PART TWO
CHAPTER III
FROM UNQUALIFIED TO QUALIFIED SUPPORT

THE KASHMIR DISPUTE

Of all the disputes that have bedevilled Pakistan's relations with India since the partition in 1947, the most enduring and outstanding has been that related to the future of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Stemming from the Indian claim that the Instrument of Accession signed by the Hindu Maharaja in October 1947 had rendered Kashmir 'an integral part of the Union of India', and the Pakistani contention that the future of the state --- a muslim majority area and, hence, assumed to be potentially a Pakistani province --- could only be determined through a UN-supervised plebiscite, the dispute had plunged India and Pakistan into a 'limited war' in Kashmir within a year of their independence. Seventeen years later, following a series of unsuccessful efforts both inside and outside the United Nations for its peaceful settlement, this dispute had also resulted in a major war between these two states in September 1965.

After the war, however, through Soviet mediation, both India and Pakistan agreed 'not to have recourse to force and settle their disputes through peaceful means'. This agreement embodied in the Tashkent Declaration of 10 January 1966, effectively meant that Islamabad had accepted the fact that it could not succeed in unifying and integrating the princely state with Pakistan, and, therefore, had

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indirectly agreed to a status quo where India occupied three-fifths of Kashmir with a population of four million people, and Pakistan controlled the rest of the state with a total population of one million as 'Azad Kashmir'. Nevertheless, the Ayub regime and the three successive governments in Pakistan continued to stress that the Kashmir issue was still alive and that its resolution was a pre-requisite for a durable peace in the subcontinent.

This continued emphasis on the Kashmir issue has been explained by the Pakistan Government in terms of principles. Giving up the demand for a plebiscite in Kashmir, it is argued, would be tantamount to accepting that, due to its sheer size and capabilities, India should be allowed to settle disputes on its own terms. This, it is further argued, would set a precedent which could be followed by India in any other disputes that may arise between New Delhi and Islamabad in future.3

Considering that throughout its history, Pakistan's leaders have perceived their Indian counterparts as at worst bent upon undoing Pakistan and at best relegating it to a satellite status, this explanation cannot be totally ignored. However, the fact remains that other factors account for the continued references to the Kashmir dispute as well. Firstly, for instance, the issue is kept alive due to the pressure from the military which, by arguing that until the dispute is settled the presence of the Indian Army in the 'Occupied Kashmir' poses a security threat to Pakistan, has been able to demand and justify huge defence allocations and to retain a high position in the political power structure. Secondly, the demand for a plebiscite has often been raised to retain the support of the

3 Interview with an official from Pakistan Foreign Office, June 1984.
Pathans, and especially of the Punjabis, who have all along Pakistan's history closely identified themselves with the 'cause' of the Kashmiri people. Thirdly, it has also provided the Government, when required, with a rallying point and a means to divert its people's attention away from the country's economic and political problems.

Regardless of the reasons behind the continued emphasis on the Kashmir issue, however, it cannot be discounted that the issue has been kept alive by all the Pakistani regimes, and that it has always been a yardstick with which these regimes have judged the degree of other states' friendship with Pakistan. This chapter deals with the Chinese policy towards this most enduring issue in Pakistan's history. It begins with a description of Chinese support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue during the period from 1969 to the end of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. Then, it proceeds to trace Beijing's policy on this issue during the Bhutto and Zia regimes respectively.

China and the Kashmir Issue: 1969-1971

The beginning of 1969 witnessed the Pakistan Government asserting, as in the past, that the Tashkent Declaration signed three years before had established beyond any doubt the fact that the Kashmir issue was the basic cause of the tension in the subcontinent and that therefore, it needed to be resolved as early as possible. It was on the basis of this assertion that Islamabad rejected New Delhi's offer for a 'no-war' pact made on 1st January 1969, as it only provided for talks and not negotiation on the Kashmir issue. Meanwhile it also began diplomatic moves urging the four permanent members of the Security Council to pass a resolution on the Kashmir issue.

\[\text{Dawn, 16 January 1969.}\]
issue, even if only a simple appeal to the countries involved to enter into direct negotiations to settle it. Upon the failure of this move, three months later, following the Indian Government's decision to confer propriety rights on non-muslims over the muslim-evacuee land in Kashmir, and make the voicing of the demand for self-determination an offence liable to heavy punishment, the Pakistan Government submitted a protest note to the Security Council identifying the Indian moves as constituting 'serious violations of the international agreements embodied in the UNCIP and the Security Council resolutions'. The Indian Government, the note stressed, was under an obligation to invite the citizens of the state who had left the Indian occupied area to return to their homes and also to guarantee all human and political rights to the people of the state.

The Indian Government, on the other hand, continued to claim that the integration of Kashmir in the Union of India was irrevocable, its sovereignty non-negotiable and that New Delhi was not obligated under the Tashkent Declaration to settle the issue. Hence, it argued, by raising objections to the Indian moves in Kashmir and referring the issue to the United Nations, Pakistan was committing 'brazen-faced interference' in India's internal affairs.

The Chinese response to this controversy, as had been the case since 1964, was to support Islamabad's position on the Kashmir issue. On 23 March 1969, for instance, at a Pakistan National Day reception held in Beijing, Chinese Vice-Premier Hsieh Fu-Chih assured his Pakistani hosts that 'the Chinese people ... remain unshakable in their stand of giving resolute support to the Kashmiri people's just

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5 Times of India, 5 February 1969.  
6 Pakistan Times, 15 March 1969.  
7 Pakistan Times, 13 April 1969.  
8 Times of India, 28 May 1969.
struggle for the right to self-determination'.

Six weeks later, on 5 May 1969, Chou En-lai once again stated that 'the Chinese Government and people will, as always, ... firmly support the Kashmiri people's struggle for the right of self-determination', and reiterated his support during Air Marshal Nur Khan's visit in July. Responding to the Air Marshal's appreciation of 'China's unqualified support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their just struggle for the inalienable right of self-determination'. Chou En-lai expressed his Government's resolve to 'always' firmly support the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination. These and other similar categorical declarations were supplemented with a frequent coverage and endorsement by the Chinese media. On 16 June 1969, for instance, Hsinhua reported a Dacca weekly, Holiday, as stating that 'for the last few weeks as if to browbeat the new government in Pakistan, the Indians have time and time again parroted their assertions of "sovereignty" over occupied Kashmir'. The same day, the Chinese news agency also reported the Indian Foreign Minister, Dinesh Singh's statement of 27 May 1969 that India would not 'give away Kashmir', and Pakistani official's reaction that Kashmir belongs

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13 It is essential to point out that, barring the occasions when the Kashmir Issue is in the limelight, Chinese media's endorsement of Pakistan's position is generally restricted to reporting what Pakistanis say about the issue without any comment.

to the people who alone have the right to decide their future affiliation'. It also reported the Pakistani official's comments that Dinesh Singh's statement indicated a hardening of India's attitude and revealed its real intentions towards Pakistan and demonstrated its unwillingness to eliminate the basic cause of difference. Then it proceeded to discuss a Pakistan Times editorial on the need to resolve the Kashmir issue, and identified it as 'exposing the Indian authorities' recent capricious attitude towards Pakistan ...'.

Ten days later, on 26 June, citing the Pakistan Times as the source of its information, Hsinhua reported the accusation by Abdul Hamid, President of the Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir, that the Indian leaders were exhibiting a 'growing obduracy' on the Kashmir issue. This was followed, on 14 July '69 by another news item from Hsinhua reporting a statement by a 'public figure in Rawalpindi' that the 'Indian expansionists' occupation of Kashmir was the worst conspiracy against the freedom loving people of Kashmir and Pakistan', and that the Indian expansionists wanted to subjugate Pakistan because it was supporting the Kashmir people's struggle for freedom.

The Chinese policy of support for Pakistan over the Kashmir issue continued for most of 1970 as well. During his visit to Pakistan on 11 March 1970, for instance, Kuo Mo-jo, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, declared that 'The Chinese Government and people will, as always, ... firmly

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support the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for the right of self-determination',\textsuperscript{18} and repeated this stand at a Pakistan National Day reception in Beijing twelve days later.\textsuperscript{19} This was followed, on 4 April, by Fang Yi's reiteration of support on the Kashmir issue, with the added assurance that 'this stand of [the Chinese Government and people] is ever consistent and unswerving'.\textsuperscript{20} Similar assurances were given by the Commander of the Chinese Air Force, Wu Faxian as well during Air Marshal Abdul Rahim Khan's visit to Beijing in May - June 1970.\textsuperscript{21}

Along with these assurances the Chinese media continued to provide a frequent coverage echoing or reporting the Pakistani position. On 14 July 1970, for instance, in a report from Rawalpindi, Hsinhua gave details of the 'Kashmir Martyrs Day' held in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, highlighting the participants' emphasis on 'the need to liberate Kashmir from the Indian oppression', and their denunciation of 'the Indian rulers ... for a colonial policy towards the Kashmir people in occupied Kashmir'.\textsuperscript{22} Only six days later, citing western news agencies, Hsinhua reported the demonstrations and rallies held in Indian-Kashmir during Indira Gandhi's visit, emphasising that they reflected the desire of the Kashmiri people to determine their own future. The demonstrators it reported, 'refuted Indira Gandhi's allegation at a public meeting on 15 July that Kashmir had acceded to India 23 years ago and had become an integral

\textsuperscript{19}NCNA, 23 March 1970, in SCMP, No.4627, 1 April 1970, p.133.
\textsuperscript{21}See Wu Faxian's Banquet Speech in Honour of Pakistan Air Marshal Abdul Rahim Khan, NCNA, 31 May 1970, in SCMP, No.4673, 10 June 1970, pp.63-64.
part of India', 'pointed out that the people of Kashmir must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination so as to decide to whom Kashmir belongs', and concluded that 'the Kashmir people will not rest until they are given the right to decide their future themselves'.

Towards the end of 1970, however, Beijing began exhibiting signs of reducing the level of its political support for Islamabad. Firstly, throughout the period September - December 1970, the Chinese media neither reported the developments in 'Azad' or 'Occupied' Kashmir, nor echoed the Pakistan Government's demand for a settlement. Secondly, in contrast to Air Marshal Abdul Rahim Khan's visit, when Beijing repeatedly assured him of its support over Kashmir, during the visit by Admiral Muzaffar Hasan, Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan's Navy, in September 1970, the Chinese Government stated its position only once. Thirdly, although during President Yahya's visit in November 1970, the Chinese Government and media frequently stressed their 'firm support [for the] Kashmiri people in their just struggle for the right to self-determination', unlike during Kuo Mo-jo's visit to Islamabad in March 1970 they did not go on to declare that Beijing 'will, as always', provide its 'firm

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24 See, for example, 'Pakistan Air Force Commander-in-Chief Abdul Rahim Khan Gives Farewell Banquet in Beijing', NCNA, 3 June 1970, in SCMP, No.4675, 12 June 1970, p.130; see also f.n.22.
Moreover in the Joint Communiqué issued at the end of the visit the Chinese Government merely noted with interest the recent offer made by the President of Pakistan on the withdrawal of troops with the view of enabling the people of Jammu and Kashmir to freely exercise their right of self-determination, and considered it worthy of support of the people of various countries] without declaring specific Chinese support for it. This omission was significant as the Pakistan Government, in marked contrast, had categorically stated in the joint communiqué its support for Beijing's admission to the United Nations --- an issue which had been as important for China as had the Kashmir question to Pakistan.27

This 'new' Chinese policy of reduced support continued during 1971. In February 1971, for example, a part of the Karakorum Highway was handed over to Pakistan by the Chinese Government. India had frequently criticised the construction of this highway on the grounds that it passes through an area which legally belongs to India, i.e. Azad Kashmir.28 The Chinese Minister of Communications, Yang Jie, who attended the inaugural ceremony, made no reference to Beijing's stand that the Kashmir issue still needed to be settled.29 Neither did Chou

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29 NCNA, 18 February 1971, in SCMP, No.4847, 1 March 1971, pp.40-44.
En-lai, in his congratulatory message on Pakistan's National Day on 22 March 1971, mention Chinese support for Pakistan over Kashmir.\textsuperscript{30} Only on 21 and 29 May 1971 was Beijing's support for Islamabad in the dispute reiterated by the Vice Foreign Minister, Han Nianlong, and Vice Chairman of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Revolutionary Committee, Long Shujin respectively; but on neither occasion was anything said about intent to continue this support in the future.\textsuperscript{31} Thereafter the Chinese Government maintained a studied silence on the Kashmir issue until the end of the year.

In December 1971, war broke out between India and Pakistan, including in Kashmir and Punjab. Within a few days the Indian Army had occupied a much larger area than its adversary across the ceasefire line in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{32} Soon afterwards, the spectre of an Indian effort to dismember and render defenceless West Pakistan as well was raised, when the United States began expressing fears that the Indian Government contemplated redeploying all its forces on the western front after operations in East Pakistan ended, so as to liberate the Pakistani part of Kashmir and wipe out the Pakistani Army and Air Force.\textsuperscript{33} The genuineness of these fears cannot definitely be determined, as the US Administration itself was divided about the feasibility of such an Indian adventure.\textsuperscript{34} Nevertheless,

\textsuperscript{30} NCNA, 22 March 1971, in SCMP, No.4870, 1 April 1971, p.205.
\textsuperscript{33} Henry Kissinger, White House Years, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p.901.
\textsuperscript{34} See, for example, Christopher Van Hollen, 'The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon, Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia', Asian Survey, Vol.XX, No.4, April 1980, pp.350-352.
the very fact that the spectre was raised by a world power made the Pakistan Government extremely nervous, when it was already facing the clear cut possibility of East Pakistan’s secession.\(^35\)

The Chinese Government initially responded to the situation by supporting US moves aimed at reducing the possibility of an all out Indian attack on West Pakistan. On 10 December 1971, Huang Hua held a secret meeting with Henry Kissinger who informed him of the US Government’s plan, worked out with General Yahya, to propose in the United Nations an immediate ceasefire to be followed by negotiations for troop withdrawals and the satisfaction of Bengali aspirations. Considering that by then the Indian Army had already occupied a large area of East Pakistan and the emergence of Bangla Desh had become a distinct near-future possibility, the US proposal was aimed primarily at putting an end to Indian military operations in the west. Two days later, in an urgent meeting (called, in a marked departure from past practice, by the Chinese Government itself), Huang Hua conveyed to Haig Beijing’s acceptance of the US proposal. He also refrained from criticising, and therefore implicitly endorsed, American moves aimed at urging the Soviets to dissuade the Indian Government from an all out attack on West Pakistan --- moves which proved successful as the Soviet Union actually began pressing New Delhi to accept the territorial status quo in the west, including Kashmir.\(^36\)

However, on 16 December 1971 --- the day when the Pakistani Army surrendered in the East and New Delhi offered to cease hostilities in the West, in a move similar to that made during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, the Chinese Government intervened directly with a note to India alleging that Indian armed personnel had crossed the Sikkim

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\(^{35}\) Interview with a ranking Pakistan Army Officer, May 1984.

border on 10 December. The same day, in a report on 'Indian expansionism', the NCNA gave a detailed account of the origin and developments of the Kashmir dispute and accused New Delhi of taking 'a truculent and unreasonable attitude with regard to Kashmir, a region in dispute between India and Pakistan, trying to take possession of this region by force'. This policy, along with other acts of the 'Indian Government's interference in, bullying and aggression against Pakistan', the report concluded, was the root cause of the turmoil in the South Asian subcontinent. These moves, while important in that they had put on record the Chinese opposition to any Indian moves for unifying Kashmir by force, were essentially insignificant. By offering a ceasefire in the West, India had implicitly at least made it clear that it did not intend to try to seize all of Azad Kashmir by force, so all China was doing was giving apparent support to Pakistan which it knew would not be required.

The Bhutto regime - The Kashmir Issue and China

The lessons of the Indo-Pakistan war (1971) confirmed the futility not only of Indian but also of Pakistani attempts to change the situation in Kashmir by force. Hence the new government in the 'new' Pakistan, under Bhutto's leadership, decided to close the Kashmir issue permanently. The Indian Government, which all through the history of the dispute had demonstrated a preference for sealing the issue, shared this interest. However, there was one condition. As the war had resulted in India's emergence as the dominant regional power and because it was holding 90,000 Pakistanis in captivity and

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occupying almost 5,000 square miles of Pakistani territory, New Delhi wanted to settle the issue on its own terms. This was reflected, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter V, in the statements of a number of Indian leaders suggesting a 'straightening' of the border in Kashmir in the immediate aftermath of the war. It became even more obvious after the conclusion of the Simla Accord in July 1972, when the Indian Government unilaterally linked the withdrawal of its forces from Pakistan's territory with an agreement on the delineation and demarcation of the line of control in Kashmir. At this stage, as will also be discussed in detail in Chapter V, the Chinese Government supported Pakistan by providing it with a leverage against New Delhi's attempts to settle the Kashmir question on its own terms. Beijing declared categorically that as long as the Indian Government refused to comply with the UN resolutions passed during the 1971 war, the Chinese Government would bar Bangla Desh's entry to the United Nations. It was primarily this leverage which made India change its position and proceed with the delineation and demarcation of the line of control in Kashmir followed by the withdrawal of forces before the year 1972 came to an end.

The beginning of 1973, therefore, witnessed a situation in which India occupied three-fifths of Kashmir and Pakistan controlled the rest of it with a line of control demarcated through a mutual agreement between the two states. Since the clause related to Kashmir in the Simla Accord had stipulated that the line of control 'shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side', there were speculations that,

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39 For text of Simla Accord, See, Pakistan Times 2 July 1972.
notwithstanding either Pakistani or Indian claims to the contrary, this line of control was to be treated by both sides as an international border. These speculations seemed valid when both India and Pakistan embarked upon a process of integrating their respective parts of Kashmir.

In India, the process had already been initiated in 1972 when Mrs Gandhi lifted the ban on Sheikh Abdullah's entry to Kashmir, and deputed G. Parthasarathy and the External Minister, Swaran Singh to enter into negotiations with him and his lieutenant Mirza Afgal Beg for a complete and final accession of Kashmir to the Union of India. As a friendly gesture the Indian National Congress also decided not to contest elections in the Kashmir Valley in September 1972, thereby letting the United Front, formed by the banned Plebiscite Front and the Awami Action Committee, emerge as the strongest group in the Kashmir Legislative Assembly. In 1973, however, New Delhi increased its efforts for achieving Kashmir's total accession and, therefore, as another friendly gesture lifted the two year old ban on the Plebiscite Front in January 1973.

On the other side of the border, Bhutto also initiated a slow process of integrating Azad Kashmir into Pakistan. The first indication to this effect was received in August 1972 when the Pakistan Government took steps to end the feudal tribal rule and bring Gilgit and Baltistan, parts of the disputed area of Kashmir on its side of the ceasefire line, under the administration of the

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40 For Pakistan's claim that the Simla accord does not alter the status of the Kashmir issue, see Bhutto's statement, Pakistan Times, 4 July 1972; and for Indian claims that Kashmir issue has been settled, see P.N. Haksar's statement, Times of India, 20 July 1972.
41 Times of India, 11 August 1972; and The Times, 6 March 1973
42 Keesing's Contemporary Archives: 1971-1972, p.25547
Central Government. Much clearer indications, however, were given in November 1973 when Bhutto visited Azad Kashmir and suggested that it should be administratively integrated with Pakistan. Simultaneously, his Government began attempts to promulgate an 'interim Constitution' for Azad Kashmir which among others, included a provision for a 14 member Council with Pakistan's Prime Minister as its head and the Azad Kashmir Prime Minister as its Vice-President.

In spite of these moves, the Pakistan Government did not admit to its people that the Kashmir issue had been effectively sealed. This was primarily for domestic political reasons; during the National Assembly hearings to ratify the Simla Accord, a number of opposition leaders had expressed fears that the clause related to Kashmir would essentially amount to burial of the issue but had been assured, especially by Bhutto, that the Accord did not prejudice Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue and that the Government would continue to champion the cause of the Kashmiris. Once delineation of the line of control was completed, the Pakistani Government could not afford to withdraw these assurances, as to do so would have provided the opposition, already at loggerheads with the Central Government in Baluchistan and the NWFP, with a chance to mobilize the masses in Punjab as well.

Therefore, Islamabad continued to raise the Kashmir issue. On 5 March 1973, for example, as reports began appearing in the Indian

44 The Times, 23 August 1972.
45 See Bhutto's Speech in a public meeting at Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir, Pakistan Times, 6 November 1973.
47 See Pakistan Times, 15 July 1972.
48 For full text of Bhutto's speech, see Pakistan Times, 15 July 1972.
press that talks were being held between Indira Gandhi's emissaries and 'some Kashmiri politicians' on the future of Kashmir, Bhutto issued a statement reiterating Pakistan's demand for a plebiscite, and stressing that 'no action or arrangement which attempts to determine the future shape and affiliation of the state, or any part thereof, without any impartial ascertainment of popular will, would constitute a disposition of the state ...'.

The frequency of such references was initially not very high, increasing only after the Delhi Agreement was concluded in August 1973 and the Indian Government agreed to repatriate the 90,000 Pakistani POWs. Only 20 days after the agreement, speaking in the UN General Assembly, Bhutto referred to the 'unresolved dispute over the state of Jammu and Kashmir', and stressed that 'the important issue of self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, to which the United Nations and both India and Pakistan are committed, will have to be faced and honourably resolved for the good of [the subcontinent]'. Six weeks later, on 5 November 1973, during his tour of Azad Kashmir, Bhutto once again raised the issue and declared his government's willingness to enter into talks with India on the future of Kashmir.

Beijing responded to this situation by adopting a posture parallel to that of Islamabad.

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49 'Statement issued by the President of Pakistan, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, regarding Pakistan's Stand on the Kashmiri's right to self-determination', Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXVI, No.2, Second Quarter 1973, pp.118-119.

50 This policy stemmed from Pakistan Government's interest in ensuring that it got the prisoners of war back without any more complications.


52 Pakistan Times, 6 November 1973; see also Dawn, 10 November 1973.
Throughout the period preceding the Delhi Agreement (August 1973), the Chinese Government refrained from issuing any categorical statements of support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, nor did the Chinese media provide frequent coverage of Pakistani and/or Azad Kashmir leaders' references to the need to resolve the issue. Between January and August 1973, for instance, the NCNA transmitted only two news items on the Kashmir question. The first merely reported a Pakistani statement of gratitude for consistent Chinese support on issues including Kashmir, the second reported in detail Bhutto's statement of 5 March 1973 on the reported talks between Mrs. Ghandi's emissaries and Sheikh Abdullah.

After India had agreed to repatriate the Pakistan POWs, however, Beijing once again began exhibiting a willingness to identify itself with Islamabad's stand on the dispute. On 17 January 1974, after a year-long interval, Zhang Caiqian at last reiterated the Chinese support for the demand for a plebiscite in Kashmir. Four months later, during Bhutto's visit to Beijing, Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping declared at a banquet on 12 May that 'come what may, the Chinese Government and people will, as always, ... firmly support the people of Kashmir in their struggle for the right to self-determination'. Although the Indian Charge d'Affaires thereupon walked out, the Chinese Government repeated its

53 During Pakistan Chief-of-Army Staff General Tikka Khan and Mrs. Nusrat Bhutto's visit to Beijing in January and February 1973 respectively, for instance, no mention was made of Chinese support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.
determination to support the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the joint
communique issued at the end of the visit.\footnote{For full text of the
Communique, see NCNA, 14 May 1974, in FBIS:CHI, 15 May 1974, pp.A/1-3.}
This position was
defended on historical grounds by a NCNA report on 18 May, 1974 in a
commentary entitled 'Who Is "Fishing in Troubled Waters?"'. It
referred to a Tass statement about Deng Xiaoping's remarks, made on 14
May 1974, describing them as 'a deliberate effort to stir up a wave
of provocative clamoring in order to fish in troubled waters'. NCNA
argued that the Soviet position on the Kashmir dispute, accepting the
state as an integral part of India, reflected Moscow's desire to
'take advantage of and expand the Indo-Pakistan dispute to further
realise ... [its] wild social-imperialist ambitions in ... [the South
In contrast, NCNA argued, the Chinese Government
had consistently maintained that the Kashmir dispute, deliberately
left over by British imperialism in order to create antagonism
between India and Pakistan, should be solved through peaceful
negotiations between the two states and in accordance with the desire
of the people of Kashmir'. 'This stand', the report said, 'is not
only supported by the Pakistani Government and people, but at the
same time is identical to the earlier stand of the Indian Government
on this question', and pointed out 'that in 1953 the prime ministers
of the two countries reached an agreement and expressed that the
Kashmir dispute "should be settled according to the desires of the
people of Kashmir". Before this, the Indian Prime Minister Nehru had
guaranteed more than once to give the people of Kashmir the right to
self determination'. Further justifying Beijing's continued support
for Pakistan the NCNA report pointed out that this stand was in
conformity with United Nations' resolutions on the Kashmir dispute, which India had also accepted in the past as a basis for solution of the dispute. 60

The Chinese support continued during the second half of 1974, when the Bhutto regime once again brought the Kashmir issue into the limelight. In a series of statements issued during this period, the Pakistan Government accused India of synchronising its talks with Sheikh Abdullah with mobilisation of its troops in Sialkot and Kashmir. 61 These allegations, denied by New Delhi, 62 implied that once the Indian Government succeeded in signing an accord with Sheikh Abdullah, it would also attempt to integrate Azad Kashmir per force. At this stage the Bhutto regime was facing the Qadiani issue and intensified warfare in Baluchistan, and probably raised the spectre of an Indian threat to divert attention from the domestic problems. 63

The Chinese Government, however, ignored this probability and, as in the past, identified itself with Pakistan's position. On 11 July 1974, for instance, the NCNA reported that Bhutto had 'disclosed' in an interview with a correspondent of the New York Times that very recently there had been some 'ominous' movements and deployment of Indian forces near Sialkot and Kashmir and elsewhere which pointed to a 'grand design' of playing on Pakistan's nerves, intimidating it and making some unpleasant announcement relating to

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61 See, for example,
   Bhutto's Speech at Mangora, Pakistan Times, 13 July 1974; and
   Foreign Minister, Aziz Ahmed's press conference on 20 July 1974,
62 See, for example, Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh's
   Statement in the Rajya Sabha on 1 August 1974, Times of India, 2
   August 1974.
63 This view was widely held by the opposition groups in Pakistan who
   accused Bhutto of impairing the chances of Indo-Pakistan normalisation
   by continuously referring to the Kashmir issue.
the occupied Kashmir.\textsuperscript{64} This was followed by another NCNA report which quoted Bhutto as stressing that neither India nor Pakistan should remain under the impression that the Kashmir issue had been solved.\textsuperscript{65} These and other similar reports\textsuperscript{66} were supplemented with occasional Chinese criticism of India's stand on Kashmir. On 29 October 1974, for example, while discussing 'India's aggression and expansion in the South Asian region', an NCNA commentator pointed out that '... scheming to forcibly annex Indian-occupied Kashmir, the Indian Government ignores that the case has still to be settled with Pakistan and is acting in defiance of the Kashmir people's right to self-determination'.\textsuperscript{67}

The year 1975 began with the news that the negotiations between Sheikh Abdullah and the Indian Government, which had dragged on since 1972, were being concluded and that an accord was imminent.\textsuperscript{68} This news was confirmed on 24 February when Mrs Gandhi announced in the Parliament that Sheikh Abdullah had agreed in principle to Kashmir's complete accession to the Union of India, and to dissolve the Plebiscite Front and replace it with the original National Conference.\textsuperscript{69}

As soon as the agreement was announced Bhutto, who had previously mentioned on several occasions that any unilateral decision by India would not be acceptable to the world at large and

\textsuperscript{66}See, for example, 'Bhutto on Talks with India', NCNA, 3 December 1974, in FBIS:CHI, 4 December 1974, p.A/8.
\textsuperscript{68}International Herald Tribune, 20 January 1975.
specifically to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan, reacted sharply by calling on all Kashmiris and Pakistanis to observe a complete strike on 28 February 1975. Bhutto's interest in diverting attention from Pakistan's economic problems partially accounted for this sharp reaction. A major factor, however, was his interest in stemming any charges of actually 'selling Kashmir out' during the negotiation of the Simla agreement.

Regardless of the motivations behind Bhutto's reaction, however, the Chinese Government once again sided with Pakistan. On 25 February 1975, NCNA transmitted a detailed report of Bhutto's statement and his call for a general strike. The call was made, it pointed out sarcastically, 'immediately after hearing the announcement' by Indira Ghandi of an "agreement" on the status of Kashmir reached between her and Sheikh Abdullah, former Prime Minister of the Indian-occupied Kashmir. The same day it transmitted 'International reference material on the Kashmir problem', which blamed India for not resolving the Kashmir dispute. After tracing its origin and discussing the 1953 agreement between India and Pakistan, it stated:

Since 1953 Pakistan has all along advocated conducting a plebiscite while India time and again has broken its promises, claiming that "Kashmir is a component part of the Indian Union". It even declared that plebiscite was no longer practical. It is why the Kashmir problem has remained unsolved for a long time.

China also identified itself with Bhutto's position that the

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70 See, for example, Bhutto's Statement in Campbellpur, Dawn, 28 January 1975.
clause on the Kashmir dispute in the Simla Accord did not mean that Pakistan had given up its demand for holding a plebiscite in Kashmir and that, therefore, India was under an obligation to settle the dispute bilaterally and unilaterally. It was mentioned in the reference material that 'in July 1972, India and Pakistan had concluded the Simla agreement, which stipulated that the two parties should respect the ceasefire line without doing harm to each other's stand which is known to all'. 'However', it said, 'the Indian government has stepped up its activities to change Kashmir's status and this time has finally [and] unilaterally declared that the India occupied area of Kashmir is a component part of the Indian Union'.

For the next few weeks, the NCNA increased markedly its coverage of the Kashmir dispute. Occasional references were also made to the international reaction to India's accession of Kashmir. This was accompanied by an article in Jen-min Jih-pao on 3 March 1975 entitled 'The People of Kashmir Will Not Tolerate Deprivation of Their Right to Self-Determination'. Though not officially representing the Chinese Government's stand on the Kashmir dispute, this article condemned the Indian action. It stated:

On 24 February, the Indian Government unilaterally declared the Indian-occupied area of Kashmir to be a constituent part of the Indian Union. This act by the Indian Government is resolutely opposed by the people of Kashmir and Pakistan. The Chinese people firmly support the just struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self determination, and firmly support the just stand of the Pakistani Government.

and people on the Kashmir question.  

This article also pointed out that the Indian decision to integrate Kashmir would affect the process of normalization in South Asia. '... The Indian Government', it said, 'had continuously stepped up its activities to change the status of Kashmir. [I]t ... has ... annexed the Indian occupied sector of Kashmir, blatantly making the unilateral declaration to formally make the Indian-occupied area of Kashmir a constituent part of the Indian Union'. 'This act', it maintained, 'not only violates the UN resolution and tramples on the Kashmiri peoples' right to self-determination, but is detrimental to peace and stability in the South Asian region'.

The question as to how the Indian decision would affect the peace and stability of the region, however, was not answered in this article but in another NCNA broadcast on 7 March 1975 which quoted an editorial published in the weekly Jad-o-Jehad (Struggle) from the Indian part of Kashmir, as stating:

... To think that the agreement will go to lessen tension in this region, bring about stability or lead to solving the problems facing the masses is sheer wishful thinking and an exercise in self-deception... Far from lessening, the tension between India and Pakistan (which had been accepted as a party to the Kashmir dispute by Sheikh Abdullah and India) will further increase, and those sections of the people in the Kashmir valley who are dissatisfied with the agreement will give a new form and dimension to their struggle... Tension and struggle, ... [therefore] are bound to intensify.

On 11 March 1975, the NCNA transmitted another report on 'India's Sophistry Over Kashmir Issue' which questioned the Indian claim that the developments in Kashmir were India's internal affair.

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The Indian Government, it argued, had agreed to resolve the question of the accession of Kashmir region - 'a big international dispute' - through a plebiscite, both in the United Nations and in the Indo-Pakistan joint communique of 1953. 'However, going back on its own words', it continued, 'the Indian Government arbitrarily defined Kashmir as one of its states in its constitution. Now, it again described the accession of Kashmir as an "internal affair" which could be decided unilaterally by India'. 'If it is an internal affair of India', it asked, 'why has the Indian Government said on several occasions that it would respect the will of the local people? And why has it agreed to hold a plebiscite to solve the question of the accession of Kashmir'. The report also supported Pakistan's 'stern condemnation' of the accord by saying 'Pakistan Prime Minister Bhutto put it well when he said that according to the UN resolutions accepted by India and Pakistan, the Indian Government cannot change the status of dispute on the Kashmir issue'.

This Chinese support for Islamabad continued for the rest of 1975. Initially, the Chinese media frequently reported the Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri leaders' opposition to the accord and reiteration of the need to resolve the issue through a free and impartial plebiscite. Simultaneously, the Chinese leaders exhibited a willingness to reiterate Beijing's pro-Pakistan stand on Kashmir. In April 1975, for example, Vice-Premier Li Xiannian stated that '[The Chinese Government] will continue to render resolute support ... to

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the struggle of the people of Kashmir'. However, in the second half of the year, as the Pakistan government began playing down the issue, the Chinese references to, and support for Pakistan's stand on, the Kashmir issue also became less frequent.

The beginning of 1976 witnessed a change in China's attitude on Kashmir, Beijing again seeming less willing to consistently declare its support for Pakistan. In February 1976, for example, Zheng Sansheng, Deputy Commander of the PLA units in Xinjiang, visited Pakistan but failed to reiterate Beijing's support for Islamabad's stand. Similarly, on 16 May 1976, while commenting on the Indo-Pakistan agreement to restore diplomatic relations, a Jin-min Jih-pao newsletter only hinted at Bhutto's and Agha Shahi's statements that the future of Kashmir still remained to be settled. 'The result of the India-Pakistan talks', it stated, 'does not mean that from now on all will be smooth sailing in South Asia. There are still unresolved disputes between the two countries'. Its silence on Kashmir was especially noteworthy, because it referred specifically to the Farrakha Barrage, a dispute between India and Bangla Desh, not Pakistan, as one of 'the problems in the entire region'.

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82 See Li Xiannian's speech at the banquet given in his honour by Bhutto, NCNA, 21 April 1975, in SCMP, No.5845, 25 April 1975, p.41.

83 Soon after the 11 May 1976 agreement between India and Pakistan, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Agha Shahi had declared that of all the issues listed under the Simla Agreement, only Kashmir remained to be resolved. Two days later, Bhutto had stated on 13 May 1976, that Kashmir was a basic issue on which there could never be a compromise, for the destinies of Pakistan and Kashmir were unbreakably tied to each other. A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman on 16 March 1976 had also identified the Kashmir dispute as one of the three outstanding issues that needed to be resolved by India and Pakistan. Dawn, 12, 14 and 17 May 1976.


85 Ibid.
That these omissions were not inadvertent became obvious only a few days later. From 21 to 26 May 1976, Bhutto visited North Korea where he consistently raised the Kashmir issue and referred to the 'international conspiracy' which dismembered Pakistan in 1971. While reporting this visit, the NCNA not only ignored his critical references to India but omitted all his references to Kashmir.

Bhutto went from North Korea to visit China from 26 to 30 May 1976. On the day of his arrival, Jen-min Jih-pao published an editorial which stressed the recent improvements in the diplomatic relations in the subcontinent, attacked imperialism and hegemonism, and lauded Pakistan's economic progress during 1972-1976, but made only a passing reference to the Kashmir dispute and, more noticeably, omitted the word 'just' in reiterating Chinese support for Kashmiri self-determination. On the same day, at the welcoming banquet, the new Chinese Premier, Hua Guofeng, blamed South Asian discords on an (unspecified) evil-intentioned outside power, and welcomed Pakistan's normalisation of relations with India and Bangla Desh. The more noticeable feature of his speech, however, was that in reiterating China's support for Pakistan in 'the struggle to safeguard independence, defend state sovereignty and oppose outside interference', he made no mention of the Kashmir dispute. Only after Bhutto had mentioned the dispute in his speech at the return banquet on 29 May 1976, maintaining that 'normalisation does not mean

86 See, for example, Bhutto's speech at a banquet given in his honour by Marshal Kim Il Sung, in Pyongyang, on 21 May 1976, and the Joint communique issued at the end of Bhutto's visit to North Korea, Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXXIX, No.2, Second Quarter 1976, pp.187-193.
that one side must abandon its traditional support to the right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, ... [and] resist from the basic principle of its foreign policy \(^90\) did Chinese Premier reiterate China's support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir 'in their just struggle for self-determination'. \(^91\)

In the joint communique issued at the end of the visit, the Chinese Government, once again, attempted to distance itself somewhat from the Pakistan Government's position on Kashmir. For the first time in 12 years, Beijing did not join Pakistan from the beginning in expressing its support for Kashmiri people's right of self-determination. Instead, modelled after the Shanghai Communique issued at the end of Nixon's visit to China in February 1972 --- a head of a state, Beijing was not friendly with --- the Sino-Pakistan Joint Communique allocated the Pakistan Government paragraphs eight and nine to express its opinion on the process of normalisation in South Asia, and record its views on why a settlement in Jammu and Kashmir was essential for full normalisation in the subcontinent. In paragraph ten, the Chinese side appreciated the developments in South Asia, and it was only in paragraph eleven that it joined Pakistan in expressing 'firm support for the struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir for attaining their right to self-determination'. The word 'just' was once again omitted. \(^92\)

Beijing's reluctance to consistently identify itself with Islamabad's position on Kashmir continued till Bhutto's overthrow in July 1977. Although the Pakistan government, motivated by the need to prevent the opposition capitalising on the issue in an election year,


\(^91\) NCNA, 30 May 1976, in Ibid., p.A/16.

continuously raised the Kashmir issue, Beijing refrained from even acknowledging the existence of the dispute. On 5 October 1976, for example, in his speech in the UN General Assembly, the Chinese Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua expressed his Government's support for the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Azania, Palestine, Cyprus and Timor but made no mention of Kashmir. This omission becomes especially noticeable in view of the fact that at the same General Assembly session, the leader of the Pakistani delegation, Aziz Ahmed, had called for resolution of the dispute and had identified it as the only step remaining to be taken under the Simla Agreement for normalising relations between India and Pakistan. On 28 January 1977 also, an article entitled 'Premier Chou Creatively Carried Out Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line in Foreign Affairs' was published in the Beijing Review; it recounted the contributions made by Chou En-lai in formulating China's foreign policy, but significantly omitted any reference to the Kashmir dispute.

The Zia Regime - The Kashmir Issue and China

On 5 July 1977, General Zia-ul-Haq overthrew Bhutto and assumed power on the pretext of holding an impartial election within ninety days. Towards the end of the year, however, after postponing the promised elections indefinitely, the Zia regime also began raising the Kashmir issue in an attempt to divert public attention away from the constitutional crisis.

The Chinese Government responded, as in the final eighteen months of Bhutto's reign, by demonstrating a reluctance to consistently identify itself with Islamabad's stand. In fact this reluctance was slightly more pronounced than before. On 14 December 1977, Zia went to China on an informal visit. During this visit, as had been the case earlier with Bhutto, Jen-min Jih-pao published a welcoming editorial which praised Pakistan for its positive role in international affairs and contributions to the cause of Third World unity and reiterated Beijing's resolute support for the 'Pakistan people in their just struggle to safeguard national independence and state sovereignty'. However, it failed to make even the cursory reference to Beijing's views on Kashmir that had been made during Bhutto's visit. Only when Zia raised the issue, maintaining that its resolution would pave the way for a durable peace in the subcontinent, did Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping express China's support, and did so in phraseology milder than that used by Beijing previously. Instead of using the traditional expression of support for 'the struggle of the people of Kashmir for self-determination', Deng restricted himself to expressing the Chinese Government and people's unswerving support to the Pakistani people ... in their efforts for the exercise of self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir' without, once again, identifying the struggle as "just" one, and without expressing support for the Pakistan Government's efforts.


For the next two years, the Chinese media drastically reduced their coverage of Pakistani statements on the dispute. The number of high-power delegates expressing Chinese support for Pakistan on Kashmir also decreased. Out of six high-level Chinese delegations to Pakistan during the 1978-79 period, only two visiting Chinese Vice-Premiers, Geng Biao and Li Xiannian, reiterated their Government's support for Pakistan on the dispute, and even this was couched in very qualified terms. Firstly, as was the case during Zia's visit (December 1977) the Chinese Vice-Premier, Geng Biao, restricted himself to supporting 'Pakistan's efforts for the self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir'. The next visiting Chinese Vice-Premier, Li Xiannian, even further modified the expression and repeated his Government's firm support for the 'Pakistan Government's efforts for the realisation of the right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir'. Secondly, during Geng Biao's visit, in marked contrast to the Pakistani news media, the Chinese highlighted their leader's reference to Beijing's support for all the South Asian states and only afterwards mentioned China's support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, thereby conveying to India, and Pakistan, that Beijing's first priority was improvement of relations with all South Asian states rather than siding with Pakistan on a basically dormant issue. Thirdly, in reporting speeches which contained references to China's support for Pakistan, the Chinese media omitted sentences which gave an

100 See the text of Li Xiannian's speech at the banquet given in his honour, NCNA, 22 January 1979, in FBIS:CHI, 23 January 1979, p.A/17 (emphasis added).
101 See footnote 67.
impression that the support was unqualified. During his visit to Pakistan in January 1979, for example, Li Xiannian reiterated his Government's support for Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute and then said, 'We have done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The vagaries of the international climate notwithstanding, principled stand will always remain unchanged'. In reporting his speech, NCNA omitted these sentences. 102

More importantly, unofficially the Chinese Government began suggesting to Pakistan that it should 'forget' about the Kashmir issue and attempt to improve relations with India. 103

It would, therefore, be fair to suggest that, during the 1978-79 period the Chinese reluctance to support Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute became even more pronounced, in fact almost bordering on neutrality on an issue over which Beijing had thrown in its lot with Islamabad in 1964.

Conclusion

The preceding account has attempted to demonstrate that Chinese support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue has vacillated between complete identification with Pakistan's position on the issue, and a definite reluctance to echo Pakistan's position on the issue. From 1969 till late 1970, for instance, Beijing supported Pakistan on the issue --- a support which waned towards the end of 1970 and remained so for a major part of 1971. Towards the end of 1971, however, as the Indo-Pakistan war broke out, Beijing reverted to a policy of total identification with Pakistan's position. The period from 1972 to 1975 witnessed a continuation of this policy. Thereafter, however, Beijing's support dwindled and came to border on neutrality.

102 For Chinese version of the speech see footnote 108; for Pakistani version, see Pakistan Times, 22 January 1979.
103 Interview with a ranking Pakistani military officer, May 1984.
CHAPTER IV

FROM QUALIFIED TO UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT

EAST PAKISTAN CRISIS (1971)

On 16 December 1971, following Lieutenant-General Niazi's agreement to surrender unconditionally all Pakistan land, naval, paramilitary and civil armed forces in East Pakistan to the nearest regular troops under Indian Command, Indian forces entered Dacca. This heralded not only the end of the nine-months old East Pakistan crisis, which had begun with the military crackdown on 25 March 1971, but also the end of Pakistan as it had existed since its independence in August 1947. Throughout this period the Pakistan Government continued to claim that the Chinese Government was providing 'unflinching and forthright support to Pakistan's solidarity, integrity and sovereignty'.

The question arises as to what extent this claim was justified or, to put it differently, what was the nature of Beijing's political support for Islamabad during the East Pakistan crisis. This chapter attempts to answer this question; to this end it describes briefly the events leading up to the military's decision to act on 25 March 1971 against the Bengalis, the unfolding of the crisis, Indian attempts to exploit the situation to dismember its erstwhile enemy, Pakistan's reactions to these attempts and the Chinese response to these developments.

The Road to the Crisis

The genesis of the East Pakistan crisis is often traced back to the geographical, social and political differences existing between

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1 See, for example, Dawn, 22 May 1971.
the two wings of Pakistan at the time of independence. However, the fact that most Third World states lack completely complementary political and social units seems to suggest that, notwithstanding these dissimilarities, 'United Pakistan' could have continued to exist had its leaders attempted to integrate the communities of both the wings or, at least, acknowledge the claims of various groups to share power and resources, and to enjoy cultural autonomy. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic-military elite that ruled Pakistan since its inception, and consisted predominantly of Punjabis, and Urdu speaking migrants from Indian provinces, pursued policies that denied the constituent units their due share of power and resources, and attempted to negate their cultural identities. These policies exacerbated the already existing differences between East and West Pakistan to an extent that, by the mid-1960s, the Awami League, which drew its support from the rising East Pakistani entrepreneurial class, students, government officials, and various professional groups, openly began demanding a drastic restructuring of Pakistan's political system.

While the Ayoob regime reacted negatively to these demands for regional autonomy, General Yahya Khan, who ascended to power in March

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2See, for example, Robert Jackson, South Asian Crisis: India-Pakistan-Bangla Desh, (London: Chato and Windus for International Institute For Strategic Studies), pp.9-20; and Mohammed Ayoob, 'Background and Developments', in Mohammed Ayoob, et al. (eds), Bangla Desh, A Struggle for Nationhood, (New Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1971), pp.1-44.


1969, exhibited a more sympathetic attitude. On 28 November 1969, he announced that elections for both a Constituent Assembly and Provincial Assemblies would be held in December 1970 on the basis of universal suffrage with a common vote in both wings. Five months later, on 30 March 1970, he promulgated the Legal Framework Order (LFO) which identified 'maximum autonomy' for the provinces as one of the 'fundamental principles for the future Constitution of Pakistan'.

The Awami League agreed to contest the election under the LFO. The results of the election, held on 7 December 1970, proved astonishing as the Awami League won 167 out of 313 seats and emerged as the majority party in the Constituent Assembly. Within four years of raising the issue, therefore, the Awami League seemed closer to implementing its goals. However, it never eventuated. Soon after the election, Bhutto, whose Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had won 81 seats on a programme of a 'strong central government, a powerful army and anti-Indianism', began demanding that the Awami League should negotiate with the PPP on the nature of the draft constitution prior to the inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly. The 'hawks' in the Yahya regime, who were hostile to the League's stated intention for a drastically reduced defence budget, began endorsing Bhutto's demand.

The inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly, therefore, was delayed. Finally, on 13 February 1971, Yahya announced that it would be summoned on 3 March 1971. However, only two days

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8 Pakistan Times, 14 February 1971.
before the Assembly was to meet, on 1 March the military regime postponed the inaugural session indefinitely on the grounds that the differences between Mujib and Bhutto on the question of the draft constitution remained unresolved.9

This announcement, made without any prior consultation with Sheikh Mujib, was received with fierce resentment in East Pakistan. Mass rallies were held urging secession, and on 2 March 1971, the flag of Bangla Desh - (meaning the land of Bengalis) was hoisted by the students' League in Dacca. Simultaneously, Sheikh Mujib called for a general strike in the province on 3 March 1971, launched a non-violent non-cooperation movement against the Government, and announced that a mass rally would be held in Dacca on 7 March at which he would make a final decision on the future course of action'.

This announcement was followed, on 4 March 1971, by the Awami League's decision to run a parallel government in East Pakistan.10

Faced with this situation, on 3 March, Yahya invited Mujib to attend a conference of leaders of all parliamentary groups. On rejection of this, on 6 March, he announced that the Assembly would be called into session on 25 March 1971, but the next day Mujib refused to attend the session unless the Government conceded to withdraw Martial law, return the Army to barracks, conduct an inquiry into the loss of life caused by the Army's actions since 1 March 1971, and immediately transfer power. On 15 March, therefore, Yahya arrived in Dacca and began talks with Mujib, urging him to avoid confrontation with the military regime.11

10Times of India, 4 March 1971; and Maniruzzaman, op.cit, pp. 78-81.
Meanwhile, however, the 'hawks' accelerated the pace of troop reinforcement and arms supply from West to East Pakistan, to challenge Mujib if he persisted in his 'uncompromising attitude'. On 23 March the Awami League presented to Yahya a draft constitution for Pakistan which aimed at denying the central government any real control over even defence and foreign affairs. Probably apprehensive that Yahya might concede to accept the draft, the 'hawks' intervened.\(^\text{12}\)

The Crisis - India, Pakistan and China's Initial Reaction

On 25 March 1971, General Yahya suddenly left for West Pakistan and General Tikka began the notorious military crackdown; West Pakistan army units moved against the Bengali police, attacked Bengali army officers and soldiers, took over the students' halls in Dacca University, seized the offices of the opposition newspaper, raided the houses of the Awami League supporters, and killed a number of civilians. The next morning, Sheikh Mujib was arrested, and a series of Martial Law orders were promulgated banning all political activity. This operation, undertaken with the explicit aim of suppressing the Bengalis within 72 hours, backfired. While the Awami League leaders went underground, the officers and soldiers of the East Bengal Regiment (EBR), East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), and police force instantly rebelled against the West Pakistan Army. They were joined by the Bengali civil servants, and the enraged Bengali population who either heard of, or became direct or indirect victims of, the Army's atrocities. Simultaneously, a number of Bengalis fled

across the border into India.\footnote{Jackson, \textit{op.cit}, pp.33-35; Maniruzzaman, \textit{op.cit}, pp.81-98; Feldman, \textit{op.cit}, pp.138-44.}

These developments were exploited by Pakistan's main antagonist, India. Soon after the military crackdown on 25 March, the Indian Government held a special meeting of its Political Affairs Committee to discuss the propriety of Indian military intervention in support of the Bangla Desh rebels. The idea was opposed by the three Chiefs of Indian Services on the grounds that the Indian forces were unprepared \textit{at that moment} for a military intervention which could lead to an all out war. It was, therefore, shelved temporarily and the Indian Government opted for a strategy of covertly assisting the rebels, while overtly limiting itself to expressions of sympathy for the Bengalis, and urging the international community to take urgent steps to prevent the Pakistan Government from ruthlessly suppressing its own people. Thus, the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) was instructed to lend all possible assistance to the Mukti Bahini, the EBR and EPR, without risking a direct confrontation with the Pakistan Army. Meanwhile most of the Awami League leaders, who had gone underground during the military crackdown, and then had fled to India, were received cordially by the Indian Government, which discussed with them their plans of forming a government-in-exile.\footnote{Maniruzzaman, \textit{op.cit}, pp.107-111.}

Simultaneously, New Delhi began issuing statements expressing its sympathy for the freedom fighters. On 26 March 1971, Indian Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh expressed 'great concern' over the developments in East Pakistan.\footnote{Bangla Desh Documents, Vol.I, p.671.} The next day, speaking in the Lok Sabha, Indira Gandhi described the crackdown as 'not merely the suppression of a movement, but ... meeting an unarmed people with
tanks', and stated that a 'wonderful opportunity for the strengthening of Pakistan has been lost in a manner which is tragic ... [and] agonizing and about which we cannot find strong enough words to speak'. This was followed, on 31 March 1971, by the unanimous adoption of a resolution by both Houses of the Indian Parliament which demanded immediate cessation of 'the use of force and the massacre of defenseless people', and called upon 'all peoples and Governments of the world to take urgent and constructive steps to prevail upon the Government of Pakistan to put an end immediately to the systematic decimation of people' which amounted to genocide. The resolution also assured 'the 75 million people of East Bengal ... that their struggle and sacrifices ... [would] receive the wholehearted sympathy and support of the people of India'.

Though these expressions of sympathy were carefully worded to suggest that India's support for Bengalis was limited to 'their struggle for a democratic way of life' - within the framework of Pakistan -, and though the Indian Government was cautious enough to highlight that, in spite of the tremendous popular pressure it did not intend according recognition to the Bangla Desh Government, which had proclaimed independence on 10 April, New Delhi's policies evoked strong criticism from Islamabad.

The Indian Government, Pakistan complained, was blatantly interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs by 'circulating malicious and baseless reports' about, and issuing statements and resolutions on, the situation in East Pakistan. It was also helping 'miscreants', Pakistan alleged, by sending armed infiltrators into

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the border areas of East Pakistan. Simultaneously, Pakistan charged, the Indian Government was encouraging its press and people to urge an active and direct participation in Pakistan's internal affairs. This policy, which was disconcerting as it implied a threat of use of force at some stage in the future, Pakistan argued, was a part of the 'Indian grand design' of establishing its hegemony in the region. After bringing Pakistan under its sphere of influence, it alleged, the Indian Government was to embark on a process of affecting the sovereignty of the neighbouring states such as Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Malaysia, Afghanistan and Iran. The international community, therefore, Islamabad consistently stressed, was under an obligation to condemn the Indian policy towards East Pakistan as it was setting a precedent for intervention in neighbouring states' internal affairs.

The Chinese Government's response to this call was initially very slow to come through. Various Chinese diplomats, when asked to comment on the post-military situation in East Pakistan, stated that it was an internal affair of Pakistan and that China did not interfere in other countries' internal affairs. Meanwhile the Chinese Government and news media maintained a studied silence on the issue. This silence was broken only on 3 April 1971 --- eight days after the Pakistan Army crackdown --- when the NCNA broadcast a report on the situation in East Pakistan. This report, however, did not meet the requirements identified by Pakistan, i.e.

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18 See texts of Pakistan's protest notes to India, Pakistan Times, 27 and 31 March 1971, and 2 April 1971.
19 See, for example, a report transmitted by Radio Pakistan, 1 April 1971, in Summary of World Broadcasts: Far East, (Hereafter cited as SWB FE, No.3651, 3 April 1971, p.B/5.
21 For text of the report see NCNA, 3 April 1971, in SWB FE, No.3653, 6 April 1971, pp.B/1-3.
condemnation of India's interference in Pakistan's internal affairs. Instead, it exhibited China's reluctance to side with Pakistan against India on the East Pakistan issue. Firstly, it reported that the Pakistan Government had lodged strong protests with the Indian Government successively on 27 March, 30 March and 2 April against 'its blatant interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan' but was careful to indicate that the Chinese Government did not necessarily agree with the allegation by identifying Rawalpindi as the source of the information. Secondly, it reported briefly General Yahya's broadcast to the nation on 26 March 1971 of his decision to ban the Awami League but was once again careful to suggest that Beijing did not necessarily agree with Islamabad's description of the Awami League as representing anti-Pakistan and secessionist elements, by putting these words within quotation marks. Thirdly, and quite interestingly, by referring to various western news agencies, the NCNA allocated almost one-third of the total report to the Indian reaction to the military crackdown in East Pakistan, but refrained from commenting on the propriety or impropriety of the response, thereby reflecting Beijing's reluctance to commit itself to a clear-cut policy on the East Pakistan issue.

This non-committal attitude underwent a slight change four days later. On 7 April 1971, while lodging a protest against a demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi on 29 March, the Chinese Government identified India as 'flagrantly interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan'. This change could be ascribed to not so subtle hints in the Pakistani news media suggesting that Islamabad expected Beijing to support Pakistan. On 5 April 1971, for instance, Pakistan Times, which reflects Government

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views and policies, had expressed confidence that China would stand by Pakistan 'through thick and thin'.

However, since the Chinese protest note had highlighted that 'basing itself on the five principles of peaceful coexistence' Beijing had never interfered in the internal affairs of other countries, it is more likely that the slight change was caused by the Pakistan Government's decision on 6 April 1971 to make public Yahya's reply to Podgorny's letter of 2nd April 1971 urging Islamabad to take most immediate measures to end the repression in East Pakistan. In the reply Yahya had stressed that 'for any power to support ... [India's] moves or to condone them would be a negation of the UN Charter as well as Bandung Principles', and, therefore, had also indirectly indicated to Beijing that failure to condemn Indian interference would mean that China did not necessarily adhere to the principles of peaceful coexistence it had referred to only fifteen days ago.

Notwithstanding the slight move away from a non-committal attitude, the Chinese Government was careful to emphasise that there were limits to which it was prepared to support Pakistan against India in the East Pakistan crisis. The contents of the protest note of 7 April, for instance, reflected Chinese reluctance to repeat Pakistan's allegations that India was spreading malicious and baseless reports about the situation in East Pakistan. The note stated: 'On 29 March 1971, several hundred Indians frantically shouted slogans ... slandering China as aiding the Pakistan Government in its "war on the freedom-loving people of East Bengal".

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23 Pakistan Times, 5 April 1971 (emphasis added).
Yet the Indian policemen ... made no effort to stop them, thereby suggesting that Beijing was objecting to being slandered and not to Pakistan being branded an aggressor in East Bengal.

Similarly, the next day, in an introductory note before transmitting Yahya and Podgorny's letters of 2 and 6 April, the NCNA refrained from mentioning India by name and merely drew attention to Yahya's statement that Pakistan was determined not to allow any country to interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs.

This policy of an extremely qualified support for Pakistan did not change until 11 April 1971 when a 'Commentator's article' in the Jen-min Jih-pao, entitled 'What are the Indian Expansionists Trying to do?', categorically accused India of having 'done its utmost to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan in disregard of the repeated stern protest of the Pakistan Government'. The article then proceeded to repeat Islamabad's contention that New Delhi's response to the situation reflected India's expansionist policies.

'The relevant measures taken by Pakistan's Yahya Khan in connection with the present situation in Pakistan', it stated, 'are the internal affairs of Pakistan, in which no country should or has the right to interfere; but the Indian reactionaries come out in a great hurry to interfere openly in the internal affairs of Pakistan. Certain prominent figures in the Indian Government ... raised a hue and cry for ... interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan. The Indian Parliament and the Indian National Congress flagrantly discussed the internal affairs of Pakistan and adopted resolutions interfering in

these affairs.... Meanwhile, the Indian reactionaries have set their entire propaganda machine in motion to fan up anti-Pakistan chauvinist sentiments. 'All these frenzied acts', it maintained,'... have laid bare the expansionist features of the Indian reactionaries'. The article also repeated Pakistan's claim that the Indian Government had massed troops along the East Pakistan border, and had instigated armed personnel in civilian clothes to infiltrate into Pakistan territory for disruption and harassment. It also questioned India's claim that the geographical proximity made it difficult for India to view the developments in East Pakistan as 'simply an internal matter for Pakistan'. 'Such an argument', it maintained, 'is extremely preposterous. Every country occupies a definite place in geography and has neighbours. If this 'theory' of the Indian expansionists can be established then countries with expansionist and aggressive ambitions can interfere in the internal affairs of their neighbouring countries at random on geographical excuses'. 'Under these circumstances', asked the commentator, 'what normal relations can there be between countries?'

The Commentator's article was followed, the next day, by Chou En-lai's letter to Yahya which pointed out that Beijing had noted that 'of late the Indian Government has been carrying out gross interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan by exploiting the internal problems of Pakistan', and then stated that should India 'dare to launch aggression against Pakistan, the Chinese Government and people will, as always, firmly support the Pakistan Government and people in their just struggle to safeguard the state's sovereignty and national independence'.

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It was, therefore, seventeen days after the military crackdown, that the Chinese Government voiced its support for Pakistan against India on the East Pakistan crisis. The support, however, contrary to the claims made by the Pakistani news media, was far from being unqualified. The *Jen-min Jih-pao* article, for instance, which was hailed by the Pakistan news media for having exposed 'the obvious insincerity of India against Pakistan', had demonstrated that Beijing was willing to repeat Islamabad's allegations against New Delhi if they dealt specifically with India, but that it was not willing to echo Pakistan's contention that the Awami League, in collusion with India, was bent upon disintegrating Pakistan and, therefore, justify the Army action in East Pakistan. The article had also conveyed that, though willing to question the logic of India's claim that the geographical proximity rendered it difficult for India to ignore the developments in East Pakistan, Beijing was not prepared to argue against India's claim that the West Pakistan Army was massacring its Bengali population. In addition, it had also clearly set out the limits of Chinese commitment to Pakistan by stating that 'the Chinese Government and people will ... resolutely support ... [Pakistan in its] just struggle for safeguarding national independence and state sovereignty, and against foreign aggression and interference' but by omitting any reference to Beijing's support for Pakistan's territorial integrity --- the real issue at stake in the Bangla Desh crisis. The omission was significant as only two paragraphs earlier the author had asked rhetorically: 'As known to all, if the independence, sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity of a country are encroached upon, then what is left of the

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interests of the people? Similarly, Chou En-lai's letter, which was praised by the Pakistani news media for expressing China's unequivocal support for Pakistan, significantly lacked any reference to Pakistan's territorial integrity. In fact, the letter was worded to suggest that Beijing did not approve of Pakistan's handling of the crisis. 'It is important', it stated, 'to differentiate the broad masses of the people from a handful of persons who want to sabotage the unity of Pakistan'. More importantly, this letter, which was reportedly written in response to 'President Yahya's appeal to Beijing for support as a counterbalance to Moscow's support for India', was not at all reported by the NCNA, thus indicating Beijing's intention to downgrade its significance.

The Continuation of a Qualified Support

For the next seven months, there was no change in the Chinese policy of providing a qualified political support to Pakistan.

By mid-April 1971, for instance, as the Pakistan Army had succeeded in quelling the rebellion, at least temporarily, and had established a semblance of normalcy in the eastern wing, a mass exodus of Bengalis, both Hindus and Muslims, had begun from East Pakistan into the Indian states of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and West Bengal. Faced with this massive influx of refugees estimated by Indian sources as approximately 60,000 per day various Indian leaders began emphasising that India, which was

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31 Jen-min Jih-pao Commentator's Article: What Are Indian Expansionists Trying To Do?, op.cit, p.110.
35 Times of India, 24 April and 5 May 1971.
already finding it difficult to raise Rs.500 million for raising additional jobs and lowering the level of unemployment, could not afford to shelter the refugees at a daily cost of one million rupees. The international community, therefore, they maintained, was under an obligation to not only assist in providing relief to the refugees but also urge Yahya's regime halt the genocide and 'ensure that conditions were ... established soon in East Bengal for the refugees to return to their country as soon as possible'. Meanwhile, the Indian Government continued to exhibit a sympathetic attitude towards the Awami League. Not only was the establishment of the Bangla Desh Government-in-exile on 17 April 1971, with Tajuddin as its Prime Minister, and its requests to the international community for recognition given extensive coverage by the Indian news media, but Indian leaders also issued a number of statements suggesting that New Delhi was considering the issue of according recognition to it.

The Pakistan Government retaliated against this policy by maintaining that the Indian Government was exaggerating reports and figures about the refugee influx. Whatever refugees were there in West Bengal, it argued, were mainly destitutes and other rootless persons who had been collecting there since independence, including those who might have migrated from East Pakistan years ago and were yet to be settled. New Delhi, however, it was claimed, was raising the refugee issue because it wanted to 'hoodwink the world' about the presence of armed infiltrators in East Pakistan militarily and, more importantly, receive massive doses of foreign aid on the pretext of

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37 See, for example, Indira Gandhi's reply to discussion in Lok Sabha, 26 May 1971, in Gandhi, op.cit, p.22.
providing relief to the refugees in order to bolster its own economy. As for the Bangla Desh Government-in-exile, Islamabad argued, it was an imaginary Government set up by New Delhi on the Indian soil and not in Chuadanga, East Pakistan, as was popularly claimed by the Indian news media. These acts, coupled with the massive mobilization of Indian forces along the East Pakistan-India border, the Pakistan Government claimed, reflected India's intentions of dismembering Pakistan and, therefore, required the attention of the world community.

The Chinese Government, as already pointed out, did not respond to these developments by siding indiscriminately with Pakistan against India. Instead, it exhibited a certain degree of restraint in identifying itself with Islamabad's position. During the mid-April to mid-May period, for instance, the number of news items transmitted by Radio Peking and NCNA on various aspects of Pakistan totalled only nine, of which six concentrated on the developments in the eastern wing. Of these six items, four were merely reports of the situation in East Pakistan, and therefore, like the first NCNA report on the subject on 3 April 1971, duly cited the sources of their information and contained absolutely no comments on the news reported. The remaining two items, both transmitted by Radio Peking, were commentaries on East Pakistan's situation which, instead


39 See, for example, Statement by Pakistan Official Spokesman, Pakistan Times, 30 April 1971; and Malcolm W. Browne, 'War With India Possible, Pakistan General Asserts', New York Times, 6 May 1971.

of focusing only on the Indian actions, dealt with the Soviet, American and Indian interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.  

'Facts show', it was argued, that 'the two super powers, working in close coordination with the Indian reactionaries, have carried out crude interference in Pakistan's internal affairs' — a contention which, by blaming Moscow and Washington as well, tended to reduce the intensity of criticism directed solely against India. Even the contents of the reports and the commentaries reflected, as before, the Chinese Government's reluctance to repeat Pakistan's allegations against India in toto. Beijing, for instance, was prepared to repeat that 'the ugly expansionist features of the Indian reactionaries' were revealed by its policy of 'feverishly ... encroaching upon Pakistan's territorial integrity', blatantly discussing 'certain measures [adopted by Yahya Khan] concerning the present situation in Pakistan, massing troops near the border of East Pakistan, dispatching armed personnel in civilian clothes and troops into Pakistan territory to carry out armed threats', and violating Pakistan's airspace. It was also prepared to report Pakistani analysis that the statements by various Indian leaders and analysts to the effect that India could not sit idle, and its policy of 'supporting the handful of people to create turmoil' in East Pakistan indicated New Delhi's intentions of committing aggression and dismembering Pakistan. The Chinese news media were also willing to echo Islamabad's claim that, contrary to the reports of the Indian media, public opinion in East Pakistan was opposed to, and condemned, India's interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.

However, Beijing was not willing to even report, as before,

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Islamabad's allegation that India had been instigating Sheikh Mujib to move away from the demand of 'Six Points' to the idea of a confederation, that it had been supplying arms to the Awami League which the latter was intending to use in an armed uprising planned for a zero hour on 26 March 1971, and that the military action in East Pakistan was an attempt to foil this conspiracy. Neither was it willing to repeat, either in the reports or the commentaries, the Pakistani claim that the Indian Government had set up the imaginary Government of so-called Bangla Desh on its soil in order to 'boost its morale as well as that of its collaborators'. 42 The Chinese Government also demonstrated its unwillingness to repeat Pakistan's contention that the Indian Government was raising the refugee issue and exaggerating their number in order to receive assistance for its own economic development. Furthermore, while reporting India's violation of Pakistan's territorial integrity and insisting that 'no foreign country has the right to interfere with the just stand and actions of the Pakistani Government and people to safeguard their territorial integrity, national unification, sovereignty and independence', 43 the Chinese Government continued to display a reluctance to voice its support for Pakistan's territorial integrity.

Similarly, from mid-May onwards, as it consolidated its control in East Pakistan, the Yahya regime began to take a number of steps directed at reversing the growth of the refugee outflow into India. The UN General Secretary, U Thant, for instance, was informed of Islamabad's willingness to accept his proposal of April 1971 for UN

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42 See, for example, Official Pakistan 6 May Statement on India's and Awami League's role in The East Pakistan Crisis, Dawn, 7 May 1971.
Simultaneously, a series of conciliatory public declarations were made urging the 'law abiding' citizens of East Pakistan to return to their homes and reception camps were set up along the East Pakistan-India border.\textsuperscript{45} This was followed on 10th of June, by General Tikka's declaration of an amnesty for 'all citizens of the province', including political leaders and workers, and members of the armed forces and other law-enforcing agencies.\textsuperscript{46} More importantly, the authorities in Islamabad began to stress that they did not intend denying the Awami League members a share in political power. On 24 May 1971, while announcing his intentions of shortly revealing a revised plan for a return to the orderly progress towards a transfer of power to 'the representatives of people', General Yahya emphasized that 'with the exception of the ones who had committed serious crimes' all the National Assembly members elected on the Awami League would also be transferred power.\textsuperscript{47}

These conciliatory moves, were spurned by the Awami League. On 2 June 1971, Tajuddin, Prime Minister of the Bangla Desh Government-in-exile stated in an interview: '...[A]s far as we are concerned, there is no room for compromise within the framework of Pakistan. Bangla Desh is sovereign and independent, and we shall defend its separate and free entity at any cost'.\textsuperscript{48} The Indian Government, which by then had begun assisting the exiled government in raising and equipping a guerrilla army and regular troops to fight

\textsuperscript{44} Jackson op.cit, p.50.
\textsuperscript{45} See, for example, President Yahya's public declaration of amnesty, \textit{Pakistan Times}, 22 May 1971.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Dawn}, 11 June 1971.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Pakistan Times}, 25 May 1971.
\textsuperscript{48} Tajuddin Ahmed's Interview with All India Radio on 2 June 1971, \textit{Bangla Desh Documents}, Vol.I, p.325.
the Pakistan Army supported this position, and itself also reacted negatively to Islamabad's moves. The influx of 2 million refugees, deliberately expelled by the Pakistan Army, it argued, had caused economic, social and political problems for India, and especially for its states bordering East Pakistan. Consequently, what was previously Pakistan's internal problem had become an internal problem for India as well. It was, therefore, entitled to ask Pakistan to create conditions for the early return of the refugees under credible guarantees for their future safety and well being. This could not be achieved, it was maintained by the military regime's policy of suggesting a solution to its eastern wing's problems. Neither could it be achieved by arriving at a settlement with India, nor with the breakaway groups of the Awami League. The only solution, which would be feasible as well as acceptable to New Delhi, it was stressed, lay in Islamabad's acquiescence in working out a political settlement with the representatives of Bangla Desh outside the framework of Pakistan.

To this Islamabad retaliated by arguing that New Delhi had no right to sit in judgement over the developments in East Pakistan and dictate a certain course of action in regard to matters that were exclusively Pakistan's own affair. In any case, it was claimed, the movement for 'Bangla Desh' was dead as its 'pioneers' were ridden with factional disputes and lacked any conviction. As for the

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49 Jackson op.cit, p.56.

50 See, for example, Indira Gandhi's reply to discussion in Rajya Sabha on 15 June 1971, and her interview with Italian TV team the same day. Gandhi, op.cit, pp.24-30; and Indian Foreign Minister's address to the National Press Club, Washington, on 17 June 1971, Bangla Desh Documents, Vol. I, pp.686 - 688.

refugees, Islamabad maintained, they were being forcibly retained and moved to far flung areas because the Indian government wanted to keep the 'so-called refugee issue' alive in order to find a pretext for destroying Pakistan.\textsuperscript{52}

Beijing's policy in this new round of arguments was the same as before, i.e. one of providing a qualitative support to Pakistan. In fact, the Chinese Government exhibited slightly more restraint in voicing its support for Pakistan. From mid-May until the end of June 1971, for instance, Radio Peking and NCNA relayed nine news items related to Pakistan. Of these, not a single item dealt with the developments in, and Indian policy towards, East Pakistan, or Islamabad's allegations against New Delhi.

Neither did the Chinese Government declare its support for Pakistan's territorial integrity. On 21 May 1971, for example, at a reception to mark the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, the Pakistani ambassador stated: 'Today when our very existence as a nation has been threatened by hostile outside interference in our internal affairs, the People's Republic of China has come out with unflinching and forthright support to our national solidarity, integrity, and sovereignty'.\textsuperscript{53} However, the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, Han Nianlong, made no reference to the Indian threat to Pakistan's existence and, in his speech, merely repeated China's commitment to support Pakistan in its 'just struggle to safeguard state sovereignty and national independence and oppose foreign aggression and interference', without mentioning the word

\textsuperscript{52} See, for example, "Discovery" of "Bangla Desh government", Radio Pakistan, 31 May 1971, in SWB FE, No.3697, 1 June 1971, p.A3/12.

The restraint in Beijing's support was once again reflected during the months of July and August 1971. Upon receiving 'reliable reports from a friendly great power' in July that the Indians had begun to prepare for a military confrontation, Islamabad accelerated the pace of internationalising the East Pakistan issue hoping that it might dissuade India from fighting a war which Pakistan was bound to lose. At the meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 5 July 1971, therefore, it endorsed the idea that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should send its 'representatives' or 'observers' to the East Pakistan border to create favourable conditions for the return of the refugees. This idea, which was contained in U Thant's aide-memoire to both India and Pakistan on 19 July was rejected by New Delhi, on the grounds that it attempted to equate India with Pakistan, and failed to appreciate that the stationing of observers, rather than creating 'the necessary feeling of confidence' among the refugees to return to their homes it would merely create a facade of action as a cover for the continuation of the present policies of the Yahya regime and further aggravate the suffering of the people of Bangla Desh. Nevertheless, Islamabad once again proposed to the President of the Security Council on 11 August 1971 that a 'good offices' team of the Council should visit the border areas of India and East Pakistan 'to defuse the tense situation' there. Even this proposal was rejected by India which argued, on 18 August, that if Pakistan sincerely wished to defuse the

56 Jackson op.cit, p.67; Times of India, 22 July 1971.
57 Jackson, op.cit, pp.67-68.
situation 'it ought to settle [the issue] with the elected representatives of Bangla Desh' and not insist on converting the situation in East Bengal into an Indo-Pakistani issue.  

Throughout this period, in marked contrast to the United States and Great Britain which had welcomed the proposal for stationing UN 'observers' along the Indo-East Pakistan border, Beijing refrained from commenting upon, or even reporting, Islamabad's suggestions and New Delhi's refusal to accept them. Instead, the Chinese media concentrated on reporting Pakistan's opposition to the idea of 'two Chinas', its support for Beijing's representation in the UN, and the Bank of China's decision to handover its offices in Karachi and Chittagong to the Government of Pakistan!

Even the accelerated pace of military build up along the borders in September-October 1971, and the rising spectre of another Indo-Pakistan war failed to swerve China from its policy of qualified support for Pakistan. During the month of October, for instance, when the Pakistan Government consistently maintained that the Indian moves along the East Pakistan border and the posture adopted by its armed forces suggested a serious possibility of its aggression against Pakistan, and called upon the international community to impress upon India the need to desist from interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs and to withdraw its forces from the Indo-Pakistan borders, the Chinese Government scrupulously refrained from either subscribing to, or reporting, Islamabad's position. Instead, its media merely reported Yahya's message of greetings to China on its National Day receptions held in Pakistan to mark the occasion and the

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58 Pakistan Times, 16 August 1971; and Times of India, 25 August 1971.

59 See, for example, 'Yahya Khan's Address to the Nation', Pakistan Times, 13 October 1971.
details of a Pakistani athletics team's visit to China.  

This guarded attitude became most noticeable in early November 1971 when General Yahya sent a high powered delegation, led by Bhutto, to Beijing, presumably in an attempt to seek assurances from the Chinese Government that it would, as in the 1965 war, deter an Indian attack on East Pakistan. In spite of the claims made prior to, and during the visit, by Islamabad and Pakistani news media that an Indo-Pakistan war would not be limited to the subcontinent, and that China's friendship would help in preserving the independence, integrity and unity of Pakistan, Beijing exhibited a reluctance to identify itself too closely with Islamabad.  

Firstly, as the delegation arrived in Beijing, it was subjected to a 'spontaneous' demonstration against the military regime's policies in East Pakistan. Secondly, at the welcoming banquet on 7 November 1971, the Chinese Acting Foreign Minister, Chi Peng-fei expressed his Government's concern 'over the present situation in the subcontinent', and identified India as having 'crudely interfered in Pakistan's internal affairs, [and having] carried out subversive activities and military threats against Pakistan by continuing to exploit the East Pakistan question'. He also identified Yahya's proposal for mutual withdrawal of Indian and Pakistan armed forces from the border as a 'reasonable' one and 'helpful to easing tension

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61 Choudhury, India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh and the Major Powers, p.213
62 See, for example, Commentary by Ahmed Hassan of the 'Sun', Radio Pakistan, 5 November 1971, in SWB FE, No.3833, 8 November 1971, p.A3/3; and Daily Mail, 4 November 1971
63 Hindustan Standard, 10 November 1971
in the subcontinent', and suggested that it should be welcomed. However, unlike the Pakistani spokesman on Beijing talks on 6 November, he refrained from categorically stating that 'the aggressive posture of India along Pakistan's borders threaten[ed] peace', or that New Delhi had been grossly exaggerating the figures for the refugees. Neither did he express Beijing's support for Pakistan's territorial integrity. Thirdly, the same evening, at the banquet given by Bhutto, Chou En-lai merely observed that the Pakistani delegation's visit was a demonstration of 'friendly relations of cooperation' between the two states but did not touch upon the merits of Indian and Pakistani positions on the East Pakistan situation. Fourthly, the two sides did not issue a joint communique at the end of the visit.

A Change in Support: Qualified to Unqualified

The second half of November 1971, however, witnessed a change in Chinese policy. In the wake of a sudden acceleration in the speed of the drift to an Indo-Pakistan war, the Chinese delegate in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly issued a statement on 19 November 1971 which, for the first time since March 1971, referred and subscribed to Islamabad's stand on the issue of Pakistani refugees in India. 'The so-called question of refugees from East Pakistan', he stated, 'came into being and developed to its present state due to a certain country's intervention in Pakistan's internal

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65 Radio Pakistan, 6 November 1971, in Ibid., p.A3/4
66 NCNA, 7 November 1971, in Ibid., p.A3/3
The Pakistan Government, he maintained, had repeatedly proposed relaxing the tension on the subcontinent and settling the refugee question but these proposals were rejected by 'the country concerned', which continued 'to exploit the question of refugees ... to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan, to carry out subversive activities against her and obstruct the return of the East Pakistan refugees to their homeland...'.

The responsibility for not arriving at a reasonable settlement of the question of the East Pakistani refugees, therefore, he suggested, lay with India and not Pakistan.

Five days later, on 24 November --- i.e three days after India had launched an undeclared war in East Pakistan --- in a meeting with the Pakistani ambassador, Chou En-lai 'expressed concern over the military provocations carried out by India along the East Pakistan border in the past few days'.

The following day, speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Taxila Heavy Mechanical Complex in Pakistan, the Chinese Minister of the First Machine Building Industry, Li Shuiqing, identified Pakistan's 'cause' as a 'just' one --- an expression used for the first time by any Chinese leaders in eight months --- and expressed his conviction that it was bound to be victorious.

Four days later, speaking at an Albanian reception in Beijing on 29 November, Chinese Vice-Premier, Li Xiannian, blamed the

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68 Ibid, p.218 (emphasis added).
69 Ibid, p.218.
Indian 'subversive activities and military provocations against East Pakistan', which were being supported and encouraged by social imperialism (i.e. the Soviet Union), for aggravating the tension on the subcontinent'. The Chinese Government and people, he stated, are greatly concerned over the present India-Pakistan situation. 'We maintain', he proceeded, that 'it is ... impermissible for a country, under any pretext, to employ large number of armed troops to wilfully cross its own border and invade and occupy another country's territory'. Then he identified, as had Chi Peng-fei during Bhutto's visit early in the month, General Yahya's suggestion for the respective withdrawal of the armed forces from the border as a 'reasonable proposal'.

Parallel to the issuing of these statements, the Chinese news media broke their six-months old silence on the developments in East Pakistan. On 24 November 1971, the NCNA transmitted its first account of the Indian invasion in the Jessore sector and other places in the province. This was followed by extensive coverage of the East Pakistan situation, including among others, news of Indian moves, Pakistani people's opposition to New Delhi's actions, and various statements by Chinese leaders supporting Islamabad.

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74 The last report on East Pakistan was transmitted by the NCNA on 8 May 1971.
major significance, however, were three themes discussed by the Chinese media in this coverage. Firstly, for the first time since the military crackdown, they subscribed to Islamabad's position that Bangla Desh was a creation of the Indian Government. A commentary on the 'Indian Ambition to Annex East Pakistan', for example, stated on 2 December 1971, that the so-called "Bangla Desh" is entirely a sinister means of the Indian Government to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan to divide and subvert Pakistan. Following the serious turn that matters took in East Pakistan in March 1971, it pointed out, India 'made use of some secessionists of Pakistan to rig up in mid-April a so-called "Provisional Government of Bangla Desh". The "independence ceremony" of "so-called Bangla Desh", it maintained, was staged by the Indian Government in a remote village very close to the Indian border, and its members were actually active in Calcutta, New Delhi and other places in India. Secondly, in marked contrast to the policy eight months back, it began suggesting that the Indian actions deserved serious condemnation. While commenting on Indira Gandhi's demand of 30 November that, as a 'gesture for peace', Pakistan should withdraw its forces from East Pakistan, for instance, the report cited above stated: 'The glaring fact is that the Indian Government has dispatched large numbers of troops to invade Pakistan, but reversely accused Pakistan of threatening India's security and even demanded the withdrawal of Pakistan's troops from East Pakistan. What arrant gangster logic! Thirdly, it stressed that the Indian Government was being backed and abetted by social-imperialism (i.e. the Soviet Union) which had been

supplying weapons to India while, at the same time, putting pressure on Pakistan since the beginning of the crisis.69

Notwithstanding these themes and the Chinese leaders' expression of concern which marked a move away from Beijing's policy of qualified support, however, the Chinese Government did exhibit some reluctance in completely siding with Islamabad. Both Li Shuiqing and Li Xiannian, for example, in their statements on 25 and 29 November 1971 respectively, merely reaffirmed the Chinese Government's pledge to support Pakistan in its 'just struggle against foreign aggression and interference and in defence of [its]... sovereignty and national independence' and refrained from mentioning, as before, the word 'territorial integrity'.80

The outbreak of the declared Indo-Pakistan war on 3 December 1971, however, removed this element of reluctance. On 4 December, the Chinese Acting Foreign Minister, Chi Peng Fei, for the first time in nine months, 'strongly condemn[ed] India's subversion and aggression,' and reaffirmed the Chinese Government and the people's 'firm support', for Pakistan's 'territorial integrity'.81

The next day, without mentioning the Pakistan Air Force's attack on the Indian airfields of Amritsar, Pathan kot and Avantipur on 3 December which had actually extended the war to the western sector, the NCNA, in its first report of the declared war, stated: while stepping up its armed invasion of East Pakistan, the Indian Government yesterday (4 December 1971) flagrantly expanded aggression

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by launching attacks on West Pakistan.\textsuperscript{82} This was followed by a markedly stepped up coverage by the Chinese news media of the South Asian situation.\textsuperscript{83} In this coverage, the Chinese Government not only consistently highlighted its resolute support for Pakistan's struggle to protect its territorial integrity but also denounced the 'Indian Government strongly for its flagrant aggression against Pakistan'. On 6 December 1971, for example, a commentator's article in the Jen-min Jih-pao, titled 'Most Preposterous Logic, Flagrant Aggression' stated that 'the armed aggression against Pakistan was the inevitable outcome of the expansionist policy the Indian reactionaries ...[had been] stubbornly pursuing'. Since March 1971, it maintained, New Delhi had supported 'the secessionists in Pakistan by every means', and had 'grossly interfered in Pakistan's internal affairs'. Later, it had 'cooked up a so-called "Provisional Government of Bangla Desh", which in reality was installed on Indian territory and it also 'dispatched so-called "freedom fighters" into East Pakistan to perpetrate armed harassment and subversion. Finally, it stated, New Delhi was attempting to 'inject this "puppet regime" into Pakistan through open, direct invasion by the Indian troops...'. 'The fact is clear', it stated, the Indian Government is the naked aggressor.\textsuperscript{84}

To commit aggression against Pakistan, the same commentator pointed out, New Delhi had 'created various most absurd pretexts, arrogant to the extreme'. In a 'typical expression of

\textsuperscript{82} NCNA, 5 December 1971, in SW\& FE, No.3858, 7 December 1971, pp.C/4-5, (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{83} See, for instance, 'Chinese Coverage of India-Pakistan Conflict: Editorial Report', SW\& FE, No.3859, 8 December 1971, pp.C/6-7; and 'Beijing Radio Coverage', SW\& FE, No.3860, 9 December 1971, p.(i).

\textsuperscript{84} NCNA, 6 December 1971, in SW\& FE, No.3858, 7 December 1971, pp.C/6-7 (emphasis added).
big-Indianism', for example, it had maintained that 'Pakistan is "next door" to India and the "solution of Pakistan's internal affairs must be done according to India's formula'. Then it had the impudence to carry out unbridled armed invasion of Pakistan on the pretext of the "refugee question". Such practices, it was pointed out, were not without a precedent in India's history. New Delhi, it was stated, had engineered ten years ago 'the rebellion of serf-owners ... in the Tibet region of China', but upon its failure, New Delhi had 'abducted tens of thousands of Tibetan inhabitants of China to India and made use of this incident to carry out frantic anti-China activities'. 'It is the customary practice of the Indian reactionaries', the Jen-min Jih-pao commentator stated, 'to poison the relations between nationalities in neighbouring countries and create incidents to be used as pretexts for intervention, subversion and aggression against these countries'.

Neither was the Indian demand for the 'withdrawal' of Pakistani troops from its eastern wing, it was pointed out, without a parallel in the world history. The demand resembled the methods used by Japanese imperialism to invade and bully China in the 1930s. 'In 1931', it was explained, 'the Japanese militarists flagrantly created the Mukden incident, drove the Chinese troops south of the Great Wall and rigged up a "Manchukuo" in North East China....[Four years later], while engineering the so-called "autonomy in north China", and rigging up a puppet administration in east Hopei, [they] openly demanded that Chinese troops withdraw from their own territory, Hopei province, so as to attain their goal of further occupying North China'. 'The gangster's logic of the Indian expansionists',

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therefore, it was claimed, 'is merely the usual tactic of all aggressors'.

The Indian reactionaries were rampant to this degree, the Chinese news media claimed, because they were being encouraged by social-imperialism in undertaking their venture of annexing East Pakistan. In addition to providing economic, military and political support to New Delhi, it was stressed, the Soviet Government had also exerted both disguised and undisguised pressure on Islamabad to force it to succumb to India's demands. In reality, therefore, the Soviet Union was pursuing policies similar to those pursued by the German and Italian fascists vis-a-vis Japanese militarists on the issue of establishing "Manchukuo" regime in north-east China.

This criticism of the Indian and Soviet policies by the Chinese media was accompanied by a very strong and direct Chinese support for Pakistan at the United Nations. On 4 December 1971, during the Security Council deliberations, unlike the United States' representative who spoke of 'the recourse to war by the nations of South Asia', the Chinese representative, Huang Hua categorically stated that 'the Government of India [had] openly dispatched troops to East Pakistan, thus giving rise to a large scale armed conflict and thereby (had) aggravated tension in the ... subcontinent and in Asia as a whole'. Then he proceeded to identify the Indian

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89 'Statement by Mr. Huang Hua, Representative of China, 4 December 1971', in Ibid, p.435 (emphasis added).
argument that the continued massive influx of refugees from East Pakistan accounted for its East Pakistan policy as 'completely untenable'. The facts reveal, he maintained, that New Delhi had 'not the least intention to settle the question of the East Pakistani refugees', but that it intended to 'capitalize on the question as a pretext for committing further subversion and aggression against Pakistan'. Thus, he stated, the Security Council should 'surely condemn the act of aggression by the Government of India and demand that the Indian Government immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its armed forces from Pakistan'. The next day, the Chinese representative submitted a draft resolution which, like the draft resolution tabled by the United States on 4 December 1971, called upon India and Pakistan to cease hostilities and withdraw respectively from the international borders. However, unlike the one presented by the United States, this draft resolution devoted the preceding three paragraphs to noting India's large scale attack on Pakistan, condemning its act of creating a so-called "Bangla Desh", and calling upon the Government of India to withdraw its armed forces and personnel sent in Pakistan immediately and unconditionally on the grounds that failure to do so would be tantamount to legalizing India's aggression. The same day, the Chinese representative vetoed a Soviet draft resolution which 'called upon Pakistan to ... cease all aspects of violence... which had [resulted] ... in the deterioration of the situation' on the grounds that it reflected the Soviet Union's utmost attempts to 'defend the Indian aggressive acts subverting the Pakistan Government and disrupting the national unity.

of Pakistan'. Two days later, on 7 December 1971, during the General Assembly meeting, the Chinese representative stressed that the United Nations should not repeat the mistakes made by the League of Nations, and draw a clear line between the aggressor (India) and the victim of aggression (Pakistan). The resolution passed by the General Assembly, however, only 'called upon India and Pakistan ... to take forthwith all measures for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of their armed forces on the territory of the other ...'.

Thereafter, the Chinese Government and press continued to repeat its condemnation of the Indian and Soviet policies against Pakistan. The final Chinese Government's statement issued on 16 December 1971, for instance, accused India of brazenly launching a large-scale war of aggression, and exploiting the 'refugee question' to achieve the 'pipe dream of a greater Indian Empire'. It, then proceeded to reaffirm Chinese firm support for Pakistan 'against aggression, division and subversion'. Four hours later, however, General Niazi surrendered to General Aurora and brought the nine-months old crisis to an end.

Conclusion

The initial phase of the 1971 crisis saw the Chinese Government


92 Statement by the Chinese Representative Chiao Kuan-hua in the UN General Assembly', 7 December 1971 (Extracts', in Ibid, pp.225-228.


providing extremely qualified support for Pakistan against India. Pakistan's allegations against India were not repeated neither was any attempt made to justify the Yahya regime's actions in the Eastern wing of Pakistan. Significantly, there was a clear cut reluctance to evince China's support for Pakistan's territorial integrity. It was only, in the last stages of the crisis when an 'undeclared' war started in East Pakistan, that Beijing in a volta-face sided with Pakistan against India and echoed all those Pakistani allegations against New Delhi that had, hitherto, remained unreported by the Chinese media. This support continued both within and outside the UN until 16 December 1971 when the Indian forces marched into Dacca and the dismemberment of Pakistan eventuated.

The questions arising from this chapter are as follows:

Why was China reluctant to side with Pakistan in the initial stages of the East Pakistan crisis?

Did China approve or disapprove of the Pakistan Government's military crackdown in the eastern wing?

If Beijing disapproved of the Yahya regime's domestic policies, why did it choose to side with Islamabad during the final stages of the crisis?

Was this change a function of Chinese perceptions of the Soviet and Indian moves in the South Asian region?

Possible answers to these questions will be discussed in Chapter IX.
CHAPTER V

UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT:

CHINA AND THE 'NEW' PAKISTAN'S PROBLEMS

DECEMBER 1971 - APRIL 1974

On 16 December 1971, a few hours after Mrs. Gandhi's declaration in the Lok Sabha that 'Dacca is now the free capital of a free country',¹ the Indian Government announced a unilateral ceasefire on the western front from 2000 hours the following day and expressed the hope that there would be 'a corresponding immediate response from the Government of Pakistan'.² The next day, Radio Pakistan reported President Yahya's announcement that Pakistan had accepted the Indian proposal for a ceasefire.³ Thus the fourth Indo-Pakistan war, which had caused a major geopolitical restructuring of the South Asian region, formally came to an end on 17 December 1971. Three days later, General Yahya stepped down from the posts of President and Chief Martial Law Administrator and handed over power to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto whose party, the PPP, had won the majority of the West Pakistan seats in the December 1970 elections.⁴

Soon after coming to power, this new regime of the 'new' Pakistan --- or what was left of the 'old' Pakistan --- faced a myriad of problems. These included, among others, the problems of securing Indian withdrawal from the 5000 square miles of territory occupied on the eastern front during the recent war, and the release of 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war (POWs) captured by the Indian Army after the surrender on the eastern front.

⁴Radio Pakistan, 20 December 1971, in SWF FE, No.3870, p.C/1
This chapter attempts to describe the Chinese policy towards Pakistan throughout this period, i.e. December 1971 to April 1974. It begins with a brief description of Islamabad's attempts to secure the withdrawal of troops and the repatriation of POWs, and then describes and analyses the motives behind the Indian policy of delaying the process. It, then, proceeds to describe the nature and significance of Beijing's support for Islamabad in solving its postwar problems.

Pakistan's Problems

On 20 December 1971, as he took over the reins of government, Bhutto found Pakistan facing a situation drastically different from the one existing at the end of the Third Indo-Pakistan war (1965). Unlike then, when its territorial gains had remained limited, the Indian Army was now occupying large tracts of the 'new' Pakistan's territory. It was in a position to cut the main Pakistani lines of north-south communication through Hyderabad to Karachi and was occupying approximately 5000 square miles of Pakistan's territory, i.e. seven times the area it had captured in the 1965 war. At the same time, it was holding in captivity about 10,000 Pakistani civilians and 80,000 soldiers who had surrendered to the Indian command in the eastern sector. The Pakistan Army's gains, on the other hand, were minimal. It was occupying only 69 square miles of

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5 In the 1965 war, even according to the New Delhi estimate, the Indian Army had captured only 740 square miles of Pakistan's territory, cited by S.M. Burke, Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical analysis, (London: Oxford University Press 1973), p.334; Dawn, 6 August 1972.

Indian territory, and approximately 50 square miles in Jammu and Kashmir, and had captured only about 1000 Indian soldiers on the western front.⁷

Faced with this unfavourable situation, Bhutto shelved his claim of fighting 'a thousand years of war with India' and began to issue statements expressing Pakistan's intentions of living in peace with its South Asian neighbour. On 30 December 1971, for instance, while addressing a meeting of journalists, educationists and writers, he said, 'Pakistan wants to live in friendship with all its neighbours, more so with India...'.⁸ However, he was careful to point out on this and subsequent occasions that this friendship could be established only if the Indian Government treated Pakistan as an equal and not a satellite. A practical manifestation of such an attitude, he emphasised, would be the Indian decision to immediately release Pakistani prisoners of war and evacuate the territories occupied during the 1971 war.⁹

The Indian response to this call was not very favourable. For the first time in the last twenty four years, the Indian Government was finding itself in a clearly advantageous position. Instead of giving up this position, New Delhi was determined to exploit it for pressuring Islamabad into finding a permanent solution to the Kashmir problem on Indian terms. Soon after the war ended, therefore, the Indian Government had begun issuing statements suggesting that an adjustment to the old ceasefire line in Kashmir would be necessary for settling matters between the two South-Asian states. On 18

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⁷ Dawn, 6 August 1972.
⁸ Radio Pakistan, 30 December 1971, in SWB FE, No.3877, 1 January 1972, pp.C1/2 (emphasis added).
December 1971, for example, after declaring in the Lok Sabha that 'there ... was] no dispute between India and Pakistan which ...[could] not be settled through friendly negotiations' the Indian Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram had stated: 'It will now be our endeavour to forge ... a new relationship with Pakistan based ... on cooperation guaranteeing to us the security of our borders and our vital road communications'. Three days later, India's External Affairs Minister, Swaran Singh, made it clear in the Security Council that India would insist on some adjustments with regard to the ceasefire line in Kashmir 'to make it more stable, rational and viable.' This was followed by Mrs. Ghandi's press conference on 31 December 1971, where soon after stating that various issues which had arisen because of the recent conflict could be discussed between the two countries, she mentioned the Kashmir issue. 'The whole idea of a ceasefire line in Kashmir,' she said, 'was to maintain peace and security.' It was to be seen whether this aim has been achieved. It may be necessary to have some adjustments. Unless and until Islamabad agreed to this demand, and 'a concrete border settlement ... reached with Pakistan' the Indian Government was careful to emphasise, 'there was no question of its troops withdrawing from the present ceasefire positions along the western frontier ...'.

Neither was it prepared, the Indian Government emphasised, to repatriate immediately the Pakistani prisoners of war.

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The delay in their repatriation, New Delhi was careful to suggest, was linked not with the straightening of the ceasefire line in Kashmir but with the issue of Pakistan's recognition of Bangla Desh. The Pakistan army on the eastern front, it was explained, had surrendered to a joint Indo-Bangla Desh command. The Indian Government, therefore, was not entitled to release the prisoners without the concurrence of the authorities in Dacca. This, in turn, it was pointed out, could not come about without Pakistan's willingness to recognise Bangla Desh as a separate identity.  

However, in spite of its attempts to suggest otherwise, certain statements by the Indian Government reflected that it was using the POWs as a lever to obtain a final Kashmir settlement on its own terms. On 27 December 1971, for example, some Indian official spokesmen, soon after declaring that the 'ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir ... may have to be straightened and rationalized' added that the new rulers of Pakistan would 'have to sober down before there [could] ... be talks about repatriation ...'.

Faced with this Indian policy of procrastinating over troop withdrawal and POW repatriation as a lever to extract maximum gains on the Kashmir issue, the new Pakistani regime found itself in a predicament. It could not succumb to the Indian demand for 'rationalizing' the ceasefire line in Kashmir, primarily for two reasons. Firstly, negotiating from a position of weakness, it could not predict the extent to which it would have been forced to compromise on the Kashmir issue. Secondly, even if the Indian

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14 See, for example, Indira Gandhi's Interview with the correspondent of Hungarian newspaper 'Nepszabadseg', Times of India, 24 April 1972.

Government's demands for a compromise were not maximal, the mere idea of compromising on the Kashmir issue might have enraged the Pakistani people, especially the Punjabis who were in the majority in the 'new' Pakistan and had all through Pakistan's history identified themselves closely with the Kashmir issue. Considering that Bhutto had received maximum political support from the Punjabis during the December 1970 elections, their opposition to any compromise on Kashmir could have undermined the new regime's stability.

Neither could Islamabad counter New Delhi's tactics by recognising Bangla Desh and depriving India of the alibi that the prisoners could not be repatriated without the concurrence of the Bangla Desh Government. This inability to accord immediate recognition to what had been previously part of Pakistan stemmed not from the Pakistan Government's refusal to accept the reality of Bangla Desh but from its appreciation of the fact that the people of Pakistan were going through a trauma after the secession of the eastern wing. Throughout the nine months of counter-insurgency operations, they had been kept in the dark about the real developments in the East and, therefore, when faced with the shock of Pakistan's dismemberment, were reacting negatively and fiercely opposing the idea of endorsing Bangla Desh's independence. Under these circumstances, instead of forcing them to instant acceptance, the new regime in Pakistan had opted for a psychological approach of gradually preparing its people to accept the reality of Bangla Desh. Initially, therefore, it had maintained that the Indian occupation of the eastern wing had not marked the end of the 'United Pakistan'. In his first address to the nation as the President, for instance, Bhutto had stated that East Pakistan was an inseparable and unseverable part of Pakistan, and that he was determined to negotiate with the leaders of the eastern wing to work out a settlement.
ensuring that the two parts retained their links, even if it was within a loose framework of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{16} Two weeks later, he had released Sheikh Mujib, who had been kept under solitary confinement since March 1971, on the grounds that the Sheikh was a 'patriotic Pakistani leader' and that by releasing him the Pakistan Government was not only respecting world opinion but also paving the way for finding a link between the two wings.\textsuperscript{17} Upon arrival in Dacca on 10 January 1972, however, Sheikh Mujib had declared that there could be no question of maintaining links with West Pakistan, and that Bangla Desh was a reality that had come to stay.\textsuperscript{18} Nevertheless, the Pakistan Government had continued to maintain that 'the last word had not yet been spoken by the Sheikh' and that there was still some possibility of the continued existence of the 'United Pakistan'.\textsuperscript{19} It could not, therefore, suddenly change its position and accord de jure recognition to Bangla Desh as it would have met with fierce domestic opposition. Moreover, there was no guarantee that even if it did succeed in depriving New Delhi of the chance to use the POWs as a lever, the Indian Government would not continue to exploit the issue of withdrawal of forces for securing Pakistan's approval to frontier adjustments in Kashmir.

The Pakistan Government could not afford to maintain the status quo either. A policy of allowing the Indian Government to detain the POWs and delay the withdrawal of troops for an indefinite period of time was bound to create dissatisfaction among the Pakistani population. This would have been especially true in the case of the

\textsuperscript{16}Pakistan Times, 21 December 1971.
\textsuperscript{17}Pakistan Times, 4 January 1972.
\textsuperscript{18}Radio Bangla Desh, 10 January 1972, in SWB FE, No.3886, 12 January 1972, p.C1/2.
\textsuperscript{19}See, for example, Pakistan Times, 13 January 1972, and text of Bhutto's speech at a news conference. Dawn, 14 January 1972.
province of Punjab where the majority of the Pakistani soldiers came from and, therefore, as previously mentioned, could have undermined the stability of the new regime in Pakistan.

To get out of this predicament, the Bhutto regime explored three avenues. Firstly, it began arguing that the Indian Government should separate the question of the POWs from the rest of the issues bedevilling relations between the South Asian states. The Pakistan Government, it was maintained, was prepared to negotiate with its Indian counterpart to arrive at a modus vivendi but believed that, in order to prepare a climate conducive to negotiations, New Delhi should desist from using the POWs as a lever against Islamabad and release all of them immediately. In any case, it was argued, according to Article 118 of the Geneva Conventions, the POWs could not be the subject of negotiations and had to be repatriated as soon as a ceasefire had been arrived at. This repatriation, it was contended, could not be delayed on the pretext of the absence of Bangla Desh's concurrence because, firstly, the Pakistan army had surrendered to the Indian forces and not to a joint Indo-Bangla Desh command which was a 'legal fiction', and, secondly, the POWs were being detained by the Indian and not the 'Bangla Desh' authorities.

The Indian Government, however, ignored these arguments and, during Mrs Gandhi's first official visit to Bangla Desh on 17 March 1972, agreed in principle to transfer any Pakistani prisoner of war against

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22 See, for example, Bhutto's interview with the correspondents of the Times of India, and the Indian Express, as transmitted by Radio Pakistan, 16 March 1972, in SWP FE, No.3943, 18 March 1972, pp.A3/8.
23 See, for example, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary's Press Conference, Pakistan Times, 10 March 1972.
whom a prima-facie case could be found to Bangla Desh, for the purpose of holding war crime trials. 24

Secondly, Islamabad attempted to indirectly counter India's pretext that Dacca's opposition was the prime cause of the delay in the repatriation of prisoners by dissuading Bangla Desh from its resolve to put them on trial. This was done partly by threatening to use the 400,000 Bengalis stranded in Pakistan as hostages if Dacca proceeded with the trials. 25 At the same time, however, with the help of 'some friendly countries' especially Indonesia, the Pakistan Government attempted to establish contact with the Bangla Desh authorities. Mujib and Bhutto, it suggested, should meet on an equal footing and settle, along with various other issues, the question of putting the Pakistani prisoners on war crime trials. 26 This settlement of disputes, it maintained, would pave the way for Pakistan's recognition of Bangla Desh. These moves, however, failed to achieve their objective. The Bangla Desh Government refused to hold any meeting between the leaders of the two countries without prior de jure recognition by Pakistan of Bangla Desh's separate statehood. It also refused to be cowed by Islamabad's threat of using Bengalis as hostages and reiterated its resolve to hold war crime trials of Pakistani POWs. 27

Thirdly, the Pakistan Government tried to muster international support for pressuring India into resolving the issues arising out of

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the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war. Within three weeks of coming to power, therefore, Bhutto asked all countries, especially the major powers, to refrain from according recognition 'to the "so-called Bangla Desh" in a hurry'.\textsuperscript{28} This move was made on the assumption that India was keen to win recognition for Bangla Desh and that a delay in its recognition in support of Pakistan was likely to make India reconsider its strategy of exploiting Pakistan's weakness for extracting concessions on the Kashmir issue. However, this move met with little success. A number of states recognised Bangla Desh within a few weeks of its independence. More importantly, the two super powers did not respond favourably to Islamabad's moves. The Soviet Union recognised Bangla Desh on 24 January 1972, and two weeks later invited Mujib to visit Moscow.\textsuperscript{29} The United States also accorded recognition to the new South Asian state on 4 April 1972 and expressed its willingness to assist Dacca in the task of economic reconstruction.\textsuperscript{30}

**Chinese Support for Pakistan**

In marked contrast, however, Beijing stood by Islamabad during this period. Even prior to Bhutto's ascent to power, the Chinese Government had demonstrated on a number of occasions its unwillingness to acknowledge the dismemberment of Pakistan and had identified the fall of Dacca as a 'temporary difficulty' faced by the Pakistani people. On 17 December 1971, for example, ten hours after the Pakistan Army had surrendered, the NCNA transmitted a report on 'some facts of ... [Indian] bullying and aggression against Pakistan'.

\textsuperscript{28}Pakistan Times, 14 January 1972.
\textsuperscript{30}New York Times, 5 April 1972.
which identified Bangla Desh as East Pakistan, its new government as a 'rebellious organisation', and the Farrakh Barrage dispute as one existing between India and Pakistan, not between India and Bangla Desh. The same evening, speaking at a banquet for the Sudanese Vice-President, Chou En-lai branded India as an aggressor, and accused it of having occupied East Pakistan, installing there a single-handedly manufactured puppet regime of 'the so-called "Bangla Desh"', and attempting to legalise this aggression by imposing surrender terms on Pakistan. 'However', he asserted, 'the fall of Dacca is definitely not a so-called "milestone" towards victory for the Indian aggressors, but the starting point of their defeat' and expressed his Government's conviction that 'no matter what difficulties and dangers may arise', final victory surely belonged to the 'great Pakistani people...'. The next day, in its first report on the fall of Dacca, the NCNA had maintained that 'with the active encouragement and energetic support of Soviet revisionist social imperialism in disregard of the strong condemnation of world opinion', the 'Indian aggressors ... [had] invaded and occupied Dacca, the capital of East Pakistan, by armed force...'. After occupying Dacca, it reported, the Indian Government was expressing the intention to 'hang on in East Pakistan and impose military occupation there'. Therefore, the NCNA quoted 'foreign news agency reports', it had installed' the so-called Bangla Desh puppet regime [which] "remain[ed] under the overall command of General Aurora" (Indian Commander in the Eastern theatre)'. However, the report suggested in the end, it was a temporary victory which was bound to have domestic


and regional repercussions for the Indian Government. '...[T]he Indian reactionaries', it stated, 'are pleased with their own ruses. However, those who play with fire will burn themselves... [T]heir crime of aggression will definitely arouse stronger dissatisfaction and resistance among the people of Pakistan and the South Asian subcontinent, including the people of India'.

Simultaneously, the Chinese Government had also exhibited concern over the Indian intention to exploit Pakistan's weakness for extracting concessions on the Kashmir issue. This concern was initially reflected in an NCNA report of 17 December 1971 on 'Indian Expansionism' which allocated almost 60 per cent of its content to a discussion of the Kashmir issue and commented that Indira Gandhi had inherited Nehru's mantle and was obstinately clinging to the assertion that 'Kashmir is India's territory'. Two days later, the Chinese media expressed this concern more openly. After reporting the statement of the Indian Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram that any Indo-Pakistan solution must 'guarantee to [India] ... a security of [its] ... borders and vital road communications', the NCNA quoted a western news agency's analysis where it was indicated that the Indian forces would seek to hold the territory they had occupied in West Pakistan, especially, the territory around Shakargarh which commanded the major road link to Kashmir. It also reported an Indian official spokesman's statement that 'India's frontiers must be settled according to "the new ceasefire line"' and commented, 'such is the gangster logic of the Indian expansionists: India's boundary lies wherever the Indian aggressor troops have invaded and

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The Chinese Government persisted in its policy of not acknowledging the emergence of Bangla Desh and encouraging the Pakistani people to face this 'temporary difficulty' even after the change of regime in Islamabad. Only nine hours after Bhutto was sworn in as President, for example, the NCNA transmitted a 'worker-peasant-soldier battlefield special column' accusing India of following a 'piratical logic'. In the name of 'fighting for fundamental ideals', it maintained, the Indian reactionaries, colluding with Soviet revisionism, had 'trampled over' and 'usurped' half of Pakistan's territory. However, it concluded on an optimistic note, '...The time when one could act outrageously and do as one pleases by force is gone for ever. The frantic 'ideals' of Indira Gandhi and the like can never be implemented. ...Indian reactionaries, you will never have peace. Do not feel happy too soon'.

Two days later, on 22nd December 1971, while congratulating Bhutto on his assumption of the Presidency, Chou En-lai repeated this optimistic assurance. 'We are deeply convinced', he stated, 'that so long as the people of Pakistan uphold unity and persist in struggle [against the Indian aggressors], they will certainly be able to overcome temporary difficulties and final victory will certainly belong to the great people of Pakistan ...'. This was followed, four days later, by Chinese Vice-Premier Li Xiannian's speech at a banquet for an Iraqi delegation in which, while referring to the

37 NCNA, 22 December 1971, in SWB FE, No.3873, 28 December 1971, p.C/16.(emphasis added)
plight of Biharis in Bangla Desh, he identified the emergence of the new state as the military occupation of East Pakistan by the Indian expansionists, and the Bangla Desh authorities as the East Pakistan rebels under the Indian command who were 'massacring and ... persecuting innocent Pakistani people in all parts of East Pakistan ...'\textsuperscript{38} Thereafter, the Chinese media frequently used this terminology while reporting events in Bangla Desh.\textsuperscript{39}

Contemporaneously, Beijing continued to indicate its concern over the Indian intentions of exploiting Pakistan's weakness for gaining concessions in Kashmir. It was reflected, for instance, in Chinese Vice-Premier Li Xiannian's speech on 26 December 1971 in which he stated that the 'Indian Government must ... immediately and unconditionally withdraw its aggressor forces from East Pakistan and all the other places it has occupied'.\textsuperscript{40}

The Chinese support for Pakistan, however, was most clearly spelt out during Bhutto's three days' visit to Beijing on 31 January 1972. On the day of his arrival, \textit{Jen-min Jih-pao} published an editorial which branded the assertions made by New Delhi that "Bangla Desh" [had] ... become a "reality" as 'a typical argument to legalise aggression'. 'The whole world', it stated, 'can see that it is created by the Indian Government through naked aggression and subversion and with the support of Soviet revisionism'. Then it proceeded to endorse, without mentioning his name, the position taken by Bhutto in his first broadcast to the nation on 29 December

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} NCNA, 26 December 1971, in \textit{SWR PE}, No.3874, 29 December 1971, p.C/1.
\item \textsuperscript{40} NCNA, 26 December 1971, in \textit{SWR PE}, No.3874, 29 December 1971, p.C/1 (emphasis added).
\end{itemize}
1971, that the leaders of East and West Pakistan should be given an opportunity to work out a settlement between the two wings and that, prior to these negotiations, India must vacate East Pakistan, 'A Pakistani leader once said', the editorial stated, 'that the Pakistan Government has made blunders and terrible blunders indeed in the past in handling the question of East Pakistan. But this can only be solved ... by Pakistan itself. It does not mean that ... [India can] dispatch troops to occupy East Pakistan and impose a so-called solution on Pakistan by force from outside'.

The next day, at the banquet in Bhutto's honour, after reviling India for 'seriously disrupting peace in the South Asian subcontinent', Chou En-lai noted that the Indian forces to date were 'in forcible occupation of Pakistan territories', and were incessantly violating the ceasefire and continuing their military provocations against Pakistan. Then, to convey that these pressure tactics for changing the status of the Kashmir issue would not be viewed with equanimity by Beijing, he reiterated China's resolute support for Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and endorsed Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue.

This was followed, on 2 February, by the issuing of the joint communiqué in which Beijing identified itself completely with Islamabad's stand on the issues arising out of the Indo-Pakistan war (1971). Firstly, in paragraph II of the communiqué, the Chinese Premier expressed his understanding of and respect for Bhutto's stand that future relations between the two parts of Pakistan should be


established through negotiations between the elected leaders of the people without forcing intervention or influence, and that Indian forces must withdraw from East Pakistan to enable such negotiations to take place without any intimidation. Secondly, in paragraph IV, Chou En-lai joined Bhutto in calling upon India to fulfil its obligations under the Geneva conventions and repatriate the Pakistani prisoners of war without further delay. Thirdly, in paragraph III, along with Pakistan, Beijing expressed its opposition to Indian attempts to exploit Pakistan's weakness by stressing that New Delhi must vacate Pakistani territories, and that the UN must ensure strict observance of the ceasefire and withdrawal of forces to their respective territories and positions along the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir. 43

Twenty five days later, on 27 February 1971, the Chinese Government once again demonstrated its support for Pakistan. In a joint communique issued after Nixon's visit to Beijing, in marked contrast to the United Stated which 'favoured' the idea, the Chinese Government 'firmly maintained that India and Pakistan should, in accordance with the UN resolutions on the Indo-Pakistan question, immediately withdraw all their forces to their respective territories and to their own sides of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir.' 44

Thereafter, the Chinese media continued to highlight Indian reluctance to implement the relevant UN resolutions by reporting Pakistan's allegations of Indian torture of the POWs, attempts to use them as a bargaining chip, and frequent violations of the ceasefire

43 NCNA, 2 February 1972, in SWB FE, No.3906, 4 February 1972, p.A/1-3 (emphasis added).
line at Kashmir. 45 As long as New Delhi persisted in this policy, Beijing maintained throughout these first few months in the history of the 'new' Pakistan, like all other 'justice upholding countries' it would resolutely oppose the Indian aggressors.

To prove this commitment was credible, the Chinese Government consistently opposed India in various international forums. On 7 January 1972, for instance, despite arguing very strongly in favour of increasing the number of seats for the Asian group, the Chinese Government opposed the Indian candidature to the sessional committees of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Explaining this opposition, the Chinese representative, An Chih-yuan stated: 'as is known to all ... India launched a barbarous aggression against Pakistan, trampled upon and dismembered a sovereign country. With its criminal acts, the Indian Government has stripped off all the mantles of 'peace', 'humanity' and 'non-alignment', ... thus laying bare its ugly features as an aggressor. The Indian Government has grossly violated the UN resolution calling for ceasefire and troop withdrawal by India and Pakistan, and refused to implement the Security Council resolution for ceasefire and troop withdrawal'. 'Will it not be big mockery to the United Nations', he asked rhetorically, 'if such a country which has trampled upon the purposes and the principles of the UN charter at will should be allowed to take part in the sessional committees of the ECOSOC?' 46

This was followed, in March 1972, by Chinese opposition to the


The proposed participation of India in the Special Committee on Decolonization and its working group. The Chinese representative, Chong Yung-kuan, repeated the allegation that India had 'seriously undermined peace on the South Asian subcontinent', and had 'crudely violated' and 'refused to implement' the relevant UN resolutions. The Chinese delegation, therefore, he explained, considered it inappropriate for such a country which had ignored the common desire of all the peace-loving and justice-upholding countries and peoples, and which had refused to implement the UN resolutions 'in open violation of the purposes and principles of the UN charter' to join the Special Committee and its working group.47

As another gesture of support for Islamabad, Beijing sometimes expressed its disapproval of other states' plans or decisions to recognise Bangla Desh. The expression took both direct and indirect forms. In the case of Britain, for instance, China expressed its displeasure by transmitting reports of the strong criticisms of Indian policy of dismembering Pakistan from various groups in Britain, and their calls to support the unity of Pakistan.48 Similarly with the Burmese Government, Beijing indicated its opposition through the 'voice of the People of Burma' --- a Radio Station operated from South China - which criticised Ne Win's decision to recognise Bangla Desh as 'an extremely reactionary act', a proof of the military government's support for the Indian reactionaries, and 'an open interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan...'49 However, in the case of the Soviet Union, China

47 NCNA, 2 March 1972, in SCMP, No.5094, 16 March 1972, p.158.
48 See, for example, NCNA, 30 December 1971, in SWB FE, No.3877, 1 January 1972, pp.C1/4-5; and NCNA, 12 January 1972, in SWB FE, No.3888, 14 January 1972, pp.C/4-5.
resorted to direct condemnation. In an article published seven days after the Soviet recognition, for instance, Jen-min Jih-pao accused Moscow of 'brandishing the signboard of the so-called "support to national self-determination"' while in essence interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs and attempting to legalise its aggression, and then suggested that by recognising Bangla Desh, the Soviet Union was paving the way for East Pakistan's conversion 'into a new Indian protectorate'.

This pro-Pakistan declaratory policy was translated into actual support for Islamabad in the second half of 1972. To fully appreciate the significance of this support it is essential to describe the context within which it was provided.

In early 1972, the Indian Government had expressed its willingness to hold a summit meeting with Pakistan but had suggested that it should be preceded by emissary level talks. Islamabad had reacted favourably but again asked the Indian Government to repatriate the prisoners beforehand. New Delhi, however, indicated a continued intent to link release of the prisoners to the Kashmir issue. Five days before the emissary level talks, which were held on 25 April 1972, for instance, the leader of the Indian team, D.P. Dhar, visited Bangla Desh and held a meeting with Sheikh Mujib. During this visit, he told newsmen that the agenda of the forthcoming talks included 'certain issues which were absolutely bilateral ... [and others] which were tripartite and concerned Bangla Desh', thereby indicating that New Delhi still refused to discuss the

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50 It Is Impermissible to Legalize India's Invasion and Occupation of East Pakistan', op.cit., pp.A/9-11.
51 Pakistan Times, 8 April 1972.
question of prisoners without Dacca's participation. At the same time, he also emphasised that 'the future of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir' would be one of the main issues in the talks and said '... Pakistan has no locus standi in Kashmir and [it] has to vacate from there'.

This was followed, six days later during the emissary-level talks, by Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh's statement in the Lok Sabha that New Delhi wanted to 'solve the basic and peripheral issues with Pakistan together to remove the threat of another war', indicating his government's preference for a package deal involving the solution of the Kashmir dispute.

The Bangla Desh Government for its part continued to reject Islamabad's moves to hold talks before recognition and worked out a programme, by 22 May 1972, to try Pakistani soldiers for war crimes.

The situation underwent little change even when summit level talks were held in Simla in July 1972. Mrs. Gandhi refused to discuss the release of the POWs captured on the eastern front on the grounds that she was committed to the Bangla Desh Government on this point, but expressed her willingness to exchange those captured on the western front. However, she did discuss the Kashmir issue and the withdrawal of forces. The Simla agreement, concluded at the end of the meeting stated that the two parties would withdraw their armed forces to their respective sides of the international border within 30 days of the accord coming into force. In Kashmir, the two sides agreed to respect 'the line of control resulting from the ceasefire

54 Reported by SWR FE, No.3975, 28 April 1972, p.(i).
56 Times of India, 2 July 1972.
of 17 December 1971 ... without prejudice to the recognised position of either side'.

This agreement was cautiously welcomed by the Chinese Government. Speaking at a banquet in honour of the southern Yemen delegation on 9 July 1972, for example, Chou En-lai identified it as one of the new successes achieved by the people of various countries in 'their struggle against imperialism, revisionism and reaction', and praised Bhutto for having 'upheld the reasonable position he had declared prior to the talks' i.e., not permitting India to impose humiliating terms of peace on Pakistan.

The course of events, immediately after the agreement, however, demonstrated that Bhutto had not succeeded in actually dissuading New Delhi from persisting in its delaying tactics. Firstly, the Pakistan Government called a special session of the National Assembly only eight days after the agreement was signed. While it got it ratified on 14 July 1972 and conveyed the instrument of ratification to New Delhi the next day, it was not until 1 August, that the agreement was presented by the Indian Government to the Lok Sabha. It then took New Delhi another three days to deliver the instrument of ratification to Islamabad. Secondly, as it conveyed the instrument of ratification to Islamabad on 4 August, New Delhi also issued a statement making it clear 'that action for the withdrawal would have to be simultaneous with the delineation of the line of control in

57 For text of the Simla Agreement see Pakistan Horizon, Vol.25, No.3, 3rd Quarter 1972, pp.117-118.
60 Times of India, 2 August 1972, and 5 August 1972.
Jammu and Kashmir. 61 This position not only ran counter to the accord arrived at Simla which had identified no such link and had specified 30 days after the ratification as the duration within which the withdrawals were to take place, but also suggested that if the delineation of the line of control did not take place in accordance with India's wishes the evacuation of Pakistani territories might be delayed. Thirdly, thirteen days after the agreement was concluded, Mrs Gandhi sent her Principal Secretary, P.N. Haksar to Dacca where, after holding talks with the Bangla Desh Foreign Minister, he repeated the Indian Government's position that the POWs would not be repatriated without the consent of the Dacca authorities. 62

Under these circumstances, Bhutto through the then Pakistan ambassador to China, Agha Shahi, requested the Chinese Government to assist Pakistan in fully resolving its problems arising out of the 1971 war. The assistance, it was suggested, could take the form of a Chinese veto over Bangla Desh's admission to the United Nations which was filed on 8 August 1972 as it would then enable Islamabad to have some bargaining power while dealing with India and Bangla Desh. The Chinese Government, according to a Pakistani diplomat, assured the Pakistan Government that 'it could consider China's right to veto as its own'. 63 That the Chinese Government meant it was proven a few days later.

At the outset of the UN Security Council meeting held on 10 August 1972 to discuss the question of Bangla Desh's admission, the Chinese representative, Huang Hua, unsuccessfully opposed the

63 Interview with an ex-ambassador of Pakistan to China.
inclusion of the item in the agenda. 'As is known to all', he said, "Bangla Desh" is still collaborating with India in continuing to obstruct the United Nations [General Assembly and Security Council] resolutions [of December 1971] concerning the withdrawal of troops and the release of the prisoners of war. India has not only failed to effect a true withdrawal of its troops but is colluding with "Bangla Desh" in unreasonably detaining more than 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and civilians over a long period and refusing to release them. "Bangla Desh" is even holding out threats of a trial of the prisoners of war.' 'All this', he maintained, 'has directly violated the two United Nations resolutions and the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and is totally incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations'. In these circumstances, he stated, the Chinese delegation did not consider "Bangla Desh" to be qualified at all to join the United Nations.64

Soon after the discussion began on the agenda, the Chinese representative opposed the Indian, Soviet and Yugoslavian demand for the immediate admission of Bangla Desh to the United Nations.65 Elucidating his Government's reasons for opposing Dacca's entry, he argued that India had failed to comply with a General Assembly resolution of 7 December 1971 calling for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal, and a Security Council resolution of 21 December calling upon them to take all measures necessary to preserve human life and to apply in full the Geneva contention provisions for protection of the wounded and sick, prisoners of war and civilians, and immediate release and repatriation of the prisoners of war. 'The Indian

65 Ibid, pp.4-7.
Government', he said, 'failed to withdraw all its troops to its own territory in accordance with the resolutions concerning troop withdrawal and has been detaining over 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and civilians'. The Indian Government, he argued, was resorting to 'such an unreasonable course of action' because it wanted 'to maintain the tension on the South Asian subcontinent and use the prisoners to arrive at a 'final settlement' of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. By threatening to try the Pakistani prisoners, he maintained Bangla Desh was in fact 'colluding with India in blackmailing Pakistan and obstructing the implementation of the relevant UN resolutions. Under these circumstances, he implied, admitting Bangla Desh to the United Nations would be tantamount to declaring the UN resolutions of December 1971 invalid, and 'aiding and abetting evil doings'. The Chinese Government insisted that Bangla Desh's application should be considered 'only when the relevant resolutions have been truely implemented and only after a reasonable settlement of the issues between India and Pakistan and between Pakistan and "Bangla Desh" has been achieved'.

However, since neither China nor any other state offered a formal alternative proposal, the President of the Security Council referred Bangla Desh's application to the Committee on the Admission of New Members. At its first and second meetings held on 11 and 21 August 1972 the Chinese representative reiterated the stand taken in the Security Council. He also opposed and then abstained from participation in the vote taken to determine the attitude of members towards the application of Bangla Desh on the grounds that it could not fully represent the views of various delegations who favoured

66 Ibid, pp.7-8.  
Meanwhile, the Chinese Government tabled a draft resolution which suggested that the Security Council should defer the consideration of Bangla Desh's application until the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations were fully implemented. Explaining this draft resolution on 25 August 1972, the Chinese representative asserted that since the relevant resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council the year before had not been implemented it was difficult to judge if Bangla Desh was 'merely uttering empty promises' or whether it was 'truly willing' to carry out the responsibilities contained in Article 4 para 1 of the UN Charter. Only after these resolutions had been fully complied with, he suggested, could the Security Council confidently admit Bangla Desh to the organisation.

The Chinese draft resolution, however, was vetoed on 25 August 1972 by the Soviet Union which along with Great Britain, India and Yugoslavia, cosponsored another draft resolution calling for Bangla Desh's immediate admission. Under these circumstances, the Chinese representative, who had already declared his Government's determination 'to not compromise on principles of the UN Charter', vetoed the four power draft resolution --- the first veto cast by China since its admission to the organisation in the previous year.

Justifying the veto, the Jen-min Jih-pao stated on 28 August 1972 that it was cast in faithful fulfilment of China's sacred duty

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68 Ibid, p.94.
72 Ibid, pp.10, 15.
to uphold justice and oppose hegemony, aggression and expansion. 73

The same day, Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua visited Islamabad where he repeated his Government's call for the implementation of the UN resolutions of December 1971. China, he said, hoped that the countries of the South Asian subcontinent would seek among themselves fair and reasonable solutions for their mutual problems on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. 74 Pakistan, he maintained, had been making efforts to this end. President Bhutto, for instance, had made 'positive contributions' towards arriving at an agreement on the withdrawal of troops. He had also expressed his willingness to meet Sheikh Mujib without preconditions to discuss all questions between them. What was lacking, he suggested, was reciprocity by India and Bangla Desh. New Delhi, he stressed, must implement 'conscientiously' the agreement on the withdrawal of forces. Sheikh Mujib should also welcome and respond to Bhutto's 'reasonable proposal' for unconditional talks. Failure to do so and attempts to put off a reasonable settlement of the South Asian problems, he pointed out, would prolong the time before which Beijing would concede to Dacca's entry into the United Nations. 75

That Beijing refused to be diverted from this policy was underscored at the General Assembly's 27th session (September 1972) when the Yugoslav Government, with Soviet backing, again attempted to secure the admission of Bangla Desh. From the outset, the Chinese Government opposed this move. On 21 September 1972, for instance,

74 Pakistan Times, 29 August 1972 (emphasis added).
75 See Chiao Kuan-hua's speech at the dinner given by Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Iftikhar Ali, on 29 August 1972, NCNA, 30 August 1972, in SWB FE, No.4080, 31 August 1972, pp.A3/1-2.
when the idea was presented to the General Committee of the General Assembly, the Chinese representative voted against it. Two days later, when the issue came up during adoption of the agenda the Chinese Government again opposed the idea. This was followed by Chiao Kuan-hua's speech at the plenary session on 3 October. The argument presented during all these meetings was essentially the same as before. The Chinese Government maintained that it was not fundamentally opposed to the admission of Bangla Desh, but it held that consideration of the question should be postponed until the UN resolutions were fully complied with as this alone could lead to the relaxation of tension in the South Asian region and prepare conditions for a permanent peace.

Faced with this consistent Chinese opposition to, and the Soviet pressure for, Bangla Desh's immediate admission, the General Assembly adopted together, without a debate or vote, the Yugoslav resolution and another draft resolution sponsored by Argentina, which expressed the desire that the parties concerned should make all possible efforts ... to reach a fair settlement of issues that were still pending, and called for the return of the POWs. Since these two resolutions were identified by the President of the General Assembly as interdependent and as suggesting that Dacca's entry into the United Nations should be considered within the framework of an overall solution of the political, legal and humanitarian problems,

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their simultaneous adoption was tantamount to vindicating Beijing's stand and, therefore, was welcomed by the Chinese representative. The Chinese delegation, he stated, hoped that now the parties concerned would truly and speedily implement the relevant UN resolutions so that "Bangla Desh" could be admitted to the international organisation.\textsuperscript{79}

\textbf{Significance of Chinese Support}

The question arises as to how this consistent Chinese opposition to Bangla Desh's admission into the UN actually assisted Pakistan in securing the evacuation of its territories and release of its soldiers.

Throughout the Security Council and General Assembly proceedings on the issue, by consistently identifying India as 'the main culprit' and Bangla Desh as a state which was merely colluding with it, and always mentioning the need for a reasonable settlement of disputes between India and Pakistan before referring to the Pakistan-Bangla Desh disputes,\textsuperscript{80} the Chinese Government had clearly indicated that if the Indian Government did not resolve the problems arising out of the December war in a manner acceptable to Pakistan, Dacca would not be able to enter the United Nations. In other words, it provided Pakistan with a leverage in dealing with India. The longer New Delhi delayed the evacuation of Pakistani territories and repatriation of the POWs, the longer would Pakistan delay Bangla Desh's admission by indirectly using China's right of veto. Since, as previously mentioned, the Indian Government had been keen on getting Bangla Desh

\textsuperscript{79} GAOR: PM, vol.II, 27th Session, 2093rd meeting, 29 November 1972, p.26

\textsuperscript{80} See, for instance, S.C.O.R., 27th Year, 1658th meeting, 10 August 1972, pp.2, 8; and GAOR: PM, Vol.II, 27th Session, 2051st meeting, 3 October 1972, p.15.
--- a state created with active Indian assistance --- into the organisation, this leverage clearly softened its attitude vis-a-vis Pakistan.

This was most obvious in the case of the withdrawal of forces from occupied territories. On 5 September 1972, for example, in marked contrast to the past, the Indian Government issued a statement which was significant for its conciliatory tone. The problems involved in the delineation of the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, it maintained, were taking longer than had been anticipated but both sides were 'trying to overcome the difficulties [causing the delay] as speedily as possible. The delay in the completion of the delineation, it further stated, was 'bound to have some effect on the withdrawal of forces' but assured that 'every effort would be made to keep the delay to a minimum possible'. Later, although the Indian Government continued to link the delineation of the line of control with the withdrawal of forces, in line with the prerequisites laid down by China, it was cautious to emphasise repeatedly that it wanted to conduct negotiations with Pakistan on the basis of equality and not from a position of strength. In October 1972, for example, a dispute arose over the possession of a 1.5 square miles area of Thakur Chak which was occupied by Pakistan but was wanted by India. Initially, the Indian commanders suggested that the two sides should commence the withdrawal of forces and postpone the settlement over the disputed area for a later time. Pakistan rejected the offer. This would have delayed the delineation and hence the withdrawal. However, the Indian Government took the initiative in hastening the

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82 See, for example, Swaran Singh's statement, in the UN General Assembly, Times of India, 4 October 1972.
process by agreeing to give up its claims on two villages - Dhund and Gaikot - in return for Pakistan's agreement to withdraw its forces from the Thakur Chak area. The agreement on the delineation of the line of control, therefore, was reached by 13 December 1972 and within 13 days after that the evacuation of territories was completed.

As for the POW issue, the Chinese Government had clearly stated that if Bangla Desh continued to provide India with a justification to detain the soldiers by persisting in its threat to put them on trial and attempted to use them for extracting de jure recognition from Pakistan, it would not be able to join the United Nations. This threat softened Dacca's position which, even if prepared to wait for Islamabad's recognition, had consistently, since its inception, expressed an interest in immediately joining the UN. This softening of attitude was reflected initially in the reluctance of Bangla Desh Foreign Minister, Samad, to mention a set date for the trials, even though in May 1972 Dacca had announced that such a plan had been completely worked out. Later, in November 1972, in marked contrast to previous statements, Sheikh Mujib also talked about 'forgiving' the Pakistanis. However, since the Dacca authorities had consistently maintained that they would put on trial about 1500 Pakistani soldiers for war crimes, they could not afford to suddenly change their position on the issue, as it entailed the risk of triggering domestic opposition. Therefore, as late as 3 March 1973, Sheikh Mujib was still declaring that Pakistani war criminals would

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be tried in Bangla Desh before an eminent judge and in accordance with international convention. 86

Neither could the Indian Government suddenly agree to repatriate the prisoners. This would have confirmed the Pakistani and Chinese allegation that the 'joint Indo-Bangla Desh Command' was merely a 'legal fiction' used by New Delhi to justify its detention of one-fifth of Pakistan's army for the purpose of extracting concessions on the Kashmir issue. Therefore, throughout the second half of 1972, while drastically reducing the frequency of news media coverage on the issue, the Indian Government continued to maintain that the POWs could not be repatriated without Pakistan's recognition of and negotiations with the Bangla Desh authorities on the issue. 87

However, beginning in early 1973, New Delhi visibly changed its policy on the issue. In order to create conditions for the repatriation of the prisoners, Mrs Gandhi's Political Secretary, P.N. Haksar visited Dacca in March 1973, and this was followed by a visit by Bangla Desh Foreign Minister, Dr. Kamal Hussain, to New Delhi on 13 April 1973. 88 At the end of this exchange of visits, India and Bangla Desh issued a joint declaration on 17 April expressing their readiness 'to seek a solution to all humanitarian problems through simultaneous repatriation of the Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian internees, except those required by [Dacca] ... for trial on criminal charges, repatriation of the Bengalis forcibly detained in Pakistan and repatriation of the Pakistanis in Bangla Desh, that is, all non-Bengalis who owe allegiance and have opted for repatriation

87 See, for example, Radio New Delhi, 7 December 1972, in SWB FE, No.4166, 9 December 1972, pp.A3/5.
to Pakistan'. The proposal was rejected by Pakistan, which questioned Bangla Desh's right to try 195 Pakistani soldiers.

At this stage, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chi Peng-fei visited Islamabad on 18 June 1973. During this visit he identified the current situation in South Asia as 'still disquieting' and expressed concern over the 'continued unreasonable detention' of over 90,000 Pakistani prisoners and civilians. Then he supported Islamabad's stand on the Joint Indo-Bangla Desh Declaration by stating that Pakistan's demand for the unconditional release of all the detained personnel was "entirely just".

However, it seems that, during his visit, the Chinese Foreign Minister also urged Pakistan to reciprocate the Indian initiative for unfreezing the situation in South Asia. Although no clear indication to this effect can be found in Chi Peng-fei's statements during the visit, the subsequent policy initiatives taken by Islamabad and Beijing's reaction to them seem to support this contention.

Firstly, only eight days after the visit, the Pakistan National Assembly passed a unanimous resolution empowering the government to recognise Bangla Desh at a time deemed appropriate without compromising Pakistan's interest.

Three days later, Beijing expressed its approval of the decision by transmitting a detailed report of the unremitting efforts made by Pakistan at solving the postwar problems and identifying the resolution as 'another important

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89 Times of India, 18 April 1972.
90 Burke, op. cit, p.1040.
92 Pakistan Times, 28 June 1973; and 'Resolution on "Bangla Desh" passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan, Pakistan Horizon, Vol.xxvi, No.3, 3rd Quarter 1973, pp.113-114.
step' in that direction.\textsuperscript{93}

Secondly, only four days after Chi Peng-fei's visit, Pakistan responded favourably to the Indian offer of 11 June 1973 suggesting, in a marked contrast to the past, that bilateral official level talks be held to discuss various 'humanitarian issues' arising out of the December war, including the question of the prisoners.\textsuperscript{94} The talks were, therefore, held on 24 July 1973 in Rawalpindi followed by another round in New Delhi from 17 to 28 August resulting in the conclusion of the Delhi Agreement under which the Indian Government, with Bangla Desh's consent, agreed to return the POWs and pledged not to undertake any action against the 195 alleged war criminals before a tripartite meeting of India, Pakistan and Bangla Desh.\textsuperscript{95} Only two days later, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Aziz Ahmed, visited Beijing where he was told by Chi Peng-fei that the Chinese Government approved of the 'positive results' yielded by the series of constructive measures taken by the Pakistan Government in the recent Indo-Pakistani talks.\textsuperscript{96}

However, while urging Islamabad to reciprocate New Delhi's initiative for breaking the stalemate on the POWs issue, it seems that Chi Peng-fei had assured Bhutto that the Chinese Government would continue to bar Dacca's entry into the UN unless it abandoned the idea of holding war crime trials against 195 Pakistani soldiers. This was indicated firstly by Bhutto when he stated during Chi

\textsuperscript{94} Dawn, 26 June 1973.
\textsuperscript{95} For the Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of the Indo-Pakistan talks at Rawalpindi and the text of the agreement concluded in New Delhi, See, Pakistan Horizon, Vol.xxvi, No.3, 3rd Quarter 1973, pp.114-117.
Peng-fei's visit --- a statement reported by the NCNA --- that he felt elated that China would continue resolutely, determinedly and unswervingly to support Pakistan's position in the months to come. 97 Concrete proof, however, was given during the 28th session of the General Assembly. Ignoring the conciliatory remarks made by Dacca with an implicit request to pave the way for its entry into the UN, 98 the Chinese representative Chiao Kuan-hua maintained on 2 October 1973 at the plenary session of the General Assembly that it was not until 28 August 1973, i.e. eight months since the Assembly had adopted its interdependent resolutions, that an agreement had been reached on the POW issue. Although to be welcomed, he stated, 'the agreement reached is on paper, and there will have to be a process before it can be turned into reality. The complications may yet arise'. The Chinese Government, therefore, he asserted, felt that the question of admitting Bangla Desh into the UN could be considered 'only after the thorough implementation of the UN resolutions, and definitely not before', the position China had adhered to since the UN debates of August 1972. 99

Thereafter, the Chinese Government did not issue any statement on the question of the POWs. This was probably due to the fact that a deadlock existed between Pakistan and Bangla Desh over the issue of trial of 195 alleged war criminals, and China could do nothing more than wait for some incident to break this deadlock. This happened when during the Islamic Summit held in Lahore in February 1974, through the mediation of Muslim states Pakistan recognised Bangla

Desh, and Sheikh Mujib agreed to attend the Summit. During his visit, he indicated his Government's willingness to drop the demand for trial of the soldiers by expressing the hope that the issue would be resolved 'satisfactorily' in a tripartite meeting. The meeting was held in April 1974 and Dacca dropped its insistence on trying the POWs. Two months later, the Security Council once again discussed Bangla Desh's application and Beijing quietly agreed to admitting Dacca to the international organisation.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that in the immediate aftermath of the Indo-Pakistan war(1971), the 'new' Pakistan was beset with a number of problems. These included the securing of the withdrawal of Indian forces from Pakistani territory and the release of 90,000 POWs without either compromising on the Kashmir issue or immediately according recognition to the breakaway province of Pakistan. At this juncture, when most of the states ignored Pakistan's pleas for postponing Bangla Desh's recognition until such time that Pakistan solved its post-war problems, for reasons that will be analysed in Chapter X, the Chinese Government supported Pakistan. By vetoing Bangla Desh's admission to the United Nations unless India implemented the UN resolutions passed during the 1971 war, Beijing provided Pakistan with a leverage against New Delhi. This enabled the Bhutto regime to solve its post-war problems without settling the Kashmir issue on India's terms.

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On 18 May 1974, India became the sixth nuclear power when it staged its first nuclear test, involving the detonation of a plutonium device in the 10-15 kiloton range at a depth of over 100 metres in the Rajasthan desert.\(^1\) Announcing the explosion, the Indian Atomic Energy Commission maintained that it formed a part of the programme undertaken by the Indian Government to keep itself abreast of developments in nuclear technology 'particularly with reference to its uses in the field of mining and earthmoving operations'. India, it highlighted, had no intention of producing nuclear weapons as it was strongly opposed to military use of nuclear explosions.\(^2\)

Despite this assurance, the international reaction to the test was generally unfavourable. The Pakistan Government's response, however, was the strongest. Commenting within a few hours of the announcement, a Pakistani official stated that the news 'is a development which cannot but be viewed with the degree of concern matching its magnitude by the whole world, and more especially by India's immediate neighbours'.\(^3\) The next day Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto identified the 'new development' as entailing the risk of 'nuclear blackmail'.\(^4\) Four days later, on 23 May 1974, the Pakistan Government raised the issue with the UN Secretary General

\(^1\) Keesing's Contemporary Archives: 1974, 24 - 30 June 1974, p.26586.
\(^2\) Times of India, 19 May 1974.
\(^3\) Pakistan Times, 19 May 1974.
and expressed its 'deep concern at the military implications of
India's atomic explosion'. This was followed, on 1 June 1974, by
Pakistan's decision to postpone its talks with India on the
restoration of communication links and travel facilities, which were
due to be held in Islamabad on 10 June.

This chapter attempts to assess briefly the reasons for this
negative response, and then describes the strategy adopted by, and
Beijing's political support for, Islamabad in the immediate aftermath
of the Indian nuclear explosion. Then, it proceeds to discuss
China's response to Pakistan's proposal for a Nuclear-Free Zone (NFZ)
in South Asia put forth within and outside the United Nations during
the period from 1974 to 1979.

Indian Nuclear Explosion

Pakistan's Fears and Search for Guarantees:

The historic animosity which had conditioned each major South
Asian State to view the other's gain as its loss and vice-versa would
at any stage of history have provoked Pakistan to respond negatively
to India's nuclear test. However, the reasons why the Pakistan
Government reacted as fiercely as it did in May 1974 could best be
understood with reference to the developments after the Indo-Pakistan
war of 1971.

The Fourth Indo-Pakistani war, which drastically restructured
the geopolitical situation on South Asia, had not only resulted in
the emergence of an independent state of Bangla Desh but had also
further tilted the regional military balance of power in favour of
India. The ratio of tanks in Pakistan's inventory to those in the

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5 Pakistan Times, 24 May 1974.
Indian Army, for instance, had deteriorated from 1:1.8 in July 1971 to 1:2.1 in July 1972. Similarly, the ratio of total Pakistani combat aircraft and naval vessels to those of India had changed from 1:2.2 and 1:2.3 in 1971 to 1:3.2 and 1:4.2 respectively in 1972.\(^7\)

To reduce this level of disparity, the Bhutto regime, soon after coming to power, had embarked upon a process of acquiring weapons. Although this weapon acquisition programme did not result in Pakistan's emergence as the regional military power, it did decrease slightly its military inferiority vis-a-vis India. By the end of 1973, therefore, the ratio of Pakistani tanks and aircraft to those of India had improved to 1:1.8 and 1:3.0 respectively, and that of Pakistani to Indian naval vessels to 1:2.9.\(^8\) Consequently at the turn of 1974 the Pakistan Government had begun identifying the Indo-Pakistani military disparity as being 'within manageable dimensions'.\(^9\) It was at this stage of growing confidence after the demoralising experience of 1971 that the Indian Government staged its first underground nuclear test and once again heightened Pakistan's sense of insecurity.

Despite the Indian contention that the test had been carried out for peaceful purposes and its disavowal of intention to produce nuclear weapons, the Pakistan Government viewed India as having taken the first step towards acquiring a nuclear arsenal. 'As there [was] no difference between a peaceful and non-peaceful nuclear explosion, Pakistan's military analysts maintained, it was 'a hard and unpalatable fact that India [had] become a nuclear power'. With reactors working at Trombay, Rana Pratap Sagar and Tarapur, they

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\(^7\)See Table 1.

\(^8\)Ibid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Equipment</th>
<th>July 1971a</th>
<th>July 1972b</th>
<th>December 1973c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paki-India Ratio</td>
<td>Paki-India Ratio</td>
<td>Pakistan India Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanks</td>
<td>775 1:1.8</td>
<td>660 1:2.3</td>
<td>1,110 1:1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft</td>
<td>285 1:2.2</td>
<td>200 1:3.2</td>
<td>265 1:3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naval vessels</td>
<td>22 1:2.3</td>
<td>14 1:4.2</td>
<td>22 1:2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

argued, India's estimated annual production of plutonium was about 200-220 kgs, which could be used for producing 35 low yield 'crude' atom bombs. Limited range delivery means, such as conventional aircraft which needed only slight modification were already available to India. Therefore, they argued, if it so chose, India could gain in a year or so tactical nuclear strike capability. Over the next three to four years, they predicted, this capability was to further increase with the coming into operation of three more nuclear reactors and rapid development of a programme for producing medium range missiles.

These prospects were considered ominous by Pakistan primarily on two accounts. Firstly, they were viewed as having implications for any future conflict between India and Pakistan. In any future war, it was feared, encouraged by sections who did 'not consider the actual use of atomic weapons in armed conflicts as illegal and immoral', the Indian Government might be tempted to resort to tactical nuclear weapons after a conventional attack in order to conserve their manpower and finish the war speedily. Secondly, the Pakistan Government feared that even if India did not actually use the nuclear weapons, it would be able to exploit its sheer capability to do so for forcing Pakistan into compromising on various regional issues and

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10 Ibid., p.34; and Wing Commander Inamul Haq, 'Indian Nuclear Explosion and Its Implications', Pakistan Times, 6 September 1974. It is, however, important to point out that the 'Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission' (PAEC) estimated that India was capable of producing only 6 bombs per year. See, for example, Dr Munir Ahmed Khan, Chairman, PAEC, 'Challenge and Response', Pakistan Times, 14 August 1974.

11 Aslam, op.cit., p.34.

12 Haq, op.cit.

13 Ibid.
relegating it to the status of a satellite state. 14

To counter this perceived threat, the Pakistan Government under Bhutto who had always advocated acquisition of nuclear capability and, therefore, soon after coming to power had put the Pakistan Atomic Commission under his direct supervision, intensified its efforts to respond to the Indian threat in kind. However, with only one 125MW heavy water reactor, supplied by Canada and safeguarded through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), operating in the country, coupled with lack of skilled manpower especially in engineering, relatively less developed steel, chemical and electronics industries, financial constraints and no known Uranium or Thorium deposits, it was obvious that Pakistan was eight to ten years away from acquiring the capability to carry out its first nuclear explosion. 15

As an interim measure, therefore, the Pakistan Government opted for a political strategy of seeking credible security assurances from the United Nations and the five nuclear powers against a threat of attack. Speaking at a news conference held the day after the Indian test, Bhutto stated that 'the threat by a nuclear weapon power

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14 This fear was reflected in Bhutto's press conference on 19 May 1974 when he asserted that despite India's entry into the nuclear club Pakistan would not compromise on the Kashmir issue. Pakistan Times, 20 May 1974. Later it was reflected in a number of articles and editorials published in the government-controlled media which pointed out that India would exploit its nuclear power to force Pakistan into compromising on regional issues. See, for example, A.T. Chandhuri, 'India Goes Nuclear', Pakistan Times, 19 May 1974; and Editorial: Nuclear Threat', Pakistan Times, 13 June 1974

against a non-nuclear weapon country affects not only the victims but also the entire international community, particularly the great powers'. There was, therefore, no reason why Pakistan should not 'secure political counter-measures against a potential nuclear threat from India' and not be left alone in facing the challenge. As the nuclear proliferation posed a threat to the whole world, he elaborated, the United Nations had a clear and pressing duty to address itself more vigorously to the question of credible security assurances against a nuclear threat or blackmail to all non-nuclear weapon states. The existing assurances by the security council, he maintained, lacked credibility. Neither could the US-Soviet statement of intent to act jointly to prevent a nuclear war inspire sufficient confidence among the victims of would be aggressors. 'What is needed', he explained, 'is a joint undertaking in the nature of an obligation by all the permanent members of the Security Council to act collectively or individually on behalf of the threatened state' '...[T]he nuclear umbrella of all the five big powers or filling that of at least one of them', he added, 'is the irreplaceable minimum of protection that is required to give states like Pakistan a real assurance of security against nuclear threat or blackmail.16 The next day, i.e. 20 May 1974, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Aziz Ahmed, repeated in Washington that India's successful underground detonation represented a new threat to Pakistan's security and that it would, therefore, seek protective guarantees from major powers against an Indian nuclear threat.17 Thereafter, within the next few days the Pakistan Government raised the issue of the Indian nuclear explosion

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16 For full text, see 'Documents', Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXXVII, No.2, Second Quarter 1974, pp.131-34.

and the need for a 'nuclear umbrella' at the CENTO meeting and with UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim. Simultaneously, the Pakistani news media, in an extensive coverage, began asserting that the very fact that the test was carried out at a stage when millions of Indian people continued to suffer from poverty, starvation and unemployment indicated that New Delhi had acquired the capability to threaten and blackmail its neighbours, especially Pakistan. Under such circumstances therefore, it stressed, the Pakistan Government was justified in demanding a nuclear umbrella.

However, while highlighting the significance of nuclear guarantees, the Pakistan Government and media were careful to indicate continuously that they expected to elicit Chinese, more than any other state's, assurances in this respect. On 19 May 1974, for instance, while declaring that his Government was sending envoys to various states to secure a political assurance against India's use of nuclear threat, Bhutto mentioned China before referring to other nuclear powers. The same day, a leading article in the government controlled newspaper Pakistan Times emphasised that the Indian test posed an equal threat to China as New Delhi was initially allowed to develop its nuclear power as a counterpoise to China, thereby indicating that the new development required a joint Sino-Pakistani response. Two days later, using a different frame of reference,

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18 Pakistan Times, 22 May 1974 and 24 May 1974.
20 He said: 'We are formally approaching the Secretary General of the United Nations and I am also sending the Foreign Secretary to China, France and Britain to explain our position'. 'Documents', Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXXVII, No.2, Second Quarter 1974, p.133.
Radio Karachi drew a parallel between the Chinese and Pakistani positions. 'China', a commentator said, 'once faced the threat of two superpowers, just as Pakistan today is confronting Indian nuclear blackmail', and then proceeded to stress that the world should take measures against India.\footnote{Radio Karachi, 21 May 1974, in \textit{SWB:FE}, No.4607, 23 May 1974, p.C/1.} This was followed a few days later by another article in the \textit{Pakistan Times} which categorically stated that 'China is the one country from which Pakistan could expect helpful understanding'. 'It can be hoped', it said, 'that Pakistan does not stand alone'.\footnote{Abdul Majid, 'India's Nuclear Threat', \textit{Pakistan Times}, 13 June 1974.}

Chinese Response

The Chinese Government, however, despite these direct and indirect calls for political support adopted a very cautious attitude. On 19 May 1974, for example, it was thirty hours after the official Indian announcement before NCNA transmitted for the first time, a report of India's nuclear test. Although coming only eight hours after Pakistani official's criticism, it was brief and factual, refraining from criticising, or even commenting on, New Delhi's nuclear explosion.\footnote{NCNA, 19 May 1974, in \textit{FBIS:CHI}, 20 May 1974, p.A/1.} The omission was significant as less than three hours later, in reporting a Soviet underground nuclear explosion, the NCNA not only criticised the Soviet Union but also accused it of redoubling 'the efforts to sharpen the hatchet [of nuclear war]'.\footnote{NCNA, 19 May 1974, in \textit{FBIS:CHI}, 20 May 1974, pp.A/4-5.}

The next day, the Chinese media reported Bhutto's press conference of 19 May 1974, in which he expressed a resolve that Pakistan would not succumb to India's hegemony or dominance over the subcontinent. Similar to the pattern adopted during the early phase
of the East Pakistan Crisis, this report frequently used quotation marks and avoided commenting on the contents of the press conference, thereby indicating that Beijing was not prepared publicly to agree or disagree with the Pakistani contentions that Indian entry into the nuclear club was a 'forceful development', and a prelude to Indian 'nuclear blackmail' and 'domination over the sub-continent'. Even more significant, however, was the fact that while reproducing Bhutto's statement, the NCNA completely omitted any reference to his call for nuclear guarantees from all the permanent members of the Security Council, collectively or individually, against an Indian nuclear threat. Neither did it report Bhutto's announcement that the Pakistan Government was sending its Foreign Secretary to China, France and Britain to explain its position on the Indian nuclear explosion.26

The same pattern was adopted by the NCNA three days later as well when it reported, on 23 May 1974, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Aziz Ahmed's speech at the CENTO meeting stressing his Government's resolve not to submit to India's nuclear blackmail and regional hegemony. Not only did the report make frequent use of quotation marks, neither endorsing nor opposing Pakistan's criticism of Indian nuclear tests, but it also failed to report Aziz Ahmed's declaration that the great powers, who had a stake in peace and stability in the subcontinent, had a responsibility to reestablish confidence --- shaken by the Indian nuclear test --- among India's neighbours. Moreover, while reporting the communique issued at the end of the meeting, the Chinese news agency also ignored the paragraph related to the Indian nuclear test, and referred only to the CENTO ministers' reaffirmation of the importance they attached to

the preservation of the territorial integrity of the member states. 27

That Beijing was cautious not to criticise India's acquisition of nuclear capability and openly side with Pakistan against India was once again demonstrated on 31 May 1974 when the NCNA transmitted a commentary on India's economic problems. The country, it claimed, was beset with economic difficulties, manifested in the serious food shortage leading almost 550,000,000 people to the brink of starvation, a 26% annual inflation rate and rapidly increasing unemployment. 'But under such a difficult economic situation', it noted, 'the Indian Government has steadily increased its military spending in recent years. Its budget for the fiscal year 1974-75 provides a record 19,150 million rupees or 5,040 million rupees more than that of fiscal year 1971-72 (the year of the Indo-Pakistani war). 'With a view to making up the financial deficit, maintaining huge military spending and repaying foreign debts', it continued, 'the Indian Government has been borrowing from abroad year after year' and has reached a stage where its projected foreign aid requirements for the current fiscal year exceed the estimated payments on debts and interests. 28 Although this projection of India's situation was akin to that described by the Pakistani media since the 18 May 1974 nuclear test, the commentary refrained from highlighting this similarity. Neither did it go to the extent of stating that the nation whose leaders had 'trotted the globe with a begging bowl asking for roubles and dollars...to feed the hungry


mouths' had 'squandered away' twelve billion rupees 'to detonate a nuclear device and blackmail small powers'. Instead, it stated very nonchalantly that UPI on 24 May had 'quoted US Commerce Department Officials as saying that India, which became a nuclear power a week ago, is encountering its "worst economic year" since independence from British rule in 1947'.

The Chinese Government did not swerve from this cautious attitude even in the first week of June 1974 when Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Agha Shahi, visited Beijing. Throughout this visit, which lasted from 6 to 10 June, the Pakistani media continuously pointed out that it was made because of the Indian nuclear test. Simultaneously, they continued to suggest, as before, that China should be forthcoming in its political support for Pakistan against the Indian nuclear threat. On 7 June 1974, for instance, a major article in the Pakistan Times, while reiterating the need for political assurances in the wake of India's nuclear test, maintained that the Security Council guarantees as well as the 'Three Powers Declaration' were not sufficient, thereby implying that the onus was now on China and France to help 're-establish confidence' among the South Asian states. Three days later, another article in the Pakistan Times suggested that, taking place within a week of Bhutto's visit to Beijing, the Indian test was a rebuke to Beijing's desire for normalisation of relations with all the South Asian states (expressed in the Sino-Pakistan joint communique) and, therefore,
warranted a joint Sino-Pakistan response.\textsuperscript{33} Beijing, however, completely ignored these suggestions and throughout the visit refrained, unlike its Pakistani counterpart, from even hinting that the visit was made in accordance with Bhutto's announcement following the Indian detonation. In fact, on 11 June, i.e. the day after Agha Shahi's departure, \textit{NCNA} transmitted a report on Bhutto's reply to Indira Gandhi refuting her justification for the nuclear test which, as before, duly cited the Associated Press of Pakistan (AAP) as the source of the information, and frequently used quotation marks without any comments, thus indicating Beijing's reluctance to openly support Islamabad against New Delhi on the nuclear issue\textsuperscript{34}

Towards the end of June 1974, however, the Chinese Government moved slightly away from its cautious attitude. On 27 June, \textit{NCNA} reported a Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman's statement of China's support for Pakistan. It quoted him on the outcome of Agha Shahi's recent visit to Beijing as stating that:

"...'China has expressed her firm opposition to the attempt of any country to pursue expansionism by means of nuclear threat or nuclear blackmail. China has also reiterated her consistent position that nuclear weapons should be completely prohibited and thoroughly destroyed and, as a first step, countries possessing nuclear weapons should undertake the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, pledging in particular not to use them against non-nuclear weapon countries and nuclear weapon free zones...'.\textsuperscript{35}

This report was significant as it contained, for the first time in two weeks, a Chinese admission, even if an indirect one, that Agha Shahi's visit was related to the Indian nuclear explosion. However, it still fell short of Islamabad's expectations because it

demonstrated, firstly, that Chinese support for Pakistan had been couched in extremely general terms and, secondly, that Beijing had not specifically committed itself to supporting Pakistan against India, which in any case did not claim to be possessing nuclear weapons. The report further highlighted the second aspect by completely omitting any reference to the claim made by the Pakistan official that 'China's full and resolute support to Pakistan approximates to a Chinese nuclear umbrella over Pakistan'.

That China was not willing to go beyond this limit in supporting Pakistan against the Indian acquisition of nuclear capability was underscored the next day, i.e. 28 June 1974, when the Jen-min Jih-pao published a 'commentator' article on the resolution adopted by the fifth Islamic Foreign Ministers' conference, calling on all countries possessing nuclear weapons not to use them against non-nuclear weapon countries. After criticising the super powers' policy of nuclear armament, this article stated: '[H]arbousing the ambition to become a sub-super power, a certain country, though not a super power, is engaged in arms expansion and war preparations and even resorts to nuclear blackmail and threat to realise its expansionist designs'. 'The Pakistan Government and its people', it continued, 'have always opposed any aggression and threat from outside. After the recent Indian nuclear blast, Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto declared in Pakistan National Assembly: "It is out of the question" for Pakistan "to submit to the nuclear blackmail of India". 'The solemn stand of the Pakistan Government expressing the Pakistan people's unswerving determination to defend state sovereignty and independence in

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36 For Pakistani official's statement, see Pakistan Times, 27 June 1974.
defiance of brute force', it maintained, 'has won sympathy and support from many countries'. Even on this, the first occasion when Beijing had provided implicit support for Pakistan's 'solemn stand', the anonymous commentator soon proceeded to water down the criticism against the 'certain country'. In the next paragraph it identified the resolution passed by the conference as 'an effective exposure of the super powers which are pursuing the policy of nuclear blackmail and the country which entertains expansionist ambitions' thus exempting India from the charge of nuclear blackmail. Moreover, while outlining China's reaction to the resolution, it once again limited itself to general statements without categorically supporting Pakistan against India. 'The Chinese Government and its people', it stated, 'firmly support the just struggle of Pakistan and other countries for national independence and state sovereignty, and against aggression and intervention from outside, including against nuclear blackmail and threat'. 'We hold', it concluded, 'that no policy of nuclear blackmail and threat of any country can cow the people of various countries. Countries which try to carry out expansion and aggression by resorting to nuclear blackmail policy, will only be lifting a rock to squash their own feet and will suffer disgraceful defeat'.

Thereafter, the Chinese media occasionally mentioned India's entry into the nuclear club but the frequency of these references, and the intensity of criticism, remained extremely low compared to

38 Ibid., pp.C/1-2.
that levelled by the Pakistani media. In marked contrast to this cautious attitude, however, the Chinese Government exhibited a willingness to support openly Pakistan's call to establish a nuclear free zone in South Asia.

**Nuclear-Free Zone in South Asia**

The idea of declaring South Asia a Nuclear Free Zone had been mooted by Pakistan as early as September 1972, when its representative to the IAEA called for a treaty between the South Asian countries similar to the Tlatelolco treaty for the denuclearization of Latin America. This was followed by Bhutto's declaration at the inaugural ceremony of the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP) that, to ensure that atomic energy did not become 'a symbol of fear for its people, Pakistan would welcome, if the entire subcontinent, by the agreement of the countries could be declared a nuclear free zone and the introduction of nuclear weapons banned'. It was only after the Indian nuclear test, however, that Islamabad began propagating the proposal with any seriousness.

On 20 August 1974 the Foreign Secretary, Agha Shahi, asked the UN Secretary General in a letter that an item entitled 'Declaration and Establishment of a Nuclear-Free Zone in South Asia' be inscribed

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39 On 2 September 1974, for instance, while criticising India's annexation of Sikkim, a Jen-min Jih-pao article said: 'Regarding itself as a sub-super Power, India dreams of lording it over South Asia.... Recently, it blasted off a nuclear device to make nuclear blackmail and nuclear menace in the South Asian Region'. "Commentator": Denounce India Strongly for its despicable act, annexation of Sikkim', Jen-min Jih-pao, 2 September 1974, in SWB:FE, No.4694, 4 September 1974, p.A3/2; and on 29 October 1974, a commentary stated: 'Last May The Indian Government exploded a nuclear device in Rajasthan on the border of Pakistan... The reactions in South Asian region were that this was nuclear blackmail and nuclear threat'. NCNA, 29 October 1974, in SWB:FE, No.4742, 30 October 1974, p.A3/5.

40 Dawn, 4 October 1972.

41 Dawn, 29 November 1972.
on the agenda of the General Assembly's twenty-ninth session. Explaining the proposal in his policy speech in the General Assembly on 27 September 1974, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Aziz Ahmed, maintained that the explosion of a nuclear device by India was 'a development of great import'. Regardless of Indian claims that it was intended entirely for peaceful purposes, he emphasised, the fact remained that technologically there was no difference between nuclear explosions for peaceful and military purposes. Furthermore, he warned, the explosion might have removed the restraint on nuclear proliferation and therefore could be emulated by others. One of the collateral measures to check this development and achieve the goal of general and complete disarmament, he said, could be to declare the South Asian region a nuclear-free zone. Elaborating the concept, he stated that various South Asian states, e.g. Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan had proclaimed their opposition to the introduction of nuclear weapons into the region, or their acquisition. Therefore, Pakistan felt that 'this common desire of the states of South Asia now need[ed] to be translated into a formal arrangement'. Such an arrangement, he spelt out, might include 'an unequivocal commitment by the regional states not to acquire or manufacture nuclear weapons', and 'a regime for independent observation and verification of explosions conducted for peaceful purposes as a safeguard against diversion of peaceful nuclear programmes to military ends'. The proposal was supported by the Chinese Government five days later, on 2 October 1974. Unlike the US delegate, who only underscored the need for the world to realise the peaceful benefits

of nuclear technology without contributing to nuclear proliferation, and the Soviet delegate who did not even mention the Indian nuclear test, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chiao Kuan-hua, stated in the General Assembly that the effects of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 had 'barely subsided', when 'India exploded a nuclear device allegedly for peaceful purposes'. This, along with a number of other developments, he continued, had caused turbulence in the South Asian region which ran counter to the desire for peace of people of all the countries in the region and, therefore, called for vigilance. The proposal put forward by Pakistan for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in South Asia is entirely reasonable. China gives it her firm support. The Chinese Government, he added, 'consistently holds that the nuclear countries should undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries or nuclear-free zones. We are ready to make such an undertaking in regard to the proposed nuclear-free zones in South Asia and Middle East. We hope that all the other nuclear countries will do the same'.

The Chinese Government expressed its support for Pakistan's proposal in the General Assembly's First Committee as well. To fully appreciate the value of this support, it is essential to recount the developments that took place in the First Committee to which was assigned the responsibility of discussing the issue.

The Pakistan Government had formally presented its proposal before the Committee on 28 October 1974 when its representative, Iqbal Akhund, had outlined the 'cardinal features of the arrangement envisaged' for the proposed nuclear-free zone in South Asia. These

44GAOR:PM, 29th Session, 2252nd meeting, 2 October 1974, document A/PV.2252, pp.51-53.(emphasis added)
features, he said, included, firstly, an understanding by states of the region to refrain from producing or acquiring nuclear weapons; secondly, an undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states not to introduce nuclear weapons into the area and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against members of the zone; and thirdly, a system of safeguards and verification to ensure the faithful implementation of their commitments by the parties. He also outlined four salient steps that needed to be followed. These were: firstly, the General Assembly should proclaim South Asia as a nuclear-weapon free zone; secondly, consultations be held as soon as possible among the countries of the region and, at an appropriate stage, with the nuclear-weapon states to give practical shape to this declaration; thirdly, the Secretary General be authorised to invite countries of the region to begin consultations; and fourthly, the Assembly should lay down appropriate guidelines in order to facilitate the process of negotiation and give it a sense of direction.

The Indian Government opposed this proposal. '...[T]he first prerequisite to the creation of such a zone', its representative, K.P. Misra, argued on 11 November 1974, 'is an agreement among the countries concerned'. 'As regards Pakistan's proposal', he said 'no consultation among the states in the region took place before the item was inscribed on our agenda. Therefore, it would be premature, indeed it would be prejudging future consultations, to declare South Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone or even to endorse the concept'. Furthermore, he explained, the Indian stand had been that the

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46Ibid., pp.43-47.
differing conditions from the one part of the world to another need to be taken into account in assessing the feasibility of creating a zone. 'Africa and Latin America', he elaborated 'are separate and distinct continental zones, geographically and politically. In that sense South Asia cannot be considered a zone. The presence in Asia of countries belonging to military alliances and the existence of nuclear-weapon powers would have a vital bearing on the viability of a nuclear-weapon free zone'.

Faced with this opposition, the Pakistani delegation, which had already revised its draft due to international opposition by downgrading the demand for proclaiming a NFZ in South Asia to merely endorsing the concept, attempted to discuss the draft with its Indian counterpart so as to find some common ground on the issue. On 12 November, therefore, the Foreign Secretaries of the two states held talks which ended in failure. Thus, on 14 November 1974, Pakistan tabled its draft resolution with the following principal clauses:

[The General Assembly]

1. endorses, in principle, the concept of a nuclear-weapon free zone in South Asia.

2. invites the states of the South Asian region and such other neighbouring non-nuclear weapon states as may be interested to initiate, without delay, necessary consultations with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone and urges them, in the interim, to refrain from any action contrary to the achievement of these objectives.

3. requests the Secretary General to convene a meeting ... to render such assistance as may be required for the purpose and to report on the subject to the General

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Assembly at [the next] session. 49

On the same day India also tabled a draft resolution with only one operative paragraph, stating that the General Assembly 'considers
... that the initiative for the creation of a nuclear-weapon free zone in the appropriate region of Asia should come from the states of the region concerned, taking into account its special features and geographical extent'. 50 Both these draft resolutions were adopted initially by the First Committee and then the General Assembly as parts A and B of one resolution 3265: XXIX. 51

Throughout these discussions, the United States adopted a stand which, though sympathetic towards the Pakistani proposal, came much closer to the Indian stand. Its representative, Stuart Symington, for instance, welcomed Islamabad's interest in denuclearizing South Asia but identified certain criteria for establishing such a zone which, inter alia, required that the initiative should come from the states in the region, and that the zone should preferably include all states in the area whose participation was deemed important. 52 The Soviet Union went a step further and endorsed the Indian proposal, while criticising that of Pakistan as having omitted some important elements. 53 In contrast, the Chinese Government sided with Pakistan. In the Committee's general debate on 4 November 1974, its

50 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
51 Ibid., pp. 3-5; and 'Resolution 3265 (XXIX): Declaration and Establishment of a Nuclear Free Zone in South Asia', Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly, 29th Session, Agenda Item 107, 7 January 1975, document A/Res/3265 (XXIX), pp. 1-3.
representative, Mr An, stated that the proposals put forward by various states for establishing nuclear-free zones 'are entirely just ... which the Chinese Government fully supports'. Then he specifically mentioned Islamabad's stand and said: 'we welcome the proposal made by Pakistan ... and we are prepared to undertake due obligations'.

Two weeks later, just before the Pakistani and Indian draft resolutions were put to the vote, the Chinese representative gave another detailed statement. 'The Chinese Government and people', he said, 'deeply sympathise with the numerous small and medium sized countries in their positive efforts to safeguard the peace and security of their regions, to oppose nuclear blackmail and threat, and to establish nuclear-free zones ... In our view, the Pakistan proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in South Asia is just and reasonable'.

A few minutes later, when the vote was taken, the Chinese delegation abstained on the Indian draft resolution but became the only nuclear power to vote in favour of that put forward by Pakistan. To underscore that Beijing was prepared to stand by Pakistan, the very next day, on 21 November, NCNA transmitted the news that the First Committee had adopted Pakistan's draft resolution, without even mentioning that the Indian resolution had also been adopted, in fact with a slightly more votes than those secured by Pakistan.

The year 1975 witnessed the continuation of this support. During

57 The Indian draft resolution was adopted with a vote of 90 to none with 32 abstentions, whereas Pakistan's draft secured 84 votes in favour, 2 against with 36 abstentions.
his visit to Pakistan in April 1975, for instance, Chinese Vice-Premier Li Xiannian stated that his Government will 'continue to render resolute support ... to the proposal of the Pakistan Government for a nuclear-free zone in South Asia...'. Six months later, when the issue was once again discussed by the General Assembly's First Committee, the Chinese representative reiterated his Government's support for Pakistan's efforts. Later, on 4 December 1975, when the Indian and Pakistani draft resolutions, almost identical to those submitted the previous year, were adopted simultaneously without a vote, the Chinese representative declared that had they been put to the vote, his Government would have voted in favour of the Pakistani draft and abstained on that of India.

In 1976, however, Beijing began exhibiting signs of reluctance to continuously side with Islamabad on the proposal to denuclearise South Asia. During Bhutto's visit to Beijing in May 1976, for instance, the Chinese Premier Hua Gofeng initially declared his Government's 'firm support' for Pakistan's proposal but only three days later, at the banquet given by the Pakistani Prime Minister, failed to reiterate the stand. This failure was all the more noticeable as only a few minutes earlier Bhutto had expressed his government's appreciation for China's 'firm support', maintained that its positive attitude towards the deep concern of non-nuclear states over the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons had evoked wide approbation, and had expressed the hope that other nuclear states would

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60 GAOR:1st Com., 30th Session, 2105th meeting, 4 December 1975, document A/C.1/PV.2105, p.61.
emulate the Chinese example.\textsuperscript{62} Even in the joint communique issued at the end of the visit, China did not join Pakistan in stressing the need to denuclearise the South Asian region. Instead, following the pattern of the Shanghai communique of 1972, Pakistan was allocated one paragraph to express, once again, its gratitude for Beijing's firm support on the issue. This failure was also significant as only in the preceding paragraph, China had joined Pakistan in firmly supporting the 'just proposition' of Sri Lanka for making the Indian ocean a zone of peace.\textsuperscript{63}

That these omissions were not accidental was confirmed when the issue was once again discussed by the General Assembly's First Committee in October-November 1976. During these discussions, unlike in the past, the Chinese representative did not specifically mention Pakistan's proposal for a NFZ in South Asia but issued a general statement of support for the proposals put forth by various states 'for the establishment of nuclear-free zones in Latin America, Africa, South Asia, the Middle East etc'. Moreover, he identified the superpower policies of aggression, expansion and war as the 'principal obstacle to the true realisation of nuclear-free zones' --- a position opposite to that of Pakistan, which blamed India for the failure to establish such a zone in South Asia.\textsuperscript{64}

This reluctance was reflected in the Chinese Government's behaviour in 1977 as well. On one occasion during his visit to Beijing in December 1977, for example, General Zia expressed the Pakistan Government's appreciation to the Chinese Government for 'its


\textsuperscript{63}For full text see NCNA, 30 May 1976, in \textit{SCMP}, No.6112, 10 June 1976, pp.228-31.

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{GAOR:1st Com.}, 31st Session, 25th meeting, 8 November 1976, document A/C.1/PV.25, p.46.
support to the initiatives to realise the objectives of establishing a nuclear-weapon free zone in South Asia'. The Chinese vice-Premier, Deng Xiaoping, in contrast, ignored the issue and restricted himself to general expressions of support for Pakistan.65

The 1978-1979 period also witnessed the continuation of this policy. There were occasional references to China's support for Pakistan's proposal. During his visit to Nepal in February 1978, for example, Deng Xiaoping expressed his Government's 'firm support for the proposal of the Pakistan Government for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in South Asia'.66 The same month, while presenting his report at the Fifth National People's congress, Hua Gofeng reiterated his Government's support for the proposal.67 Even Geng Biao supported the concept during his visit to Islamabad in June 1979. However, at the United Nations where the issue was consistently raised by Islamabad, while continuing to vote in favour of Pakistan's draft resolutions for the NFZ in South Asia, the Chinese Government persisted in its policy of not being 'vocal' about this support.68 Both in 1978 and 1979, therefore, unlike the United States and the United Kingdom, which after voting in favour of Pakistan's draft resolution, explained the reasons for doing so, the Chinese representative opted to remain silent.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated two points:

Firstly, despite the fact that the Indian nuclear explosion was

perceived by Pakistan as increasing its security risk, Beijing had exhibited a clear reluctance to respond to Pakistan's call for a 'nuclear umbrella'.

Secondly, in the immediate aftermath of the Indian nuclear test, China was willing to categorically support Pakistan's proposal for establishing a nuclear-free zone in South Asia. However, after 1976, this support gradually tapered off. While consistently voting in favour of Pakistan's proposal at the United Nations, Beijing began exhibiting a clear reluctance to publicise or even defend this support.

This chapter raises the following questions:

Why did the Chinese Government exhibit a reluctance to respond to Pakistan's call for a 'nuclear umbrella'?

Why did Beijing strongly support Islamabad's proposal for a nuclear-free zone in South Asia during the 1974-76 period?

Why did the Chinese support for Pakistan's proposal for a nuclear-free zone in South Asia taper off after 1976?

Were these developments a part of an overall change in China's South Asian strategy?

Answers to these questions will be discussed in Chapter X.
CHAPTER VII

PAKISTAN AND THE SAUR REVOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN (1978)

CHINESE RESPONSES

On 27 April 1978, following a successful military coup in Kabul, the rule of the last member of the Nadir family, President Daoud, was terminated and the pro-Soviet Jamiyat-e-Democratigi-yi-Khalq-i-Afghanistan, commonly known as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), took over the reins of Government. Three days later, the Republic of Afghanistan was renamed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) and Nur Mohammad Taraki, the General Secretary of the PDPA, was elected Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and President and Prime Minister of the country.1 Outlining his government's policies on 6 May 1978, Taraki stated that 'new Afghanistan, its party, Revolutionary Council and Government, [would] ... pursue a policy befitting the people and for the development of democracy, economic progress and friendly links with all countries, strictly and consistently remaining in a position of non-alignment'. 'No one', he stressed, 'can be our "model" in accordance with which we shall develop. ... As a non-aligned country, Afghanistan neither wishes for nor intends to conclude any military arrangements, either bilateral or multilateral. Our foreign policy is non-alignment.'2

Despite this and subsequent similar statements by him and his colleagues, however, the news of the change of government in Kabul was received with a certain degree of apprehension and nervousness by the Pakistan Government, which did not recognize the new regime in Kabul until 5 May 1978.3 The questions arise as to why the Zia

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2 Kabul Times, 13 May 1978.
3 Pakistan Times, 6 May 1978.
regime, which itself had come to power by overthrowing Bhutto in July 1977, reacted negatively to the coup in one of its neighbouring states, and how, if at all, Peking reacted to this situation. This chapter attempts to answer these questions and therefore, is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the Pakistan Government's threat perceptions in the wake of the Saur revolution in Afghanistan. The second part describes the extent to which Peking subscribed to these threat perceptions and the manner in which it supported Pakistan during the twenty months of rule by the Khalq governments.

The Saur Revolution and Pakistan's Threat Perceptions

To fully understand the Pakistan Government's threat perceptions after the emergence of the left-oriented regime in Kabul, it is necessary to look at the history of, and Afghan policy towards, Pakistan's two provinces adjoining Afghanistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan.

During the British Raj, the nationalist movement in the NWFP --- a province with muslims secure in their 94 per cent majority, and far from Delhi --- followed a pattern markedly different from that in areas that were later to constitute the Dominion of Pakistan. Not having faced the problems encountered by muslims residing in the rest of United India, especially in Hindu-dominated provinces, the dominant political party in the province, Khudai Khidmargaran (Red Shirts), led by Khan Abdul Ghaffer Khan was not averse to collaborating with the Indian National Congress to oust the British Government. In fact, it established a political alliance with the Congress against the Muslim League's efforts to partition India. However, as the creation of Pakistan became an immediate prospect and

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the British Government began discussing the need to hold a plebiscite in the NWFP, Khan Abdul Ghaffer Khan, with the support of his party, demanded that a third choice of a 'free Pathan State of all Pakhtoons' be given, in addition to that of union with either India or Pakistan. Upon the British rejection of this demand, Khan Ghaffar Khan called upon his supporters to boycott the referendum of 6 July 1947. Almost 49 percent of the electorate refrained from voting, but an overwhelming majority of those who did vote favoured the idea of joining Pakistan. The Khudai Khidmargaran, therefore, changed their position, maintained all they wanted was 'full freedom for the Pathans to manage their internal affairs as a unit within Pakistan State', and declared themselves willing to delegate the responsibility for the NWFP's defence, foreign affairs and communications to the central government of Pakistan. Thereafter, depending upon the Punjabi national ruling elite's willingness or unwillingness to give a certain degree of provincial autonomy to the federating units, the National Awami Party (NAP) --- the successor to the Khudai Khidmargaran led by Ghaffer Khan's son Wali Khan --- vacillated between support for the idea of Pushtunistan within Pakistan and a separate state for the Pathans. Though the frequency of references to an independent Pushtunistan decreased towards the end of the 1960s as the Pathans were integrated more within the national economic mainstream, occasional references in the post-1971

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6 Of the 292,118 voters, 289,244 opted for Pakistan, whereas only 2,874 expressed their desire that the NWFP should be a part of India. V.P. Menon, The Transfer of Power in India, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p.389.
8 The Khudai Khidmatgaran was banned by the Pakistan Government in September 1948.
period suggested that the NAP was unwilling to give up completely its prerogative to raise the issue.\(^9\)

The situation in Baluchistan, the largest and internally most varied, South-western province of Pakistan, was somewhat similar to, but more serious than, that prevailing in the NWFP. During the mid-eighteenth century, almost a hundred years before the British arrived in the area, Mir Nasir Khan, a tribal chief had succeeded in establishing a loose confederacy spread between the Indus in the east and the Persian province of Kerman in the west. Upon their arrival, however, the British Government broke the confederacy up and concluded agreements with the Persian and Afghan Governments as a result of which one-third of the 'original Baluchistan' was ceded to Persia and a thinly populated strip in the north was assigned to Afghanistan. The remaining Baluchistan was divided into two parts; one was administered directly by the British Government whereas the other, a principality called Kalat, was ruled by Khans who traced their lineage back to Mir Nasir Khan. On the basis of this lineage, while collaborating with the British Government, they periodically demanded that the whole Baluch territory be, someday, united under their rule. The British Government took no notice of this demand.\(^10\)

In August 1947, when the British left India, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan Baloch, the then Khan of Kalat, declared his principality a sovereign state. The Pakistan Government initially accepted the Khanate's sovereign status but very soon began to demand its accession to the


\(^10\) Mir Khuda Bakhsh Bijarani Marri Baloch, Searchlights on Baloches and Balochistan, (Karachi: Royal Book company, 1974), pp.238-249; and Selig Harrison, 'Nightmare in Baluchistan', Foreign Policy, No.32, Fall 1978, pp.142-143.
new muslim state and mobilised forces against Kalat.\footnote{Mir Ahmed Yar Khan Baloch, *Baluch Kaum-wa-Khawanin-i-Baluch* (Quetta: Gosha-e-Adab, 1972), p.147.} Faced with this military pressure, the Khan proposed confederate status, granting the Dominion of Pakistan the right to control the Khanate's foreign affairs, defence and currency. The Pakistan Government promptly rejected the proposal, and militarily annexed the principality in 1948. This sparked an insurgency led by Prince Abdul Karim Khan, the Khan of Kalat's younger brother, which was quelled quickly but was followed by another rebellion in 1958, led by the Khan of Kalat himself, provoked by the Pakistan Government's decision to merge its four western Pakistani provinces into 'one unit'. This rebellion was also crushed by the Pakistan Government but for the next eleven years Baluchistan remained a trouble spot with the National Awami Party assisting the guerillas.\footnote{Inayatullah Baloch, 'Afghanistan-Pushtunistan- Baluchistan', *Aussen Politik*, Vol.31, No.3, pp.294-296.}

Towards the end of the 1960s, the situation in Baluchistan began to improve from the Baluches' point of view. Yahya Khan's decision in 1969 to disestablish the 'one unit', grant Baluchistan the status of a separate province, and to hold elections on the basis of universal suffrage in December 1970, gave rise to hopes among the Baluches that for the first time they would be granted provincial autonomy.\footnote{Ibid., p.296.} These hopes came to fruition when, after coming to power, Bhutto permitted the winning National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulmae Islam (JUI) to form a coalition provincial government in Baluchistan. This parliamentary period, however, proved to be short lived. Soon after his success at Simla in projecting an image of a 'united Pakistan', Bhutto reverted to his preference for a
strong central government and gradually began alienating the political elite of Baluchistan as well as the NWFP. The climax came in early 1973 when, taking advantage of the seizure of Soviet arms from the Iraqi embassy and the rebellion in Lasbela, Bhutto dismissed the Baluchistan government, sparking off an insurgency in Baluchistan which lasted for almost four years, i.e. from 1973 to 1977 and was led by the Marxist-oriented Baluchistan People's Liberation Front (BPLF) and the Baluch Students' Organization (BSO). 14

These various political groups in Baluchistan and the NWFP, who actually fought for or merely threatened succession, were supported by the Afghanistan Government from 1947. This support primarily stemmed from Afghanistan's own stand on the Pushtunistan issue. The 1893 agreement for the Durand Line, which demarcated the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Kabul maintained, had been signed under duress and therefore the area west of the Indus down to the Arabian Sea belonged to Afghanistan and not Pakistan. 15 On the basis of this stand, the level and scope of Afghan support for the Baluch and Pathan leaders of Pakistan varied from time to time depending upon the personal commitment of the Afghan rulers, the need to divert the public's attention from domestic problems, and the situation in Pakistan. During 1952-1955, for example, when the Pakistan Government amalgamated the various parts of the western wing into one administrative unit under the name of West Pakistan, the Afghan

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14 Inayatullah Baloch, op.cit., pp.296-300; and Harrison, op.cit., pp.143-149.

Government, under the premiership of Mohammad Daoud, provided staunch support to the Baluches and Pathans of Pakistan. The people of Pushtunistan, Kabul reiterated frequently, should be allowed to secede and form a separate state which might remain independent or join Afghanistan.\(^{16}\) After 1963, when Daoud resigned as Prime Minister and King Zahir Shah began to pursue a more moderate policy, Afghanistan's support subsided, and was restricted to a demand that the two provinces be allowed to participate in the main political system.

In 1973, however, the situation once again underwent a change. Sardar Daoud's rise to power as the head of the Republic of Afghanistan coincided with Bhutto's dismissal of the NAP-JUI's government in Baluchistan and the subjecting of Khan Abdul Wali Khan and other Pathan leaders to severe harassment. Daoud who had always been a fiery Pushtun nationalist, therefore revived the Pushtunistan issue and also began providing sanctuaries and other assistance to Baluch insurgents and some of the Pathan leaders who had fled to Afghanistan.\(^{17}\) This support continued until late 1975 when the Shah of Iran succeeded in prevailing upon Daoud to moderate his stand on the Pushtunistan issue. The Afghan Government, thereupon sealed its

\(^{16}\) For example, the Afghan Foreign Minister, Sadr Naim Khan stated in a press conference in Karachi on November 1954 that the people of Pushtunistan should be given an opportunity to express themselves on their 'status and way of living'. *Dawn*, 8 November 1954; see also, Daoud Khan, the Afghan Minister's statement that Afghanistan has certain responsibilities with regard to (their) Pakhtoon brothers...'. *Pakistan Times*, 2 September 1954; the resolution passed by the Afghan Grand National Assembly, *Loi Jirga*, in the middle of November declaring that Afghanistan did not recognise the 'Pakhtunistan' territories as a part of Pakistan, *Asian Recorder*: 1955, p.521; Sangat Singh, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Appraisal* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1970), pp.28-29; and Leon B. Poullada, 'Afghanistan and the United States; The Crucial Years', *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.35, No.2, Spring 1981, pp.188-189.

borders to Baluchistan, which were being used by pro-secessionist Pakistani Baluch elements, and then opened a dialogue with Islamabad to resolve the Pushtunistan issue.\(^{18}\)

In June - August 1976, Bhutto and Daoud exchanged visits. During these visits according to unofficial sources, Daoud agreed to accept the Durand Line, and to withdraw his support for the Pushtunistan issue provided Bhutto freed all the Baluch and Pathan leaders.\(^{19}\) The conclusion of the actual agreement, however, was delayed initially due to the domestic turbulence after the March 1977 elections and then by the change of government in Pakistan in July 1977.

The new regime in Pakistan led by General Zia-ul-Haq, while attempting to establish contact with the Afghan Government, initially concentrated on defusing the situation in Baluchistan by reaching a truce with the Baluch leaders and declaring a general amnesty for all the Baluch insurgents in November 1977. Early the following year, it also freed all the Baluch and Pathan leaders who had been held in captivity by the Bhutto regime since February 1975. Following these decisions, Daoud visited Islamabad on 5 March 1978 and, according to unofficial sources, agreed to repatriate, forcibly if required, all refugee Baluch and Pathan political leaders.\(^{20}\) For the next four weeks, Daoud implemented the agreement and repatriated a few Pakistani political exiles, including Wali Khan's brother-in-law, Captain Azam Khan.\(^{21}\) The process, however, stalled with the change of government in Kabul on 27 April 1978.

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., pp.42-43.


\(^{21}\) Ibid.
The Saur revolution brought to power the PDPA which had not only opposed the Zia-Daoud accord but had also used it to rouse the masses against Daoud in the ten days preceding the coup. Soon after assuming control, this regime expressed its intention of ceasing to repatriate political leaders from Afghanistan.\(^{22}\) Simultaneously, it also revived the Pushtunistan issue. On 4 May 1978, for example, Radio Kabul claimed that letters from northern Pushtunistan expressing joy on the victory of the Saur revolution had concluded with slogans like 'long live the brotherhood of Afghanistan and Pushtunistan'.\(^{23}\) Two days later, in his first press conference, Taraki categorically referred to the Pushtunistan issue as a 'political problem' requiring a 'peaceful and friendly solution' with 'our Pakistani brothers'.\(^{24}\) Once again on 9 May 1978, while presenting a 30 points manifesto on his government's policies, he identified 'the realization of the right to self-determination for the Pushtun and Baluchi people through peaceful negotiations and talks between the DRA and Pakistan' as one of the Kabul's main foreign policy objectives.\(^{25}\) Probably to suggest that the new regime was really committed to this objective, Taraki also held a meeting with Khan Ghaffer Khan, and Ajaal Khattah, General-Secretary of Pakistan's outlawed NAP party who had been residing in Afghanistan since 1974.\(^{26}\)

That the Daoud regime, soon after coming into power in 1973 had

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\(^{22}\) Ibid, p.32, and Dawn, 10 May 1978.


\(^{24}\) Kabul Times, 13 May 1978.


first raised but then dropped the Pushtunistan issue should have convinced the Pakistan Government that, given time, the new regime might do the same. However, certain factors made Islamabad perceive the Taraki regime's references to the Pushtunistan issue as being more ominous than those of the previous one. First and foremost was the character of the new regime in Kabul. The PDPA was essentially a communist party. It had been initially established, in 1965, during the period of democracy-yi-naw or 'new democracy' of the Afghan monarch Zahir Shah, with a Marxist-Leninist programme, but, due to tactical and personality differences, had soon split into two factions, the 'Khalq' and the 'Parcham'. The Khalq, led by lower and lower-middle class nationalist Ghilzai Pakhtoons, such as Taraki and Mafizullah Amin, had attempted to develop its roots among the rural-based educated Pushtun speakers. The Parcham, led by Dari-speaking, pro-Soviet, Kabul intellectuals like Babrak Karmal, on the other hand, had solely concentrated its activities in the military and, therefore, in July 1973, had played an instrumental role in bringing the pro-Soviet Daoud to power.

Within two years of his ascent to power, however, the Parcham found Daoud consolidating his rule to the exclusion of his leftist allies. In 1977 he declared a one-party system under his leadership and sought to forge close ties with and receive financial assistance from the Shah of Iran and the Arab world. Meanwhile, he undertook a gradual but steady process of purging his administration of communists. Faced with this threat, and encouraged by the Soviet Union, the Parcham and Khalq reestablished the PDPA and drew up plans on the basis of which, in the wake of the party leader Mir Khyber's death and the arrest of the major PDPA leaders, the military overthrew and killed Daoud.27

Secondly, the Soviet Union had reacted very favourably to the change of government in Kabul. It was the first state to recognize Taraki's government on 30 April 1978 --- even before other embassies could establish telephone contacts with the new regime. Three days later, Brezhnev and Kosygin sent congratulatory telegrams to Taraki on his election as head of the Afghan Government and expressed 'firm confidence' that 'relations of lasting friendship and fruitful all-round cooperation' would develop and strengthen. The next day, on 4 May, a commentary by Radio Moscow referred to the coup as 'the important changes in the history of Afghanistan's national liberation movement' and noted 'with satisfaction that the prediction of the Great Lenin, who said that the Soviet Union would always remain the first friend of the Government of Afghanistan has come true in our time'. Simultaneously, the Soviet news media had markedly increased the coverage of the world's reaction to, and the policies of, the new government in Kabul. Although, this coverage refrained from either commenting upon, or even reporting Taraki and his colleagues references to the Pushtunistan issue, the Pakistan Government feared that Moscow would support Kabul's policy vis-a-vis the Baluches and Pathan of Pakistan, as it had done explicitly during the 1955-63 period and then implicitly since 1963. Moreover, there

had also been reports that, in the 1950s and early 1960s, Moscow had prepared plans to despatch agents to Pakistan from the Afghan territory it had also discussed the possibility of sending Soviet troops into Afghanistan at the appropriate time for joint operations against Pakistan. That the Kremlin was prepared to pursue such a policy during the reign of a monarch and then of a republican related to the royal family, the Pakistan Government feared, was an indication that the Soviet Union was much more likely to support the new regime, a communist one which included the pro-Soviet Parchamis, over the Pushtunistan issue.

The threat of Soviet-backed Afghan attempts to destabilise Pakistan was perceived to be more serious in Baluchistan than in NWFP, due to the simultaneous presence of a number of factors. The first factor was the newly emerging congruity in the Soviet and Afghan concepts of Pushtunistan. Throughout the period preceding the Saur revolution, Afghan Governments had consistently defined Pushtunistan as comprising both the NWFP and Baluchistan. An Afghan career diplomat, Rahman Pazhwak, in the late 1950s, for instance, had identified the Chagai area, Bolan and the Baluch States of Kalat, Makran, Las Bela, and Kharan as part of the 'Pushtunistan' of 'today'. The Soviet Union, however, while siding with Kabul on the issue, had always restricted its support to the creation of Pushtunistan comprised of the Pushtun-speaking people of Pakistan only. It did not accept the wider Afghan claims over Baluchistan which was always identified as a distinct geographical area, and the Baluches were identified as a separate nationality with their own

34 Interview with an official of Pakistan Foreign Office.
35 Pazhwak, op.cit., pp.8-10.
right to self determination. This dissimilarity between the position of the two governments disappeared with the PDPA's ascent to power. For the first time now, the Afghan Government also acknowledged the right to self-determination of both the Baluches and the Pushtunsas separate nationalities. On 5 May 1978, for instance, Radio Kabul transmitted a message from two unknown people, described as Baluch leaders, expressing their hopes that the Afghan revolution would lend strength to the Baluch people's struggle for self-determination. This was followed, as previously mentioned, on 9 May 1978 by Taraki's policy statement referring to the 'right of self-determination for the Pushtun and Baluchi people ...'. That this congruity with the Soviet position was not an aberration but part of a consistent policy was reflected in the subsequent frequent references by Afghan leaders distinguishing clearly between the two nationalities.

Secondly, in spite of General Zia's attempts, the situation in Baluchistan had not been fully defused. Anti-government feelings were still rife and the BPLF, led by Khair Baksh Marri, was insisting that the army pull back to pre-1972 positions. It was also expressing its distrust of Zia's amnesty declaration. In fact, Khair Baksh Marri, while privately warning bluntly of the danger of Baluch separatism, was publicly also hinting that the Baluches may be 'forced to adopt an attitude different from the prevalent norms of politics'.

Thirdly, Pakistan was being ruled by General Zia --- a

\[36\] Inayatullah Baloch, op.cit., pp.286-87.
\[40\] Harrison, op.cit., p.146.
representative of the army which, as an institution, had traditionally been suspicious of the Soviet Union and had consistently adhered to the theory that Moscow wanted to gain access to the warm water ports of the Indian Ocean through Baluchistan. The change in the Afghan policy on the issue of the Baluches' right to self-determination and the existing exploitable dissatisfaction in Baluchistan were automatically perceived by Islamabad as signalling that the Soviet Union was going to use its links with the new communist regime in Kabul to destabilise the situation in Baluchistan.\(^{41}\)

Even if the Soviet Union did not do so, the Pakistan Government feared it would exploit its ability to do so to pressure Pakistan into changing its foreign policy. This threat perception could be explained in terms of the nature of the regime in Pakistan, a pro-American, right wing, military government which, having overthrown the relatively liberal Bhutto government, was drawing political support from the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) which included, among others, extreme right-wing Muslim fundamentalist Parties like the Jamaat-i-Islami.\(^{42}\) This regime, therefore, was bound to view the emergence of a communist regime in its neighbourhood as ominous. However, this perception was reinforced by Moscow's refusal to even attempt to convince Pakistan that it did not intend using its links with Kabul to change Islamabad's foreign policy orientation. Instead in a marked departure from the past, when he had appeared anxious to befriend Pakistan, the Soviet ambassador to Islamabad, Sarwar Azimov, criticised Pakistan's foreign policy in an interview with a Lahore magazine, Afrasia. 'Pakistan'

\(^{41}\) Interview with a ranking Pakistan Army Officer.

\(^{42}\) Ahmed, *op.cit.*, pp.53-54.
he said, 'is a friend of our enemies. Her foreign policy is directed against us and she is an aligned country unlike India, and Afghanistan who are non-aligned and our friends ...'. Then he demanded that Pakistan withdraw from CENTO and hinted that failure to do so might jeopardize diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

Coming within two weeks of the coup in Kabul, this interview (later denied by the Soviet Union) convinced Islamabad that its threat perception was justified.

Chinese Support for Pakistan

Questions arise as to what extent Peking subscribed to Islamabad's threat perceptions and what was the nature of political support, if any, for Pakistan during the April 1978 - December 1979 period.

The Chinese Government initially adopted a cautious attitude. It was unwilling to identify itself directly and explicitly with Islamabad's view that the danger to Baluchistan and the NWFP, as well as the possibility of Soviet pressure on Pakistan, had increased with the emergence of a communist government in Afghanistan. On 9 May 1978, for instance, the pro-Peking newspaper from Hong Kong Wenhui Po published a 'special article' column on the coup in Afghanistan which referred, in general terms, to Pakistan's threat perceptions. After pointing out that the several coups d'état in Afghanistan in the 20th century were closely related to the social system, the economy and the conventions of the imperialists, it stated: 'However, the shadow of the Soviet Union still covers Afghanistan and makes Pakistan and Iran worry that they may be affected by the chaos.

created by the Soviet Union. Although this article indirectly reflected the views held by Peking, no such references were made directly by the news media in mainland China itself. Instead, the Chinese media restricted themselves to only implicitly subscribing to Islamabad's threat perceptions. On 12 May 1978, for example, a short commentary entitled 'A noteworthy trend' the Ren-min Ribao referred to Sarwar Azimov's interview with Afrasia. 'According to reports in Pakistan newspapers', it stated, 'the Soviet ambassador to Pakistan, in a rare talk with a reporter, smeared Pakistan as a biased country, a friend of the Soviet Union's enemies and an enemy of the Soviet Union's friends, and also stated that only when Pakistan withdrew from CENTO would the Soviet Union find everything about Pakistan satisfactory'. 'It is by no means accidental', it continued 'that the Soviet Union's envoys in South Asian countries are unrestrainedly interfering in the internal affairs of other countries'. 'On the contrary', it echoed the views of the Pakistani news media, 'these are intentional acts by Moscow to exert pressure on Pakistan and other Asian countries'. However, unlike the Pakistani media, it refrained from categorically stating that these 'intentional acts' were linked directly with the coup in Kabul. Instead, it restricted itself to stating that they were 'attributable to Moscow's anxiousness to strengthen its strategic plan in the arc extending from Africa to South Asia through West Asia ...'. This commentary also exhibited Peking's reluctance to clearly spell out Pakistan's fears with respect to the situation in its two western provinces. For instance it stated that the 'Soviet Union is an expert and a

veteran at subversion and sabotage' and advised, among others, the South Asian countries not to be afraid, and to be to some extent prepared 'to deal with Soviet aggression, subversion, and infiltration ...'. However, it did not explicitly subscribe to Pakistan's fears by either identifying Baluchistan and the NWFP as the most likely targets of Soviet subversion, or pointing out that the possibility of Soviet infiltration had increased with the emergence of a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul.45

Neither was the Chinese Government initially prepared to acknowledge the existence of and declare its support for Pakistan against the more obvious threat posed by Afghanistan which was consistently emphasizing the Baluches' and the Pushtuns' right to self-determination. This became more obvious during Chinese Vice-Premier Geng Biao's visit to Pakistan in June 1978 to attend the inaugural ceremony of the Karakorum Highway. Firstly, on 16 June 1978, in a banquet given in Geng Biao's honour, General Zia indicated his government's concern over Kabul's attitude towards Islamabad. 'It is our conviction', he said, 'that close friendship and cooperation is in the best interest of ... [Afghanistan and Pakistan] and in the larger interest of regional stability and global peace'. Then he 'expressed the hope that efforts would be made to bring to a close an era of confrontation in South Asia ...'. The Chinese Vice-Premier, however, despite the fact that he was reported to have had 'cordial' and 'friendly' talks with General Zia the same morning and that General Zia in his speech had also underscored the identity of Sino-Pakistan views on major international issues, chose to ignore the issue and made no reference to Afghanistan's policy towards

Pakistan. Secondly, at the same banquet, General Zia, whose regime had been fearful of a further disintegration of Pakistan, tried to elicit a categorical statement of China's support for Pakistan by expressing a 'deep sense of gratitude to the Chinese Government and people for their help and assistance in the defence of [Pakistan's]... sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity'. Geng Biao, however, on this and subsequent occasions, refrained from giving any such categorical assurance. Instead, as in the East Pakistan crisis, he restricted himself to expressing China's 'unswerving support [for] the Pakistan Government and people in their just struggle to safeguard national independence and state sovereignty' without mentioning the words 'territorial integrity'.

Thirdly, unlike the Pakistani media which stressed that Geng Biao's visit was significant because it had primarily taken place 'against the background of important changes gradually making themselves felt in the region' (the usual expression referring to the coup in Afghanistan), the Chinese media was cautious to emphasize, throughout and immediately after the visit, that the major significance of the visit stemmed from the fact that it was made to attend the inaugural ceremony of the Karakorum Highway.

The Chinese Government continued to exhibit this cautious attitude for most of the second half of 1978. In the first week of September, Pakistan's Adviser for Foreign Affairs, Agha Shahi,

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visited Peking. Although not enough information is available on the visit, there are a few pointers which suggest that he discussed the Khalq regime's policies with the Chinese Government. On 6 September 1978, for instance, at a banquet for Agha Shahi, the Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua stated: 'Our exchange of ideas for a better understanding of the situation is very necessary in view of a world which is in the grip of unrest and intranquility, with the two super-powers, especially Soviet Social-imperialism, launching new offensive in Africa, Middle East, the Persian Gulf and South East Asia'.\(^{51}\) The next day, NCNA reported his meeting with Vice-Premier Li Xiannian and described his talks 'on the further development of the friendly relations between the two countries and on issues of common interest' as 'friendly', which was the usual word for indicating agreement.\(^{52}\) In spite of this agreement, however, the Chinese Government refrained from issuing any categorical statement supporting Pakistan against the perceived Soviet, or the more obvious Afghan threat. Instead, Huang Hua limited himself to expressing the belief that 'the friendly relations between the peoples of China and Pakistan ... would surely be further strengthened through regular exchange of views'.\(^{53}\)

Seven weeks later, on 27 October 1978, NCNA transmitted a 'feature' article on the improvement of relations among South Asian countries. In this article, for the first time since the April 1976 coup in Kabul, the Chinese Government acknowledged the existence of a dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Notwithstanding the Taraki regime's consistent reiteration, and Pakistan's questioning of the

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need to resolve the national issue of Pakhtun and Baluchi people, however, Peking refrained from openly siding with Islamabad against Kabul. Instead, the article appreciated and encouraged Pakistan to establish friendly relations with its northwestern neighbour. 'Although problems of one kind or another still exist among the South Asian countries', it stated, 'the nations concerned are making progress in the direction of the gradual and systematic settling of disputes by peaceful negotiations'. 'Last September', it elaborated, 'when Zia-ul-Haq was visiting Afghanistan, he said that if there were differences between the two countries, they could be solved through negotiations carried out in a friendly and brotherly atmosphere'. 'This trend', it expressed its appreciation, 'is in accordance with the interests of the South Asian peoples themselves and will undoubtedly lead to the further stabilisation of the situation throughout South Asia'.

At the turn of 1979, however, Peking began moving away from its cautious policy. On 30 December 1978, NCNA transmitted a commentary entitled 'Kremlin pushes southward in 1978' which for the first time since the coup in Kabul, explicitly subscribed to Islamabad's threat perceptions. 'The Kremlin's southward push', it stated, 'stands out most noticeably in its global expansionist offensive this year'. One of the moves witnessed by the outgoing year, it pointed out, is 'opening up a corridor to the South'. 'The coup d'état in Afghanistan last April', it explained, 'was followed by the conclusion of a USSR-Afghanistan treaty of "friendship, good neighbourliness and cooperation", including a military clause'. 'The contiguous Iran and Pakistan', it asserted, 'are obviously the next

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This was followed on 19 January, by an article in the Beijing Review entitled 'Social-Imperialist Strategy in Asia', which, while outlining Moscow's 'deeply disturbing acts of aggression and expansionist intrigues in Asia last year', for the first time in the preceding eight months, categorically identified Baluchistan as a target of Soviet subversion. The Soviet Union, it stated, 'tried to consolidate its footholds in South and West Asia so as to encircle Pakistan and Iran. It provided the weapons for Baluchistan insurrectionists, tried to further dismember Pakistan and force it to obey its dictates'.

While identifying itself with Islamabad's perceptions, however, the Chinese Government initially exhibited an unwillingness to categorically declare its full support for Pakistan against the Soviet backed Afghanistan. On 20 January 1979, for instance, Chinese Vice-Premier Li Xiannian visited Pakistan. During this visit, according to the NCNA itself, he exchanged views with General Zia on the present international situation, particularly the situation in the South Asian subcontinent. As before, since Pakistan was worried about the situation on its northwestern frontier, it is not illogical to assume that General Zia would have raised the subject of his regime's problems with Kabul. Nevertheless, the Chinese Vice-Premier refrained from declaring his Government's full support for Islamabad. Instead, during the banquet given in his honour on the 21st of January, he restricted himself to stating that 'the government and people of China will, as before, resolutely support

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the just struggle of the Pakistan Government and people in defending national independence and state sovereignty and opposing external aggression and intervention ...', once again omitting any reference to China's support for Pakistan's 'territorial integrity'. 58

A similar attitude, was adopted by the Chinese Government during the Pakistani Secretary of Defence, Lieutenant General Gilani's visit to Peking in February 1979. On one occasion, for instance, General Gilani indicated the kind of support his government expected to receive from China: '... [W]e know', he said, 'that the Chinese people will never seek hegemony and their power will be a source of strength to the smaller countries in guarding their national independence, state sovereignty and territorial integrity'. Then he asserted that, although they wanted to live in peace with all, 'the people of Pakistan ... [were] determined to safeguard their independence and territorial integrity'. 59 The Chinese deputy Chief of General Staff, Zhang Caiqian, however, ignored the reference to territorial integrity and merely assured that ' ... whatever happens in the world, [China] ... will never change ... [its] stand of supporting the just struggle of the Pakistani people to safeguard their national independence and state sovereignty'. This omission was significant as the assurance was preceded by Zhang Caiqian's statement that 'at the present moment when the hegemonists, big and small, are posing an increasingly grave threat in our region, the Chinese people and their liberation army are very much concerned for Pakistan our friendly neighbour'. 60

It was not until the end of March 1979 that Peking fully came out in support of Islamabad.

60 Ibid. p.A/12.
Since the April coup in Kabul, a number of Afghans, whose interests were directly threatened by the change of government, had been migrating to Pakistan and Iran. The frequency with which Afghan refugees began pouring into Pakistan and Iran, however, markedly increased towards the end of 1978 due to a number of socio-economic reforms introduced by Taraki's right hand man, Hafizullah Amin, such as the abolition of the bride price and 'purdah', cancellation of agricultural debts, land redistribution and formation of rural cooperatives on the communist pattern, as well as the regime's efforts to replace the authority of the local elite with its own party bureaucracy, wide spread arrests, massacres and executions of opponents. These Afghan refugees, who poured in at an average rate of 13,000 per month after November 1978 and included the traditional elite, religious class and the fundamentalist and nationalist groups from the rural areas organised themselves into a number of guerilla groups and, in early March 1979, when the snow melted, began insurgency operations in Afghanistan. The first target was Nooristan but soon the insurgency was to spread in a number of eastern and south-eastern provinces.

Faced with this situation, the Afghan Government, which had initially denied the presence of any rebellion, began to accuse the Pakistan Government of collaborating with 'some imperialist countries and left' extremist aggressors in imparting special training to a 'group of traitors'. The Soviet media adopted an even more hostile

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tone than the DRA towards Pakistan. On 19 March, a Pravda article by I. Alexandrov entitled 'Reactionary Intrigues against Democratic Afghanistan' accused Pakistan of supporting the Afghan rebels. One of the most active groupings operating under slogans hostile to the April revolution, it stated, was the 'Muslim Brotherhood' which had its main bases in Pakistan. These groupings, it accused were waging a 'vicious propaganda campaign' against Democratic Afghanistan and its revolutionary government 'from the territory of Pakistan and a number of other states'. 'Radio stations set up in Pakistani territory', it elaborated, 'are disparaging the measures carried out in the country [Afghanistan], slandering the bodies of power and sowing all kinds of rumours intended to shake the confidence of the masses in the revolution. They send in leaflets ... calling for a 'holy war' against the legitimate Government and its bodies'. 'Everything indicates', it claimed, 'that the activities of the rebels and counter-revolutionaries are being unfolded not without the knowledge of the official Pakistani authorities', and accused 'these authorities' of failing to cut short these activities entailing 'a gross violation of the principles of good neighbourliness'. The article also accused that Chinese instructors were training the 'sabotage and terrorist gangs sent into Afghanistan from Pakistan' and that 'the Karakorum Highway was being used for transporting weapons, equipment and propaganda materials intended for organizing subversive activities in the DRA'.

This was followed by two more articles in Izvestia and Pravda on the 20th and 21st of March respectively with similar accusations and a warning that 'the inciting statements in support of the "Afghan Muslims" coming from

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Iran and Pakistan ... indeed are not in the interests of the peoples of Pakistan and Iran themselves.\(^{65}\)

The Pakistan Government, despite the fact that these charges were true, denied them on 20 March 1979. The allegations were described by a Pakistani official as 'totally baseless' and as 'false and mischievous charges' that had been made in complete disregard of facts. The Pakistan Government, he maintained, was not allowing the Afghan refugees to carry on hostile propaganda against the DRA. On the contrary, he claimed, Afghan refugees had been granted asylum in Pakistan on purely humanitarian grounds and on the condition that they would not use Pakistan's territory for any activity that might jeopardise its attempts at forging close ties with a neighbouring state, Afghanistan.\(^{66}\)

The Chinese news media, from the outset, supported this position. On 23 March 1979 NCNA transmitted news of Zia's denial of Pakistan's complicity in the Afghan rebellion.\(^{67}\) The next day, a Renmin Ribao article described the recent articles published in Pravda as 'slandering the Pakistan Government for interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan' and as spreading the 'preposterous rumour' that China and Pakistan were collaborating in training and arming Afghan guerrillas. These allegations, it pointed out, had been refuted by the Pakistani media as well as the government which had described 'all these malicious slanders fabricated by Pravda' as having been 'made in complete disregard to facts' and 'totally baseless'. Giving further details of the refutation, the article stated:


\(^{66}\)Pakistan Times, 21 March 1979.

On 19 March Pakistan's President Ziaul Haq told reporters at Peshawar that about 35,000 Afghan refugees had entered Pakistan, 25,000 of whom were staying in the north-western border provinces. 'It is purely on humanitarian grounds' that the Pakistan Government offered to take care of their everyday needs so that they could go on living. They had not done anything to harm relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. President Ziaul Haq also said: 'We are making the greatest efforts to maintain a highly peaceful relationship with Afghanistan, and I believe we can succeed'.

'This [refutation]', the article stated emphatically 'is true to facts'. Then it proceeded to provide an explanation, one totally parallel to Islamabad's position, of why it considered Pakistan's denial as being based on fact. Since the Afghan coup the previous year, it maintained, the Pakistan Government had been attempting to establish friendly and cooperative relations with the Taraki regime, and the Pakistani President, Ziaul Haq, had visited Kabul in September 1978 for that purpose. It had also offered entrepot facilities to Afghanistan and had made a friendly gesture of providing Kabul with wheat, sugar and 30,000 tons of rice 'despite domestic economic difficulties'. As for the refugees, it quoted a Pakistan Times editorial, they had been given asylum in Pakistan on humanitarian grounds, and then pointed out that their influx could not be stemmed due to the rough and difficult terrain along the common borders, and intermarriage between the people living in these border areas, which prevented Pakistan from closing the border. However, it stressed, Islamabad was not responsible for the 'recent clashes between Muslim guerillas and government troops in Afghanistan' as it was neither its policy nor was it in its interest to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs. The article was finally concluded with an analysis of motives behind Pravda's

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fabrication of rumours and accusations 'when the facts were so obvious'. Soviet social-imperialism, it argued, was facing growing opposition from the people of South and West Asia because its 'frantic expansion and infiltration' into that region had created great unrest and brought serious disasters to the people. 'To defend its conquest and make new expansionist moves', it continued, 'the Soviet Union is adopting all kinds of despicable tricks to shift the blame on to others and divert the peoples' attention from the real situation. The Pravda articles thus hide a malicious intent'.

The Chinese media's total identification with Islamabad's position was accompanied by the Chinese Government's categorical declaration of full support for Pakistan. On 26 March 1979, speaking at a banquet in Islamabad, the Chinese Air Force Commander-in-Chief, Zhang Tingfa used a phrase stronger than had been used by various Chinese leaders in the previous eleven months to express Peking's support for Islamabad. 'The Chinese people and the Chinese People's Liberation Army', he said, '... will, as in the past, firmly support the Pakistani people in their struggle for safeguarding national independence, state sovereignty and territorial integrity'.

This Chinese policy of fully and explicitly supporting Pakistan continued for the next five months. In early April 1979, for instance, the Soviet accusations against Pakistan assumed a stronger tone. A Radio Moscow commentary maintained that in spite of all assurances by the Government of Pakistan, 'armed groups of bandits' were continuing to cross from its territory into Afghanistan. The facts showed, it argued, that the Pakistani special services in

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collaboration with the CIA, were 'using the cunning ploy' of sending 'armed gangs' of the reactionary 'Muslim Brotherhood' into Afghanistan 'not at just one place but several, so as to give the impression of rising everywhere against the Afghan Government'. It also questioned Islamabad's assurances that it wanted to establish good-neighbourly relations with Kabul and pointed out that the problem between Afghanistan and Pakistan was 'not a matter of innocent refugees, but of armed units which enjoy at least the connivance of the Pakistani authorities'. 'Is it not obvious', it warned, 'that such a policy is fraught with serious complication for Pakistan itself? Can one reason that Afghanistan will stand idly by in regard to actions which could not be tolerated by any self-respecting state?'. Two days later, on 5 April 1979, Tass accused Pakistan of channelling the Chinese trained 'gangs of terrorists and raiders' through its territory into Afghanistan.

To counter these and other similar accusations, the NCNA transmitted a commentary on 9 April 1979 which presented an analysis of Soviet motives behind raising 'a hue and cry against "interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan"'. 'Afghanistan', it asserted, 'has long been a strategic target of the Soviet ruling clique, which have all along attempted to put this country under their wing and to use it as a land route southwards to the Indian ocean'. 'After the so-called "April revolution" hailed by Moscow', therefore, it argued, Soviet military advisers and specialists of all kinds were rushed into Afghanistan. Consequently, all key sectors of state power

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73 See, for example, Tass, 2 April 1979, in SWB:FE, No.6085, 5 April 1979, p.C/1; and Tass, 4 April 1979, in SWB:FE, No.6086, 6 April 1979, p.C/2.
organs, including the ministries for economy, transport and communications and mines, were being controlled by the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet influence, it quoted the West German paper Die Welt, was 'more far-reaching in the army' where the majority of higher officers were all Soviet. Moscow, the commentary asserted, wanted to further consolidate its control of and intervene in Afghanistan. To cover this 'hideous performance of an intervener', it explained, the Soviet Union was 'laying a smokescreen' and 'concoct[ing] rumours' alleging that China and Pakistan, along with other states, were 'carrying out a "joint action programme" against Afghanistan'.

This argument was further developed in the next three weeks in various reports and commentaries in NCNA, Radio Peking and the Renmin Ribao. Quoting the western news agencies, the Chinese media pointed out that since it took over the government, the PDP of Afghanistan had never effectively controlled the whole country. However, it had made matters worse by closely aligning itself with the Soviet Union. Within a month of the coup, it was maintained, the Soviet Union had concluded with Afghanistan some 40 agreements under various names and had increased the numbers of its advisers, including those in the military, to 1,000-2,000. The two states had also concluded a 'treaty of friendship, good neighbourliness and cooperation' in December 1978. These treaties and agreements, and

74 'Moscow is spreading smokescreen', NCNA, 9 April 1979, in SWB:FE, No.6089, 10 April 1979, pp.C/1-2.
75 This paragraph is based on information from current affairs review: 'What has happened in Afghanistan', Radio Peking, 16 April 1979, in SWB:FE, No.6096, 20 April 1979, p.C/1; commentary: 'Moscow is spreading a smokescreen', in Ibid, pp.C/1-2; NCNA, 22 April 1979, in SWB:FE, No.6100, 25 April 1979, in SWB:FE, No. 6102, 27 April 1979, pp.C/3-4; and 'Behind the Soviet Aid to Afghanistan', NCNA, 28 April 1979, in SWB:FE, No. 6105, 30 April 1979, p.C/1.
the existence of large numbers of Soviet advisers, which were all aimed at controlling and intervening in the Afghan political situation and plundering the country's wealth', it was argued, had sown the seeds of resistance among the Afghan people. The current unrest, therefore, was 'a great eruption of such "seeds"'. The Soviet Union, it was pointed out, had even taken advantage of this situation and had 'intensified its infiltration and expansion into the west Asian region'. It had been airlifting weapons to Afghanistan on a crash basis and sending large numbers of military advisers there. It had also sent a military delegation led by A. Yepishev, Soviet Deputy Minister of Defence, to Kabul 'to boost the morale of Afghanistan's high-ranking officers'. All these steps, it was argued, proved that Moscow was intent upon converting Afghanistan into its 'sixteenth republic'. However, to justify its actions and find another pretext for intervention, it was maintained, the Soviet Union had been vilifying China, the USA, Britain, West Germany, Pakistan, Iran, Egypt and other countries for interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

Similarly, in May and June 1979, the Chinese Government continued to side with Pakistan against the Soviet and Afghan Governments. On 9 May 1979, for instance, the Taraki regime issued a 'resolute protest' to the Government of Pakistan in connection with the growing frequency of armed attacks on areas of the DRA from Pakistan territory and accused 'a large number of Pakistani soldiers, armed with light and heavy weapons' of participating in these attacks.76 Two weeks later, on 23 May 1979, a Pravda article by Yuriy Glukhov charged that attempts were being made to launch large-scale military actions against the young Afghan republic. 'Wide

situation [could] ... not leave the Soviet Union indifferent ...'.\textsuperscript{78}

The Pakistan Government, however, once again denied these allegations and reiterated its position of providing asylum to the refugees on humanitarian grounds and of consistently adhering to the goal of establishing friendly relations with Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{79}

The Chinese media, as before, supported this position. The news of the Pakistan Government's refutation was reported promptly and consistently.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, on 26 May 1979, a *Renmin Ribao* commentary identified the allegations made by *Pravda* against Pakistan three days earlier as 'sheer fabrication'. The recent turmoil in Afghanistan, it argued, was caused by the 'intensified Soviet penetration and expansion' in that country. But *Pravda* blamed all this on Pakistan and made unreasonable charges against it. 'The Soviet paper, however', the commentary continued, 'failed to provide any tangible proof of a direct Pakistani connection with the turmoil in Afghanistan. Finally it had to defend its charge by saying weakly that "it is hard to guess whether the Pakistani authorities were unaware of the activities of the Afghan reactionaries or were unable to restrain them"'. The *Pravda* statement, it analysed, had unwittingly revealed that Moscow's charge against Pakistan was based on guess work! 'The timely refutation of the Soviet charge by the spokesman of the Pakistan Foreign Ministry', therefore 'is fully justifiable'.\textsuperscript{81}


\textsuperscript{79}Pakistan Times, 16 May 1979, 17 May 1979 and 24 May 1979.


scale interventionist plans directed against Afghanistan', it wrote, 'are actually being drawn up ... Several thousand Afghan rebels, equipped with Chinese and US arms and trained in the ways of guerilla warfare, are now concentrated on the territory of Pakistan. They are destined to be sent into Afghanistan to provoke armed conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan'. Then pointing out that 'friendly relations between the two neighbouring countries meet the national interests of both Afghanistan and Pakistan', it concluded:

In spite of warnings and public denials by Pakistan, its territory, as shown by numerous facts, continues to be used as a place d'armes for subversive action against the neighbouring state. Pakistan is being drawn into a risky game which may have disastrous consequences. 77

This was followed on 1st June by another Pravda article which accused Pakistan of 'direct complicity' in the unseemly subversive activities of 'groups of bandits and diversionists' from Pakistani territory against the DRA. The bandits and terrorists captured, it stated, testified that the anti-Afghanistan groups were being trained with the participation of Pakistani and Chinese instructors and, that they were being supplied with weapons and ammunition as well as large sums of money in Pakistan, 'Consequently', it stated, 'the facts of the recent days give a lie to the assurances of the Pakistani administration that it would not allow its territory to be used for anti-Afghanistan activities. Interference from Pakistan in the internal affairs of Afghanistan is taking place - it is now a reality'. The article, once again, concluded with a warning that 'violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty, incursions of armed gangs into its territory from Pakistan and the attempts to create a crisis

Three weeks later, on 15 June 1979, against a background of continuous Soviet and Afghan charges of Pakistan's complicity in the Afghan rebellion, Radio Peking transmitted a detailed report which indirectly supported Islamabad. Echoing Pakistan's stand that the policies pursued by the Afghan regime itself, rather than the alleged outside interference, accounted for the turmoil in Afghanistan, the report stated that 'in the final analysis' there were three major causes for the breaking out and spreading of anti-government armed activity in 15 of the country's 29 provinces and municipalities. Firstly, it explained, 'Since coming into power in April 1978, the present Afghan Government had carried out three major cleaning-up campaigns, suppressing large numbers of people, not only military and government officials and religious and tribal personages who had opposed the present regime, but also ordinary staff members and workers. Secondly, numerous economic difficulties, poor agricultural harvests and insufficient industrial funds had rendered the lives of the people very hard, creating an exodus of 300,000 refugees to Iran, Pakistan and some Arab countries. Third, the present government's 'extraordinary relationship' with the Soviet Union had aroused discontent among the people of all strata resulting in intensified anti-government activity. The Afghan government's attempts to suppress this activity with Soviet backing, it explained, had aroused discontent among military personnel who had been mutinying and defecting to the anti-government armed forces. 'With the many up-to-date weapons they have carried away with them', the report maintained, 'the Muslim armed forces have been able to improve their equipment and greatly increase their fighting capacity', thereby implying that Pakistan was not, as charged by the Soviet and Afghan Governments, a place d'armes. 82

The strongest refutation and criticism of Soviet and/or Afghan charges against Pakistan, however, was made by NCNA on 26 June 1979. Commenting on the statement made by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation of the Soviet Union on 21st June 1979, which called on the international democratic public and on all people to resolutely demand an end to the open military interference [in the DRA] by the Pakistan authorities,' it stated: 'This is the first time that an official Soviet organ has come out with an attack against Pakistan. This is something which warrants public attention'. The Soviet Union, it explained, had begun its propaganda campaign against Pakistan last March, but at that time the tone of the attack was comparatively mild, and the targets of attack, apart from Pakistan included some other countries. Since April, however, the Soviet Union had increasingly directed its attacks solely against Pakistan, and charges and intimidations had escalated. This escalation in Moscow's attacks on Pakistan, it maintained, had always been paralleled with the Soviet intensified control of and intervention in Afghanistan, the latest attack by the AAPSO, therefore, it pointed out, was significant not because it was valid but because it indicated Moscow's anxiety over the situation in Afghanistan and its attempt to once again find a pretext for increased intervention in that country.  

The Chinese media's support for Pakistan against the Soviet and Afghan charges continued during July and August 1979 as well. For instance, on 8 August, i.e. only three days after the fierce fighting between Afghan guerillas and armed forces (which was followed by  

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Soviet and Afghan allegations and Pakistani denials of any complicity); 84 Renmin Ribao published an article which repeated the arguments that the resistance movement in Afghanistan was triggered by the Soviet interference in the country, and that Moscow was further tightening its control over all Afghanistan by taking advantage of the turmoil. However, it stated, to cover its actions up, Tass had 'attributed the fighting which broke out in Kabul to the provocations carried out by "imperialist forces in conjunction with foreign reactionaries and their former pawns"'. 85

This was followed by another commentary, transmitted by NCNA on 20 August 1979, which stated that the Soviet Union, which was the root cause of the turbulent situation in Afghanistan, had always tried 'to cover up the truth by throwing the blame on the Afghanistan's neighbours as well as other countries'. To prove that this contention was correct, it quoted an editorial in the Hindustan Times on 8 August 1979 which had argued that the scale of fighting inside Afghanistan could no longer be explained away as the work of counter-revolutionaries and their abettors. To further reinforce its argument, it also quoted a commentary in the July 1979 issue of Round Table which had pointed out that 'no one had yet produced a scrap of evidence to connect any foreign power directly with the uprising in Herat or the rebellion in the Afghan provinces'. 86

In September 1979, the situation changed. As a result of a palace coup, Hafizullah Amin, the main organiser of the April 1978, ousted and killed Taraki.

84 See, for example, Text of communique of The Government of the DRA, Radio Kabul, 5 August 1979, in SWB:FE, No.6187, 7 August 1979, p.c/1; Radio Moscow, 9 August 1979, in SWB:FE, No.6191, 11 August 1979, p.c/4; and Pakistan Times, 7 August 1979.
85 Xue Yuan, the instability of the Political Situation in Afghanistan', Renmin Ribao, 8 August 1979, p.5, in FBIS:CHI, 22 August 1979, p.F/2.
and came to power. Soon after assuming control, Amin attempted to improve relations with Pakistan in a bid to bring the Pakistan-based insurgency to an end. He not only declared his resolve to settle the 'outstanding issues' between Kabul and Islamabad through friendly negotiations, but also renewed the invitations earlier made by Taraki, for visits by Pakistani Foreign Minister, Agha Shahi, and General Zia. Although Islamabad did not respond to these overtures as enthusiastically as Kabul would have preferred, General Zia did announce on 27 September 1979 that his government was prepared to exchange views at the foreign ministers' level.  

As the diplomatic negotiations to set a date for Agha Shahi's visit began, despite the fact that the Soviet Union continued to occasionally accuse Pakistan of collaborating with the other states to undo the revolution, the Chinese Government ceased to issue any statements refuting these allegations. At the same time, once again Peking began to shy away from categorically expressing its support for Pakistan. On 8 October 1979, for instance, at the banquet for the visiting Pakistani Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshall Anwar Shamim, the Chinese Commander of the Air Force, Zhang Tingfa used a much weaker phrase to express Peking's support for Pakistan than he himself had used earlier in March 1979. 'We always hold', he said, 'that Pakistan which adheres to a policy of independence and sovereignty and stands on the subcontinent of South Asia will play an important role in maintaining stability and peace in this region', and then wished Pakistan prosperity, stability and constant growth.  

Similarly, only twelve days later, during his visit to Islamabad, Zhang Caiqian, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA restricted himself to only

87 Pakistan Times, 28 September 1979.
stating that 'stable and prosperous Pakistan is of great significance to the defence of peace in this region and in the world'.

This change proved shortlived. On 27 December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, ousted and killed Amin and installed Babrak Karmal as the head of the state. Soon afterwards, the Chinese Government reverted to its policy of refuting Soviet and Afghan allegations, a trend which to date has continued.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the emergence of a pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan was viewed apprehensively by the Pakistan Government. Nevertheless, the Chinese Government was unwilling to categorically identify itself or support Pakistan against a perceived Soviet threat and obvious Afghan attempt to exploit the secessionist tendencies in Baluchistan and NWFP. It was only, at the turn of 1979, when Afghanistan signed a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union that Beijing gradually moved to support Pakistan against Kabul and/or Moscow. This support primarily took the form of refuting Soviet and Afghanistan allegations of Pakistan's complicity in training and arming Afghan guerillas. The duration of Hafizullah Amin ascent to power, however, once again witnessed Beijing's reluctance to categorically side with Islamabad.

This chapter raises major questions about China's policy towards South Asia during the 1978-79 period. These questions, which will be answered in Chapter X, are as follows:

What was Beijing's perception of the Taraki regime in 1978?

Why did this perception change at the turn of 1979?

Why did China avoid siding with Pakistan during Amin's rule?

To what extent does China's fear of Soviet encirclement explain these changes in the Chinese responses to the Afghan Coup of 1978?

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CHAPTER VIII

CHINESE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO PAKISTAN: 1969-79

The most frequently mentioned and least discussed aspect of China’s relations with Pakistan relates to its economic and military assistance. It is, for instance, frequently emphasised that, with military and economic aid worth US$378 million provided during the 1965-79 period, Pakistan ranks as the largest recipient of Chinese assistance among the non-communist Asian states. However, with one exception, little or no attempt has been made to focus attention on this dimension of Sino-Pakistani relations. The main reason for this neglect is probably the barriers faced by the researchers in accumulating relevant data. The two states are signatories to an agreement which prohibits them from divulging any information on their economic and military interactions. It is, therefore, often difficult to obtain exact information from either of them on the Chinese component in even the most widely publicised projects undertaken by the Pakistan Government with Beijing’s aid. The news media of the two countries do not provide a clear picture either; while the Chinese press generally refrains from reporting any news of aid to Islamabad, the Pakistani press repeatedly reports the same news, thereby conveying an impression that the quantum of Chinese economic aid is much larger than is the reality.

1John Franklin Copper, China’s Foreign Aid in 1979-80, Occasional Papers/Reprint Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, School of Law, University of Maryland, No.5, 1981, p.15.
3Interview with an official of Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan.
4An example of the confusion created by such reporting is the information provided by Wolfgang Bartke who identified Beijing as providing US $82.0 million during 1967-68 instead of the correct amount of only US$40.6 million. Wolfgang Bartke, China’s Economic Aid, (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1975), pp.10-11.
The barriers become even higher when one ventures into the sphere of military assistance. Unlike in the case of western suppliers, the Chinese Government does not announce the conclusion of any agreement on military aid. Consequently, while it is possible to ascertain to some degree the number and type of weapons transferred, it is immensely difficult to obtain information on the time of conclusion and the exact terms of the agreements under which these arms are supplied. Neither is it easy to estimate the value of these arms transfers with any degree of precision. The US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), which has access to information unobtainable by independent research organisations, for instance, provides information on the cumulative value of Chinese arms transferred to Pakistan during the last five or ten years. Though significant, as these values include the smallest items and equipment for defence industries, they are not necessarily useful for a researcher who might wish to focus on a specific period of time. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), on the other hand, makes available its unpublished worksheets which provide an annual breakdown of the value of Chinese arms supplied to Pakistan but due to its tendency to count every announced sale as a transfer it comes up with figures that, to the despair of the analysts, are substantially higher than those of ACDA.

Notwithstanding these barriers, however, it is possible to trace a pattern, even if a bit sketchy, of the Chinese economic and

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military assistance to Pakistan, and this chapter precisely attempts to achieve this goal with reference to the period from 1969 to 1979. It is divided into two parts; the first part focuses on the economic aid, whereas the second deals with the military dimensions of the Sino-Pakistan relations.

**Chinese Economic Aid to Pakistan**

Due to the widespread poverty in the country, the Pakistan Government has always found it difficult to mobilise adequate resources from the domestic economy to meet its requirements of capital goods, industrial raw materials and other essential equipment. To bridge the gap between total foreign exchange earnings and the total import bill, therefore, it has relied on foreign economic assistance since independence. During the 1950s, the bulk of this assistance, which took the form of grants and loans and increased from US$371 million during the 1950-55 period to US$990 million in the First Five Year Plan (1955-60), was provided by the United States and various Western countries and agencies (later organised as the 'Pakistan Consortium') under bilateral agreements.\(^7\)

It was only in July 1964 that the Soviet Union became the first Communist state to provide a loan worth US$25.9 million with an interest-rate of 2.5% and repayable in 12 years for exploration of mineral resources, including oil.\(^8\)

The Chinese aid relationship with Pakistan, however, was established in 1964 when Beijing offered an interest-free loan of

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US$60 million, to be repaid in Pakistani currency and goods over a period of twenty years beginning in 1976.\textsuperscript{9} Half of the loan was to be utilised for importing various commodities from China including steel billets, coal, aluminium conductors, galvanised sheets, structural steel and electrical installations.\textsuperscript{10} The remaining half was earmarked for various industrial projects. During the talks held in June 1966 to discuss the nature of these projects, the Chinese Government agreed to allocate a major share of this project aid to providing technical assistance and equipment for a Heavy Mechanical Complex in Taxila designed to produce complete plants for sugar mills and cement factories, low-pressure boilers, overhead travelling cranes, earth-moving implements such as road rollers, scrapers and bulldozers, and railway equipment. Construction of this complex was to begin in 1967 and be completed by 1972 with full production capability to be acquired in 1978.\textsuperscript{11}

This first Chinese loan was followed by another, worth US$6.9 million, in January 1967. Extended solely for the purpose of importing 100,000 tons of wheat and 50,000 tons of rice from China, this loan was also interest-free and was repayable in 20 years following a grace period of ten years.\textsuperscript{12}

At the turn of 1969, the Chinese Government extended another interest-free credit worth US$40.6 million. Repayment, as with the previous two loans, was to commence after a grace of 10 years and was to extend over two decades.\textsuperscript{13} According to the terms of the agreement,

\textsuperscript{10}Dawn, 28 December 1967.
\textsuperscript{12}Pakistan Economic Survey: 1970-71, p.86.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
one-third of this credit was allocated for purchase of Chinese commodities including cement, coal and steel. The remaining two-thirds was earmarked for specific development projects such as a sugar mill, a chemical fertiliser plant in East Pakistan, and a refractory plant for manufacturing magnesite bricks. Most importantly, this loan was to provide the foreign exchange component for a proposed Heavy Foundry and Forge project at Taxila which was designed to supplement the Heavy Mechanical complex and, at full capacity, was to produce steel castings, steel ingots, iron castings, press forging, forged billets and copper and aluminium castings worth Rs 395.7 million annually. During the fiscal year 1970-71, the Chinese Government announced two additional loans for Pakistan. The first one was interest-free and worth US$2.9 million. The second loan, which was offered during General Yahya's visit to Beijing in November 1970, was the largest donation of aid yet to Pakistan and one of the largest the Chinese Government had made to any Third World state; a US$217.391 million interest-free loan, repayable over twenty years with a 10 year grace period. Negotiations on the utilisation of these loans began in 1971 and by mid-October 1971 the Chinese Government agreed to assist Pakistan in setting up small fertiliser factories run on gas in different parts of the eastern wing and inserting 5,000 tube wells in the northern districts of the province. It also agreed to send its experts to East Pakistan in November 1971,

14 Dawn, 27 December 1968.
16 This loan was also repayable over a period of 20 years with a 10 year's grace period. Pakistan Economic Survey: 1971-72, (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, Economic Adviser's Wing, 1972), p.87.
17 The only other Chinese loan that exceeded this amount was offered to Tanzania and was worth US$270 million. Bartke, op.cit., p.11.
to determine the feasibility of ten developmental projects for which Islamabad had sought Beijing's assistance. Due to the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war in December 1971, and the secession of East Pakistan, however, these projects were never undertaken.

During Bhutto's visit to Beijing in January 1972, the Chinese Government converted four project-cum-commodity loans amounting to US$110.4 million into grants and deferred the repayment of the US$217.391 million loan of 1970 for twenty years. Thereafter, the Chinese Government did not provide any grant assistance, but it did advance three additional loans. The first, in 1975-76, was worth US$4.293 million, and repayment was to commence immediately at 4.5% interest. The second loan, worth US$5.718 million, was provided in 1977-78 at an interest rate of 4.5% to 5.0% per annum, and an amortization period of 6.5 years. This was followed in 1979-79 by another loan worth US$3.618 million, repayable over a period of six years at an interest rate of 4.5% per annum (Table 1).

Cumulatively, these loans were utilised primarily for a number of industrial projects undertaken by the Government of Pakistan. Although an exhaustive list of these projects is not possible to obtain, the most frequently reported by the Pakistan news media include:

1. Larkana sugar mill, which was completed in March 1975. This mill has an annual crushing capacity of 400,000 tons and it provides employment for 3,000 people;

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18. The list included, among others, aid for a new Dacca-Chittagong railway line, railway signalling, the Rupsa bridge, and a power supply system for the irrigation projects of the East Pakistan Agricultural Development Bank. Ibid, pp.156-157.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Interest Rate %</th>
<th>Amortisation Period</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>+Converted into grants in February 1972.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>217.391</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>+Amortization period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>4.293</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>+was increased to 40 yrs in February 1972.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>5.718</td>
<td>4.5-5.0</td>
<td>6.5 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>3.618</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:

2. Exploration of copper, chromite and iron ore in Baluchistan, Kalabagh and Kashmir;

3. Two mini-steel mills; one in Nok Kundi, Baluchistan, based on local iron ore deposits, and another one at Kashmore - a place where the border of three provinces, i.e. Sind, Baluchistan and Punjab meet, also based on local iron ore deposits;

4. Two fertiliser plants in the NWFP; one near Peshawar with an annual production capacity of 70,000 tons of urea, and another one in Haripur, Hazara, of 95,000 tons;

5. One glass-sheet factory at Nawshera, NWFP, which would also manufacture safety glass for motor vehicles;

6. One cement factory in Daoud Khail, NWFP;

7. Five textile mills in Dera Ghazi Khan, Tarbela, Kotri, Mirpur (Azad Kashmir) and Punjab;

8. The construction of Tarbela-Wah 220 kW double-circuit transmission line to link Tarbela power station with the national grid;

9. The installation of a new 30,000 kW thermal power station at Quetta.

Other Chinese aided projects, which are either planned or under construction, include a ceramic factory in NWFP, a refractory in

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27 Pakistan Times, 23 May 1975
28 Pakistan Times, 18 November 1972.
Abbotabad, and two sugar mills, one each in Punjab and Sind.

Although comprising only 2.81% of the total grants and loans received by Pakistan during the period from 1969 to 1979, the Chinese economic assistance had been significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it had been provided when Pakistan was in dire need of foreign aid. In 1970, for example, the Pakistan Government had launched its Fourth Five Year Plan envisaging an annual increase of 6.5% in the GNP, and a total expenditure of Rs 49,000 million in the public sector and Rs 26,000 million in the private sector but its foreign exchange reserves were so low that, unlike the estimated foreign aid requirement of US$2,850 million for the Third Five Year Plan (1965-70), it required foreign assistance worth US$4,620 million to finance the Plan. Economic assistance from the Western countries, however, was not forthcoming. The Aid-to-Pakistan Consortium countries had pledged or indicated a contribution of US$578.4 million for the first financial year of the Plan but the actual disbursement of this assistance was delayed as the Consortium postponed its meeting, from December 1970, to March 1971. The Pakistan Government, therefore, asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan of US$50 million for the financial year 1970-71. The IMF agreed in principle to meet the request but tied the loan

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31 Interview with an official of Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan.
with the demand that Pakistan should devalue its currency. Although the Pakistan Government did not concede to the demand immediately, the possibility of such a decision affected markedly the total value of home remittances made by overseas Pakistanis. At this stage, without attaching any strings, the Chinese Government offered an interest-free loan of US$217.391 million which comprised 21.62% of the total aid pledged to Pakistan during the 1970-71 fiscal year and, therefore, reduced the economic burden on the Pakistan Government to some extent. Similarly in early 1972, when the Bangla Desh crisis and the Indo-Pakistan war (1971) had resulted in almost complete depletion of Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, and the Consortium countries were not prepared to assist the government of the 'new' Pakistan against a virtual collapse of its economy by resuming the aid supplies suspended in mid-1971, the Chinese Government had taken the initiative of converting four loans into grants and extending the grace period for the November-1970 loan for another ten years.

Secondly, the terms of the Chinese aid were more favourable than those granted by any other country, capitalist or communist. For instance unlike Soviet loans with an interest rate of 2.5% per annum and American loans with interest rates ranging from 0.75% to 7% per annum, 95.03% of the total Chinese loans extended to Pakistan during the 1969-79 period were interest-free and included a ten year grace period before repayment was to commence.

Thirdly, a major portion of the loans and grants was utilised for establishing projects which the western donors had been unwilling

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to finance. A major proportion of the 1968-69 loan which was later converted into grant, for example, was allocated for Chinese technical assistance and equipment for a Heavy Foundry and Forge project --- the first of its kind in the country --- which was expected to save Pakistan Rs 395.7 million a year once it reached full production capacity.\footnote{Pakistan Economic Survey: 1974-75, p.56.}

Fourthly, the terms on which the project aid was offered were more favourable than those offered by various Western donors. The Chinese Government, did not insist that its technicians and workers be given salaries higher than those of their Pakistani coworkers. Instead it stipulated in the project aid agreements that its workers would be paid in accordance with Pakistani standards. Considering that in projects undertaken with the assistance of western countries, a major proportion of the loan is generally used up by paying for disproportionately higher salaries to the consultants and workers of the donor state, the Chinese refusal to follow suit meant that the Chinese aid was proportionately more valuable than equivalent sums in Western (or Soviet) aid.

Fifthly, instead of being concentrated in the relatively more developed province of Punjab, the Chinese aided projects were established in all four provinces and, being labour-intensive in nature, provided employment for people in even the remote areas of Baluchistan like Nok Kundi.

Notwithstanding these favourable attributes, the fact remains that viewed on its own, the Chinese economic assistance to Pakistan gradually declined during the period from 1969 to 1979. This becomes evident, from a comparison of the total value of Chinese loans contracted by Pakistan during the period under review. During the
period between the fiscal years 1968-69 and 1970-71, Beijing had granted Islamabad three loans which amounted to US$260.891 million. In marked contrast, however, the total value of three Chinese loans extended to Pakistan during the second half of the 1970s did not exceed US$13.629 million. The terms of the loans also gradually became less favourable; the first three loans, were interest-free, and included a grace period of ten to twenty years before the repayment was due to commence and three of them were converted into grants. The loans provided during the period from 1975 to 1979, however, not only incurred an interest rate of 4.5% to 5.0% per annum but also did not contain any grace period.  

These changes in the volume and terms of Chinese economic assistance to Pakistan were accompanied by a decline in Pakistan's share of total Chinese aid to Third World countries. In 1970, for example, the US$217.391 million loan extended to Islamabad constituted 28.2% of the total loans granted by Beijing to various underdeveloped countries in that year. This share, however, declined to 1.17% in 1975. Two years later, it increased to 3.14%, but in 1978-79, with the Chinese loan worth US$3.618 million, Pakistan's share of Chinese aid commitments to the Third World, once again registered a decline to 1.95% (Table 2).

Concomitantly, the rate of disbursement of Chinese loans to Pakistan also slowed down. During the period between 1972 and 1975, for instance, on an average, US$16.88 million were disbursed annually. However, this rate declined by 15% in the 1976-78 period to an annual average of US$14.34 million dollars. This is

40 This is especially significant as the Soviet loans to Pakistan during the 1975-79 period were extended at an interest rate of 2.5% to 3.0% per annum only. Pakistan Economic Survey: 1979-80, pp.156-158.
TABLE 2: PAKISTAN'S SHARE OF THE TOTAL CHINESE LOANS EXTENDED TO DEVELOPING STATES: 1969-79
(US$ MILLION)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Chinese aid extended to developing countries</th>
<th>Total Chinese aid extended to Pakistan</th>
<th>% of the total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>220.3</td>
<td>28.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>4.293</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>5.718</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>3.618</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:


significant as in the corresponding period, despite a relative decline in total Chinese commitments, the overall rate of disbursement of Chinese credits to the Third World states had increased on average by 7.6% (Table. 3)

That the value of Chinese economic assistance to Pakistan gradually declined during the period from 1969 to 1979, however, becomes most evident with a comparison of 'grant equivalent' and 'grant ratio' of various Chinese loans extended to Pakistan during the period under consideration. The 'grant equivalent', i.e. The difference between the amount of a loan and the present value of the flows generated by repayment can be determined by the following two formulae:

\[ G = L - \sum_{j=1}^{T} \left( \frac{C_j + I_j}{(1+q)^j} \right) \]  

and

\[ G = L - \sum_{j=1}^{M} \frac{I_j}{(1+q)^j} + \sum_{j=M+1}^{T} \frac{C_j + I_j}{(1+q)^j} \]  

where

- \( G \) is the grant equivalent in cash terms.
- \( L \) is the face value of the loan.

\[ 41 \text{Abbas, op.cit., pp.178-179.} \]

\[ 42 \text{It must be pointed out that various other formulae can also be used to determine the grant equivalent of loans, and that this formula has been used primarily because its ability has been proved in a previous study of Chinese loans to Third World State, Janos Morvath, Chinese Technology Transfer to the Third World, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), pp.25-32.} \]
### TABLE 3: A COMPARISON OF THE YEARLY DISBURSEMENT OF CHINESE LOANS TO PAKISTAN AND ALL THE THIRD WORLD STATES: 1972-79 (US$ MILLION)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Disbursement to all the developing countries</th>
<th>Disbursement to Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>28.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>12.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>5.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>20.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>14.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>14.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>14.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**

- T is the time of maturity in years.
- q is the opportunity rate of discount as a fraction.
- Cj and Ij are, respectively, the capital repayment and the interest payment due at the end of the jth year, and
- M is the moratorium years on repayments, that is the grace period.

The 'grant ratio', on the other hand is the proportion of grant equivalent in a loan and can be ascertained as follows:

\[ g' = \frac{G}{L} \times 100 \]

where

- g' is the grant ratio.
- G is the grant equivalent, and
- L is the face value of the loan.

Computed on the basis of these formulae, and the assumption that the opportunity rate of discount is 6%, it becomes evident that the grant equivalent and grant ratio of the Chinese loans offered to Pakistan gradually declined during the 1969 - 79 period. The Chinese loan worth US$ 40.6 million offered to Pakistan during the fiscal year 1968-69 and later converted into a grant, for instance, initially contained a grant equivalent worth of US$27.566 million with a grant ratio of 67.89%. The second loan worth US$2.9 million also contained a grant equivalent of US$1.97 million with a grant ratio of 68.24%. The third loan worth US$217.391 million was offered on even better terms; while initially its grant equivalent amounted to US$147.771 million with a 67.97% grant ratio, after Beijing's decision to defer its payment for 20 years, its grant equivalent was

\[ \text{Ibid, p.32.} \]
increased to US$178.523 million thereby raising the grant ratio to a record level of 82.12%. In marked contrast, however, the Chinese loan of US$4.293 million contracted by Pakistan in 1975-76 contained a grant equivalent worth of US$0.723 million only with a grant ratio of 16.84%. The US$5.718 million credit of 1977-78 contained an even lesser amount of grant, i.e. a grant equivalent worth of US$0.566 million only with the grant ratio declining to a mere 9.89%. Although these two values for the US$3.618 million worth loan extended in 1978-79 increased to US$0.523 million and 14.45% respectively, the fact remains that the grant equivalent and grant ratio of the Chinese loans, and hence their real value, declined during the second half of the 1970s (Chart I & Table 4).

**Chinese Military Assistance to Pakistan**

Since independence in 1947, Pakistan has perceived India as posing a major threat to its security. The Indians, Islamabad has believed, have never accepted the partition and, therefore, would some day take military measures to reincorporate Pakistan into India. Hence, from the outset, Pakistan's defence policy has been preoccupied with maintaining a military balance vis-a-vis India. Because Pakistan has been industrially and economically much weaker than its neighbour, this preoccupation has resulted in Islamabad pursuing a policy of closely aligning itself with and acquiring weapons from extra-regional major powers. During the 1950s and early 1960s this policy found expression in Pakistan's membership of the Western alliance system and close defence links with the United States which entitled it to sufficient arms deliveries to offset the perceived Indian threat.

In 1965, however, the Chinese Government also came into the picture. This entry was caused by the US decision to impose an arms
TABLE 4: GRANT EQUIVALENT OF CHINESE LOANS
CONTRACTED BY PAKISTAN 1968/69-1979/80 (FISCAL YEARS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Loan (US$ million)</th>
<th>Grant equivalent (US$ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>27.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71(a)</td>
<td>217.391</td>
<td>147.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72(a)</td>
<td>217.391</td>
<td>178.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>4.293</td>
<td>6.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>5.718</td>
<td>0.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>3.618</td>
<td>0.523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a): The loan extended in November 1970.

Source:

and Personal calculations
CHART 1:
COMPARISON OF GRANT RATIO OF CHINESE LOANS EXTENDED TO PAKISTAN:
1968 - 1979 (FISCAL YEARS)

a * The U$217.391m. worth loan's grant ratio in November 1970
b * The U$217.391m. worth loan's grant ratio after Chinese decision to defer repayment for 20 years
embargo on both India and Pakistan on 8 September 1965, i.e. only two days after the Third Indo-Pakistan war had broken out. This arms embargo, which was fully lifted only in April 1967, affected Pakistan more than India because, unlike the Indian Government which had received less than US$110 million worth of American military assistance the Pakistan Government was almost entirely dependent on the United States for military equipment. Soon after the 1965 war, therefore, the Pakistan Government faced the task of not only replenishing the losses incurred during the war through sources other than the United States but, also to eliminating any future risk of being rendered completely defenceless through total dependence on any single arms-supplying state. However, very soon it became clear that the NATO countries and the USSR were hesitant to sell arms to Pakistan for fear of alienating India which had consistently opposed any decision to supply weapons to its regional adversary. The Pakistan Government, therefore turned towards China which, not inhibited by any consideration of India's reaction, agreed to provide military aid to 1965. Under this agreement, the existence of which

44 Although the embargo was partially lifted in February 1966, it was only in April 1967 that the US Government agreed to sell weapons to Pakistan on cash basis. SIPRI, The Arms Trade with the Third World, (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), p.495.
45 Following the Sino-Indian border war, the US had promised to provide military aid worth US$110 million to India but it had only partially been delivered when the India-Pakistan war broke out in 1965. The Times, (London), 5 March 1963; New York Times, 13 May 1964.
46 According to the SIPRI worksheets, although the value of US military assistance to Pakistan had decreased from US$27,013,000 in 1962 to US$2,201,000 in 1964 the US still met 100% of Pakistan's defence needs when the war broke out in 1965. SIPRI worksheets, Unpublished data.
was not acknowledged until 23 March 1966, the Chinese Government supplied Pakistan with 4 MiG-15s (UTI), 4 IL 28 bombers, 40 MiG-19(F-6) interceptor/fighter aircraft and approximately 80 T-59 medium tanks during the 1965-66 period. The deliveries of these Chinese weapons, however, was disrupted by the onset of the Cultural Revolution and for the next three years no Chinese arms were received by Pakistan.

At the turn of the 1970s, as it came out of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Government resumed its arms supplies to Pakistan. From early to mid 1970, for example, Pakistan received approximately 20 T-59 tanks and 24 MiG-19s. The volume of supplies increased during the next twelve months, when approximately 125 additional T-59 tanks and 20 PT-76 light tanks were delivered. Massive Chinese military aid, however, began only after the Fourth Indo-Pakistan war (1972); in the first six months of 1972, Pakistan received approximately 95 T-59 tanks and 11 MiG-19s. This was supplemented in the next two years by the deliveries of 400 additional T-59 tanks, 90 MiG-19s, 4 'Hu Chwan' fast attack hydrofoil torpedo and 4 'Shanghai II' motor gun boats. From mid-1974 to mid-1976, Pakistan also received another consignment of 100 T-59 tanks, 8 'Shanghai II' and 2 'Hai Nan' class large patrol craft (Table 5).

For the next two and a half years, Pakistan did not receive any major weapons. however, in late 1979, the two states began negotiations for the the supply of Chinese F-6(bis) aircraft which were concluded

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48 This acknowledgement came in the form of the Pakistan's National Day flypast being led by four MiG-19s and the display of three Chinese T-59 tanks. Pakistan Times, 24 March 1966.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Army (T-59)</th>
<th>Navy (PT-76)</th>
<th>Air Force (MiG-19)</th>
<th>Air Force (IL-28)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965 to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1968 (80)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>(125)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>app.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>app.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Hu Chwan:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Shanghai II</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Shanghai II</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Shanghai II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Hai nan Class</td>
<td>Large Patrol craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Convention: ( ) = Unconfirmed

Sources:


in early 1980.  

Simultaneously with the transfer of arms, the Chinese Government also assisted Pakistan in establishing local defence industry. Under an agreement concluded in mid-1967 and made public in June 1968, for instance, Beijing assisted in the setting up of an ordnance factory at Ghazipur, East Pakistan. This factory became operational in April 1970. The magnitude of Beijing's assistance in enabling Pakistan to acquire defence production capability, however, increased markedly after the 1971 war. Following the Fourth Indo-Pakistan war, the Chinese Government was approached by Pakistan for assistance in establishing an aircraft battle damage repair facility located fairly close to the main operational sectors along the central and northern borders of India. Beijing not only accepted the request but also offered a more advanced capability than had been requested, including full overhaul and rebuild capabilities. Consequently, under a protocol signed in 1972, the Chinese Government assisted Pakistan in setting up an F-6 rebuild factory at the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra. Pakistan's contribution to this factory, which was inaugurated in November 1979, was limited to providing the site, labour force and cement, sand and water. The Chinese Government, on the other hand, not only provided technical assistance but also funded and supplied all equipment, machine tools, steam generating plants and electrical fittings for the rebuild factory.

Concomitantly, Beijing also assisted Pakistan in setting up a Heavy Rebuild factory at Taxila. This factory, the negotiations for which were started and concluded in 1972 and which was fully

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50 Interview with a ranking Pakistani Air Force officer.  
51 Pakistan Times, 7 April 1970.  
commissioned in November 1979, is capable of undertaking complete rebuilds of T-59 tanks, and major engine overhauls.\textsuperscript{53} The coverage by Pakistani news media seems to suggest that in addition to providing technical assistance, the Chinese Government funded and provided equipment for at least the engineering facilities like Investment Casting, Gas Nitriding, Shell Casting and Tool (TIP) Plants which were previously rare in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{54}

In addition to these two defence projects, there were, as yet unconfirmed reports of Chinese collaboration in the production of ground-to-air missile SAM-2 in Pakistan, and assistance in the setting up of a factory near Karachi to manufacture tanks and anti-tank missiles.\textsuperscript{55}

This Chinese military assistance during the 1969-79 period, although provided at a stage when the Pakistan Government was exploring the possibilities of and receiving military equipment from other sources\textsuperscript{56} was significant for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it was provided when Pakistan needed it most. During the 1971 war, for instance, Pakistan had lost 83 aircraft, 220 tanks, 2 submarines and 20 naval vessels. In contrast, India had lost only 83 tanks, 54 aircraft and one naval vessel,\textsuperscript{57} and the regional military balance of power had therefore tilted even more in favour of India than had ever been the case in the past. The new Government in Pakistan, therefore, was faced with the task of not only replenishing

\textsuperscript{53} The Guardian, 19 January 1980; and interview with a ranking Pakistan Army Officer who was involved in these negotiations

\textsuperscript{54} 'HRF: A Milestone in Self Reliance', Pakistan Times, 6 September 1979, p.5.

\textsuperscript{55} The Times, 28 January 1974; and Daily Telegraph, 29 June 1978.

\textsuperscript{56} The list of suppliers included Sweden, France, Italy, Iran, UK, USSR and USA.

the losses incurred during the war, but also ensuring that the margin of Pakistan's military inferiority was reduced to manageable proportions. The United States, despite the Nixon Administration's sympathetic attitude towards Pakistan, was not prepared to provide any military equipment, because of Congressional opposition. Neither could the Pakistan Government itself afford to purchase large quantities of military equipment on the open market due to the heavy economic costs of the crisis and subsequent war with India. Therefore, soon after assuming power, Bhutto visited Beijing in January 1972 to discuss, among other subjects, Pakistan's 'defence needs'.

During this visit, although the Chinese Government declined Pakistan's proposal for a 'defence pact' to counter-balance the Indo-Soviet treaty, it agreed to provide military assistance, and during the next two and a half years delivered to Pakistan approximately 495 T-59 tanks, 101 MIG-19s(F-6) and 8 naval vessels. By mid-1974, therefore, the ratio of the total number of Pakistani tanks to those in India was reduced from 1:2.3 in 1972 to 1:1.8. Similarly, the ratio of Pakistani to Indian aircraft and patrol boats had reduced from 1:3.2, and 1:4.2 in 1972 to 1:1.7 and 1:2.9 in 1974 respectively.

Secondly, a major proportion of this assistance was provided as a grant at a time when Pakistan had to pay for weapons from other

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59 The Chinese were reported to have said they 'did not ascribe too much importance to legal formulae in any case'. Asia Research Bulletin, 1-28 February 1973, p.1623.
even when payment was required, China made the situation easier by extending loans on extremely soft terms. Thirdly, the military equipment was delivered at a speed unmatched by western suppliers. For instance, unlike the French Government which took three years to supply 28 Mirage Vs, the Chinese Government during the same period delivered approximately 100 MIG-19s (F-6). Fourthly, the Chinese Government had been a more dependable source of military supplies. During the Bangla Desh Crisis, for example, France and the United States banned deliveries of equipment ordered by Pakistan in 1970 and early 1971, but the Chinese Government continued to supply the 125 T-59 and 20 PT-76 tanks ordered before the crisis started. It was only after these deliveries were completed that Beijing expressed its unwillingness to supply additional major weapons. However, it still continued to supply small arms.

Finally, unlike the Western countries and especially the United States, the Chinese Government did not gear its military aid to making Pakistan permanently dependent on it for spare parts. Instead it not only pursued a policy of supplying sufficient spare parts but also assisted Pakistan, as previously discussed, in acquiring the capability to rebuild and overhaul these weapons indigenously. The F-6 rebuild factory, for instance, has provided Pakistan with the capability to refurbish 30 aircraft per year instead of sending them,

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61 Chou Enlai has been reported to have said during Bhutto's visit to Beijing in January 1972 that 'we are not ammunition merchants, whatever your defence requirements are, they will be met gratis', New York Times, 2 February 1972.

62 Interview with an official of Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan


64 Military Balance: 1971-72, p.70.

65 Interview with a ranking Pakistan Air Force officer, February, 1982.
as was the case in the past, to Shanghai for approximately 18 months. 66

Regardless of these favourable attributes, however, the fact remains that, contrary to the commonly held view, Chinese military assistance gradually declined during the 1969-79 period. This becomes evident firstly from a comparison of the average distribution per year of major Chinese weapons delivered to Pakistan during the period under review. During the 1970-76 period, for example, the Pakistan Army and Air Force received on average 127 tanks and 31 aircraft per year. The Pakistan Navy was also supplied on average 4 patrol boats per year between the period 1972 to mid-1976 (Table. 5). But from mid-1976 to December 1979, despite some reported interest, Pakistan did not receive any major weapons from China 67

Secondly, although the military aid during the 1969-76 period was provided free of cost, according to Pakistani sources, the Chinese Government began demanding payment for arms in 1978. 68

Finally, a comparison of Pakistan's share of the total value of Chinese arms delivered to various developing states also suggests a decline in Beijing's military support for Islamabad. During the 1973-77 period, for instance, Islamabad's share of the total value of

66 Fricker, op. cit., p.59.

67 In May 1976, for example, during Bhutto's visit to Beijing there were reports that Pakistan was interested in procuring Chinese F-7 aircraft. These reports were lent credibility not only by the composition of Pakistani delegation which included Joint Chief of Staff, Mohammed Shariff, and Air Force Chief of Staff Marshal Zulfigar, but also by the fact that also some high officials of the Pakistan Air Force were summoned from home during the negotiations, and Air Marshal Zulfiqar stayed in China after Bhutto had left. However, the annual aircraft inventory of Pakistan's Air Force in July 1978 reveals that these requests were not accepted. FEER Military Balance: 1978-79, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1978), p.66., and, Salamat Ali, 'Bhutto's Winning Ways', FEER, 11 June 1976, p.33

68 Interview with a ranking Pakistan Air Force Officer.
### TABLE 6: COMPARISON OF THE CUMULATIVE VALUE OF ARMS TRANSFERS BY CHINA TO SELECTED STATES (US$ MILLION)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>% of the total</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>% of the total</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total aid for developing countries</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>12.79</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Vietnam</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>12.79</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>41.86</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>13.68</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>25.78</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>16.31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**

Chinese arms transfers to the developing countries was 23.25% and it ranked as the second major recipient of Beijing's military aid. However, during the period between 1978-82, this share declined to 12.10% and Pakistan ranked fourth among the Third World states receiving arms from China (Table. 6).

In brief, therefore, it can be stated that although the Chinese Government provided valuable economic and military assistance to Pakistan, contrary to the commonly held beliefs, the real value of this aid declined after the mid-1970s.

Conclusion

This chapter shows the Chinese Government was forthcoming in continuing its pre-1969 policy of supporting Pakistan both economically and militarily. This support was not without significance as it was provided when Pakistan needed it most and on favourable terms. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the magnitude of this support declined since 1976 and remained so until the end of 1979.