affaire*, through Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, the Pakistani envoy in Tehran, conveyed a verbal but “official” invitation to the Pakistani premier and Madame Khan that was accepted

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 20-23. For Operation Gibraltar and operation Grand Salam in Kashmir and Pakistani infiltration in Kashmir; a critical position of the Pakistan army and the pressure on President Ayub and his cabinet see Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan – Pakistan First Military Ruler* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1993), pp. 313-332, 335-362.

⁹Naseem, pp. 33.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Wheeler, “Soviet Publications on India and Pakistan”. *Asian Review*, Vol. LIV, 197, January 1958, p. 8. For the Russian comments on the partition of India see Ragunath Ram, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1983), pp. 15-16. For Stalin criticism of Pakistan see Rashidi, pp. 47-48.

¹¹ Rabbani, p. 395. Henceforth.

¹² For cynical remarks of Stalin about the “Two Nation Theory” see Ram, p. 8. Ram also notes that even some Western scholars took a similar view, for instance Hans. J. Morgenthau in “The Impasse of American Foreign Policy”, states, “Pakistan is not a nation and hardly a state. It has no justification in history, ethnic origin, language, civilization or the consciousness of those who make, up its population. They have no interest in common save one: fear of Hindu domination. It is to that fear and to nothing else, that Pakistan owes its existence, and thus for its survival as an independent state...It is hard to see how anything except a miracle, or else a revival of religious fanaticism, will assure Pakistan’s future. pp. 260-62. See Ram, pp. 66-67, e.n. 25.

¹³ Naseem, pp. 36-37.

*For the economy of Pakistan which were occupied by the rich families who rose to the decision-making positions. For instance Habib Rahim Rahimtoola, *al-Haj M.A.H. Isphani, A. Dawood, H. Ali Mohammad, B.M. Idrees, A.Salam, A. Rushdi etc.*, for more details about these business communities see K.B. Saeed, (1980), *Politics in Pakistan: Nature and Director of Change* New York: Praeger, pp. 25-26, f.n., 73.

¹⁴ Alan Campbell Jhonson, *Mission with Mountbatten* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, n.d.), p. 114.

on 7th June 1949.¹⁵ However, due to a powerful **clique in the foreign office the visit was sabotaged.¹⁶ The date was on the Soviet suggestion postponed from August 20th to November 7th, 1949.¹⁷ It transformed the Russians earlier coolness into indifference. Besides, the clamp down [popularly known as Rawalpindi Conspiracy case]* against the Communist Party of Pakistan on 9th March 1951 was also a cause of detest for the USSR. It was projected and publicized widely so as not only to cover the pro-American activities but also to suppress the opposition specially the communists who were opposed to the Pak-American military collaboration. However, recently, the former foreign minister Akram Zaki revealed that actually USSR invited Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on 14th August which was declined as Independence Day of Pakistan. However, the USSR Government was informed that the visit should be scheduled for ten days and the prime minister also desired to visit the Muslim Central Asian states, it was the main point on which the USSR Government did not show consent.¹⁸

On the other hand, 'the acceptance of American invitation by Liaquat Ali Khan cast doubts on her non-alignment policy.'¹⁹ Actually it was due to the tussle of two pro-west and pro-socialist groups in the foreign office with their personal interests.²⁰ Pakistan disinterested with the establishment of friendly relations with Soviet Union. On April 13th, 1948, Pakistani foreign minister Sir Zafarullah Khan in New York proposed to the deputy foreign minister of USSR Andri Gromyko for the exchange of ambassadors, after seventeen months, Pakistan named its first ambassador to the USSR. On 21st November 1949, USSR announced M. Ivan Nikolaevich Bakutin as ambassador to Pakistan.²¹ But it delayed till 15th March 1950, when the said ambassador at the Soviet embassy in London took charge as the Soviet ambassador to Pakistan.²² A negative approach was that Sir Zafarullah's remarks on delay in exchange of envoys with the Soviet Union on the flimsy excuse of shortage of housing in Karachi.²³ Another call for anxiety for the USSR was the bureaucratic troika** assured USA for their vital role against communism,

¹⁵Naseem, p. 44.

¹⁶ G.W. Choudhry, *India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Major Powers: Politics of a Divided sub-Continent* (Karachi, n.d.), p. 13.

*Zafarullah, Ghulam Muhammad and Mr. Ikramullah Foreign Secretary. This clique was of the view that Pakistan was in dire need of both economic and military assistance, neither of which could be expected from the Soviet Union at that time. However, this clique neglected that due to industrial and agrarian might Russia was more suited to the need of Pakistan than USA. The later events showed that how despite the coolness of Pakistan, Russia advanced her technical support to Pakistan in the period of strained relations with USSR.

*For details of this Conspiracy and the activities of the Communist Party in Pakistan see Ram, pp. 21-22. Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters – A Political Autobiography* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 37-38.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁸ The Sunday Magazine, *Aaj*, (4 October, 2014), Peshawar, p. 5.

¹⁹ Mushtaq Ahmad, *Foreign Policy of Pakistan* Karachi, p. 63. See also S. Irtiza Hussain, *Time for A New Consensus* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1963), pp. 102-103. Letter to the Daily Dawn, January 24, 1986, Karachi. Letter to the Daily the *Muslim*, January 24, 1986, Islamabad.

²⁰ Naseem, pp. 17-18.

²¹ Hafeez-ur-Rehman Khan, "Pakistan's Relations with the USSR," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. XIV, 4, 1961, p. 33. For Ayyub Khan views about the visit of Liaquat Ali Khan to Moscow, see Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters – A Political Autobiography*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 168.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Naseem, p. 39.

the Quaid himself while receiving the credentials of the newly arrived American ambassador Paul H. Alling, hinted at the Soviet activities in the northern parts of Pakistan.”²⁴ Due to this turn down of Stalin’s invitation and acceptance of the US invitation in the mid 1950s – the Kremlin leaders recognized that the best way to penalize Pakistan was to support her adversary, India.²⁵ So, the anti-Communist environment was there in the administration of Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan joining the SEATO & CENTO

Pakistan after its start in 1947 had to face number of hostile Indian actions.²⁶ Ayub Khan writes that Pakistan was compelled to align herself with the West in the interests of her security. It became a member of the Baghdad Pact and South-East Asia Treaty Organization, both of which were not well received in the communist world.²⁷ Because of Pakistan’s security fear and desire, the first agreement with USA was signed on 9 February 1951, subsequent agreements were signed in February 1952, March 1953 and December 1953. These agreements assured the military aid as well as other economic assistances to Pakistan.

The Russians had the desire to export* communism and to counter imperialism particularly in South Asian Region. On 11th January 1955, Pakistan signed Defense Support Assistance Agreement with USA in Karachi for security purpose. Then, on 24th February 1955 Pakistan signed a defense pact with USA. With the joining of these regional military pacts South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)** and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)*** USSR got alarmed.²⁸ For these security pacts, the army chief had the consent of Ayub

²⁴ R.S. Vankataramani, *The American Role in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1984), p. 44. It is said that even before the partition Quaid-i-Azam was aspiring and thus working to get the US attention and aid specially arms. The Indian writer documents that two months after the partition he requested the Americans for financial assistance over a period of five years. The request related to US\$ 170,000,000 for army, US \$ 75,000,000 for the Air Force and US \$ 60,000,000 for the navy. For more details in this regard see Quaid’s quest for American Arms *Ibid.*, p. 1-31.

*Ghulam Mohammad, Zafarullah and Firoz Khan Noon.

²⁵ Chodhry, p. 18.

²⁶ Mahboob A. Popatia, *Pakistan’s Relations With The Soviet Union 1947-1979* (Karachi: Pakistan Study Centre, 1988), pp. 23-25.

²⁷ Khan, p. 116. For the reason of USA an observer in the Pact because of the strong opposition of Egyptian President Jamal Naser, *Ibid.*, see p. 154. To the Muslim world the Christian world impelled to help the Muslim world against the threat of Communism. USA wanted to establish counterpoise to Communism in the Middle East. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁸ Gauhar, pp. 196. Henceforth.

*The Soviets wanted to give the national bourgeoisie of Third World countries, an understanding that they did not want to force communism on them but wanted to move them towards progressive social change. They under the new leadership countered the American policy of ‘Broad basing the regimes’ by whatever methods available and suitable to them. For instance in India they came up with aid either for industrialization, which was not forthcoming in India domestically, or from the Western bloc. In Afghanistan, they catered aid to the preference of the King and his council of ministers. On elite level geo-political and strategic interests were used selectively as in the case of Soviet support to India and Afghanistan on Kashmir and *Pushtoonistan* issues respectively once the United States brought the Cold War into the ‘containment ring’ through its global military alliance system in the mid-fifties. For the change of the shift in the policy of the USSR under Nikita Khrushchev towards the Third World, see Chodhry, p. 18. For Pak-Afghan relations and the Pakhtunistan issue see also Khan, pp. 174-76.

**SEATO initially called Manila Pact. There were eleven articles in this Pact. The countries signing the Pact included USA, UK, France, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. It is significant to note that Pakistan also signed in May 1954 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with the United States.

Khan who had persuaded the US government to assume a long-term commitment of military aid to Pakistan and had been responsible for getting Pakistan into the regional alliances.²⁹ Ayub Khan writes that since we had never been a part to any design against USSR and our membership of these Pacts were dictated solely by the requirements of our security.³⁰ During Ayub visit to Moscow Mr. Kosygin the Russian Prime Minister showed his displeasure about these Pacts.³¹ When in 1955 Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact, Soviet Union charged that, by joining the Pact, Pakistan had become a member of an aggressive western alliance', and it responded by radically altering its stand on Kashmir.³² However, many misunderstandings cropped up and the leaders of the Soviet Union decided to give full support to India.³³ During 1954-1962, the Soviet Union dropped its neutrality on the Kashmir issue and openly supported India.³⁴ Despite that, Pakistan had signed many agreements with USSR for cooperation.³⁵

The U-2 Incident (May 1960) – The Enemy Exposed

There were number of reasons which annoyed USSR from Pakistan. The links between Islamabad, Washington and Beijing were seen with suspicion. Moscow had strong reservations and started revisiting their trust and reliability over Pakistan.³⁶ The Soviets were quite suspicious that Pakistan would allow the US to use her territory against USSR, which actually and ultimately turned out true.

Under the Treaty of CENTO Pakistan allowed the Americans to establish a highly sophisticated communications, base at *Badaber near Peshawar. It allowed the Americans to maintain constant aerial surveillance over Soviet territory. Nevertheless, when the US attempted some spying over USSR war bases facilities, its spy plane flown by CIA pilot Francis Gary Powers was shot down by a Soviet S-75 Dvina (SA-2 Guideline) surface-to-air missile. The Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev not only booked President of the United States Dwight D. Eisenhower for it but also threatened Pakistan for attack over this breach of trust. However, In March, 1965 during Ayub visit to Moscow, he assured the USSR that

***In Baghdad Pact, the countries were U.K. Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq. But due to the revolution in Iraq in 1958, she left this pact and later on, it was given the name of CENTO. It is interesting to note that USA was not its member but closely associated with it from its inception. In that period, Pakistan was associated with the United States through not one, but four mutual security arrangements. In this sense, she was sometimes regarded as 'America's most allied ally in Asia'. She was the only Asian country to join both SEATO and CENTO.

²⁹ Gauhar, p. 112. Ayub visit to USA in April 1958 to secure military aid on a long-term basis .See *Ibid.*, p. 115.

³⁰ Khan, p. 117.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-173..

³² *Ibid.*, p. 132.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³⁴ Rashidi, p. 49.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50. See also Popatia, pp. 84-85.

³⁶ M. Raziullah Azmi, "Pakistan's Soviet Policy: One Step Forward: Two Steps Back", *Asian Profile*, vol. 15, 2, April 1987, p. 169.

*The base at Badhber, near Peshawar, had been leased out to the US in 1959. For a detail of the U-2 Spy Mission and the analysis of this incident see *The New Times*, July 4, 1947. As quoted in S. M. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy – An Historical Analysis* (London: University Press, 1973), p. 195. See also f.n. of page 196. pp. 97-98.

this treaty would not be renewed,³⁷ and also confessed that in the U-2 incident, we were clearly at fault.³⁸

President Ayub Khan's first visit to USSR – the Ice Melt

Ayub Khan writes that for establishing good relations with USSR, the main cause was that our civilization and culture had close connections with Central Asia, two hundred years of British occupation had wiped out these connections. By the time, the British left, the contact had been lost.³⁹ On 3rd April 1965, Ayub visited Moscow and made meetings with Prime Minister Kosygin, he said that Soviet policy was to establish the broadest possible co-operation with the East as well as the West. The Soviet Union also had apprehensions about the Pak-Sino relations.⁴⁰ Kosygin told Ayub “We entertain no interest in Asia which could coincide with the United States. They are pursuing a policy of enslaving the people of Asia. The Pak-Indo disputes are all the result of past imperialist domination and current capitalist designs.” The Soviet Union believed in resolving its disputes through dialogues. About the Kashmir issue Kosygin said that “I can assure you that we will do nothing to fan this dispute. We shall do our level best to bring it to an end.”⁴¹

Bridging the Gulf - the Role of USSR in the Tashkent Agreement

Due to the Kashmir problem cross border firing started and on August 5, 1965. On August 16, Indian troops crossed the line and occupied some Pakistani posts.⁴² On the pretext of Pakistan aircraft attack on Amritsar 5 September, the Indian troops on 6 September without a declaration of war, launched an offensive across the Punjab frontier into West Pakistan.⁴³ On 20 August, Kosygin wrote to Ayub and Shastri and offered the good offices of the Soviet Union for a meeting in *Tashkent [Uzbekistan]. In a third letter, on 17 September to Ayub he reiterated the proposed meeting. Initially, Foreign Minister of Pakistan Mr. Bhutto went to Moscow on 23 November to discuss the issue with Kosygin.⁴⁴ The reason of the Soviet good offices was that USA President Jhonson and UK Prime Minister Mr. Wilson failed to help Pakistan in settling the War affairs; Ayub accepted the mediation of the USSR in this connection.

³⁷ Gauhar, pp. 196-97. See Safdar Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided*, (Lahore: Ferozsons Ltd., n.d), p. 160.

*It is significant to note that the clashes between the Indians and Pakistanis on the ceasefire line in Kashmir had greatly increased during 1964, and still more during the first half of 1965.

³⁸ Khan, p. 171.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴⁰ For the fear of USSR against China and the Chinese apprehension about the Soviet might see Khan, pp. 172-73. Gauhar, pp. 291-92.

⁴¹ Gauhar, p. 294. For the settlement of the Run of Kutch dispute with India and the Indian defeat in event pressurized her Prime Minister Shastri for adventure to take revenge from Pakistan. See Rashidi, pp. 20-21.

⁴² Rashidi, p. 21.

⁴³ Rashidi, p. 22. For ceasefire acceptance and Ayub, Bhutto and Air Marshal Nur Khan hurry to accept it see Gauhar, pp. 355-56.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-364. For the 11 articles text of the Tashkent Declaration see Naseem, pp. 236-39.

*The reason for the selection of Tashkent was that due to severe snowfall and cold weather in Moscow and Kremlin it was thought fit to held a Summit Conference in a place where the weather would be pleasant and the second reason was that the Central Asian State Uzbekistan had a historical political and intellectual link and influence over India so it was considered as the best place for this Conference.

On 1st January 1966, Ayub took off from Peshawar for Kabul en route to Tashkent, and reached Tashkent on 3rd January. The inaugural session started on 4th January and on 5th January, he met with Shastri. On 6th January Ayub met with Kosygin and received the Soviet made draft for the agreement between the two countries. On 8th January, all contact between the two delegations had ceased. On 9th January, Kosygin once again met with Ayub, it was this meeting which decided the fate of Tashkent Conference and the future course of events in Pakistan. Kashmir was not included and Kosygin told Ayub that your foreign minister Mr. Bhutto assured us before the Conference in Moscow that Kashmir will not be made the decisive point in these negotiations. The nine-point declaration proposed by Kosygin was signed at a formal ceremony on 10th January, there were no secret protocols, appendices, or letters annexed to the Tashkent Declaration.⁴⁵ “Kosygin also gave Ayub an understanding that the Soviet Union would drop its posture of the support to Afghanistan on Pakhtunistan issue.”⁴⁶ It is also of much significance that on 9th January Kosygin for the first time stated, “The Soviet Union appreciates that a dispute exists in Kashmir...of course there is a dispute.”⁴⁷ The Soviet statesman, in order to bring the Indians down, suggested to his Indian counterpart that the Soviet Union might not always be in a position to support India.⁴⁸ USSR wanted to lower the prestige of Communist China in the eyes of Pakistan; therefore, she ultimately made it successful.⁴⁹ USSR also wanted to declare herself as a gospel of peace in Asia.⁵⁰

Russo-India Nexus – the safeguard against the West

USSR never wanted USA to play her role openly in the Asian affairs. Soviet involvement in the Indian sub-continent was an extension of Moscow’s bipolar competition with Washington and its nascent rivalry with Peking.⁵¹ The Soviet political and military role in Asia especially South Asia can be compared with that of the United States in the Middle East. Soviet wanted to develop and maintain this role of a ‘Crisis manager’.⁵² The close ties between India and USSR could be concluded from the fact that during the 1965 War, Kosygin promised the Indians Ambassador, B.K. Nehru, that the Soviet Union would continue its regular arms supplies to India. Washington also promised the same in case of Chinese attack.⁵³

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 379-88. For these Nine Points see also Mujtaba Razvi, *The Frontiers of Pakistan – A Study of Frontier Problems in Pakistan’s Foreign Policy* (Karachi: National Publishing House Ltd, 1971), pp. 283-85.

*For propaganda against Ayub by Bhutto about this secret protocol see Gauhar, 393-94 .

⁴⁶ Ram, pp. 143-145. Choudhry, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁷ Choudhry, p. 52.

⁴⁸ Salman Taseer, *Bhutto: A Political Biography* (Amherst: Syracuse, 1979), p. 66.

⁴⁹ Bindra, pp. 62-63. For the reaction on the declaration of Tashkent of Indian Parliament and Pakistan National Assembly, see *Ibid.*, pp. 65-68. What Pakistan gained from this Declaration see Burke, *Pakistan Foreign Policy* pp. 352-53.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵¹ Syed Rifaat Hussain, “Pak-Soviet Relations since 1947-1984: A dissenting Appraisal” *Strategic Studies*, Vol. X,3, Spring 1987, pp. 64-88.

⁵² Jonathan Steele, *Limits of Soviet Power: the Kremlin’s foreign Policy from Brezhnev to Chernenko* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 74.

⁵³ Gauhar, p. 348. See also G.W. Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan*, (London: C. Hurst & Co. 1972), p. 203-206.

USSR Prime Minister Kosygin visit to Pakistan (17th April 1968)

The main reason of the Kosygin visit to Pakistan was that Pakistan had assured her for the termination of the *Badaber* air base. Actually, the agreement between Pakistan and USA had been signed in 1959, and was due to expire in 1969. The agreement provided that the lease for the base would stand automatically renewed unless notice of termination was given twelve months in advance. Ayub gave the notice on 6 April 1968 and then Kosygin arrived on Pakistan on 17 April on an official visit. This was the first ever visit of a Soviet Premier and the crowds gave Kosygin a warm welcome, much to the chagrin of American officials in Islamabad. The first meeting of Ayub-Kosygin on 18 April lasted for well over three hours. He signed an agreement for financing and executing the steel mill project in West Pakistan. An understanding was also reached regarding the setting up of an atomic power plant in East Pakistan. The Soviet Union offered assistance for establishing a radio-relay link between Pakistan and the USSR and beyond to Europe. Kosygin said that relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union would continue to improve and strengthen. He said the talks with Ayub were meant to achieve “a détente in international tensions.” As USA on 15th June 1966 had announced the suspension of military assistance to Pakistan, therefore, in the same month, Pakistan had sent a delegation to USSR for the purchase of the arms. On 20th April 1968, Pakistan and the Soviet Union signed a Cultural and Scientific Cooperation Pact. Earlier Ayub on his second state visit went to USSR between 25 September and 4 October 1967, to discuss the details of an agreement for the supply of Soviet arms to Pakistan. It was there that he gave them a firm commitment that he will terminate the *Badaber* base lease by giving the Americans due notice at the appropriate time. His ten-day stay in the Soviet Union, during September-October 1967, had convinced him that Pakistan could achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture only through co-operatives.⁵⁴ Besides, the USSR also provided a modest amount of weapons after the giving of assurances by Ayub to close down this communication centre. Kosygin also visited India after the visit of Pakistan and he suggested Indira Gandhi that some mutually acceptable solution of the dispute which had arisen between India and Pakistan over the Indian plan to construct Farrakha Barrage on river Ganga should be found.⁵⁵ It is important to note that in May 1969 Kosygin again visited Pakistan and asked General Yahya Khan for a cooperative organization of Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Iran and the Soviet Union, which he had proposed sometime earlier during his visit to Kabul, would be economically beneficial for Pakistan. He also suggested the summit and deputy foreign minister level conference be held to discuss the transit trade. He expressed the hope that Iran and Turkey could also participate in the conference. Initially Yahya Khan agreed on the proposal but later on avoided it.⁵⁶ It is important to note that when the Sino-Soviet Clashes occurred in 1969, the Russian made it clear to Pakistan that they disapprove her friendship with China. The containment of China in the region became Russia’s primary

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 416-19. One of the main reason was that Ayub was deeply upset when the US stopped the supply of arms to Pakistan during the 1965 war, and when the Americans declined to resume military assistance in April 1967, he was left with no option but to look toward the Soviet Union for military aid and to expand Pakistan’s relations with China. For Ayub visit to USSR see also Popatia, pp. 96-97.

⁵⁵ Popatia, p. 98.

⁵⁶ Choudhury, pp. 63-64.

concern. When her Defense Minister, Anderi Grechko, visited Pakistan in February 1969, he told S.M. Yousaf, the Foreign Secretary, "You cannot have simultaneous friendship with USSR and China." In response to the arguments from the Pakistan side, he curtly replied, "What is permissible for a super power is not possible for a country like Pakistan."⁵⁷

USSR and the Kashmir Issue

It is a fact that diplomatically India had won the support of most of the countries on the question of Kashmir that it is an integral part of India including the big powers support. Due to the repeated blunders of Pakistan, Soviet Union always neglected her role and position in the region. USSR was much annoyed from Pakistan, therefore, on 14 February 1957, she exercised her first veto on Kashmir in favor of India.⁵⁸ More disturbing for Pakistan was the Soviet stand in favor of India on the Kashmir question. When on 29 January 1962 Pakistan called for immediate consideration of the Kashmir problem by the Security Council because a "very grave situation" prevailed between India and Pakistan the Soviet Union opposed it. Then on 4 May 1962 the soviet representative, Morozov, spoke in the Security Council against the suggestion that there should be a simultaneous withdrawal of the Pakistan and Indian armed forces from the territory of Kashmir.⁵⁹ About the Kashmir issue, Kosygin said, "I can assure you that we will do nothing to fan this dispute. We shall do our level best to bring it to an end."⁶⁰ One of the Pakistan genuine demands from USSR was that the Soviet policy on the Kashmir question and its role in the United Nations had obstructed progress towards a just and peaceful solution of the problem.⁶¹ When in early 1965, Indian and Pakistani forces confronted each other Kosygin sent almost identical messages to Ayub and Shastri in which he expressed the Soviet concern over the military situation in Kashmir and advised them to bring about a cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of troops to the respective sides of the ceasefire line established in July 1949.⁶²

USSR Offer's Pakistan to join her Regional Defense Pact

It is significant to note that after the arms sales, Russian pressures were further intensified, when Pakistan was advised to join Kosygin's plan for a regional economic grouping, comprising Afghanistan, India, Iran, Pakistan and the Soviet Union, and L.I Breznev's scheme of an Asian Collective Security arrangement.⁶³ In this security arrangement Pakistan saw that the Russian motives behind these schemes of regional cooperation against "imperialist" aggression and "neo-colonialism" were to contain Chinese influence in the area, and also to jeopardize its friendship with China on whom it relied heavily in case of a threat from India. Accordingly, it rejected these various Russian proposals. It refused to

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵⁸ Safdar, p. 159.

⁵⁹ See Popatia, p. 84.

⁶⁰ Gauhar, p. 294.

⁶¹ Popatia, pp. 89-90.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶³ Vijay Sen Budhraj, "Moscow and the Birth of Bangladesh," *Asian Survey*, vol. 13, No. 5, May 1973. p. 487. Also see Chodhury, pp. 63-68.

pay the heavy political price for the Russian arms, uncertain in quantity and poor in quality. Pakistan's rejection of the new Soviet proposals in Asia against China put an end to the short-lived period of so-called friendly relations between Moscow and Islamabad (1965-1970).⁶⁴ In July 1969, the Soviet Ambassador discussed the proposals for collective security in Asia with Yahya Khan as well as the Pakistan Foreign Secretary. It cleared to Pakistan that the scheme was directed against China.⁶⁵ Russians felt disgusted with the refusal of Pakistan and after the Indo-Soviet Treaty, the Soviet press and radio unleashed a propaganda campaign. When hostilities broke out, Moscow held Pakistan responsible and threatened that she could not remain indifferent as these developments affected her own security. Other countries were warned to stay out of war, a warning that was obviously directed against China.⁶⁶

General Yahya Khan's visit to Moscow

During Yahya Khan's Moscow visit in June 1970, the Soviet Government, notwithstanding Pakistan's refusal to accede to the collective security scheme, agreed to enhance its economic cooperation with Pakistan by assisting in various projects including the previously mentioned one million ton capacity Pakistan Steel Mills at Pipri, a landmark in Pakistan's economic development. On the issue of supply of arms to Pakistan, USSR emphasized participation in her proposed Asian Security Scheme. Kosygin indicated that Pakistan's acceptance of the Soviet proposals would be, in his opinion, the best guarantee for its territorial integrity.⁶⁷ Now Pakistan had begun to face complications and difficulties in its policy to develop bilateral equations with Great Powers. During that time on the 2500th anniversary of the Persian Monarchy at Persepolis provided an occasion to Podgorny to confer with Yahya Khan and President Giri of India. Podgorny asserted Yahya that the Soviet-India Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was not directed against Pakistan and that his country would not encourage aggression by India. However, Yahya told that India should be pressurized to take back her forces to the previous position.⁶⁸

The East Pakistan grievances against West Pakistan

It is a fact that the union between the two parts [East and West Pakistan] was an uneasy one from the beginning. East Pakistan had complaints about the unequal distribution of economic resources between the two wings of Pakistan. The capital of the country was in the western part, most of the officials and army were from the western part. Bengalis found themselves left far behind in the process of state building and economic development, and felt that they were not adequately represented.⁶⁹ The language issue came as a blow to the unity of the

⁶⁴ Rashidi, p. 51.

⁶⁵ Popatia., p. 100. See Mehrunnisa Ali, *Foreign Policy of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 54. Mahmood, p. 162.

⁶⁶ Mahmood, p. 163.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 113-14.

⁶⁹ See Rounaq Jehan, *Pakistan Failure in National Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 4-8.

nation and deeply alienated East Pakistanis.⁷⁰ There was a great economic disparity and between 50 to 70 percent of the nation's foreign exchange earnings, but the Bengalis received only 25 to 30 percent of Pakistan's total income.⁷¹ All the banks and insurance assets were controlled by West Pakistan.⁷² Even in the 1965 Pak-India War the Eastern Wing was left without any defense, and this sense of insecurity greatly perturbed the Bengalis. During the general elections of December 1970 Awami League (AL) got a clear cut majority in the National Assembly with 98.4 percent of the elected seats allotted to East Pakistan, in West Pakistan the PPP captured only 50 percent of the total seats allotted to this wing. This victory of the AL threatened the power position of West Pakistan military and economic elites and also the continuation of economic benefits derived from East Pakistan, which later on led to a war in December 1971 between India and Pakistan.⁷³ During that period of crisis on 28 March 1971, counsel-General of the Soviet Union at Karachi conveyed Prime Minister Kosygin's oral message to Yahya Khan expressing Soviet apprehensions. On March 31st both the houses of Indian Parliament passed a resolution expressing wholehearted sympathy and support for the people of East Bengal and calling on Pakistan to put a stop to the systematic massacres it was perpetrating against them.⁷⁴ On 2 April, President Nikolai Podgorny sent a message to Yahya Khan stating that his country was greatly alarmed to receive the reports that the political dialogue had been broken off and "the Military Administration" had resorted to "extreme measures" and used armed forces against the people of East Pakistan. When USSR was reminded her harsh measures taken in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Central Asian Republics, it displeased USSR and the cordiality of the late 1960s was replaced by coolness in the relations.⁷⁵ The result was that on 22 November 1971 Indian forces crossed the international frontier in the eastern sector and on 3 December armed hostilities broke out on the western front as well.⁷⁶

How much the Russians were interested in the fall of Dacca, it can be realized from the fact that when in November 1971, the Indian forces crossed the East Pakistan border, the USSR chose to remain silent. Its first public official reaction to the fighting came twelve days later when fighting had escalated to the West Pakistan borders.⁷⁷

Indo-Soviet Treaty of 9th August 1971

USSR was irritated with the Pakistan policy, to keep all eggs in the one basket, and her joining the defense pacts was never tolerated by her. USSR made it clear to Pakistan that without her support it would be very difficult for her to maintain its position in Asia. The basic goals of the Soviet policy in Asia were to persuade Asia States – and non-Asian powers such as the United States – that the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-89. For the Government of Pakistan's Policy of discrimination towards the Eastern Wing, see Bindra, pp. 121-26.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 91-108.

⁷³ Bindra, p. 119.

⁷⁴ Sir Morrice James, p. 180.

⁷⁵ Popatia, pp. 109-111.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁷⁷ Mehrunnisa Ali, *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1998* 7th Edtn. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 26.

Soviet Union is not only a world superpower but also an Asian power. Second, reducing and limiting Washington's influence. Third, that of containing the influence of China."⁷⁸ By refusing to comply with the crude Russian pressures, Pakistan had to pay a heavy price. Soviet Russia's relations with India grew stronger day by day. By signing the 20-year treaty of peace, friendship, and cooperation in August 1971 with India, the Soviet Union gave almost a blank cheque to New Delhi.⁷⁹ It was signed on 9th August⁸⁰ and there were twelve articles of the treaty.⁸¹ USSR also wanted to wean away Pakistan from China and US influence. USSR was much shocked when Pakistan refused to join its Asian military pact. For this reason, she fully extended her support to India and the Soviet military and diplomatic backing brought a full confidence for India to drown the two nation theory in the Indian Ocean as Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi made a false notion.

The Kissinger's visit greatly perturbed USSR and India therefore, on 9th August 1971 Soviet Union and India signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in New Delhi, which had been under consideration since Brezhnev floated the idea of a collective security system in Asia but which India was reluctant to conclude. Then Indira Gandhi visited Moscow on 27-29 September 1971 to coordinate Indian and the Soviet policies and to ensure further supply of the Soviet arms. The joint statement issued at the end of the visit expressed the concern of the two sides "over the grave situation which has arisen on the Hindustan subcontinent as a result of the recent events in East Pakistan. This visit ensured deliveries of large quantities of arms to India. She also condemned the trial of Mujib by Government of Pakistan.⁸² It is significant to note that under this treaty USSR fully supported India. On 4th December, a Soviet spokesman disclosed that Mr. Kosygin did not plan to mediate between India and Pakistan as he did in 1965-6, since the Indo-Soviet Treaty precluded him from doing so.⁸³

Under cover of that treaty, USSR threw caution to the winds about any reaction of Pakistan and China and warned India's unfriendly neighbors Pakistan and China that they would in future have to reckon with the Indo-Soviet Treaty with all its implications. The treaty was signed to meet the threat of war from Pakistan and to find a solution of the East Pakistan crisis. It is further noted that India wanted that at the time of war with Pakistan, she should be getting military supplies from the USSR and her support in the UN. The USSR indeed supported India's stand in the United Nations after the declaration of war on 3rd December between India and Pakistan.⁸⁴

⁷⁸Robert C. Horn, *Soviet Indian Relations: Issues and Influence*. (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 65.

⁷⁹For the text of the agreement see *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, London, August 21-28, 1971, p. 24773.

⁸⁰Budhraj, *op.cit.*

⁸¹Dr. S.S. Bindra, *Indo-Pak Relations – Tashkent to Simla Agreement*. (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1981), p. 140. See also Sir Morrice James, *Pakistan Chronicle*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1992), p. 182.

⁸²Popatia, pp. 112-13. For this visit and the pressing of Indira Gandhi on Kremlin to for the urgency, See Bindra, p. 145.

⁸³Ali, p. 26. Henceforth.

⁸⁴Bindra, pp. 141-142. Henceforth.

USSR apprehensions on Islamabad-Peking-Washington Nexus

Significantly, the change in Soviet policy during the crisis in East Pakistan was due primarily to the fact that the circumstances of the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1971 were quite different from those in 1965. Early in the 1970s a Sino-US rapprochement was already in sight and the United States was seeking to intimidate India on behalf of both its clients Pakistan and its ally China. The Soviet Union could not naturally remain indifferent: for its own interests in South Asia were at stake.⁸⁵ As USSR did not like the role of China in the Asian affairs, therefore, she repeatedly showed great concern about Pak-Sino friendly relations. During those days, USA had improved her relations with Pakistan therefore; it was against this background that in July 1971 the world was astonished to learn about the U.S. National Security Advisor to the President, Henry Kissinger's secret mission to China via Pakistan. Kissinger's China mission had a profound bearing on the Soviet security perceptions. USSR took a very serious notice of Pakistan's role as an intermediary between the two Great Powers.⁸⁶ As USSR could not tolerate it therefore, she formed Moscow-Delhi-Dacca Axis. The result was that by supporting India the USSR deliberately surrendered the mediatory role which it had played at Tashkent. It also led to the polarization of the power in the region. With this the USSR-Pak relations seemed to have reverted to what they were a decade earlier in the fifties.⁸⁷

USSR Warnings to Pakistan

Soviet goodwill for Pakistan had now evaporated. Further, Pakistan's role in arranging the Sino-American dialogue was greatly resented in Moscow. This was the background of the Soviet attitude to Pakistan at the beginning of the civil war in East Pakistan in 1971. The Soviet support for the Bangladesh movement could only be explained in terms of these developments in the Pakistani-Soviet relationship in the preceding two years, 1969-70. Soviet hostility continued even after East Pakistan's secession. It was because of the Soviet policy on 'Pakhtunistan' where it encouraged Afghanistan in sustaining irredentist claims against Pakistan. The USSR Prime Minister Kosygin said that the USSR President had also urged Yahya Khan to restore democracy in East Pakistan, release Mujib and take effective measures for the return of the refugees.⁸⁸ It is worth mentioning that in March 1971, the Soviet Union was the first super power to react to the internal crisis of Pakistan. In a letter to Yahya Khan on 2nd April 1971, Podgorny said that USSR had great apprehensions about the complex problems in East Pakistan. The tone and contents of Podgorny's letter made it clear that the USSR had changed her policy of neutrality and that she was no more willing to play the role of a peacemaker as she had done in 1965-66.⁸⁹

Russia's partisan role was a part of her international strategy. Her primary concern being containment of China, the USSR wanted to encircle her. First, she strengthened India so that she could be used against China in the event of Sino-

⁸⁵ Rangunath Ram, p. 222.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁸⁷ See Bindra, p. 183.

⁸⁸ Popatia, p. 114.

⁸⁹ Mahmood, pp. 162-63.

Soviet confrontation. Secondly, the USSR's old dream of establishing naval bases in the Indian Ocean was likely to be realized. Thirdly, with the fall of East Pakistan, the USSR expected to get firm footing in South-East Asia.⁹⁰

USSR wanted to teach a lesson to Pakistan becoming the base for the Western Imperialism and to realize the importance of Russia. We see that after August 1971 relations between the USSR and Pakistan, which had considerably cooled since April 1971, thenceforth deteriorated rapidly. The Russian government suspended its economic aid to Pakistan and the Russian experts working on various projects left the country. The Soviet import organization advised the Afghan *Bank-i-Milli* not to permit any movement of Pakistani goods into Afghanistan, which serves as the overland transit route for Pakistan-USSR trade. Sea trade was also suspended and after November 1971, no Soviet ship came to pick up cargo from Karachi.⁹¹

One can realize the grave involvement of USSR in East Pakistan crisis from the answer of an Indian in which he replied that Pakistan had become an undependable ally of any power which wants to pursue the policy of containing Chinese influence in this part of the world. Kosygin supported the Bangladesh movement despite its legal and theoretical snags because he must have thought that he...backing a winning horse." The Bangladesh was also interlinked with the Sino-Soviet rivalry in South and South-east Asia. It also had a bearing on the strategic and global competition in the Third World between the two super-powers....It can also be traced from the old Russian documents that the Soviet government shared the old czarist interests in the Persian-Indian Ocean area. The Kremlin leaders throughout 1969 and 1970 were assiduously working for some economic, political and military grouping with the containment of China as its object.⁹² What irritated USSR was that Pakistan expressed its inability to join its security pact for south Asian region which was basically for the containment of China. It brought to an end the brief interval of so-called friendly relations between Moscow and Islamabad.

USSR using of Veto Power against Pakistan in UNO

USSR was a world power, and wanted to realize her importance in the region as well so that to contain the role of its rival USA in the region. It was operating in the context of nuclear parity with the USA and superiority in conventional land forces. The Russians were in no hurry to terminate the fighting since their interest was better served by the continuation of hostilities leading to an Indian victory. Of equal significance was the Soviet role in the debates at the Security Council, which was convened to discuss the India-Pakistan conflict. For the first time in many years, the Soviet Union disassociated itself from the mainstream of international opinion by rejecting the proposition that in an armed conflict priority be given to the imposition of a cessation of hostilities. Moscow's main position was that a ceasefire was inconceivable without a political settlement in East Pakistan.⁹³ On 4th December 1971, Pakistani's representative, Agha Shahi

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164. See also Ali, p. 24.

⁹¹ Ali, pp. 26-27.

⁹² As quoted in G.W. Choudhury, *United Pakistan*, pp. 204-208.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25. See Bindra, p. 163.

presented a resolution for condemning the Indian interference in East Pakistan. However, the USSR representative held Pakistani “military authorities” responsible for the situation and even suggested that the representative of Bangladesh be given a hearing in the Council. This so-called Bangladesh Government had been formed on the Indian territory. On the same day, the Soviet Union vetoed a draft resolution sponsored by the USA in the Security Council, which called for an immediate cessation of hostilities withdrawal of troops from each other’s territory by Pakistan and India. Soviet Union presented a resolution in which Pakistan was blamed for the escalation of war. However, China vetoed it. On 5th December, the US resolution was again vetoed by USSR. Due to the inability of the Security Council, the matter referred to the General Assembly and on 7th December, it overwhelmingly adopted a resolution, which called upon both India and Pakistan for immediate ceasefire.⁹⁴ The Assembly out of whose total membership of 131 adopted the resolution, 104 states voted for it. Despite this mandate from an overwhelming majority of the world community, the USSR vetoed for the third time in the Security Council a draft resolution drafted on similar lines as the previous ones. It was only after the Indian occupation of Dhaka that Moscow dropped its obstructive approach.⁹⁵ No doubt, USSR supported the Indian stand. She was an equal partner in the miseries of the Indian Government. The Russian support can also be realized from the fact that before the starting of the war USSR informed Pakistan that an armed attack against India by Pakistan, under whatever pretext, would evoke the most resolute condemnation in the Soviet Union. In addition, when the war started, Mr. Kosygin who was in Denmark on an official visit issued a statement in favor of India.⁹⁶ So, India with full confidence and strong support of the USSR plunged into the war and carried the day.

During all these proceedings Russian played a double game; on the one hand she tried to paint her role as a peacemaker and propagated for the end of the war and on the other hand, her military and diplomatic assistance to India and her role in the Security Council provided an umbrella under which India successfully invaded East Pakistan. In fact, India launched an attack with the prior approval and under the guidance of the Soviet Union. According to one report, on 13 December, Russian Ambassador to India, Nikolai M. Pegov, promised that the Soviets would open a diversionary action against the Chinese in “Sinkiang”, and would not allow the Seventh Fleet to ‘intervene’. Further, it was reported that the Soviet army personnel were manning Indian missile boats and were seen flying Indian Army planes during the war.⁹⁷ No doubt, on diplomatic front the Russia’s role was equally hostile in the Security Council. She blocked the passage of every resolution aiming at peace till the fall of East Pakistan. The Russian diplomats in the Security Council were heard asking the Indian representative, how long they

⁹⁴ Popatia, pp. 115-16. Eleven members voted for the resolution. Britain and France abstained. The USSR and Poland cast negative votes. The Soviet Ambassador to the UN Jacob Malik called US resolution “a one-sided and unacceptable draft.” He said that its approach was to “shift responsibility from the right to wrong.” He, without naming China, attacked her for the position, which she had taken. With this, the Chinese Ambassador to the UN Huang Hua charged both USSR and the India saying that because of encouragement given by “social imperialists” India had committed aggression on Pakistan. For the complete, process of the General Assembly and the Security Council See Bindra, pp. 189-94.

⁹⁵ Ali, p. 25.

⁹⁶ Bindra, p. 181.

⁹⁷ Safdar, p. 164.

would take to reach Dacca. The USSR was so deeply concerned about the slow progress of the Indian forces in completing the operation that she sent her first Deputy Foreign Minister to Delhi during the war. He was convinced that the morale of Pakistani forces had been broken and that the surrender was only a matter of three or four days. The Soviet Union was, therefore, rightly accused of being the “Real Director of the Bangladesh Force.”⁹⁸

During the war when the fall of Dhaka seemed imminent, a Russian delegation headed by the First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuzntsov arrived in New Delhi to work out the organization of the ‘Bangladesh Government. Not only that but when the news of the USA naval fleet aired and entered in the Indian Ocean on 14th December 1971, the Soviet Union adopted a strategy of introducing its own naval presence in the Indian Ocean. For this purpose she gained access to the Islands of Mauritius and Socotra in Southern Yemen, secured bunkering and other naval facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and established a supply depot and training mission at Visakapatnam.⁹⁹ On 14th December, D.P. Dhar visited Kremlin and remained with Kosygin for two and half hours and discussed the latest situation in East Pakistan. The Soviet Deputy Minister, Nikolai Firyubin assured Dhar that: “in these threatened hours, the Soviet Union, just as it has always been will remain your sincere friend.”¹⁰⁰ The USSR played its ignominious role in this crisis. According to Chinese government “The Soviet Government has played a shameful role in this war of aggression launched by India against Pakistan. The whole world has seen clearly that it was the backstage manager of the Indian expansionists.”¹⁰¹ It was due to this role of USSR that Mujib felt it proper to pay his thanksgiving first visit as the premier outside the subcontinent to USSR.¹⁰² Sheikh Mujib requested his host to dispatch a salvage team to clear mines and sunken vessels from the port of Chittagong and Cjalna and make them navigable again.¹⁰³

Effects of the Dismemberment on Pak-USSR Relations

After becoming President, Mr. Bhutto visited Moscow in 1972, but the relationship did not improve much. The political unrest in the NWFP and Baluchistan provinces was greatly due to Soviet encouragement. The seizure of Soviet arms smuggled into Pakistan through the Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad, the coup in Afghanistan and President Daud’s threats to revive the old issue of “*Pakhtoonistan*” were interpreted in Pakistan as indications of continued Soviet pressure to bring Pakistan into the Asian Collective Security System. The involvement of USSR can be judged from the fact that Soviet Union had moved its troops to its border with China thereby precluding the Chinese forces from coming to the aid of Pakistan even if China had so desired.¹⁰⁴ When in March 1972 Mr.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁹⁹ Ali, p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ See Bindra, p. 182.

¹⁰¹ Choudhury, *United Pakistan*, p. 216.

¹⁰² *New York Times*, March 6, 1972.

¹⁰³ *New Times*, Moscow, No. 37, 1972 as referred in S.M. Burke, “The Postwar Diplomacy of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971,” *Asian Survey*, vol. 13, No. 11 (Nov. 1973), p. 1048. Also see USSR-Bangladesh joint communique published by TASS, 4 March 1972 as mentioned by Mehrunnisa Ali (ed.), (2010) *Reading in Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971–1998*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press), p. 28.

¹⁰⁴ Rashidi, p. 52.

Bhutto as President of Pakistan made a state visit to Moscow, Mr. Kosygin referred to the East Pakistan crisis and said that the forces of “national liberation” had been confronted with the forces of “anti-people military dictatorship” which had joined efforts with external aggressive circles hostile to the people of Hindustan, including the Pakistani people. He further declared, “If history were to be repeated, we would take again the same stand because we are convinced that it was correct.” Kosygin remarks amounted to a very serious admonition of the President of Pakistan. They conveyed the message that Pakistan should understand the limit of the Soviet tolerance.¹⁰⁵ Whatever the effect of this India accomplished the task of dismemberment of Pakistan.

Conclusion

Pakistan in particular, has failed to evolve a stable policy towards the Soviet Union based on its own merits, and taking account of Pakistan’s national interests and geopolitical realities in the region. Rather, it has allowed its Soviet policy to be decisively influenced by American policy vis-a-vis South Asia and the USSR, and by the Soviet role in countries neighboring Pakistan. Moscow on the other hand, has attached high priority to its relations with it, and eagerly reciprocated any friendly overtures emanating from Pakistan.

On the other hand, the soviet approach to its relations with Pakistan, both in historical and contemporary contexts seems to have been marked by a high degree of pragmatism, which unfortunately has not been matched by Pakistan. Their own national and security interests geared policies of both Pakistan and the Soviet Union towards each other. Soviet Union xenophobic due to its historical experiences and the containment policy of the United States and the Western bloc, and Pakistan, eager to safeguard its freshly won independence and ambitions to develop as fast as possible, did whatever they could to achieve their respective aims and objectives.

However, Pakistan’s extreme pro-Western support annoyed most of the Islamic countries beside China. USA was not much keen in the development of cordial relations with Pakistan. On the other hand Pakistan forgot to afford the hostilities of the big powers like USSR in the neighbor. The hostile attitude of India joined with USSR’s annoyance made it an extremely venomous combination against Pakistan which it had to endure sooner or later. Instead of playing safe and exploiting the USSR’s interests in Pakistan’s own national interest it over committed itself with the US led Western block and in this way put itself in an extremely precarious condition within its own region. Pakistan did not adopt a balanced foreign policy and tried to get the US support in extremely risky conditions that ultimately resulted in irreparable loss.

Pakistan did not realize the gravity of the situation during the 1971 War and again asked USA for help which she did not consider. On the other side, USSR provided full support to India on every platform. Still Pakistan experiencing the old wines in the new bottles but the result is the same.

¹⁰⁵ Popatia, p. 124.

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