

PAKISTAN-NEPAL RELATIONS

CONVERGING INTERESTS AND PARALLEL STRATEGIES

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation attempts to study the relations between two relatively small states in the immediate neighbourhood of a large country and whose foreign policies are dominated by their perceptions of and their relations with this neighbour. Out of these two nations is Pakistan and Nepal, the former is predominantly Muslim and the latter takes pride in claiming for itself the status of the only Hindu state in the world. On the other hand, their common neighbour, India, although overwhelmingly Hindu, has a sizable Muslim population. Moreover, while both of these countries have been under the spell of authoritarian rule with heavy censorship on their press, their common neighbour has more or less succeeded in establishing democratic rule. Besides, the significance of such a study within the regional context lies in the fact that until now no comprehensive work has been undertaken by scholars of any country on this subject.

Before looking at the relations between these two countries, it will be in the fitness of things to touch upon the basic objectives of their foreign policies. As has been stated above the foreign policies of both Pakistan and Nepal revolve around their perception of India and their relations with that country. Therefore, it would not be wrong to state that their foreign policies are primarily Indo-centric.

Pakistan's primary objective of foreign policy, since its very inception, has been a search for "security" against or "power parity" with India. While highlighting this issue, an Indian scholar comments,

"The search for security as far as the Pakistanis are concerned, boils down to a search for moral and material support in order to counterpoise and neutralise Indian power superiority in the sub-continent." (1) This search for power parity with India has resulted from a variety of factors including the peculiar complexes of the Muslim League leaders and the hatred and bloodshed that accompanied the partition of the sub-continent. Pakistan continued to search for an equal status with India in the international arena in order to vindicate the validity of the "two-nation" theory on which it was based.

Pakistan's preoccupation with its security was echoed by an important Karachi daily in the early sixties when it editorially said, "If the main concern of Christian West is the containment of Chinese Communism, the main concern of Muslim Pakistan is the containment of militarist and militant Hinduism." (2) Former President Ayub Khan, while expressing concern about India's allegedly aggressive postures, wrote in

(1) Mohammed Ayoob, "Ayub's Foreign Policy: From Alliance to Equidistance", The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Journal (New Delh) Vol. 2, July 1969, p. 1.

(2) The Dawn (Karachi), 26 April 1963.

his autobiography,

History has placed us in the path-way of the conflicting interests of major powers. Our location gives us a strategic significance both in South East Asia and in the Middle East. But the cause of our major problems is India's inability to reconcile herself to our existence as a sovereign, independent state India's ambition is to absorb Pakistan or turn her into a satellite. (3)

The Kashmir issue further vitiated Indo-Pak relations as well as Pakistan's perception of India. The integration of the major portion of the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir into India posed both ideological and security challenges for Pakistan. The Pakistanis felt that without Kashmir the new state was ideologically incomplete and the validity of the two-nation theory was still in question. According to Z.A. Bhutto, now President of Pakistan, "Kashmir must be liberated if Pakistan is to have its full meaning." (4) From the security angle also Pakistan felt insecure as a result of the Indian presence in the Valley of Kashmir which brought Indian military power within striking distance of the Army General Headquarters in Rawalpindi as well as the important air bases of Sargodha and Peshawar. Moreover, the headwaters of most of

(3) Mohammed Ayub Khan, "Friends not Masters - A Political Autobiography" (London, 1967), p. 115.

(4) Z.A. Bhutto, "Foreign Policy of Pakistan" (PIIA, Karachi, 1964)

the rivers of the Indus system, which flow through and irrigate West Pakistan (now Pakistan), are located in Kashmir. Pakistan was apprehensive of the fact that during times of Indo-Pak tension New Delhi may decide to reduce or switch off supply of water to Pakistan thus turning it into a semi-desert. While the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 allayed these Pakistani fears to a substantial extent, they were not completely obliterated. A Pakistani observer while emphasizing Pakistan's claim on Kashmir has written, "For ethnological, economic and strategic reasons, Pakistan cannot possibly allow a hostile or potentially hostile country to hold Kashmir." (5)

Certain domestic factors were also responsible for Pakistan's obsession with India. In order to keep its two disparate wings united, Pakistan needed to manufacture "an external threat" which would in a negative way strengthen the bonds between East and West Pakistan. While this strategy proved to be counter productive in the long run, it did have considerable pay off in the short run. Moreover, Pakistan's ruling elite, which was extremely narrow based in terms both of social class and regional origin, needed the India bogey in order to perpetuate itself in power and pose as the defender of the Muslim homeland. This was really an attempt at increasing the identification of the Pakistani masses with

(5) G.W. Choudhury, Pakistan's Relations with India, 1947-60

(London, 1968), p. 8.

the ruling coterie in Karachi and Islamabad. All these factors combined to make Pakistan's obsession with India in the realm of foreign policy complete.

Nepal's obsession with India was as complete, although for vastly different reasons. The security of Nepal and a search for national identity constitute the basic goals of its ruling elite. According to a student of Nepal's external policy, the threat to Nepal's independence from its neighbours was of two types. From China it was a "military threat" but from India the threat was of "political" nature. (6) Nepali society is a remarkable synthesis of Indian and Chinese cultures with the Indian element predominating. Nepal's world view, as aptly stated by a western observer, is primarily a reflection and extension of its perception of the country's two enormous neighbours. (7)

Another major objective of Kathmandu's foreign policy is the economic development of Nepal. So far as foreign aid for economic development is concerned, India has been the largest donor country. About 90% of that country's trade is also with India and a very large portion of the remaining trade is carried on through the transit point at

(6) S.D. Muni, "Foreign Policy of Nepal, 1951-56", (Thesis, Ph. D. Rajasthan University, Jaipur, 1971), p. 62.

(7) See Leo E. Rose, "Nepal: Strategy for Survival" (Berkeley, 1971), p. 15.

Calcutta. (8) This excessive dependence of Nepal on India has resulted from the fact that it is a landlocked country and has had open borders with India for centuries. According to an observer, "the sheer magnitude of Nepal's economic dependence on India has created a great deal of resentment among the Nepalese elite and the small, though growing, urban, educated middle class." (9) It has also been pointed out that Nepal's infant nationalism is trying to develop an economic content by means of trade diversification, although with little success so far. (10)

Other declared objectives of Nepal's foreign policy, viz. world peace, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and the strengthening of the United Nations, can also be understood only within the regional context, because "peace in the neighbourhood" is a major precondition for Nepal's very survival. Nepal, quite conscious of its size in terms of territory and population, has identified its interests with those of the small nations. The Nepalese attitude has also been dictated by big brotherly treatment that India has allegedly meted out to its small neighbour. The over-sensitivity to anything Indian was deliberately magnified during the Mahendra

(8) For details of these figures please see Mohammed Ayoob, "India and Nepal: Politics of Aid and Trade", The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Journal (New Delhi) Vol. 3, No.2, October 1970.

(9) Ibid. p. 127

(10) Ibid.

era. King Mahendra said in October 1962, "Nepal is never prepared to play second fiddle to any country and will never lag behind in thinking out ways and means of her own welfare." (11) Nepal's policy of non-alignment is also mainly used as a balancing factor between India and China.

The ruling elite of Nepal, like its counterpart in Pakistan, has had an extremely narrow social base and has been authoritarian in character. It has deliberately used anti-Indian sentiments to perpetuate itself in power. It has also tried to acquire legitimacy within Nepal by projecting itself as the only available check to Indian dominance in Nepal.

It should also be noted that both Pakistan and Nepal brought China into the picture primarily as a counterpoise to India, despite the vastly different character of the social system of China when compared to those of either Pakistan or Nepal.

This study tries to highlight how Pakistan-Nepal relations have developed primarily in this context of their respective (but equally strong) obsessions with India, and to what extent they have tried to woo each other to further their respective objectives vis-a-vis India. The subsequent chapters will deal with the course of events which brought the two countries together mainly to counter India's predominant influence in

(11) H.M. King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva, Proclamations, Speeches and Messages (H.M.G, Kathmandu, 1967), Vol. II, pp. 143-4.

South Asia. Five chapters have been devoted to studying the various facets of Pak-Nepal relations. One chapter deals exclusively with the reaction in Nepal, both official and non-official, to the liberation struggle in Bangladesh which has radically transformed the power-balance in South Asia.

CHAPTER II
INITIAL CONTACTS

Pakistan, after its birth as a nation, was involved in a series of domestic crises. The post-partition era created a lot of problems for the ruling elite. The rehabilitation of millions of refugees and the task of building up a sound economic infra-structure for the survival of the new nation kept the policy-makers preoccupied with the domestic scene. In such a situation, Pakistan did not give any priority to start diplomatic relations with any new nation, unless forced under economic compulsions. Nepal, being separated from Pakistan by a small strip of Indian territory did not provide any such incentive to the Pakistani policy-makers. On the other hand, until 1951, Nepal was itself preoccupied with a serious domestic crisis. The isolationist policy of the Ranas also discouraged the Pakistani rulers to start any diplomatic manoeuvre. According to Leo E. Rose, the prospect of British withdrawal was a bitter pill for the Ranas. It was sometimes, before they were prepared to accept the need to make major policy adjustment to meet the new situation. So until that period, there was a stalemate in relationship between the two countries. (1)

(1) Leo E. Rose, "Nepal: Strategy for Survival" (Barkely 1971) p. 178.

The first ever policy-statement by Pakistani rulers on Nepal was on 20 July 1951 when Premier Liaquat Ali Khan alleged that India had undermined the independence and sovereignty of her small neighbours and pursued aggressive policies towards them. (2) But Nepal reacted sharply by sending a strong protest to Pakistan for having made such a statement. Thus during King Tribhuvan's regime, Pakistan could not get the slightest encouragement to stir up any anti-Indian feelings in Nepal, although she very desperately tried to exploit any sort of strain in Indo-Nepalese relations to its own advantage. This also gives us some clue as to what extent India was a factor in Pak-Nepal relation during the Mahendra regime. A special relationship between India and Nepal existed during the whole Tribhuvan period, when under the Agreement of 1947, and the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950 there was a move to formally co-ordinate Nepalese Foreign policy with India. (3) There was also a large amount of co-ordination in the sphere of defence between India and Nepal. Such close relations between India and Nepal inhibited the Pakistani rulers from making any moves in order to come closer to Nepal.

Although the Tribhuvan regime did not officially encourage any detente between Pakistan and Nepal, still the fact cannot be ignored

(2) The Hindu, 25 July cited in S.D. Muni "Nepal Pakistan Relations Partnership in expediency", South Asian Studies, Vol. 5, No. 1 Jan. 1970. p. 65.

(3) See Muni, n. 2, p. 65;

that the Bandung diplomacy hastened greater Pak-Nepal contacts. Nepal joined the Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan in March 1952 and in that capacity attended the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in April 1955. The possible motive for Nepal to join the Colombo Plan was to benefit from its technical assistance programme. Such programmes could help the member states in three ways: (4) i.e. (i) sending of consultants and experts (ii) higher training abroad in the various fields of economic development under the plan (iii) provide training, equipments and experts for specialised institutions located in the Colombo Plan area. The Bandung Conference where Nepal participated along with twenty-eight other countries of the Afro-Asian region, strove to promote good-will and understanding among the nations of Asia and Africa and to consider social, economic and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented. (5) The Nepalese delegation watched with interest and curiosity when the Prime Minister of Pakistan proposed in a speech at Bandung that the Conference should adopt the following principles as the "Seven

(4) P.W.E. Curtin, 'The Effect of Colombo Plan', Pakistan Horizon,

Vol. VII, June 1954, p. 78.

(5) "Notes on Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung", Pakistan Horizon,

Vol. VIII-IX, 1955-56, p. 308.

Pillars of Peace". (6)

- (1) "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations",
- (2) "recognition of the equality of every independent and sovereign nation",
- (3) "abstention from interference in the internal affairs of one country by another",
- (4) "Non-aggression against territorial integrity",
- (5) "Integrity of self-defence exercised singly or collectively",
- (6) "the right of self-determination of all peoples and the abhorrence of colonial exploitation in any shape",
- (7) "the settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means - negotiation, arbitration or mediation".

When the question of U.N. membership for the new states was debated in Bandung, Pakistan gave wholehearted support to their admission to the world body. Subsequently at the tenth U.N. General Assembly session on 3 October 1955, the leader of the Pakistani delegation, Mohammad Ali said in his address, "For many years, a number of nations which fully satisfy the tests for membership set forth in the Charter, have been seeking admission to this organisation but unfortunately in vain. The Bandung Conference called upon the

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- (6) "News Chronology", Pakistan Horizon, Vol. VIII-IX, 1955-56, p. 308.

Security Council to support the admission of those states, which qualified for membership under the terms of the Charter and specifically the following Asian and African countries, which so qualified: Cambodia, Ceylon, Japan, Jordan, Libya, Nepal and a United Vietnam. "My delegation therefore trusts that the Security Council will speedily recommend their admission." (7) Thus Nepal's canvassing for U.N. membership at Bandung, with active support from Pakistan, finally yielded results and it was admitted to the U.N. in 1955. The Pakistani delegate in his welcome address at the General Assembly said, "On behalf of the people, the government and the delegation of Pakistan, I welcome cordially the new members of the United Nations as colleagues and friends in this organisation." (8) In his special gesture of good-will towards Nepal, he added, "In the same way do we welcome Nepal, which is in our region and which has a common history with our sub-continent." (9)

It would also be worthwhile to examine to what extent China was a factor in bringing Pakistan and Nepal together. The Pakistani scholars give much significance to Nepal's gradual broadening of international horizon in the mid-fifties and this according to them

(7) GAOR, Session 10, Plen. mtgs. 531, 8 October 1955, p. 701.

(8) GAOR, Session 10, Plen. mtgs, 556, 15 December 1955, p. 451.

(9) Ibid, p. 451.

indirectly helped strengthen Pakistan's relationship with Nepal. They analysed the situation in the following way:

Sure of its hold on Nepal, India, in order to canalise the anti-foreign sentiment of the Nepalese towards China and at the same time to assure China that it had no designs against it, put pressure on Nepal to establish diplomatic relations with China. What India did not foresee was that Nepal after establishing relations with China, would try to balance the two, for achieving more freedom in its affairs." (10)

Subsequently, China and Nepal signed a Treaty based upon "Five Principles" on 1 August 1955 in which "China emphasized equality of status between the two countries, thus hitting hard at the special position enjoyed by India in its dealing with Nepal". When Pakistan saw that Nepal "grew in stature as an independent state, because of its being so treated by a great Asian Power" it all the more stepped up its efforts to befriend Nepal. (11)

With the death of King Tribhuvan and the succession of King Mahendra to the Nepalese throne more or less a new chapter began in Pak-Nepal relations. With Mahendra's rise to power Nepal's foreign policy took a turn from that of "special relations with India" to that of "a balance of power in the regional context". Its policy while within the region was dominated by big powers like India and

(10) Staff Study, "Pakistan and Nepal", Pakistan Horizon, Vol. XV, No. 2, 1962, p. 131.

(11) See Eastern World, London, Oct. 1956, p. 12 cited in 'Ibid'.

China was more of 'a strategy for defence and development'. (12) The Pakistani observers could rightly sense the growing independence of Nepal in international affairs and the Pakistani government anxiously waited for the opportunity to establish intimate neighbourly relations with that country. When Pakistan got an official invitation from Nepal to attend Mahendra's coronation in 1956, it considered it a boon. A statement by T. P. Acharya, the then Prime Minister of Nepal is significant in order to understand the Nepalese mind. Acharya said, "Nepal wants to be friendly with every country in the region. India in her own interest should encourage the development of Nepalese nationalism even if it hurts her temporarily." (13) Hamidul Haque Chaudhary, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, led the Pakistani delegation to the coronation ceremony on 30 April 1956. When asked by Indian journalists in New Delhi en-route to Kathmandu, the Pakistani Foreign Minister said that he might discuss the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with Nepal. (14) On the occasion of that visit the Pakistani Press criticised India for carrying in one newspaper mischevious propganda in connection with the reception and treatment of the Pakistani delegation at the coronation celebration which was reported

(12) S.D. Muni, "Foreign Policy of Nepal, 1951-56" (Thesis, Ph. D.

University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, 1971), p. 193.

(13) Staff Study, n. 10, p. 132.

(14) Ibid. p. 132

to have been poor causing annoyance to the delegation. (15) Even some scholars charged that Pakistan's attempts to forge normal ties with Nepal were not looked upon with equanimity by India. A leading Pakistani daily while briefly reporting the coronation ceremony, focused its attention on the possibility of future ties with Nepal. The paper in one of its reports said that Pakistan's Foreign Minister, H. H. Chaudhury, was understood to have raised the question of establishing diplomatic relations with Nepal when he met Nepal's Premier, T.P. Acharya, on May 1, 1956. (16) It also reported, "H.H. Chaudhury said that Pakistan would offer technical assistance to Nepal." (17) The Pakistani Press also highlighted another interesting statement of T.P. Acharya. He was reported to have told a Press Conference at Kathmandu on 4 May 1956, that "Nepal had no desire to align itself with any bloc. Nepal would be a sort of Switzerland in Asia." (18) This was obviously a welcome gesture for Pakistan. Even Indian newspaper reports say that Nepal at that moment was "not averse to the idea of establishing diplomatic relations with Pakistan, if approached by the latter." (19) Thus the initiative in diplomatic manoeuvres was entirely left to the Pakistanis. Although the Pakistani Press reported the informal

(15) Ibid., p. 132.

(16) The Dawn (Karachi), 4 May 1956.

(17) Ibid.

(18) The Dawn, 5 May 1956.

(19) The Statesman (New Delhi), 21 April, 1956, cited in Muni, n. 2, p.66

exchange of views on the question of diplomatic contacts between the two nations, it was officially denied by Nepal. (20) At the end of the coronation ceremony, the delegation left Kathmandu for Dacca. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Pakistan's High Commissioner in India, while replying to a question at the Dacca airport, said that they had received tremendous applause in Nepal with loud slogans of "Pak-Nepal Bhai Bhai" from a large number of people present at the Kathmandu Airport. The Nepali Muslims were reported to have greeted the Pakistani delegation with shouts of "Narai Takbeer Allahu Akbar". (21) He even asserted that the Nepalese Foreign and Home Ministers personally received the Pakistani invitees to the coronation at the airport. When asked by a Pakistani correspondent as to the possibility of future diplomatic relations, he added, "Nepal knew our mind." (22)

For three years following the coronation there was no diplomatic move of any sort by either side. From 2 to 4 June, 1959, Pakistan's High Commissioner in India, Mian Ziauddin, visited Kathmandu and had series of talks with both King Mahendra and Prime Minister B.P. Koirala on this issue. On the eve of his departure the envoy said that Pakistan and Nepal were maintaining good relations and the establishment of diplomatic tie was

(20) The Statesman (New Delhi), 14 July, 1957, cited in Muni, n. 2, p. 14

(21) The Dawn, 5 May 1956.

(22) Ibid.

a mere formality. (23) After that, the leading Pakistani newspapers published special news items and editorials on this issue. "It is understood", a paper reported "Nepal believes that in the altered situation in the Himalayan region today, it has become imperative for her to extend her neighbourly relations with as many countries south of the Himalayas as possible and Pakistan is one among her principal close neighbours in this region." (24) The paper further reported "It seems she (Nepal) has realised that it would be incongruous for her not to have diplomatic relations with Pakistan when she is having it with distant countries like USA, U.K." (25) In the evaluation of Pakistan Horizon (the organ of the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs) "the success of Pak-Nepalese efforts to establish relations, was due to a new stage reached in Nepal's relations with other countries especially Soviet Union and China." (26) With the establishment of a Soviet Embassy in Kathmandu in the middle of 1959, USSR broke "the gentleman's agreement" observed by the powers. King Mahendra's belief in the traditional principle of balance of power and non-interference in the internal affairs of Nepal by any other country, was also a welcome gesture for the ruling elite of Pakistan.

(23) Nepal Samachar, 4 June 1959 in Muni, n. 2, p. 14.

(24) Pakistan Times (Lahore), 28 January 1960.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Staff Study, n. 10, p. 132.

In an editorial at the end of January 1960 Pakistan Times stated:

Geographical proximity and common interests in the South Asian region clearly prescribe a mutual policy of close association. Pakistan, having so far been preoccupied with the grave problems that arose in the wake of her emergence as a new country, has not done nearly as much as it might otherwise have done to strengthen its ties with all countries of South and South East Asia. (27)

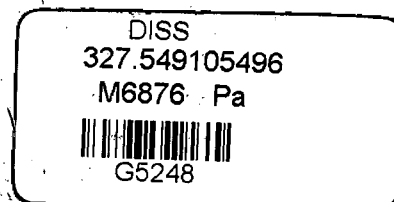
Describing the aloofness of Nepal from the rest of the world in the late forties and early fifties the paper commented that "epochmaking changes in the neighbouring lands" seemed to have "no impact on Nepal's isolated and placid existence". Welcoming the new Nepalese attitude, the paper asserted that alongwith the changing world, Nepal's "world outlook was also changing eventhough very slow." (28) Nepal had been forced by happenings in her immediate neighbourhood over the last few years to give serious thought to the conduct of her foreign relations. The Chinese seizure of Tibet, as pointed out, had powerfully impressed upon Nepal the need for "bidding farewell to isolationism". (30) The paper also highlighted the danger for landlocked Nepal because of her excessive dependence upon India. Writing about the initiative from the Pakistani side, it said, "Pakistan has

(27) Pakistan Times (Lahore), 29 January 1960.

(28) Ibid.

(29) Ibid.

(30) Ibid.



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obvious claims to being one of the foremost among countries she (Nepal) may now desire to come close to. It is well worth hoping that our Foreign Office will take the first opportunity of ascertaining Nepalese wishes in the matter of exchange of diplomatic envoys." (31)

The reports of the semi-official Pakistani daily turned out to be prophetic. On 19 March 1960, both the governments in Karachi and Kathmandu announced simultaneously that diplomatic relations were to be established and A.K. Brohi, Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, was to be concurrently accredited as its ambassador to Nepal and was to function from New Delhi. (32) Although contacts were established at a non-residential level, in the first instance, it marked the beginnings of a new chapter in the relationship of the two countries. While presenting the letter of credentials to King Mahendra, A.K. Barohi, Pakistan's first ambassador to Nepal, said on 6 April: "Today's occasion was a consummation of Pakistan's long-felt desire to develop closer links of friendship and cooperation with Nepal." (33) He further said, "It might be possible for us to explore further possibility of mutual co-operation and thus inaugurate a new era of

(31) Ibid.

(32) Pakistan Times, 20 March 1960, also see 'News Chronology',

Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 13, 1960, p. 178.

(33) Pakistan Times, 8 April 1960.

mutual aid in other fields of common endeavour." (34) The King, while welcoming the new envoy, said: "Addition of Pakistan to our circle of friends has naturally given us much satisfaction specially in consideration of physical proximity of the two countries as well as the existence of cultural and religious ties between them." (35) Lt-General Daman Shomsher Jung Bahadur was named as Nepal's first ambassador to Pakistan. Pakistan and Nepal looked forward towards increasing cooperation not only in the political sphere, but also in the fields of economic collaboration. Thus, Pakistan's frantic attempts to befriend her immediate neighbours to the detriment of Indian interests bore some fruits when Pak-Nepal relations were started at the diplomatic level.

(34) Ibid.

(35) Ibid.

CHAPTER III

BEGINNING OF FRIENDSHIP

Soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Nepal, the latter had to face a domestic crisis. On 15 December, 1960 the King by a Royal proclamation dismissed B.P. Koirala's Cabinet and the National Parliament, abrogated the Constitution and took entire control of the administration in his own hands. He also promised a type of partyless Panchayat Democracy to his people more or less similar to that of Pakistan's Basic Democracy.

To this the Indian reaction was very sharp. It was rated in India as the "subversion of democratic forces". Nehru gave a statement in the Indian Parliament on 16 December, 1960, regretting that the democratic experiment in Nepal had suffered a "set-back". (1) Such a statement though not completely unexpected came as a big shock to King Mahendra. On the other hand the King's action was hailed in Pakistan on two counts. (2) First, Pakistan, during 1958, had undergone a similar exercise as a result of Ayub Khan's military coup. Ayub Khan had ridiculed the transplantation of the Western form of Parliamentary democracy in the underdeveloped countries of Asia. Secondly, it was a matter of satisfaction to the ruling elite of Pakistan that another

(1) India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series 2, Vol. 49, Session 12 of 1960, Col. 5975.

(2) Girilal Jain, 'Pakistan and Nepal', Times of India (New Delhi), 23 September 1961.

neighbouring country was following Pakistan's footsteps in the new pattern of government. "The superficial feeling of ideological solidarity", an Indian Journalist aptly comments, "between the ruling elites in Kathmandu and Rawalpindi has been cemented by the refusal of Nehru and other Indian leaders particularly J.P. Narayan to bless the King's action in setting aside the democratic process." (3)

Ayub Khan's gesture of goodwill towards Nepal can also be attributed to another factor. He had developed an ambition to be able to speak on behalf of as many small neighbours of India as possible. The Pakistani Press gave a great deal of coverage to King Mahendra's action which they called an attempt to save his country from chaos and confusion. A leading newspaper reported that Mahendra "would now try to instill a new awareness in the people through Panchayat democracy when the attempt to develop democracy from the top had failed." (4) The paper also welcomed the new foreign policy statement in which Mahendra declared his desire to maintain friendly relations with all nations and strive for world peace and international economic cooperation.

The policy of neutrality and non-alignment with any power block and allowance of foreign private investment to fill the gap of domestic private capital was considered another friendly gesture by Pakistan.

(3) Ibid.

(4) The Dawn (Karachi), 6 January 1961.

While eulogizing Mahendra's palace coup, one Pakistani paper wrote editorially:

The overthrow of democratic system anywhere is a matter of concern, but in recent years there have been instances to prove that when a combination of circumstances arise, which threaten the very existence of a nation, there may be no alternative but to scrap the democratic form for the time being and set the country on the road to viability and stability. The same thing has obviously happened in Nepal and King Mahendra is entitled to the sympathy and support of all friendly nations who wish Nepal well. (5)

Reacting sharply to India's unfavourable reaction the paper praised the Nepalese as a "fiercely independent race" who naturally "resented India's attempt to constitute herself as a self-appointed protector of their country". Pakistan expected India to "revise its attitude and get reconciled to dealings with Nepal on the basis of equality." (6)

Pakistan's favourable reaction encouraged the monarch of the mountain kingdom to go on a state visit to that country. Mahendra's main motive to visit Pakistan was possibly to seek support for legitimising his personal rule. On 5 September 1961, a few days before Mahendra's state visit to Pakistan, the first Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan, Nara Pratap Chata presented his credentials to President Ayub. (7)

(5) Ibid.

(6) Ibid.

(7) News Chronology, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. XIV, 1961, p. 337.

The King and Queen with Princess Shanti and a ten member party arrived at Karachi on a six-day state visit on 10 September 1961. (8) Alongwith the Pakistani and the Nepalese Press, Indian newspapers also gave a fairely good coverage to Mahendra's visit to Pakistan. A few days before the visit a leading Indian daily wrote in its news report from Karachi;

King Mahendra will be presented with Pakistan's highest civil award, 'Nishan-i-Pakistan' during his six-day state visit to Pakistan beginning on September 10. The King will be decorated by the President because of the laudable measures he had taken for the progress of the Nepalese people. (9)

Again, in another news report from Kathmandu one day before the King's visit, the same paper recorded, "Observers here (Kathmandu) don't expect the visit to produce any major or lasting result." (10) The report further said;

Nepal had apprehension about Pakistan's capability to give any substantial amount of economic aid. The main feature of the visit was likely to be one of mutual appreciation between Ayub Khan and Mahendra of each other's leadership and to evolve any philosophical ground in support of the respective coups in the two countries. (11)

(8) Ibid.

(9) Times of India (New Delhi), 6 September 1961.

(10) Times of India (New Delhi), 10 September 1961.

(11) Ibid.

Observers felt that Pakistan's public approbation of Mahendra's leadership alongwith China was mostly tactical and an attempt to take advantage of the disappointment created among the royalists in Kathmandu by Nehru's often expressed dislike of the Nepalese King's action in snuffing out Parliamentary democracy in Nepal. (12) Indian newspapers also made attempts to highlight the differences between Hindu Nepal and Muslim Pakistan. This was in striking contrast to the reporting in Pakistani press. (13)

When one looks at the Pakistani public opinion as reflected in the press, one gets an entirely different scenario. Exactly a day before the arrival of the royal entourage a leading daily showered all

(12) Ibid.

(13) See for instance an editorial report which appeared in the

Pakistan Times, 21 January 1960, which said, "This independent Himalayan Kingdom of nine million people is one of this country's closest neighbours. Geographical proximity and common interests in the South Asian region clearly prescribe a mutual policy of close association." On the other hand, a leading Indian journalist stated, "On the deeper and popular level, there is very little in common between the two countries.", Times of India (New Delhi), 23 September 1961.

praise on Mahendra and his outstanding achievement as "a sagacious statesman". (14) The strategic importance of the Himalayan Kingdom in South Asia was highlighted in the Pakistani press. "The country also occupies a very strategic position", the daily commented, "the importance of which has been increasingly manifested since the withdrawal of the British power from the Indo-Pak sub-continent." (15) While giving a brief survey of Nepal's domestic scene which forced Mahendra to take over the administration, the paper wrote, "It needed a leadership of the highest order to safeguard the country from external pressure and at the same time to establish internally a stable political, administrative and social system." (16) The famous royal communique that "corruption ruled the roost and favouritism became the rule rather than the exception" was given very high publicity in the entire Pakistani press.

The Pakistani ruling clique, which to a large extent controlled the press, supported Mahendra's direct rule by saying that the King had to step in and dismiss the Cabinet and Parliament in exercise of the powers which the Constitution specially conferred on the Head of State. In justification of the striking similarity between the systems in the

(14) The Dawn, 10 September 1961.

(15) Ibid.

(16) Ibid.

two countries, one paper commented, "We in this country also passed through some of these experiences and our own Revolution of October 1958 was necessitated by more or less similar circumstances." (17) The King was also praised for his "bold and progressive" measures in the expansion of education, administrative reforms, planned economic development and rationalisation of tax system and land tenure. The daily further said, "It is most interesting to note that King Mahendra's ideas on the type of democracy which is suitable for underdeveloped and educationally backward countries, largely coincide with those of the architect of our Revolution." (18)

Reflecting upon Mahendra's foreign policy, the Pakistani press diagnosed a significant difference between Nepal's neutrality and India's non-alignment. Citing an official publication from His Majesty's Government in support of the above difference it recorded, "There is no truth in the contention that neutralism as such is better than block politics from the moral point of view." (19) Morality, as the Nepalese official thinking went, was neither an integral part of neutrality nor that of military alliances. Nepal believed in neutralism, because it was both "practical and suitable" for it. Thus while challenging the

(17) Ibid.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Ibid.

Nehru brand of "neutrality", the Pakistani press praised the Mahendra brand which did not regard neutralism as "morally right and alignment as morally wrong". Obviously, pointing towards India one editorial recorded, "If certain other exponents of neutralism had the same honesty and courage to face the truth, they would have contributed better to international understanding, specially in this particular region." (20) The entire Pakistani press in extending a warm welcome to the royal guest and his gracious and charming queen noted, "We extend to them the felicitation of the people of Pakistan and we hope that their sojourn in our midst will be a pleasant one." (21)

Protocol formalities have great significance in deciding the diplomatic behaviour of nations in the world. So one has to watch carefully this part of the drama while examining the trend of relations between two countries. As reported in Pakistani press, the BOAC Quantas Boeing 707, bringing the Royal Party from Athens touched down at 3.15 P.M. on 10 September 1961 at Karachi air port. (22) In spite of a drizzle a grand reception was given to the King and his Party by President Ayub. Other dignitaries present were Mr. and Mrs. Manzur Quadir (Foreign Minister), Z.A. Bhutto (the Minister of Fuel, Power and

(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid.

(22) The Dawn, 11 September 1961.

Natural resources), S.K. Dehlavi (Foreign Secretary), Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Chairmen and members of Basic Democracies and prominent citizens. A special Guard of Honour was given by the Pakistani armed forces. In a colourful ceremony at night, Ayub Khan honoured Mahendra by conferring on him, 'Nishan-i-Pakistan' and in return the King also conferred on the President the highest civic award of Nepal, 'Ajjashwa Rajan'. On that occasion, Ayub Khan said: "The people of Pakistan entertained sentiments of great friendship for the people of Nepal and have always admired their great sincerity and spirit of sacrifice in the cause of development of their country." (23) In showering compliments on Mahendra, he said,

Your Majesty's great effort in this direction, particularly to raise the standard of living of your people and to effect great social, educational and political reforms in Nepal, have been recognised in Pakistan as a landmark in the history of your country. In recognition, therefore, of Your Majesty's lasting ideas and notable contributions to the cause of peace and progress and also as a token of our deep affection and regard, we present to Your Majesty, a Nishan in the Order of Pakistan which is the highest civil award in Pakistan. (24)

The first day of the King's visit was restricted to a few engagements.

But the mutual expression of goodwill by both the Heads of State showed a green signal for the success of his (Mahendra's) mission.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Ibid.

On 11 September the two Heads of State held talks for ninety minutes. It was also attended by the their respective Foreign Ministers. News reports said that the talks were held in a "cordial atmosphere". (25) Pakistan's 5 Year Plan and the scheme of Basic Democracies were explained by N.A. Farooqui, Pakistan's Cabinet Secretary, to the King and his entourage. It was explained that Basic Democracy had "helped in associating the largest possible number of people with the administration of the country." (26) Ayub Khan assured all possible help to Nepal which he said was making "tremendous efforts to maintain its independence." While proposing a toast for the royal guests, Field Marshal Ayub characterized the King as "a true Rajput and a true successor to his illustrious ancestors". He further said that a great people like the Rajputs could accomplish difficult tasks. "They had a glorious past and a great tradition", he added. (27) While paying tribute to the great fighting capacity of the Gurkha troops, he said, "Those of us who had served in the armed forces were aware of what magnificent fighting men the Nepalese were and what sterling qualities they possessed." (28) He also appreciated Mahendra's efforts to

(25) The Statesman (New Delhi), 12 September 1961.

(26) Asian Recorder (New Delhi), No. 46, Vol. VII, 1961, pp 4267-8.

(27) The Statesman (New Delhi), 12 September 1961.

(28) Asian Recorder, n. 26, p. 4267.

stabilize the political situation in his country and bring prosperity to his people. He extended the hand of co-operation on behalf of Pakistan for any help needed by Nepal. As a pointer towards the Big Powers, the President said, "In trying to do our best by the peoples in our countries, our friends instead of being helpful, have become a nuisance." (29) He also charged, "They think that a free society cannot be called free unless it is run in accordance with some text-book maxims." Ayub Khan, in his banquet speech, expressed the view that the system operating in his country and the newly introduced system in Nepal were no less democratic than any other existing system.

Criticising the Western form of democracy as introduced in newly emergent nations, he said,

I believe that the basic thing in your country, like my country, is that we have to have a democratic system. We must allow our people opportunity to go ahead and make as much good as they can and that can only happen, if there is a sphere and an atmosphere of equality, brotherhood and liberty. Once this is done, the system has really to conform to whatever the circumstances of the country are. (30)

He advised the Nepalese King to go ahead with his new scheme without worrying about what "somebody else from outside said". "Once you make the grade", Ayub Khan emphasized, "everybody will give you a chit." (31)

(29) The Hindu (Madras), 14 September 1961.

(30) Ibid.

(31) Ibid.

In Ayub Khan's scheme of things, what one had to do was to evolve a system in such a way that the people would be able "to understand it, work it and have faith in it".

At a banquet given by King Mahendra in honour of President Ayub Khan at President's House on the night of 12 September, the former was "more discreet and restrained" as compared to the latter. This as pointed out by a close observer, was in conformity with Nepal's "two pronged diplomacy towards India" at that time, i.e. "trying to explain the propriety of Mahendra's action to the Indian Government" on the one hand and "operationalizing the balance of power mechanism to put counterpressure on India" on the other. (32) The King, in his speech, asserted that "equal faith in principle and practice can alone be a step in the direction of world peace." (33) Nepal, he added, cherished "sentiments of peace, fraternity and friendship towards all countries". Expressing a measure of self confidence in the future development of Nepal, Mahendra continued, "We are very happy to be able to tell you that with the co-operation of all our countrymen, our country is showing progress in every field. We wish ill to none, nor can we tolerate anybody wishing ill to us." (34) Mahendra declared that mutual non-aggression

(32) S.D. Mini, "Nepal-Pakistan Relations: Partnership in Expediency", South Asian Studies (Jaipur), Vol. 5, No.1, January 1970, p. 68.

(33) The Dawn, 13 September 1961.

(34) Ibid.

among the neighbouring nations, territorial sovereignty and independence, non-interference in internal affairs and attitudes of friendship and cooperation were adequate for mutual happy relations. He (Mahendra) was happy "to see the progress and prosperity achieved in every field by Pakistan under Ayub Khan's leadership." (35) Replying to the toast Ayub Khan said that "the greatest need for Nepal and Pakistan was to have a democratic system of government", but that was radically different from the Western brand of democracy. (36)

At a reception given by the Nepalese Ambassador, N.P. Thapa, in Hotel Metropole, Karachi, the King in a jolly mood told the newsmen, "I have fallen in love with your President." (37) When asked about the possibility of cultural exchanges through a pact, he said that he would go into details after his visit to China later that month. He also conveyed to the newsmen that he was enjoying his visit to Pakistan and was happy to be there. (38) Indian journalists were not invited to this reception - a rather unusual practice.

While explaining the country's 5-year Plan to Mahendra, Ayub Khan

(35) Asian Recorder, n. 26, p. 4267.

(36) Ibid.

(37) The Dawn, 13 September 1961.

(38) Statesman (New Delhi), 14 September 1961.

said that Pakistan's Government was "engaged in a gigantic effort to make a dynamic society through planned economic development." (39) Said Hasan, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, also explained in detail the aims and working of the 5-Year Plan. Explaining the economic and philosophic concept of planning, he (Said Hassan) said that the economic planning covered not only "the aspirations of the people for a fuller life but was an instrument of policy for evolving the desired society."

(40) The then existing government, in his words, had brought about various reforms in the economic and agricultural fields, which no previous government was able to do. (41) The rural society in Pakistan, as explained to the King was already undergoing changes under the impact of the land reforms.

Factors like full employment (a target for the next 5-Year Plan), profit sharing of workers on the basis of increased industrial output, reform in land tenure and government participation in agriculture, would bring to the people all the benefits of a welfare state, without sacrificing the attributes of a free society,

Mr. Hasan emphasized. (42) Thus, the King was given a very rosy picture

(39) The Dawn, 13 September 1961.

(40) Ibid.

(41) The Dawn reported that Pakistan's 1st Plan expenditure envisaged Rs.1,080 crores and the target was accomplished to the extent of 90%. See Ibid.

(42) Ibid.

process of
of the socio-economic change in Pakistan under the new system of Basic Democracy introduced by Ayub Khan. The entire framework of Basic Democracy and its working was explained to Mahendra and two special lectures were arranged where Ayub Khan himself served as a teacher for part of the time. An Indian journalist aptly commented after a few days of the royal visit, "This was probably for the first time that a visiting Head of State had been put through class-room lectures. This is Pakistan's contribution to international diplomacy." (43)

The King visited many important places, specially Valika Textile Mills, Karachi Shipyard etc. His visit to the city of Lahore provided another major land mark. Over one thousand guests attended a reception at the historic Shalimar Gardens, built by Emperor Shahjahan, where Mahendra was presented with a silver replica of the same garden. (44) Nazir Ahmad, Chairman of the Lahore Municipal Corporation, read the address of welcome on behalf of the citizens of Lahore. He began by saying, "It is a matter of great pride and happiness for me that I have been given the privilege of welcoming on behalf of the people of Lahore, the eminent head of a great country of Asia and his consort." (45) He traced from history the "centuries old" cultural and social ties with

(43) G.L. Jain, "Pakistan and Nepal, Overtures to King Mahendra", Times of India (New Delhi), 23 September 1961.

(44) Indian Express (New Delhi), 15 September 1961.

(45) Pakistan Times, (Lahore), 14 September 1961.

(46) Ibid.

Nepal. He also emphasized the martial superiority of the valiant and warrior like Nepalese and Pakistanis as a distinctive common feature. "That is why", he added, "the people of Pakistan have always taken deep interest in the affairs of the people of Nepal and in their well-being and prosperity." (46) He lauded the personal interest shown by King for the welfare of the self respecting and courageous masses of Nepal under his leadership. He touched upon the glorious history of the ancient city of Lahore and emphasized its importance as the premier city in the western wing. He also praised the reforms introduced by Ayub Khan in the national life of Pakistan after the revolution of October, 1958 for the "consolidation of the economy and for the social unity and welfare and prosperity of the masses". "The establishment of Basic Democracy", he said "besides being in consonance with our national aspiration and ideals, is also comprehensible and practicable." (47) It was 'gratifying' for them to know that "King Mahendra, having considered western type of democracy impracticable for the people of Nepal, was setting up a strong Panchayat System, which in many ways was identical to Basic Democracies". Pakistan, in his words, was "desirous for lasting peace in the world and wished to maintain the most cordial relation with her neighbours." (48) He concluded by saying;

(46) Ibid.

(47) Ibid.

(48) Ibid.

We avail ourselves of your visit to convey, through Your Majesties, our feeling of love, friendship and goodwill to the people of Nepal and pray that Nepal may take rapid strides on the road to progress and prosperity under your benign leadership. (49)

King Mahendra in his speech extended "cordial thanks for the warm welcome" in the "historic city" which he regarded as a gesture of goodwill towards Nepal and the Nepalese people. He emphatically said, "The people of countries like Pakistan and Nepal living in the shadows of the vast Himalayas, should be able to march forward in the spirit of mutual goodwill and friendship. I hope that you too want the same." (50)

He traced the old links of Nepal with the city of Lahore by stating that even in the 1960s those who went from that part of the subcontinent to Nepal were called 'Lahurary' in Nepal. Mahendra also specially emphasized the need for "strengthening the relations of mutual friendship and cooperation among all the countries of the world in general and among the countries of Asia in particular". With a note of contentment of his visit to Pakistan he ended by saying, "We are happy that we got an opportunity to see some examples of progress and prosperity achieved in Pakistan. We wish your country God speed in its march along the paths of progress." (51)

(49) Ibid.

(50) For the full text of Mahendra's Speech, see Pakistan Times (Lahore),
14 September 1961.

(51) Ibid.

King Mahendra's visit was summed up "as an effort on his part to seek justification of the abrogation of the Parliamentary system in his Kingdom before the Pakistan's military junta and fortunately for him this came in ample measure." (52) No doubt Mahendra equally reciprocated by his "seal of approval" on the system of Basic Democracy introduced by the Pakistani junta.

Another common ground found by both the leaders was the repudiation of western forms of democracy and direct elections. The assertion by both the Heads that these were unsuited to their countries and perhaps to the rest of Asia, also had "punctuated mutual admiration". (53)

The Joint Communique issued at the end of Mahendra's visit followed the "pattern of the communique of the non-aligned nation's conference at Belgrade." (54) The reference to the raising of standards of living, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other and the personal contacts of the two leaders, were all in line with the Belgrade declaration.

Another break-through achieved by the meeting of two leaders was the "opening up of the possibilities of trade and cultural relations" -

(52) Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 17 September 1961 (G.S. Bhargava reporting from Rawalpindi).

(53) Ibid.

(54) Indian Express (New Delhi), 18 September 1961.

hitherto virtually non-existent between Pakistan and Nepal. (55) Pakistan hoped to export jute goods, paper, and engineering goods in exchange of varieties of timber. On the cultural level, a Nepalese Foreign Office source indicated that two dozen Pakistani Films could easily be exported to Nepal. There being no Film Industry in Nepal, Pakistani producers could employ Nepali artists and produce films which could be of interest to both the countries. About the setting up of a Nepalese Mission in Karachi, Tulsi Giri, the Foreign Minister, was quoted as saying that it could be possible after more exchanges of cultural delegations and closer economic ties. (56)

On the political level, the talks between Mahendra and Ayub Khan were kept a closely guarded secret. (57) It was not known, whether Pakistan raised the question of Kashmir with the King while reviewing the international situation. Foreign Minister Tulsi Giri, while speaking on Radio Nepal later, denied that the King had discussed the Kashmir issue with the Pakistani President. Although when K.I. Singh was Prime Minister of Nepal he was reported to have said that Kashmir belonged to India, Tulsi Giri preferred to remain non-committal. Observers however believed

(55) The Statesman (New Delhi), 18 September, 1961. See also Asian Recorder, n. 26, p. 4267.

(56) Asian Recorder, n. 26, p. 4268.

(57) Ibid.

that the King could not but have been non-committal and cautious as he had been throughout his tour while answering questions put to him by Pakistani newsmen. Appearing in a question-answer programme over Radio Nepal on 24 September 1961, Tulsi Giri said that the King's visit was not indicative of any weakening of Nepal's policy of non-alignment and that the people of Pakistan had a lot of good will for the Nepalese despite different foreign policies and religions of the two countries. He was also quoted as saying, "Nepal can benefit from the experience of Pakistan as from those of other countries in the pursuit of her desire to evolve a system suited to her tradition and genius." (58) Another interesting feature of the visit was highlighted by an Indian journalist who said, "Seldom has any foreign dignitary received so much praise in Pakistan as was lavished on King Mahendra during his visit." Almost all newspapers, including those of East Pakistan (although the King did not visit the latter) gave maximum news coverage to his visit. (59)

It is also interesting to note how Pakistanis interpreted the King's visit in perspective. One semi-official paper looked upon the visit as "the first step towards the extension of her (Pakistan's) impact on a country generally regarded as within the Indian sphere of influence." (60) Again, the reference in the joint-communique to

(58) Ibid, p. 4258.

(59) Girilal Jain, "Pakistan and Nepal", Times of India (New Delhi)

23 September 1961.

(60) Pakistan Times, 17 September 1961.

"non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries as the sine-qua-non for avoiding conflict among nations" assumed importance in the context of newspaper comments in Pakistan that Indian partiality for Nepal's first representative government deposed by the King during December 1960 was "tantamount to interference in Nepal's domestic affairs." (61) As compared with the Press build up of the visit and the rumours set afloat about its significance, the joint communique sounded "a damp squib" and for no reason whatsoever an impression was created that "Pakistan had scored over India" and that India should be kept in darkness about the finer aspects of the visit. Pakistani newsmen for instance had been asked to highlight the fact that the Nepalese King was scheduled to visit Peking very soon. This had given rise to the speculation that the King might impress upon the Chinese Pakistan's anxiety to enter into a border treaty with the Peking regime.

After Mahendra's visit, the first positive measure announced by the two countries was the proposed air link between Kathmandu and Dacca. Nepal was however not very enthusiastic about the proposal on economic grounds. (62) Kathmandu was of the opinion that the proposed flight would

(61) Ibid.

(62) Hindustan Times, 2 October 1961.

not bring any additional benefits to Nepal which Calcutta was not giving to the country's citizens and trade. But Pakistan was keen on the ground that the air link between the two countries would "open avenues for trade and traffic" between them. (63)

On 14 February 1962 when King Mahendra, wearing the 'Nishan-i-Pakistan' awarded to him during his Pakistan visit, accepted the credentials of Agha Hilali, Pakistan's Ambassador to Nepal, he declared that the people of Nepal as the people of Pakistan would not be deterred in the defence and preservation of their national sovereign rights and their heritage. (64) The King emphasized that in accordance with the principles of the U.N. Charter both the countries shared "the common aspirations and objectives of live and let live". He said that he valued the "newly acquired friendship" of Pakistan borne out of the intense desire of their peoples to improve ties of friendship between

(63) Pakistan Times, 13 February 1962.

(64) News Chronology, Pakistan Horizon (Karachi), Vol. 15, 1962, p. 79;

See also the Hindu, 15 February 1962 and Hindustan Times, 15 February 1962; S.D. Muni in his doctoral thesis also refers to such a statement in the Gorkhapatra, 15 and 18 February 1962. See S.D. Muni, "Foreign Policy of Nepal, 1951-66" (Thesis, Ph. D. Rajasthan University, Jaipur, 1971), p. 232.

Pakistan and Nepal. The Pakistani envoy in return said that both Nepal and Pakistan had "well known traditions of friendliness and good-will towards all" and added that the progressive collaboration between the two countries would serve the cause of international peace and harmony. (65)

Ramlal Shrestha, President of Pak-Nepal Friendship Society, in a reception in honour of the new Pakistani envoy declared at Kathmandu on the night of 16 February 1962 that the King and the people of Nepal were determined to defend the sovereignty and national integrity of their country against any one. (66) He added that Pakistan wanted to live in peace with all countries, but would not submit to any body. Agha Hilali donated Rs.150/- from his personal fund to the Pak-Nepal Friendship Society and announced a cash prize of Rs. 50/- for the best essay on "Why Nepal should be friendly with Pakistan."

A series of new moves were announced by the middle of 1962 in both the countries. King Mahendra, during his Pakistan visit in 1961, had extended an invitation to President Ayub which the latter had accepted. It was now known from circles close to the President that he would be visiting Nepal during October 1962. (67) Moreover, a high powered Nepali delegation was expected to visit Pakistan sometime during May in the same year to finalise an agreement between the two countries on cooperation in

(65) Hindustan Times, 15 February 1962.

(66) Pakistan Times, 17 February 1962.

(67) Pakistan Times, 16 May 1962.

the field of civil aviation like training of pilots, repair facilities, etc. What was significant to note here was that until then Nepalese Airlines depended entirely on India for this purpose. Now charges were made that the Indian instructors for pilot training "wanted to perpetuate their presence in Nepal" and were therefore delaying the training of the Nepalese. Another significant move in Nepal, as reported in Pakistani Press, was that a Nepalese Trade Delegation was expected to visit Dacca, Chittagong and possibly West Pakistan to explore the possibilities of diversification of Nepal's international trade. (68) Pakistan Times commented, "Kathmandu's efforts to find new outlets and to lessen her dependence on neighbouring India has caused irritation in New Delhi." (69) The Pakistani press treated India's reaction as unfriendly but appreciated the stiff attitude of the Nepalese on the ground that Nepal was a sovereign state and like India was free to find assistance from any quarter for its economic development. Nepal's attempt at diversification of her economic and political ties strengthened the prospects of closer relations between Pakistan and Nepal.

(68) Ibid.

(69) Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

STRENGTHENING OF TIES

Ayub Khan's proposed visit to Nepal during 1962 could not materialise due to the Sino-Indian Border dispute which took an ugly turn during October. The strained relations between India and China during this time no doubt affected to some extent Pak-Nepal relations, because both the nations tried to exploit the situation to their maximum advantage.

In order to have a dispassionate view of the situation, it is essential to study the reaction of both the countries to the Sino-Indian border trouble. To take the case of Pakistan first, the entire mass media in that country propagated the view that India had started the war to extract more benefits in terms of arms aid from Western nations. A prestigious daily wrote in its editorial, "Prime Minister Nehru now admits that under his leadership, Indians have been out of touch with reality, and gone on living in an artificial atmosphere of his own creation. The massive invasion of India by China which is of course Mr. Nehru's version of Sino-Indian border conflict has shocked Nehru into his belated realisation of a truth which all but the Indians have seen and known for many years."(1) Mr. Nehru, the paper charged, was unrealistic enough when he insisted that Chinese troops must first withdraw to the positions they held before September 8, 1962, before accepting any other agreement. Pakistani intellectuals also interpreted this as a rejection of the Chinese offer of a border settlement. According to them, Nehru had let his country in for a

(1) The Dawn, 27 October 1962.

long drawn conflict the ultimate consequence of which might be to the disadvantage of India. (2) The Indian leadership, as charged by its Pakistani counterpart, was bent on "pursuing expansionist policies".

Talking about the policy of growing militarism in the sub-continent through extensive arms aid to India, a Pakistani journalist wrote in a weekly column, "Although Pakistan's interests are not directly involved in the undeclared war now being fought by India and China, for obvious reasons, she cannot remain a totally uninterested spectator of developments that are capable of affecting the peace of the region." (3) He stated that Pakistan, as also some small Asian countries, could not "view with equanimity the possibility of a great increase in the supply of arms and weapons to one of the belligerents", i.e. India. (4) India, it was explained, was trying to exploit the war issue in three ways. First, the Indian leaders were making the best possible use of Chinese "aggression" as a means to "mitigate the acerbity and acuteness of internal dissension". Secondly, India wanted "to get the better of China in the competition for Asian leadership by bringing about that country's political isolation in the continent". The final and ultimate aim was "to convert all the political sympathy won by India in the

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid. See the article "War in the Himalayas" by Ahmad Ali Khan.

(4) Ibid.

West into foreign currency and military hardware." (5) The apprehension in the minds of the Pakistanis about the western military aid to India was that it would give India "a great preponderance of military power in the region and make Pakistan's relative position quite unenviable". Such arguments were put forward due to the psychology of "power parity" with India prevailing in the minds of the Pakistani intelligentsia.

The statements of some public figures in Pakistan during the Sino-Indian dispute also deserve to be reported. Z.A. Bhutto, the then Rehabilitation and Natural Resources Minister, said in a public meeting on 3rd November at Lyari, "About India's request for understanding and sympathy in her border dispute, Pakistan was not prepared to discuss anything, unless India quits Kashmir." (6) Even Ayub Khan in his reply to Nehru's letter, very politely condemned the latter's policy of arms build up. He decried the fact that the dispute "led to intensified military activity and induction of new war potential thereby endangering the peace and stability of the region in which Pakistan was vitally concerned." (7) In a mildly ironical tone Ayub Khan stated, "Mr Prime Minister we are fully conscious of the great responsibility that lies on your shoulder for the maintenance of peace especially around the subcontinent. We therefore hope

(5) Ibid.

(6) The Dawn, 4 November, 1962

(7) The Dawn, 9 November 1962.

that conflict between India and China can be peacefully resolved." (8)

Sometime later the Pakistan President expressed the fear that arms being rushed to India by Western Powers would be used against Pakistan. (9)

Expressing almost similar sentiments during his tour of Western Europe, Fazlur Quadar Chowdhury, Pakistan's Minister for Information, said in a Press Conference that the so-called India-China war was a "mock fight" which Indians were utilizing to acquire free arms from the west. "If Indians were genuinely afraid of the Chinese attack", he asserted, "they would not have maintained 80% of their army on Pakistan's border." (10) Expressing concern at the so-called "aggressive designs" of India against Pakistan, a military observer commented that it was not merely "the grave overall threat to the peace of Asia but also an increasing concern to the people of Pakistan." (11)

Turning to Nepal's reaction during the entire period of tension between India and China (1959 to 1962) we find that Nepal took "a neutral stand vis-a-vis the Sino-Indian dispute, although the growth of tension between Nepal's two neighbours posed a threat to her neutrality and

(8) Ibid.

(9) The Dawn, 19 November 1962.

(10) Ibid.

(11) The Dawn, 20 November 1962.

resulted in an embarrassing situation for the government." (12) Premier B.P. Korala, during the democratic rule in Nepal, had maintained a non-committal stand regarding the validity of the McMahon Line between India and China. During 1962, when the Sino-Indian dispute reached its climax, King Mahendra also maintained a neutral stance. He was reported to have said that Nepal could not be "a calf between two fighting bulls". His government scrupulously observed silence on the subject and it was denied that Nepal was playing off her one neighbour against the other. (13) Nepal was already unhappy over the anti-Mahendra activities of Nepalese rebels operating from Indian soil. However, at the outbreak of the Sino-Indian conflict in October, the Indian government took certain measures to stop such rebel activity against the royal regime. The Nepali Congress head office in Calcutta announced the withdrawal of the movement against Mahendra's direct rule. (14) Nehru had also by this time become reconciled to the King's rule and the Panchayat system. Thus changes in New Delhi's

(12) S.D. Muni, "Foreign Policy of Nepal (Thesis Ph.D. Rajasthan University, Jaipur, 1971), p. 248. See also the Coomoner (Kathmandu) 10 September 1959.

(13) H.M. King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva, Proclamations, Speeches and Messages (HMG, Kathmandu, 1967) Vol. II, pp. 123-30.

(14) Muni, S.D. "Nepal-Pakistan Relations: Partnership in expediency", South Asian Studies, Vol. 5, No. 1, January, 1970, p. 69.

Nepal policy made the Royal regime somewhat sympathetic towards India during these troubled days.

But the Chinese side also left no stone unturned to befriend Nepal. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Chen-Yi, stated on 5 October 1962 at a banquet to celebrate the first anniversary of the Nepal-Chinese Boundary Treaty, "In case any foreign army makes a fool hardy attempt to attack Nepal, China will side with the Nepalese people." (15) Nepal obviously exploited the situation to her own advantage.

King Mahendra's sharp reactions to the suspension of rebel activities against his regime from within India provided an interesting clue to Nepal's attitude during the war. Mahendra said in Kathmandu on 11 November 1962 that Mr. Subarna Shamsheer's (leader of the outlawed Nepali Congress) directive from Calcutta to the "anti-national" elements to stop their activities due to the India-China conflict made it crystal clear and proved without doubt that all rebel activities against Nepal were being organised from Indian soil and that all these elements owed their allegiance not to their motherland, but to India. (16) He further asserted, "It would have been much better, if these persons, who showing considerations for the present situation in India have suspended their activities to have (sic)

(15) See Leo Rose, "Nepal, Strategy for Survival" (Barkely, 1971),

p. 248.

(16) The Dawn, 12 November, 1962.

realised the interest of their motherland." (17) Mahendra was also reported to have said that Nepal wanted friendly relations with India and believed that India too would not like to spoil her relations with Nepal for the sake of a handful of persons. (18) According to the Nepalese King, the armed conflict between the two countries was regrettable and had to be solved by China and India as soon as possible. Reiterating Nepal's policy of non-alignment and friendship for all and ill-will towards none, the King did not have any fear that Nepal would in any way be affected by the Sino-Indian clash. (19) In accordance with this principle, the King sent his emissaries, Bishikesh Shah and Tulsi Giri, to China and India in November and December 1962 respectively to impress upon each of them that Nepal desired to be left alone in the conflict. (20) He stated, "Nepal sees no reason why she should become a victim of the struggle between her two neighbours, nor in fact does she want to be in that position." (21) A keen observer of Nepal's declared neutrality in the dispute, there was a mild attitude of sympathy and

(17) The Dawn, 12 November 1962.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Ibid.

(20) Muni, n. 12, p. 250.

(21) King Mahendra's Speeches, n. 13, pp. 147-148.

support for India. (22) When one looks at the age old link between India and Nepal, such a conclusion is more or less true.

After the Sino-Indian war, the trade relations between Pakistan and Nepal gradually gained momentum. Waheed-ur-Zaman, Pakistan's Commerce Minister, made a statement in Karachi on 13 January 1963 after his return from Kathmandu that the Nepalese Commerce Minister, Vedananda Jha, would arrive in Karachi by the end of January, 1963 to sign a Trade and Transit Agreement. (23) The agreement was signed by the respective Commerce Ministers in Karachi on 28 January 1963. It was effective for two years and could be extended for six months unless terminated by either party. The agreement was designed to further extend the economic collaboration between the two countries. Earlier, it had been initialled at Kathmandu when Waheed-ur-Zaman had led the Pakistani delegation to Kathmandu earlier that month. The agreement provided on a reciprocal basis freedom of transit for goods intended for import into or export from the territories of either country from or to a third country.

(24) There was also a provision for the exemption from customs and transit duties for traffic on transit and for guaranteeing the safety of goods in transit through the territories of either country. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Waheed-ur-Zaman pointed out that the agreement was a

(22) *Muni*, n. 12, p. 250.

(23) Asian Recorder (New Delhi), March 1963, Vol. IX, No. 11, p. 5047

(24) Ibid. p. 5088.

manifestation of mutual goodwill existing between the two countries and was not intended to work against any body's interests. (25) :

Reciprocating the sentiment Vedanand Jha said that Nepal was trying to develop trade relations with several countries and the latest agreement was a step in that direction and should be appreciated in every quarter. (26) At a reception given by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industries, the Nepalese Commerce Minister invited Pakistani industrialists to set up small and medium sized industries in Nepal and assured HMG's full cooperation in providing all facilities to Pakistani investors, on a footing of equality with Nepali citizens. He was reported to have said that there existed great scope for the setting up of wool, glass and leather industries in Nepal. (27) He also promised a ten-year income tax holiday, custom facilities for import of raw materials, machinery and facilities to the Pakistani industrialists to repatriate captial to Pakistan.

Ayub Khan's official visit to Nepal from 9 May to 12 May 1963 was announced a few days before the actual trip began. Just before leaving Pakistan for his Nepal visit, the President condemned western military aid received by India during and after the Sino-Indian conflict.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Ibid.

He also condemned India's alleged intransigence towards her small neighbours. (28) The presence of Z.A. Bhutto in the thirteen-member entourage was considered significant in India because of the fact that he (Bhutto) was the leader of Pakistani delegation to Indo-Pak talks and had signed the border agreement with China on behalf of Pakistan. (29) Just on the eve of the President's visit, Pakistani newspapers lauded the efforts made by both countries for increasing contacts between Pakistan and Nepal. One leading daily in its editorial commented, "The trip symbolises the blossoming friendship between the two countries faced with many common problems and perils. (30) Reviewing King Mahendra's earlier visit to Pakistan, it pointed out that the people of Pakistan found in him a man of "great charm, intelligence and understanding". They were impressed by his "struggle to preserve his country's freedom and his efforts to lift his people out of the feudal morass in which they have been wallowing for centuries." (31) Mahendra, as the Pakistani observers sensed, had discovered a kindred spirit in Ayub and the joint communique issued after Mahendra-Ayub talks had laid the basis for an enduring understanding between the two countries. The

(28) Naya Samaj (Kathmandu), 5 May 1963 in guni, n. 14, p. 8.

(29) Indian Express (New Delhi) 7 May 1963.

(30) Pakistan Times, 8 May 1963.

(31) Ibid.

paper expressed the hope that the President's visit would help to strengthen the existing bonds and broaden the area of fruitful cooperation. About Bhutto's inclusion in Ayub's team, the explanation given was that international problems were likely to overshadow everything else. (32) Expressing apprehension about India's massive defence preparations after the Sino-Indian border dispute, the paper commented that India posed a common threat to both Pakistan and Nepal. (33) As a result of this assumed danger from India it was felt necessary for the leaders of both the countries to "meet and consider how best the looming threat on the horizon" could be effectively countered.

Ayub Khan's entourage arrived Kathmandu on the morning of 9 May according to schedule. An English daily of Dacca gave a very detailed account of Ayub Khan's reception at Tribhuvan Airport. (35) The President's team included Z.A. Bhutto, Foreign Minister, Qudratullah Shahab, Secretary in the Ministry of Information, M. Shafquat, Director General in the Ministry of External Affairs, Brig. M. Sarwar, Personal physician to the President and Brig. S.G.M. Pirzada, the President's Military Secretary. Agha Hilaly, Pakistan's Ambassador to Nepal (also

(32) Ibid.

(33) Ibid.

(34) Pakistan Horizon (Karachi), Vol. XVI, 1963, p. 199. See also Pakistan Observer (Dacca), 10 May 1963 and The Dawn, 10 May 1963.

(35) See for a clear picture of Ayub's reception, Pakistan Observer, 10 May 1963.

High Commissioner to India), had reached Kathmandu two days earlier to receive the President. Other dignitaries besides the King present at the airport to receive the President were the Chief Justice of Nepal, the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Chairman of Nepal Rashtriya Panchayat, Cabinet Ministers, Heads of diplomatic missions in Kathmandu, including the Indian High Commissioner, and other high officials. After the airport ceremony, when the President was passing through the seven mile route, hundreds of banners written in Urdu over red cloth had been hung all along. Some of the banners said, "Sadar Ayub Dili Khushameded, Ayub-Mahendra Zindabad." (36)

Mahendra in his friendly and enthusiastic welcome expressed the hope that the President's visit would further strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries. Ayub Khan in his reply to Mahendra's welcome address said that in view of the growing understanding between Pakistan and Nepal, a number of avenues of closer cooperation between the two countries could be explored. (37) The President in his airport speech said, "I am sure I will carry back to the 95 million people of Pakistan memories not only of greatness of your purpose but also of the greatness of your hearts." (38)

(36) The Dawn, 10 May 1963.

(37) Ibid.

(38) Pakistan Observer, 10 May 1963.

Ayub Khan was given a rousing reception by the Kathmandu Nagar Panchayat. In his reply to the address of welcome presented by the Chairman of the Nagar Panchayat, Ghanshyam Shrestha, the President expressed the confidence that more contact between the people of the two countries would help strengthen the links of friendship and brotherly feeling between the two governments and the peoples of the two countries. He said, "Your dedicated and energetic monarch with his singleness of purpose to the cause of the nation has been endeavoring to bring out (sic) the two countries closer in all fields of life." (39) He promised all possible help from Pakistan for the development of Nepal. President Ayub added that he was impressed by the efforts of King Mahendra to build up democracy in Nepal on foundations laid by his illustrious father His Majesty King Tribhuvan. (40) Ayub Khan ridiculed the mere imitation of Western democracy by saying that it "served neither the cause of people nor that of democracy itself." (41) He also re-emphasized the striking similarity between Basic Democracy in Pakistan and Panchayat Democracy in Nepal. He continued, "I am positive that under the guidance of your great leader and your Statesman Sovereign you will march forward on the road to prosperity and progress." (42)

(39) The Dawn, 10 May 1963.

(40) Ibid.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Ibid.

Ayub Khan also highlighted the geographical proximity of the two countries as well as the "common heritage, common hopes & aspirations and common responsibilities shared by the two peoples." (43)

Comments in Indian papers on the first day of the visit are also worth considering. A New Delhi paper aptly reported, "An atmosphere of quiet diplomacy marked the conclusion of the first round of talks between King Mahendra and President Ayub Khan." (44) At the banquet reception, a special issue of "Pakistan News" dealing with the Kashmir issue was distributed among the guests by a Pakistani official. The brochure stressed the need for holding a plebiscite in Kashmir, based on the claim that 77% of the people were Muslims and all rivers of Kashmir flowed into Pakistan. (45)

In a civic reception on 10 May held by the Nepal-Pakistan Friendship Association, both the Heads of State decided to exchange residential diplomatic missions. On that occasion Ayub Khan emphasized that such a step would further "facilitate friendly exchanges between the two countries." (46) The President expressed his keenness for the growth of Pak-Nepal relations at all levels. The two leaders also

(43) Nepal's National News Agency (Kathmandu), 10 May 1963 in Muni, n. 14, p.

(44) Times of India (New Delhi), 10 May 1963.

(45) Ibid.

(46) The Statesman (New Delhi), 11 May 1963.

expressed a desire to step up the students exchange programme between the two countries.

Ayub Khan conferred with Tulsī Giri, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, for forty-five minutes on the same day. Matters of mutual interest discussed at the talks, as the Pakistani Press reported, mainly covered political developments in this region of Asia and the possibility of greater Pak-Nepal cooperation in the field of economic development, trade and industry. (47) The Nepalese Premier told the visiting Pakistani journalists that Nepal was anxious to encourage the inflow of foreign capital for rapid industrial development and the President had promised assistance in this regard. (48) Informed Pakistani sources reported that Kashmir was also referred to in the talks. (49) However, as reported in the Indian Press, Nepal took no sides in the Kashmir issue. (50) The talks were held in general terms but were still considered significant in official circles both in Rawalpindi and Kathmandu.

While speaking at an ancient temple town few miles away from Kathmandu, Ayub Khan said that the future would prove that the people of Nepal had made the right decision to be friendly with Pakistan. He

(47) The Dawn, 11 May 1963.

(48) The Statesman (New Delhi), 11 May 1963.

(49) The Dawn, 11 May 1963.

(50) The Statesman, 11 May 1963.

praised the large heartedness of the people of Nepal who inspite of having different religions live together in peace. Their history and natural talents showed that they had qualities which should help them to go high in the world. (51)

The news commentary by a leading Pakistani daily on 11 May 1963 expressed the view that Ayub's state visit was yet another step forward towards the consolidation of Pakistan's friendly relations with her neighbours. (52) As strongly asserted by its press, the main object of Pakistan's foreign policy was to have "friendship towards all and malice towards none." (53) The paper mentioned two basic reasons for the constant admiration and affection for the Nepalese on the part of the Pakistani people. The first reason was that Nepal had been one the very few eastern countries which had never been subjugated by any western power. The second reason was the martial tradition of the Nepalese. (54) The training of Nepalese students in Pakistan and the presence of a large number of Buddhists in Pakistan, who regarded Nepal as the birth place of Gautam Buddha also helped in broadening the cultural contacts between the two countries. (55) It may be noted in this context

(51) The Dawn, 11 May 1963.

(52) Ibid.

(53) Ibid.

(54) Ibid.

(55) Ibid.

that a Pakistani Buddhist Delegation had attended the fourth World Buddhist Conference held at Kathmandu in late 1956.

A British paper while reporting under the heading "Nepal's Drift to Pakistan" wrote, "Although Ayub Khan is returning Mahendra's state visit to Pakistan of last year, the present occasion has more importance than an exchange of formal courtesies. It represents an important step forward in Nepal's efforts to extend her relations with the outside world." (56) The paper commented that the increased cordiality between Nepal and Pakistan had more than ordinary interest for Pakistan, and India had meanwhile learned few lessons about how to conduct her relations with her smaller northern neighbour. King Mahendra's capacity and determination to run his own affairs without advice from India had been recognised, although somewhat belated. (57)

On the third day of his visit, Ayub Khan, while addressing a Press Conference, said that he did not believe that China had any intention to invade India and the military build up by India was out of proportion to any danger from China. (58) According to him, Pakistanis

(56) The Guardian (Manchester), 11 May 1963.

(57) Ibid.

(58) The Dawn, 12 May 1963.

were justified in suspecting India's intention regarding its smaller neighbours. Asia, he thought, needed "a zone of peace and not atom free zone". "India should learn", he added, "the lesson of religious toleration and peaceful coexistence from Nepal and the Nepalese. (59) Thus the sum-total of his address was to portray India as a country with aggressive intentions and as the villain of the piece. (60)

Ayub Khan was invited to address a gathering of the Nepal Council of Asian and World Affairs (NCAWA) on 11 May. In his address to NCAWA, Ayub Khan urged the peace-loving nations of the world "not to tip the balance of power in such a way as to create nervousness or tension in the minds of small countries", which were looking desperately for "peace, security and stability." (61) The President regretted that small nations continued to live in fear of their larger neighbours and while inter-dependence was growing it was unfortunate that political relations between states "did not always develop with sufficient harmony to keep in step with the transformation of facts of contemporary life". With the end of the era of imperialism and colonialism small states were being called upon to play important roles in the affairs of the world. But at the same time the centre of power had shifted to nations

(59) Ibid.

(60) Asian Recorder, Vol IV, No. 11, 1963, p. 5280.

(61) The Dawn, 12 May 1963.

with economies of continental proportions based on large domestic or regional markets. The developing nations of the world had to face the rising expectations of their peoples for better and richer and fuller life which could only be achieved if there was "peace, security and international cooperation". Pakistan, he said, had been working for the achievement of a "world free from fear" and the successful pursuit of that noble aim depended principally on "mutual respect, mutual cooperation and a genuine desire to live in peace and friendship with one's neighbour." (62) This, according to Ayub, was the major key to "real and lasting peace" in world order where all countries, great or small, had to co-exist without any mutual suspicion. While focussing his attention on the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Nepal, he expressed great satisfaction at the cordial and close relationship that was emerging between the two countries. Emphasizing the cultural link between the two countries he said,

History and geography have provided foundations on which we can build an impressive edifice of friendly cooperation. Our two countries have a long history in the course of which their heritage was enriched by the fusion of diverse cultural elements most of them common to both. The monuments of great antiquity and artistic beauty which abound in Nepal and Pakistan testify to the achievement and glory of our forebears. (63)

(62) Ibid.

(63) The Dawn, 13 May 1963.

The peoples of Pakistan and Nepal, in his opinion, shared many characteristics born of their environment, including courage, loyalty to their country and the capacity for hard work. "All this," he added, "and our dedication to ideals of peace, international harmony and progress demand that Pakistan and Nepal should develop fraternal ties to cooperate in various spheres for the prosperity and well being of their people." (64) The President also praised the modest role played by Nepal at the UN towards the attainment of international peace and justice. He strongly advocated regional cooperation among neighbouring states like Pakistan and Nepal. Praising the similar systems introduced in the two countries, Ayub Khan remarked, "The gaining of independence from foreign control and the emergence of democratic institutions can have meaning only to the extent they lead to the happiness and prosperity of their people." (65) He lauded the achievements of his regime in the spheres of social welfare, and technical progress. He also appreciated the steps taken by King Mahendra in tackling similar problems. He could foresee an era of limitless cooperation between the two countries, especially in the economic and technical fields.

The Ayub-Mahendra talks centred on the future trade and economic ties between the two countries. They opened up the possibility of

(64) Ibid.

(65) Ibid.

opening a branch of the Pakistan Bank in Kathmandu. (66) There was a proposal to establish a micro-wave link between Pakistan and Nepal through joint assistance from the National Bank in Kathmandu and the Pakistan Bank. The proposal for providing transport facilities to Nepalese goods in East Pakistan (both export and import) was also discussed.

While addressing the Rashtriya Panchayat in Kathmandu on 11 May 1963, Ayub Khan pointed out the danger of Nepal and Pakistan becoming "a source of temptation for the avaricious unless" they disciplined themselves and caught up with the rest of the world. (67) He also stressed that both Nepal and Pakistan were determined to preserve their independent status and hoped that the leaders of this region and the world would adopt "a sympathetic attitude towards them in order to dispel their apprehension as also of the world at large." (68) He began by saying, "In welcoming me here and giving me an opportunity of addressing this August Assembly, you have bestowed upon me, high prerogative and honour for which I am deeply grateful to you." (69) According to Ayub, Pakistanis like the Nepalese, were the inheritors of ancient faith and

(66) The Dawn, 12 May 1963.

(67) Asian Recorder, n. 61, p. 5280.

(68) Proceedings of National Panchayat, 10 May 1963, in Imni, n. 14, p.71.

(69) The Dawn, 12 May 1963.

and culture and were on the "threshold of new experiences both exciting and grave". In justification of the two nation theory in the sub-continent, he added,

Pakistan was founded by the indomitable will of a hundred million people, who felt that they were a nation too numerous and too distinct to be relegated for ever to the unalterable position of a political minority, specially when in the vast sub-continent, which was their homeland, there was enough room for two great nations. (70)

He emphasized that the essence of Pakistan's ideology "was and is to live and let live". While experimenting with that ideology in Pakistan, the political institutions had "passed through certain evolutionary process". As the chief architect of Basic Democracy in his country, he felt that it was suited to the genius of his people. In his own defence he added, "The time honoured maxims and hallowed principles embodied in a text book constitution are of little validity unless a nation feels that it possesses the necessary spiritual strength to live up to them."

(71) He expressed great sympathy with the recently introduced Panchayat system which, in his opinion, enabled the Nepalese people to enjoy the fruits of political freedom and social justice. The Pakistani President hoped the leaders in this region and elsewhere in the world would pursue the path of understanding and use their wisdom and power to dispel and

(70) Ibid.

(71) Ibid.

not to enhance the fears of an apprehensive world. (72) Expressing a note of concern at the devastating effect of cold war politics specially on the growing nations like Pakistan and Nepal, he said, "Our people are deeply distressed at the thought that world wide destruction might overtake not only fuller life to which they aspire, but the entire opportunity for good." (73) In his diagnosis of the state of underdevelopment in Pakistan as well as Nepal, he stated that the resources in both were untapped, capacities unused and genius inactive. Therefore the vital need for the people of both the countries was to dedicate themselves fully to "the task of catching up with the rest of the world." He called upon the elites who had the "opportunity of developing the capacity to serve the underprivileged" to dedicate themselves "to the cause of their peoples". In an emotional tone he asserted, "If our political institutions have to reflect ultimately the image of true liberty, the underprivileged and the down trodden in our country must be lifted to the level of true freedom - freedom from hunger, want and disease." (74) To fulfil this tremendous task, heavy responsibility rested on the shoulders of both the local and national leaders. The President ended with a note of optimism by saying,

(72) Asian Recorder, n. 60, p. 5280.

(73) The Dawn, 12 May 1963.

(74) Ibid.

"Our sweat and toil of today in the service of our people will enable the coming generations to lead a better and happier life." (75)

The editorial comments in the Pakistani Press during Ayub Khan's official visit to Nepal need to be examined for any objectives evaluation of Pak-Nepal relations. A leading daily while reviewing the overall relations between Pakistan and Nepal in the early sixties wrote,

No less historic than King Mahendra's visit in September 1961 to the young Republic of Pakistan, is the current visit of President Ayub to the ancient Himalyan Kingdom. Both the visits have served to demonstrate the growing good will and affection between the two nations and their firm determination to promote and safeguard their national and international interests with understanding and cooperation. (76)

The most favoured Nation treatment "to either country" under the Trade Agreement of October 1962 and "free movement of goods" through each other's territory under the Trade and Transit Agreement of January 1963, had enabled the two countries not only to "increase but also to diversify their import and export trade." (77) Long term tax concession to Pakistani industrialists with the right to remit profits and an undertaking to bear the external cost of joint ventures by HMG had further enhanced Pak-Nepal collaboration in the economic development of the latter. The proposal to set up a cement factory about twenty miles

(75) Ibid.

(76) Ibid.

(77) Ibid.

from East Pakistan territory in the private sector^{was} "expected to be the first positive outcome of Pak-Nepal joint participation". The editorial further reported, "With the President's visit, not only the process of economic collaboration will be accelerated it's scope will also be widened." (78) Mahendra's statement at the State Banquet calling for "a steady expansion of relations for the greater good of both the countries", was reciprocated by Ayub Khan when he said, "We in Pakistan would be happy to provide you with any help that lies in our capabilities." (79) The principle of live and let live was not only common to both the countries but also sprung from their "common resolve to catch up with the march of the time". The paper also highly appreciated the latest reform laws by Mahendra in his Kingdom which abolished the centuries old discrimination based on caste in the administration of justice, a law to give sanction to intercast marriage and one to ban polygamy and child marriage. It also lauded the "marked rise in the international status" of Nepal and its allround economic development. It echoed the sentiment expressed by Ayub Khan that "the Pakistani nation would be happy and proud to share this friendly nation's efforts to achieve its high destiny." (80)

(78) Ibid.
 (79) Ibid.
 (80) Ibid.

In a Joint Communique issued at the conclusion of Ayub Khan's visit to Nepal, it was affirmed that keeping in view the tensions and problems of the area, settlement of all disputes by peaceful means, would be in the highest interest of the countries of the world at large. (81) The two Heads of State were of the opinion that "the exchange of visits and personal contacts at all levels" would not only promote greater amity and fruitful cooperation between their two countries, but also contribute to the peace and stability of the region. Press reports from Pakistan indicated that the two leaders had the Kashmir and Sino-Indian border conflict in mind when they emphasized the need for peaceful settlement of problems in this region. (82) The joint communique highlighted the following issues: First, both the leaders expressed satisfaction at the progress made by the two countries in developing friendly ties, especially after the introduction of airlink between Dacca and Kathmandu. They also wanted to expand economic, technical and cultural cooperation for mutual benefit. They decided to establish resident diplomatic missions on reciprocal basis in both countries. The two Heads conferred on each other the honorary rank of Field Marshal. Another important landmark was their mutual appreciation of each other's political systems. They

(81) News Chronicle, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. XVI, 1963, p. 199; See also Asian Recorder, Vol. IX, 1963, p. 5280.

(82) Ibid.

reaffirmed that each country should build its own system "best suited to the genius and traditions of its people." (83) Besides, there were indications of increase in the number of Nepali students in Pakistan's educational institutions and more frequent exchange of cultural delegations. Also, there was the possibility that some Pakistani telecommunication experts would be visiting Nepal to further pursue proposals for a closer telecommunication link between the two countries. Thus Ayub Khan's visit, as in the words of a Pakistani daily, had "apparently left a great impact" on Nepal. (84) The indications were that talks on various issues started by him would be continued at the diplomatic level.

The President, while flying back to Dacca, said in a farewell message to King Mahendra,

The people of Pakistan have been pursuing the same goal and that the basic principle which both have to bear in mind is that in order to be able to fully utilise the resources of the country for the betterment of the lot of the common people, it is essential to have peace on our border and stability within our territory. (85)

On his return to Dacca, when asked by pressmen as to the Nepalese stand on Kashmir, he replied that Nepal was not directly concerned but she had sympathy for all rightful causes. (86) Appreciating the religious

(83) Pakistan Times, (Lahore), 13 May 1963.

(84) The Dawn, 13 May 1963.

(85) Pakistan Observer (Dacca), 13 May 1963

(86) The Dawn, 13 May 1963. See also Asian Recorder, n.81, p.8280.

toleration in Nepal he told the pressmen that he was amazed to see that Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists in that country lived in complete accord, amity and friendship.

The reaction in the Indian Press at the end of Ayub Khan's visit was more or less mixed. One popular daily commented that Nepal's foreign policy was based on friendship with all, particularly all its neighbours, and it was not considered likely that it would stick its neck out in any dispute between neighbouring countries. (87) In the meantime, in a reference to Ayub Khan's visit to Nepal, Agha Hilaly, Pakistan's Ambassador to Nepal said "Friendship between Pakistan and Nepal proved that religion need not necessarily divide the people of one country from another." (88) In consideration of the above remark, there was every reason for India "to regard Ayub's visit as a good augury" because of its stand that religion should not pose a hindrance to the development of cooperative relations with Pakistan. The defence of the whole sub-continent being very much interlinked, an editorial noted with concern, "If there is a feeling in any quarter that Nepal's newly developing friendship with Pakistan is a kind of reflection conditioned by set-backs in Indo-Nepalese relations, the sooner that feeling dispelled, the better."

(87) Indian Express (New Delhi), 13 May 1963.

(88) Hindustan Times, 14 May 1963.

(89) Ibid.

It was essential for India, as Lal Bahadur Shastri emphasized during his visit to Nepal in March 1963, that it should respect "every manifestation" of Nepal's national pride and love of freedom, especially when Nepal was "stepping out into the wider world and seeking new spheres of influence and action," (90) The settlement of all disputes by peaceful means as enunciated in the communique was rated as "noble sentiments" but strangely enough the document contained "nothing of least consequence to either country, either good or evil." (91) Ayub Khan's insinuation that the danger from the massive Indian build up was not only to Pakistan but to all other neighbours was viewed critically in India. His (Ayub Khan's) reference to small nations continuing to live in fear of their larger neighbours sounded very much like the Chinese talking of "great power chauvinism." (92) One gain of the visit was that Pakistan got an assurance of Nepal's neutrality in the Kashmir dispute. But, on the other hand, the ways and means to expand economic, technical and cultural cooperation was left unexplained. (93) In the context of Indo-Pak relations and the tensions between India and China, Nepal, as stated by Tulsī Giri, had followed a policy of "positive neutrality". President

(80) Ibid.

(91) National Herald (Lucknow), 14 May 1963.

(92) Indian Express (New Delhi), 22 May 1963.

(93) Ibid.

Ayub, as another popular daily critically remarked, "no doubt attempted to exploit the discontent among Nepalese over the Indian failure to understand Nepal and the feelings of Nepalese." (94) But it was erroneous to presume that Nepal shared "the outlook of Pakistan towards many problems" that affected Nepal and India equally.

Radio Nepal said on 29 May 1963 that under the Nepal-Pakistan Trade Treaty, licences were being issued by the government to a business firm in the southern town of Birat Nagar to export 4000 tons of rice to Pakistan. (95) Agha Hilaly, Pakistan's Ambassador designate to UK, said in Peshawar on 13 September 1963 that Pakistan and Nepal were now linked with the most cordial bonds of "good-will, understanding and mutual cooperation and there were wide prospects of further improving the existing relations." (96) He added that more seats would be reserved for Nepali students in the Pakistani educational institutions especially in the field of technical education. On October 31, 1963 the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council in Pakistan in a meeting at Rawalpindi approved the establishment of radio, telegraph and telephone links between the two wings of Pakistan via Kathmandu. The first phase of the scheme was proposed to be radio communication between Dacca and

(94) The Hindu, 25 May 1963.

(95) The Statesman (New Delhi), 30 May 1963.

(96) The Dawn, 14 September, 1963.

Kathmandu. (97) Kathmandu was understood to have agreed in principle to a Pakistani proposal to set up a relay station in Nepal to facilitate the radio link between the two wings of Pakistan. The two sites suggested for the Rs. 2.5 crores relay station were Dudelhura and Makwanpur in the Terai. Towards the first week of December 1963 a news report said that the Nepal Government was providing four routes in the country for carrying on Nepal-Pakistan trade. These were Birat Nagar, Birganj, Bhairawa and Nepalganj. The Nepal Government was also considering an Indian proposal to build at Radhikapur 3,000 square feet of covered accommodation consisting of sheds, sidings and staff quarters for handling the transit trade. These were to cost Rs. 2 lakhs (N.R.). (98)

During the last week of January 1964 it was reported in the Press that the Nepal Government would set up a commercial consulate in Dacca for its trade convenience. Lakshman Jang Bahedur Singh, until now Commissioner of Lumbini Zone, was understood to have been appointed as Commercial Consul. (99) Although India had already granted transit facilities through Radhikapur with some minor restrictions, Nepal's trade with Pakistan had not started by land route until then. Nepal Radio in its morning programme on 4 March 1964 broadcast the statement

(97) Asian Recorder, Vol. IX, 1963, p. 5570.

(98) Hindustan Times, 6 December 1963.

(99) Hindustan Times, 21 January 1964.

by a Pakistani businessman, Ahmed Daud, expressing regret at the delay in acquiring transit facilities through India for Pak-Nepal trade. The Radio quoted him as stating with a note of optimism that "Pak-Nepalese trade would however continue by the air route regardless of the hazard."

(100) This statement had been broadcast inspite of the assurance given by India of its full cooperation in Nepal's drive for trade diversification in accordance with the Indo-Nepal Trade and Transit Treaty.

Radio Nepal again reported on the morning of 13 March 1964 that telecommunications link would be established between Pakistan and Nepal within seven months and equipment would be received from Japan within two months. Technical aspects of the project were discussed between Heramba Pradhan and M.M. Hussain, the Chief Engineers of the two countries in Kathmandu. (101) On 1 April 1964 it was reported that Pakistan and Nepal had signed an accord to set up a microwave communication link between the two countries. (102)

King Mahendra and Queen Ratna arrived in Karachi on 15 June 1964 on a two day private visit. Z.A. Bhutto, the Foreign Minister, and other

(100) Indian Express (New Delhi), 5 March 1964.

(101) Hindustan Times, 14 March 1964.

(102) News Chronicle, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 17, 1964, p. 414.

high officials received them at the airport. It was reported that President Ayub would receive them at dinner in President's House.

According to Nepalese Charge d' Affairs in Karachi, Mahendra might have had significant talks with Ayub Khan. (103) A delegation from Nepal was expected soon for further talks on the proposed telecommunication link between Simra in Nepal and Dacca in East Pakistan.

Towards the last week of November 1964 the Nepalese delegation composed of H.P. Upadhyaya, Chief Engineer of Telecommunication and J.L. Sattyal, Director of Postal Services visited Pakistan in connection with the telecommunication link between the two countries. (104) In their eleven days talks with the Pakistani delegation, it was agreed that a feasibility survey for linking East and West Pakistan via Nepal, would be carried out by a Japanese telecommunication consulting company.

As reported in the Nepalese Press, the Indo-Nepal talks on transit facilities for Pak-Nepal trade at Badhikapur reached ^Astalemate on 25 November 1964. The Nepalese delegation was understood to have felt that the Indian proposal fell far short of Nepal's rightful demand for free and unrestricted transit facilities as guaranteed by both the international conventions and the Indo-Nepal Treaty for Trade and Transit. (105)

(103) The Times (London), 18 June 1964.

(104) The Motherland (Kathmandu), 26 November 1964.

(105) Ibid.

The talks ended in failure on the early morning of 27 November and the Nepalese charged that the Indian delegation's attitude was negative and unhelpful. (106) An official of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Nepal said that the attitude adopted by the Indian officials at the talks was unjustified. An English daily of Nepal editorially commented, "Trade is a vital life blood of a nation. Nepal has to diversify her trade according to her needs and resources." (107) Another Nepali newspaper felt that Nepal's foreign trade not only with Pakistan, but also with others to be routed through Pakistan, had received a setback because of the nonavailability of transit facilities at Radhikapur. (108) The Nepalese reason for the failure of the transit talks was that India continued to obstinately insist on exorbitant charges to be paid by Nepal for the transit facilities in violation of established practices. Reacting against India's doubts about the future repercussion of Pak-Nepal trade, the editorial said:

Like any other growing economy, her (Nepal's) own also requires export earning to increase so that her progress may find a stable basis. And if she tries to seek new avenues to attain this end, she should not be misunderstood. Nor such efforts need run counter to the interest of any other nation. (109)

(106) The Motherland (Kathmandu), 26 November 1964; See also News Chronology, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 17, 1964, p. 414.

(107) The Motherland (Kathmandu), 30 November 1964.

(108) The Commoner (Kathmandu), 30 November 1964.

(109) The Commoner (Kathmandu), 1 December 1964.

The Nepalese papers also focused their attention on the criticism of the failure of transit talks by Z.A. Bhutto, Pakistan's Foreign Minister. Bhutto, in a statement on 29 November 1964, condemned what he called India's "policy of economic blockade against land locked Nepal". This blockade, he felt, would only strengthen the resolve of Nepali people to spare no efforts to consolidate their position and to protect their independence. (110) He also described India's refusal to grant normal transit facilities to Nepal for trade with Pakistan as "another deplorable example of her negative attitude towards her neighbours, and disregard for the rules of neighbourliness". In other speeches also Bhutto emphasized the theme that India posed a common danger to both Pakistan and Nepal. (111)

(110) The Motherland (Kathmandu), 2 December 1964; See also The Commoner n. 109.

(111) See for instance his speeches in the National Assembly in Z.A. Bhutto, Foreign Policy of Pakistan, Pakistan Institute of International Affairs (Karach, 1964), p. 118.

CHAPTER V

INDO-PAK WAR AND EXCHANGE OF VISITS

In the previous chapter we have seen the beginning of a new era in Pak-Nepal relations. Since Ayub Khan's visit to Nepal, both these neighbouring countries had shown keenness to collaborate in various fields of trade, commerce, air service and micro-wave communications. One major bottleneck in the overland trade between the two countries was India's objection to the use of Radhikapur as a transit point between Nepal and East Pakistan. But on 7 January 1965 it was announced that India had agreed to provide transit facilities for Nepal's trade with East Pakistan via Radhikapur from the first week of February 1965. (1) It may be recalled that until then trade carried on between the two countries was by air.

Direct overland trade between Nepal and East Pakistan via Radhikapur began on 1 February 1965. It was expected that Pakistan would import from Nepal new wool and timber and export consumer goods in return. The Nepal-Pakistan Trade Agreement (1962) envisaged a Rs. 2 crores turn over on a barter basis. It was also reported that the Nepal Government had posted a customs Official at Radhikapur to facilitate the movement of goods. (2) Business circles in Kathmandu felt there was likely to be a shift in Nepal's foreign trade as a sequel to the establishment of contact at Radhikapur. Observers in

(1) News Chronicle, Pakistan Horizon (Karachi) Vol. 18, 1965, p. 93.

(2) Asian Recorder (New Delhi), Vol. XI, 1965, p. 6311.

India felt that as a result of the inflow of Government subsidized Pakistani goods into Nepali's market, some of the Indian goods might be dislodged. (3)

While speaking at a dinner meeting at the Kathmandu Rotary Club on the night of 24 March 1965 on Pakistan's Economy and Foreign Policy, Kamaluddin Ahmad, Pakistan's Charge d' Affairs in Nepal, said that though Pakistan's relations with Nepal were of recent origin, they had developed on sound lines with the result that there was mutual trust and confidence between the two countries. (4) He also emphasized that the strengthening of relations with Nepal was in pursuance of Pakistan's foreign policy which was designed to see "friendly relation with all countries" in order to promote world peace. He strongly hoped that the cooperation between the two nations would develop for "mutual benefit."

On 8 July 1965 it was announced in Kathmandu that Upendra Bahadur Basnet, a career diplomat, had been appointed as Nepal's first resident Ambassador in Pakistan. (5) Until then Pakistan and Nepal had been represented by Charge d' Affairs.

A Pakistani trade delegation led by Pakistan's Commerce Secretary, H.M. Aslam, arrived by air from Dacca on the morning of 2

(3) Ibid.

(4) The Dawn, 26 March 1965.

(5) Asian Recorder, n. 2, p. 6601.

August, Pakistan's Charge d' Affairs joined the four members delegation. The leader of the Nepal Government's team for the trade talks was K.M. Dixit, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. The talks, which began on the same day, covered the ways and means to strengthen trade relations between the two countries and also the transit facilities at Radhikapur and other allied problems. Nepal, as reported in the Nepalese Press, was facing the problem of deficit trade with Pakistan and the talks were expected to balance the trade and improve the relations between the two countries. (6) From then onwards, Pakistan decided to import from Nepal timber, oil, musk, rice, boulder and mustard in exchange for textile goods, machinery and cosmetics. But for an overland trade, it was difficult to import and export such items on a large scale.

On subsequent days until 5 August 1965, a series of talks were held between the official delegations of both the countries, in a cordial atmosphere. A "total identity of views" was expressed by both the parties. It was expected that the discussions would be able to assess the new developments since the trade pact between the two countries signed in October 1962, and suggest plans for increasing Pak-Nepal trade. Although the 1962 Agreement envisaged an annual trade of Rs. 1 crore (Nepali Rupees) each way, such a figure was not reached

(6) The Commoner (Kathmandu), 3 August 1965.

because of "some procedural difficulties." (7) Although India allowed transit facilities since February 1965, only light goods like cigarettes, textiles, cosmetics, biscuits, soap and blades worth Rs. 360,000 (P.R.) were imported into Nepal from Pakistan until then by air service.

At the end of the trade talks between the two delegations a joint communique was issued on 5 August 1965. The communique said, "Despite keenness on the part of both sides, trade between the two countries had not moved as desired." (8) The bottlenecks in the way of the flow of trade between them were examined and the proper channels to ensure quick and expeditious movement of goods were deliberated upon. In a joint press release issued at the conclusion of trade talks on 6 August between Pakistan and Nepal the hope was expressed that the trade between the two countries would flow in a satisfactory manner. (9) A detailed discussion as to the possibility of using Chittagong port as an alternative to Calcutta for the transit of goods to and from third countries was held and "an understanding on enforcement of certain arrangement in this regard was reached." (10) The agreement also hoped

(7) The Commoner, 5 August 1965.

(8) The Statesman (Calcutta), 7 August 1965.

(9) News Chronicle, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 18, 1965, p. 313.

(10) The Commoner, 6 August 1965.

that "as a result of these deliberations trade would move between the two countries soon in a satisfactory manner." The Nepalese delegation was highly impressed by the "cordial and friendly" feelings of the Pakistani delegation towards the development of Nepal and both appreciated the need for periodical consultations and agreed to hold six-monthly review of trade and allied matters. They also felt that, although it was signed almost three years ago, the Pak-Nepal Trade Treaty of October 1962 had achieved little except reiteration of the desirability of trade diversification by both the countries. (11) A member of the Nepali delegation who participated in the talks stated that Nepal would have to study the comparative cost structure of transit through Calcutta and Chittagong, before it would try to route its trade either partially or wholly through Chittagong. (12) He indicated that the use of the Chittagong port for transit would imply the use of Badhikapur transit point in India. In case of the Calcutta transit port there were special facilities and concession to traders and no demurrage charged on the goods in transit.

Going into the pros and cons of the Transit Trade communique, a

(11) Ibid.

(12) The Asian Recorder, n. 2, p. 6637.

Nepalese daily commented, "The reported 'total identity of views' between both sides naturally gives us some hope that we shall be able to see something concrete being done to alter this picture to our benefit." (13) To develop trade, in the opinion of the daily, was not merely "to find out identity of interests" but also to see that the "identity finds suitable efforts and conditions to manifest itself in actual mutual benefit." (14) For the Nepalese, diversification was no doubt "a happy sign of growing consciousness" of their needs in the present state of economic development. One editorial did not hesitate to criticize His Majesty's Government on its policy of foreign trade when it wrote, "Why cannot we tell Rawalpindi, which is obviously friendly to us, that it would help us much, if we could have cement, corrugated sheets, steel structures, etc instead of lipsticks and face-powders." (15) He argued that diversification of trade could be really useful when it could be related to overall efforts for economic progress.

On 10 August 1965, King Mahendra inaugurated the direct radio telecommunication link between Nepal and Pakistan. (16) The colourful

(13) The Commoner, 6 August 1965.

(14) Ibid.

(15) The Commoner, 11 August 1965.

(16) News Chronicle, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 18, 1965, p. 315.

function at Singh Durbar marked the completion of the first phase of telecommunication links between Pakistan and Nepal. The King exchanged greetings with President Ayub on that occasion. In his brief message to Ayub Khan he said; "On the occasion of the establishment of telecommunication link between our two countries, we are happy to see the results of fruitful collaboration between Nepal and Pakistan materialise. We feel that such collaboration in future will forge stronger links." (17) Ayub Khan in reciprocating the sentiment expressed by Mahendra said, "Both the countries being engaged in nation-building work, telecommunication is one of the many fields in which the two countries could collaborate to achieve their common goals of development." (18) He also earnestly hoped that such link would "help bring their people still closer, strengthening further the friendly relations" existing between the two countries.

A five kilowatt equipment was installed on that day to facilitate conversation or exchanges message by teleprinters. The project was to cost in all Rs. 20,27,000 (N.R.) out of which the Pakistani Government provided Rs. 15,42,000 and Rs. 5,14,000 was contributed by the Nepalese Government.

(17) The Commoner, 11 August 1965.

(18) Ibid.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Kedar Man Byathit, Nepal's Transport and Communications Minister, stressed the importance of communication facilities for the development of the country. (19)

With the introduction of that system, "a new and important chapter" was added in the field of Nepalese communication system, the Minister declared. The Pak envoy, Arshad Hussain, said, "Progressive implementation of the proposals initiated by our two governments, are happy signs of closer relations and they augur well for an ever-increasing (sic) in all the fields where we have common interests." (20)

He also emphasized that Pakistan believed in "building bridges between nations and no walls to separate them". The project, he had in mind was "an indivisible bridge of Radio waves between Pakistan and Nepal" and over that would go all types of communication, information and ideals - which would lead to "mutual understanding, greater co-operation and firm friendship". The Pakistani Communication Minister, present on the occasion, said that since both Pakistan and Nepal were developing countries and lived in proximity to each other, it was natural that they sought each other's help and counsel in their development. Championing the cause of international peace he added, "We in Pakistan also believe that the establishment of the areas of peace, friendship and cooperation between neighbouring countries was a real contribution to the cause of world peace." (21)

(19) Ibid.

(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid.

On 12 August 1965 a Pak-Nepal Telecommunication Agreement was signed for the establishment of Lahore-Dacca-Kathmandu micro-wave system. (22) According to the press communique, the agreement was signed by Arshad Hussain, Pakistan's envoy and Bakh Bahadur Thapa, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Planning, on behalf the Pakistan and Nepal Governments respectively. Speaking on the occasion, K.M. Vyathit, Nepalese Communications Minister, said "the new agreement would bring the two countries together." (23) K.A. Sabur Khan, Pak Minister for Communications and leader of the four-members Pakistani delegation, hailed the agreement as "a new chapter in the friendship between the two countries". The agreement was not very specific as to whether it concerned the telecommunication link already established between Kathmandu and Dacca or a new proposal for bouncers in Nepal for East-West Pakistan Communications. (24)

When the Indo-Pak War broke out in September 1965, Nepal's attitude was one of calculated neutrality. No doubt Pakistani papers gave an entirely different picture about Nepal's attitude on the war. At the dawn of the conflict a Pakistani newspaper highlighted the report in a pro-Pakistani Kathmandu Hindi weekly in the following way.

(22) News Chronology, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 18, 1965, p. 315.

(23) The Commander, 13 August 1965.

(24) Asian Recorder, n. 2, p. 6662.

According to its report, Naya Samaj from Nepal described the disturbances in Kashmir as "people's revolution" and declared that "sympathy of all nations which have recently gained their freedom, would naturally go towards them." (25) The weekly, as reported, described India's efforts to involve Pakistan in the "uprising" in Kashmir as pure fabrication to conceal its own "misdeeds" and its efforts to "supress" Kashmiris by force. The weekly was reported as having written that, "India, it seems, was apprehensive that if Kashmir got her freedom through self-determination, India's hold on Sikkim and Bhutan would automatically get lost." (26) The slogan "Force will be met with force" during the war was interpreted as India's aggressive designs against Pakistan. The report also said that the uprising in Kashmir against India was "a part of people's consciousness growing in Asia, Africa and Latin America against colonialism and it was not a mere revolt but rather a 'people's revolution'." Referring to Tibet the weekly reported that India gave asylum to Dalai Lama on the plea that China had annexed his territory, but it (India) wished to maintain its dominion in Kashmir "against the will of the Kashmiri people". In a reference to the Kutch agreement, the paper observed that Pakistan's reasonable attitude in that case proved that she had no hand in the

(25) See the Dawn, 25 September 1965.

(26) Ibid.

recent Kashmir revolt. It also observed that the most opportune moment for Pakistan to embarrass India was during the Sino-Indian war in 1962. Hence India was accused as "charging Pakistan only to conceal her own misconduct" and it was for India a "bitter cry in dying anguish".

On the other hand, another English daily from the mountain Kingdom gave a different interpretation of the Indo-Pak conflict. The paper in its editorial said, "Being a close friend of both, Nepal cannot but have an uneasy feeling over the fast-deteriorating situation in Kashmir. She hopes that peace will be established before it becomes impossible." (27) But it expressed sorrow that one more trouble had been added to the ferment of Asia, which had become "truly a storm centre of the present day world." A political commentator wrote in an article named "Kashmir Dilema" that Nepal could do nothing else than wishing that the crisis would come to a speedy end through peaceful negotiations. (28)

King Mahendra addressed identical letters to the Heads of State of both India and Pakistan explaining that Nepal had taken no sides on the question of Kashmir. He also favoured "a bilateral settlement of differences without interference or counsel from any third party" and asked both the sides to accept the U.N. Security Council resolution for

(27) The Commoner, 4 September, 1965.

(28) The Commoner, 6 September 1965.

ceasefire in the interest of peace in the region. (29) The Royal message as reviewed in Nepal stressed the urgency of the need to ensure peace in the peninsula as well as the wisdom of confining problem and its solution between the two countries directly concerned so that matters were not complicated further. (30)

Commenting on the new dimensions of Nepal's foreign policy during the recent years with special reference to the Indo-Pak war of 1965, an Indian newspaper wrote: "This strategic Himalayan Kingdom has extended its friendly relationship to the world including its other neighbours, always keeping in view what it considers to be its own interests." (31) When large scale guerilla raids in Kashmir were already in operation, Nepal and Pakistan were expressing mutual admiration in Kathmandu over their trade and economic collaboration programme. But the seriousness of the Kashmir situation was known only after the Pakistani delegation headed by a senior minister had left Kathmandu. Authentic reports were received by Indian press on views privately expressed by Nepalese leaders appreciating India's stand and action in Kashmir. But the only

(29) H.M. King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva, Proclamations, Speeches and Messages (HMG, Kathmandu, 1967) Vol II, December 1960-1965, pp. 348-9.

(30) The Commoner, 14 September 1965.

(31) The Statesman, (New Delhi), 14 September 1965.

official comment made to the press was that the countries should settle their dispute in an atmosphere of peace and friendship. When Foreign Minister, K.N. Dista, was leaving for Peking in late August, he was quoted by some Dacca reporters as advocating the principle of self-determination when replying to a question on Kashmir, although he shrewdly refused to comment on the Pakistani infiltration. But later a Nepal Foreign Ministry spokesman denied such reports. The concern in Kathmandu, as interpreted in India, was real not merely because the conflict was thought to be harmful to India and Pakistan, but also because of the apprehension that it might affect Nepal indirectly if it was protracted. (32)

Although Pakistani official propaganda continued to claim that Nepal had sided with Pakistan during the war and had asked India not to use Gurkha troops against her, the Nepalese Foreign Ministry denied such reports. (33) The different statements issued by His Majesty's Government within a few days of the outbreak of war made it amply clear that Nepal intended to remain carefully neutral and had no desire to take any side in the matter. "As a peace loving country", an editorial said, "Nepal cannot but sincerely wish that these dangers (to peace) may be eliminated without any delay. For neutrality is inspired by good will to all her friends." (34) When asked to comment on the replies of

(32) Ibid.

(33) Gorkhapatra (Kathmandu), 13 and 17 September 1965.

(34) The Cosmopolitan, 18 September 1965.

the Presidents of India and Pakistan to Mahendra's identical appeals suggesting the Security Council's initial resolutions as a basis for resolving the crisis, a spokesman of the Nepalese Foreign Office said, "There is a ray of hope now". However the spokesman reserved his comment on the Chinese ultimatum to India during the 1965 war.

When the ceasefire was declared between India and Pakistan, King Mahendra hailed the development. He wrote to the Heads of both the countries:

It is with profound satisfaction and relief that we in Nepal hail the ceasefire ending armed hostilities between India and Pakistan. By agreeing to the Security Council resolution, calling for immediate end of fighting your Excellency have shown remarkable wisdom, statesmanship and contributed to the preservation of international peace and security for which I offer Your Excellency our sincere congratulations. (35)

Nepal, according to his message, wished to see amity and good will prevail in India-Pakistan relations and considered the ceasefire as auguring well for peaceful settlement of all outstanding differences and promotion of good neighbourly relations between the two countries. (36)

An explanation of Nepal's assumed neutrality has been given by a Pakistani writer. Nepal, the writer claims, was treated as a satellite

(35) The Commoner, 24 September 1965.

(36) Ibid.

of India. "The 'big brother' posture", he writes, "impelled Nepal to seek security in a wider fellowship of nations, great or small, including Russia, America and Pakistan, while eschewing involvement with either China or India." (37) This policy was strictly adhered to during hostilities between India and China and the Indo-Pak war of 1965. An Indian scholar however feels that Nepal's sympathy for India during the war was evident when Mahendra during his state visit to India during November-December 1965 agreed with the Government of India that the principle of self-determination can apply only to dependent and trust territories and cannot be extended to integral parts of sovereign states. (38) No doubt such statements made Pakistan uncomfortable. In apprehension of a possible strain in Pak-Nepal relationship, Foreign Minister K.N. Bista visited Pakistan from 25 to 31 January 1966.

On the eve of Bista's visit a Nepalese paper wrote, "Chiefly a good-will visit, the occasion will be naturally utilized for increasing further understanding between the two countries." (39) Bista's team

(37) Mahtaq Ahmad, Pakistan's Foreign Policy (Karachi, 1968), p. 14.

(38) At the end of King Mahendra's state visit to India a joint communique was issued. See Joint Communique and Speech, FAR, No. 9, 11 and 12, Vol. XI, November-December, 1965 in S.D. Muni, "Foreign Policy of Nepal" (Thesis, Ph.D. Rajasthan University, 1971), p. 253.

(39) The Commoner, 24 January 1966.

included his wife, private secretary, K.B. Shrestha, and Under Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, M.K. Rimal. At a dinner given in honour of the visiting Foreign Minister, Z.A. Bhutto, the then Pakistani Foreign Minister, said in Karachi on the night of 25 January that friendship between Pakistan and Nepal was "growing stronger and stronger because it was based on justice and equality." (40) Reciprocating the sentiments expressed by Bhutto, the Nepalese Foreign Minister said that the visits by both Heads of State and various other delegations had helped in cementing the bonds of friendship that had always existed between the two countries. Ayub Khan as "one of the very ^(S.) great men of Asia", Bista paid tributes to the astute diplomacy and statesmanship showed by him (Ayub Khan) at Tashkent in the cause of peace. (41) He thanked the Pakistan Government and people for appreciating the position of Nepal.

In his official talk with Bhutto at the latter's residence where also present were Aziz Ahmad, Director General of Pakistan's Foreign Office, M.A. Alvie, Pakistan's Ambassador to Nepal and M.K. Rimal, Under Secretary in Nepal's Foreign Office. They discussed matters of mutual interest. Bista told newsmen at Karachi airport, "We always believed in mutual friendship. I am sure my visit will further strengthen the already existing cordial relations between Nepal and Pakistan." (42) Answering

(40) The Dawn, 26 January 1966.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Ibid.

a question about the prospects of increased trade between Nepal and Pakistan, he hoped it would receive impetus following the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan. He emphasized at a reception in the Pakistani Chamber of Commerce that Nepal had a "keen desire to expand trade relations with Pakistan." (43)

Bista met five Nepalese airmen undergoing training in Pakistan. He visited the mazar of Quaid-i-Azam M.A. Jhinnah and laid a floral wreath there. He also visited the Institute of Cotton Research and Technology and the Design Centre for Cotton Industry.

During the Foreign Minister's visit a Nepalese paper editorially wrote, "If anything it is a natural projection of Nepal's desire to expand and further strengthen her foreign relations in keeping with the spirit of a resurgent Asia." (44) The paper also commented that the time was most propitious for a good-will journey, since it was timed after the Tashkent Declaration. India was advised not to be unnecessarily irritated by that good-will visit.

Bista called on President Ayub on the 29th morning at Rawalpindi and handed over a message from King Mahendra hailing the Tashkent accord

(43) The Commoner, 27 January 1966.

(44) The Commoner, 28 January 1966.

and expressing a desire to have an opportunity to visit Pakistan at an early date. (45) He presented to the President on behalf of King Mahendra an ornamental dinner gong, a unique product of Nepali craftsmen, and a Nepalese shawl. In return Ayub Khan presented a beautiful coffee set embossed with Pakistan's crest and a brocade sari for Mrs. Bista. The Minister also paid a visit to the archeological museum at Taxila, Sirkap, the district city site of Taxila excavations, Rawal dam and various parts of Islamabad.

Pakistan's Minister of Industry, Altaf Hussain, hosted a dinner for him where he (the Pakistani Minister) said that Pakistan would send a team of experts to explore the possibility of starting joint ventures with Nepal. Bista, in his reply, stressed the need for closer economic collaboration between the two countries to strengthen the existing friendly relations. He noted with pleasure that five scholarships were granted to Nepali students in each faculty and Nepali students were being trained in civil aviation and telecommunication. He hoped the relations between the two countries would increase "from strength to strength." (46)

Bista, on his arrival at Dacca on the 30th evening, said, "The prospects for transit trade between Nepal and Pakistan were now brighter in view of the improved Indo-Pak relations." (47) During the dinner,

(45) See the details of Bista's meeting with Ayub Khan in the Dawn, 30 January 1966 and the Commoner, 30 January 1966.

(46) The Dawn, 30 January, 1966.

(47) The Commoner, 30 January 1966.

hosted for him by Abdul Monem Khan, East Pakistan's Governor, he said that President Ayub had wished King Mahendra success in his "endeavour to lead his country to progress and prosperity". Ayub Khan in his message also appreciated Mahendra's efforts for "promoting greater cooperation and friendship" between the two countries.

On his return to Kathmandu, while speaking to pressmen at the Gauchar Air Port, Bista stated that he had had very friendly discussions with the leaders and officials of Pakistan on various matters of mutual interest. "The Pakistani leaders", as he added, "are of the opinion that economic collaboration between the two countries is very essential for cementing the existing ties of friendship." (48) A Pak delegation was expected to visit Nepal to explore the prospect of investing Pakistani capital in the Mountain Kingdom in the near future. When asked to comment on the reported statement regarding the question of reviewing the Tripartite treaty allowing the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers in the British and Indian Armies, he said His Majesty has no plan to make amendments. During his visit he had clearly explained to Pakistani leaders about Nepal's treaty obligations towards India which rendered Kathmandu helpless regarding the use of Gurkha troops by India against a third country. (49) Bista also emphasized that the Tashkent

(48) The Commander, 2 February 1966.

(49) See Gorkha Patra, 26, 28, 30 and 31 January and 2 February 1966

and the Dawn, 26, 30, 31 January 1966 cited by Muni, n. 38, p.253.

Declaration had broadened the scope for smooth economic relations between Nepal and Pakistan. His talks with President Ayub Khan and Foreign Minister Bhutto on matter of mutual interest were reported to be "very useful".

On 20 April 1966 King Mahendra declared in Kathmandu that cooperation between Nepal and Pakistan in economic, cultural, technical and other fields had contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding and goodwill between the two peoples. Again, while addressing the eighth session of the Rashtriya Panchayat, he declared that his government was endeavouring to further strengthen relations with Nepal's neighbours, i.e. Pakistan, China and India. (50)

On 26 February 1967 King Mahendra and Queen Ratna, on invitation from President Ayub Khan, arrived in Dacca on a 5-day visit to East Pakistan. (51) Abdul Monem Khan, East Pakistan's Governor, and Nepali nationals studying in Dacca were among the large crowd, assembled at Dacca air port to greet the royal party. According to the report published in a morning daily of Dacca, "The golden spring sun shine greeted the Royal Couple when their plane touched the airport." (52)

(50) News Chronicle, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 19, 1966, pp. 186 and 276.

(51) See the Dawn, 27 February 1967; Pakistan Observer (Dacca), 27 February 1967; and The Commoner, 27 February 1967.

(52) The Morning Star (Dacca), 27 February 1967.

The royal party while going on an excursion trip to the Sunderban on 27 February 1967 was entertained to classical music by noted Pakistani artists. (53) A Dacca daily reported on 27 February, "Wherever Their Majesties go they will find themselves among friendly people in Pakistan and will receive the same spontaneous and warm welcome." (54) The same newspaper in its editorial reported that Pakistan had cordial relations with Nepal and the Pakistanis cherished the friendliest feelings and the highest regard for the brave people of Nepal. (55)

After returning to Dacca from the Sunderban trip via Jessore and Khulna on 2 March 1967 Mahendra visited the College of Arts and Crafts. He also offered prayers in Boora Shiv Mandir and Dhakeswari Shiv Mandir. The same day there was a reception in his honour by the Consul General of Nepal where the East Pakistan Governor was also present. (56)

At a banquet given by Governor Monem Khan, King Mahendra said that his "visit to this country would certainly strengthen friendship, understanding and cooperation" between Nepal and Pakistan. (57)

(53) Two famous musicians were Ustad Amanat Ali Khan and Ustad Fateh

Ali Khan, both of them holders of 'Janghe-i-Khidmat' and had visited Nepal during 1966 at the invitation of the King. See Ibid.

(54) Morning Star (Dacca), 27 February 1967.

(55) Ibid.

(56) The Commoner, 4 March 1967.

(57) Pakistan Observer (Dacca), 3 March 1967.

He also expressed deep gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan in general and East Pakistan in particular for their warm welcome and hospitality. He was greatly impressed by the progress made by Pakistan under the able leadership of Ayub Khan. (58) The King was charmed by the fascinating scenic beauty of the land of East Pakistan. He proposed a toast for the health and prosperity of the President and people of Pakistan. The Governor, in his return speech said, "Pakistan and Nepal shared a common attitude towards world problems and faced a common task in developing the economic potential and the well-being of the people of the two countries." (59) While proposing a toast for the health and long life of the King and Queen, he added, "Placed as we are in such a close proximity to each other, it is only natural that the relations between our two countries would develop and close cooperation exist in all spheres." (60) He also pointed out that the people of Pakistan were watching with interest and admiration the system of Panchayat Democracy introduced for the benefit of the Nepalese people. He also emphasized that Basic Democracy coming from the grass roots had brought about a great change for the better particularly in the rural life of Pakistan.

(58) The Commoner, 4 March 1967.

(59) See Pakistan Observer, 3 March 1967.

(60) Ibid.

The introduction of air service between Dacca and Kathmandu and the facility for Nepali students in Pakistan, according to him, widened the area of cooperation between Nepal and Pakistan still further. (61) It is interesting to note that King Mahendra's visit had hardly any coverage in the West Pakistani Press. Even in the East Pakistani Press the news about the royal entourage was hardly given any importance on the front page.

King Mahendra paid an unofficial visit to West Pakistan from 20 to 22 April 1967. He was accompanied by Queen Ratna, Foreign Minister K.N. Bista and Mrs. Bista, Prince Gyanendra and Princess Sobha. He was received by President Ayub Khan at Chaklala airport in Rawalpindi. After a brief welcome speech by Ayub Khan at the President's Guest House, the King praised the "great economic strides" Pakistan had made under the "able and brilliant leadership of President Ayub." (62) Ayub Khan said, "We are happy that Your Majesty has brought about considerable political stability in your country. Nepal is now well on its way to progress under Your Majesty's wise guidance and leadership." (63) The President hoped that in future Nepal would continue to march towards progress. A leading Pakistani daily further reported that avenues of greater collaboration would be discussed between the two Heads of State as both

(61) The Commoner, 4 March 1967.

(62) The Dawn, 21 April 1967.

(63) Ibid. See also the Commoner, 22 April 1967.

the countries had identical problems of development. (64) It was hoped that Pakistan could be of great assistance to Nepal which had embarked upon a vigorous development programme under the "sagacious leadership of the King". In glorifying Mahendra's achievement in international affairs it was reported that he not only developed his country rapidly but also obtained its recognition in the comity of nations within a short span of time. The report further said that Pakistan and Nepal had no political differences and had common interests in the political developments in the region. The King's visit was also used as an opportunity to malign India. It was stated that as a result of Indian indifference to national aspirations and unwarranted checks on her trade with other countries particularly Pakistan, Nepal was forced to depend entirely on Indian goods. (65) In its search for trade diversification Nepal had shown considerable interest in collaboration with Pakistan in the textile and jute industries. It was generally felt in Pakistan that with more frequent visits by Pakistani businessmen and industrialists joint Pak-Nepal ventures would flourish in Nepal.

On the last day (22 April 1967) of the King's visit the two Heads of State had a broad exchange of ideas on international issues and

(64) Ibid.

(65) Ibid.

mutual problems. Their talks were mainly concerned with three basic themes i.e. "concurrence on most world issues", "go-ahead signal" for a micro-wave project to link Nepal with both the wings of Pakistan and finally "Indian obstruction in transit facility as a handicap to Pak-Nepal trade." (66) The King and the President showed unanimity of approach in their broad survey of the situation in South and South East Asia, specially on the Vietnam issue. They reiterated their keen interest in mutual economic development and plans to further promote their collaboration in industrial and technical fields. Specially the issue of setting up glass, vegetable oil and cotton textile industry in Nepal by Pakistani industrialists was discussed. It was noted that due to lack of transit facilities through India, timber and other goods from Nepal could not be exported to Pakistan although the latter could airlift consumer goods to the former. (67) During the talks the Nepalese side was represented by Foreign Minister K.M. Bista, Foreign Secretary J.N. Singh and the Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan. The Pakistani side was represented by Foreign Minister S. Pirzada, Pakistan's Ambassador to Nepal, Foreign Secretary S.M. Yusuf and other senior officials from the Foreign Office.

(66) The Dawn, 23 April 1967.

(67) The Commoner, 24 April 1967.

The King, while leaving on 22 April for Paris with his fourteen member team, in a message for Radio Pakistan said, "I am so happy to be here once again on my way to Europe." (68) He extended an invitation to Ayub Khan and his wife to visit Nepal. K.N. Bista also invited S. Pirzada, his counterpart in Pakistan, to visit Nepal.

A Nepalese daily while reviewing the King's visit to Pakistan commented, "There are some common political interests between the two countries at present which make us feel, for the moment closer to each other." (69) The paper emphasized the importance of less emotional things like trade and cultural contact in establishing a permanent and enduring relation. "Living in an age of international cooperation and coexistence" it further reported, "Nepal naturally wants to develop her relation with other countries, specially her neighbours." (70) The fact that Pakistan was a party to a number of alliances and Nepal maintained a non-aligned status did not prevent both of them from coming closer in various areas of economic and technical cooperation.

(68) The Dawn, 23 April 1967.

(69) The Commoner, 25 April 1967.

(70) Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

RELATIVE STAGNATION

In spite of two short visits by King Mahendra and one by Premier K.N. Bista to Pakistan (as discussed in the preceding chapter), Pakistan-Nepal relations did not show any significant change. In fact, the general sympathy expressed by the Nepalese population in favour of India during the 1965 war made the position of the Nepalese ruling elite a bit embarrassing in front of Pakistanis. The visits by Mahendra and Bista were obviously felt necessary in order to convince the ruling circles in Pakistan about Nepal's neutrality during the war inspite of some treaty obligations with India. (1)

When trade between Pakistan and Nepal from 1962 to March 1968 was reviewed it was found that Nepal had exported to Pakistan commodities valued at Rs. 1,20,873 (N.R.). During the same period, however, Pakistan had exported to Nepal commodities worth Rs. 5,68,442 (N.R.). (2)

Pakistani exports to Nepal were mainly cigarettes, handloom saris, leather goods and medicine while Nepal mainly exported herbs and some other forest products in return. The trade was mostly by air.

(1) Pakistan was unhappy about the use of Gurkha troops during the Indo-Pak war of 1965. But Nepal was helpless to do anything about it because of the 'Tripartite Treaty' signed among the United Kingdom, India and Nepal, as already discussed in an earlier chapter. See footnote (49) of Chapter V.

(2) Rising Nepal (Kathmandu), 27 March 1968.

During the third week of April 1968 Pakistan formally informed Nepal's Government of its decision to support Nepal's candidature for the Asian seat in Security Council vacated by India. (3)

K.N. Bista, the Nepalese Foreign Minister, told newsmen in Kathmandu that he visualised increased cooperation between Nepal and Pakistan. (4) Nepal invited Pakistani entrepreneurs to invest in the industrial sector in Nepal. About transit facilities Bista said Nepal had received greater cooperation from India than before.

In the meantime, it was officially disclosed on 5 February 1968 that Abdur Rauf Khan, then Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi, was being appointed Ambassador to Nepal. (5) King Mahendra, while receiving the credentials from Abdur Rauf Khan during the second week of June 1968 noted with satisfaction that the bonds of friendly relations between Nepal and Pakistan had considerably strengthened over the years. The Nepalese monarch expressed his earnest desire that relations should develop further in the years to come for mutual benefit. (6) According to him, similarity of approach to national and international issues was an important factor for the growth of understanding among nations. Thanking

(3) Rising Nepal, 20 April 1968.

(4) Rising Nepal, 24 May 1968.

(5) The Asian Recorder, Vol. XIV, 1968, p. 8266.

(6) The Dawn, 13 June 1968.

President Ayub for his message of felicitations on his (Mahendra's) recovery from a recent heart-attack, the King asked the Ambassador to convey to the President his best wishes for the wellbeing of President Ayub Khan and for the peace and prosperity of Pakistan.

On 14 June 1968 Nepal's national news agency, Rashtriya Sambat Samiti, signed an agreement for exchange of news with the Associated Press of Pakistan. (7)

The Central Cabinet of Pakistan, which met in Rawalpindi under the chairmanship of the acting President Abdul Jabbar Khan during the first week of August 1968, ratified the Telecommunication Agreement signed between Nepal and Pakistan. (8) The Agreement provided for reasonably low charges for telephone calls and telegrams between the two countries.

K.N. Bista, while speaking at a reception held on 14 August 1968 by the Nepal-Pak Friendship Association on the occasion of the twenty-first anniversary of Pakistan's independence, referred to the speedy progress made by Pakistan under the leadership of President Ayub Khan and said that Nepal was happy in the progress and happiness of all friendly nations. (9) He expressed satisfaction at the cordial relations growing between Pakistan and Nepal. The Chairman of the National Panchayat, Lalit Chand, equally lauded the "close and intimate" relations between the two

(7) The Asian Recorder, Vol. XIV, 1968, p. 8426.

(8) Rising Nepal, 7 August 1968.

(9) Rising Nepal, 15 August 1968.

countries and hoped for further strengthening of these ties. The Pak envoy, Abdur Rauf Khan, expressed almost similar sentiments. While praising Ayub Khan's achievements in the "first decade of reforms" he said that Pakistan like Nepal subscribed to a political system which though basically democratic was tailored to the tradition and temperament of the people. (10) Although Nepal was non-aligned and Pakistan was aligned with the West through a number of regional pacts, the Ambassador tried to justify Pakistan's virtual non-alignment between such giants as USA, USSR, and Communist China. He also pointed out that the approach of Nepal and Pakistan both to internal and external problems had been more or less the same. The relations between the two countries, he emphasized, were founded on much deeper and firmer values than mere profession of friendship. The flow of overland trade, according to him, would reinforce the cordial relations between them. The Ayub Khan era in Pakistan, he evaluated, had brought outstanding achievements in the field of land reforms, overhauling of the educational system, constitutional reforms, food sufficiency and progress in industrialisation during the third 5-Year Plan. (11) The President of the Nepal-Pak Friendship Association in his

(10) Ibid.

(11) The figure that he presented regarding the increase in the Gross National Income and Per Capita Income was 30.4% and 14.8% respectively; see Rising Nepal, 15 August 1968.

concluding address referred to the struggle of the Pakistani people for independence and expressed the hope that the friendship between the two peoples would go on developing. As a matter of significance for any outside observer although 15 August was the birth anniversary of both India and Pakistan, the Nepali press just gave a brief reference to India's independence day on a side column whereas Pakistan's achievements got a place in the major front page headlines. On 16 August 1968 the Rising Nepal, while extending best wishes to both India and Pakistan, wrote, "Pakistan has registered development during this period inspite of setbacks and difficulties. But with what we are concerned here is the growth of cordial relations between Nepal and Pakistan after the establishment of official relations only a few years ago." (12) The paper also emphasized the similarity of approach by Nepal and Pakistan in tackling problems of internal development and in their review of the international situation. The daily expressed the hope that with the passage of time the then existing cordial relationship would be further strengthened and "made more meaningful in terms of benefits to both the peoples."

On 24 August 1968 it was reported that a 15-member Nepalese delegation led by Arun Chandra Pradhan, Director of Commerce, was scheduled to leave for Dacca on 31 August to study the feasibility of exporting

(12) Rising Nepal, 16 August 1968.

goods to East Pakistan through the overland route. (13) The delegation was expected to study the possibility of opening trade route between Birol of Dinajpur in East Pakistan and Badhikapur of Malda in India. (14) Again the report came from Kathmandu on 10 September that a two member Nepalese delegation was already in Dacca to study the transit facility through Indian territory for Pak-Nepal trade. (15) Pakistani sources also highlighted a news item during the third week of September about the reported statement of Madhav Kumar Bimal, Nepalese Consul General in Dacca. The Nepalese diplomat indicated that a land route connecting East Pakistan with Nepal would be opened in the near future and the rail link would enable the two countries to transport their trade conveniently. (16) The connecting points between the two countries, according to him, were to be Birol and Badhikapur as already mentioned earlier. The progress of the scheme, he expected, would entirely depend on India's willing cooperation.

On 18 September 1968, Abdur Rauf Khan, the Pakistani envoy to Nepal, while speaking at Ananda Kuti Vidyatirtha revealed that the Pak-Nepal Cultural Agreement was expected to be concluded in the near future. (17)

(13) Rising Nepal, 24 August 1968.

(14) Amrit Bazar Patrika (Calcutta), 29 August 1968.

(15) Rising Nepal, 10 September 1968.

(16) The Dawn, 18 September 1968.

(17) See Rising Nepal, 19 September 1968.

Referring to the bilateral relations he said that the exchange of visits by the two Heads of State had immensely contributed to further strengthening the existing friendly relation.

As a gesture of good-will, Nepal sent Crown Prince Birendra on a three day visit to West Pakistan on 24 September 1968. He visited the industrial establishments at Karachi, the interim capital Rawalpindi, and the Mangla Dam. At Lahore the Prince said, "My current visit to Pakistan is a manifestation of growing and cordial relations between Nepal and Pakistan." (18) He extended an invitation on behalf of the Government of Nepal to Captain Ganhar Ayub, son of the Pakistani President, to visit the Himalayan Kingdom.

During the early part of November 1968 a telecommunication agreement between Nepal and Pakistan, providing for a direct telegraph circuit between Kathmandu and Dacca, was signed by the representatives of two governments at Karachi. (19) That agreement was also ratified by the two governments and the instrument of ratification was exchanged in Karachi between Mir Mohammad Hussain, Director General, Pakistan Telegraph and Telephone Department, and B.B. Basnyat, Nepalese Ambassador in Pakistan. The agreement provided for specially reduced rates for telegrams

(18) Rising Nepal, 25 September 1968.

(19) The Dawn, 23 November 1968.

and telephone calls exchanged between the two countries. The traffic exchanged between them being small, there was no sharing of revenues or accounting in respect of traffic originating in one country and destined for the other.

President Ayub's son, Captain Gauhar Ayub, arrived in Kathmandu on 2 December 1968 on a weeklong visit at the invitation of the Government of Nepal. (20) He was scheduled to spend most of his time in touring different parts of Nepal and tiger hunting.

The government controlled press in Nepal was working hard to justify the system of Basic Democracy in Pakistan, because King Mahendra wanted in return a legitimisation of his Panchayat system. An article published in a leading daily stated, "In Pakistan, the system of Basic Democracy has successfully demonstrated that political stability and socio-economic progress are complementary to each other." (21) Basic Democracy, in its opinion, played a vital role in maintaining law and order in rural Pakistan. The paper further said that the system brought justice to the door-step of the people in the rural areas through their representatives who were fully aware of the local situation.

The fact that Nepal was gradually becoming sympathetic towards Pakistan on the Kashmir issue could easily be noticed from the opinion

(20) Hindustan Times, 2 December 1968.

(21) Rising Nepal, 25 December 1968.

expressed by the semi-official Nepalese press. Abdur Rauf Khan, Pakistan's envoy, reportedly stated in Kathmandu on 12 January 1969 that Pakistan had accepted the offer of the Shah of Iran to mediate in dispute between India and his country and that Pakistan would accept any honourable solution which would be acceptable to the people of Kashmir. Commenting upon this the semi-official Nepali language local daily declared "Pakistan does not insist that other problems between the two countries can be solved only after solving the Kashmir problem." (22). It also felt that Pakistan was prepared to have disputes solved through diplomatic or other authoritative channel to the benefit of both the countries. However, a non-official, and at times anti-government, paper gave a different version of the reported speech. According to it, the Pakistani envoy declared that there was no point in solving minor problems between India and Pakistan until the Kashmir problem was solved. (23)

Frequently, the Nepalese press was vocal in expressing the opinion that India was creating obstacles in the flow of overland trade between Nepal and Pakistan. According to a report in an English daily/usually considered to be pro-Peking, the old Radhikapur railway line connecting East-Pakistan with India, which had been destroyed on both sides of the border during 1965 war, had been repaired by the Pakistani side whereas

(22) Gorkha patra (Kathmandu), 13 January 1969.

(23) Nepal Times (Kathmandu), 13 January 1969.

the Indian side was left unrepaired. (24)

The reaction in the Nepalese press to the internal changes in Pakistan in 1969 provided a clear picture of the Nepalese attitude towards that country. The downfall of Ayub Khan was reported in the semi-official English daily of Kathmandu on 28 March 1969 in a simple and straightforward way with the headline, "President Ayub surrenders power to the Army - General Yahya Khan appointed new administrator, all ministers dismissed." (25) Again, after two days of calculated silence, the semi-official daily reported, "Calm returns to East and West Pakistan in sharp contrast to five months of rioting and mob killings that led to Marshal Ayub Khan's resignation and return to military rule." (26) The editorial hailed the imposition of martial law in both the wings of Pakistan as "a fitting climax to the unprecedented riot and anarchy" which tore everything to shreds and above all placed that "country's very existence in jeopardy". The justification for the imposition of martial law was found on the ground that everything was returning to normal in the both the wings within just two days. The interest of the nation, in its view, was most paramount in such a situation. In its opinion,

(24) The Motherland (Kathmandu), 13 January 1969.

(25) Rising Nepal, 28 March 1969.

(26) Rising Nepal, 28 March 1969.

Though history repeated itself in Pakistan within eleven years as Marshal Ayub took over power there in October 1958 much in similar circumstances that prevailed three days ago, there was no alternative to the course that has been taken. (27)

Paying tributes to Ayub Khan's achievements in the preservation of Pakistan's territorial integrity the paper further noted that the Field Marshal had done whatever he could during more than a decade of stewardship in Pakistan not only to maintain stability in that country and to contribute to national development but also had gone to the farthest extent possible in bringing to bear the opinion of those opposed to him in the future political set up of Pakistan. As party politics is completely banned in Nepal, it was but natural for the semi-official press to put all the blame on the "power hungry" politicians and they were held responsible for the state of anarchy prevailing during the last days of the Ayub regime. The daily legitimised the second coup-d'etat in Pakistan with a wishful note that it would shape and influence events for the better in future.

King Mahendra very soon recognised the change of regime in Pakistan and sent a message of greetings to the new Pakistani President in the early part of April 1969. General Yahya Khan, in his reply to the King, expressed his sincere desire to strengthen further the friendly relations and close cooperation between Nepal and Pakistan. (28)

(27) Ibid.

(28) Rising Nepal, 25 April 1969.

Pakistani envoy, Abdur Rauf Khan contributed a special article on "Nepal-Pakistan Relations" in the Rising Nepal on the forty-ninth birth anniversary of King Mahendra in June 1969. He began with an introduction which stated, "Although Nepal has a long history of being an independent country, it was in 1951 thanks to late King Tribhuvan that Nepal came out of its self-imposed isolation." (29) He narrated the whole history of Pak-Nepal relation beginning from Nepal's membership of the consultative committee of the Colombo Plan since March 1952, of which Pakistan was an active member. While highlighting Mahendra's 1961 visit to Pakistan he emphasized "the identity of outlook" between the two Heads of State and Pakistan's assurance of help to Nepal in the latter's efforts to maintain its independence. A significant outcome of the Nepali Monarch's first visit, according to the Pakistani envoy, was the formation of Pak-Nepal Cultural Association soon after. He also pointed out that Pakistan had given in all 109 scholarships to Nepali students between 1964 and 1971. He took pride in stating the fact that during 1967-68 Nepal received the highest number of scholarship awarded to any foreign country by the Pakistan Government. Nepalese students were awarded fourteen scholarships under the Colombo Plan. While concluding his article, Rauf Khan said,

(29) A. Rauf Khan, "Nepal-Pakistan Relation" in the Special Supplementary of Rising Nepal, 12 June 1969.

Based on mutual respect and regard for each other's independence and interest, cordial relations between Nepal and Pakistan have grown closer over the last seven years. There is increasing cooperation today between the two countries in the field of economic development, possibilities of Pakistani collaboration in industrial growth of Nepal are being explored. (30)

He stated that the Pak-Nepal friendship was based on a "sound and abiding" footing. The envoy ardently hoped that the ties would grow stronger with the passage of time.

The Pakistani Embassy in Kathmandu also made some attempts to popularise Pakistani literature in Nepal. On 15 June 1969, the Pakistani Ambassador presented to King Mahendra a copy of Nepali translation of some of the verses of Mohammad Iqbal and Nazrul Islam with a note of dedication to the King of Nepal. (31) That was the first attempt made in the Nepali language at presenting the works of two national poets of Pakistan.

During July 1969, at the consultative meeting of non-aligned countries in Belgrade, Nepal pleaded for a broad based definition of non-alignment and pressed for the inclusion of Pakistan. (32)

(30) Ibid.

(31) Rising Nepal, 18 June 1969.

(32) India in World Strategic Environment, Annual Review, 1969-70,

(I.D.S.A., New Delhi), pp. 137-8.

On 14 August 1969, Mahendra sent a message of felicitation to President Yahya Khan on the National Day of Pakistan. (33) It was announced in Kathmandu on 15 August that the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation would absorb all the twelve Nepali pilots who had completed their training in Pakistan. (34)

An Indian journalist, stationed in Kathmandu, reviewed the Nepal-Pakistan relations until the end of September 1969 and called it "one of extreme cordiality". He wrote, "Pakistan has had the benefit in Nepal to offer on attractive terms an alternative outlet for Nepalese produce. While the economic feasibility of such a proposition is seldom debated, it does help to provide a basis for a working relationship." (35) It is barely two and a half hours journey from Kathmandu to Dacca overflying Patna and English Bazar on the West Bengal-East Pakistan border. The air corridor from Kathmandu to Dacca, as viewed by the journalist, was the best third country alternative for Nepal. It was much better than an air link with China. He cited Foreign Minister Bajbhandari's foreign policy statement to the Rastriya Panchayat on 11 August 1969 where the Nepalese Foreign Minister had bracketed Pakistan with India and China for the first time. The Minister had stated that Nepal-Pak trade could not reach the expected

(33) Gorkhapatra (Kathmandu), 14 August 1969.

(34) Nepal Times (Kathmandu), 15 August 1969.

(35) Ranjan Gupta, 'Nepal and Pakistan', Indian Express (New Delhi),

level because of transit difficulties created by India. Pakistani official propaganda also kept on repeating that Pakistan was denied its legitimate share of assets at the time of partition and India was seeking the to wreck the Pakistani economy with its attitude of "bullying big neighbour". Such propaganda had a psychological impact in Nepal particularly at the time of tensions in Indo-Nepalese relations. The Pakistani mass media, which closely followed Indo-Nepalese relations, no doubt tried to make the most of a good opportunity to widen the misunderstanding between India and Nepal. The reporter ended on a note of warnings:

Though Pakistan has been cautious in its move with Nepal, it is now likely that Pakistani assistance, which at present (1969-70) is insignificant, may increase. Such a move is likely to be of political and propaganda value to Pakistan particularly as Nepal is the only Hindu Kingdom in the World. (36)

As announced in a Nepali daily, the Royal Nepali Ambassador designate to Pakistan, Ishwari Raj Mishra presented his credentials to President Yahya Khan on 6 October 1969. (37)

As reported in the Pakistan Samachar, a news bulletin published by the Pakistan Embassy in Kathmandu, Prime minister K.N. Bista told a correspondent that he was quite satisfied with the then existing state

(36) Ibid.

(37) Gorkhapatra, 9 October 1969.

of Nepal-Pakistan relations. (38) He laid emphasis on the need to achieve greater economic cooperation between Nepal and Pakistan in the interests of both nations. Nepalese Foreign Secretary, Yadu Nath Khanal, said that Nepal-Pak relation would definitely develop further if Nepal was provided the same transit facilities by India as Pakistan was providing to Afghanistan to enable the latter to export goods to India.

(39) Also, the proposal for extension of the railway line to link Nepal with Pakistan through India was only possible with India's cooperation.

According to a report in the Nepalese press, S.K. Upadhyaya, Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission of Nepal, had been invited by his Pakistani counterpart to visit Pakistan from 3 November to 9 November 1969. (40) He expected to hold talks with Pak officials regarding the fields in which Pakistan could extend technical cooperation to Nepal in the implementation of her Fourth 5-Year Plan.

Nepalese Foreign Minister, G.B. Rajbhandari, while on a 3-day visit to East Pakistan from 28 October to 30 October 1969, had talks with the East Pakistani Governor "on matters of mutual interest." (41) Nepal, according to him, had no problem with Pakistan. The volume of Pak-Nepal

(38) New Herald (Kathmandu), 7 October 1969.

(39) Ibid.

(40) New Herald (Kathmandu), 27 October 1969.

(41) Gorkhapatra (Kathmandu), 29 and 31 October 1969.

trade, he thought, would increase once India provided transit facilities through Radhikapur. Before his return he told newsmen in Dacca on 30 October that Pakistan should be allowed to attend the proposed summit Conference of non-aligned nations because it was "a neutral nation in actual practice." (42)

The scheduled visit of S.K. Upadhyaya, Vice-Chairman of N.P.C., was undertaken between 2 and 9 November 1969. He met his Pakistani counterpart, M.M. Ahmad, at Islamabad and discussed measures to promote cooperation in different fields. (43) Ahmad told him that Pakistan would extend all possible cooperation for the economic development of Nepal. The two planners discussed new avenues of collaboration between the two countries in the field of agriculture, research, irrigation, industry and technical education. Upadhyaya told newsmen on his return to Kathmandu on 9 November that two or three teams of experts and officials would visit Nepal to study the possibility of developing irrigation facilities in Nepal through Pakistani cooperation. M.M. Ahmad was also invited by him to visit Nepal soon.

(42) The Samaj (Kathmandu), 1 November 1969.

(43) See Gorkha Patra, 3, 4, & 10 November 1969; Also see Rising Nepal, 4 November 1969. For a brief summary analysis, see India in World Strategic Environment, Annual Review, 1969-71 (I.D.S.A., New Delhi), p. 38.

A Pakistani industrialist, Yahya Bhawany, offered scholarships to two Nepali employers of Ragimpati Jute Mills Ltd, Birat Nagar, for training in Jute Technology in Dacca. (44) The Nepalese press reported during the last week of November 1969 that Yahya Bhawany had selected Hitauda in Nepal as a site for a cotton Textile Mill with a capital of Rs. 59,000,000 (N.B.). (45) His Majesty's Government was ^{taking} taking steps to grant him license for that purpose.

During the same week there was some criticism against Pakistan in one of Nepal's weeklies. The weekly charged that Radio Pakistan was hurting the feelings of Nepal, a Hindu nation, by slandering and ridiculing Hinduism and Hindu religious practices. (47) Radio Pakistan, as reported, ridiculed Hindu customs as "acts of hypocrisy" and described Hindu scriptures as useless. "Such propaganda", the editorial noted, "may be a consequence of Pakistan's political disputes with India and directed towards the Hindus of India. But the Hindus of Nepal cannot keep quiet." (48) It counselled Pakistani friends to think what effect such propaganda would have on the Nepalese people.

(44) Rising Nepal, 8 October 1969.

(45) New Herald (Kathmandu), 23 November 1969.

(46) Rising Nepal, 27 December 1969.

(47) Arati (Kathmandu), 24 November 1969. See also Times of India (New Delhi), 9 December 1969.

(48) Ibid.

Although the Nepalese press generally refrained from making any comments on the internal developments in Pakistan, occasionally there were some comments in support of measures taken by the ruling elite in Pakistan. When Yahya Khan announced his decision to entrust the representatives of the people with the responsibility of drafting the Constitution, a weekly in Kathmandu remarked, "General Yahya Khan seems to be making efforts to exclude himself from the line of military rulers of the world. His efforts are no doubt aimed at brightening the political horizon of Pakistan." (49) The weekly expressed doubts whether political parties which were engaged in mutual wranglings would be able to give a Constitution on schedule.

Pakistan's envoy, Rauf Khan, at a reception in his honour at the Islamia School in Nepalganj on 28 December said, "Though Pakistan is an Islamic society, it is proud of its friendship with Nepal, a Hindu nation." (50) He felt that the goodwill and unity existing among the various communities in Nepal was a unique example in the world. (51) He highly appreciated the attitude of Nepalese Muslims who regarded themselves first as Nepali citizens and then a Muslim. A letter of felicitation was presented to him on behalf of 'Baye Adab', a Muslim literary institution.

(49) Naya Sandesh (Kathmandu), 28 December 1969.

(50) Gorkhapatra, 30 December 1969.

(51) Rising Nepal, 30 December 1969.

There was another wave of anti-Pakistan propaganda in Nepal during the first week of February 1970. A daily newspaper charged Pakistan in an editorial for instigating communalism in Nepal through the frequent visits of Pakistani communal extremists to organise communal organisations. (52) Citing a particular instance the paper said the convenor of an extremist communal organisation in Lahore had recently visited Nepal with the aim of organising a secret communal organisation. During his stay in Kathmandu he was in constant touch with two foreign embassies and distributed several pamphlets. The paper urged the government to act strongly and put a stop to such activities which went against Nepalese interests. The paper also further charged that the Pakistani envoy during his extensive tour of eastern Nepal encouraged the opening of a Muslim organisation called the "Anjuman Islam". His active association with a particular community was treated as "interference in Nepal's internal affairs." It also condemned the "emergence of communal and religious organisations like Jihad, Mujahid and Fiedayin". The paper also reacted against Radio Pakistan's attempt to spoil Indo-Nepal relations especially after the postponement of the Delhi talks on trade and transit in January 1970. The Pakistani propaganda that, "Nepal has spat on the face of India" and was severing all trade relations was

(52) Dainik Nepal (Kathmandu), 3 February 1970; See also Hindustan Times,

5 February 1970 and for a brief account see India in World

Strategic Environment, n. 43, pp 137-8.

condemned by a weekly called 'Arti'. Radio Peking also joined hands with Radio Pakistan in broadcasting stories that war had started between India and Nepal. In an open letter to these Radios, 'Arti' cautioned the "war mongers" to stay out and added that Nepal was capable of solving its problem with India through friendly negotiations. The weekly noted,

We have a 500 miles long and open border with India. Millions of Nepalis are living in India. Religious, cultural, historical and family ties have been subsisting between the peoples of the two nations for thousands of years. It is natural that certain problems should arise between the two nations. (53)

Another national daily, the Swatantra Samachar, charged Pakistan with not granting unrestricted transit facilities to Afghanistan and said there was no guarantee that Pakistan would not deal in the same way with Nepal if the situation arose. (54) The paper also condemned Pakistan's attack on Hinduism especially when Nepal did not attack Muslims or Islam. Indian observers were of the view that the persistent refusal by India to react to the propagandist tactics by Kathmandu, using Pakistani and Peking assistance, had led to a stage when Kathmandu was finding it difficult to curb the monster it had unleashed. (55)

(53) The Patriot (New Delhi), 17 February 1970.

(54) Hindustan Times, 5 February 1970.

(55) The Patriot, 17 February 1970.

Pakistan and Nepal signed a cultural agreement in Kathmandu on 25 May 1970. It was designed to strengthen friendly relations between the two countries. (56) The agreement provided for the establishment of cultural associations, information centres and reading rooms in each other's country. Exchange of scholars, scientists and cultural troupes were envisaged in the pact. It was also aimed at friendly cooperation between the journalists, writers and radio organisations of both the countries. (57) Welcoming the signing of the agreement, a Kathmandu daily expressed the hope that it would help in bringing the two countries and peoples closer through the medium of various bilateral cultural exchanges envisaged in the agreement. (58)

Rauf Khan, the Pakistani envoy, in a signed article in the *Rising Nepal*, categorised four different spheres of Pak-Nepal cooperation, viz., bilateral problems, international issues, economic and technical collaboration and friendly cultural exchanges. (59) Discussing the first issue he said that Nepal's contact with Pakistan, though historically age old, started blooming only after 1960. Pak-Nepal relations had come a

(56) *News Chronicle*, Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 23, 1970, p. 199

(57) India in World Strategic Environment (I.W.S.E.) Annual Review, 1970-71
(I.D.S.A., New Delhi) pp 281-3.

(58) Rising Nepal, 27 May 1970.

(59) Rising Nepal, 12 June 1970.

long way within the span of a decade. According to him, Nepal-Pak friendship was an example of the people of two neighbouring countries living in perfect peace and harmony despite being adherents of different religious faiths. He considered Nepal's religious toleration worth emulating by other nations in the region, torn by religious strife. He acknowledged the support his country had received from Nepal on many international issues in return for Pakistani support to Nepal at the UN during 1955 and 1968 and affirmed that both of them shared a common attitude towards world problems and maintained friendly relations with all three super powers, USA, USSR and China. (60) About economic and technical collaboration he presented a list of Pakistani assistance to Nepal in various fields. (61) and also highlighted the fact that the first consignment of Nepali goods had been exported to East Pakistan via Radhikapur. Rauf Khan maintained that Nepal's attempt to diversify her trade through Pakistan had been thwarted for one reason or another. He imparted a sense of urgency to the problem of Nepal's trade and transit by describing it as a 'bottleneck' in further improving Pak-Nepal relations.

(60) Ibid. See also Times of India (New Delhi), 16 June 1970.

(61) For instance thirty cultural scholarships were awarded by Pakistan to Nepalese students, ninetyseven pilots, aeronautical engineers and mechanics trained in Pakistan at a cost of Rs. 3.5 million in Nepalese currency. See for details Rising Nepal, 12 June 1970.

He looked forward to the establishment in Nepal of a cotton textile mill by a Pakistani firm and even expressed his government's desire to help in the study of lother irrigation project. Finally, he pointed out, that after the signing of the cultural agreement two cultural troupes sent by the Pakistani government on the occasion of King Mahendra's birth anniversary and the wedding of Crown Prince Birendra had depicted the amount of goodwill and friendship the Pakistanis cherished for their Nepali brethren.

It was officially announced on 5 July 1970 in Islamabad and Kathmandu that President Yahya Khan of Pakistan would pay a four-day visit to Nepal at the invitation of the Nepalese King. (62) According to the official Nepalese news agency, Nepal and Pakistan started trade by the land route through Indian territory on 11 April 1970. (63) On that day the first consignment of fifty packages of spikenard went to East Pakistan through Badhikapur transit point. India had always been subjected to the charge by both Pakistan and Nepal of not granting transit facilities through her territory, although not a single consignment of Nepalese goods meant for Pakistan had been blocked by a Nepalese trader. While reviewing the Pak-Nepal trade, a Dacca paper

(62) Pakistan Observer (Dacca), 6 July 1970.

(63) Asian Recorder, Vol.XIV, 1970, p. 9565; See also India in World Strategic Environment, Annual Review, n. 57, pp. 269-70.

pointed out that since the Trade and Transit Agreement between Pakistan and Nepal (1962 and 63) only negligible amount of trade had taken place between the two countries as India had not given the transit facilities for the flow of goods which had to be lifted. (64) Commenting on Yahya's forthcoming visit to Nepal, a Kathmandu daily wrote on 13 July, "The visit will be one more milestone in the consolidation of the growing friendship between Nepal and Pakistan." (65) During the same month a six-member cultural team from Nepal visited East Pakistan to participate in the 3-day long 'Nepal Night' arranged by the Nepali Consul General's Office in Dacca. (66)

Speaking on the twenty third anniversary of the National Day of Pakistan on 14 August 1970, the Pak Charge d'Affairs, Muftafiqur Rehman said in Kathmandu that friendly relations between Nepal and Pakistan had developed progressively after the establishment of diplomatic relations.

(67) According to the Pakistani diplomat the mutual visits by King Mahendra President Ayub Khan had further consolidated the existing friendship.

President Yahya Khan's visit took place in September 1970 as scheduled. As reported in a Nepalese daily, the elaborate preparations were made to accord a colourful and warm welcome to the Pakistani President. (68) On the eve of the visit in a special article

(64) Ibid.

(65) Rising Nepal, 13 July 1970.

(66) India in World Strategic Environment, Annual Review, n. 57, p. 282.

(67) See News Reviews of Countries Bordering India (NRCBI) September 1970 (I.D.S.A., New Delhi), p. 5.

(68) Rising Nepal, 27 September 1970.

"Nepal-Pakistan: Scholarships and exchanges", the semi-official Rising Nepal wrote, "Since it is ultimately on the understanding and goodwill between the leaders of the two countries that much of the growth of mutual ties depend, these visits have been of great help in fostering a closer sense of understanding." (69) It further noted that just as cooperation between the two countries in matters of mutual interest in the various international forums stemmed basically from the rapport established between King Mahendra and the former Pak President, it was only logical to assume that with President Yahya Khan's visit to Nepal, another chapter in Nepal-Pak friendship and understanding would be added. It was also stated that 100 Nepali pilots and 123 personnels in various other fields under Colombo Plan were to be trained in Pakistan by 1971. 60 scholarships were already awarded by Pakistan to Nepalese students under the cultural programme. With a note of optimism the Rising Nepal added,

Though much particularly in trade and industrial cooperation remains to be done in the sphere of Nepal-Pakistan relations, one can take considerable heart in the solid achievements recorded in a comparatively short span of time. Given the continued good will that exists and the proper circumstances, there is no reason why here too improvements cannot be generated. (70)

While welcoming President Yahya Khan at the Tribhuvan Air Port on 27 September 1970 King Mahendra highlighted Nepal's policy of

(69) Ibid.

(70) Ibid.

establishing and further strengthening friendship with all. "In this process", the King added, "we have been fortunate to welcome distinguished leaders of different countries of the world from time to time." (71) The Pakistani President's visit, he hoped, would further strengthen the friendly ties existing between the two countries. Yahya in his reply hailed the historic and cultural ties and proximity of views between Nepal and Pakistan and said,

My long cherished desire of seeing this neighbouring country, fulfilled amid's the warmth of heartfelt affection all around, is yet another indication of our common desire to cement the bonds of a friendship which has already made a positive contribution to the maintenance of peace and stability in our region. (72)

Yahya Khan was accompanied by M. Shamsul Huq, Pakistan's Minister of Education and Scientific Research, Sultan M. Khan, Foreign Secretary, Syed Ahmed, Secretary in the Ministry of Information and National Affairs, and other senior officers. The King conferred upon President Yahya Khan the title 'Ojaswi Rajanya', the highest civil award in Nepal at a palace meeting during the day. (73)

On 28 September proposing a toast to General Yahya Khan, King Mahendra said, "There can be mutual aid and cooperation between us in matters relating to historical and development field." (74) He also

(71) Rising Nepal, 28 September 1970.

(72) Pakistan Observer (Dacca), 29 September 1970.

(73) See Asian Recorder, n. 63, p. 984#.

(74) Hindustan Times, 29 September 1970.

repeated his oft quoted saying: "We cherish friendship with all and harbour ill-will towards none. Our behaviour is peaceful and friendly with all and we expect similar behaviour from our friends." (75) He was also of the view that the disputes between one country and another should be mutually settled in a peaceful manner. Earlier (27th September Dinner Speech) the King had made a passing reference to the great scope for trade between Nepal and Pakistan and considered all countries neighbours as well as others as equal. (76) The Pak President was not slow in responding: "I am confident that we have much to gain from each other's experience in various fields of nation building." (77) He added, "Let us with deeds say what is in our hearts rather than by bombast and verbiage." (78) He emphasized that Pak-Nepal trade was a two way traffic and did not involve a big brother's role. In an earlier dinner speech (27 September) the President had said that Pakistan was determined to cooperate with all like-minded nations in creating conditions conducive

(75) Pakistan Observer, 29 September 1970.

(76) See Asian Recorder, n. 63, p. 9842.

(77) Pakistan Observer, 29 September, 1970.

(78) Ibid.

to peace and stability. He added, "We believe that this objective can be realised by strictly adhering to the well established principles of pacific settlement of disputes, respect for international agreements, right of self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries." (79) Yahya Khan in his speech made indirect reference to Pakistan's stand on Kashmir and the Tashkent Declaration. "The success of attempts at fulfilling the economic and social needs of peoples of their two countries depended upon the absence of tension and conflict in the world and this region in particular", he asserted. (80)

Commenting upon Yahya Khan's Banquet Speech (28 September), a Dacca paper stated that it was illustrative of Pakistan's anxiety not to imitate the Indian role. (81) It added, "There are indications that Nepalese are keen for trade with Pakistan. Their ideals about diversification of trade sources have crystallised into concrete actions which include the setting up of a fairly well-managed state trading organisation." (82) The paper further noted that banquet speeches like the airport speeches concealed

(79) Rising Nepal, 28 September 1970.

(80) See Asian Recorder, n. 63, p. 9842.

(81) Pakistan Observer, 29 September 1970.

(82) Ibid.

more than they displayed. It said, "The more convenient phraseology of matters of common interest as used by Pakistani spokesman revealed little. We might like to think of matters in which this warmth of feeling for each other can mean concrete schemes involving cooperation between the two countries." (83) It made Pakistan conscious of its limitation by adding, "Pakistan is neither able nor willing to compete for influence in this mountain kingdom with the giants, not even with India which has a full fledged aid mission there." (84)

Yahya Khan, while addressing the Kathmandu Nagar Panchayat, stressed the need for cooperation among the developing countries particularly neighbours. He said that he was deeply touched by the words of welcome from the Chairman of the Nagar Panchayat. While thanking the distinguished members for giving him an opportunity to be with them, he said, "As students of history we have known of Kathmandu as the Capital of an ancient Kingdom, which has successfully been influenced by the Vedic, Buddhist and Mughal civilizations." (85) The wealth of classical art and architecture in the kingdom he declared "reflects this blend of civilization and evokes admiration of every one". Describing the city of Kathmandu as a perfect combination of the best features of the old and

((83) Ibid.

(84) Ibid.

(85) Ibid.

new, he added, "Development of Kathmandu exemplifies the quest for a better life that is the common endeavour of the developing countries of Asia and Africa." (86) Being in an age of rapid communication, he declared, people were well aware of the industrial and technical advances in the developed countries and it was but natural that they should desire similar progress in their own countries. No government could ignore these rising expectations. While giving a glorified image of Pakistan's development decade he said, "In Pakistan, where we had to start virtually from scratch, a certain measure of progress has been achieved." (87) He tried to prove that Pakistan's economy had achieved maturity by stating that it could withstand the shock of the conflict of 1965 and the political turbulence of 1968-69. Explaining the mounting crisis during the last phase of Ayub Khan's rule he said,

In the previous years maintaining the momentum of economic development resulted in a degree of neglect of the welfare and social sectors thereby creating certain imbalances which we are trying to rectify now. My Government has instituted reforms in the field of education and labour and the fourth Five Year Plan had been drawn up keeping in view the requirements of social justice. It is my hope that, God willing, by the end of the plan period, we shall have achieved a better distribution of wealth and reduced disparity considerably. (88)

(86) Ibid.

(87) Ibid.

(88) Ibid.

To secure free access to the markets of the developing nations and to prevent deterioration in terms of trade, Yahya Khan declared, it was necessary that the developing nations should cooperate with each other, the more so when they are neighbours. According to him, the development of friendly relations between Nepal and Pakistan was not surprising, since friendly ties between them dated back to ancient times. The link between Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha, and Pakistan's Taxila, where the torch of Buddhist civilization burnt brightest was, according to Yahya Khan, most illustrative of Pak-Nepal ties. The establishment of tangible links in the form of trade, cultural exchanges and air services, according to him, had given new dimensions to their relationship.

Briefing newsmen at Kathmandu on 28 September 1970 about the Yahya-Mahendra talks, B.B. Rajbhandari, Nepal's Foreign Minister said that they revealed much that was common in their views on international issues.

(89) The two Heads of State discussed international affairs including the Lusaka Conference, trade and mutual interests but no specific issue was highlighted. The same day I.M. Singh, writing a special article on Nepal-Pak relations in the Rising Nepal, recollected that in 1956 a Pakistani delegation had attended the fourth World Buddhist Conference held in Nepal. The delegation included among others the saffron-clad monk of the Kamalpur Buddhist monastery of Dacca. He also highlighted the

(89) Asian Recorder, n. 63, p. 9842.

point that during King Mahendra's visit to Pakistan in 1961 the people of both the countries for the first time got to understand and appreciate each other's systems and ways of life. (90) He finally pointed out that since 24 September 1970 Dacca station of Radio Pakistan had opened a radio programme in Nepali language. This, according to the article, was another milestone in bringing the two peoples closer.

In the meantime statistics for Pakistan's foreign aid to Nepal, were made public by the Pak Embassy in Kathmandu. (91) The Rising Nepal reported on 27 September 1970 that Pakistan had given a big boost to the promotion of Nepal's civil aviation by extending training facilities under the Colombo Plan to more than 100 personnels, pilots, aircraft mechanics and engineers, between 1964-71 at a cost of over Rs. 35,00,000 (N.R.). Under the same plan 123 other personnels were trained in Pakistan since 1963-64. Under the cultural scholarship scheme Pakistan had awarded nearly sixty scholarships to Nepali students for studying medicine, engineering and agriculture and had given assistance for the development of the banking industry and sports. Pakistan had also expressed its desire to help in the study of the Lethar (sic) Irrigation

(90) I.M. Singh, "Nepal-Pakistan Relation", Rising Nepal, 28 September 1970.

(91) The Embassy bulletin claimed that Pakistan had offered twenty-seven scholarships to Nepal for 1970-71, five in medicine, one in geology, one in engineering, six in civil aviation, six in banking, six in road construction and two in public administration. See India in World Strategic Environment, Annual Review, n. 57, pp. 265-66.

Project and in the implementation of Nepal's fourth 5-Year Plan. A textile mill in Nepal was getting substantial aid from a Pakistani firm. (92)

At the end of Yahya Khan's visit a joint communique was issued on 30 September 1970. According to the communique the two Heads of State assisted by their ministers and advisors had fruitful exchange of views on the international situation as well as on matters of common interest particularly relating to the developments in the region. (93) They were convinced that the friendly ties between the two countries based on equality, mutual trust and understanding, had made a positive contribution to peace and stability in the region. While discussing ways and means of expanding the areas of cooperation between the two countries the two Heads decided that the officials of the two governments should explore possibilities for cooperation particularly in trade and economic matters. Yahya Khan promised Mahendra that his government would be happy to provide additional facilities to Nepali scholars in Pakistan in the educational, medical, engineering and research institutions. They reiterated their belief that the settlement of all problems as well as elimination of the causes of misunderstanding or friction between nations

(92) Ibid.

(93) See the document "Pak-Nepal Joint Communique", Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 23, 1970. See also the Motherland (Kathmandu), 10 October 1970 and the Commoner (Kathmandu), 2 October 1970.

should be achieved by peaceful means and in accordance with internationally recognised principles and procedures. Both agreed that representation of Communist China in the United Nations would make the U.N. more effective and broad based.

They reaffirmed their faith in the principle of peaceful co-existence, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and the right of self-determination as enshrined in the U.N. Charter. (94) They disapproved the direct or indirect interference in the internal affairs of a country by outsiders. Obviously the Vietnam issue was in their minds when they asked for withdrawal of all foreign troops. About the Middle East crisis they were convinced that no solution could be possible without taking into account the question of Palestine Arab refugees. In mutual appreciation of their political systems set up by the respective ruling elites, they reiterated their firm belief in the right of every nation "to choose the political, social and economic system best suited to the condition of the country and to the genius and tradition of its people". Both of them urged the adoption of more liberal trade and economic policies by the developed countries towards the developing nations in order to accelerate the pace of their economic development. The Pakistani President raised the Kashmir and Farakka issues to which Mahendra expressed the desire that these should

(94) India in World Strategic Environment - Annual Review, n. 57, p. 282.

be peacefully settled. The Nepalese King emphasized the urgency of signing and ratifying the 1969 International Convention on Trade and Transit of the Landlocked Countries which he considered important for their economic development through trade diversification and international trade. It may be noted in this context that both India and Pakistan had not signed the 1969 Convention on Trade and Transit until then. Both of them deeply felt that such friendly exchanges of visits would contribute to better understanding and still closer cooperation between the two peoples and would further strengthen their ties. The Pakistani President extended an invitation to Mahendra to visit his country which the latter accepted with pleasure. The two Heads of State mourned the passing away of President Nasser of UAR and expressed sincere sympathies and heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the UAR.

Yahya returned to Dacca on the morning of 1 October 1970. Before his departure, in a message to Radio Nepal he expressed his gratitude for getting an opportunity to express his sincere thanks to King Mahendra and the people of Nepal for their warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to him. The Pakistani President added, "Apart from enjoying the breathtaking beauty of your lovely country, I have seen tremendous effort being made by His Majesty's Government for the welfare and uplift of the people. As a result Nepal is taking great strides towards progress and prosperity." (95) Yahya Khan stated that although the task of economic

(95) Pakistan Observer, 1 October 1970.

development was difficult and time consuming, Nepal under the dynamic leadership of the King was bound to achieve its goal. "I am returning home", he declared, "with very happy memories of stay in Nepal. I am greatly impressed by the warmth and large heartedness of your people for whom the people of Pakistan entertain greatest regard and friendship."(96) He was quite convinced that with so much of goodwill and understanding cooperation between the two countries was bound to increase in the days to come. In a special message to the King from his aircraft before takeoff, Yahya Khan said, "Your Majesty, As I leave the soil of Nepal, I carry with me very fond memories of an extremely pleasant and fruitful visit to your great country." (97) He again asserted that the people of Nepal had a special place in the hearts of the people of Pakistan.

Yahya Khan, immediately after his arrival at Dacca, addressed a Press Conference. He told newsmen that Nepal had a keen desire to develop friendship with Pakistan and it was but natural for Pakistan to reciprocate this desire. He added, "Anything we can do for them and anything they can do for us should be welcome. They (Nepalese) are wonderful people, they are courteous and warmhearted." (98) About the development activity in the Kingdom, the President said that the Nepalese

(96) Ibid.

(97) Ibid.

(98) Ibid.

wanted "to get the best of the new, but retained the best of the old", which was "a healthy tradition and worth learning for the Pakistanis too."

There were some comments in the Pakistani press on the outcome of Yahya Khan's visit to Nepal. A Dacca paper called it the "success of personal diplomacy". (99) In its opinion the fact that both Mahendra and Yahya Khan held absolute power contributed to its success more than any other factor. The joint communique, the paper wrote, tried to "conceal the rapport in very plain prose and showed it up as one of those many communiques one sees every other day". The Dacca daily made it clear that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Nepal could in no way flourish at the cost of India. It declared,

Let us be honest! We are neither in a position to take India's place in Nepal's scheme of things, nor should we try even to think of a role which runs counter to Nepal's vital ambition of becoming really independent of India, economically, politically, culturally and militarily. In between these two lies our approach to Nepal. (100)

In criticising the big brotherly attitude of India which compelled Nepal to gradually drift away from India, the paper added, "India considers this state more or less its natural appendage with trappings of an independent existence." (101) In the opinion of the daily an alternative outlet to the sea for Nepal, besides Calcutta, could be East Pakistan's

(99) See Pakistan Observer, 30 October, 1970. See especially Syed Najjullah's report from Kathmandu.

(100) Ibid.

(101) Ibid.

Manila Port. But, it continued, "India is holding on to its privileges by insisting that the 880 yards of railway line which was pulled out during 1965 beyond Radhikapur to the East Pakistan border should remain the bottleneck (sic) which prevents Nepal's trade with East Pakistan primarily." (102) That was, in its view in sharp contrast to the provision of transit facility provided by Pakistan for Afghan goods going to India. In the opinion of the daily, Pakistan was not getting any substantial gain from its trade with Nepal, but Nepal's anxiety to diversify its trade and economic relations was sure to have Pakistan's "deepest sympathy and active support."

Pakistan was also in no mood to normalise its relations with India for the sake of certain minor imports (like boulders) from Nepal. Between January and July 1970, Nepal's exports to Pakistan were valued at Rs. 180,631 (P.E.) and her imports from Pakistan Rs. 172,696 (P.R.). Pakistan had its sympathy with Nepal in its rather frantic attempt to get popular support for the signing and ratification of the 1965 Convention on Trade and Transit of the Landlocked States. The major weakness in the joint communique, as pointed out by the Pakistan Observer was that the document was "smooth, easy and plain prose but there was not much meat in it." (103)

(102) Ibid.

(103) Ibid.

The reaction in the Indian Press to Yahya's visit to Nepal also needs to be studied. One major Indian daily wrote,

The exhibition of friendship between the two countries, highlighted by Pakistani President's visit, should also be judged in the context of King Mahendra's calculated and dexterous policy of securing the maximum benefits from as many countries as possible and counter-balancing their influence to the best of his advantage in his strategically situated territory. (104)

Although Pakistan's capacity to provide any substantial aid to Nepal was extremely limited in the estimation of the daily, a reasonable explanation for the growing warmth between the two countries could be that Nepal wanted to use Pakistan as a balancing factor against India. It cited four explanations to justify Mahendra's almost pathological distrust of India. First, out of the two basic zones of Nepal, Kathmandu and the other valleys stretching upto the Tibet border and populated by Gurkha and Newar tribes were staunchly loyal to the King, whereas the entire terai region, with a predominantly India-based population, had greater affinity with India than Nepal. That region was invariably a focal point of unrest, revolts or insurrection in the past. Secondly, the King's recurring grievance against India was that it had been harbouring and encouraging refractory Nepali Congress leaders. Again, the Indian Ambassador was charged as dabbling too freely in Nepalese politics. Finally a pervasive presence of India in Nepal was intolerable for the

(104) The Hindu (Madras), 14 October 1970.

Nepalese. A small country like Nepal, the paper added, imbued with an intense sense of nationalism and keenness to preserve and strengthen its distinct identity in the comity of nations, at times gave the impression of drifting away from India only to escape India pervasiveness and herein at least partly lay the explanation for the occasional Nepalese tantrums. A prominent Nepali when interviewed by an Indian journalist during Yahya's visit said, "You should know that if it suits us to cultivate Pakistan or for that matter any country's friendship, we will do so but without harming India in any way." (105) An Indian scholar feels that the built-in restraints and inflexibility of Pakistan had provided Nepal with larger room to use its discretion. He says, "Only under duress from India she (Nepal) has responded to Pakistani overtures and has been quick to assume a posture of difference with the termination of the duress." (106) In other words Pak-Nepal friendship has been regarded by him more or less as "a partnership in expediency".

During the month of November 1970 Nepal contributed Rs. 50,000 (NR) as a token of sympathy for the cyclone affected people of East Pakistan. (107)

(105) Ibid.

(106) See for a detailed account of his pointed observation, M.D. Muni, "Nepal-Pakistan Relations: Partnership in Expediency," South Asian Studies (Jaipur), Vol. 5, January 1970, p. 78.

(107) News Review on Countries Bordering India (I.D.S.A., New Delhi), December 1970, p. 5.

In the meantime Pakistan was facing an acute domestic crisis in its eastern wing. The Nepali reaction, both official and non-official, to the liberation struggle in Bangladesh will be examined separately in the next chapter; but the relevance of the Nepalese reaction to the crisis in East Bengal for the present chapter is due to the fact that the Pak-Nepal relations suffered a set back during the crisis period from which they have not recovered as yet.

In a message of greetings to King Mahendra on Nepal's National Day on 18 February 1971, General Yahya Khan expressed the confidence that the friendly relations so happily existing between Pakistan and Nepal would continue to be strengthened and areas of cooperation further expanded in years ahead. (108) He stated, "I take this opportunity to wish Your Majesty health and happiness and the friendly people of Nepal continued progress and prosperity under Your Majesty's enlightened leadership."

Attoulla Khan, the new Pakistani Ambassador to Nepal, reached Kathmandu unannounced during the second week of April 1971 to fill the vacancy created by Abdur Rauf Khan's transfer to Libya. (109) The new Ambassador, while presenting his long overdue credentials to King Mahendra on 30 May 1971, said that Pakistan would be happy if it could help Nepal

(108) Pakistan Observer, 19 February 1971.

(109) Times of India (New Delhi), 17 April 1971.

in its development. The King in his brief speech said, "It is satisfying to note that we not only share common interest in the maintenance and promotion of international peace, but also hold similar approaches to many questions facing the world." (110)

According to Press reports, the Dacca-Kathmandu flights, which were cancelled in the wake of the military crackdown in East Bengal, were resumed during the last week of July 1971. (111) Another report came from Kathmandu that the special envoy of Yahya Khan, Raja Tridiv Roy, who was scheduled to arrive in Nepal on 30 November 1971 after visiting Ceylon, Thailand and Burma, did not turn up in Kathmandu. (112) Waiting correspondents at Tribhuvan airport were told by the security officials that the Pakistani emissary was not on board the plane he was supposed to be on. ^{The} mystery of the visiting envoy was only a pointer to the crisis that the Pak ruling elite was facing in its eastern wing, and especially in convincing the world in general and its neighbours in particular about the necessity for its military action in Bangladesh.

(110) Times of India (New Delhi), 31 May 1971.

(111) Times of India (New Delhi), 23 July 1971.

(112) Times of India (New Delhi), 2 December 1971.

CHAPTER VII

NEPAL AND BANGLADESH CRISIS

During the struggle for the liberation of Bangladesh the reaction of the international community was mixed. Private individuals in a number of countries no doubt condemned the pre-planned military crackdown on the unarmed masses of East Bengal. But most governments preferred to call it an internal affair of Pakistan and did not want to interfere in such an affair. Nepal being on the periphery of the troubled region, its reaction from 25 March 1971 to the day when Bangladesh was liberated by the allied forces gives a revealing account of its strategy of balance of power within the region.

The Government of Nepal more or less remained detached in its pronouncements during the initial stages of the struggle. But some leading figures and non-official organisations occasionally raised voices against the atrocities committed in East Bengal. According to news reports thirtyone Nepali nationals, including students, studying in Dacca, were flown to Kathmandu on 12 March 1971 by an aircraft of the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation because of the deteriorating situation in East Bengal. (1)

The General Secretary of the Nepali Communist Party, Tulailal Amatya, according to press reports, called upon all Nepalese people living in Nepal as well as in India, Ceylon and Burma to show their indignation against the atrocities committed by the Yahya Government.

(1) News Reviews on Countries Bordering India (I.D.S.A., New Delhi),

He also asked them to help the people of Bangladesh in their struggle for liberation. In a statement in New Delhi, he said, "It is high time that the civilized world cries a halt with one voice to the wanton destruction of the freedom loving people of Bangladesh." (2) He called upon the Government of Nepal, on behalf of his party and the Nepalese people, to denounce the inhuman suppression of the freedom fighters and to grant recognition to the provisional government of Bangladesh. In a signed letter to an Indian daily, he wrote,

It is a blot on the history of world civilization that the people of Bangladesh are being crushed mercilessly by the dictatorial forces of Yahya Khan. The people of Bangladesh have the right to live independent of the inhuman dictatorship of West Pakistan. It is the duty of and responsibility of the civilized world to see that the human (sic) suppression of the people of Bangladesh is stopped immediately. (3)

On the other hand, the semi-official daily, Rising Nepal, in an editorial captioned "Conflicting Reports", indirectly justified the military junta's action in suppressing the liberation struggle in Bangladesh. It stated, "Anywhere and at anytime the states have treated and continue to treat secessionist cases with heavy hand." (4) The paper though that there was no alternative but to treat the unfortunate happenings in East Bengal as Pakistan's internal affair. In justification

(2) The Statesman (New Delhi), 4 April 1971.

(3) Indian Express (New Delhi), 6 April 1971.

(4) Reported in the Tribune(Chandigarh) 5 April 1971.

of strong military action to suppress any secessionist movement in a country, the editorial added, "If in some case the Press reports are louder than guns, it is also equally true guns are far from silent as claimed by another party." (5) Indirectly it expressed displeasure at the maximum news coverage of the freedom struggle in the Indian press and the frank exchanges in the Indian Parliament.

Speaking to newsmen at Birat Nagar, M.P. Koirala, former Nepalese Prime Minister, appealed to the Pakistan Government to immediately end the use of force in the eastern wing. (6) He was the first public leader in Nepal to denounce the military action in East Bengal.

The first non-official organisation to condemn the mass killings in Dacca and other places on 25 March 1971 and after was the Nepal Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. In a statement it condemned "the military terror against the peaceful civilian life in East Pakistan." (7) It also deprecated the destruction of hospitals and educational establishments in in human massacre which had left Hitler behind.

The Central Committee of the official Youth Organisation in a resolution at Nepalganj followed suit by expressing grave concern at the deteriorating situation in Bangladesh. It made a fervent appeal

(5) Ibid.

(6) Times of India (New Delhi), 8 April 1971.

(7) Ibid.

for immediate end to hostility and wished that peace was restored through a negotiated settlement between the concerned parties on the basis of the wishes of the people and the rule of law. (8) This was significant in the sense that it was the first official organisation in Nepal to openly raise its voice against the military crackdown.

An Indian daily, while stating that there was wide scope for King Mahendra to play a key role in the diplomatic negotiations during the conflagration in East Bengal said, "The triangular relationship (that Nepal maintained with India, China and Pakistan) places the King in an enviable position which he could exploit if he chooses for constructive purposes in a troubled region." (9)

During the first week of May 1971, the Democratic Panchayat Study Centre of Nepal expressed grave concern at the insecure condition of Nepali nationals living in war-torn Bangladesh and urged the Nepali Government to take steps to protect the lives of several thousand Nepalese living in East Bengal. (10) As reported by a Gurkha League Leader, about 7000 Nepali nationals had been killed in Bangladesh. This report however was denied by R.P. Giri, Nepal's Panchayat and Information Minister, who stated that the Government had no knowledge

(8) The Searchlight (Patna), 18 April 1971.

(9) The Statesman (New Delhi), 19 April 1971.

(10) Times of India (New Delhi), 12 May 1971.

about such killings. (11) The Panchayat Study Centre condemned it as Pakistan Government's "butchery" and demanded full compensation for the loss of Nepalese lives and properties. In the meantime a nine-member Bangladesh Co-operation Committee under the chairmanship of the Nepali poet Iswar Vallabh was set up to express solidarity with the people of Bangladesh. The Committee included writers, journalists and intellectuals. In a resolution, it said, "The genocide and the military junta's monstrous and oppressive regime in East Bengal should end immediately." (12) It also expressed the hope that the whole world would recognise Bangladesh soon.

An official press release in Kathmandu on 4 June 1971 said that the Government of Nepal had contributed Rs. 25,000 (N.R.) as relief assistance on "humanitarian grounds" through the UN agencies. (13) This contribution was regarded by observers as a token of sympathy for the people of Bangladesh on the eve of Mahendra's visit to India. Meanwhile, the East Bengal Refugee Assistance Committee under the chairmanship of Rishikesh Shah, former Foreign Minister, was planning to launch a collection drive as soon as it had secured official permission.

(11) Indian Express (New Delhi), 13 May 1971.

(12) Times of India (New Delhi), 18 May 1971.

(13) The Motherland (New Delhi), 5 June 1971.

King Mahendra, while addressing the eighteenth session of the National Panchayat during the first week of July 1971, asserted that "the problem of Pakistan should be peacefully settled in a manner acceptable to all concerned." (14) This was a very cautious approach to such a grave issue. Replying to the debate on the Royal address in the National Panchayat on 7 July 1971 the Nepalese Prime Minister, K.N. Bista, said, "The problem of East Bengal has to be solved by the people and the Government concerned." (15) He reiterated that the happenings in East Bengal had become a matter of concern to Nepal as they had become to other neighbouring nations. The caution adopted by King Mahendra and Prime Minister Bista was the logical upheaval in Bangladesh was viewed as an "internal affair of Pakistan." (16) Several members of the Rashtriya Panchayat however expressed their concern at the sufferings of the East Bengali people. They demanded, in resumed debate on the King's address, that Nepal should specifically spell out its views on the current

(14) Indian in World Strategic Environment - Annual Review, 1970-71

(I.D.S.A., New Delhi), Vol. I, p. 283, See also the motherland (Kathmandu), 31 July 1971.

(15) Hindustan Times, 9 July 1971.

(16) See S.D. Muni and U. Phadnis, 'Ceylon, Nepal and the Emergence of Bangladesh, Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay), Vol. VII, n.8, 19 February 1972, p. 471.

situation in that troubled region of the sub-continent. (17)

Nevertheless there was a broad consensus among the members that the Kingdom had to follow a non-aligned policy in order to safeguard its own interests.

Commenting upon the wide-spread sufferings of the people of Bangladesh, a Kathmandu daily editorially said, "The world report on the East Pakistan situation makes it more than clear that things in the strife torn region still happen to be far from normal." (18) The paper made it clear that if Islamabad wanted normalcy to return to its eastern wing then it must make moves towards a political settlement. Indirectly it called upon the military junta in Islamabad to reduce its military pressure as far as and as soon as possible and take steps to come to a working arrangement with the aspirations of the Bengalis. It added, "A nation does not exist on victor-vanquished relationship between its people." (19) It commended the restraint and patience with which New Delhi was dealing with the mounting refugee problem. Some Rashtriya Panchayat members, while participating in a discussion on the Appropriation Bill on 30 July 1971, accused the Nepalese Government of remaining indifferent to the genocide in East Bengal." (20) They

(17) The Motherland (New Delhi), 18 July 1971.

(18) The Commoner (Kathmandu), 18 July 1971.

(19) Ibid.

(20) The Hindu, 2 August 1971; See also Indian in World Strategic Environment, n/14, p.283.

regretted the Government's attitude and felt that Nepal should have played a major role in devising a peaceful solution of the problem. In their view, His Majesty's Government, in place of condemning the genocide and mass exodus of the civilian population from the country, had "condoned the crimes" of the military junta by resuming the suspended civil flights between Kathmandu and Dacca.

U.N. Secretary General U. Thant's proposal for posting UN observers on the Indo-East Bengal border to watch the real movement of refugees and estimate the magnitude of problems faced by India by their influx, was characterized by Motherland, an English daily from Kathmandu as nothing more than an attempt to postpone the inevitable. (21) The paper urged the nations of the world to unite to formulate a solution that touched the very crux of the matter in East Pakistan. In its opinion the presence of U.N. observers was no guarantee for the return of refugees to their own country where only burnt houses and famine awaited them. It further said that nations in their individual and personal capacities had reacted with horror and sympathy, but as responsible governments they had embraced the virtue of silent indignity.

Nepal's Foreign Minister, G.B. Rajbhandary, stated in unequivocal terms, while replying to questions in the National Panchayat, on 10 August 1971, that Nepal's relations with Pakistan were based on mutual

(21) The Patriot (New Delhi), 6 August 1971.

good-will and understanding. (22) According to him, the situation in East Pakistan, although tragic, was an internal affair of Pakistan arising out of Pakistan's internal reasons. Nepal, he added, did not want to complicate the matter by "commenting on an internal matter of Pakistan in accordance with her non-aligned policy based on the principle of non-interference in other country's affairs". On the question of refugees, the Foreign Minister said he felt sorry for them and added, "Nepal wants that refugees should be able to go back to their country and live there in peace." (23) He reemphasized King Mahendra's earlier remark that a solution should be found which would be acceptable to all parties concerned.

According to reports appearing in the Indian press, a Nepalese Foreign Office spokesman said in Kathmandu on 15 August 1971 that while the Nepalese Government had all sympathy for the displaced persons from East Bengal, it did not want the country (Nepal) to be flooded with refugees of Bengali and Nepali origin. (24) It was learnt that about

(22) The Commoner, 11 August 1971. See also Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), 12 August 1971, and India in World Strategic Environment, n. 14, p. 283. Also News Commentary by Radio Pakistan, 12 August 1971.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Times of India (New Delhi), 17 August 1971.

130 Nepali and 15 East Bengali families had crossed over to Bhadarpar district in south-eastern Nepal in July and August 1971. But the Government spokesman in Kathmandu said that these refugees were tackled at the local level and persuaded to return. The spokesman added that despite its sympathy for the refugees on humanitarian grounds the Nepalese Government pursued "a policy of strict non-interference in the affairs of its friendly neighbour." (25) Premier Bista, in his address at a public meeting organised by the Nepal-India Friendship Association to observe the Indian Independence Day on 15 August 1971, said, "The refugees from East Bengal have all our sympathy, but we feel that our friendly neighbour, Pakistan, is fully competent to solve this problem." (26) In the Indo-Nepal joint statement, signed at the end of Foreign Minister Swaran Singh's visit to Kathmandu during September 1971, the term used was "East Pakistan" and not the relatively neutral term "East Bengal". (27) The Nepalese Government did not permit the non-official East Bengal Displaced Persons Relief Committee, presided over by the former Foreign Minister Bishikesh Shah, to collect fund for relief operations although the Government had already contributed a sum of Rs. 25,000 in Nepalese currency for refugee relief through the U.N. agencies.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Luni and Phadnis, n. 16, p. 472.

However, the liberation struggle of Bangladesh was supported by a majority of Nepalese intellectuals, progressives and public figures. Two Nepali leaders, Surya Bahadur Upadhyaya, former Home Minister in B.P. Koirala Cabinet, and K.J. Raymaji, leader of the banned pro-Moscow Communist Party, said in a joint statement in Kathmandu that the Bangladesh problem was of Pakistan's own making. (28) They appealed to the military rulers of Pakistan to release Sheikh Mujib and come to a political settlement honouring the verdict of the people in the General Elections held in Pakistan during December 1970. The Nepal Vidyarthi Sangh, an organisation of democratic students sympathetic to the outlawed Nepali Congress, condemned the secret trial of Mujib by a Pakistani military court and called upon the Government of Nepal to exert pressure on Pakistan to bring about the Sheikh's immediate release. (29)

Commenting on Mujib's secret trial, a Kathmandu daily wrote editorially, "It is to be hoped, although there is little scope to entertain such a hope, that Islamabad will give a second thought to its attitude towards the aspirations of East Pakistan and find out ways for a political solution of the problem." (30) The trial and execution of the Sheikh, the editorial thought, would "bar the door against all possibilities" of reconciliation and, once for all, set things on

(28) The Patriot (New Delhi), 18 August 1971.

(29) The Motherland (New Delhi), 19 August 1971.

(30) The Corner (Kathmandu), 22 August 1971.

collision course. The Nepal Council of World and Asian Affairs, a non-official body, also appealed during the last week of August 1971 to the Pakistan Government to release Sheikh Mujib immediately on humanitarian grounds. (31) In a general body meeting of Nepal's Bangladesh Refugee Relief Committee on the night of 28 August 1971, the members condemned the military junta's move for the secret trial of Mujibar Rahman on the ground that it was "against all canons of international law and justice". (32)

It was only in September 1971 that the Government of Nepal categorically declared its full sympathy with India in facing the influx of nine million refugees from Bangladesh. This was the outcome of the official meeting between Swaran Singh, India's Foreign Minister, and Nepalese Premier, K.N. Bista, at Kathmandu. After the Indian stand on vital issues like Bangladesh and the Friendship Treaty with Soviet was clarified, there was wide appreciation by Nepal of the Indian stand on the Bangladesh problem and Nepal was believed to have assured India that it would support New Delhi in international forums like the United Nations. (33) In the joint communique issued at the end of Swaran Singh's visit, K.N. Bista noted the social and economic implications of the refugee influx for India. (34).

(31) Times of India (New Delhi), 25 August 1971.

(32) Times of India (New Delhi), 30 August 1971.

(33) Assam Tribune (Gauhati), 5 September 1971.

(34) Times of India (New Delhi), 6 September 1971.

At a public meeting in Kathmandu on 8 September 1971, under the auspices of Bangladesh Refugee Relief Committee, a number of Nepali leaders like S.B. Thapa, former Prime Minister, S.P. Upadhyaya, former Home Minister and K.J. Raymajhi, General Secretary of the outlawed pro-Moscow Communist Party, denounced the inhuman atrocities in East Bengal and the secret trial of Mujib. (35) They demanded Mujib's unconditional release. According to these leaders, because of sheer geographical proximity developments in Bangladesh were bound to have their impact on Nepal. They wondered how the Government in Kathmandu could maintain a studied silence over the issue when it was aware that in future Nepal would have to maintain closer relationship with Bangladesh than with the regime in Islamabad. In sharp contrast to official thinking, Upadhyaya and Raymajhi contended that Bangladesh was a fait accompli and added, "We Nepalese look forward to the day when Bangladesh will celebrate its independence day." (36)

In great admiration of India's role in taking care of nine million refugees, an English daily from Kathmandu wrote editorially: "There is no doubt for its sheer magnitude that the East Bengal refugee influx into India is one of the greatest of such tragedies in human history." (37)

(35) The Statesman (New Delhi), 9 September 1971. See also Indian Express (New Delhi), 9 September 1971.

(36) Ibid.

(37) The Commoner (Kathmandu), 10 September 1971.

It appreciated the manner in which India was bearing that great burden with a lot of sacrifices. It called upon the international community to see that suitable conditions were created for the return of the refugees to their homes.

In the meantime a three-member Bangladesh delegation, led by Abdul Malik, had visited Nepal between 25 August to 9 September 1971. Other members of the delegation were Subodh Kumar Mitra and Abdul Monem Palukdar. Its purpose was to acquaint the people and government of Nepal with the actual happenings in Bangladesh since the military crackdown on 25 March 1971 and to seek Nepal's support. (38) According to the delegation's estimate about 7000 Nepali nationals employed in Bangladesh had been exterminated in Chittagong and Kushtia. During their fifteen day stay, the delegation met public leaders, senior government officers, student leaders and notable citizens to seek support for their freedom struggle. But the mission was regarded as only a partial success in rallying Nepalese support. The leader of the delegation, when pressed by newsmen said, "It is our misfortune and not the fault of the Government here (Kathmandu) that, perhaps, we have not been too convincing." (39)

(38) The Statesman (New Delhi), 11 September 1971. See also Hindustan Times, 13 September 1971 and Motherland (New Delhi), 11 September 1971.

(39) Hindustan Times, 13 September 1971.

Nepal's National Committee for World University Service in a meeting during the first week of September 1971 denounced the inhuman atrocities perpetrated by West Pakistan's military rulers on the people of Bangladesh. (40) Premier Bista, speaking to the Nepali Press Club, on 11 September said that Nepal believed in the policy of friendship and cooperation with all countries and in making ceaseless efforts for world peace. (41) While referring to the problem of exodus of refugees from East Bengal to India, he emphasized "the need for creating suitable conditions as early as possible for the return of refugees to their homes." (42) He stated that the Nepalese Government viewed the problem of refugees faced by India sympathetically. Some observers, in their review of the Bista Government's stand on the question of genocide and the massive inflow of refugees into India, were of the opinion that Nepal only made an attempt "to echo the hollow concern of the international community." (43) This was evident from the official reaction in Kathmandu after Swaran Singh's visit, when the government spokesman avoided any direct reference to the mass killings of East Bengalees by the Pakistani army. Moreover, suitable conditions for the return of refugees were never spelt out

(40) The Motherland (New Delhi), 11 September 1971.

(41) Rising Nepal (Kathmandu), 12 September 1971.

(42) The Commoner (Kathmandu), 12 September 1971.

(43) Muni and Phadnis, n. 16, p. 471.

clearly by the ruling elite in Kathmandu.

According to press reports from Nepal, the presence of 140 Bihari Muslims out of a total of 300 refugees in Kathmandu was imposing considerable strain on the normally cordial relationship between Pakistan and Nepal. A senior official told an Indian reporter in Kathmandu that unless the Indian Embassy could certify them as Indian citizens, all refugees would end up in jail for illegal entry. (44)

During the same period a deadlock was noticed in Nepal-Pakistan airlines talks on the issue of resuming flights from Kathmandu to Dacca. As interpreted in the Indian press, the Soviet Union, under obligation of Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971, had quietly told Nepal that it would consider it an unfriendly act should its airline resume its flight to Dacca. During the airlines talks Pakistan International Airlines promised full loads both ways and a war-risk insurance of Rs. 3000/- per flight and other sundry expenses to the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation. The agreement somehow broke down and some diplomats characterized it as "Soviet arm twisting". (45)

Although the Nepalese Government made no official protest about the presence of 140 Bihari Muslim refugees, mainly because of its neutral posture and its desire not to antagonise the Yahya regime, the Pakistani

(44) Hindustan Times, 14 September 1972.

(45) Motherland (New Delhi), 16 September 1971.

Embassy was informed that Nepal would like these people out of the country "as soon as possible". This was, no doubt, a difficult task as the overflight over the 17-mile stretch of Indian territory had been banned since the hijacking and burning of an Indian Airlines plane in Lahore. The only alternative route for the repatriation of these displaced persons was via Bangkok.

The Nepal Vidyarthi Sangh at its annual conference held at Narayan Ghat in Central Terai from 14 to 18 September, condemned the genocide in East Bengal committed by the Pakistani army. (46) It emphasized the need for a political solution of the problem, and handing over of the administration to the elected representatives of the people. It may be noted here that some Kathmandu youths and students had formed a "Bangladesh Support Council" earlier to give moral support to the liberation struggle. The Bar Association of Nepal had also in the meantime declared in a resolution that the secret trial of Sheikh Mujib was not only contrary to the dictates of justice but also an outright violation of the Human Rights Declaration. (47)

(46) Indian Express (New Delhi), 20 September 1971.

(47) See an unnamed political commentary: Bangla Desh, Inspiration for Democracy (Bangla Desh: Loktantra ke Prerna) Dinaman (New Delhi), Vol. III, 23 January 1972. p. 11.

From 18 to 20 September 1971, an International Conference on Bangladesh was held at New Delhi to mobilise world opinion in support of the liberation struggle. Delegates from a large number of countries, both official and non-official, attended the Conference and expressed their personal feelings about the movement. The Nepalese delegation included a number of important public figures like D.P. Koirala, former Prime Minister; Rishikesh Shah, former Foreign Minister; Rabindranath Sharma, Member of Rashtriya Panchayat and formerly Minister of State for General Administration; K.P. Bhandari, member of Rashtriya Panchayat and Chairman of the Nepal Bar Association and Working Committee member of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee; Veerendra Keshari, former member of Rashtriya Panchayat and Senate member of Tribhuvan University; and Indra Kant Mishra, Editor of Dainik Nepal.

At the opening session of the Conference two members of the Nepalese team got the opportunity to speak their minds on the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani military junta and the difficulty faced by India in tackling the massive refugee influx. Rishikesh Shah emphasized the fact that Nepal was doing its utmost to help the cause of Bangladesh by extending financial support through an organised committee to the refugees sheltered in India. In justification of Nepal's vital interests

involved in Bangladesh, he said, "Speaking in physical and geographical terms, I think Nepal is closer to Bangladesh than any country other than India." (48) He wanted to emphasize before the international gathering that the events in East Bengal had aroused the conscience of the Nepalese people. He added "We in Nepal have asked for the unconditional release of the unquestioned leader of East Bengal or for that matter the whole of Pakistan, Sheikh Mujibur (Rehman), because we have felt that his release alone will help the political settlement of the question of East Bengal."

(49) In his view the freedom movement in Bangladesh was not a matter within the jurisdiction of the U.N. Charter. In highlighting this issue further he said,

It has been my opinion for a long time that in a question concerning the natural rights of man himself, if we were not prepared to look at it in the proper perspective, we certainly cannot find fault with other countries like South Africa for denying human rights to certain sections of their population. I am sure this conference will look at this problem in this perspective. (50)

He assured the Conference on behalf of all members representing the Bangladesh Refugee Assistance Committee that they would do everything

(48) Rajni Gupta and Badhakrishna (Ed.) World Meet on Bangla Desh (Report of Proceedings of the International Conference on Bangladesh held in New Delhi from September 18 to 20 1971), International Committee of Friends of Bangladesh, (New Delhi, 1972), p. 59.

(49) Ibid. p. 59.

(50) Ibid. p. 59.

possible to help the cause of East Bengal. As a non-official body the least that the committee could do was to "make an appeal to all members of the United Nations to extend recognition to the new Government of Bangladesh". B.P. Koirala, Nepal's former Prime Minister, began by saying, "We are meeting today under the shadow of a great tragedy enacted in Bangladesh." (51) He pointed out that seventy-five million people of Bangladesh, unarmed or poorly armed, were being gunned down by a brutal military machine and were being subjected to all kinds of indignities and humiliation by the occupation forces. Koirala declared, "It is not enough to pass resolutions showing concern over the calamity, we should do something more." (52) The international community, in his opinion, could not side track its responsibility by imposing the burden of "eight million refugees" on India alone. Moreover, it was, he felt, not merely a fight for "some" constitutional gains by the East Bengalis. "It was", he emphatically declared, "the people of Bangladesh fighting to uphold a principle, to uphold the dignity of man, to uphold the democratic way of life." (53) According to him, the spontaneous, enthusiastic and massive support given by the people of Nepal to the freedom struggle in Bangladesh despite the indifference of the Government of Nepal, showed that the

(51) Ibid, p. 42.

(52) Ibid, p. 42.

(53) Ibid, p. 43.

Bengalis were in a way fighting for the Nepalese people also. Koirala went on to add, "If the people of Bangladesh go down fighting and if the light is extinguished there, our light in Nepal will also go out. Even in India, which is a democracy, I may warn my Indian friends that if the light goes out in Bangladesh, some of their lights will also be knocked out." (54) He felt that it was a "fond delusion" to hope that the dictators in Islamabad would respond to the appeals or diplomatic pressure of the big powers. He stated "I can speak with knowledge when I say that the dictators will not listen to any pressure except the pressure of arms." (55) He said he was eagerly looking forward to any concrete steps that the conference was going to decide upon in order to help the people of Bangladesh. He ended with another provocative statement when he declared, "I would like to repeat that if Bangladesh is lost, then the people's fight for the democratic way of life will be lost elsewhere. We in Nepal know that if Bangladesh people win, half of our struggle will have been won already." (56) In a personal interview in Delhi during the his visit, he held out the threat of "an armed insurrection if non-violent methods did not succeed in securing democratic rights in Nepal." (57)

(54) Ibid. p. 43.

(55) Ibid. p. 43.

(56) Ibid. p. 43.

(57) Tribhuvan Nath, "Why Nepal Stays Silent", Times of India (New Delhi)

During the first week of October 1971, Mustafizur Rehman, the first Secretary of Pakistan Embassy and Head of Chancery in Nepal, announced his defection to the Bangladesh freedom movement. In a press conference the Bengali diplomat read out a letter addressed to the Nepalese Prime Minister in which he had said, "I can no longer associate myself with a government which has ruthlessly trampled upon the rights of life, liberty and freedom of religion, conscience and other fundamental rights of my people, with a view to bring about a total or partial destruction of the Bengali race." (58) This, he said, was the reason why he had severed "all his links with the dictatorial regime in Pakistan" and declared his allegiance to the democratically elected Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. He had asked the Nepalese Premier to let him stay on in Nepal as the official representative of the Bangladesh government. Observers pointed out that this was the first defection on the part of a Pakistani diplomat in the Himalayan Kingdom which maintained good relations with Pakistan. (59) Mr. Rehman was allowed to stay on in Kathmandu for sometime as the Bangladesh representative provided he did not disturb Nepal's relations with Pakistan. He was, however, not allowed to fly the Bangladesh flag. (60) In the meantime, the Nepalese Consul-General stationed in Dacca made

(58) The Guardian (Rangoon) 5 October 1971.

(59) Ibid.

(60) Hindustan Times, 29 October, 1971.

a sudden air dash to Kathmandu when his government was under intense public pressure to modify its neutral stand on the Bangladesh issue. Apparently, the Nepalese Foreign Ministry had sought a first hand report of the situation in East Bengal before deciding any shift in Nepal's stand. (61)

While participating in the general debate in the U.N. General Assembly on 6 October 1971, Padam Bahadur Khatri, Nepal's permanent representative at the UN, mentioned the problem of Bangladesh refugees towards the end of his speech. He pointed out that a critical situation had developed out of the recent domestic events in East Pakistan. He said, "The people and the Government of Nepal have been deeply moved by the great human tragedy taking place in our neighbourhood. The tragedy is of an unprecedented magnitude and it has reopened old problems and generated new ones." (62) According to him, his country shared the view expressed by the Secretary General that these problems in their totality were of common concern to the international community and needed clear understanding, cooperation and statesmanship of the highest order in order to contain and ameliorate the unfortunate situation. He, on behalf of his Government, felt concerned at the social and economic implications for India following the influx of millions of refugees into India from across the border. Praising India for the way it had faced

(61) The Statesman (New Delhi), 6 October 1971.

(62) GAOR, Session 26, Provisional Verbatim Record, A/PV 1955, p. 311

See also news report in Rising Nepal, 8 October 1971.

the refugee problem, he added, "In meeting the burdens imposed by these problems, India, true to its humanitarian tradition, has been valient and generous." (63) In appreciation of the Secretary General's initiative in extending humanitarian assistance to the refugees in India and the affected people of "East Pakistan", he canvassed wider support among the members of the United Nations. At the same time he emphasized the need to create conditions for the return of the refugees to their homes.

The Nepalese press, with the exception of the government controlled dailies, had by now become quite vocal in condemning the inhuman atrocities committed by the Pakistani military junta in Bangladesh. It also sensed the possibility of an impending war between India and Pakistan with all its disastrous effects in the neighbouring region. A Kathmandu paper wrote in its editorial, "Should a war break out between India and Pakistan now responsibility for its consequence will rest squarely on Pakistan." (64) In highlighting the troop concentration on both sides and the "Crush India" slogan in Pakistan, it felt that the roots of the ensuing conflict lay in the short sighted and foolish action of Yahya regime. The daily commended India for refraining from any precipitate action in spite of the intolerable burden of the refugees and the constant provocation by the Pakistani troops.

(63) New Herald (Kathmandu) 28 October 1971.

(64) The Commoner (Kathmandu) 29 October, 1971.

Another daily expressed grave concern at the impending crisis. It however felt that it was in the interest of all, there by indirectly sounding a warning to King Mahendra's Government, to see that a possible confrontation between India and Pakistan was averted. (65) In its opinion the only way to avoid war was to persuade Pakistan to seek a solution of the East Bengal problem by talking with the leaders of East Bengal instead of continuing with its military adventure. It added, "If Rawalpindi thinks that the only way out of the impasse in which it happens to be at present is to go into war against India, she is only thinking of jumping from the frying pan to (sic) the fire." (66) The paper thought that caught in an insoluble dilemma in East Bengal Pakistan might like to turn it into an Indo-Pak problem by starting a war with India.

Towards the last week of November 1971, an Indian journalist reported from Kathmandu that most people in Nepal felt genuine sympathy for the cause of the freedom fighters in Bangladesh, but he stated, this had made no difference to the uncanny silence of the Nepalese Government over the development next door. (67) He analysed the Nepalese Government's mind in the following way. The establishment feared that expression of open sympathy with the freedom fighters' cause would displease Islamabad

(65) The Commoner (Kathmandu) 29 October, 1971.

(66) Ibid.

(67) Times of India (New Delhi), 27 November 1971.

and perhaps China. But going somewhat deeper, the King's camp felt that such an exercise might have repercussions, not wholly desirable from its point of view, on political trends within the Kingdom. He cited Someeksha, a weekly reflecting pro-Moscow Marxist opinion, which had written in its editorial, "Nepalese do not want war, but every one knows with whom their sympathies lie." He also referred to Navin Khabar, reflecting radical nationalist opinion, which squarely put the blame for the crisis on the American policy of giving arms to Pakistan and distributing only powdered milk to the Bangladesh refugees. The common man in Nepal, he felt, was very much perplexed by the Government's silence on so vital an issue of foreign policy. The Nepalese would welcome open help by their Government to the freedom fighters rather than the lip sympathy so far expressed for the refugees. According to him, leading intellectuals with democratic and pro-Moscow leanings, were keen to extend their hands of friendship to the people of Bangladesh. However, another observer pointed out sometime later that the liberation movement in Bangladesh was not supported by some former Communist leaders with Maoist leanings who now proclaimed themselves to be Royalists. Puran Bahadur, leading light of the China-Nepal Friendship Society, according to this observer, denounced the policy of "Indian expansionism" and defended the military junta's action as a necessity in order to defend the territorial integrity of Pakistan. (68) Man Mahan Adhikari, a Maoist leader, cited

(68) See Bangla Des: Inspiration for Democracy, n. 47, p. 12.

by him, spoke almost in similar tones and loyally supported Mahendra's position of "cold neutrality" over the Bangladesh issue.

Before the beginning of the Indo-Pak war of December 1971, the ruling circles in Kathmandu were much annoyed at the provocative remarks regarding armed resurrection made by B.P. Koirala during his September visit to Delhi in connection with the International Conference on Bangladesh. The establishment had already started a wave of repression by detaining forty political workers in the Terai region and stopping Government advertisements to those newspapers which had refused to condemn Koirala's statement in Delhi. The basic dilemma haunting the minds of the establishment was, "How could Kathmandu support India in a cause which is linked however indirectly with the struggle of its sworn opponents at home?" (69) It was also annoying to the H.M.G. that India gave "shelter to the arch opponents of the Government sponsored non-party system". The Nepalese Government expected the Indian Government to discourage B.P. Koirala from making such a political statement.

When war became inevitable and India recognised Bangladesh, there were mixed responses in Nepal. At the popular level the recognition of Bangladesh was welcomed and the Bangladesh Cooperation Committee in Nepal urged His Majesty's Government to follow India's example in recognising

(69) See Tribhuvan Nath, "Why Nepal Stays Silent", Times of India

(New Delhi), 27 November 1971.

the new Republic. (70) Before the outbreak of full scale war there was, according to a Nepali observer, instinctive sympathy and support by the traditionally freedom loving people of Nepal for the liberation struggle, whereas the official reaction remained largely "cool, cautious and calculating." (71) When the war came, the official press only felt concerned for its adverse effect on Nepal's tourist trade, imports and exports. A leading daily, in its editorial, regarded the outbreak of war as a painful and anxious moment for the country. In order to justify its neutral stand, it emphasized that Nepal had "excellent relations with both the belligerents" and apprehended a shortage of essential commodities due to dislocation of Nepal's trade with India and through Indian territory. (72) The paper advised officials and ordinary citizens not to say anything or act in a manner which might affect Nepal's position of non-alignment. The Nepal-Pakistan Friendship and Cultural Association declared that the Bangladesh problem was an internal problem of Pakistan and blamed India as the aggressor. (73) But, in spite of official propaganda, the Nepalese people remained more or less sympathetic towards India. They condemned

(70) The Statesman (New Delhi), 3 December, 1971.

(71) Sita Shreshtha, "Nepal and Bangla Desh", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 29 December 1971.

(72) Rising Nepal, 6 December 1971.

(73) "Bangla Desh: Inspiration for Democracy", n. 47, p. 12.

the vulgar and slanderous propaganda by Radio Pakistan against Hinduism in India.

In the UN General Assembly Debate on the Indo Pak War on 7 December 1971 Nepal participated actively but abstained on the final voting on the Resolution asking for an immediate ceasefire. Nepal had realized, although belatedly, the dictates of geography in showing greater measure of understanding for India's (and Bangladesh's) position than either Ceylon or Burma. The Nepalese representative, while taking part in the debate, was quite conscious of the "limitations of Nepal as a small country surrounded by bigger and more powerful neighbours and incapable of either of defending itself alone from external attack or of imposing her will on others, by means of the use or threat of force." (74) He emphasized the point that, more than many other member-states, Nepal needed the system of collective security and could not afford to be equivocal in her understanding and interpretation of the Charter principles as her very survival depended upon it. "In this light", he added, "my delegation welcomes the consideration by the General Assembly of the present item concerning the deteriorating situation which has led to the current large scale armed clashes between India and Pakistan." (75) He reaffirmed his faith in the United Nations' capacity to deal with such

(74) GAOR, Session 26, Provisional Verbatim Records, 7 December 1971, p. 111.

(75) Ibid.

situations which threatened international peace and security. He added that as a matter of basic principle his delegation could not remain indifferent to proposals seeking to put an end to all hostilities and effect in the withdrawal of forces. But he also pointed out that at "the same time it must be understood that the end of the current fighting alone does not solve the problems which led to the fighting." (76) He, thus, made an effort to focus the attention of the member nations on the urgent need for a political solution in East Bengal which would fully respect the wishes of the people of Bangladesh. He called upon the General Assembly to take such necessary measures as stood a reasonable chance of being implemented. The measures suggested by him were, first, to put an end to the armed conflict and at the same time create "not only the physical but also the political will on the part of the parties concerned which is required for the solution of basic problems." (77)

The substance of the Nepalese delegate's speech in the General Assembly indicated that Nepal was ready to fully cooperate with the United Nations in its efforts to put an end to the armed conflict in the subcontinent. But the fact that Nepal abstained from voting along with eleven other members, knowing fully well that the resolution was going to be adopted by a big majority, only made certain points clear. Nepal was quite sure of India's refusal to abide by the resolution. As a corollary to this, Nepal also knew very well that the emergence of a free and

(76) Ibid.

(77) Ibid.

sovereign Bangladesh on the world map had become inevitable sooner or later, and sooner rather than later. Nepal could not afford to ignore the geopolitical reality of Bangladesh situated next door to it. Kathmandu's voting behaviour in the General Assembly also gave an indication that it would recognise the new nation in the near future.

The propaganda of pro-Peking forces in Nepal during the December War provides an interesting study by itself. Some references has been made to this earlier also. The Maoists elements treated the liberation war in Bangladesh as "an insurgency hatched by the reactionary forces". An observer cited the Matribhumi, the weekly newspaper patronised by them, which published a series of articles condemning India for trying to create a new country in its sphere of influence. The weekly also charged that India was bent on destroying the territorial integrity of another country in violation of the principles of international law and morality. Moreover, when the ceasefire resolution in the General Assembly was endorsed by 104 members with only 11 in opposition, the weekly came out sharply with a comment that morally and politically India had been defeated and Pakistan had won international sympathy. (78)

In the meantime it may be noted that another Pakistani diplomat in Kathmandu, A.K.M. Maslehuddin, who was first Secretary for Commercial and Consular Affairs, defected and declared his allegiance to Bangladesh.

(78) "Bangla Desh: An Inspiration for Democracy", n. 47, p. 13.

He was followed by nine other Bengali staff members of the Embassy. With these defections the defection of all Bengali staff of the Embassy was complete. (79)

After the emergence of Bangladesh and its recognition by India, Bhutan and some other countries, Nepal according to the Indian press, was left on the horns of a dilemma. (80) After the decisive war, a London paper writing under the caption "Nepal's Options reduced by India's Victory", said,

For the past decade Nepal made the most of its precarious independence by playing off India, China and Pakistan. With the weakest corner of Nepal's foreign policy - cordial relation with Pakistan as an antidote to Indian influence - effectively dismantled, India will have a stronger and eventually, it is often feared here, determining influence on Nepal's foreign policy and on her economic and political developments. (81)

Commenting on Nepal's response during the December war, the paper said that Nepal's inability to separate itself from India was aptly demonstrated in spite of the fact that the official policy in Kathmandu was theoretically pro-Pakistani. About the future prospect of relations with Bangladesh, it prophesied that with Bangladesh "likely for the foreseeable future not to have a foreign policy different from New Delhi" and West

(79) National Herald (New Delh), 27 December 1971.

(80) Hindustan Times, 1 January 1972.

(81) The Guardian (London), 5 January 1972.

Pakistan "impotent and humiliated", Nepal must now look elsewhere for increased foreign support to balance New Delhi.

The release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, after Mr. Bhutto tookover as President of Pakistan, was highly acclaimed in Nepal. Even the semi-official Rising Nepal thoroughly overhauled its traditional cold attitude towards the Bangladesh movement. The paper, in an editorial comment, welcomed the Sheikh's release as a "useful gesture" and a step in keeping with the demands of domestic and world opinion. (82) But it used the term Bangladesh within inverted commas, apparently toeing the official line, whereas most other newspapers in Kathmandu ignored this official line and welcomed the new nation as the third largest neighbour of Nepal. Reflecting an official indication regarding recognition of Bangladesh, the semi-official daily wrote, "Now that this hitherto imponderable factor is imponderable no more, a major step forward to recognition of Bangladesh has been reached." (83) Obviously while talking about the imponderable factor, it was referring to the release of Sheikh Mujib.

On 16 January 1972, Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pandey, the Nepalese Ambassador in India, formally conveyed the message, in a letter to H.R. Chaudhury, Chief of the Bangladesh Mission in New Delhi, that his Government had decided to recognise Bangladesh. (84) While announcing

(82) Reported in the Statesman (New Delhi), 7 January 1972.

(83) Rising Nepal, 10 January 1972.

(84) National Herald (New Delhi), 17 Januar 1972.

his country's decision the ambassador expressed the hope that other countries would see the reality of the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent sovereign nation and soon recognise it. Thus, Nepal became the fourth Asian nation and the eighth country in the world to recognise Bangladesh. Almost simultaneously, the Foreign Ministry in Kathmandu announced in a press release, "The Government after careful consideration of the new situation has come to the conclusion that the new state of Bangladesh is an undeniable political reality. The Government would try to maintain friendly relations with Pakistan." (85) The decision, it pointed out, was in the interest of Nepal. The press note sincerely hoped that the newly born non-aligned state under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib would be able to play its role in the international field and would safeguard the hard won freedom of the country. S.P. Upadhyaya, a former Nepalese Home Minister, expressed satisfaction that the Nepalese Government had taken the formidable and wise decision keeping in view the national interests. (86) Abdus Samed Azad, the Bangladesh Foreign Minister, commenting on the Nepalese recognition said,

(85) Rising Nepal, 17 January 1972. The announcement was also broadcast by Radio Moscow on the same day.

(86) National Herald (New Delhi), 18 January 1972.

It is a matter of happiness that all our neighbours have realised the reality of Bangladesh. We are now in a position to establish diplomatic relations with all our neighbours. (87)

On 18 January 1972 D.B.C. and A.I.R. reports said that Pakistan announced the recall of its ambassador from Kathmandu. A Pakistani official regretted that the Nepalese decision was premature as close ties had been existing between the two countries. (88) A Calcutta newspaper, in welcoming the decision, paid tribute to the political sagacity of the rulers of Nepal and felt that Kathmandu was quite convinced about the stability and permanence of the new nation. (89) Prime Minister Bista said on 23 January 1972, in defence of his Government's policy on recognition, that the decision was intended to establish trade relations and friendly ties with Bangladesh. Nepal had offered to supply food grains, sugar, edible oil and rape seeds to Bangladesh. (90) Observers considered it significant that Nepal had taken such a decision in the face of China's aggressive backing of Pakistan and Pakistan's known and adverse reaction to this step. (91) Nepal, however, could not afford to ignore for long her own trade and political interests in the region.

(87) Ibid.

(88) Rising Nepal, 18 January 1972.

(89) Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), 18 January 1972.

(90) The Statesman (New Delhi), 21 January 1972.

(91) News Reviews on South Asia (I.S.D.A., New Delhi), January 1972,

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Before going on to highlight the emerging trends in Pakistan-Nepal relations in the light of the birth of a new republic of Bangladesh in South Asia it is in the fitness of things to glance briefly at the various stages through which Pak-Nepal relations have developed, the details of which have already been narrated in the earlier chapters.

The first phase (Chapter II) which covered the period from 1947 to 1960 was more or less an era of self imposed isolation. Both the countries, very much preoccupied with their domestic crises (as already discussed), did not take any major initiative to come closer to each other. That is why official contacts between the two countries were limited to only three occasions. (1)

The second phase (Chapter III) began with the agreement on the part of both the countries to establish diplomatic relations at the non-residential level. During this period the foreign policies of Pakistan and Nepal toward each other were very much linked with the changes in the power structures in both the countries. The C-in-C of the Army took over power in one country and in the other the King put an end to

(1) The first indirect ^{was} contact at Bandung Conference in 1955. The other two were the official Pakistani delegations at King Mahendra's coronation ceremony and the International Buddhist Conference held in Kathmandu during 1956. All these have been mentioned in various chapters.

the nascent democracy and concentrated absolute power in his own hands. Both of them had deep distrust of western forms of democracy for their own separate reasons. Both Ayub Khan and King Mahendra expressed mutual admiration for each other's new political experiments. This was reflected in the various discussions between the two heads of state during Mahendra's visit to Pakistan in 1961.

The third phase in Pakistan-Nepal relations (Chapter IV) acquired significance because of the Sino-Indian border dispute and the reverses India suffered on the Himalayan frontiers in the conflict of 1962. Pakistan reacted very sharply to western military aid to India. On the other hand, although the Nepalese government assumed a posture of neutrality, it undoubtedly took advantage of India's loss of prestige in the region. Subsequently, the well-timed visit of Ayub Khan to the mountain kingdom and the big welcome he received there was an indication that Nepal wanted to befriend Pakistan despite the irritation this caused to India. Although Ayub Khan could not get an assurance of support from Mahendra on the Kashmir issue, the indications were that Nepal had backed away from a position of active support for India's stand on Kashmir to a relatively more neutral posture. This phase was also significant in another sense. Two agreements relating to trade and transit were signed by Pakistan and Nepal. Although Pakistan had no particular economic interests in the Himalayan kingdom, it wanted to use trade as a major lever to wean away a strategically important

neighbour from the spell of Indian influence. On the part of Nepal, the policy of trade diversification paid more psychological than economic dividends, since it spelt out Kathmandu's desire to lessen its all but complete dependence on India on matters of trade. The setting up of microwave communication links between Lahore and Dacca via Kathmandu during this period also made one feel that Pakistan could use Nepal as a suitable link between its two wings separated by one thousand miles of hostile Indian territory.

With the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan War in September 1965, the small states in the subcontinent were on the horn of a dilemma. King Mahendra very tactfully handled his foreign policy so as not to completely antagonise India. On the other hand, Nepal made hectic attempts to convince the military junta in Pakistan about Kathmandu's inability, because of treaty obligations, to prevent the use of Gurkha troops by India against Pakistan. However, in spite of Foreign Minister Bista's personal visit to West Pakistan immediately after the war and two short visits by Mahendra to both the wings of Pakistan (Chapter V), Pakistan-Nepal relations in general suffered a setback during this period because of the improvement in Indo-Nepalese relations and the Indian leaders' acceptance of the legitimacy of Mahendra's system of 'Panchayat Democracy'.

Then came a period of stalemate (Chapter VI) in the relations between the two countries. This could possibly be explained in terms

of another major political crisis in Pakistan which led to the end of the Ayub Khan era, although the levers of power continued to be in the hands of another army commander. This is why one hardly finds any significant moves made by either country during 1968-69. Yahya Khan's visit to Nepal in 1970 could perhaps be explained as an effort in picking up threads as well as to acquire greater legitimacy in the eyes of the Pakistanis.

The years 1971 and 1972 are important landmarks (Chapter VII) in Pakistan-Nepal relations because of the collapse of military rule in Pakistan and the coming into power of popular governments in both the former wings of undivided Pakistan. Popular sympathy in Nepal for the cause of Bangladesh, during the entire liberation struggle in the former East Pakistan, in spite of prolonged official silence, led to some deterioration of Pakistan-Nepal relations.

Now, with the emergence of a sovereign Bangladesh, the link between the two wings of Pakistan has broken. The new links that Nepal is going to establish with these two separate countries provides enough food for speculation.

In the light of political and military developments over Bangladesh, it has been observed that a new balance of power has

increased India's importance in the region. (2) The myth of an artificial parity between India and Pakistan based on Pakistan's strategy of "borrowing strength" has been exploded. Moreover, the interest of Nepal in Pakistan has now diminished to a large extent because of the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan. Although, while recognising Bangladesh, Prime Minister Bista had categorically stated that Nepal would like to maintain friendly relations with Pakistan, Nepal's main trade interests, as admitted by him, remained in Bangladesh.

Thousands of people of Nepali origin are employed in the tea plantations of Chittagong Hill tracts and other parts of Bangladesh. The new country, as already pointed out earlier, is separated from Nepal only by a small strip of Indian territory. Although territorially almost equal to Nepal, in population, resources and political acculturation, Bangladesh far exceeds Nepal. Moreover, Nepal's trade diversification was hampered in the past partly because of the strained relations between India and Pakistan. This prevented Nepal from gaining access to the sea through the alternative route via the former

(2) See for instance, Romesh Thapar, "The Impact of Bangla Desh",

Seminar (New Delhi), No. 150, February 1972, p. 235. Another

observer points out with a similar tone, "The hard fact of India's size, stability and geography cannot be ignored as a vital factor in the politics of the Indian Ocean area of Asia and indeed of the World." See Rajeshwar Dayal, "Global Dimensions" in Ibid, p. 29.

East Pakistan. Now, with the present state of relations between India and Bangladesh, India is not likely to create difficulties in Nepal's trade with and through Bangladesh. It is very much on the cards, therefore, that there would be greater contacts between Bangladesh and Nepal than those which had existed between united Pakistan and Nepal. Although there is enough scope for bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh, the latter would also like to diversify its trade. The main justification for this, as pointed out by a western observer, is the memory of "economic domination of East Bengal by the predominantly Hindu hinterland of industrialised Calcutta." (3)

There is also another possibility which may affect the formulation of foreign policies in the three countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal). If Pakistan and Bangladesh patch up their differences and start afresh with a new approach, both of them along with Nepal could still hope to act as checks on India's predominant position in South Asia. But this possibility is rather remote, at least as far as the foreseeable future is concerned.

(3) Peter Lyon, "Bangladesh: Fashioning a Foreign Policy", South Asian

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