

CHINESE POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN

(1969 - 1979)

by

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any university, and to the best of my knowledge and belief contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text.

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For My Parents

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An explanation concerning the spelling of

Chinese Names and Places:

On 1 January 1979 the Pinyin or Chinese phonetic alphabet was officially adopted in the People's Republic of China to replace the Wade-Giles conventional system that has been used for over a century to translate Chinese names and places. For this thesis, however, a mixture of both the systems is used. Names of leaders who were in prominence or died before 1979 are spelt in Wade-Giles, such as Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung; otherwise there would be unnecessary confusion with their spellings in the sources cited in the footnotes. For all the current PRC leaders the 'Pinyin' system is used.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of Chinese policy towards Pakistan during the period from 1969 to 1979. Its central concerns are:

- a) to determine the nature of Beijing's policy towards Islamabad during the period under review, and
- b) explain the reasons for the continuity and/or changes in this policy.

Before addressing itself to these central questions, this thesis discusses the nature of China's relations with Pakistan during the first two decades of its existence. After pursuing a "correct" policy towards Pakistan during the 1950s, it is argued, Beijing moved to establish a "close" relationship to Islamabad in the wake of the Sino-Indian border dispute. Pakistan was provided substantial political, economic and military assistance by China during the 1963-68.

The period from 1969-79, however, this thesis attempts to demonstrate, did not always witness a continuity of this close relationship. To this end, it employs a thematic approach. The issues which have been identified as significant for Pakistan, and on which the Chinese response has been examined include the Kashmir dispute, the East-Pakistan Crisis and the Indo-Pakistan War (1971), the "New" Pakistan's post-war problems, the Indian nuclear explosion and Pakistan's proposal for a Nuclear Free Zone in South Asia, the emergence of a pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan (April 1978 - December 1979) and Chinese military and economic assistance for Pakistan.

This is followed by an attempt to explain the reasons for changes in Chinese policy toward Pakistan in the framework of Beijing's fear of Soviet encirclement. After the major Sino-Soviet

border clashes (March 1969), it is argued, the Chinese Government attempted to improve relations with India. As these moves showed signs of success, with an aim to convince New Delhi of its interest in rapprochement, Beijing began to limit its support for Islamabad. This became especially apparent during the East Pakistan crisis. This policy of limiting Chinese support for Pakistan in order to facilitate the Sino-Indian normalisation of relations, it is argued, would have continued, had the Indian government not elicited Soviet support to dismember Pakistan towards the end of 1971. Prospects of the Soviet Union emerging as a major external power in the subcontinent and the concomitant danger of reduced Chinese influence in the region motivated Beijing to shelve its policy of improving relations with India and concentrate on supporting the already acquired but quite weak ally Pakistan. During 1972-75, therefore, China provided substantial political, military and economic assistance to Pakistan. In 1976, however, when Sino-Indian rapprochement got under way Beijing once again reduced the level of its support for Islamabad. This trend, it is argued, would have continued had a pro-Soviet regime not come to power in Afghanistan. The rise of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the strengthening of Soviet-Vietnam relations intensified Chinese fear of encirclement. So after a period of concentrating on Iran as a pillar of its anti-Soviet policy in West Asia, Beijing began to rely on Pakistan to "contain" Soviet "expansion". This marked the beginning of an upward trend in Chinese support for Pakistan in 1979 --- a trend which has since continued.