

**U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS DURING THE NIXON
ADMINISTRATION, 1969-1972**

*Dissertation is submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2011



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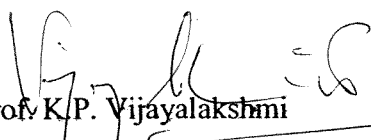
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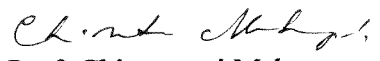
I declare that the dissertation entitled "U.S.-Pakistan Relations During the Nixon Administration, 1969-1972" submitted by me for award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.


EVA LORENG

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiner for evaluation.


Prof. K.P. Vijayalakshmi
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Acknowledgements

I take this opportunity to thank my guide Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra. A special thanks to Prof. Christopher S. Raj and Prof. K.P. Vijayalakshmi. I would like to thank the staff at the American Centre, IDSA and the Teen Murti Bhawan libraries for their kind help. I would like to thank all my classmates Allen V.L. Pundir, Kapil Kumar Verma, Sangeetha Hembrom, Shrotam Katwal, Tanushree, Vanlalpari, Vishwabharti Kumar Gupta, Vivek Mishra and Zhang Kuo. A special thanks to my friends Hina Pandey, Keneisenyo Solo, Natalia Kaul, Nilabh Krishna and Trasha Gupta. I would like to thank Sanjay Photostat for their cooperation and help. Last and definitely not the least my mother and my brother Abhijeet who stood by me like a rock always inspiring me to work hard and excel.

Preface

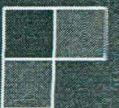
The Nixon administration (1969-1972), has been one of the most controversial and one of the most documented periods in contemporary American history. Decades have passed since the Nixon administration is over. The government has come up with several declassified documents and many scholars, former bureaucrats and diplomats have written on it extensively, making it the apt time to reconstruct and analyse what happened and why did it happen. The Focus of my research is on the American perspective on the U.S.-Pakistan relations during the Nixon administration 1969-1972, that is the first term of the administration in the White House office. Several factors have played a key role in shaping their relations. The opening of China with the help of Pakistan and the tilted American stand during the 1971 War, have been given attention in particular. Pakistan was essentially a strategic pawn in the Nixon administration's Cold War calculations and innovative initiatives and the Nixon administration's strategic moves towards China brought little benefit and greater loss to China.

The first chapter looks into the evolution of US-Pakistan strategic alliance from the beginning of the Truman era till the end of the Johnson era. The second chapter looks into the external environment and the domestic factors that shaped the US-Pakistan relations. The third chapter focuses on how the US carried out the process of rapprochement with the help of Pakistan. Chapter four analyses the indifferent attitude the Nixon administration had adopted towards the crisis in East Pakistan during the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Chapter five looks at how the American tilt towards Pakistan affected the 1971 India-Pakistan war. The sixth chapter that is the conclusion of the dissertation firstly explains how Pakistan had been a pawn in the Nixon administration's Cold War calculations and innovative initiatives. Secondly the conclusion shows how the Nixon administration's strategic moves towards China brought little benefit and greater loss to Pakistan.

Introduction

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- ❖ Creation of Pakistan and American Response to it
- ❖ The Truman Period, 1945-1952
- ❖ The Eisenhower Period, 1953-1960
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Chapter 1



Introduction

“No nation can have a sure guide as to what it need not do in foreign policy without accepting the national interests as that guide.”

(Morgenthau 1951:67)

1947, when almost half the world was in the process of recovering from the devastation of the Second World War; in the Indian sub-continent the partition redefined devastation. Born was the state of Pakistan a product of religious bigotry and the two nation theory. Soon its religious identity became a question and an issue of conflict forever, as large number of Muslims chose to stay back in India. Thus the seeds of anti-India sentiments in Pakistan and an India obsessed foreign policy were sown. The U.S. at this time was the only state in the western world which had escaped the Second World War unscathed¹.

Post-Second World War peace was short lived. Soon the saga of Cold War the ideological conflict was unleashed between the US and the USSR lasting for almost four decades. It witnessed both the superpowers attempting to spread their tentacles world over under different strategies and policy measures. Containment of the U.S.S.R. became the prime feature of the American foreign policy. Pactomania and the aid politics became the handmaiden of this ideological battle. According to Kheli (1982:4) it was:

“A policy to confine the communist contagion by establishing a “cordon sanitaire”, around the periphery of the Soviet Union, the PRC and, Eastern Europe.”

¹ Except for the attack by the Japanese on the military base at Pearl Harbor the U.S. did not face any attack on its home soil during the Second World War, as compared to the other states in the western world.

With few resources (in comparison to India) and bitter internal political battles, Pakistan struggled to meet its foreign and domestic policy needs.

“The unanimous stand to seek American support to counter India was the only uniting factor for the Pakistani ruling elite. Pakistani policy makers remained convinced that India, which is several times bigger than Pakistan in size and resources, was conspiring against Pakistan’s very independence and territorial integrity (Amin 2000:41).”

The story in newly independent India stood somewhat in contrast, as framing the Constitution and development of core industries had preoccupied India. In case of Cold War politics Indian leadership unanimously took a neutral stand, with adoption of Non Alignment as a foreign policy strategy. Such developments only added to the insecurities of Pakistan, and their keenness to align with the US.

During this period policies of any state towards South Asia were framed keeping in Indo-Pak hostilities. Since 1950 another feature was added to this; that was an independent communist China. Soon the policies towards the region were framed keeping in purview all the three states that is India, Pakistan and China. In Framing policies towards this region appeared to be herculean task with a pro-US Pakistan, a marginalised India and a communist China. The US, suffering from the communist phobia, wanted to counter communism in South Asia Pakistan’s fears of succumbing to the Indian might made them eager to be a part of the western alliance. Both saw in each other the answer to their problems and the rest is history. What unfolded with time was an intense drama on the world stage which witnessed vehement promotion of national interest.

If the Truman era laid the founding stone of the US-Pakistan alliance, the Eisenhower administration made a building on it only to be destroyed by the short lived Kennedy administration. When the Johnson administration reached its end once again national interest gave the alliance a new turn.

Scholars have defined the relations differently with many looking at it from the perspective of relations between a core and a periphery state. President Ayub Khan in his memoir summed up calling Pakistan as the most allied ally of the US.

Creation of Pakistan and the American response to it

Scholars trace the relations between the US and the Indian sub-continent (since at this time Pakistan had not emerged as an independent state) to the arrival of ‘Yankee Chipper’². But this did not mark the beginning of any relations between the two. Ties between the US and the leaders of the Muslim League developed as the Indian national movement approached its climax.

For long the Indian National Congress (INC) alone led the Indian National Movement, but seeds of difference were sown in 1906 with the creation of the Muslim League and the introduction of communal electorates. The term Pakistan which in Urdu means “sacred land” originated in 1933.

Amin (2000:3) says “Poet Philosopher Muhammad Iqbal is regarded as the first top-ranking figure to set forth the concept of an independent Muslim state comprising the Muslim majority areas in the north-west of what was British India. Moreover this peculiar background has profoundly influenced Pakistan’s foreign policy after independence.”

In 1940 the Muslim League adopted the resolution for creation of Pakistan as a state for Muslims as its primary objective, giving a new turn to the Indian national movement. The event created a big buzz in the Indian political arena, but miles away in the US the event was rather insignificant. The concerns raised by the India League³ in the US in

² It was the first American ship that arrived on the Indian shore in the 18th century. This was officially the first point of contact between the US and India.

³ A small community formed by the Indians settled in the United States.

support of the INC were mere whispers falling on deaf ears. The American government and the press maintained a subtle stand on the developments in South Asia. The staunchness with which they followed this policy was best manifested in the Second World War. However, Bhutto (1969:28) felt the other way and said:

“The United States had shown an increasingly direct interest in Indian affairs as the Japanese advance into Asia spread westwards. The concern of the Americans with the strategy of World War was bringing them into touch with political issues, on which they had strong opinions and little experience. Now that the Japanese were advancing towards its frontiers, United States Government began to express views and offer counsel on Indian affairs. . .”

Relations between British India and the US were carried on via the British government. The American consular offices in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Karachi played a limited role. Officially diplomatic ties between the U.S. and British India were established in 1941, followed by establishment of American mission in Delhi in 1942, and complete diplomatic relations were established later in 1946. An American Embassy was established and Henry Grady was the first American ambassador to India. Formal establishment of ties did not bring about any overnight changes in the relations between the US and the Sub-Continent, although the US did not approve of partition of India. According to Kux (2001:12):

“The wartime dependence of Europe on the US made the latter to pressurize for the Indian independence; the US had experienced the devastation of the Civil War on its home soil, and therefore did not want that India should also experience the same after the partition.

American magazines ‘Life’ and ‘Time’ and the newspaper ‘The New York Times’ took an anti-Muslim League stand.

Pro-Pakistan leaders from the sub-continent had started making attempts to garner American support for their cause. M. A. H. Ispahani (a businessman from Calcutta) and Begum Shah Nawaz (a Punjabi

personality) kept the case of Pakistan in front of Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State; even as they participated in the New York Herald Tribune forum and travelled throughout the length and breadth of the US for the purpose. The concept of NAM had already started shaping in India and thus an alliance with any of the post war superpowers was out of question.

The Truman Period 1945-1952

After the Second World War the saga of the Cold War politics dictated US foreign policy. Largely under the umbrella of the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine the Truman administration promoted its foreign policy needs around the world⁴. Pakistan at this time continued to be under the British Commonwealth. Both the US and Pakistan were seeking allies for fulfillment of varied purposes. Besides the political factors and the foreign policy needs, the geography and the topography of the region also played an important role in developing the ties between the two states.

Pakistani leadership from the beginning was vocal about their desperation to become an American ally. Jinnah in one of his speeches called Pakistan a democracy and said that communism did not flourish on the soil of Islam (Kux 2001:33). Pakistan can never go communist said scholar Fazlur Rehman (Choudhury 1977:111). One of the prime reasons behind the western bias was the western education of the ruling elite of Pakistan⁵.

⁴ The Marshall Plan was essentially a Recovery program of the U.S. launched in 1947 after the Second World War for Europe. This was the brainchild of the then U.S. Secretary of state George Marshall. In a speech to the Congress President Truman said "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure (Government of the United States of America 1947). The media interpreted this speech as the 'Truman Doctrine'. Under this the US provided Turkey and Greece with economic and military aid.

⁵ Even the ruling Indian elite of the time was largely educated in the west and carried similar biases. But unlike Pakistan India chose to take a non-aligned stand. Roots of this policy can also be found in the pre-independence era itself.

Pakistan was also surrounded with problems on all fronts and saw the US as the messiah who would save her.

“Perhaps Pakistan had been pre-occupied, for the greater part of its existence, in a difficult and unequal contest with India and this had produced the most decisive impact on the formulations of its foreign policy (Amin 2000:40).”

However, from the Soviet perspective both India and Pakistan were potential American stooges, and therefore, it only promoted cordial and limited relations with both the states, voluntarily opting to maintain some distance as a precautionary measure. According to Amin (2000:41):

“The Soviets saw a hand of imperialism behind the developments in the sub-continent and treated both India and Pakistan as bourgeois pro-west states⁶.”

Further according to Burke (1990:30-31):

“Pakistan cannot afford to wait she must take her friends where she finds them, said Liaquat Ali Khan viewing these developments.”

Geographical boundary brought the most fertile parts of Punjab to Pakistan, but it also brought a dry plateau, high and barren mountains, and a desert. East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) was a fertile region but was too far from West Pakistan and prone to environmental disasters, other than this it was surrounded by India on all the three sides. The limited resources made Pakistan desperate for American help, and barely two weeks after independence Pakistan asked the US for aid.

Problems had already erupted on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Jinnah doubted that there was a Soviet hand in spoiling the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Several issues were involved in this (a)

⁶ Amin (2000:41) further says “The US extended an invitation to Indian Prime Minister Nehru to visit the United States and this was readily accepted. Also India decided to stay on in the Commonwealth even after becoming a republic. Both of these moves drew criticism from the Soviets who now looked more supportively towards Pakistan.”

Afghanistan opposed Pakistan's entry into the United Nations (U.N.), (b) the Afghans supported the freedom of the tribes of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Pushtunian independence⁷ and (c) the validity of the Durand Line⁸ became vexed question. The problems did not blow out of proportion with the geography of the region playing a key role, as Afghanistan is landlocked state and is dependent on Pakistani land routes for trade. Therefore, annoying Pakistan was out of question for them.

After independence the reorganization of states began, Indian states were given three options under the Indian Independence Act; they could have remained with either (a) India or (b) Pakistan or (c) could have emerged as an independent state. In case of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir a unanimous decision could not be reached. Geographically and demographically it could have joined either of the two states.⁹ The problem started 1947 onwards, with the infiltration of Pakistani tribesmen from NWFP in Kashmir. The political situation in Kashmir started deteriorating and Hari Singh sought the help of the Indian government in meeting these challenges, in return of which he signed the Instrument of Accession (IoA) in favor of India; but this was perceived as a fraud by

⁷ The tribes in the Pakistani state of NWFP wanted to be free and Afghanistan supported this demand. On the other hand the Pushtuns, one of the tribes in the NWFP wanted to establish a state for themselves that is the state for Pathans carving it out from Pakistan.

⁸ Durand Line, name given to the geographical boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan. This was established by the British with the Treaty they signed with the Abdur Rehaman Khan in 1893, and this was to stay for a period of 100 years. The line became an issue since it divided ethnic Pathans into two different nations.

⁹ Maharaja of Kashmir Hari Singh a Hindu King ruled Jammu and Kashmir at the time of independence and he wanted to remain independent. Kashmir Valley had a dominant Muslim population; Jammu had a dominant Hindu population and Ladakh had a dominant Buddhist population. Economically the minority Hindus comprised the elite section of the society and the Muslims were mostly peasants and artisans.

Pakistan¹⁰. Immediately after signing of the IoA Prime Minister Nehru pledged that the final accession would be based on plebiscite and the government of Jammu and Kashmir would be decided by the Constituent Assembly of the state. Instead began the first conflict between India and Pakistan over the territory of Kashmir.

On the advice of Lord Mountbatten, Nehru took the issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and here 'United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan' (UNCIP) was set up. The commission comprised of Americans and British. The issue only complicated with time. Under the commission the Line of Control (LoC) was established as the de-facto border between India and Pakistan. The first American Ambassador to Pakistan Paul Ailing called Pakistan as a victim of conspiracy (Kux 2000:36). But American media particularly the Time magazine and newspaper New York Times and other international news agencies like Reuters remained anti-Pakistan in their approach.

Under Fleet Admiral Charles W. Nimitz of the American Navy a plebiscite was to be held on January 5th, 1949, but it could not take place. Then a council was appointed under Dr. Frank P. Graham¹¹, four phases of negotiations followed and 12 proposals were made but still no conclusion could be reached. The U.S. also arranged for a brief meeting between the Indian and the Pakistani officials. India and Pakistan held discordant stands of the; and the issue remained unresolved and was eventually suspended from the UN as well. According to Choudhury (1977:115):

¹⁰ With this Instrument of Accession the state of Jammu and Kashmir did become a part of India under article 370, but there were only three subjects in context of Jammu and Kashmir which the Union of India had control over (a) defense, (b) foreign policy and (c) communication, but this article had temporary status. In the constitutional history of India this is one of the most debated articles as it failed to satisfy any of the sides completely.

¹¹ Dr. Graham was the U.S. Senator from North Carolina, and he was appointed as the representative for India and Pakistan in the U.N.

“However, it was a different story for the US, on the eve of Liaquat Ali Khan’s visit to the US the American press frankly admitted that the Americans knew little about Pakistan.”

Soon Pakistan started receiving American Aid. The US was the first state to give bilateral aid to Pakistan. The first aid was given in 1951 this was for the development of railways in Pakistan.

Choudhury (1977:116) says “A group of American Senators who visited the sub-continent in November 1949 expressed dismay that the air of both the dominions was charged with unusual tension making one doubtful of the existence of peace in these two countries. This, the Senators believed was a disturbing factor in the consideration of foreign aid.”

The aid was not a philanthropic move of the US. It was given keeping in mind the strategic importance Pakistan in the US foreign policy.

Choudhury (1950:76) says “Pakistan’s policy of non-involvement in the east-west Cold War policy initiated by Jinnah and followed by Liaquat Ali Khan upto 1950 was coming to an end along with American policy of non-involvement in the sub-continent. The US and Pakistan were moving in the same direction for different reasons. The US was guided by global policy of containing international communism and Pakistan was motivated by problems of national security and defense.”

As spilling of disaster in the region could mean poverty and which was considered a breeding ground for communism. The change in stand also promoted the ‘Good Samaritan’ image of the US.

Amin (2000:40) says “Soon after independence Pakistan also explored Pan-Islamism to see if it could bring the weight age of the numerous Islamic states behind it with respect to India. However, it drew a blank and its call for an Islamic bloc even aroused uneasiness in countries like Egypt which were seemingly worried that Pakistan would become a rival for leadership in the Islamic world.”

Thus Pakistan had no option but to seek the help of any of the power blocs, and it was satisfied with the American support.

The Eisenhower period 1953-1960

“I Like Ike”, the Presidential campaign slogan took Dwight Eisenhower the first Republican President after World War II to the White House in 1953. Containment of the Soviet Union continued to be the prime feature of foreign policy. At the domestic front McCarthyism, one of the darkest phases of American encounter with communism on the home soil, unfolded. Scholars claim that the ‘Grand Strategy’ of the Eisenhower administration to counter the Soviet threat using Pakistan had developed even before he had taken the office. Pakistan looked upon the Eisenhower administration with hope and expectations. The ‘American tilt’ towards Pakistan which developed later during the Nixon period (1969-1972) finds its roots in this period. The cordial bent was also an outcome of the national interest, personal likes and dislikes and family ties between the policy makers¹². Thus close ties developed between the US and Pakistan during the Eisenhower period¹³.

Domestically Pakistan faced a volatile political situation. Pakistan was still a part of the British Commonwealth and unlike India it had not undertaken constitutional, social and economic developments¹⁴. Perhaps soon after the arrival of the Eisenhower administration Pakistan placed a request for wheat shipment to meet the food shortage after the two

¹² American Ambassador to Pakistan Horace Hildreth had his daughter married to the son of Pakistani President Mirza. Though considered insignificant but it did add to his pro-Pakistani attitude.

¹⁴ Kashmir continued to be a bone of contention between India and Pakistan, and this influenced the American policy towards South Asia. The Eisenhower administration took an initiative outside UN and sent a mission under Paul Hoffman, President of the Ford Foundation and former administrator of the Marshall plan to initiate bilateral talks between India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue. The proposal for vision of Kashmir was pushed upon, but Pakistan did not accept it. The mission ended in a failure.

¹⁴ The CIA in an undercover operation had sent scientist Dr. Charles Burton Marshall to Pakistan to help in framing new constitution. Basically this was a camouflaged move by the US to influence the domestic political developments in Pakistan, and the US also obliged Pakistan by doing so.

consecutive droughts. But the aid reached only West Pakistan; these factors laid the ground for the differences between East and West Pakistan. Amidst all these developments Mohammed Ali Bogra became the new Pakistani Prime Minister in 1953.

An internal State Department memorandum mentions that Washington applauded the new Prime Minister as energetic and progressive minded (Kux 2000:53).

Dulles's Asia tour took US-Pakistan relations on a completely different road. Dulles convinced Nehru of a neutral American stand and the impossibility of a military alliance with Pakistan. But time again proved the lack of sagacity with which Nehru knew world politics. As Dulles's Pakistan visit was followed by negotiations for American military aid in name of communist threat. As a token of consolation Pakistan was made to pledge that, these weapons would not be used against India. Perhaps Pakistan would help India in situations of external aggression. After the tour Dulles emerged as the ardent advocate of the Pakistani cause in front of the House Foreign Affairs Committee¹⁵.

This was followed by Gen. Ayub Khan's visit to the US. He had only one agenda that was to ensure the American military support for Pakistan. Before any conclusion could be reached Ayub Khan opened Pandora's Box by disclosing the ongoing negotiations to the media. Nehru called the deal "a step towards war, even world war, a step which will bring war right to our door" (Kux 2000:61). Late 1953, Vice President Richard M. Nixon visited India and Pakistan.

¹⁵ Dulles's pro-Pakistani approach was a result of several of factors. Before taking the office his brief meeting with Indian representative to the UN, Krishna Menon (known to be a leftist) had left a sour taste in Dulles's mouth. He found Nehru's neutral foreign policy naïve and extremely leftist. Moreover Nehru had refused to sign the peace treaty with Japan this further annoyed Dulles. Such personal likes and dislikes played a subtle but a key role in shaping American policy towards Pakistan.

Gupta (1972:23) points out that the Americans planned to use West Pakistan as a 'watchdog' against the Russians and the visit turned out to be the curtain raiser for the 'grand design'.

Nixon's own personal biases towards Pakistan played a pivotal role in shaping the tilt towards Pakistan.

The military aid soon reached Pakistan. According to the US the deal was taken without much contemplation, as even the specific role to be played by Pakistan in the defense of the Middle East was not clear. Nehru was calmed with the assurance that the aid will not be used against India and if something like this happens then the US would take action against Pakistan. The American media gave a mixed response to these developments. The *New York Times* praised the military aid, the *Washington Post* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* criticized it.

According to the then US Ambassador to Pakistan, Horace Hildreth, 'the only limitation' on the use of military aid was that it would not be used for the purpose of aggression (Amin 2000:44).

In 1954, Food for Peace Program (FPP) began. This helped the US to get rid of the surplus food stock produced during and immediately after the Second World War and it also helped the US in generating goodwill for itself.

Soon both the states entered into their first bilateral defense agreement, the Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA). This sanctioned the American military aid to Pakistan. According to a secret aide-memoire the military aid to Pakistan increased to 50 million. Besides this the U.S. provided 4 army infantry, 1.5 armored division, modern aircraft for air force squadrons and 12 navy vessels.

There were even information programs in the Pakistan armed services run by the United States, designed to promulgate US view of the world and pro-Americanism (Cohen 1987:27).

Despite all the support, Islamabad at regular intervals of time kept nagging Washington for more and more aid. Perhaps at times even the Eisenhower administration became suspicious about Pakistan's plans and ordered a detailed inquiry into the aid request. However, it was proved that Pakistan was in dire need of food aid.

The Pakistani army chief, General Ayub Khan, was particularly keen to secure the latest American military equipment for the Pakistani armed forces with the conviction that whereas Pakistan had the manpower to take on India, it was only deficient in military equipment (Amin 2000:43).

The policy of 'Pactomania' took shape under the Eisenhower administration. Initially the plan was to build Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO), based on the concept of 'Northern Tier Defense'¹⁶. But the plan remained only on paper. This plan materialized only in 1954, in form of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Initially Pakistan's membership of SEATO was opposed, even by the U.S. since it did not fulfill the condition on geographical ground. Still Pakistan insisted for the membership viewing it as an additional safe guard measure against India, and therefore in 1955 it officially became a member of SEATO. The same year initiative for a defense pact was taken by Iraq and Turkey which resulted in the formation of the 'Baghdad Pact'. This was actually a manifestation of the Northern Tier alliance concept in true sense. Britain also became its member. The US chose an observer status; keeping in mind the interstate rivalries in the Arab world it thought it would be better to maintain some distance. Pakistan delayed its decision, but eventually became a member. Later in 1959 it was renamed

¹⁶ Under MEDO the US and the UK would enter into a mutual defense agreement with the state in the Middle East. Through such a policy the US expected to keep the Soviet plans of expansion in Afghanistan under check and also hoped to hold a dominant position in the region. Perhaps need of such a policy measure would not have arisen if the US would have positively responded to the Afghan request for American arms aid. Kheli (1982) considers the 'Northern Tier of Defense' as a precursor to the Nixon Doctrine of 1969; since at this time president Nixon was the Vice President.

as the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) after Iraq withdrew its membership.

Senator Fulbright had warned about adverse consequences the SEATO and CENTO could have, but such warnings were shrugged off due to the short sightedness of the policy makers. According to Amin (2000:43):

“This was not an unnatural alliance. In ideological terms, Pakistan felt closer to the West rather than to Communism. Moreover the Russians had been on an expansionist course southwards since the previous two centuries and had annexed vast Muslim territories in Central Asia with which the Pakistani people had age-old links. This had aroused a negative perception in Pakistan about Russian intentions.....Pakistan’s closest friends in the Islamic world, Iran and Turkey, were keen to join these pacts as both of them felt directly threatened by the Soviet Union; and their attitude clearly influenced Pakistan.....Pakistan because of its membership of the pacts had alienated Moscow to the extent that it had made a common cause with both India and Afghanistan in their respective disputes with Pakistan.”

The intelligence reports played an important role in the developing close ties between the US and Pakistan.

The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE 1955:423) reported on Pakistan “the regime favors a strong central government, economic development through austerity measures and foreign aid and close alignment with the US.”

NIE was extremely optimistic of the economic development in Pakistan and on the other hand extremely sympathetic towards Pakistan’s fears of India. Therefore it recommended large amounts of US aid with the belief that this would change things for better. But the reports were based on speculations which proved faulty with time. All this was done so that Pakistan could serve the American agenda under SEATO and the Baghdad Pact. However, no one had any idea about the role Pakistan was supposed to play in the defense of the Middle East. Struve Hensel the Assistant Secretary of Defense exposed the faulty intelligence reports that led to the

formation of such an unbalanced policy. He pushed the administration to chalk out a role for Pakistan in the defense plan to combat the spread of communism, on the other hand Karachi had already started making a hue and cry over the much delayed aid package. Thus towards the end of the first term of President Eisenhower relations between the US and Pakistan had reached a bitter note.

In 1956 President Eisenhower came back for a second term, and this time with a mature policy towards South Asia. Pakistan continued to be a military ally and received abundance of American military aid. The American military undertook several training programmes in Pakistan. The much anticipated economic aid reached Pakistan under which it received \$2 billion dollars between 1953 and 1961. Political infighting kept the Pakistani politicians pre-occupied, as a result of which economic development suffered and the dependence on the American aid grew. This further raised doubts in Washington about the continuation of the aid programmes.

In the meantime US developed ties with India, starting with food aid. This policy measure was initiated keeping in mind the economic development of India and to distance India from the Soviet Union. Such initiatives were not welcomed by Pakistan, and a repercussion of this was the development of close ties with China (these ties took firm shape in the 1960's).

In 1957 Pakistani Prime Minister Suhrawardy visited US but most of his demands were not fulfilled. Pakistan agreed to open its air bases for the US in return of the aid¹⁷.

¹⁷ The National Security Agency (NSA) had identified a place called Badaber near Peshawar to establish an American air base. This place was close to the Central Asian parts of the Soviet Union and therefore this was apt for the U-2 planes for spying purposes. The U-2 planes were developed by the Central Investigation Agency (CIA) and were given the nickname "Spy in the Sky". These planes

Gilani (2006:85) said “States access to the Badaber Air Force Base near the Afghan border for U-2 reconnaissance flights over the USSR—at substantial risk to its own security.”

Some quick changes followed in mid 1957 after the appointment of James Langley as the new American ambassador to Pakistan. He like Hensel the Assistant Secretary of Defense he too believed that the US-Pakistan alliance was based on faulty intelligence reports. Soon a technical team from the US carried out an inspection of the American military assistance given to Pakistan. In the meantime political infighting once again began in Pakistan and Feroz Khan Noon became the President of Pakistan but soon a military coup took place in 1958 and Gen. Ayub Khan became the President.

In 1959 a bilateral security agreement was signed between the US and Pakistan. Under this the US agreed to support Pakistan in case of any external aggression, but did not commit to aid against any attack by India.

In this agreement it was stated that the US ‘regards as vital to its interest and to world peace the preservation of the independence and integrity of Pakistan (Burke 1990:67).

“Treaty of Friendship and Commerce was signed between Pakistan and the United States on 12 November 1959 (came into effect in 1961). Comprising of 11 articles, treaty was major a concord having been signed between two countries” (Kundi 2009:195-196).

According to Gilani (2006:85) when the Eisenhower administration took office in 1953, the US government became increasingly anxious about the spread of communism to Asia and started to take an interest in Pakistan.

The development of ties between the US and Pakistan during the Eisenhower administration simply depicted the policies developed out of

could fly higher than maximum range of Soviet air bases and they had special cameras for the spying purpose. The U-2 incident simply put Pakistan in jeopardy.

communist phobia. Pakistan's membership of the CENTO and SEATO remained fruitless. They made an imbalance in Pakistan's alliance with the western countries as well their own standing (Burke 1973). Thus the foreign policy witnessed blunders and decisions made in rush but at the end things were resolved.

The Kennedy Period 1960-63

The American presidential election of 1960 marked the changing of the guard in the United States, bringing to the forefront the first generation of politicians to be born in the twentieth century. At the Democratic National Convention meeting in Los Angeles in early July, Senator John F. Kennedy, the suave young man from Massachusetts, swept a first-ballot nomination and, in the process, overwhelmed his nearest rival, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, the Senate majority leader (Burns and Siracusa 2007:1-2).

What followed was one of the closest races for the White House office in the history of the US. The two competitors John F. Kennedy and Vice President Nixon stood in stark contrast to each other from all the perspectives, and in the end the 43 year old John F. Kennedy (one of the youngest President in American history) emerged victorious. The circumstances were overwhelmingly favored John F. Kennedy, he was a war hero, a Pulitzer Prize winner¹⁸, had served fourteen years in Congress, eight of them as the junior senator from Massachusetts, in 1952 he was elected to the Senate¹⁹, almost all the qualities sought in a potential presidential candidate. Kennedy's foreign policy marked a departure from the foreign policy of the previous administrations. For Pakistan this change meant its fears coming to life. Kennedy's appreciation of Nehruvian idealism in the State of the Union address was only the

¹⁸ John F. Kennedy had won the Pulitzer Prize for his 1956 work "*Profiles in Courage*". This certainly added to his prestige as a Presidential candidate.

¹⁹ Victory as a senator certainly added to the popularity of John F. Kennedy, as he defeated Henry Cabot Lodge, who came from a political dynasty and was considered to be a tough opponent.

prelude. The U-turn taken in the American policy towards Pakistan was only to return to the later in order to meet the foreign policy needs.

From the days of the campaign itself President Kennedy had emphasized on the idea of having a balanced foreign policy particularly towards South Asia, unlike his immediate predecessor. Kennedy appointed Lyndon B. Johnson as the Vice President and McGeorge Bundy as the National Security Advisor. Other than them Kennedy's team had Dean Rusk²⁰ as the Secretary of State. He was to be assisted by Chester Bowles who was known to be pro-India. Journalist Philips Talbot was made the Assistant Secretary of Near East and South Asia. J.K. Galbraith was appointed as the American Ambassador to India. Robert Komer was the CIA agent appointed to deal with South Asia. Komer under the Eisenhower administration was known to have favored a pro-India policy and had always opposed the American military aid to Pakistan. In context of Pakistan minimal changes followed as William Rountree continued as the American Ambassador to Pakistan and was later replaced by Walter McConaughy.

Appointing a pro-India administration was the subtle move made by Kennedy, but political analysts had already started making gloomy prognostications about the US-Pakistan alliance. A precarious situation stood in front of Pakistan. On the home front political divide within the country widened²¹. Then there was the dire need of American aid, and the possibility of which looked bleak. Still the optimism of Ayub did not die

²⁰ Dean Rusk had dealt with the Kashmir issue during the Truman administration and had served in the sub-continent during the Second World War.

²¹ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had started rising as a political leader. He belonged to the faction of western educated elite. He soon made his way in the ministry. Differences arose when he became vocal about his ideas of decreasing dependence on the US aid and developing self sufficiency. Besides this he also stressed on developing ties with USSR and China, a result of this was the invitation to the Soviets for gas and oil exploration in Pakistan, when Bhutto was the Natural Resource Minister. Bhutto's own men found it difficult to accept such policy changes, and the Americans were offended.

so soon, he kept looking for opportunities to maneuver things in favor of Pakistan.

Vice President Johnson's visit to Karachi was expected to be one such opportunity, but things turned out differently. Johnson was full of praises for Ayub but did not appreciate his administration. Pakistan used the tactics of pleading and pleasing but things only became sour. Soon the US provided India with assistance of \$ 1 billion. On the other hand through the World Bank consortium the US pledged on \$ 150 million in aid for Pakistan. As a consolation measure Pakistan was told that the US would increase its share of aid if the other states would increase their share of aid to Pakistan. Thus the circumstances were apt for China-Pakistan relations to ripe, and the developments that followed were not appreciated by the US.

The equations underwent a change when the US did not get the desired results with the Bay of Pigs invasion and the failure of the Vienna summit with the USSR. These changes made the Kennedy administration rethink its policies, and this was seen in their attempts to make Gen. Ayub's 1961 visit to the US a success. Ayub's approach was abrasive, as he accused US of escalating tension between India and Pakistan by aiding the former. Ayub emphasized on the idea that in order to undo the wrongs President Kennedy should pressurize Prime Minister Nehru to resolve the Kashmir issue. But Kennedy's response on the issue remained curt and unfriendly. Ayub only cemented the beggar bowl image of Pakistan when he asked for American help to improve the poor drainage system in Pakistan, although President Kennedy gave a positive response to this. Lastly the troubled relations of Afghanistan and Pakistan were also raised but Kennedy refused to intervene, saying that this would only further push Afghanistan in the hands of the Soviet Union. The trip had its high and low points, but on the whole there was no major shift in policy.

The 1962 Pakistan unveiled its new constitution. Bhutto's position in the political arena was becoming firm. The issue of Kashmir was again raised by Pakistan in the UNSC but only to be left disheartened. Moreover in 1962 American arms aid to India (F-104 jet fighter aircrafts) only widened the rift between Pakistan and the US. Though for the Americans such a decision was made in order to prevent an arms deal between India and the Soviet Union. However, the Assistant Secretary on Near East and South Asia Philips Talbot did warn that such actions could mean putting the Badaber air base in jeopardy. A second meeting between Kennedy and Ayub followed, in the latter half of 1962. Kennedy tried to influence Ayub to resolve issues with Afghanistan, but the changes were minimal²².

According to Kux (2000:128), by the autumn of 1962 the US-Pakistan relations had attained a somewhat unsteady equilibrium. Aid to India continued to be the bone of contention, but Ayub made the most of it as the continued complaints Pakistan resulted in an increase in the aid received by them.

Things became worse during the 1962 Indo-Sino border conflict, as all the states directly or indirectly involved tried to promote their own interest by arm twisting the situation. The US aimed to prevent the destabilization of India and therefore offered help. The US had also asked Pakistan to help India and Pakistan took advantage of the situation saying that help would be at the cost of resolving the Kashmir issue. But there was a sudden withdrawal of forces by China, and the border which China had proposed was accepted. China played its part of politics, as it did concede some part of the acquired territory to India but at the same time gave economic aid to Pakistan and offered an aggression pact. But Pakistan accepted neither of the offers, in order to prevent any further rift with the US. In November 1962 President Kennedy was assassinated but until then

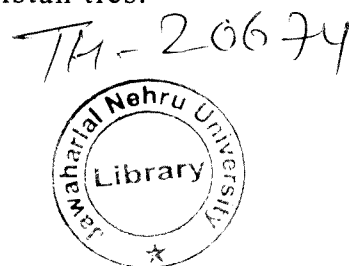
²² The US offered assistance to develop a rail link between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Besides this Afghan trade offices in Pakistan were closed down; due to the problem of Afghan tribesmen infiltrating into Pakistan, were now reopened.

there had been no major breakthrough in the US-Pakistan relations. The relations began at an unfriendly note and remained that way till his sudden death.

The Johnson Period 1963-69

Kennedy's Presidency was unfortunately cut short, but within two hours of President Kennedy's assassination Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as the 36th President of the US. The sudden stepping into the Presidential shoes caught him off guard. In his first State of the Union Address to Congress, delivered on 8 January 1964, Lyndon Johnson showed every sign of carrying forward the plans and programs of Kennedy (Burns and Siracusa 2007). Therefore at the domestic front things remained the same and any drastic shift in foreign policy was also not expected. It was only with time that the story of the Vietnam War unfolded and the policies took new turns.

President Johnson in his first term in office stood by what he had said in the State of the Union address. Therefore political analysts expected a pro-India policy. The funeral of President Kennedy did give Pakistan the opportunity to mend ties with the US, but then things turned out differently. Firstly Pakistan unlike other states was represented by Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (other states were represented by the Heads of state). Moreover post the funeral service Bhutto in a meeting with President Johnson and entered into a heated arguments with the American President. Therefore the opportunity was completely wasted. In the initial days policies did not mark any departure from that of the previous administration. Pakistan remained critical of the American military aid to India, but demanded aid for its own self. The US also remained critical of the developing Sino-Pakistan ties.



But soon things became more and more intertwined due to several issues which developed. China which the US saw as a threat started developing closer ties with Pakistan. Then there were the valiant attempts of the Johnson administration to balance the policy towards South Asia (unlike his predecessor President Johnson did not favor India over Pakistan). In 1964 President Johnson served a carefully planned frugal military aid package, to India and Pakistan. But Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai's trip to Pakistan (in which he did almost everything to woo Pakistan) made President Johnson rethink over his plans. Eventually only India became the recipient of American aid, and as expected this was followed by Pakistan's criticism. President Johnson became even more disinterested in mending ties with Pakistan and rather became more concerned about the developing Sino-Pakistan ties.

Late 1964 elections were held in the US and Pakistan, and President Johnson and President Ayub Khan returned for second terms. Policies underwent a change in the second term. President Johnson now viewed Pakistan as an ally whose help the US needed in order to promote its interests. Giving aid to Pakistan was no more an issue for the Johnson administration, but then this time the package was well crafted as it was definitely not for free. The Vietnam War was escalating and the US expected Pakistani support due to the latter's membership of SEATO. The Johnson administration also expected a mellowing down of the anti-American stand in the Pakistani media. President Ayub continued with his strategy of seeking American support, but the experience with the Kennedy administration seemed to have wisened his foreign policy approach as at the same time he promoted cordial ties with China and the Soviet Union.

Ayub termed his strategy as "Triangular Tightrope". Under this policy he visited China, Soviet Union and the US. Visit to China was a pleasant

experience. Ayub was more than welcomed there and the ties that developed between Pakistan and China faced American criticism. Next in row was the visit to the Soviet Union. There Ayub was questioned about Pakistani ties with the US he responded by saying:

“These pacts are dead but we are not in a position to bury them” but he also assured the Soviet Union “Pakistan would not serve as an instrument of US policy in South Asia (Kux 2000:164).

The trip to the US was postponed to June 1965 by the Johnson administration. Pakistan was critical of such developments but postponing Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri’s trip as well, worked as the cooling agent. These developments led to breaking of high-level communication of the US with India and Pakistan. A simultaneous development was the skirmishes on the India-Pakistan border. Pakistan after thorough calculations chose this time as ripe to settle scores with India. Pakistan thought that after losing in the Indo-Sino conflict of 1962 the morale of the Indian forces would be low, but it turned out the other way. Firstly there were clashes in the Rann of Kutch. Other factors that played a key role were the contrary military developments in India and Pakistan. Nehru’s lack of interest in military development of India was displayed in the 1962 Indo-Sino conflict. For Pakistan, military development had been the primary focus since independence, so much so that the economic development had been completely ignored. But after the defeat in 1962 India took all the required measures to develop its defence systems whereas in Pakistan the defence system was built on American aid and once the aid would be cut off Pakistan would have been in troubled waters. The chief concern of the US at this time was to prevent further tilting of Pakistan towards China for help.

Post the clash in the Rann of Kutch Pakistan launched “Operation Gibraltar” in Kashmir²³. Through such provocations Pakistan thought of pushing India to talk on the issue of Kashmir. But the plan failed as it was based on faulty speculations. As the tension escalated on the India-Pakistan border, the UN and the US came into the picture to resolve the tension. The US had planned not to take a strict stand towards any of the states. But the tension continued to escalate and the conflict became a full scale war. Pakistan used the weapons supplied to it by the US, breaking the clause of the 1959 American military aid. India also retaliated in full scale and Bhutto described India’s actions as “naked plunder” (Bhutto 1969:77). The Johnson administration and the US Congress took a neutral stand by suspending the military aid to both India and Pakistan. Being well aware of the fact that Pakistan had ignited the conflict, it was difficult for the US to support Pakistan any more.

Bringing peace to the region was necessary and this time the initiative was taken by the Soviet Union in the form of the Tashkent agreement. Though reluctant but eventually Ayub agreed for it. But before the Tashkent agreement, Ayub flew to Washington, as the much postponed trip had materialized. The visit marked a shift in the American stand on Pakistan. On one hand the Vietnam War was escalating and it had become a lonely battle for the US, Pakistan appeared to be the potential ally. The US asked for Pakistan’s help in the Vietnam War under the SEATO agreement however the US did not ask for support in form of troops. The US agreed to support Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir and also agreed to stop India from crushing Pakistan. But the Johnson administration also said that Pakistan need not tell the US how to deal with India, because it

²³ The Pakistani proposal to launch a counter attack in Kashmir was named as Operation Gibraltar. Through this they wanted to reopen the Kashmir issue for negotiations, although they did not want to start a war. They simply wanted to take advantage of India’s condition post the defeat in the Indo-Sino conflict of 1962.

is the bilateral relations between the two and Pakistan is not a part of it. The US also warned Pakistan from developing close ties with China. The following year in early 1966 the Tashkent agreement took place but it was only partially successful. The accord between India and Pakistan was seen in good light by the US. In 1967 the American military aid to Pakistan resumed, to counter the developing military ties between India and the Soviet Union. Besides this, India had a domestically developing weapons industry of which the Pakistanis were always weary off. By the end of the Johnson administration the US-Pakistan alliance had become a rather notional affair.

Conclusion

Some sum it as the Cold War alliance, some call it alliance guided by national interests and some call it a boondoggle policy measure; the US-Pakistan relations from the Truman era to the Johnson era has been a love hate journey which witnessed its own highs and lows.

Robert Gilpin (1981:22) says “no nation can have a sure guide as to what it must do and what it need not do in foreign policy without accepting the national interest as that guide.”

The case of US-Pakistan relations was not far from Gilpin’s explanation. Although other factors such as geography, and personal likes-dislikes and family ties also came to play a cameo role. Both the states sought each other’s alliances in order to meet their distinguished goals. In the theoretical framework the relations are looked upon as relations between a core and a peripheral state²⁴. However, such an explanation is one dimensional as it simply presents the US as the exploiter of the Pakistan.

²⁴ Systems theorist Wallerstein has categorized states as core and peripheral states. By core states, he refers to the developed states which are dependent on the other states for their resources such as US, France etc. By peripheral states he refers to the developing states which often serve as the source of raw material for the developed or the core states, such as most of the third world states. The ideas of Wallerstein has been referred to from the article by Soherwordi, details of which are given in the references.

According to Mansoor Akbar Kundi (2009:201-202) “the role of Pakistan as a true and sincere ally which American administration has both ignored and least honored over the years, Pakistan at the cost of its core interests supported US policies in the region, but in return US adapted double standards and abandoned its ally in distress.”

However, both the states did benefit from each other (though there were momentary hiccups such as during the Kennedy and the Johnson administration) otherwise the alliance would not have lasted for such a long time. Problems arose as Pakistan became completely dependent on the US aid simply showing the shortsightedness of the Pakistani policy makers and promoting the beggar bowl image of Pakistan.

From the Pakistani perspective the arms supply relationship with the United States has always carried with it a political overtones of the vital interests of Pakistan....This perception faded in the 1960s and 1970s when other states (especially China) supplied Pakistan with arms....because of this perception of centrality, there was an assumption that the United States would support Pakistan against its chief enemy, India an assumption privately fostered by some American officials (Cohen 1987:20).

Often caught up in dilemmas (particularly in chalking out a role for Pakistan in SEATO and CENTO) the American administration also had its own share of problems in prioritizing things the administrations did not have unanimous stands on policy issues.

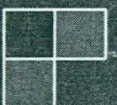
Bhutto (1969:84) summed up the US-Pakistan relations saying “The Soviet Union seeks peace between India and Pakistan to contain the influence of the United States and China. The United States seeks peace between the two countries to prevent the spread of Soviet influence in Sub-continent and to make India and Pakistan jointly face China.”

Thus post-Second World War the US-Pakistan relations were a product of multiple factors.

Emerging Perception of Pakistan in the Nixon Administration

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ The Background of Sino-Soviet Rift
- ❖ Internal Changes in China
- ❖ Alternative Channels that Failed
- ❖ Geographical Factors
- ❖ President Nixon's Perspective of Pakistan
- ❖ The Deteriorating Political Situation in
Pakistan
- ❖ Conclusion

Chapter 2



Introduction

“Nixon and Kissinger were writing a secret play with a large act for Pakistan.”

(Kheli 1982:31)

On 5th July 1971, President Nixon²⁵ wrote a new chapter in diplomatic history, announcing on national television his trip to the People’s Republic of China. For President Nixon it was a dream come true.²⁶ The world watched the development with astonished eyes. Support and appreciation poured for Nixon and his administration from all quarters with minimum criticism. The new era in US-China relations marked a departure from three decades of isolationist policies. The event showcased years of calculated political strategies which manifested Nixon administration’s tilt towards pragmatism rather than ideology. The development often defined as the foreign policy masterstroke of President Nixon and his administration involved several actors around the globe with Pakistan “the most allied ally of the US” playing a pivotal role.

For two decades after the Second World War cordial bonds flourished between the US and Pakistan. On the surface it looked like a perfect affair, as only a few knew about the dilemmas the administrations in both the states went through particularly in context of aid. These developments along with the changing foreign policy needs and different perspectives of

²⁵ In all the chapters For President Nixon’s speeches, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu> has been referred to. His speeches have either been quoted directly or paraphrased.

²⁶ President Nixon for long had desires to visit China; he had expressed these desires to Columnist Paul Dixon. As Vice President (1953-60) he had visited the Soviet Union in 1960, and during this trip he tried to get a visa for China as well, but things did not materialize. The Kalb brothers in their biography of President Nixon and Seymour M. Hersh in his work *“The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House”*, quote Paul Dixon who said “that if it worked once it can work twice and that he can achieve a breakthrough into the forbidden country that holds one-fourth of earth’s people his image will be so gigantic he’ll overshadow any stay at home Democratic opponent.” The actual event made Dixon’s vision prophetic.

the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations led the US and Pakistan to part ways. But destiny had a different plan and the rift in the relations did not last long. The vision and rapport of President Nixon with the Pakistani leadership and the changes and developments in the domestic and the foreign policy front brought them back together.

The Background of Sino-Soviet Rift

In 1950, China became independent, and the fears of the west came to life as it set out on the road to communism. The US perceived this as the coming together of the two giants the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, in short a big blow to the capitalist world. Scholars and foreign policy analysts expected that in presence of a tiff with the US China would certainly cling to its alliance with the Soviet Union. The mild reaction of China to the Polish and Hungarian invasion by Soviet Union spoke of a firm alliance between the two. Perhaps Athar Aman (1974:156), said:

“A few years after the World War, China also fell under communism. It generated fears among the capitalist Countries represented by U.S.A. They have supposed that communist states might expand their Ideologies, and they were moving with the ambitions of dominating the world.”

But behind the curtains differences prevailed in the communist world since the very beginning. As firstly states had adopted such a mode of development due to varied reasons, they practiced different variants of communism and lastly the spread of communism was not solely a result of Soviet efforts. Thus the binding factor between the Soviet Union and China soon became a bone of contention.

Post Chinese independence the Soviets propagated the idea of the Chinese being their communist brothers, but on the Chinese front it was a different tale since the beginning. Chinese history since the ancient times has

manifested the Chinese belief of superiority, same was the case when they adopted communism. Soviet communism was a result of proletariat revolution in contrast to which the communism in China was a result of agrarian uprisings. Following these difference, the Chinese believed they had achieved communism without passing through socialism as the Soviet Union did. Moreover, Mao claimed Chinese communism to be purer than its Soviet counterpart. But this variation in communism went almost unnoticed by the capitalist bloc.

The Sino-Soviet rift gained attention once the differences in the nuclear arena emerged. China's strategic nuclear weapons programme dates back to mid 1950's. A workable relationship in the nuclear sector developed between the Soviet Union and China. The Soviet Union gave extensive aid to China which included technical support in construction of a facility for uranium enrichment and a sample of an atomic bomb. The founding stone for the Chinese nuclear programme was laid by the Soviet Union.

Between 1955-58 both the states signed six agreements on nuclear cooperation. The Soviet Union provided China with cyclotron, a nuclear reactor and fissile material for research. Moscow also provided assistants in nuclear physics. In 1957 the Sino-Soviet Agreement on New Technology for National Defense was signed; and the Soviets provided China with the prototype of a nuclear weapon and related technical data on construction, training and operation of gaseous diffusion and separation.

But the alliance was short lived. China did not like to be dictated by their Communist brothers. Ancient Chinese history and the theory of Middle Kingdom explain this attitude of China. Thus followed the split and the Soviets refused to provide any further technical information regarding nuclear weapons and by 1960 the Soviet Union withdrew all the technical

experts as well. With time the suspicion of the west about the probable Sino-Soviet rift was only confirmed.

With every passing phase the Chinese only became more vocal about their stand on the Soviet Union. The Polish and the Hungarian invasions met with the conciliatory act of China, but things had changed now. The Czechoslovakian invasion by the Soviet Union faced vehement criticism from China. The state controlled Chinese newspapers like the *People's Daily* referred to the Czech invasion as an armed aggression moreover it called the Brezhnev doctrine as an out an out theory which preached limited sovereignty.

“Russia and China had developed ideological differences during Bucharest Conference in 1960, and territorial dispute between the two countries further widened the gulf. This development gave another opportunity to U.S.A. to exploit the situation in her own interest” (Aman 1974:156).

Both communist giants the Soviet Union and China suffered from expansionist tendencies, and history speaks for it. What unfolded in 1969 was the counterpart of Siachin on the Indo-China front; that is the Usuri river conflict between the Soviet Union and China. The Usuri River runs along the eastern border of China and Soviet Union, and it has a river island called Damansky by the Russians and Chenpao by the Chinese. From economic and geographical perspective it is a useless uninhabited marshy island. The only human presence in the area had been of the Soviet and Chinese forces which patrolled the area.

Geographically the island is close to China and therefore China claimed its right over it. Many questioned the struggle for this useless piece of land, but what appeared to be useless from economic and geographical perspective held great strategic importance. Both the states wanted to keep the other at as much distance as possible; this was similarly the way India did not give away Siachin since it preferred to keep China at as

much distance as possible. Soon the clashes took place along the eastern border of the Soviet Union and China. Firstly there was exchange of fire at Damansky/Chenpao then at Hu-Ma, Ai-Hui and lastly at Fu-Yuan. By mid 1969 Sino-Soviet relations seemed to be improving with the signing of the protocol on improvement of navigation on Boundary Rivers. But again the peace was short lived, as soon fighting broke out between the two on the Sinkiang and Kazakhstan border at Chungchak and Yumin. Perhaps the tension escalated to such a level that observers around the world expected breaking out of a war.

Tension and differences between the two states had reached to such a level that even when the heads of states Kosygin and Chou went for the funeral of Ho-Chi-Minh they made it point that they did not run into each other. But again the relations saw a U-turn following the meeting between the two on their way back at the Peking airport. Again policy analysts were made to put on their thinking caps.

Kissinger (1979:185) said “the President wondered if this meant a “détente” between them, according to him this was an effort by both the sides to position themselves for the next round of their conflict and Sino-Soviet relations were approaching a crisis point.”

Nixon (1981:67) said “the US did not use China to play against Moscow. Even if there had been no differences between Russia and China, it would still have been in our interest to improve relations with China.”

The bottom line remained that the difference in the Sino-Soviet relations had become public. The rift was a reason of relief for the Americans till the time a conflict did not break out between the two, but even if a conflict were to breakout the Americans tried to make most of it. The occasional cooling of tension between the Soviet Union and China did act as red herring for the Americans but not for long.

Internal Changes in China

The 1960's is always remembered as a decade of turmoil in the US, and the story was no different on the Chinese front. China underwent a Cultural Revolution in the mid 1960's almost fifteen years after independence. As the masses tilted towards western ideas, China further withdrew itself from the outside world. Drastic steps such as withdrawing Ambassadors from other states were taken.²⁷ The Revolution was shouldered by three factions (a) the faction led by Chou Enlai, (b) the faction led by Lin Piao and (c) the radical sect.

Chou Enlai's group was moderate and believed that the American threat to China had reduced with the prolonged and useless Vietnam War in the background. Lin Piao led the military faction which believed that China had a better future if it developed ties with the Soviet Union. Lastly the radical sect opposed a close relationship with both the US and the USSR. Their view is considered insignificant as they played only a marginal role in the Revolution. President Mao's stand was not always clear, moreover with his wife Chiang Ching playing a key role in the Cultural Revolution, many were suspicious about Mao.

The necessity for a change in China policy was clearly felt throughout the academic community in the US. As early as November 6, 1968, the day after Nixon's election, eight prominent China scholars from Harvard University, Columbia University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology drafted a Memorandum for the President elect urging his administration to move more positively towards the relaxation of tension between China and the US and the eventual achievement of reconciliation.

The group chaired by Professor Jerome A. Cohen, a professor of law at the Harvard, urged among other moves, sending an emissary to meet in secret with the Chinese to discuss prospects for a normal relationship. In February 1969, some members of the group met with Nixon and Kissinger

²⁷ The only country from where China did not withdraw its ambassador was Egypt.

at the White House, but of course none was included or consulted when the American–Chinese contact began” (Hersh 1983:357).

Further Hersh said that this was one of the prominent reasons as to why Nixon and Kissinger romanticized Chairman Mao and Chou Enlai without realizing that the China they were approaching was undergoing a change. The Cultural Revolution certainly brought a change in the Chinese approach towards west. Adding to this was the border conflict with the Soviet Union and the escalating Vietnam War.

Nixon (1981:118), “the Chinese made this change because it was in their interests; because at that point they needed the United States just as the US needed China”

In public view Chinese stand towards the west had remained unaltered; perhaps China described Nixon’s visit to Europe as “Rat crossing the street”. Thus though the changes had started taking place, it took sometime before they actually took a firm shape.

The Alternative Channels

The plans on paper spoke about President Nixon’s will to open up China, but the prime requirement for the plan to materialize was a reliable ally. In a Cold War divided world, keeping in mind that China being a Communist state President Nixon planned his moves with all the required caution, perhaps going to the extent of maintaining secrecy from most of his administration.

Nixon instructed all American diplomats to answer “Soviet probing of our position on Communist China” by saying that “we deplore the idea of Soviet strike against Chinese nuclear facilities or any other major Soviet military action” (Dallek 2007:288).

Nixon wanted to frame a foreign policy in which the US would have allies in Asia but at the same time the Asian states would not be dependent on

the US. Thus selecting Pakistan to be the intermediary between the US and China was a sedulous move.

By finding the Romanian channel Nixon fully utilized his trip to Europe. While in France he raised the issue of China with the French President Charles De Gaulle. Though strained, the French Foreign Ministry had managed to retain its relations with China, even during the Cultural Revolution. France and the US felt the need to engage China keeping in mind the strides it had taken in the nuclear arena and otherwise. Despite the internal differences in the form of Cultural Revolution on the domestic front China stood strong on the economic front and therefore isolationist policies could not have been an option any more. President Nixon also agreed to put an end to the Vietnam War, and even emphasized on initiating negotiations for this purpose, President Nixon also requested De Gaulle to get this message conveyed to Peking through the French Ambassador in China Etienne M. Manac'h and in April 1969 Nixon's wishes were fulfilled by him.

Another turning point in Nixon's visit to Europe was the stoppage at Romania. Romania at this time was a satellite state of the USSR, and the visit by the American President gave signals for Romanian independence, which made the Soviets invest more in their relationship with Romania. Romanian hospitalities made the Nixon administration to consider Romania as a potential ally to carry forward the idea of opening up to China. The Nixon administration believed that Romania being a communist state would better understand the sentiments of communist China. Moreover, in Ceausescu the Romanian President they saw a leader strong leader who would not succumb to the Soviet pressure. Through Ceausescu, Nixon even managed to secretly inform Peking about his plans to normalize Sino-American relations. But the plans did not take any

concrete shape as China was not comfortable dealing with the US via the Romanian channel. Probably the Chinese feared a repetition of history of Soviet invasion (as it had happened in Hungary and Czechoslovakia).

President Nixon had also visited Romania as a private citizen between 1960-68. At this time Ceausescu was the Communist Party General. In his memoir Nixon shares the conversation he had with Ceausescu in context of opening China. However in the conversation Nixon did not hint at anything directly, but he found Ceausescu's response cold, as the Romanian leader did not give any assurances. Therefore even a few months down the line no change or shift in the American policy could be seen, on the contrary the Vietnam War escalated, and other plans of SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty), Asia Doctrine and to open up China seemed to be going nowhere²⁸.

Geographical Factors

Though often ignored but geographical factors have always played an important role in shaping relations between states, and the US-Pakistan relations were also influenced by it. Cold War witnessed the unfolding of the race for allies between the US and the USSR, and the relations between the US and Pakistan was a result of this race. Geographically Pakistan best fulfilled the needs of American foreign policy. Pakistan was in the close vicinity of the USSR (if Afghanistan would not have been there then the USSR would have shared a border with India and Pakistan) and therefore it became the apt choice to establish American Air Force bases, in return of American aid. The relations did see a downturn during

²⁸ Later even the Romanian Channel responded this was around the same time the Pakistani channel had responded. From both the channels the messages conveyed were same, Chou Enlai had responded positively. This was the small role played by the Romanian channel as post this the Pakistani channel became the prime mode of communication between Washington and Peking. The Romanian channel was purposely avoided keeping in mind that it was a satellite state of the Soviet Union. Nixon wanted to keep the plan a secret, and through the Romanian channel things could have been leaked out to the Soviet Union.

the Kennedy and the Johnson administration, but only to be revived during the Nixon administration.

Materializing President Nixon's plans to open up China could not have been possible without finding reliable allies, particularly in the region near China. India though located close to China was not considered as an option due to India's Non-Aligned policy of NAM and Nixon's personal bias. On the other hand Pakistan which had served as a reliable ally of the US was geographically located near China and Nixon shared good personal rapport with the Pakistani ruling elite. Perhaps as Kheli (1982:1) says:

“Pakistan's strategic location, on the boundary of both the USSR and the PRC, greatly commended itself to the United States for use in its containment policy.”

President Nixon's Perspectives of Pakistan

'National Interest' as emphasized by realists has always been a prime mover in international politics. Considering only national interest as the policy determining factor the equation of international relations looks imbalanced. Time and again events have shown how pivotal is the role of other actors in shaping policies. American tilt towards Pakistan during the Nixon administration manifests this best, as the personal biases of President Nixon played a key role.

Nixon's love for Pakistan is best captured in his memoir. Sharing his experiences Nixon shows contrasting emotions when talking about his trips to Pakistan and India as Vice President and as un-person. Nixon visited Pakistan for the first time in 1953; Pakistani administration went out of the way to please him. Reflecting on his trip he wrote:

In Pakistan I met Ayub Khan who was then Commander of Pakistan's armed forces and had not yet assumed political power. I particularly

enjoyed talking to him because, unlike most of his countrymen, he was not obsessed by the Pakistan-India problem. He did indicate his total contempt for the Hindus and his distrust of Indians, but he was more anti-communist than anti-Indian. He was seriously concerned about the communist threat, both ideological and military, and about the danger that the Soviets would use India as a cat's paw for establishing a major presence in South Asia. At that period in his career he was strongly pro-American and believed that Pakistan and United States should be allies and friends (Nixon 1978).

At the end of the 1953 trip, Nixon called Pakistan the country for which he will do everything. Perhaps Pakistan without American aid according to Nixon would have been disastrous. Vinod Gupta (1972:25) also says that Nixon suffered from misplaced egotism of 'power superiority'.²⁹ Nixon shared similar stories about his 1964 visit to Pakistan when in his memoir he said "In Pakistan I saw my old friend, President Ayub Khan" (Nixon 1978).

Things stood in contrast on his visits to India. In 1953 when he came as Vice President he did not receive any special attention or care. Even though Nehru was known for going out of the way to please the visitors, but Nixon saw a different side of him. Nixon was treated like a Vice President but there was a lack of the special touch of Nehru. Nixon though was not offended but was not pleased, either and this was evident in his memoir when he called Nehru the least friendly leader. Perhaps he found Indian people to be complex. The impression of India on Nixon went horribly wrong when Nixon visited India in 1964 as un-person. The Foreign Office in India gave Nixon a cold shoulder. He was unable to meet any of the leaders who were in power. The only leader with whom

²⁹ Vinod Gupta further explains power superiority as having a liking for strong men, and Field Marshal Ayub Khan was known to be a strong man. So was General Yahya Khan who had replaced Ayub Khan in 1969. However, after the 1971 War views about Yahya Khan changed drastically.

Nixon could have a face to face meeting was Morarji Desai who too had become an unpopular leader. However, according to Kaul (1980:34):

“Nixon’s suspicion of non-alignment, also his dislike of Mrs. Gandhi’s personality, his distrust of the Soviet Union and countries friendly to her, his desire to exploit Sino-Soviet differences, his ambition to make America the dominant power in the world by propping up aligned states like Pakistan and opposing independent non-aligned states like India. This in brief, explains the method in the madness of Nixon, in antagonizing a potentially great and genuinely friendly country like India for the sake of expediency and short term advantages.”

The cordial personal ties were not limited between the Pakistani and American heads of state, a similar rapport existed between the diplomatic circles of both the states. Such close ties had developed since Eisenhower’s time. Under Eisenhower, Horace Hildreth was the American ambassador to Pakistan and his daughter had married a Pakistani leader’s son. During Hildreth’s term the US and Pakistan had shared friendly ties. A similar story unfolded during Nixon’s time. Agha Hilaly was the Pakistani ambassador to the US, his brother was the Pakistani ambassador to China and their sister had been a student of Henry Kissinger at the Harvard University. The ties were not as close as during Hildreth’s time, but certainly signaled the existence of close workable relations. Perhaps another reason why Pakistan was favoured above Romania.

Thus when Nixon was looking for allies in order to promote his policy of opening up China, then Pakistan became the obvious choice. As he shared a good rapport with the ruling elite there, he considered them to be reliable and strong in comparison to other states and their leaders.

The Deteriorating Political Situation in Pakistan

“Political Instability” the terms became synonymous with the domestic politics of Pakistan since the time of its birth. Only politically the geographically, socially and culturally different territories of West and

East Pakistan had been held together. But in 1969 winds of change reached the domestic political arena in Pakistan. The decade old regime of Field Marshal Ayub Khan started to lose its grip on power. President Khan's administration faced opposition on all fronts, best seen in the countrywide strikes and protests that took place in 1969. Economically Pakistan had remained stagnant, with bare minimum infrastructure and the cut down in American aid during Kennedy and Johnson administration simply turned the tide against Ayub Khan's regime. Lastly the SEATO and CENTO also proved to be of no help.

To maintain order President Khan sought the help of the army, but matters only worsened with the killing of a few students in the firing. The rift with East Pakistan widened, with the political movement under Mujibur Rehman gaining ground. Political opposition was adamant in its demand for election. President Ayub Khan had plans for establishing a parliamentary form of government and replacing the presidential form of government. In order to pacify the political opposition President Khan held a conference but it remained inconclusive. Though President Khan agreed to the demand of holding elections, he did not fix any date for it. Thus the opposition was left more enraged.

In the meantime the ambitious Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto sought American support in order to further his presidential dreams. Bhutto sought media support, in propagating that ousting of Ayub Khan would be best for Pakistan and for US-Pakistan relations. President Nixon had already sketched out his road to Peking, and this would not have been possible without a stable Pakistan under a pro-west regime. The disputes were internal and therefore the US could not openly play a role in resolving them, at the same time it could not put its national interest at

stake. Therefore the Nixon administration needed to do something but not openly.

On 25th March 1969, President Ayub Khan stepped down as the President of Pakistan and handed over power to Army General Yahya Khan. Ayub Khan held the Central Investigation Agency (CIA) responsible for this regime change. He suspected CIA's hand behind all the opposition movements. In a Convention of the Muslim League, he told a few leaders that the CIA was not satisfied with his progressive policies, and therefore favored Bhutto and the leftist movement under him. He also called Bhutto an American agent.

Pakistan-China Relations

The story of Pakistan-China relations is a tale of how two states came together with betrayal, and necessity in the backdrop. Pakistan's close ties with the US ended with the Eisenhower administration, a new chapter began during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, with military aid being cancelled and the rift in the relations only widened with time.

Soherwordi (2010:26), says "Numerous reasons may be put forth for the deterioration of relations between Pakistan and US during 1960s." However, he considers "the following reasons for the fall of mercury of friendship between the two nations: a. frequent change of governments in Pakistan; b. J.F Kennedy's pro- India policies; c. Pak- China growing friendship; d. War of 1965, (from ambiguity to clarity)."

Pakistan was again in search of an ally. Story on the Chinese front was no different as post independence China faced the hostility of the US, soon its relations with the Soviet Union had also turned sour and then in the neighborhood its relations with India had also gone bad post 1962 war. Thus China too was in dire need of friends and allies. In 1960, the Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan Mihail Kapitsa was reported to have told Pakistanis:

“We support India and Afghanistan against you because they are our friends, even when they are wrong. But your friends do not support you, even when they know you are right (Choudhary 1977:79).

Amidst these developments began the Pakistan-China relations which the scholars came to refer as “all weather friendship.”

One of the significant development was when, on May 17, 1963, Chou En-Lai declared that China “Would defend Pakistan throughout the world” for “Pakistan defended China in SEATO and CENTO” (Soherwordi 2010:29-30).

In 1960 Pakistan and China agreed to allow each other’s airlines in their respective territories China and Pakistan ratified the Final Agreement on Delimitation and Demarcation of Sinkiang on Kashmir border in 1963. Pakistan was given traffic rights at Canton and Shanghai and the Chinese were given the same in Karachi and Dhaka. Soon trade agreements and air transport agreements were signed between the two. Between 1960-63 China became the biggest importer of Pakistani cotton. China started developing roads connecting the two states; the most significant development being the Trans-Karakoram highway. Such developments were contrary to the isolation both the super powers had imposed on China. Perhaps with the help of Pakistan, China was able to develop trade links with other Islamic states as well. China also repaid his friend Pakistan during the 1965 Indo-Pak War, by helping Pakistan in signing a ceasefire agreement, as China on its part threatened India. China also helped Pakistan with supply of military equipments. According to Bhutto (1969:54) says:

“The Government of America objected Pakistan Policies. Pakistan’s China Policy was dubbed by American as ‘Pakistan’s flirtation with China’. In early 1960’s Pakistan for the first time ‘sought friends instead of Masters’. But Pakistan’s independent Foreign Policy did not suit the Global strategy of U.S.A. President Johnson sent a message to President Ayub Khan to change China Policy otherwise Pakistan’s military and Economic aid would be stopped.”

Pakistan and China found in each other an important neighbor and a strategic partner for containing India. Keeping such close ties between Pakistan and China in mind, the Nixon administration became more assured about have Pakistan as the channel of communication between Washington and Peking. As points out Amin (2000:11):

“Friendship with China has remained a pillar of Pakistan’s foreign policy and has withstood the test of time. It has, moreover, enjoyed enormous public support in Pakistan.”

Conclusion

Thus Pakistan emerged as the channel of communication between the US and China. Developing the channel took almost a year’s time, as before coming to the conclusion the Nixon administration considered all the available candidates. As failure in opening of China could have cost the US in the economic as well as in the foreign policy arena. Amin (2000:12) points out that:

“The Chinese made this change because it was their interests; because at that point they needed the United States, just as the US needed China.”

At the same time the US needed to balance the Soviet threat. According to Nixon (1981:129):

“Even if there would have been no difference between the Russia and China, it would still have been in our interest to improve relations with China.”

Then Kissinger (1979:684-685) in his memoirs said:

“The China card was not ours to play. Sino-Soviet hostility had followed its own dynamics. We had not generated it; we were, in fact, unaware of its intensity for the better part of a decade....We could not exploit the rivalry; it exploited itself.”

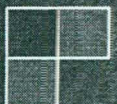
Basically Nixon attempted to justify the policies of his administration by saying that they did not exploit Sino-Soviet rift and played China against

Moscow. On the other hand Pakistan was willing to be an American ally keeping in mind its economic objectives. Then China itself considered opening up again keeping in view its economic objectives. Therefore all the opportunities were utilized and exploited to the best by all the three states. In the simplest of the terms this story of emergence of Pakistan in the American perspective and the eventual opening of China can be explained as there was a 'will', and therefore developed a 'way' giving life to the will.

Role of Pakistan in Sino-American Détente

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Two Years of Back Channel Diplomacy
- ❖ Kissinger's Trip to Peking
- ❖ Conclusion

Chapter 3



Introduction

“Napoleon said of China: ‘There lies a sleeping giant. Let him sleep! For when he wakes he will move the world.’ The giant is awake. His time has come, and he is ready to move the world. China is rising and it may soon move the world.”

Nixon (1981:241)

In the year 1969, new administrations came to power in the US and Pakistan, under President Nixon and President Yahya Khan respectively. Though Pakistan is called the ‘most allied ally’ of the US, in reality the US-Pakistan relations have never been more than ‘A marriage of convenience’. Whenever both the states came close or entered into an alliance it was to serve their own interests. By the mid 1960’s problems and rift had started appearing in this marriage, the marriage could have broken down due to irretrievable damage done during the Kennedy and Johnson administration, but destiny had other plans. Under the Pakistan friendly Nixon administration the marriage was saved; but not for any philanthropic reasons but only to promote American interest in the region.

Aware of the Sino-Soviet rift the US wanted to make the best of the available opportunity. Détente with either of the communist powers was considered, but President Nixon also understood that at present such a policy change was possible only in case of China. Perhaps he considered détente with China as prelude to détente with the Soviet Union. Nixon (1967:493) had planned to open up China even before taking office and in his article ‘*Asia After Viet Nam*’, in the journal *Foreign Affairs* he said:

“Taking the long view, we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations, there to nurture its fantasies, cherish its hates and threaten its neighbours.”

Besides this Nixon (1981:245) again tried to justify his acts saying in his talks with several Third World leaders he found that:

“China had the credentials the US could not match and they will listen to Chinese warnings when they might discount ‘our own’.”

Though the US had emerged as one of the power blocs after the Second World War, opening up an economically rising China was a precarious issue which needed to be handled with caution. Therefore the US preferred to approach China through an intermediary, but before an intermediary could be chosen the US kept several factors in mind. As the experience of the Romanian channel had taught that no matter how strong a leader was approaching China through a communist power could be synonymous with risk. The Nixon administration assumed that via the Romanian channel things can always be leaked out to the Soviet Union. Thus despite the fact that the Romanian channel did convey some of the messages, the Nixon administration always preferred the Pakistani channel. On the other hand the Warsaw Channel had been active for more than a decade, but it had not been fruitful³⁰.

Thus keeping political, strategic, economic and geographical factors in mind Pakistan was chosen as the intermediary between the US and China. Throughout the Cold War era back channel diplomacy had been in vogue, and in case of the Sino-US rapprochement it reached its pinnacle. Though the main protagonists of this tale were the Americans and the Chinese, the Pakistanis played an important side role as without them the story would have never reached its climax. Besides Pakistan there were other minor

³⁰ Due to the close ties the US maintained with Taiwan the negotiations in Warsaw between the American and the Chinese diplomats always reached a deadlock.

channels like Jean Sainteny³¹ who played their role as and when required. Talking about the Sino-US rapprochement, the primary focus was on Nixon's plan, Kissinger's vanishing act and so on, but in reality it is a story about several unsung heroes such as the Pakistani diplomats in Washington and Peking who actually made Nixon's dream come to life.

The Two Years of Back Channel Diplomacy

During the Kennedy and Johnson periods, US-Pakistan relations faced a downturn a) The arms aid to Pakistan had been suspended post 1965 India-Pakistan War and b) CENTO and SEATO had become paper alliances, and thus Pakistan had become closer to China. According to the Pakistanis they were betrayed and left in the lurch. According to the Americans they did the morally right thing, however in reality they had left Pakistan as the alliance had become a liability rather than an asset. On the other hand the Democrat leadership in Washington had better ties with India. Still the US had remained the largest source of economic aid for Pakistan. Thus for almost eight years the US and Pakistan shared distant ties, amidst which both found new allies and friends.

But with changes in power politics, new needs had arisen for the both the states. The first high level contact between the administrations of Nixon and Yahya Khan was initiated during the Pakistan visit of US Secretary of State William Rogers in early 1969. The meeting did not mark any shift from the past, it was rather confined to discussion of old issues.³² William Rogers though was appointed the Secretary of State by Nixon, he was never in the inner circle of Nixon and thus most of time was not even

³¹ John Sainteny was a Frenchman who was a friend of Kissinger. Details about him has been given in the later chapters.

³² Secretary of State William Rogers was never informed about Nixon's plan to open up China, even when the plan was being executed. Nixon always maintained a close inner circle for execution of his plans, maintaining secrecy about issues was a part of his nature. Therefore such an issue never came up for talks when he visited Islamabad in 1969 prior to President Nixon's visit.

briefed about the secret initiatives of Nixon. Nixon (1981:249) also said “If the word of the move had leaked, it might have jeopardized the whole China initiative.”

Nixon visited Pakistan during his Asia tour later in 1969. Nixon in his speech said “This is the sixth time I have had the privilege of visiting Pakistan. And, as I stand here, I am aware of some of the impressions that were deeply imbedded in my mind on those previous visits...But I do know this: that what we can do and what we intend to do on this visit is to restore a relationship of friendship based on mutual trust which is so essential to good relations between two countries. That is what we will do” (Wooley & Peters 2010). The speech was a crowd pleaser, but Nixon guarded his plans for Sino-US rapprochement. The media was briefed only about the discussion about arms supply to Pakistan, but no conclusion was reached.

Only the closest of the associates of President Nixon beforehand knew about Nixon’s request to Yahya.

“The US president asked Yahya to tell Pakistan’s friends in Beijing that Nixon did not believe that Asia could move forward without China and would not be party to Soviet efforts to isolate the Chinese” (Kux 2001:182).

Nixon expected Yahya to convey his message during his trip to Peking, scheduled later that year. The initial reluctance on the part of Yahya was natural, however after strategic and economic calculations Yahya Khan agreed to fulfill Nixon’s request. Therefore on his visit to Peking Yahya delivered the message. Thus began a new chapter in American history of back channel diplomacy.

Pakistan however was never the only channel to open up China. Other channels were sought for, many of them went unnoticed but they did play

a part. Such was the case with Jean Sainteny, a Frenchman and a friend of Kissinger in Paris, who knew the Chinese Ambassador to France. Kissinger requested him to tell the Chinese ambassador about the American plans for rapprochement. Sainteny did his job in December 1970 and informed Kissinger about it. However later when the Pakistani channel had become active we do not get to hear much about Jean Sainteny.

The Chinese too gave signals to open up. During the National Day celebrations in October 1970, the American writer Edgar Snow along with his wife stood with Chairman Mao at the Tien An Men Square to be photographed. However this act went completely un-noticed by the Americans, despite the fact that Snow was the first American to have got such an opportunity. Years later when scholars reflected on Chairman Mao's act they understood his silent message. Edgar Snow said "Nothing China's leaders do publicly is without a purpose" (Kissinger 1979). Further according to Kissinger (1979:698):

"Mao intended to symbolize that American relations now had his personal attention, but it was by then a purely academic insight: we had missed the point when it mattered. Excessive subtlety had produced a failure of communication."

The miniscule event does show that even China wanted to open up and not that only the US was putting efforts in this direction.

Similar gestures were made by President Nixon. Later in 1970 in an interview with the *Life* magazine Nixon said "If there is anything I want to do before I die, it is to go to China (Kissinger 1979:699). If I don't, I want my children to." Unlike the Americans the Chinese did not miss the message; however in the US itself the statement was not given much importance. The statement did not create any uproar. The level of secrecy maintained about the entire process was so high that Secretary of State

William Rogers (1970) due to ignorance and his pro-India approach recommended in the memorandum for the President:

“We do not have overriding political and security interests in South Asia which require us to get back into arms business. Our relations with both India and Pakistan are generally good..... India is relatively more important to our interests than Pakistan..... If we can please only one of the two countries, we should lean towards India,... Pakistan’s unhappiness will be containable. It will continue to maintain good relations with us...because we are Pakistan’s largest aid donors... After lying dormant for some time, the Turk- Pakistan one hundred M- 47 tank transaction suddenly surfaced in November when Turks told us they could go ahead if we give our approval. I recommend that we not proceed with the tank transaction because: 1- we get relatively little out of the transaction in Pakistan, compared with the disproportionate damage to our relations with India- which are relatively more important, 2- India would regard the Tank deal as a significant step by this administration in favor of Pakistan and consequently may review the Hanoi recognition question, 3- Pakistan has terminated the agreement for our intelligence facilities in its territory, and 4- Pakistan has also obtained two hundred Soviet Tanks, which reportedly will be delivered by the end of 1970”.

Despite all the secrecy the *New York Times* had already predicted Kissinger’s visit to Peking. On February 22nd 1970, the White House via Pakistani Ambassador Agha Hilaly received the positive reply of Peking which asked for a bilateral discussion. A little later a similar message was conveyed via the Romanian channel.

At this juncture according to Kissinger the administration had slight preference for the Pakistani channel, mainly because the fact that Romania was a communist state could complicate matters (Kux 2001:189).

In October 1970, heads of state had gathered in Washington for celebrating 25th anniversary of the United Nations (UN). Here Nixon announced arms supply to Pakistan; calling it one time exception. As expected, New Delhi was annoyed. Kaul (1980:33) says:

“the so-called exception was in fact neither one-time nor an exception. I recall an informal conversation with a senior counselor of the State

Department in 1969 when he bluntly warned me, 'the Pakistan Army is far superior to the Indian Army; one Pakistani soldier is equal to ten Indians.'

However the laggard bureaucratic procedures delayed the actual supply of arms. Nixon (1978) pleased Yahya with his assurance "nobody has occupied White House who is friendlier to Pakistan." Yahya took another message of Nixon, which emphasized on rapprochement, US plans of not joining a condominium against China and the names of the possible envoys for the meeting. Another significant event was that while raising a toast during dinner President Nixon for the first time referred to China by its official name, People's Republic of China (PRC).

The next message was conveyed after a short gap; the Americans had assumed that probably the response was not positive. Then Pakistani Ambassador to the US Agha Hilaly got in touch with the office of Henry Kissinger on December 8th 1970 three weeks after the message had been conveyed. Official records do not mention any particular reasons for the delay. According to Kissinger's speculations Peking probably gave such instructions, or probably it was a part of the precautions taken by Yahya. The message was on a piece of blue lined white paper and had been carried by Ambassador Hilaly by hand as Yahya did not trust the cable communication. Further Hilaly was not even authorized to leave the paper with Kissinger. Thus Hilaly dictated the message to Kissinger and he wrote it down. The message said:

"In order to discuss the subject of vacation of Chinese territories called Taiwan, a special envoy of President Nixon's will be most welcome in Peking." (Kissinger 1979:714)

Kissinger perhaps did not appreciate Chou and Yahya's method of communication as he said:

“In an age of instantaneous communication we had returned to the diplomatic methods of the previous century- the hand written note delivered by the messenger and read aloud. An event of fundamental importance took place in a pedantic, almost pedestrian fashion” (Kissinger 1979:714).

On December 16th 1970 Kissinger handed over the reply to Hilaly and in contrast it was typed, though without any letter head. The message said:

“On the broad range of issues which lie between the People’s Republic of China and the United States, including the issue of Taiwan....the meeting in Peking would not be limited only to the Taiwan question but would encompass other steps designed to improve the relations and reduce tensions. With respect to the US military presence in the region of East Asia and the Pacific as tensions in the region diminished.”

(Kissinger 1979:724)

In December 1970, Chairman Mao was interviewed by Edgar Snow, the *Life magazine* journalist. Mao said:

“At present the problems between China and the US would have to be solved with Nixon....would be happy to talk with him either as a tourist or as President” (Kissinger 1979:724).³³

The next message came from the Romanian channel, and the message stated that Nixon will be welcomed in Peking. The Americans deliberately delayed the response, in order to hide their eagerness about opening up China. Moreover, the reply was verbal. This reflects in the preference for the Pakistani channel. After this we do not hear about the Romanian channel carrying any other message from China for the US.

“Ping-Pong Diplomacy” was the next development in the row. On April 6th 1971, the Chinese invited American team of Table Tennis players to Peking. The event caught the attention of the media worldwide. The

³³ The interview was published much later after certain level of firm developments had already taken place between the US and China. Official records do not say anything about the delays, but probably it was a part of the secrecy measures that were adopted to carry out the task.

American soon withdrew some troops from Vietnam and the Chinese gave visa to several western newsmen. The event ended at a positive note.

The next phase of communication began on April 27th 1971. The new message from Chou Enlai, emphasized on having a direct discussion and that the arrangements for the purpose be made through Yahya Khan's office. In reply the Nixon administration expressed its appreciation about having Yahya Khan and his administration as an intermediary. In the meantime Joseph Farland the American ambassador to Pakistan was updated by Kissinger about the developments and the role he will be required to play. On May 10th 1971, the American reply was handed over to Hilaly, it said:

“President Nixon has carefully studied the messages of April 21, 1971, from Premier Chou En-Lai conveyed through the courtesy of President Yahya Khan. President Nixon agrees that direct high level negotiations are necessary to resolve the issues dividing the United States of America and the People's Republic of China. Because of the importance he attaches to normalizing relations between our countries, President Nixon is prepared to accept the suggestion of Premier Chou En-Lai that he visit Peking for direct conversations with the leaders of the People's Republic of China. At such a meeting each side would be free to raise the issue of principal concern to it.” (Kissinger 1979:726).

Besides this Nixon suggested the name of Kissinger for negotiations, he also emphasized that for maintaining secrecy no other channel other than Pakistan should be used for communication. In between on May 31st 1971, Nixon administration received a message from Yahya Khan via, Hilaly; it said:

- 1) There is very encouraging and positive response to the last message.
- 2) Please convey to Mr. Kissinger that the meeting will take place on Chinese soil for which travel arrangements will be made by us.
- 3) Level of meeting will be proposed by you.

4) Full message will be transmitted by safe means.

(Nixon 1978:875).

As expected the response from the Chinese was positive, they were waiting for an American envoy in Peking for negotiations. "This is the most important communication that has come to an American President since the end of the World War II", said Kissinger (Nixon, 1978). Rest what unfolded is history.

The diplomatic exchanges between the US and China had some peculiar features such as the Vietnam War was not mentioned even once. Nixon managed to keep the developments a secret from the media. In the Congress report on foreign policy in 1970 and 1971 only one and three pages respectively were devoted to Pakistan.

"Although the announcement of the SALT agreement with Moscow was not yet in hand, Nixon and Kissinger believed that it was the fear of a US-Soviet accommodation that was motivating Peking's initiative" (Dallek 2007:286).

Justifying his move President Nixon (1978), during his visit to Kansas (before Kissinger's visit) said:

"Potential of China though obscured to most American observers by its isolation, was such that no sensible foreign policy could ignore or exclude it. That is the reason why I felt that it was essential that this administration take the first steps towards ending the isolation of mainland China from the world community."³⁴

Lastly Kissinger (1979:755) described the visit to China as:

"not only transforming relations with Peking but also creating diversions from Vietnam in this country for a while we needed it in our game with the Soviets."

³⁴ Nixon in his memoir further points out that in the US the speech received little attention whereas Peking carefully followed it.

Kissinger's Trip to Peking

Henry Kissinger's trip to Peking was camouflaged by his ten day mission in East Asia. On the trip every single move of Kissinger was cautiously choreographed and the mission to Peking was code named "Polo"³⁵. As planned Kissinger flew down to Vietnam, he visited capital cities of Asian states. According to the plan on his way back, he was supposed to visit Islamabad on 9th July 1971. In Pakistan Yahya Khan cooperated with the Americans for the successful execution of the plan. Perhaps the White House had even prepared for a situation if they were to be caught, in that case it would be told to the media that Kissinger is meeting the leaders of People's Republic of China at their request and the rest would be said after the meeting.

Following orders Ambassador Farland had chalked out activities for the entire day to keep Kissinger occupied. As a part of precautions Kissinger's schedule was published, beforehand so that no one would doubt the sudden illness of Kissinger. This made the story more believable and even helped in keeping things a secret. However since the time Kissinger landed in Islamabad with NSC aide Harold Saunders, the later reported about Kissinger having an upset stomach to Sultan Khan the Pakistan's Foreign Secretary. The stomach problem of Kissinger was planned to last from 9-11 July. Such an excuse would have helped to keep the media at distance; then in the early morning before dawn Kissinger would undertake his journey to Peking in a Pakistani plane to avoid any suspicion.

During Kissinger's absence President Yahya Khan and Ambassador Farland were supposed to take control of the situation. By afternoon

³⁵ The secret trip was given such a codename keeping in mind the success the explorer Marco Polo had in reaching to China.

Kissinger met the American embassy staff, in Islamabad; but soon after that he retired himself from the media glare with the excuse of an upset stomach. Dennis Kux (2001:191) who was posted at the American embassy in Islamabad at that time recollects the events:

“At about midnight, Farland and Saunders showed up at my home. Kissinger’s stomach trouble had become much worse and he could not carry on with the planned schedule, they said. Yahya had suggested that he rest for a day or two in the nearby 8000-foot mountain resort of Nathiagali. Kissinger had agreed and also had gone along with Yahya’s wacky idea that he arrive in Nathiagali in time to see sunrise over the Himalayan peaks. This meant that he had to depart by 4 A.M. Farland, the Kissinger party and Sultan Khan planned to accompany him to Nathigali leaving Saunders behind to deal with any important cables. I said I would be at the state guest house where Kissinger was staying at 3:30 A.M. to make sure everyone left in good order Saunders and Farland insisted that this was not necessary. I disagreed, saying this was part of control officer’s responsibility. After Farland still insisted, I acquiesced, frankly happy to get a full night sleep. The party indeed left the guest house at 4 A.M. Farland and Sultan Khan drove up to Nathiagali; Kissinger and his NSC aides, however headed for the Islamabad airport, where they boarded PIA jet and took off for Beijing.”

Kissinger and his aides were driven to the Chakala airport, Islamabad in military vehicles. These vehicles were secured and any other vehicle would have caught unnecessary attention. Perhaps in order to not to be spotted by pedestrians Kissinger also carried a hat and a pair of sunglasses, on Farland’s advice. However in such early hours hardly anyone would have been out on the streets. But taking precautions would not have caused any harm.

Keeping all the precautions in mind, the plane had made a trial flight to Beijing a few days before. On the way back the plane had also brought three Chinese navigators and a senior member. The Chinese group was to accompany Kissinger. Yahya Khan gave his personal touch to the entire development as his personal pilot undertook this flight. The plane was

carefully parked on the civilian side of the airport where media and journalists could not have spotted it easily. Before boarding the plane Kissinger informed Nixon, again via the Pakistan channel.

In the meantime President Yahya Khan took complete control of the situation. As planned Kissinger was supposed to go to Nathiagali to rest. Such a site in the outskirts was chosen to avoid the media circus in the absence of Kissinger. Moreover Yahya had insisted that Kissinger should arrive there before sunrise, again a move to keep the media at a distance. A dummy motorcade from Islamabad proceeded to Nathiagali. To cover up for Kissinger Ambassador Farland, David Halperin (aide of Kissinger), two Secret Service agents and M.M. Ahmed (a Pakistani aide) sat in the cavalcade as passengers. Dennis Kux was covering up for Kissinger.

Talks in Peking were a success and were later sealed in the document called "President's Eyes Only"; and Yahya Khan provided the best cover up ever for Kissinger. When on the way back Kissinger's plane was delayed then Farland and Sultan Khan covered up for Kissinger with the excuse that Kissinger's had stopped at the town of Muree for souvenir shopping. As it had been told to the media on 11th July Kissinger returned from Nathiagali and after that he boarded his plane for Paris. Till the time a formal announcement was made about the entire episode by President Nixon on July 15th 1971, no one had the idea of the developments that had taken place. The news shocked the world, as Henry Kissinger puts it. Nixon (1981) said:

"For China this new relationship with the US represented a 'great leap forward'.....For a regime as dogmatic as Mao had been, this was a tremendous change."

Later Nixon (1999:311) again in support of his policies said:

“Like the Chinese we had no other practical choice. If we had not undertaken the initiative and China had been forced back into the Soviet orbit, the threat to west of Soviet communist aggression would be infinitely greater than it is today.”

Conclusion

Roots of the Nixonian policy of rapprochement with China can be traced back to the 1967, Foreign Affairs article “Asia After Viet Nam” by Nixon. The article adumbrated the Nixon Doctrine wherein Asian allies would be more responsible for their military defense and the United States would, correspondingly, be less responsible (Bostdorff 2002). The entire process unfolded in sheer secrecy which was essential to keep things under control, it was only with time that the entire story became public. However, India was aware about the Peking initiative of President Nixon. The information had reached India through sources in Geneva. G. Parthasarathy had been told about it in Geneva by Edgar Snow on July 7th (Kaul 1980:54). The next day G. Parthasarathy reached New Delhi and informed the government about it. However when Kissinger poked about it by T.N. Kaul in 1969 he denied the story in a diplomatic fashion, instead claiming that the US was much more closer to India than to Pakistan.

The idea took approximately five years to materialize, and Pakistan played a pivotal role in it. However everyone in the administration was not confident about the Pakistan channel. But all the opposition was silenced once the channel became a success. Although Nixon and Kissinger often tried to walk away with all the credit, but one cannot deny the fact that the success of the policy was not only about who laid the plan but also about who helped in execution of the plan.

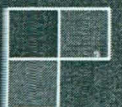
Cohen (1997) says “although the Indian diplomats were among the first to learn of the Sino-Soviet split, it was Pakistan that exploited the crack in the communist monolith by helping to arrange the secret visit of Henry Kissinger to Beijing in 1970, leading to improved US ties with China.”

The policy fulfilled American as well as Pakistani objectives. Amidst the back channel diplomacy, the political situation in Pakistan had deteriorated, attracting criticism from world over; but the Nixon administration turned a blind eye to it as the priority was rapprochement with China. Thus apart from the global 'Great Game' South Asia on the whole had limited importance for the Nixon administration. Pakistani expectations from the US increased after the success of the Sino-US rapprochement. But once again when the American objective was fulfilled, Pakistan was abandoned in the middle of nowhere.

Nixon's Response to the Political Crisis in East Pakistan

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- ❖ Phase 1: The Beginning of the Conflict in the Sub-Continent
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Chapter 4



Introduction

22 years after independence, it was only the political calculations and the strong leadership of Ayub Khan that had kept East Pakistan in the clutches of West Pakistan. But towards the end of the 1960's the differences had widened and the grip of West Pakistan over East Pakistan appeared to be becoming weak. Complaints about the step motherly treatment the East Pakistanis received only grew with time and so did the repression by West Pakistan; and thus making a war inevitable.

In 1970, Pakistan was helping the US normalize relations with PRC, on the domestic front in politics things went from bad to worse. Thousands were slaughtered and thousands had become refugees. What began as an internal conflict or problem soon developed into an issue of concern for the entire neighborhood; particularly for India which faced the largest refugee influx. Criticism poured in for West Pakistan from all quarters. The Nixon administration was indifferent and attempted to fool the world in the name of a neutral stand. Only time revealed the true story of Sino-American rapprochement, and the role Pakistan had played in it. Columnist Braden believes that the pro-Pakistani stand of the US was simply a result of a rising China.

Columnist Chalmers M. Roberts, searching for an explanation for Nixon's stubborn preference for Pakistan, cautiously suggest that Nixon's anti-India bias might be rooted in his experience as Vice-President (Walter 1979:297).

The Americans were clear about the fact that rapprochement with China was the prime agenda. Being critical of Yahya's actions in East Pakistan would have hampered the developments in Sino-US relations. The Vietnam War had not ended, and it had already drained the US treasury. Taking even a humanitarian stand on the East Pakistan crisis would have come at the cost of rapprochement with China. Economically as well the

US could not have afforded even an indirect involvement in the East Pakistani crisis as the Vietnam War had already drained them. Thus the Americans did not want to be a part of any conflict in South Asia. Therefore what developed was the American 'tilt' towards Pakistan as columnist Jack Anderson termed it.

The response of the Nixon administration towards the crisis in East Pakistan can be best understood by dividing it roughly into different phases; as the developments stretch over a year's time and though the response was largely tilted towards Pakistan but such a stand developed along with the developments in the situation in the sub-continent. Philip Oldenburg in his work 'The Breakup of Pakistan'; has broadly classified the developments in the sub-continent and the response of the Nixon administration towards it in three phases.

Phase 1: The Beginning of the Conflict in the Sub-Continent

For the first seven years after its independence in 1947, the government in East Pakistan was run by the refugees from India. But changes soon followed and after that for the next fifteen years the government in East Pakistan was being run by West Pakistani Army under the leadership of General Ayub Khan. Problems arose due to the wide rifts that existed between both the territories of Pakistan. Perhaps the geographical distance was well manifested in the relations between two territories of Pakistan.

Demographically West Pakistan comprised of Baluchis, Pathans, Punjabis, Pushtus and Sindhis whereas East Pakistan had a dominant Bengali population. Islam had been the uniting factor, but despite the religious unification culturally both the territories were poles apart. Policies framed by the West Pakistani administration did little to incorporate the

East Pakistanis, for instance Urdu was declared as the national language, whereas in East Pakistan only a handful of people knew Urdu³⁶.

Geographically both the territories of Pakistan had completely different terrain and the government in West Pakistan had remained insensitive towards the environmental problems of East Pakistan. Economic development in whole of Pakistan had been limited; this explains Pakistani dependence on American aid. Moreover, American aid that Pakistan received was used exclusively for development of West Pakistan. Wilcox (1973:16) says "In 1959-60 per capita income was 32 percent higher in West Pakistan than in the East; in 1969-70, it was 61 percent higher." Yahya made attempts to keep the territories together, with programmes such as Legal Framework Order (LFO).³⁷ But such reforms were too late and too little.

Choudhury (1977:208-209) says as early as February 1971 the *New York Times* in an article was:

"Full of critical and hostile comment at a time when the Pakistan government was engaged in serious political negotiations with the Bengali leader Mujibur Rehman for a political settlement between East and West Pakistan and to avoid confrontation. The New York Times article reflected the hardening Soviet attitude towards Pakistan at this time; Pakistan's ambassador in Moscow also began to send reports in 1970 of the Soviets' "increasing pressures" and "hardening attitude."

³⁶ However this decision was soon reverted, as in protest of this decision riots broke out in East Pakistan. But then the East Pakistanis were not pacified as, the government in West Pakistan did not do anything to make for the damages caused during the riots.

³⁷ Wayne Wilcox (1973) elaborates on the LFO says, it was started on 30th May 1970, Yahya made five points: 1) the country should be a Federation the Unity of which should not be in any manner impaired 2) the constitution must provide for Muslim ideology, democracy, civil rights, and independence of the judiciary 3) the provinces should have maximum authority within the needs of the federal government "to discharge its responsibilities in relations to external affairs and to preserve the independence and territorial integrity of the country" 4) the people of all parts of the country should be full participants in all national activities and 5) "within the specified period, economic and all other disparities between the provinces and between different areas in a Province are to be removed by the adoption of statutory and other measures"

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman head of the Awami League led the movement for liberation of East Pakistan. The movement gained momentum post the elections in December 1970. Pakistan People's Party under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto performed well in West Pakistan, but in East Pakistan the polls were swept by the Awami League winning 167 out of 169 seats. Awami League was thus democratically elected. Years of repression at the hands of West Pakistani administration had started showing its colors, but the immediate cause of victory of the Awami League was the indifference of West Pakistan after the two cyclones that hit East Pakistan in November 1970. Yahya's wishful thinking of a democratically elected majority government came crashing down. Do-gooder US also ordered relief measures. But again the aid never reached the needy.

Between December-March 1970-71 both the parties could not reach to any conclusion for forming the government. West Pakistan did not give recognition to Awami League. Eventually to sort out matters Yahya went to East Pakistan for negotiations with Mujibur Rehman.

Golam Wahid Choudhury, a Bengali who served in Yahya's cabinet, described the situation as being "like giving oxygen to a dying patient when the doctors have declared him a lost case" (Kux 2001:185).

The talks failed. Following which Mujibur was arrested and military operations began in East Pakistan on the orders of Yahya, and by March end civil war broke out.

From March 25th 1971 onwards, West Pakistan launched military operations in East Pakistan. Leaders of the liberation movement in East Pakistan requested other states to help them; they asked far away states likes Yugoslavia also for help. A cable in this context was sent to Indira Gandhi as well, requesting her to secure a UN intervention. Mukti Fauj the liberation army of East Pakistan was formed. Students in East Pakistan

had formed the 'Free Bengal Students Action Committee'. They too appealed to other states for help in terms of food and ammunition. Students from East Bengal residing in Tokyo requested the UN for help. In the US expatriates from East Bengal formed the 'East Pakistan League of America' and requested the US and Canada to give recognition to the government formed by the Awami League in exile.³⁸

A consequence of the military action was the outflow of refugees from East Pakistan in the bordering states of India. East Pakistan was geographically surrounded by India from three sides and the borders were porous, and there is only a small border that is shared with Myanmar. But the cultural and geographical reasons prevented people from migrating to Myanmar. Initially steps were taken by the Indian government to help the refugees. But then economically the refugee influx imposed a grave pressure on India; moreover as months passed by the influx simply increased. In the Indian state of West Bengal which comprised of Bengali Hindus, communal tension escalated with the coming of Bengali Muslims from East Pakistan. The resources started falling short to meet the needs of Indians and therefore to meet the needs of refugees was out of question. Basic necessities like clean drinking water were also not enough. There was a lack of proper sanitation facilities.

These developments were not followed by any immediate response from outside the region, as the world community considered the developments to be internal in character. The Nixon administration was quiet, not willing to jeopardize the China initiative; but then only a handful of people in Washington knew about the China initiative, therefore what

³⁸ Kheli (1982) points out to a little known fact that the government of the United States made direct contacts with the interim government of Bangladesh and this was outside the knowledge of Islamabad. The hope was to mediate the crisis short of independence so that war could be averted.

followed was administrative snafu. Senator Edward Kennedy a democrat who headed the Senate sub-committee on refugees on April 1, 1971, said:

“indiscriminate killing, the execution of political leaders and students, and thousands of civilians suffering and dying every hour of the day” (Oldenburg 2008:334).

The authorities in Washington were aware about the developments in the sub-continent and the atrocities committed by the West Pakistani army; but they were unwilling to acknowledge it.

Hollen (1980:422) says “Outrage at Pakistani atrocities was also felt within the bureaucracy- especially at the middle levels in State and AID- but most directly by the members of the American consulate General in Dacca.”

Archer Blood who was the American Consul General in Dhaka, sent a telegram to the Department of State, signed by 19 other members of his staff, expressing their disagreement with the American policy towards Pakistan. The state department approved Blood’s suggestions to evacuate American nationals from Dhaka. The Americans had planned to fly the evacuees to Bangkok which was closer to Dhaka. But West Pakistan insisted that the American evacuees be flown to Islamabad before taking off for the US. The American Ambassador to Pakistan Joseph Farland accepted this proposal reluctantly; only to please Yahya. Consul General Blood was soon transferred and later was given the American Foreign Service Association’s Herter Award as a complementary reward. Senator Kennedy in his report on the conditions in South Asia called the miniscule evacuation programme undertaken by the US government as a normal thinning out. On April 7th 1971, an editorial in the *New York Times* declared:

“Washington’s persistent silence on recent events in Pakistan is increasingly incomprehensible in light of eye witness evidence that Pakistani army has engaged in indiscriminate slaughter” (Kux 2001:200).

S.H. Schanberg a journalist with the *New York Times* reported about systematic killing of East Pakistanis by the West Pakistani army; using American weapons. In April 1971 in an editorial in the *New York Times* reported the opinion of the Ripon Society of the US; according to which, stability could return to South Asia only when Bangladesh would emerge as an independent nation. According to Choudhury (1977:202):

“The Western press did a great service to humanity by giving wide publicity to the atrocities of the Pakistani army in East Bengal. The result was a natural world-wide upsurge of sympathy for the cause of Bangladesh, but it also successfully camouflaged the attempt of some countries to further their narrow national interests by exploiting the tragic situation and taking advantage of the internal conflict of a smaller power.”

Farland advised the administration in Washington to cautiously voice its deep concern about the crisis in East Pakistan but not to get involved directly or indirectly.

On April 19th 1971, even the Senior Review Group in Washington, also emphasized on developing ties with India. American ambassador to India Kenneth B. Keating, expressed his support for the East Pakistanis. According to Keating, Nixon administration's emphasis on East Pakistani crisis being an internal issue was overdone. However it is not known that whether Keating was voicing his personal opinions or acting on the orders of Nixon in order to pacify the situation.

The use of American weapons became an issue. These weapons supplied to Pakistan were supposed to be used against any communist aggression in the region and not against any internal aggression. The issue was debated in the US congress. Senator Kennedy said that Pakistan was violating the agreement it had made with the US. Senators Muskie, Walter Mondale (Democrats) and Edwards Brooks (Republican) wrote a letter to the Secretary of State William Rogers enquiring about the use of American

weapons in East Pakistan and what measures the Nixon administration was taking to prevent it so that the situation normalizes. Further Senators Clifford Case (Republican) and Mondale issued a joint statement expressing their regret over the East Pakistani crisis, and said that till the time the issue is not resolved American weapons should not be supplied to Pakistan. Lastly Senator Frank Church said that American stand would be neutral if the Nixon administration stopped supporting West Pakistan.

Senators Kennedy, Fulbright and Saxbe opposed the arms supply to Pakistan. They raised the issue in the National Press Club. Senator Fulbright proposed to the administration that necessary steps should be taken to prevent the shipment of American arms and their spare parts to Pakistan. Chester Bowles former American Ambassador to India too criticized the arms shipment calling it an abysmal error. Senator Kennedy and Senator Percy even personally visited the sub-continent personally in order to better understand the situation better and they further suggested stopping the arms supply.

To ease the situation Nixon even agreed to give aid to the refugees, however this was a miniscule attempt in front of his tilted stand. India on the other hand believed that only a political solution could bring peace to the region and that aid would provide only momentary relief. Nixon also advised President Yahya Khan and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to avoid a full scale war; perhaps this was after all the strategic calculations. According to Dallek (2007:290):

“The President and Kissinger had less interest in what the Indians or Pakistanis did to each other than in assuring that nothing sidetracked Henry’s trip to China and the revolution in Sino-American relations.”

Further Nixon said “Even apart from Chinese thing, I wouldn’t....help the Indians, the Indians are goddamn good” (Dallek 2007:290). Thus apart

from the China initiative the personal dislike President Nixon had for India shaped his interpretations about India's stand on the East Pakistani crisis.

Moreover, to be in the good books of Yahya, Nixon on 25th March 1971, had allowed small arms outside US government's control to be shipped to Pakistan.

Hollen (1980:422), says "When the New York Times reported in late June that Pakistani freighters had sailed, or were about to sail from US ports with arms, a credibility gap was created with Congress and with the Indian government."³⁹

In May 1971, M.M. Ahmed a special envoy and chief economic advisor of Yahya went to the US. In Washington Nixon simply reassured his non-interfering stand to him. Thus developed the much talked about American tilt towards Pakistan. Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco said that the crisis can be resolved only by the Pakistani people. Further when the Department of State suspended the issuance of export license to Pakistan; the Pentagon continued to allow the arms supply to Pakistan; a result of lack of communication. Nixon in approving the arms ban said "To all hands. Don't squeeze Yahya at this time" (Kux 2001:201).

In addition to the eyewitness testimony the fact that after May virtually all the refugees were Hindus supports the view that actions by the Pakistan army in East Bengal constituted genocide by third definition. However the language used in public even by critics of US policy did not include the words "genocide"; for instance in Senator Kennedy's report Crisis in South Asia, we get only an indirect usage: "Our national

³⁹ Hollen has further pointed out that, New York Times on 5th February 1972 reported "The amount of arms shipped to Pakistan after March 25th, 1971 was not large, although the exact amount may never be known. Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts used the figure of \$50 million on several occasions, and this figure was given prominence by the Indian press. But a General Accounting Office study, undertaken at Kennedy's request, later reported that \$3.8 million in military supplies were exported between March 25 and September 30, 1971 on licenses issued before March 25; it is unlikely that arms shipped after March 25 exceed \$5 million.

leadership has yet to express one word that would suggest we do not approve of the genocidal consequences of the Pakistan Government's policy of repression of violence." (Oldenburg 2008:337)

Newspapers around the world continued reporting views which were critical of the American stand on the East Pakistan crisis. In May 1971 an article in the *New York Times* reported the story of Katherine G. Kelly, who was an aid worker with the refugees in India. She expressed her anguish at the response of the Nixon administration. She believed that by supporting a suppressionist regime like that of Yahya Khan the US has lost its right to support democracy. In an editorial in the *International Herald Tribune* in May 1971, clergyman Homer A. Jack too expressed his sorrow looking at the conditions in East Pakistan. Another editorial in the *New York Times* in May 1971 reported the story of John E. Rhode, a doctor who had worked with the refugees from East Pakistan. He said that the US should not support West Pakistan's military action and should not remain quiet as it simply showed its support for West Pakistan. The print media voiced opinions of individuals like Gidon Gottlieb a law professor who believed that though the crisis in East Pakistan was internal in nature but still the US still had the obligation to see whether military actions were within the parameters of law.

In the meantime cholera epidemic broke out on the India-East Pakistan border. Problems escalated as now it was not limited to the increasing refugee influx and the economic pressure imposed due to it. According to the reports in the media hospitals at India-East Bengal border were flooded with patients affected by the Cholera epidemic and slaughtered by the West Pakistani army. Disposal of the dead bodies became a grave problem. Thus India was dragged into the internal conflict of Pakistan. It would have been unfair for India to simply bear pressure and therefore

Indira Gandhi started requesting friends of Pakistan to persuade Yahya to change his decisions.

The situation in East Pakistan was nothing less than genocide, but the Nixon administration never termed it so; in June 1971 *The Sunday Times* newspaper of the United Kingdom was the first to term the genocide to define the situation in East Pakistan⁴⁰. Oldenburg (2008:336-337) quotes a hearing of the Senate sub-committee on refugees held in June 1971, which involves a question answer session between Senator Fong and Archer Blood who had been the head of the American Consulate in Dhaka:

SENATOR FONG: When the insurgents were put down, were there actions taken by the East Pakistan Army which forced the people to leave?

MR. BLOOD: I don't see any direct relationship between the level of insurgency and the flows of refugees.

SENATOR FONG: Then why would the refugees leave?

MR. BLOOD:An d, subsequently, many Hindus have left because of the way they were treated.

SENATOR FONG: Did many of them leave because they say conditions were imposed on the Hindus that they thought they couldn't live with?

MR. BLOOD: I assume so, yes.

SENATOR FONG: What would those conditions be, sir?

MR. BLOOD: I wouldn't want to go into every detail, because we have reported this in the classified messages.....I would prefer not to answer in open session....

On June 10th 1971, Congressman Cornelius E. Gallagher a democrat who chaired the Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, called the acts of West Pakistan as 'genocide'. This was for the first time that an American had termed the situation in East Pakistan as 'genocide'. He called Nixon's

⁴⁰ Oldenburg (2008) says "the International Genocide Convention (not ratified by the US at that time); defines genocides as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious....."

policy a diplomatic catastrophe. He felt that people who had democratically come to power were denied their right. Further he felt the crisis was not an internal matter, but required the involvement of mankind to resolve it. Lastly he said that the US was party to the atrocities as the weapons used to commit them were American. Besides Gallagher, Harvard economist Robert Dorfman believed the American aid had become a prerequisite for military action.

According to India, the US and China followed a policy of adventurism in South Asia. On his trip to India in July 1971 Kissinger advised Mrs. Gandhi that a war would be disastrous, and would rather develop into a war involving outside powers. According to the American calculations in case India would initiate the war then China would come to rescue Pakistan and the Soviet Union would come to help India and thus there were all the possibilities that the situation could go out of control.

Phase 2: American Response Post the Success of the China Initiative

Post the success of the China initiative Nixon in a National Security Council (NSC) meeting described Indians as slippery and treacherous people. The bottom line was that whatever India did was wrong for the Nixon administration, as it would disrupt their foreign policy initiative to open up China. Thus the US also continued to successfully supply the relief packages to Pakistan, and also secured aid under the UN umbrella.

“By mid-July 1971, Mrs. Gandhi had begun to speak of the birth of Bangladesh. There was mounting recognition that this was India’s golden opportunity to cripple and dismember Pakistan. Nixon viewed Kennedy’s espousal of pressure on Pakistan as a deliberate attempt to embarrass him and gain support in his quest for the presidency” (Kheli 1982:37).

On 2nd August 1971 in a statement in the *New York Times* UN Secretary General U. Thant warned that a war could break out in South Asia. On 3rd August 1971, the US Congress approved a bill which suspended further

American aid to Pakistan till the time reasonable stability was not restored in the region, and on the other hand relief aid for the refugees in India was sanctioned. Nixon was critical of such a policy measure. Later in August the *New York Times* quoted Senator Edwards Kennedy who on his visit to the sub-continent described the actions of the West Pakistani army as genocide.

On August 9th 1971 India and the Soviet Union signed a 20 years friendship treaty. For India the treaty was a need, as India needed outside support in order to handle the deteriorating situation on its eastern front. The US had tilted in favour of Pakistan and so had China thus the Soviet support was the only hope for India. The treaty assured Soviet support for India in case of a war. Inevitability of outbreak of a war, was known to everyone, yet when Kissinger was poked by Indian ambassador to the US L. Jha about the American interest in avoiding a war; Kissinger replied that the US simply was trying to avoid a war which could develop into an international conflict. According to a report in the *New York Times* the American intelligence agencies had reported that the USSR had persuaded India from giving recognition to the Bangladeshi government by signing the treaty with them.

Following these developments some time later Yahya Khan announced amnesty to spur refugee return. In late September 1971, Schanberg again reported about the miserable conditions in the refugee camps in India. The criticism about the stand of the Nixon administration further increased when Senator Kennedy released confidential documents which spoke of the continued military supply to Pakistan till mid-July. Further in mid-October State Department Representative C.W. Bray said that the US had along with other states been practicing 'Preventive Diplomacy' by trying to convince both India and Pakistan to not to go to war. By late October

and early November, reports about skirmishes on the India-East Pakistan border had started pouring in, but the reports were not confirmed and no one was sure as to which side was responsible for starting it.

In November 1971, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Washington. Nixon tried to persuade her that Indian involvement in the situation was not required and rather the involvement would lead to disintegration of Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi stood firm on her stand that India had no plans of crippling Pakistan or to disintegrate it. However Nixon doubted every word Mrs. Gandhi said. In his memoir Nixon (1978) says:

“Mrs. Gandhi knew her generals and advisers were planning to intervene in East Pakistan and were considering contingency plans for attacking West Pakistan as well. Even though India was neutral and continued to receive foreign aid from us, Mrs. Gandhi had gradually become aligned with the Soviets and received substantial economic and military aid from Moscow.”

Justifying his stand on the crisis in East Pakistan, Nixon praised Yahya for aligning with the US and helping US in normalizing relations with China. According to him Mrs. Gandhi's idea of establishing peace in the region was limited to words and that Yahya's idea of peace was much more, as he even responded by moving his troops from the India-Pakistan borders. However in reality things were diametrically opposite to what Nixon said.

Indira Gandhi responded by, questioning the bill of particulars against Pakistan, she was critical of the American arms supply to Pakistan, she blamed the separatist movement for the troubles in the region and told Nixon that unity of both the territories of Pakistan was impossible. Mrs. Gandhi also disagreed with the American argument that a war in South Asia could escalate into a larger Cold War. Differences between Nixon and Mrs. Gandhi only grew with the talks. Things worsened after it when

Mrs. Gandhi told a journalist that a state sitting miles apart from India could no longer dictate terms, as it is least aware of the ground realities. Mrs. Gandhi was critical of Nixon as well, as in the interview she bluntly pointed out that Kissinger did most of the talking. Lastly on December 1st 1971, the US State Department suspended the licensing of arms shipment to India.

Nixon's experience with Mrs. Gandhi had left a bad taste in his mouth, in his personal diary he wrote:

“As I saw Gandhi's assassination and heard his words on violence, I realized how hypocritical the present Indian leaders are, with Indira Gandhi talking about India's victory wings being clipped when Shastri went to Tashkent, and her duplicitous attitude towards us when she actually had made up her mind to attack Pakistan at the time she saw me in Washington and assured me she would not. Those who resort to force, without making excuses are bad enough- but those who resort to force while preaching to others about their use of force deserve no sympathy whatever” (Nixon 1978:889).

Indian involvement in the crisis to improve the situation in East Pakistan had become inevitable. For Nixon Indian involvement was inexplicable for obvious reasons.

Phase 3: After the Outbreak of the War between India and Pakistan

Eventually on 3rd December 1971, Pakistani Air Force on orders of Yahya Khan launched a surprised attack on Indian airfields in northern and western India. However the exact reason behind such a decision of Yahya Khan to attack first is not known; but whatever the reason may have been it gave India an opportunity to retaliate. Mrs. Gandhi ordered full scale offensive in East Pakistan and in the West she ordered limited offensive. Indian army along with the Mukti Bahini⁴¹ successfully invaded East

⁴¹ The rebel group in East Pakistan.

Pakistan. In a meeting of Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) on December 3rd 1971, which was later reported by journalist Jack Anderson, Kissinger said:

“I am getting hell every hour from the President that we are not being tough enough on India....He (Nixon) does not believe that we are carrying out his wishes. He wants the tilt in favor of Pakistan. He feels everything we do comes out otherwise” (Anderson Papers 1972).

However, later in his book ‘The White House Years’ Kissinger accepted that the American policy of tilt was rather weak. Therefore on the other hand the remaining export licenses for military goods for India were cancelled.

However Nixon and Kissinger always presented a colored account of the crisis, perhaps Kissinger seemed to be convinced that the war was a result Indian actions. Thus he wrote:

“I had no doubt we are now witnessing the beginning of an Indo-Pakistan war and that India had started itthere was no pretence of legality. There was no doubt in my mind- that India had escalated its demands continually and deliberately to prevent a settlement.....but what had caused the war, in Nixon’s view and mine, went beyond the refugee problem; it was India’s determination to use the crisis to establish its preeminence on the sub-continent” (Kissinger 1979:885).

On 4th December Sisco, in press conference accused India to be responsible for the war. Nixon also withdrew \$87 million of economic aid to India. Later in a press conference Spokesperson for the State Department Charles W. Bray, justified the withdrawal of aid saying that the administration was not assured of the fact whether the aid would be used for development purpose or for promoting war with Pakistan.⁴² To top it all the Nixon administration accused India of being the ‘aggressor’ in the conflict, however the evidences spoke otherwise.

⁴² According to the official documents the US gave aid only for developmental purposes.

On 6th December 1971, Secretary of State Rogers reported that Indians had attacked an American merchant vessel. In stark contrast to this on the same day Nixon in front of the Congress pledged that the US would be absolutely neutral in the conflict. Here in the sub-continent on 6th December India gave recognition to Bangladesh, a decision which it had been delayed on the advice of the Soviet Union. Kissinger and Nixon interpreted the recognition as further evidence of their idea:

“We decided that the best hope to keep India from smashing Pakistan. It was to increase the risk for Moscow- that is publicly and privately threaten the 1972 summit” (Hersh 1983:445).

Amidst these developments Kissinger received a confidential report from New Delhi, which many doubt was provided by Morarji Desai⁴³. According to the report India was planning to capture the southern half of Pakistan occupied Kashmir and to fight till the time Pakistani forces were not wiped out. The report was certainly an exaggeration; the political opposition in India was simply fishing in the troubled waters, but the Nixon administration used it to support its agenda.

On December 8th 1971, in an NSC meeting Kissinger said that they were trying to get across the message that India had jeopardized relations with the US. On December 9th Under Secretary of State John Irwin in a meeting requested Indian Ambassador to the US L.K. Jha that India should not attack West Pakistan. Jha refused to make any such commitments, rather asked Irwin if the US would provide any assurance that if an Indian territory is occupied by the Pakistanis then it would not be invaded. Only a day later Pakistan military commanders on the western front of India surrendered proposing a ceasefire, the State Department had a sigh of

⁴³ Morarji Desai was a politician from the opposition party and had rather been ignored, therefore it is doubted that he provided Washington with such information. Role of CIA was not considered as Mrs. Gandhi relied on a small circle of people often referred to as the sub-cabinet. Moreover the description of Kissinger pointed to Morarji Desai.

relief. Reflecting on the American interference in South Asia Michael Walter (1979:299-300) said:

“Still on December 10th 1971, the US Navy formed Task Force 74 consisting of the nuclear powered attack carrier Enterprise, the helicopter carrier Tripoli, three missile guided missile destroyer escorts, four conventional destroyers and a nuclear powered attack submarine.”

In the meantime on 9th December 1971 the CIA came up with a report in which they had predicted that the war would conclude with an Indian victory, Pakistan would be distorted and problems will arise in West Pakistan which would with time again spread to India, and Bangladesh would become an Indian stooge. The Task Force reached Bay of Bengal in support of Pakistan on December 14th 1971, and with the ceasefire between India and Pakistan on 17th December the Task Force also withdrew. However, according to the explanation provided by Washington the Task Force was moved there in order to evacuate American citizens from the area⁴⁴. Point to be noted is that American citizens from the region were evacuated by 12th December. The naval affairs analyst James McConnel and Anna Kelly too expressed their doubt over such an explanation.

According to official records on Bangladesh, White House Spokesperson Robert Ziegler expressed the US's appreciation of the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan. In a letter to Nixon at the close of war, Indira Gandhi cited the American Declaration of independence saying:

“with its call for man's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as a “great moment” of history “which inspired millions of people to die for liberty. The fact of the matter is that the rulers of West Pakistan got away with the impression that they could do what they liked because no

⁴⁴ “Kissinger in a background briefing to the press said that Moscow's inability to restrain the Indians could jeopardize the entire fabric of East-West relations, was meant to ensure that both New Delhi and Moscow understood the seriousness of any Indian move into West Pakistan” (Kheli 1982).

one not even the United States, would choose to take a public position that while Pakistan's integrity was certainly sacrosanct, human rights liberty were no less so.....Lip service was paid to the need for a political solution, but not a single worthwhile step was taken to bring (it) about" (Hersh 1983:464).

Phase 4: The Anderson Papers

The atrocities of the 1971 Indo-Pak War; had not been a hidden fact. The print media had left no stone unturned in exposing the real story of the East Pakistan crisis. However, once the war was over the Nixon administration had thought that soon things would be back to normal. Perhaps they strongly believed the assumption that people have a short memory. But the story of the tilted American stand towards Pakistan was far from over. Between 4th-15th January 1972, the Washington Post journalist Jack Anderson published a summary of the WSAG (Washington Special Action Group) meetings. The Anderson papers were a counterpart of the Pentagon Papers. The latter exposed the reality of the American position in the Vietnam War and the former did the same in context of the 1971 Indo-Pak war. Both the exposes brought worldwide embarrassment for the Nixon administration.

"In an interview on January 4 in New York with the Press Trust of India correspondent, Mr. Chakrapani, Anderson said that by the publication of the secret minutes he was trying to force a showdown with the administration over its classification system. Everything Dr, Kissinger did-even the toilet paper he used- was being stamped as 'secret'. That was not in public interest in a democracy" (Gupta 1972:40).

The conversations among the WSAG members which were published by the *Washington Post* clearly reflected the way the US went out of the way to bend in favour of Pakistan in order to meet its foreign policy goals. The WSAG included Henry Kissinger (National Security Advisor), John N. Irwin (Under Secretary of State), David Packard (Secretary of Defense), Richard M. Helms (Director CIA), Maurice J. Williams (Deputy

Administrator A.I.D.), Adm. Thomas H. Moorer (Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff), Joseph Sisco (Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and East Asian Affairs), G. Warner Nutter (Assistant Secretary of Defense), Samuel De Palma (Assistant Secretary of State), Armistead I. Sekden Jr. (Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense) and Donald G. MacDonald (Assistant Administrator A.I.D./ Near East and South Asia). The Nixon administration did everything to justify its stand Kissinger in a WSAG meeting on December 4th 1971, asked for a special interpretation of the 1959 bilateral agreement between the US and Pakistan. Nixon in an attempt to defend his stand said:

“One television picture is worth a thousand words’; but if the words are lies, those who see the picture may wonder whether it too is one” (Gupta 1972:39).

According to the official records:

“The “Anderson Papers” showed the degree to which criticism of policy was discouraged during WSAG meetings and the extent to which Presidential Advisor Henry Kissinger was able to monopolize direct contact with the President” (Historical Documents 1972).

Conclusion

The Nixon administration tilted in favour of Pakistan, only to safeguard its objective of opening up China. Pakistan was the communication channel between the US and China and taking any step against Pakistan would have meant disrupting the rapprochement with China. Even though the Nixon administration faced a tough opposition on the domestic and external front still it continued to support Pakistan. Often scholars define the American tilt towards Pakistan as the American support for Pakistan in disguise. Hollen (1980:428) says

“The new Nixon Kissinger strategy was to separate the humanitarian aspects of the policy from the political, a strategy that had a double purpose”.

The administration made several attempts to justify their stand. Kissinger (1979:905), in an attempt to justify the situation said:

“The United States could not condone a brutal military repression in which thousands of civilians were killed and from which millions fled to India for safety”, but the East Pakistan crisis “burst upon us While Pakistan was our only channel to China; we had no other means of communication with Peking”.

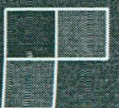
Pakistan appreciated the American stand. G.W. Choudhury (1977:210) said: “Pakistan was delighted to have this opportunity.....it was almost a God sent gift for Pakistan.”

The policy of American tilt was a result of American need. Nixon even attempted to find a scapegoat in India, but the strong stand of Mrs. Gandhi prevented him from doing so. Nixon’s arguments behind his stand simply reveal his lack of understanding of the sensibilities of the sub-continent. Thus the tilted American response was essentially the American policy to go out of the way to favour Pakistan so that American foreign policy goals were fulfilled, and they were fulfilled with Nixon visiting Peking in 1972. Kremlin was annoyed with the developments but could have hardly done anything about it.

1971 Indo-Pak War- Nature and Consequences of Washington's 'Tilt'

- ❖ Nature of Washington's Tilt
- ❖ Creation of Mukti Bahini
- ❖ Involvement of Other Powers in
the 1971 Indo-Pak War
- ❖ Change in the US Policy Towards South
Asia
- ❖ Conclusion

Chapter 5



Introduction

The year 1971, witnessed developments that changed the face of the world. If Kissinger's secret China visit and the opening up of China surprised everyone, then the brutality and the callous acts of the 1971 Indo-Pak War and the American tilt towards Pakistan shocked everyone. The political crisis in the two halves of Pakistan; firstly developed as a civil war and then into a war between the neighbors and eventually into a war involving the two power blocks (though indirectly). The war that unfolded in the sub-continent in December 1971 manifested the Cold War politics and the way it exploited the infant and politically unstable third world states. The crisis changed the face of the sub-continent forever, with the birth of Bangladesh; again putting a question mark on the existence of Pakistan. Religion laid the genesis of Pakistan and was the only unifying factor for the two halves, but the partition again proved that the other factors played a much more crucial role in keeping a state together.

Keeping the territories together was matter of honor for West Pakistan, breaking away with a hope of a better future was the desire of East Pakistan and maintaining stability in the region in order to prevent the massive refugee influx was the prime agenda of India. However, it was the US which had to choose between the devil and the deep sea. On one hand after efforts of two long years China-US rapprochement was materializing via the Pakistan channel. Speaking up for democracy and human rights would have cost US its much awaited opening of China and keeping numb towards the situation would have cost its image at the world stage. The Nixon administration chose the second option. Thus developed the 'American Tilt' towards Pakistan which led to various other developments and consequences such as (a) Creation of Mukti Bahini (b)

Involvement of other powers in the 1971 Indo-Pak War (c) Change in the US policy towards South Asia.

Nature of Washington's Tilt

What happened, why it happened and how it happened in case of the 1971 Indo-Pak War, is a story known to all. The media played a key role in shaping the interpretations of the policies framed by all the parties involved (directly and indirectly) in the conflict. India and USSR emerged as morally correct and the US and Pakistan (West Pakistan) emerged as morally corrupt. However, a close look at the policies of all the parties involved in the conflict indicates that the policies were framed so only to meet the national interest. Nixon's bias towards Pakistan certainly played a key role in the development of the American tilt towards Pakistan, but above all it was the national interest which guided him in this direction. Analysing the tilt one would find it has overtones of realism.

'Machiavellianism'⁴⁵ the term best defines the nature of the American tilt towards Pakistan. Nixon's policy to tilt in favor of Pakistan in order to meet the foreign policy need of Sino-US rapprochement has received criticism from all quarters. Concrete evidence showed that American weapons were used by the West Pakistani army to suppress the rebels in East Pakistan. From a moral point of view the Nixon administration was expected to condemn the actions of the West Pakistani army, but the Nixon administration chose to be quiet so that the process of Sino-US rapprochement carried out with the help of Pakistan was not disrupted. Writing on this stand of Nixon administration scholars have vehemently

⁴⁵ Ideas of Machiavelli have been referred to from the books '*A History of Political Thought: Plato to Marx*', by Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy, and from '*The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*', by John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens.

criticized it; but looking at the developments from a realist perspective explains why things shaped in a particular manner.

An immediate American intervention in the conflict would have certainly raised legal issues, as the conflict began as a civil war. In other words it was internal in character and involvement by any external power at this stage would have certainly brought in legal issues; perhaps this was why even India did not intervene immediately. However, when the beans of the problem were spilled to the neighbouring areas (particularly India) then an outside intervention could not have been ruled out. But even in this situation the US preferred to stay quiet. Morally and ethically the stand of the Nixon administration is not justified. However, from Machiavellian perspective Nixon was simply pursuing policies to attain the goals set by the administration. Moreover from Machiavellian perspective politics is separate from religion and ethics perhaps they are simply an obstacle in the field of politics. Politics according to Machiavelli has its own ethics perhaps something which the Nixon administration understood very well. Even Thucydides⁴⁶ and Morgenthau⁴⁷ believed that morality of politics is different or rather situational. Thus the American tilt towards Pakistan was certainly Machiavellian in character.

The justifications provided by Nixon and Kissinger further reflect on their Machiavellian approach towards policy making. Kissinger (1979:842-918) says:

“China was very sensitive to the reliability of the United States as an ally against the Soviet Union and was likely to perceive the Bangladesh crisis as a test of that reliability.

⁴⁶ Ideas of Thucydides have been referred to from *'The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations'*, by John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens.

⁴⁷ Ideas of Morgenthau have been referred to from his works *'In Defense of the National Interest'* and from *'Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace'*.

Since Pakistan was an ally of both China and the United States, its predicament served as a test of how Washington would respond to threats to the joint United States-Chinese interest. Thus Washington had to support the Pakistani military regime to demonstrate its reliability to Beijing.....The naked recourse to force by a partner of the Soviet Union (referring to India) backed by Soviet arms and buttressed by Soviet assurances threatened the very structure of international order just when our whole Middle East strategy depended on proving the inefficacy of such tactics and when America's weight as a factor in the world was already being undercut by our divisions over Indochina.”

As a realist leader Nixon was clever and alert to exploit opportunities that came his way. However, the Nixon administration seems to have avoided the advice of classical realist Thucydides who advocated calculating the pros and cons of a policy before actually implementing it.

“Politics is a struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining, and demonstrating it determine the technique of political action” (Morgenthau 1965:89).

The policy of tilt adopted by the Nixon administration was essentially to contain China, as a rising China was perceived as a threat by the Nixon administration. The tilt was in favour of Pakistan but it served a larger purpose. Self-interest is a basic fact of the human condition: all people have an interest at a minimum in their own security and survival (Morgenthau 1965:119). Nixon’s policy of tilt completely justifies Morgenthau’s principle. The policy did secure the Pakistani support for the US and this in turn secured Sino-US rapprochement.

The Nixon policy of tilt, further justifies the realist principles. The policy was national interest oriented, something which the realist school considers to be the core reason behind foreign policies. The only reason behind the tilt was the American interest in rapprochement with China. Further since it was about national interest it was also about survival, another core idea of the realist school. As the US felt the need to open up China keeping in mind its economic rise something which it found to be a threat to its own survival.

The Nixon administration further justified their policy saying that the tilt would prevent the Soviet Union from dictating policy in the sub-continent. However, Kissinger on the other hand also regards Mrs. Gandhi as a strong leader who would not come under Soviet pressure. Therefore contradiction prevailed in the policy making process of the Nixon administration something which Haendel (1977:377) also points out. Perhaps he feels that even if the Sino-US rapprochement would not have been under way still the tilt would have existed due to the personal likes and disliked of the Nixon administration.

Sanjoy Banerjee (1987:201-216) describes the stand of the Nixon administration in context of the late dependency theory and client relationship. As after the Second World War relations of the US with the strong and developed world was comparatively balanced, but with the Third World such a relation could not have developed immediately. Banerjee (1987:205-206) says:

“The client relationship is an alliance between a superpower and the dominant coalition of society in the client state. The division between the dominant coalition and the rest of society is a key feature of the client relationship.(in case of Pakistan) Since the dominant coalition was American's ally in the client relationship, Washington's interests in domestic and foreign conflicts involving the client state were shaped by the class and institutional interests of the dominant coalition.....When client states faced threats to their existence from internal or external forces, the United States extended diplomacy, arms and *training*, or direct military intervention in support of the client state.....What emerges from late dependency theory is the interdependence between the domestic political power of the local dominant classes and their allied military establishments and the links that bound them to their superpower patron. If these groups lost political power, their domestic adversaries would cut them off from the flow of institutionally critical resources from the superpower. And deprivation of such resources would undermine their political power. A client relation between a superpower and another state is defined to exist when the latter's regime has a dominant coalition dependent on the former for its critical developmental resources, and when the regime serves in turn as the necessary guarantor of that resource flow.”

The theory well explains the US-Pakistan relations during the Nixon administration. As Pakistan was certainly a client state of the US and the

dominant political faction in West Pakistan needed the help of the US in order to retain their position and develop their resources. The Nixon administration on the other hand served as the necessary guarantor for the flow of the resources for Pakistan so that its own foreign policy designs could be attained. Thus the US-Pakistan relation was a relation between a client and a master and the policy of tilt was realist in character.

Creation of Mukti Bahini

The liberation war in East Pakistan in 1971, was not a result of the changes that had taken place sometime ago, many trace its origin to the Bengali nationalism that had penetrated East Pakistan not long after independence in 1947, still others trace it to the repression and the suppression East Pakistan faced at the hands of West Pakistan. The neutral American stand which changed the face of South Asia had several repercussions with one of the initial repercussions being the creation of the Mukti Bahini in East Pakistan.

In October 1970, President Yahya Khan visited Washington for the 25th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations. Pakistan's plans to move towards democracy was not a hidden fact. Kissinger in a brief conversation asked Yahya about the possible changes in the powers of the President after the elections. Yahya was confident, that post the elections many political parties would emerge in West and East Pakistan, and they would continue to democratically contest for power, and the President would play the role of an arbiter. But Yahya's wishful thinking was ruined by the two cyclones that struck East Pakistan in November 1970. The US in order to oblige Pakistan immediately dispatched relief packages. The step motherly treatment by West Pakistan towards East Pakistan continued and the aid could not reach the needy. Thus a political cyclone broke out in Pakistan and this was seen in the elections results as

well with Bhutto and Mujib both having majority in West and East Pakistan respectively. To bring the situation under control Yahya imposed martial law in East Pakistan.

By February 1971, Washington undertook an inter-agency study of the possible options available to East Pakistan in order to reach a conclusion. Thus Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) was created. The report of the group reflected on the growing differences between the two political factions, with Mujib being determined for the formation of Bangladesh and Yahya was determined to prevent the breaking of Pakistan. The Nixon administration was aware that holding East Pakistan by force could not have been a possible option. All the developments were amidst the materializing of Sino-US rapprochement, therefore the US needed to be doubly cautious of its moves. Kissinger (1979:888) said to the WSAG:

“I made it clear to the agencies that the President would be reluctant to confront Yahya, but that the White House would not object to other countries’ efforts to dissuade him from using force. If Pakistan broke up it should be the result of its internal dynamics, not of American pressures.”

The political situation started deteriorating since March 1971. Addressing a mammoth rally in Dhaka on March 7, 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the *absolute leader of East Pakistan* at the time, declared: “This struggle is the struggle for freedom, this struggle is the struggle for independence” (Jamal 2008:5). Further Mujib also made demands to end the martial law in East Pakistan. The masses in East Pakistan were further enraged once Mujib was arrested and put in a jail in West Pakistan. On March 25th 1971 the military crackdown began in East Pakistan. Even India remained neutral at this time considering the problems in East Pakistan to be internal in character, so American interference remained completely out

of question. Perhaps the Nixon administration expected the emergence of Bangladesh without any Indian interference.

It was amidst all these developments that the people in East Pakistan were left to fight for themselves, and thus the Mukti Bahini came into existence in late April 1971. Basically the freedom fighters in East Pakistan were referred to as Mukti Bahini (MB). It comprised of (a) People from military, paramilitary and police forces also called as Niyomito Bahini and (b) People from non-military background called as Gonobahini.

“According to Pakistan army sources, there were about 5,000 regular soldiers from six battalions of East Bengal Regiment (EBR), 16,000 troops from East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) and 45,000 Police posted in the then East Pakistan” (Jamal 2008:6).

Due to the lack of resources the Mukti Bahini fought the forces of West Pakistan using guerilla warfare tactics. The intelligence agencies had kept the White House well aware of the changes. One cannot deny the fact that domestic political stability in a state played a key role in the development of its relations with other states as well. Moreover Pakistan though not the first choice but was the only US ally in South Asia in the presence of a Non-aligned India. Therefore interfering in the conflict on moral grounds as it had done in 1965, the US would have lost out on its only ally in the region and that too at a time when it needed it most. However if the US would not have tilted for a few handful of ruling elite in West Pakistan then history would have certainly be written differently. Perhaps West Pakistan would not have resorted to military action and Mukti Bahini would not have come into existence.

Involvement of the Other Powers in the 1971 Indo-Pak War

The third India-Pakistan War after independence fought in 1971 began as a civil war in East Pakistan but within a few months time it culminated

into a war between India and Pakistan and then into a war which indirectly involved the great powers of the world. In late March 1971 the West Pakistani army began its operations in East Pakistan. Changes which started in one corner of the world soon engulfed other states around the globe. The US had tilted in favour of Pakistan, India could not have stayed out of the conflict since it was directly involved in the conflict, but then India failed to handle the situation alone and was in need of an ally. Therefore the Soviet Union came into the picture and then there was China supporting Pakistan.

In March 1971, Indira Gandhi came to power with a landslide victory. Repercussions of the problem in Pakistan were at this time limited to its boundaries. Therefore the conflict during this period was categorized as civil war and therefore interference by any third party was out of question. Busy with the election campaign and its immediate aftermath Indira Gandhi adopted a hands-off policy (Kissinger 1979). By end of March T.N. Kaul permanent head of Indian Foreign Office reported to US Ambassador in India that the Indian government would prefer a united Pakistan. India perhaps had no other option rather than to remain neutral since immediate intervention could have brought criticism from the international community, moreover the refugee influx at this time was manageable. Choudhury (1977:214) says:

“When the civil war over Bangladesh began on March 25, 1971, the picture as presented in the world press seemed to be that the Soviet Union and India were on the side of justice, democracy and humanitarian principles while the United States and China were supporting a military junta in Pakistan against a national liberation movement based on democratic aspirations of the Bengalis. But the real situation was not so simple as presented in the press.”

Pakistan's fears about an Indian intentions behind its involvement in the East Pakistan crisis came to life when in a symposium on March 31st

1971, K. Subrahmaniyam the then director of the Indian Institute of Defence in a statement said that, the breakup of Pakistan is in favour of India, perhaps it is an opportunity which India must not miss and make the most of it. On the same day the Indian Prime Minister in a message to the Indian Parliament expressed India's solidarity and sympathy with East Pakistan and that India supports their cause. Such blunt statements by the Indian leadership simply gave the Pakistanis an opportunity to criticise the Indian motives behind the support. Pakistan further supported its arguments about Indian involvement in the crisis with the evidence of programs such as 'Apper Bangla and Oppper Bangla'⁴⁸ on the national radio of India the All India Radio (AIR).

On the other hand in the case of the USSR, President Podgorny on April 3rd 1971, in a message to President Yahya Khan expressed his concern about the situation in East Pakistan and he condemned the use of extreme measures by West Pakistan. Kosygin appealed to end the bloodshed and repression. Yahya Khan did not appreciate the Soviet stand and immediately interpreted it to be Soviet support for India. In order to prevent further action by the Soviet Union Yahya Khan in his reply firmly called the crisis to be internal. According to Mustafa (1972:505):

"The Soviet message set the trend of Russian policy vis-a-vis Bangladesh. In Pakistan it was generally felt that the Russians by adopting an attitude similar to that of the Indians had forfeited their posture of neutrality in the affairs of the sub-continent, which they had assiduously maintained since the Tashkent meeting in 1966."

However the Russians like the Indians took steps cautiously, as they did not give recognition to the provisional government of East Pakistan. Yet indirectly they supported the rebels in East Pakistan, a state owned

⁴⁸ This Side and the Other Side of Bengal.

newspaper *Izvestia* acknowledged the condolences sent by the leaders of Bangladesh after the death of Soviet cosmonauts in July 1971.

In case of China after friction between the US and Pakistan China became Pakistan's ally. However the 1971 East Pakistan crisis, was a precarious issue and therefore even China took steps cautiously. For a long time despite being in the same geographical vicinity China kept itself away from the conflict. China played its part in a subdued fashion, as in November 1970 China had warned Yahya Khan about the outside factors helping the rebels in East Pakistan. Though China had committed to help Pakistan, the commitment was marked with restraint. A possible reason for this could be the Sino-US rapprochement which was under way with the help of Pakistan.⁴⁹ The Soviets suspected the Chinese for playing of a dubious game. According to the Russians China in public supported Pakistan and secretly was trying to influence the rebels in East Pakistan⁵⁰.

Strategically India would have benefitted with the breakup of Pakistan. As once divided Pakistan would shrink in all the aspects. Post independence of East Pakistan, geographically Pakistan would not border India on both the sides population would reduce to 55 million, a little less than half of foreign exchange would be lost and most importantly the army would also become smaller. Moreover Indian support for rebels in East Pakistan would oblige the Mukti Bahini and therefore the government could be kept under control. It was a golden opportunity for India to eliminate the Pakistani threat (Wilcox 1973:51).

⁴⁹ Although besides the Pakistan channel, the UN meetings had also become a meeting ground for the American and Chinese delegates.

⁵⁰ G.W. Choudhury recalls, "The Chinese left him with no doubt about their disapproval of the policy of repression in Bangladesh. Bhutto was handed a list of sixty prominent pro-Peking Bengali leaders who had been slaughtered by Yahya Khan's troops (Hersh 1983).

The influx of refugees became an issue for India once it started costing India economically, moreover once the cholera epidemic broke out the pressure on India increased for no fault of hers. The US kept its feet out of the conflict perhaps Nixon was staying true to his treaty commitments as Choudhury (1977:207) says:

“1969 when he (Nixon) visited five Asian countries including India and Pakistan, Nixon gave expression of his policy by defining the role of the United States would, of course, honour its treaty commitments, it must avoid the kind of policy which would make Asian countries so dependent on the United States that the latter would be dragged into conflicts such as the Vietnam War.”

Therefore India had no option but to seek Soviet help. There was nothing secret about the Soviet stand on the crisis. Since the very beginning they wanted to prevent a war, and cautioned India also about it. Kosygin (Premier of USSR) said:

“You Indians don’t know what a war is. We’ve been through the Second World War. You Don’t know how our people suffered” (Hersh 1983:457).

But as time passed by the atrocities of the West Pakistani military increased and so did the refugee influx in India. The situation went out of control with the outbreak of the cholera epidemic. Thus the situation became unmanageable for India. The Nixon administration stood indifferent. India felt the dire need for normalization of the situation, as it would benefit all the states in the neighbourhood. But such thinking was nothing but wishful. Eventually India was left with no option but to seek Soviet Union’s help. Kheli (1982:37) points out that:

“Nixon was also aware of the fact that the Soviet Union-well before July 15 disclosure of his secret trip to China- had promised India support for guerilla operations in East Pakistan as well as protection against any Chinese reprisals.”

In August 1971, the Friendship and Peace Treaty between the Soviet Union and India raised many eyebrows around the world. Under this treaty both the states could not participate in any defense alliance which was directed against either of the two, further both the states could not even provide assistance to any third state which was involved in a conflict with any one of them. Lastly it provided for mutual consultation in case any of the two were to face an attack. According to Mustafa (1972:507):

“The Russian role in the crisis remained anomalous for quite some time. While on one hand, the Soviet Union repeatedly expressed concern at the tension in the sub-continent and support for the unity and integrity of Pakistan, on the other hand, Soviet leaders conveyed the impression that they had no objection to Indian sponsorship of guerilla struggle in east Pakistan so long as it did not lead to a total war which could invite Chinese intervention.”

Many frowned when the Soviet Union became the biggest arms supplier to India under the treaty but at that time it was a need for India rather than anything else. Had the Nixon administration not blindly tilted towards Pakistan, then even the Soviet Union would not have needed to support India. The Soviet stand helped in preventing the US from dictating terms in the sub-continent.

November 1971 onwards China openly started supporting Pakistan. The Chinese involvement in the crisis was not directly a result of the American tilt. It was only when the Soviet Union became involved in support of India which was a direct result of the American tilt, that China became open about its support to Pakistan. Chinese Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei said:

“Certain persons (who) are truculently exerting pressure on Pakistan by exploiting tension in the sub-continent in a wild attempt to achieve their ulterior motives” (Mustafa 1972:511).

China became critical of the Soviet-India Friendship Treaty calling it a de-facto alliance and that it encouraged India to carry out military adventures. Further the Chinese interpreted the Soviet activities in the Indian Ocean as an attempt to keep China under check. In late November 1971, Kissinger along with Ambassador Bush held a secret meeting with Huag Hua the Chinese ambassador to the UN. In the meeting the Chinese assured their support for Pakistan in the UN Security Council. The Chinese support remained limited to statements.

On 19th November, Washington had proposed a plan to India for systematic granting of autonomy to East Pakistan; and this was to be discussed either with William Rogers or with Kissinger, and the proposal said that it had the approval of Yahya. However the plan did not materialize as even the American Ambassador in India Keating also doubted it since it was in complete contradiction with developments of preceding months.

As a last resort Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Washington in November 1971, hoping for outside help keeping in mind the deteriorating situation in the sub-continent and the inevitability of the war.⁵¹ The Nixon administration was adamant about its non-interfering stand. Thus the visit proved to be useless, rather it further widened the rift between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Nixon Yahya Khan out of naïve optimism and over confidence doubted the possibility of a war, and believed that if at all a war would broke out then Pakistan would certainly win. Nixon accused Mrs. Gandhi of having two faces.

⁵¹ While on his way to Peking when Kissinger halted in Islamabad, in a conversation with the employees in the American Embassy he predicted the possibility of a war as one in three.

According to him, while Mrs. Gandhi was looking for negotiations via the American channel the Indian military was prepared for war⁵².

“As recorded by Dr. Kissinger, in her conversations Mrs. Gandhi challenged not only the very concept of Pakistan, but also its right to include the provinces of Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier in its territory because they “did not properly belong to Pakistan.....and should have never been part of the original settlement” (Kheli 1982:37).

But nothing shook Mrs. Gandhi from her strong stand. Scholars have come up with varied interpretations about it, such as:

“With her quick tongue and uncompromising manner, she was perceived not only as a symbol of America’s previous misguided policy in South Asia but also as a threat to the Chinese in early 1972” (Hersh 1983:460). “Bangladesh crisis was a trying time for India but Indira Gandhi stood like a rock and her fortitude and firmness was in the end rewarded” (Parasher 1996:27).

On December 1st 1971, the US went a step further to alienate India as it suspended the licensing of arms shipment to India. On December 3rd 1971, actual war broke out between India and Pakistan and according to the sources Pakistan had started the attack. Mrs. Gandhi ordered full scale offensive in East Pakistan and in West she ordered limited offensive. According to Kheli (1982:39), Yahya made such a move hoping this would provide some relief to West Pakistani army in East Pakistan. Soon the Indian army along with the Mukti Bahini successfully invaded East Pakistan. Later in ‘The White House Years’ Kissinger accepted that the American policy of tilt was rather weak. Once the war began the Soviet Union warned Pakistan about a Soviet involvement if China comes out to support Pakistan. Further the Soviet Union justified its stand saying that

⁵² Anticipating disturbances in East Pakistan, the Indian Government moved six Army divisions into West Bengal as early as February 1971 on the pretext that all these regular troops were needed to control West Bengal’s Left-wing dissidents. Joseph Alsop, reported in the Washington Post indicates that India gave advance assurances of military and other support to Awami League leaders who then launched the insurrection in East Pakistan in March 1971 (Mustafa 1972).

it could not have remained aloof from the developments in its neighbourhood.

West Pakistan was represented by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was also the Pakistani representative at the UN, dragged the issue to the UN. Aware of his eloquent skills Bhutto attempted to make the most of it. With his fiery anti-India speeches he was able to influence many. However Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh also did not give up and stood firmly supporting India's intervention in the East Pakistan crisis. In the end the draft resolution could not be passed by the UN General Assembly due to the efforts of the Soviet Union. The resolution met a similar fate when it was proposed in the Security Council. On December 5th the Soviet Union used its veto power to prevent the resolution for ceasefire from coming into force. By December Soviet support for Bangladesh became public, with the Soviet delegate at the Security Council requesting for a hearing of the representatives of Bangladesh. Then the Soviet delegates also introduced a resolution calling for a political settlement of the crisis in the East Pakistan crisis.

The Soviet Union was dragged into the conflict due to the American non-interference, But keeping in mind the US-Soviet meeting scheduled for 1972; Kissinger personally met Vorontsov a Soviet diplomat in the US to ensure that their involvement in the East Pakistan crisis would not affect their relationship. Perhaps Kissinger was quick in interpreting Indian recognition of the Bangladeshi government as an attempt to pressurize Moscow as this publicly as well as privately threatened the 1972 Soviet-US Summit.

In December 1971 in the war, the US supported Pakistan the USSR did the same in support of India⁵³. The USSR placed two ships a destroyer and a minesweeper in the Indian Ocean. As the war began the two ships were not to be relived rather their reinforcements were sent. By 6th and 7th December the USSR sent further reinforcements from Vladivostok and this included a guided missile cruiser and a conventional submarine. The CIA in its report on 9th December 1971 said that post war India-Soviet Union relations would depend on how US-China relations shape up, perhaps now if we look at the developments the CIA reports sounds prophetic.

“The timing of the Soviet ship movements.....strongly suggested that Moscow was trying to show solidarity with New Delhi in the face of possibly threatening western Naval operations” (Walters 1979:301).

On 10th December 1971, Kissinger held another secret meeting with Huang Hua a Chinese official in context of Chinese support for Pakistan. In reality the Pakistanis also knew that China would not interfere in case a war was to break out. This proved to be true as even when the war broke out the Chinese gave military and political support to Pakistan, but did not intervene. There was only a single report on December 13th which spoke of movement of Chinese soldiers along the Indian border. But such a report came only once during the crisis. The other reason was that India to some extent had dragged the outbreak of a war till December. As in December the winters are at peak; and due to heavy snowing in the Himalayas and blocking of the passes the Chinese would certainly not think of intervening. Christopher Van Hollen viewed it:

⁵³ Both the US and the USSR displayed their naval strengths in the Bay of Bengal, but the support was limited to display of strength.

“Even if the Chinese internal political tension had not acted as a restraint, any government in Peking would have thought carefully before attacking across the Himalayas in winter” (Hersh 1983:461).

Even the Anderson Papers also hinted on this. According to the CIA reports Soviet Ambassador to India Nikolai M. Pegov assured India of Soviet support in case of any Chinese or American intervention in support of Pakistan. Thus if the US would not have tilted in favor of Pakistan then the USSR would also not have intervened in support of India. Eventually the war came to an end on 17th December 1971 as the Pakistani forces surrendered. China, India and the Soviet Union would have never intervened provided the US would have pressurised Pakistan to stop its abhorring acts in East Pakistan. Choudhury (1977:206) best explains the situation saying:

“The global policies of the U.S.A., the Soviet Union and China and the regional tensions and conflicts between India and Pakistan have been interrelated. Thus within the South Asian system, the five most populous countries in the world were, to quote Norman Palmer’s words, “jockeying and jostling” with each other in a confused pattern of interrelationship.....and it is a great pity that the same liberal point of view in western countries which was most opposed to the U.S. involvement in the Vietnamese War did not condemn the Indian invasion of East Pakistan. ”

Thus the Soviet Union prevented the US from determining the destiny of East Pakistan. The Soviets managed to further develop ties with India keeping an eye on the Sino-US rapprochement Indian involvement on one hand was a result of their need and on the other India also made the most of it.

Change in the US policy towards South Asia

The 1971 Indo-Pak war resulted in the victory of India and the independence of Bangladesh; and for the US it did not leave anything except for humiliation and embarrassment. Post war American policy in

South Asia did not undergo a dramatic change. Till the time Nixon and Mrs. Gandhi were in power ties between the US and India did not take any friendly turn. Moreover Pokhran I further deepened the rift in their relations. With Pakistan the relations remained normal with only a few hiccups. As the arms embargo continued till 1975, economic aid continued and only towards the end of the 1970's Pakistan again became a frontline state for the US. Bangladesh was the new state which needed to be accommodated in American foreign policy, particularly after the crisis in which the US had tilted in favor of its enemy.

The war was immediately followed by American humanitarian assistance for reconstruction programs to Bangladesh. This was rather an image building exercise in camouflage. Senator Aldai Stevenson emphasized that along with political recognition the US should give economic assistance to Bangladesh. An American Consul General remained in Dhaka and had all the diplomatic prerogatives; and later the consulate was made the American embassy in Bangladesh. Five months later it also recognized Bangladesh, only after the success of Nixon's China visit. Senator Church believed that recognition was the only political course for the US to take. Senator Stuart Symington said that since Bangladesh had become an independent state so there was not problem in giving it official recognition. Besides this Senator Edward Kennedy, American Federation of Labor and Congress for Industrial Organization (AFLCO) also supported the proposal to give political recognition to Bangladesh.

It was a quick and calculated policy change by the US towards East Pakistan now Bangladesh. Only a few weeks back the US tilted in favor of its allies and the opponents of Bangladesh. The friendly American approach was simply to avoid any further policy complications in the region. The realist approach which says that national interest defines

policy best defined the American approach towards Bangladesh post 1971 war. Bangladesh too gave a warm response to the Americans as they indeed needed help to rebuild their state.

Conclusion

'Tilt' is the term that sums up the policy of the Nixon administration towards Pakistan during the 1971 War. Several reasons led to the American tilt the most important being the Sino-US rapprochement in which Pakistan was playing a key role and then the cordial ties Nixon had with the leadership in Islamabad. The tilt benefitted the US as the Sino-US rapprochement was successful and later even Nixon's visit to Peking met the same destiny. But for the others the tilt did not have pleasant repercussions. However the fact cannot be denied that the crisis in East Pakistan in the beginning was internal in character; and any other third party interfering in it would have meant violation of the International law. Choudhury (1977:210) says:

"The Realpolitik prevailing in the area had to be considered. Diplomatic considerations were given priority over any ideological factors by the great powers in the crisis. The Bangladesh War in 1971 provides an example of how the major powers wage their many-faceted struggle in the Third World through proxies as well as of how the Third World might become the "tinder box" that could consume the major powers' hopes for a détente."

India was forced to resort to war and seek Soviet help. The mounting refugee crisis and the so called neutral stand of the US left India with no other option. The crisis had started affecting the neighboring states and could not have been categorized as an internal crisis anymore. Therefore the Indian involvement is completely justified. The growing crisis became unmanageable and the US tilt led to the intervention of the Soviet Union and later even China. Although Chinese intervention was limited to words, the Soviets did come to help India militarily. However, even the

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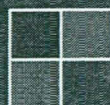
The war was immediately followed by American humanitarian assistance for reconstruction programs to Bangladesh. This was rather an image building exercise in camouflage. Senator Aldai Stevenson emphasized that along with political recognition the US should give economic assistance to Bangladesh. An American Consul General remained in Dhaka and had all the diplomatic prerogatives; and later the consulate was made the American embassy in Bangladesh. Five months later it also recognized Bangladesh, only after the success of Nixon's China visit. Senator Church believed that recognition was the only political course for the US to take. Senator Stuart Symington said that since Bangladesh had become an independent state so there was not problem in giving it official recognition. Besides this Senator Edward Kennedy, American Federation of Labor and Congress for Industrial Organization (AFLCO) also supported the proposal to give political recognition to Bangladesh.

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Soviet Union was cautious of not risking the Soviet-US détente. Eventually Bangladesh emerged as an independent state, the US policy in the region underwent a change and India's position in the region ascended.

Conclusion

Chapter 6



Conclusion

The outlook is pessimist when one looks at foreign policies and their making from the prism of realism. Realism considers national interest as the sole driving force behind policies. According to Realists ethics for policy making are redefined. The US-Pakistan relations during the Nixon period are no different. It's a tale which many define as a 'marriage of convenience. National interest brought the two together and once it was fulfilled the two parted their ways.

The relations began with cordial ties developing towards the end of the Truman era, and during the Eisenhower period closeness in relations grew. Perhaps as President Truman said on receiving the first Pakistani ambassador to the US:

"We are opening a new chapter in the relations between East and West. We stand ready to assist Pakistan in all appropriate ways which might mutually benefit our two countries and the world and we have profound hope for the continuing peaceful and constructing collaboration between Pakistan, her sister dominions and other countries" (Soherwordi 2010:22).

Pakistan was a strategic pawn in the Cold War policies of the US. However, the closeness ended partially with the Eisenhower administration as the Kennedy and the Johnson administration unfolded a new chapter by developing close ties with India in order to balance the American policy towards South Asia. Then came the Pakistan friendly Nixon administration, something the leadership in Pakistan had waited for.

In 1967 in his article in the journal Foreign Affairs, Nixon had talked about opening up China, and this was the plan with which he had come to the White House. The Sino-Soviet rift was a fact the Nixon administration was aware of. As China was a communist state and a nuclear power as well. Thus keeping in mind these developments policy making in this context was a challenge for the Nixon administration. As John Maynard Keynes says:

"There is nothing a Government hates more than to be well-informed; for it makes the process of arriving at decisions much more complicated and difficult" (Jervis 2010:185).

President Nixon tried and tested different channels before finalizing the Pakistan channel as the mode of communication between the US and China. Varied reasons were behind selection of Pakistan for this job. Geographically Pakistan is in the close vicinity of China. When relations between the US and Pakistan had soured during the Kennedy and Johnson administration, Pakistan had found a friend in China. China-Pakistan relations reached such a level that scholars came to term it as an 'all weather friendship'. Moreover, when the Cultural Revolution began in China its foreign relations shrunk, and Pakistan remained amongst the few states with which China continued with its relations. Then Nixon's personal bias towards Pakistan again made Pakistan the apt choice for the task. Thus there were ample reasons why Pakistan became the mode of communication between the US and China.

This was a precarious phase for the US in its relations with Pakistan; this was one of the reasons why Nixon was so secretive about his China initiative. Nixon tried to make the most of all the available opportunities. Perhaps President Nixon also sanctioned supply of American weapons to Pakistan calling it a one-time exception; in reality it was just a measure to oblige Pakistan so that larger foreign policy goals were fulfilled. Pakistan at this time was undergoing political instability. On the other hand the absence of the American aid during the Kennedy and Johnson period had left Pakistan in misery. Therefore a hand of friendship extended by the Nixon administration was precious for Pakistan.

For Pakistan the American friendship was the support they had against India. In reality it India did not want to be involved in a conflict with Pakistan. But Pakistan since the time of its birth suffered from the phobia of being invaded by India, something that still continues. Therefore it felt the dire need to have an external support system, which it found in the US. American support for Pakistan has always been conditional. Even during the Truman and Eisenhower period the military and economic support which Pakistan received from the US was not for any philanthropic reasons. The US aided Pakistan as keeping in mind the pactomania politics during the Cold War era. The US needed an ally in South Asia, and Pakistan appeared to be the apt choice. Initially India was considered for this purpose, but the non-aligned policy of India made the US rethink

its plan. Thus since the very beginning Pakistan had been a strategic pawn in the US foreign policy.

The American plan of rapprochement with China once again brought the US back to its most allied ally Pakistan. Once Yahya Khan agreed to become the mailbox for communication between the US and China, President Nixon fully used all the opportunities available to him for this purpose. Each time Pakistani President Yahya Khan or any of his officials visited the US they brought a message from Peking and on their way back took the reply of President Nixon. Agha Hilaly the Pakistani ambassador to the US played a key role in this exchange of messages.

In the meantime the political situation in Pakistan began deteriorating. Political and religious reasons were the only factors which had kept the two territories of Pakistan together. Demographically both the territories were poles apart, as East Pakistan had a dominant Bengali Muslim population and West Pakistan had a dominant Pathan, Punjabi and Pushtun population. Demographic differences led to cultural differences as well. Economically neither West nor East Pakistan was developed, but the American aid which Pakistan received was utilized only for the development purpose of West Pakistan. Moreover the policies that were framed were made keeping in mind only the needs and aspirations of West Pakistanis. Thus East Pakistan was left with no option but to rebel.

The conflict between West and East Pakistan started as an internal conflict, therefore none of the outside powers thought of intervening. Problems arose once media reports about the use of American weapons by the West Pakistani army to suppress the rebels in East Pakistan. These weapons were supplied to Pakistan during the Eisenhower period, and were supposed to be used against any communist aggression in the region. Along with this the inflow of the refugees in India from East Pakistan also escalated and soon it imposed several kinds of problems on India. Everyone expected an American reaction towards such developments, but the Nixon administration chose to be a silent observer.

It was a precarious situation for the Nixon administration. The Sino-US rapprochement was underway and Pakistan was playing a key role in it. The Nixon administration was also aware of the misuse of the American weapons by the West Pakistani army. Any anti-

Pakistan reaction or response by the Nixon administration would have come at the cost of the rapprochement.

Due to the high level secrecy maintained about the rapprochement with China everyone in the Nixon administration was also not aware about the initiative; this resulted into administrative snafu. The Department of State due to its lack of awareness about the initiative, sought to policies which almost interrupted the process of rapprochement. Criticism towards the indifferent stand of the Nixon administration only grew with time and at both the domestic and the international front. But President Nixon was not perturbed by this; on the contrary he became more adamant on his stand. Perhaps rapprochement with China was very close to President Nixon's heart and he was ready to go till any length in order to achieve it.

Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi even went to Washington in November 1971, with a hope that the Nixon administration would do something to stop the West Pakistani army from committing further atrocities. The meeting between Nixon and Mrs. Gandhi did not bear any fruits, rather the differences between the two widened. Eventually in December 1971, war broke out between India and Pakistan and the US supported support Pakistan, the Soviet Union supported India.

The support of the Nixon administration remained limited. The Nixon administration continued its indifferent stand towards the acts of the West Pakistani army. The US had sent Task Force 74 in the Bay of Bengal in support of Pakistan. However, in reality everyone knew that neither the US nor the USSR would directly intervene in the conflict. A direct intervention by the US would have given the Soviet Union also an excuse to intervene. The Vietnam War was still going on and it was already costing a fortune to the US, and in this situation militarily extending itself further would have proven to be disastrous for the US. The US was simply obliging Pakistan so that its process of rapprochement with China was not disrupted. Thus Pakistan was merely a pawn in the US foreign policy. However, Choudhury (1977:211) says that:

“The emotionalism that surrounded the American public undertaking of it portrayed Pakistan as a complete villain and India as a knight in shining armour. President Nixon

became the target of public misunderstanding over his policy on the issues involved in the crisis.”

The carefully calculated moves of the Nixon administration resulted in the opening of China and beginning of a new phase in US foreign policy. For Pakistan it just brought a few aid packages and nothing more. Perhaps the US would have been so concerned about its ally it would have certainly prevented its break-up. As a matter of fact months before the actual break-up the Nixon administration was aware that a break-up of Pakistan would take place, the only thing which concerned them was that they should not be blamed for the break up. Therefore the American policy to support West Pakistan during the war was framed keeping in mind all these pros and cons. Thus Nixon administration’s strategic moves brought little benefit and greater loss for Pakistan. Amin (2000:5) says that:

“A successful foreign policy-maker seeks to promote a country’s strategic interest by devising policies based on brutal realism, bereft of all kinds of illusion, romanticism and emotion. In diplomatic parlance this approach has been described as ‘realpolitik’.”

Morally the policies of the Nixon administration would appear corrupt, but then the classical Realist school says ethics of politics are different, rather situational. What the Nixon administration did was certainly influenced by personal likes and dislikes but the circumstances played a greater role in defining the ethics for this situation. As a morally correct stand of the Nixon administration would have come at the cost of national interest. Pakistan itself is to be blamed for the treatment it received, since Pakistan itself had displayed its vulnerabilities to the US; the latter only utilized them to its advantage. Perhaps as Kissinger said legitimacy should not be confused with justice (Buchan 1974:367). As Amin (2000:7) further says:

“Pakistan’s policy-makers and, indeed, even the nations as a whole, have allowed illusions to get the better of their judgement, resulting in disastrous consequences for the country. This has been a major flaw in the formulation of Pakistan’s foreign policy and, unless the policy-makers draw the right lessons from historical experience, such unrealistic evaluations are capable of causing further harm to the country.....the main weakness in the formulation of Pakistan’s foreign policy has been ‘ad hocism’ or the tendency to take decisions to tide over an immediate exigency without any long-term planning.”

The balance sheet of US-Pakistan relations remains unbalanced. Thus Pakistan was a pawn which was willingly used by the US in its political games. The US did attain its goals but Pakistan lost more than what it gained.

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