PART THREE
CHAPTER IX

'OLD' PAKISTAN AND CHINA:

AN EXPLANATION

This study undertook two tasks; one was to ascertain the nature of China's policy towards Pakistan during the period from 1969-1979. The second was to explain the reason(s) for the continuation of or fluctuation in this policy. The previous chapters, which traced Beijing's response to various issues faced by Pakistan during the decade under review, attempted to answer the first question. Before proceeding to the explanation, however, it is essential to summarise the findings on the first task.

Contrary to the commonly held assumption, China's support for Pakistan had fluctuated between very high and very low levels during the 1969-1979 period. In 1969, for instance, Beijing fully supported Islamabad's stand on the Kashmir issue, and also provided it with economic aid. This support continued for a major part of 1970 when, after an interval of almost three years, Beijing also agreed to resume the supply of major weapons to Pakistan. Towards the end of the year, however, the Chinese Government began exhibiting signs of reducing the level of its political support for Pakistan. The phraseology used to express Beijing's support for Islamabad on the Kashmir issue, for instance, lacked the customary references indicating a willingness to always continue this policy. This trend continued during 1971 and was most noticeable on the issue of Bangla Desh crisis in which China demonstrated an unwillingness to side with Pakistan against India. Simultaneously, after providing the arms for which the agreement had been concluded in 1970, Beijing also ceased to supply any additional major weapons. It was not until the end of November 1971 that Beijing once again increased the level of its support for Islamabad. During the Indo-Pakistan war (1971) this
support took the form of closely identifying with the position held by the Yahya regime and, in behind-the-door diplomacy agreeing on a Soviet role to prevent India from a rumoured major attack on West Pakistan, especially Kashmir. After the war, which resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan, Beijing supported Islamabad against New Delhi's attempts to use POWs and the occupied territories as bargaining chips to settle the Kashmir issue on India's terms. It also increased the real value of the loan granted in 1979 by deferring its payment for twenty years. Simultaneously, the Chinese Government transferred major weapons to Pakistan to an extent that by July 1974, 49% of the Pakistan air force's 283 aircraft and 53% of Pakistan's entire tank force was of Chinese origin. With one exception, i.e. on the occasion of the Indian nuclear explosion in May 1974, this high level Chinese political, economic and military support for Pakistan continued during the 1974-1975 period as well. The beginning of 1976, however, witnessed a marked decline in the level of Beijing's support; Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue was no more frequently echoed by the Chinese leaders. Neither was it supplied with any additional major weapons. Even the terms of the nominal loans became less favourable than those extended in the past. This trend continued for the next two years. It was not until 1979, the last year of the decade under review, that the level of Beijing's support registered an increase. The support, which lasted until Amin's seizure of power in Kabul in September 1979, was restricted, against the Soviet and Afghan allegations of Pakistan's complicity with Afghan rebels only, and did not include the Kashmir issue, on which China's stand almost came to border on neutrality. The economic and military aid, however, remained at a low level and failed to go beyond the beginning of negotiations for the F-6(bis) aircraft's supplies to Pakistan.
There is no single explanation of these fluctuations in the level of Beijing's support for Islamabad during the 1969-79 period, but rather a set of explanations. These explanations, however, can best be understood within the framework of China's fear of, and the strategy devised to counter, the Soviet encirclement since 1969. This chapter attempts to achieve precisely this objective.

An Explanation

For the last three decades, Communist China's foreign policy, like those of other states, has been shaped by a multiplicity of attitudes, forces and factors. Ideological beliefs, historically rooted cultural attitudes, domestic factional politics, and economic imperatives and changing views within the Chinese leadership on how best to achieve their development goals — all these factors have played their part in formulating Beijing's initiative towards and responses to the outside world.¹ The primary determining factor, often described as the lowest common denominator for any country's foreign policy, however, has been the Beijing leaders' concern with the security and territorial integrity of China.² Since coming to power, the Chinese Communist leaders have perceived the major threat to their state's security as emanating from the attempts of one or more major powers to encircle China. Hence, since 1949, the Chinese leaders have devised strategies aimed at thwarting these attempts.

1950s and 1960s

In the 1950s the Chinese Government perceived the threat of encirclement as emanating from the United States. This perception stemmed primarily from American policies towards, and in the region surrounding China.

Soon after the outbreak of war in Korea instead of adhering to his previously declared policy of not intervening to prevent a communist takeover of Taiwan where the nationalist Government had retreated, Truman ordered the US Seventh Fleet on 27 June 1950 to move into the Taiwan Strait and protect Chiang Kai Shek's regime. 3 Contrary to a previous statement issued by Dean Acheson, US Secretary of State, suggesting that Korea was not included in the US defence perimeter, 4 the United States also dispatched its troops to Korea under the auspices of the United Nations. Though these troops were initially sent to repel the North Korean attack, after General MacArthur's successful amphibious landing at Inchon on 15 September 1950, Washington began emphasising the need to reunify Korea and, if necessary, bring the US forces to the doorstep of China's major heavy industrial region, Manchuria. On 8 October 1950, General MacArthur's forces crossed the 38th parallel.

The Chinese Government, which had indicated its concern over possible US advances beyond the 38th parallel retaliated by sending its troops to Korea in mid-October 1950 to fight the US forces. 5 While fighting these troops, or volunteers as they were called by the Chinese Government, the United States also embarked on a gradual

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3 The United States and The Koren Problem, Documents: 1943-1953, Senate Document No.74, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, 10 August 1953, p.36.
4 Department of State Bulletin, 23 January 1950, p.113.
process of establishing a network of military alliances with States surrounding China.

Beginning in 1951, the United States concluded bilateral military pacts with Japan and the Philippines, and a mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with the Republic of China (Taiwan). This was followed by the US decision to conclude a bilateral military pact with South Korea in 1953, a Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with Pakistan in May 1954, and a Mutual Defence Treaty with Taiwan in December 1954. Meanwhile, in September 1954, the United States worked out a collective defence arrangement for Southeast Asia with Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand which resulted in the establishment of SEATO. Though not members of the organization, the protective mantle of SEATO was also extended to Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam. 6

This series of treaties and alliances committed the United States to the building up of local forces and, therefore, facilitated its presence in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Laos and Pakistan. 7 In return, it got the right to station 50,000 troops in South Korea and in Okinawa. 8 More importantly, the United States acquired the right to build air and naval bases or facilities in Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and a communication base in Pakistan. The Air Force base in Taiwan and

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South Korea were supplied with Matador missiles which were capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads, and could reach China with their range of 500 miles. These bases, in turn, were backed up by others located in Guam and elsewhere in the Pacific.9

In addition to concluding these military pacts, the United States also supported covert anti-communist activities against the mainland from Taiwan, Thailand, Burma and the Tibetan borderlands.10 From the Chinese point of view, therefore, the United States posed a military threat to China's security from almost all the adjacent states except India and Indonesia. Beijing, however, was unable to counter this threat militarily for not only did it lack a strong industrial base and adequate communication facilities11 but it was also hampered by an inadequate supply of outmoded and variegated military equipment which could not match the modern and standardized weaponry of the US armed forces. The regular army of the P.L.A. was armed with a mixture of European, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and American equipment.12 With a total strength of five million troops, it was primarily an infantry force with few motor vehicles and a limited number of tanks which were assigned to 'special columns' or special group armies. Its artillery divisions were also faced with the problem of limited ammunition supplies. The Chinese Air Force, though in the process of being modernised with Soviet MiG-15 jets, was also handicapped by a lack of fuel supply, dearth of trained

pilots and a shortage of heavy bombers. The navy was the weakest link in the Chinese armed forces; built from nothing after 1945 round a number of ex-Japanese, British and American warships, it consisted of out of date ships which were in poor condition. Consequently, it was no match for the US naval forces stationed around the mainland.¹³

Instead of relying solely on its own limited military capability to counter the threat of US encirclement, therefore, China devised a strategy which had two important aspects; firstly, it envisaged a close relationship with the Soviet Union so that the latter could not only protect it militarily against the United States, but also assist Beijing in developing its own military capabilities and enable it later to counter the US threat independently.¹⁴ The framework for this relationship had already been established with the conclusion of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance in 1950. Under the terms of this treaty and the subsequent agreements concluded between the two states, the Soviet Union began to assist China militarily, first in training arms transfers, after 1955, in assistance in developing China's defence industries. By the end of the 1950s, therefore, the Chinese ground forces were equipped, among others, with tanks, assault arms, artillery and small guns of Soviet origin or design, and the air force with Soviet aircraft; the Chinese air defence system was also strengthened by 750 Soviet surface-to-air missiles, while more significantly China had developed aircraft production facilities in Manchuria and acquired some experience in jet aircraft


¹⁴Barnett, Communist China and Asia, op.cit, p.254.
production. The Chinese navy had also been expanded, and with Soviet assistance, a ship building industry had been established capable of constructing medium and small units, especially submarines. Also, with Soviet aid, by the end of the 1950s, China had begun to develop its own nuclear weapons.\(^\text{15}\)

The second important aspect of China's strategy to counter the US threat was an attempt to improve relations with the neighbouring countries by using a combination of economic and diplomatic measures, and playing down the role of the revolutionary struggle in these states.\(^\text{16}\) The aims of this policy were to:

(a) reduce and/or neutralize the US influence in states where it was strong so as to decrease the chances of their use as bases from which the US could pose a military threat to China, and

(b) prevent the neutral states from "tilting" towards the United States and joining it in attempts at encircling China.\(^\text{17}\)

In the Far East the Chinese Government began to woo a wide variety of pressure groups in Japan including the Japanese Communist

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\(^{17}\) Barnett, *Uncertain Passage*, *op.cit.*, p.251.
Party, the Japan Socialist Party, left intellectuals and students, people's organizations like the Dietman's League for the promotion of Japan-China trade, ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and especially the business community. It concluded a number of 'unofficial' trade agreements with various Japanese organizations and extended frequent invitations, to, among others, Japanese peace groups, women and youth groups, labour unions and professional groups. Simultaneously, amidst frequent criticism of Japan's foreign policy, Beijing continuously expressed an interest in improving relations with Tokyo, and identified the US-Japanese security treaty and Tokyo's peace treaty with Taiwan as the only obstacles in this respect.

Meanwhile, Beijing also attempted to strengthen its links with the North Korean Government. The 'Chinese volunteers' fighting in Korea, therefore, went to the extent of accepting Kim Il Sung's nominal command. Beijing also extended a loan worth US$ 338 million in November 1953 to assist in the rebuilding of North Korea's war-ravaged economy.

In Southeast Asia, while continuing to send arms and technicians to North Vietnam and training its military and civilian personnel in China, Beijing departed, in late 1952, from the previous three years' policy of encouraging immediate communist insurrections, and began to

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assume a non-military and conciliatory posture towards the existing governments of both 'committed' and 'non-committed' states of the region. The Philippines was offered a non-aggression treaty, while Thailand was invited to inspect the 'Thai Autonomous Zone' in Yunnan to ensure its peaceful purposes. Meanwhile a dual-nationality treaty was concluded with Indonesia on 22 April 1955, followed in 1956 by an offer of military assistance. Laos was also assured of Beijing's peaceful intentions and Cambodia was extended a loan worth US$22.9 million in June 1956. Moves were made to woo Malaysia and Singapore as well by continuing to export goods worth US$30-40 million a year, and extending invitations to a Malaya-Singapore trade delegation in 1956. Burma was also subjected to conciliatory moves like negotiations for a boundary agreement with China and reduction of support for the White Flag faction of the Burmese Communist Party.

In South Asia, China attempted to counter the threat of US encirclement by establishing a close link with the non-aligned regime in India. This preference for New Delhi primarily stemmed from the Chinese view that, in spite of the presence of a group which opposed

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early recognition of the communist regime in Beijing, India was ruled by a progressive section of national bourgeoisie under Nehru's leadership and, therefore, was worthy of cultivation. This perception, in turn, probably resulted from Nehru's sympathetic attitude towards China both before and after 1949. In 1939 Nehru had visited China, where he condemned Japanese aggression. Soon after the communists ascent to power, disregarding their occasional statements urging the Indian communists to liberate India from the yoke of imperialism and its collaborators, Nehru had welcomed the communist regime in China, announced India's recognition of the People's Republic on 30 December 1949, and followed this with attempts to convince the United States, and various British Commonwealth countries to follow suit. Simultaneously, the Indian Government supported Beijing on a variety of international issues. During the Korean war, for example, it opposed branding China as an

29 This group included, among others, India's Governor General, C. Rajagopalchari, the Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel, several others in the Indian Cabinet and in the Congress leadership, for example, P.C. Baroah, Shyam Nandan Sahay, Durga Bai, J.B.Kripalani, Ayanger, and Naziruddin Ahmed, and a powerful section of the Indian Civil Service including some of the senior officials of the Foreign Office. Bhabani Sen Gupta, The Fulcrum of Asia: Relations among China, India, Pakistan, and the USSR, (New York: Pegasus, 1970), pp.100-101.


aggressor and imposing an embargo on the shipment of strategic materials to China and North Korea.\textsuperscript{34} Significantly as the United States initiated its policy of 'containing' China, Nehru not only steered India on the path of non-alignment but also used his influence to persuade various Asian states, e.g. Ceylon and Burma, against joining the Western alliance system.\textsuperscript{35}

The Chinese policy of cultivating the progressive Indian bourgeoisie initially took the form of articles which refrained from projecting an unfavourable picture of India and occasionally also approved of New Delhi's foreign policy orientation. On July 1950, for instance, the \emph{Jen-min Jih-pao} discussed India without criticizing Nehru.\textsuperscript{36} This was followed by another article on 13 July 1950 which identified India as an important member of the peace camp.\textsuperscript{37} Though there was a brief spell of two months in September-October 1950 when, angered by India's note cautioning Beijing against any move to 'liberate' Tibet, Chinese media identified the Indian Government as 'working under foreign influence hostile to China in Tibet',\textsuperscript{38} the theme of appreciating Indian foreign policy and encouraging its neutrality was not given up. Soon after Tibet's 'liberation' in October 1950, for instance, a \emph{People's China} article stated that Beijing was reluctant to believe that India might lend itself to 'the sinister Anglo-American influence now working against the legitimate


\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Hinton, Communist China in World Politics, \textit{op.cit}}, p.417.

\textsuperscript{36} Sen Gupta, \textit{op.cit}, pp.342-343, f.n.8.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Tibid}, p.343, f.n.8.

interests of the Chinese people'. 'We cherish', it said, 'the friendship that has been developing with the Indian people who are also struggling for complete emancipation from imperialist intrigues'. This was followed by another article in People's China on 1 January 1951 which recognised the Indian movement as a part of the great tide of liberation sweeping over Asia.

This favourable media coverage was supplemented by practical Chinese moves to establish close links with India. In the first week of January 1951, for example, it concluded a barter-trade agreement with India. This was followed by exchange of several good will and cultural delegations between the two states. The highlight, however, was Mao's attendance at the reception given by the Indian embassy to celebrate India's Republic Day on 26 January 1951. Speaking on this occasion Mao said: 'The Indian Union is a greater nation, and the Indian people are an excellent people. For thousands of years, excellent friendship has existed between these two nations, China and India, and between the people of these two countries ... India, China, and the Soviet Union and all other peace-loving countries and people [should] unite together to strive for peace in the Far East and the whole world'.

During the two subsequent years, Beijing continued its attempts for forging close links with India. It gave a tacit approval to India's special relations with Bhutan and Sikkim, refrained from questioning New Delhi's unilateral placing of Nepal in its defence orbit, and backed Indian claims to Goa. Significantly, in late

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40 Cited in Ibid, p.343, f.n.8.
42 Sen Gupta, op.cit, p.114.
1953 it allowed an Indian mission to visit China and work out arrangements for putting the trade and exchange of pilgrimage between India and Tibet on a regular footing.\textsuperscript{43} This was followed by the conclusion of a Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet on 24 April 1954. Concluded on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, this agreement resulted in abolition of the special privileges enjoyed by India in Tibet, withdrawal of Indian military escorts and voluntary handing over of rest houses and communication services to China but India was allowed to maintain its trade agencies in Yatun, Gyantse and Garrok.\textsuperscript{44}

Thereafter, Beijing intensified its attempts to maintain friendly relations with New Delhi. Developments in India were given wide coverage by the Chinese media, as were the views of various Indian leaders and intellectuals on international issues. The volume of trade between the two states was consistently increased, and high-level delegations were exchanged. Returning from the Geneva Conference in 1954, Chou En-lai visited India and expressed his Government's keen desire to forge a close link with India by pointing out that 'all the nations of the world could peacefully coexist, ...' no matter what kind of social system each of them had.\textsuperscript{45} In October of the same year, Nehru visited Beijing, where he concluded trade and civil aviation agreements with China.\textsuperscript{46} In 1956, Chou once again visited India, where he frequently spoke of China's desire to promote

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\textsuperscript{43}Hinton, \textit{Communist China in World Politics, op.cit}, p.283.
\textsuperscript{44}NCNA, 29 April 1954, in SCMP, No.798, 30 April 1954, p. 1
\textsuperscript{46}Statesman, 20 and 25 October 1954.
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its friendly relations with the Indian Government and people. 47

Beijing continued to pursue this 'pro-Indian' policy for the next three years. However, while maintaining friendly relations with New Delhi throughout the 1950s, as a part of its counter-encirclement strategy, Beijing also attempted to establish at least a 'correct' relationship with India's major adversary, Pakistan, which had joined the Western alliance system, viewed as a 'weak link' in the imperialist chain and a 'potential source of contradiction within the imperialist camp 48 due to its less than single-minded devotion to the American anti-communist crusade. 49 Pakistan was rarely subjected to public criticism by the Chinese news media. Even at the height of its membership of the Western alliance system, for example, it was criticised only indirectly, and if at all mentioned by name, the Pakistan Government was portrayed as ignorant because it was allowing the US, the real culprit, to use Pakistani people as 'cannon-fodder'. Even in a few isolated instances, when Pakistan was subjected to public criticism, Beijing was careful to point out that it was in response to Islamabad's deliberate and sustained 'anti-China campaign', and that it did not close the venues for improvement of relations between the two states. In fact, both Chinese media, and Chinese leaders frequently affirmed that there was essentially no conflict of interest between the two countries and that the preservation of good relations between China and Pakistan was important to China.

47 See, for example, Chou En-lai's speech in the Indian Parliament on 29 November 1956, NCNA, 29 November 1956, in SCMP, No.1423, 8 December 1956, pp.24-28.


49 Pakistan had joined the Western alliance system to counter Indian and not Chinese threat.
In the 1960s, Beijing perceived the major threat to its security as emanating from a US-Soviet 'collusion' to encircle China.50 The US was perceived as attempting to encircle China because, even though it had begun to express the hope that a less doctrinaire regime would eventually emerge there,51 none of the US military alliances in Asia was dismantled,52 and in fact US presence in states adjoining China had increased. In December 1960, for example, the United States sponsored the rightist forces which occupied Vientiane and established a new government in Laos.53 At the end of 1961, it increased the level of military assistance to South Vietnam and in 1962, in the wake of fighting in Laos, pledged to defend Thailand against communist aggression if SEATO should fail.54 It also resumed military and economic assistance to Burma after an interval of six years.55 In the Far East, in spite of signing a security treaty with Japan in January 1960, which embodied more concessions to Tokyo than the treaty signed in 1951, it retained its rights to operate military bases in Japan as well as in Okinawa.56

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50 This fear was categorically conveyed by Mao to Pakistani President, Ayub. See, G.W. Choudhury, 'Post-Mao Policies in Asia', Problems of Communism, Vol.26, July, August 1977, p.19.
57 For text of the treaty, see T.B. Millar, Contemporary Alliances, Canberra Studies in World Affairs, No.2 (Canberra: Australian National University, 1981), pp.117-120.
from the north because, following a deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations due to several factors like historical animosity, personality clashes, China's threat to Soviet ideological primacy, and above all China's realization that there were limits to Moscow's willingness to protect China against the United States and assist it in developing its own military capabilities to counter the American threat, the Soviet Union had begun to mobilize its forces against China. This had resulted in border skirmishes between the two communist states during the early 1960s. Meanwhile, like the United States, the Soviet Union also increased its efforts to woo China's neighbours. In February 1960, for example, Khrushchev visited Burma and promised to increase Soviet economic aid and cultural exchanges. Three years later, Soviet Defence Minister Malinovsky visited Burma followed by Deputy Premier Mikoyan in 1964. Indonesia was also a target; visiting Djakarta in February 1960, therefore, Khrushchev emphasised Indonesia's right to determine how to handle its overseas Chinese community.

The point where US-Soviet encirclement efforts were perceived by China as overlapping, however, was India. This perception, in turn, was formed as a result of the deterioration in Sino-Indian relations towards the end of the 1950s. As the Khamba rebellion in eastern Tibet assumed the proportions of an open crisis, India began to demand that China should evacuate the Aksai Chin area and forfeit its rights to use the militarily vital road linking Tibet with Sinkiang. Beijing rejected this demand on the grounds that it did not recognise

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the boundary established during British times. However, it continued to evince an interest in maintaining close relations with India. Special emphasis for example, was placed in the Chinese media on Nehru's positive role in India, and on its economic development. Meanwhile, the Chinese Government sealed the Sino-Indian border, to prevent Khambas from infiltrating into India and Nepal, acquiring arms and then returning to Tibet. The Indian Government responded by mobilizing its own forces along the border with China. This resulted in clashes at Longju and Khinzemano in August 1959. The most fierce clashes, however, took place in October 1959 at the Kongka Pass - the trijunction of Tibet, Sinkiang and Ladakh. Soon after these clashes, Chou En-lai repeated his government's offer, which he had been making since early 1959, to negotiate the boundary question, and to this end visited India in April 1960. During this visit he accepted a suggestion, made by Indian Defence Minister Menon, to exchange Aksai Chin for Indian control over the area leading up to the Macmahon line, by signing leases for both areas. India, however, soon backtracked, when a senior cabinet minister, Gobind Vallabh Pant, threatened to mobilize public opinion against Nehru. Following the failure of these negotiations, no further meetings were held. The Indian Government, however, initiated a process of strengthening its defence forces on the Sino-Indian border with US and Soviet assistance. By early 1961, though China continued a conciliatory policy, India began to mention the possibility of a war between the two states. The matter came to

a head in October 1962 when before leaving for Ceylon, Nehru announced his government's decision to order an offensive and drive the Chinese out of the 'Chinese occupied Indian territory'. On October 20, 1962, the Chinese Government retaliated by launching a punitive attack on India at several points on both the eastern and western sectors of the Sino-Indian border. Four days later it repeated its offer to negotiate the boundary issue, but this was rejected by Nehru. The offensive, therefore, was successfully resumed on November 16, 1962. On November 21, 1962, the Chinese government announced its decision to cease fire and withdraw its forces 20 kilometers 'behind the line of actual control'.

Throughout this period, 1959 - 1962, both the Soviet Union and the United States supported New Delhi, directly or indirectly, in its dispute with Beijing. Soon after the first major border clashes at Kongka pass in 1959, President Eisenhower visited India and expressed, though without mentioning China by name, American political support for New Delhi. The Soviet government also published a neutral statement on the Sino-Indian border dispute and then, during Khrushchev's visit to Beijing in December 1959, publicly advised China to refrain from pursuing 'adventurist policies'. At the Bucharest congress, June 1960, Khrushchev went to the extent of suggesting that China should give up the Aksai Chin area in line with the policy pursued by Lenin in concluding the treaty of Brest Litovsk. During the 1962 border war as well, after initially supporting China privately and publicly on the issue, Moscow moved to a neutral stand which favoured India more than China.

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64 Hinton, Communist China In World Politics, op.cit., pp.296-304.
More importantly while supporting it politically, the Soviet Union and the United States also began assisting India militarily. In September 1962, Moscow agreed to supply India with 12 MiG-21s and provide technical assistance in building facilities to produce them.\textsuperscript{67} Two months later, in the wake of the Sino-Indian border clashes, the United States also began supplying light infantry weapons, artillery, and communications and transportation equipment.\textsuperscript{68}

Therefore, the Chinese Government, which had been identifying India during the 1950s as an important member of the peace camp, began to perceive the Indian Government in the 1960s as assisting the Soviet Union and the United States in their attempts to encircle China.\textsuperscript{69}

As in the 1950s, Beijing found itself militarily incapable of countering the threat of encirclement. Although the communist Government had developed China into a significant military power it still lacked many of the pre-requisites for successful operation outside of China against the forces of major powers such as the US and the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{70} Therefore, the Chinese Government devised a strategy similar to that pursued in the 1950s. Under the banner of improving relations with the 'first intermediate zone', it attempted to establish friendly relations with the neighbouring states. This


\textsuperscript{69} See, for example, Shih Yen, 'Non-Aligned India's Double Alignment', Peking Review, Vol. VII, No. 33, 13 August 1965, pp. 16-18

\textsuperscript{70} See A. Doak Barnett's Statement, US Policy With Respect to Mainland China, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, 89th Congress, 2nd Session, March 1966, p.12; the ratio of the US-China military strength was identified by Morton Halperin in the same hearings as statistically 10 to 1. \textbf{Ibid}, p.289.
new strategy, however, contained another element; it attempted to build 'regional pillars'. In Southeast Asia, for example, efforts were concentrated on wooing the Indonesian government. In South Asia, departing from its policy of not playing off one state against the other, moves were made to establish and consolidate friendly relations with India's major regional opponent, Pakistan. This move, it seems, was meant to threaten India with the possibility of war on two fronts to dissuade it from 'colluding' with the US and the Soviet Union. At the same time it also resulted from an interest in preventing Pakistan, which had been moving away from the US after its military assistance to India in the early 1960s, from being drawn back into the Soviet-US attempts to 'contain' China.\(^{71}\) Pakistan, therefore, as discussed in chapter II, became the recipient of strong Chinese political, military and economic support during most of the 1960s.

The Soviet Union: The Main Threat: 1969-71

Towards the end of the 1960s, the Chinese fear of a joint US-Soviet encirclement was replaced with one of a major Soviet threat to China's territorial integrity. Convinced that Chinese hostility was likely to be implacable and enduring, at least while Mao remained in power, the Soviet Union had begun a gradual increase in its troops along the eastern sector of its border with China (the Far East and Transbaykal Military Districts) after 1965.\(^{72}\) This build up was synchronized with the introduction of Soviet forces into Mongolia within the framework of the Mutual Assistance Treaty signed between the two states in mid-January 1966. The deployment of two Soviet

\(^{71}\) Samina Yasmeen, *Pakistan's Relations With China: 1947-1979*, M.A. Thesis (Canberra: Australian National University, 1980), Chapter II.

divisions along the Sino-Mongolian border provided the Soviet Union with a platform from which it could pose a threat to the north China plain and Beijing.\textsuperscript{73} Further to the west, the Soviet Union did not reinforce its troops on its border with the Chinese Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. However, the situation over there was also volatile; discontent with the assimilationist policies pursued by Beijing during the Cultural Revolution, and encouraged by the Soviet Union large numbers of Uighurs, Kazakhs and Kirghizs had begun migrating to the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{74}

The pace of Soviet military build up along its borders with China accelerated from approximately 1967 in terms both of manpower and infrastructure, fortification, modernisation of equipment, and increased capacity for rapid mobilization. The USSR also reportedly transferred some elite troops to Central Asia and the Siberian frontier,\textsuperscript{75} and equipped its forces in Mongolia with medium range


\textsuperscript{74}Soviet attempts to incite Xinjiang minorities included stepped up activities by the Soviet-sponsored "Xinjiang minority refugee army" established in 1962 at Alma Ata under Zunin Taipo's leadership, and regular propaganda broadcasts from Radio Tashkent which emphasized the atrocities committed by the Chinese Government against the local minorities, and discussed the conditions which had forced well-known Uighurs and Kazakhs to migrate to the Soviet Union. See, for example, 'Mao's Armed Forces and the People of Sinkiang', Radio Tashkent, 14 May 1967, in SWB:SU, No.2475, 26 May 1967, p.A3/2; for further details see Donald H. McMillen, Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), pp.123-124, and 226-227.

nuclear missiles. The Chinese leaders reacted to these Soviet movements along the border by increasing their own forces there.

This was followed in late 1968 by the increase in the frequency of minor border skirmishes. On 2 March 1969, major border clashes took place between the two communist states on an island in the Ussuri River, and over the next five months were followed by a long series of incidents along both the Amur and Ussuri border rivers in the east and the Xinjiang-Central Asian borders on the west. Talks to defuse the situation were held in Khabarovsk on 18 June 1969, but were unsuccessful.

The Soviet Union continued to put pressure on China. Soviet Army divisions along the border increased from 18 in 1965 to 33 in mid-1970, and a number of articles in the Soviet media identified China as a state which had been transformed into a 'force hostile to the socialist countries'; by citing three past occasions when the Soviet Union had escalated to large-scale combat in the Far East in

1929, 1939 and 1945, they suggested that if provoked, the Soviet Union might involve China in a large-scale conventional border war.\(^81\)

Moscow also issued veiled threats of a possible pre-emptive strike on the Chinese nuclear installations. On 18 August 1969, a Soviet Embassy official in Washington asked a State Department official about the American reaction to a possible Soviet attack on Chinese nuclear installations. The news, as the Soviets intended, was leaked by the C.I.A. Director to diplomatic correspondents on 27 August 1969, when he also revealed that the Soviets had sounded out various Western communist party leaders on their likely responses to a Soviet strike.\(^82\) The strongest hint that the USSR might make a surprise attack on China's nuclear installations, however, came from the Moscow correspondent of the London Evening News, Victor Louis, who cited 'well informed sources in Moscow' as asserting that 'Russian nuclear installations stand aimed at the Chinese nuclear facilities', that 'the Soviet Union prefers using rockets to manpower' in responding to border clashes that it 'has a variety of rockets to choose from', that the Soviets have 'a plan to launch an air attack on Lop Nor', and that whether or not the Soviet Union would dare to attack China's nuclear centre was 'a question of strategy' and the world would learn about it only afterwards.\(^83\)

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The Soviet Union also initiated efforts to mobilize communist and non-communist states against the regime in Beijing. Initially this attempt took the form of indirect Soviet references to the need for waging a struggle against 'all deviations from Marxism'. But the Soviet government later resorted to open attempts at winning support of the communist states; during the Warsaw Pact meeting held in March 1969, Moscow tried to persuade the participant states to denounce China. The move, however, failed due to Romanian, Czech and Hungarian opposition. The Soviet government persevered, and at the international Communist conference in Moscow on June 7, 1969, Brezhnev said, '... we think that the course of events ... places on the agenda the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia'. The membership of this proposed system was to include both the communist and non-communist states of Asia, but the Asian reaction was cool because, despite Soviet denials, the proposal was seen as anti-Chinese.

84 Speaking at the 50th anniversary of the Comintern the Soviet Politbureau member M.A. Suslov, for example, attacked Trotskyism (a euphemism for Maoism) and urged all the participants to wage a constant struggle against 'right and left opportunism', against 'bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie nationalism' and against 'all deviations from Marxism'. 'Under the Leninist Banner of Proletarian Internationalism', Pravda, 26 March 1969, pp.1 and 4, in C.D.S.P., Vol.XXI, No.13, 16 April 1969, p.14.

85 Washington Post, 18 & 19 March 1969; US-China Relations: A Strategy for the Future, op.cit., p.53; the move was later opposed by non-Bloc communist parties as well.

Unlike many western analysts, these moves were interpreted by the Chinese leaders as mere threats and not indications of a Soviet decision to attack China in the immediate future. The bulk of the Soviet forces, they argued, were deployed in Europe; unless and until Europe was neutralized, the Soviet Union could not transfer to the eastern front the large forces needed for a successful attack on China. The Soviet moves towards West Germany were seen as a step in this direction, but the neutralization of Europe was still far from complete. Therefore, the Chinese leaders argued, the Soviet Union was not likely to attack China in the immediate future.

However, this is not to suggest that Beijing precluded the possibility of a Soviet attack in the distant future. On the contrary, it perceived the Soviet Union as pursuing a 'grand strategy' aimed at creating situations favourable for attacking China. A major part of this strategy, as reflected in the Chinese media, was perceived to be Soviet attempts to complete China's encirclement by sea. A detailed NCNA report on the Soviet 'Gunboat Policy', for instance, maintained that the Soviet Union was desperately attempting 'to open up an arc-shaped maritime route extending from the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the

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Indian Ocean, Western Pacific and the Japan Sea'. One of the major aims of this, it argued, is to blockade China. Expanding on this thesis, it maintained that in the east, Moscow had been doing 'its utmost to strengthen its Pacific Fleet' so as to serve its 'vile purpose' of dispatching to the Indian Ocean through the Japan Sea, Western Pacific and Strait of Malacca. Moreover, the 'manoeuvre area' of this fleet had extended from the Japan Sea to the Western Pacific east of the Kurile islands and Taiwan. Moscow, it continued was also receiving technical know-how from Japan for building ports in the Far East. It had also established close links with the Indonesian Government, and was attempting to develop trade and diplomatic ties with Malaysia-Singapore in order to facilitate the passage of the Soviet fleet through the Malacca Straits.

In the West, the article continued, taking advantage of the difficulties of Arab states, the Soviet Union had trebled the total number of its warships in the Mediterranean between 1967 and mid-1969, and was using or seeking access to a number of ports and bases in the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The article emphasised that 'the Indian Ocean is the vortex of the Soviet revisionists' expansionist moves from the East and the West'. It maintained that the Soviet Union was attempting to fill the vacuum left by British withdrawals and, had permanently stationed a fleet of 14 vessels there. At the same time it was also colluding with India to acquire bases, and making 'friendly visits' to various Afro-Asian

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90 It is important to point out that this picture of close Soviet-Indonesian relations was far from reality as, following the massacre of the PKI and indications of Indonesia's pro-West inclinations, Djakarta's links with Moscow were as cool, in late 1960s as they could be.
countries.91

Another NCNA report suggested that when the purported "new maritime hegemony" had been established the Soviet Union would use it 'to serve its policy of launching aggression abroad'.92 This view, it seems, was based on the assumption that the 'hegemony' would result in Soviet control of the raw materials and oil on which the West European States rely, provide the Soviet Union with an indirect control over their economies and therefore, enable it to transfer its forces from the western to the eastern borders.93

The Chinese view of the Soviet threat, however, was not restricted to this possible Soviet attack in the distant future. In addition to pursuing its 'grand strategy', the Soviet Union was also perceived as attempting to 'rig up an anti-China encirclement ring' from Japan in the Far East to Afghanistan in the North-West, the Asian collective security proposal playing an important role in these efforts.94 The Chinese analysis of the manner in which the Soviet Union was to establish this system, however, differed from that of many western analysts. It was not to emerge straight away out of a multitude of bilateral and multilateral military treaties between the USSR and China's neighbours. Instead, the Soviet Union was to pursue a long-term strategy of rendering these states economically and

93 See, for example, 'Soviet Revisionism Rabidly Pursues Social-Imperialist "Gunboat Policy" in Mediterranean', NCNA, 2 September 1969, in SCMP, No.4491, 9 September 1969, p.23.
militarily dependent on Moscow, and then turning them into bases against China. This analysis, was put forth approximately two weeks after Brezhnev had floated the idea of a collective security system. On 21 June 1969, an NCNA report on the Soviet 'Aid activities to the Third World stated that the aim of Soviet military and economic aid, was not merely to 'fleece' Third World countries but also to establish political control over them. 'India, for example', it pointed out, 'is one of the countries that receives the biggest amount of Soviet revisionist "aid" ... Soviet revisionism is India's biggest supplier of arms and its second biggest creditor after US imperialism'. This growth in the volume of this aid, it maintained, has been paralleled by the tightening of the Soviet 'political control over India'. 'Consequently', it continued, 'apart from serving as an accomplice of Soviet revisionism on important international issues like Vietnam and the Middle East, the reactionary Indian Government was also serving [the Soviet Union] as a bellwether in opposing China'. Now, the report claimed, the Soviet Union was giving priority to Southeast Asia in its 'aid' programme so as to tighten its grip there. Further elaborating this point, the report stated that 'in Southeast Asia, Soviet revisionism uses its military and economic "aid" directly to serve its vile motive of opposing China, and to form ... a ring of encirclement against China'.

This report was followed by the publication of a number of articles and reports by the Chinese media which, while discussing the Asian Collective Security Proposal and accusing the Soviet Union of attempting to encircle China, concentrated on the volume and significance of Moscow's economic and military aid to various states.

surrounding China and, therefore, repeated Chinese analysis of the 
means Moscow was likely to use to encircle the mainland.

China's Response to the Soviet Threat

The Chinese leaders held different opinions on the nature of a 
viable strategy to counter the Soviet threat. The radicals 
represented by Lin Biao, acknowledged the gravity of the threat posed 
by the Soviet Union, but equated it with that posed by the United 
States which continued to maintain bases in Japan, Thailand and the 
Philippines. The two super powers, they argued, were collaborating 
against China and, therefore, needed to be tackled simultaneously. 
To this end, they favoured a strategy of forging a 'united front from 
below' by mobilizing all the revolutionary people of the world 
against the two super-powers and their reactionary accomplices. 96

The moderates, represented by Chou En-lai, on the other hand 
took a different position. The United States, they argued had 
already initiated a process of disengaging itself from South East 
Asia and, therefore, in spite of its bases along China's periphery 
did not pose a major threat to China's security. It was the Soviet 
Union, they maintained, which was China's 'principal enemy' and 
needed to be isolated and defeated. This could be done, the 
moderates suggested, by forging the 'broadest united front from 
above'. 97 Translated into operational terms, this strategy included:

a) the use of extra-regional counterbalances, i.e the United 
States and Western Europe, against the Soviet presence in the Indian 
Ocean, Middle East and Europe, in order to reduce Soviet ability to 
transfer forces from the western to the eastern front; and

96 See, for example, 'US Imperialism, Soviet Revisionism Step Up 
Collusion Against Chinese and World People', NCNA, 16 August 1969, in 
b) improvement of relations with as many neighbouring states as possible so as either to deny completely or reduce the chances of Soviet access to these states as bases to encircle China.  

It seems that in the first few months following the Sino-Soviet border clashes the moderates were not able to prevail over the radicals. Chinese foreign policy, therefore, retained its revolutionary tones in the first few months of 1969. Towards the end of the year, however, the moderates regained some control over the formulation of foreign policy, and they gradually proceeded to implement their balance-of-power strategy.

Amidst all the propaganda against 'US imperialism', the Chinese government threw subtle hints about the possibility of a Sino-US rapprochement. While asking Washington to provide some evidence of its willingness to improve relations with China for example, a Chinese statement demanded withdrawal of US forces from the Taiwan Straits but in contrast to previous statements, did not mention US forces in Taiwan, an indication of willingness to negotiate with the US despite its security links with Taiwan. In December 1969, the Chinese government reacted favourably to the US suggestion to resume talks in Warsaw, and these were held in early 1970 after a gap of almost two years.

Simultaneously, Beijing attempted to improve relations with the neighbouring states. In the Far East, North Korea was assured by Chou En-lai in April 1970 of Chinese support for its territorial integrity, in a bid to improve Sino-North Korean relations which had

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cooled off during the Cultural Revolution. Towards Japan, which was being offered investment prospects in Siberia, China continued to pursue a policy of strengthening its links with various pro-Beijing groups in order to exert indirect pressure on the Sato government to improve relations. In this context, special emphasis was placed, as in the past, on the business community, the Komeito, the progressive wing of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japanese Socialist Party.

In the Southeast, Beijing began expressing an interest in establishing state-to-state relations with non-communist countries. In this context, it began to deemphasize, though without abandoning, the role of revolutionary movements in the region. Simultaneously, China attempted to draw the Communist states closer to itself. For example, China postponed the Warsaw talks, organised an anti-US rally in Beijing, convened Indo-Chinese Summit conference in Southern China, and extended aid to Cambodia and North Vietnam.

The Chinese policy towards South Asian states also underwent a change. To fully appreciate the reasons for this change and how it affected Sino-Pakistan relations, it is essential to understand the context within which it took place.

Since Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, the Soviet Union had moved away from an 'Indo-centric' to an evenhanded policy in South Asia. India was no longer sponsored by the Soviet Union as a

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100 Christian Science Monitor, 22 May 1969.
candidate for important international meetings. Neither was its support for Moscow on various issues as widely acknowledged by the Soviet press as before. Instead, India was treated as a state similar to Pakistan. In early 1966, for example, while categorizing various countries in terms of their progress towards the goal of 'non-capitalist development', a Soviet author had identified both India and Pakistan as states which succeeded in liquidating the top spectrum of the feudal landlord class and where the future of the large and middle landowners was still in question. The Soviet Union also ceased to support India against Pakistan in disputes involving the two states. Instead, it urged both to settle their disputes by peaceful means. On the Farrakha Barrage issue, for example, the Soviet Union did not support the Indian claim that the 'Ganges was overwhelmingly an Indian river', and that, therefore India was under no obligation to share its water resources with East Pakistan. On the contrary, the Soviet Union officially pressed the Indian Government on July 6, 1968 to work out a method for an equitable sharing of the Ganges waters along the lines of the Indus Water Treaty of 1960. Moscow also ceased to support the Indian claim that Kashmir was an integral part of the Union of India, and that, therefore, it could not be discussed with the Pakistani government. Instead, it acknowledged the existence of the dispute and the need to solve it through bilateral negotiations between India

103 Jukes, op.cit., pp.128-129.
and Pakistan. 'The Soviet Union appreciates', Kosygin said in the Tashkent conference in February 1966, 'that a dispute exists in Kashmir...of course there is a dispute'. In the same month an article was published in Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya which urged both South Asian states to 'display fortitude, flexibility and good will (in finding a solution to the Kashmir dispute)'. 'If India categorically refused to speak about Kashmir at all', the author wrote, '...one could hardly expect Pakistan's president to remain at the conference table'. This was followed by Kosygin's suggestion to Indira Gandhi in April 1968 to enter into a dialogue with Pakistan over Kashmir.

As a result of this evenhanded approach, the Soviet Union had succeeded in winning the confidence of the Pakistani government, and Islamabad, which once had refused to accept any Soviet offer of economic aid, had signed a number of economic assistance agreements with Moscow during the 1966-69 period. It also asked the Soviet Government to supply military equipment. The Soviet Union accepted this request in April 1968 and the agreement was made public following General Yahya's visit to Moscow in July 1968. Since Moscow had already established close economic and military relations with India, its success in establishing military and economic relations with Pakistan resulted in its emergence as the only major power which enjoyed good relations with both the South Asian States.

Within a year of this success, i.e. soon after the major Sino-Soviet border clashes on the Ussuri River, the Soviet Defence

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106 cited in Ibid, p. 55
Minister, Marshal Grechko, visited both India and Pakistan. This was followed by Premier Kosygin's visit to India, Pakistan and Afghanistan in May 1969\textsuperscript{110} during which he proposed the idea of establishing a regional economic grouping of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union on the grounds that it would accelerate the pace of economic development of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and alleviate their widespread poverty.\textsuperscript{111}

The Chinese Government, which had already been concerned about Soviet success in the subcontinent, interpreted the proposal for regional economic cooperation as an indication that Moscow would use South Asia as a launching pad for its proposed Asian Collective Security System. On 30 June 1969, an NCNA report identified Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan as the states Moscow was discussing the Asian security proposal with. However, citing an \textit{International Herald Tribune} article approvingly, it stated that 'the key for Asian Security System is clearly India ... (and that) Soviet revisionist boss A.N. Kosygin's recent visit to India and other countries "have been directed to this end"'.\textsuperscript{112} On 11 July 1969, NCNA went a step further, and stated that the 'Soviet revisionist Social-imperialism, while peddling its sinister stuff of the "system of collective Security in Asia", is doing its utmost to put on the stuff an attractive wrapping, i.e. the so-called Asian "Regional Economic Cooperation"'. 'The so-called "Asian Regional Economic Cooperation"', it continued, 'is nothing but a trap with a view to rigging up a military ring

\textsuperscript{111}Choudhury, \textit{India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh and the Major Powers}, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.63-64.
\textsuperscript{112}'Soviet Revisionism Haunted by Ghost of Dulles', NCNA, 30 June 1969, in \textit{SCMP}, No.4450, 8 July 1969, p.31.
encirclement against China...'. 113 Finally, on 13 July 1969, at a banquet for Pakistan's Air Marshal Nur Khan, Chou En-lai put forth Beijing's interpretation of the proposal for regional cooperation in these categorical terms:

The so-called "System of Collective Security in Asia" is a new step taken by Social-imperialism in its intensified efforts to rig up a new anti-China military alliance. ...In order to realize this scheme, it has put forward the so-called "Regional Economic Cooperation" by taking advantage of Asian countries desire to develop their national economies, vainly attempting thereby to lure them into its trap and gradually place them within its sphere of influence. 114

Beijing's initial response to this perceived threat, as was the case with its policy vis-a-vis other surrounding regions, was determined by the radicals' view of the situation in South Asia. Their view, as depicted in Chinese media coverage, was one in which India was seen as ruled by reactionaries who were colluding with, and were the lackeys of US imperialism and Soviet revisionism, in their attempts to encircle China. 115 Pakistan, on the other hand, was perceived as a victim of Soviet-US conspiracies aimed at sowing discord in Sino-Pakistan relations and turning the subcontinent into

a segment in the anti-China ring.\textsuperscript{116} The policy favoured by the radicals, therefore, and reflected in Chinese media coverage of India during 1969, was to oppose the Indian Government. Frequent references were made by Chinese propaganda organs to the emphasis placed by 'the Indian communist revolutionaries'... [who were] vigorously studying and applying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung thought' on the 'necessity of arming the peasants, building up a people's armed force and launching armed struggles... to overthrow the reactionary regime and win liberation'.\textsuperscript{117} Towards Pakistan, the radicals favoured a policy of supporting Islamabad so as to ensure that 'the imperialists, modern revisionists and their lackeys... (who were) extremely hostile to Sino-Pakistan friendship... (and had) resorted to various despicable means' failed in their 'attempts to sow discord in and sabotage the friendly relations between the people of China and Pakistan'.\textsuperscript{118} Therefore, throughout 1969, for most of which the radicals were in power, the Chinese Government supported Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. It also extended a loan worth US$40.6 million with a grant-ratio of 67.89%.


\textsuperscript{118} This view was reflected in a number of speeches given during the exchange of Sino-Pakistani delegations. See, for example, Vice-Premier Fu-Chih's Speech at the reception given by Pakistan's Ambassador on Pakistan's National Day, NCNA, 23 March 1969, in SCMP, No. 4386, 28 March 1969, p. 28. For this point, however, I am indebted to an ex-official of Pakistan-China Friendship Association, February 1982.
Although this support continued for a major part of the next year when Beijing also began to provide Pakistan with military assistance, a change took place within China towards the end of 1969 which was later to effect the level of Beijing's support for Islamabad; after a period of three years, the moderates gradually gained ascendancy in China, especially in foreign policy formulation.

The moderates had been favouring, at least for the last few years, a less militant and antagonistic policy towards the Indian Government. Indication of this stand could be found in the radicals' criticism of the 'revisionists' in China during the Cultural Revolution. On May 1969, for instance, in a report on the 'Indian People's road of armed struggle', NCNA had criticized 'the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi', (known for his moderate views), for praising and supporting 'the crimes of the Indian revisionists in shamelessly betraying the Indian revolution' and 'spread(ing) illusions of "peaceful transition" in a vain attempt to lure the Indians on to the "parliamentary road"'. Translated into practical terms, it indicated that Liu Shao Chi, and most probably other moderates whom he represented, had favoured playing down the role of revolutionaries which, in turn, could have created an atmosphere for improving, even if only slightly, Beijing's relations with New Delhi. During the Cultural Revolution, this policy suggestion does not seem to have been accepted. However, as the moderates gained ascendancy in late 1969 and early 1970, they began to convert these ideas into actual policy.

The first step was taken in March 1970 when Kuo Mo-jo attended

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120 'Indian People Embark on Revolutionary Road of Armed Struggle', NCNA, 9 May 1969, in SCMP, No. 4415, 14 May 1969, p. 25.
the banquet given by Indian President V.V.Giri at Prince Birendra's wedding in Nepal.\textsuperscript{121} This was followed, on May Day 1970, by Mao Tse-tung smiling at, and shaking hands with, the Indian Charge d'Affaires. He was even reported to have said that India was a great country and that the two neighbours should live in peace and amity.\textsuperscript{122} Meanwhile, the Chinese news media reduced anti-India propaganda, and the Bank of China and Hsinhua branches in Hongkong began extending invitations to Indian diplomats, journalists and businessmen to attend various receptions and film shows.\textsuperscript{123} Within India itself, the Chinese Embassy began giving more parties and, on a reciprocal basis, upgraded the level of Indian Government's representation in these functions. For the first time since 1962, a Senior Secretary of the Indian External Ministry, S.K. Banerji was invited to attend the Chinese National Day reception in October 1970.\textsuperscript{124} Significantly, according to Indian sources, beginning in June 1970, Beijing efforts behind the scenes to find some common ground for negotiations between the two countries.\textsuperscript{125} This culminated in a major Chinese move in September/October 1970; during his visit to Cairo in September 1970 for Nasser's funeral, Kuo Mo-jo requested a meeting with the Indian ambassador to Egypt and invited New Delhi to discuss restoring diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level.\textsuperscript{126} This was followed by a request from the Chinese ambassador in Cairo for a meeting with his Indian counterpart, which took place.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121}Ernest Weatherall, 'New Delhi-Beijing Thaw Ahead', \textit{Christian Science Monitor}, 5 March 1970.
\item \textsuperscript{123}C.P. Ramachandran, 'Indians try to make it with Beijing' \textit{The Age}, 3 December 1970.
\item \textsuperscript{124}\textit{Times of India}, 27 September 1970.
\item \textsuperscript{125}'Breaking the Ice : Editorial', \textit{Times of India}, 14 October 1970.
\item \textsuperscript{126}\textit{Times of India}, 23 October 1970.
\end{itemize}
on 11 October 1970. Although the contents of this meeting were not disclosed, it did give rise to speculations that Sino-Indian relations might improve. 127

Before proceeding any further, it is essential to indicate that there are two probable explanations for the moderates' efforts to improve relations with New Delhi. Firstly, Islamabad's foreign policy during the 1965-69 period had demonstrated that Pakistan alone could not be relied on to counter Soviet and American influence in the Subcontinent. Instead of countering the influence of China's adversaries, to Beijing's chagrin, Islamabad had accepted Moscow's offer of mediation during the 1965 war even though China had gone to the extent of issuing an ultimatum to India at Pakistan's request. Later, in spite of the continuous Chinese reminders to Islamabad that 'it did not know the Soviets as well as the Chinese did', 128 the Pakistan Government had proceeded to pursue a policy of bilateralism, improved relations with the Soviet Union, and even gone so far as to ask it for arms because of difficulty in procuring spare parts for Chinese weapons during the cultural revolution. Therefore, probably as the Soviets had done after 1964, the Chinese 129 moderates also realized that it was essential to maintain friendly relations with both South Asian states to counter the influence of their opponents. Secondly, within India itself a sizeable group in the Foreign Ministry had begun favouring a normalization of relations with China. This was reflected in 1967 in Foreign Minister Chagla's suggestion that Sino-Indian relations did not necessarily require the 'Columbo

127 Times of India, 14 October 1970.
129 Interview with a ranking Pakistan Air Force officer
formula' for the settlement of the boundary dispute. Although he was initially vehemently criticized by the Indian media and opposition, the general mood changed once the Soviet decision to supply arms to Pakistan was announced in mid-1968. Soon afterwards, a number of Indian politicians began putting pressure on the Indian Government to retaliate by improving relations with China. The Indian Government itself also began rethinking its China policy. While it was primarily a move to forestall any future Soviet supply of weapons to Pakistan, the rethinking was probably also a result of the justification provided by the Soviet Union to India for its decision to supply arms to Pakistan. Statements by various Indian leaders, and especially Indira Gandhi indicated that Moscow had tried to calm the Indian Government by suggesting that arms to Pakistan were merely geared to acquiring some influence in that country. This probably worried the Indian Government, which was receiving substantially more Soviet aid than Pakistan, that Moscow hoped to control India more than Pakistan. Therefore, to convey to Moscow that there were limits to its control over New Delhi, the Indian government began throwing out feelers to China for normalization of relations. On 12 December 1968, for instance, Mrs Gandhi declared in the Rajya Sabha that India had an 'open mind' in regard to a dialogue with China. On 1st January 1969, she once again expressed India's readiness to enter into a dialogue with China, and suggested that some sort of 'machinery' could be evolved for discussions with

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130 Girilal Jain, 'A Dialogue with China', *Times of India*, 9 October 1968.
131 Indications to this effect can be found for instance in Indir Gandhi's statement of 9 July 1968, where after criticising Soviet decision to supply arms to Pakistan she said: 'We have doubts whether the Soviet Union would be able to control Pakistan', *Times of India*, 10 July 1968.
132 *Times of India*, 13 December 1968.
Beijing. Though the Chinese Government did not respond to these feelers, the Indian Government continued to express an interest in normalizing relations with Beijing.

Therefore, as they gained ascendency, the moderates saw the possibility of improving relations with New Delhi. Hence, unlike the radicals who had brushed aside the Indian moves as 'nothing but deceitful lies', the moderates responded to the Indian overtures and made moves to improve relations with South Asia's major state.

It is within the context of these moves towards India that the changes in the level of Beijing's support during the last few months of 1970 and a major part of 1971 can be explained. The Chinese Government had informed Islamabad in advance of its decision to improve relations with India, and was careful to inform it that the Sino-Indian rapprochement would not affect Sino-Pakistan relations. However, the moderates seem to have realized that, given the traditional animosity between India and Pakistan, Beijing could not succeed in normalizing relations with India and neutralize, or at least reduce Soviet influence over it, unless and until it adopted, if not an evenhanded policy like the Soviet Union, at least a less 'Pakistan centric' approach towards South Asia. Therefore, as soon as it made moves for improving relations with India, Beijing began indicating that it was not prepared to go all out in supporting Islamabad against New Delhi. During Air Marshal Rahim Khan's visit to Beijing in May 1970, for instance, the Chinese Government not only avoided criticizing India, but also deleted all his anti-Indian

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133 Times of India, 2 January 1969.
134 See, for example, 'Reactionary Indian Government Manipulates Traitorous Dalai into conducting Anti-China Activities', NCNA, 15 October 1969, in SCMP No. 4522, 23 October 1969, p. 28.
135 G.W. Choudhury, 'Policy Towards South Asia', Current History, April 1979, pp. 155-158
remarks from its media reports. During General Yahya's visit to China in November 1970, the Chinese Government once again refrained from any direct attack on India either in the speeches or the joint communiqué. The most obvious indication, however, was a decline in the level of Beijing's support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, from that which had prevailed since 1964.

However, while giving these indications, Beijing was careful not to substantially reduce the level of its support for Islamabad. This probably stemmed from the fact that, notwithstanding Pakistan's inability to withstand Soviet pressure and the opportunities for improving relations with India, pro-Beijing groups were still stronger in Pakistan than in India. This was demonstrated, for example, by the contrast in the reaction of the two states to Moscow's proposal for a regional economic cooperation and an Asian Security System. The Indian media's reaction to the two proposals was sceptical, that of the Indian Government was lukewarm; in Pakistan, the reaction was hostile. Soon after Kosygin proposed the idea of a South Asian regional economic grouping several hostile articles were published in the Pakistani news media, and a number of politicians issued statements opposing the idea. One of the arguments against the proposal was that economic cooperation between India, Pakistan and Afghanistan should follow rather than precede the resolution of their major disputes. The major argument, however, was that Pakistan should not join any scheme directed against China. In

136 Probably the Chinese reluctance was so obvious that a Pakistani official spokesman restricted himself to stating that the Yahya-Chou talks had resulted in a 'proximity of views on most cases', and did not claim, as had been the case during the heyday of Sino-Pakistani relations that the two states had 'identity of views'. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 173.

early July 1969 after the Soviet Union had floated the idea of a collective security system for Asia, the Pakistan Times stated that Pakistan should 'protect the pattern of bilateralism from erosion by the Soviet-Indian efforts to create an economic-military community...mainly addressed to the purpose of China's containment'. 'To withstand this inexorable pressure', it said, 'is the foremost task which confronts the policy makers of the administration'.

This opposition was supplemented by that from the Pakistan Foreign Office and Military Intelligence. As G.W. Choudhury mentions, a strong pressure group within these two organizations advised General Yahya Khan to be cautious of accepting Soviet proposals due to 'their grave implications...on China's south western flank'. This group even opposed the idea of sending Pakistan's Deputy Foreign Minister to Kabul to discuss with his counterparts from India, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union the idea of transit trade.

Faced with this public and bureaucratic opposition, the Pakistani government, which had initially agreed to send representatives to the proposed regional conference in Kabul, announced on July 10, 1969 that it would not join the Soviet sponsored plans because they were aimed at 'establishing an alliance opposed to China'. It also sent Air Marshal Nur Khan to Beijing on July 12, 1969 to assure the Chinese government that it would not collaborate, no matter what the Soviet pressure, in any scheme directed against China.

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138 Pakistan Times, 9 July 1969.
139 Choudhury, India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh and the Major Powers, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
140 Pakistan Times, 11 July 1969.
Hence, motivated by the need to retain close links with a more 'reliable' state, Beijing continued to provide it with economic and military assistance. In essence, therefore, towards the end of 1970, outlines of a new Chinese South Asian policy were emerging in which, although interested in maintaining a close relationship with Pakistan, Beijing was also interested in improving relations with New Delhi and, therefore, was not prepared to provide political support to Pakistan on issues that were likely to halt the process of Sino-Indian rapprochement. The continuation of this 'new' South Asian policy primarily accounts for Beijing's reluctance to side with Pakistan for a major part of the Bangla Desh crisis in 1971.

Following Kuo Mo-jo's meeting with the Indian ambassador in September 1970, the Chinese Government had further intensified its efforts to improve relations with New Delhi. Radio Peking ceased to give any direct encouragement to the 'Indian revolutionaries', especially to the Naxalite movement which had previously been commended for its 'revolutionary struggle' in India.142 Meanwhile, Chinese Embassies in the various world capitals started inviting Indian diplomats to their receptions.143 Significantly, on 23 March 1971, in a meeting with the Indian Charge d'Affaires in Beijing Chou En-Lai conveyed his greeting to Mrs Indira Gandhi on her election victory earlier in the month,144 was the first time since 1962 that a Chinese leader had greeted a new Indian Government and, therefore, indicative of Beijing's continuing interest in normalizing relations. It was at this stage that, the government ordered a military crackdown in East Pakistan. The Pakistani ruling elite, failing to admit that this

142 Times of India, 25 March 1971.
143 The Age, 3 December 1970.
144 Times of India, 25 March 1971.
major crisis in the United Pakistan's history was triggered by its own policies, began blaming India for the situation in East Pakistan, and asked support from major powers against New Delhi. The Chinese Government, however, guided by its interest in normalizing relations with India, refrained from siding with Islamabad against New Delhi. Instead, initially it opted for a policy similar to that pursued by the Soviet Union during the 1965 war; it reported both Indian and Pakistani versions of the crisis without commenting on them. Later, as the crisis continued, it maintained a studied silence and avoided echoing Pakistani allegations against India.

However, this is not to suggest that interest in the possibility of improving relations with New Delhi is the sole explanation for China's guarded attitude during 1971. There were other reasons as well. Firstly, the Chinese Government did not approve of the Yahya regime's behaviour in East Pakistan. During Bhutto's visit to Beijing in November 1971, for instance, Beijing had expressed its disapproval by subjecting its guest to a 'spontaneous' demonstration against Islamabad's policies in East Pakistan. Privately the Chinese Government had been more open in its criticism of Islamabad's behaviour. Chou En-lai, for instance, had warned Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Sultan Khan and General Hassan, who were secretly visiting Beijing to secure Chinese support in the crisis, of 'grave consequences' if a political solution was not quickly found. Similarly, Bhutto was also advised in November 1971 that the Yahya regime should negotiate with the Awami league for a political

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146 Armstrong, op.cit, p.172
147 Choudhury, India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh and the Major Powers, op. cit., pp. 211-212.
settlement. Even in an internal report to the C.C.P. in December 1971, Chou En-lai had stated that 'there are mistakes in the domestic policy of Pakistan, [such as] the massacre in East Pakistan...'.

Secondly, although the liberation movement was being led by the Awami League, even the pro-Beijing National Awami Party led by Maulana Bhashani was also supporting East Pakistan's secession. Considering that the party had a long history of association with Beijing, and that it had gone to the extent of supporting the Ayub regime on China's request, Beijing could not suddenly ignore the NAP's position and defend what was, in any case, an untenable position of West Pakistan. Thirdly, during the first few months of the East Pakistan crisis, when the Mukti Bahini guerrillas were being trained in India, the East Pakistan Communist Party-Marxist Leninist (EPCP-ML), which had a pro-Beijing orientation, had established bases in some areas in the districts of Noakhali, Chittagong, Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, Sylhet and Kushtia. In Rangmati, EPCP-ML's leader Toaha had also collected about 10,000 'red guerrillas'. The news of their activities was broadcast by the BBC and Voice of America and this created an impression in India and other states that a protracted struggle might result in the emergence of radical, pro-Beijing leadership in a liberated Bangla Desh. Beijing therefore, had probably developed a vested interest in not opposing the liberation movement and its supporters, to ensure that it would be able to establish close relations with a radical and pro-Beijing government in Bangla Desh.

148 Interview with a Pakistani politician. September 1981.
149 Chen, op. cit., p. 135.
Notwithstanding these reasons, however, the developments during the last phase of the crisis vindicate the argument that interest in improving relations with New Delhi was the principal reason for Beijing's guarded attitude during 1971. For a major part of the East Pakistan crisis, the Soviet Union had avoided siding with India against Pakistan. Although Podgorny had sent a letter to General Yahya on 3 April 1971 urging him to take 'urgent measures to stop the bloodshed and repression in East Pakistan...[and to] use methods of peaceful settlement', once convinced that the Yahya regime was not prepared to heed Soviet advice, Moscow returned to a balancing attitude calculated to strengthen its influence in South Asia. The Yahya government was assured that the situation in East Pakistan was Pakistan's internal affair, and New Delhi's moves to draw Moscow into an endorsement of the Indian emphasis on the need for a specifically political settlement to enable refugees to return home were resisted. Meanwhile both India and Pakistan were urged caution and restraint. This Soviet attitude did not change even when the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship was concluded in August 1971. The Joint Indo-Soviet statement issued on this occasion, for instance, did not refer to East Pakistan as East Bengal, though this was what India desired. It also stressed that there could be 'no military solution' of the problem of East Pakistan and that a political settlement alone could 'answer the interests of the entire people of Pakistan'. During Indira Gandhi's visit to Moscow, Kosygin also

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reportedly advised that the conflict in East Pakistan was an internal problem of Pakistan and that it was for the people of Pakistan to decide what sort of political security they should have.\textsuperscript{155}

The Soviet version of the Joint Declaration issued at the end of the visit, unlike the Indian version, consistently referred to \textit{East Pakistan} and, not \textit{East Bengal}\textsuperscript{156}. This was followed by Podgorny's categorical statement during a stopover at New Delhi on 1\textsuperscript{st} October that 'the further sliding towards a military conflict must be prevented'. Even the Joint Soviet-Algerian Communique issued after Kosygin's visit to Algeria in early October affirmed both parties' 'respect for the national unity and integrity of Pakistan'.\textsuperscript{157}

Towards the end of October 1971, however, Moscow's approach to the crisis changed; it began identifying itself with the Indian position on the crisis. On 22 October, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Nikolai Firyubin arrived in India for talks. These were disclosed as being under Article IX of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, which required the 'contracting parties to immediately enter into mutual consultation' with a view to 'eliminating an attack or threat of attack', the disclosure that it had been invoked was a warning to Islamabad that even the Soviet Union had come to regard the Pakistan Government's failure to normalise the situation in the eastern wing and its military preparations as constituting a threat to India's security. This point was underscored once again in the Joint Statement resulting from the talks which, for the first time since the beginning of the crisis, declared that 'the two sides were in full

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Times of India, 30 September 1971.}

\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Pravda, 30 September 1971, in SWB:SU, No. 3801, 10 October 1971, pp. A3/1-3.}

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Pravda, 9 October 1971, in SWB:FE, No. 3809, 11 October 1971, pp. E/1-2}
agreement in their assessment of the situation'. 158 A further display of change in the Soviet attitude was provided by the arrival in India of the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Air Force Marshal, Kutakhov, on 28 October 1971. 159 More importantly, within a few days of Pakistan's decision to send a high-powered delegation, headed by Bhutto, to Beijing, the Soviet ambassador to Pakistan informed President Yahya that 'an armed attack against India by Pakistan, under whatever pretext it might be made, would evoke the most resolute condemnation in the Soviet Union'. 160

Hence, it became clear that instead of letting the events in East Pakistan take their own course, the Indian Government had found a 'partner' in the Soviet Union to hasten the process of Pakistan's dismemberment. This development, which indicated the failure of Beijing's efforts at drawing India out of the Soviet sphere of influence, was interpreted by the Chinese Government as increasing the Soviet prospects for strengthening its control over India and expanding its sphere of influence in the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean. 161 It was only at this stage that Beijing changed its policy towards South Asia.

For the last seven months it had been intensifying its efforts to normalise relations with New Delhi. In April 1971, soon after

158 Times of India, 28 October 1971.
159 Times of India, 29 October 1971.
161 This interpretation was frequently put forth by the Chinese Government during the Indo-Pakistan war see, for example, 'Most Preposterous Logic', Flagrant Aggression', Jen-min Jih-pao, 6 December 1971, transmitted by NCNA, 6 December 1971, in SWB : FE, No. 3858, 7 December 1971, p.C/8 ; and 'Commentary : People's Daily's Refutation of Tass on Indo-Pakistan Conflict', NCNA, 7 December 1971, in SWB : FE, No. 3859, 8 December 1971, pp. C/4-5.
arriving in Moscow, the Chinese ambassador to the Soviet Union had paid a courtesy call to his Indian counterpart, D.P. Dhar. This was followed by two more meetings between the two envoys during which normalization of Sino-Indian relations was discussed. In August 1971, China had not only refrained from commenting upon the Indo-Soviet Treaty but had also, in a move reminiscent of that made to the US, invited an Indian table-tennis team to participate in the Afro-Asian tournament held in Beijing. As a further display of interest in improving relations with New Delhi, Beijing had also circulated through Hsinhua Mrs Gandhi's message to Chou En-lai on the occasion of China's National Day Celebrations on 1st October 1971. Simultaneously, as discussed in Chapter IV, Beijing had refrained from siding with Islamabad on the East Pakistan crisis; it neither reported nor commented upon the developments in East Pakistan for most of the crisis, thereby indicating its unwillingness to echo Pakistan's allegations against India. However, as soon as the prospects of a Soviet-backed Indian move to dismember Pakistan seemed bright, Beijing temporarily shelved its new South Asia policy. Ignoring New Delhi's continued suggestions to upgrade the diplomatic representation in both countries to ambassadorial level, Beijing began identifying India as the aggressor, and repeating all those Pakistani allegations against India which it had hitherto chosen to ignore. That it was done even though by this time the pro-Beijing NAP had joined the Consultative Committee established in September 1971 by Tajuddin, Prime Minister of the Bangla Desh Government in

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162 Times of India, 26 August 1971.
163 It is reported that Beijing had initially decided to condemn the Indo-Soviet treaty but on reflection had decided to continue a softer line towards India, Times of India, 9 October 1971.
164 Times of India, 29 August 1971.
165 Times of India, 9 October 1971.
exile, to conduct the liberation war, and that Maulana Bhashani was requesting Beijing to recognise Bangla Desh, suggests that an interest in improving relations with India was the principal reason for Beijing's guarded attitude during the East Pakistan Crisis. Once Indo-Soviet moves indicated that the policy had failed to neutralise India, Beijing chose to shelve it and support Islamabad.

It is necessary to point out that the Chinese support to Pakistan was not provided to halt the process of dismemberment. There was the problem not only of the snow on Himalayan passes into India, but also the Indo-Soviet treaty, which had increased the danger to China of physically intervening, or even threatening to do so in the Indo-Pakistan war. Even more importantly, China had all along disapproved of Pakistan's handling of the crisis, and had accepted that the secession of Bangla Desh was inevitable. Therefore, during Bhutto's visit, the Chinese leaders had categorically informed the Pakistani visitors that China would not be able to intervene in a military conflict and, that Pakistan should avoid war with India or at least contain it in as small an area as possible. Most probably, the Chinese support was provided simply to ensure that West Pakistan was not destroyed, as such an outcome would have resulted in Soviet influence along the whole of China's Southwestern borders. This is substantiated, firstly by the fact that the Chinese Government did not refer to its support for Pakistan's territorial integrity until the war broke out on the western front. Secondly, as soon as it was informed of the rumoured Indian attack to capture Kashmir and dismember the rest of Pakistan

166 Maniruzzaman, op. cit., p. 143.
as well, it acquiesced in the US moves to ask Moscow to dissuade India. Another probable motivation for Chinese support for Pakistan during the last days of the crisis was its interest in winning the support of Third World states which, with their own nationality problems, had expressed concern in the General Assembly at the prospects of Pakistan's dismemberment.
CHAPTER X

'NEW' PAKISTAN AND CHINA

AN EXPLANATION

The end of the 14 day Indo-Pakistan war resulted in a drastic restructuring of the geopolitical situation in South Asia. Pakistan's major adversary, India, emerged as the preeminent regional power, whereas Pakistan itself, with the secession of its eastern wing, was reduced from a comparatively powerful state to one, according to some analysts, with only one-tenth of India's diplomatic and military leverage. This change while significant for Pakistan, also heightened Beijing's fear of Soviet encirclement-related successes along China's Southwestern flank.

China perceived the Soviet Union as having succeeded in including India in its sphere of influence. This perception was reflected in frequent articles and reports in the Chinese media that traced the history of Indo-Soviet relations. Since the first economic agreement was signed with India in 1955, Chinese propaganda organs maintained, the Soviet revisionism had provided India with credits totalling Rs 10 to 20 million, and had become its second largest creditor. The Soviet Union had also assisted India militarily since 1960. This military assistance, which totalled over US$1,600 million, had initially taken the form of weapon transfers. Later, however, the Soviet Union had begun assisting the Indian Government in arms expansion and war preparations; it had provided India with warships of various types and many up-to-date combat aircraft, and had also assisted India in manufacturing military

planes. Consequently, Soviet-made weapons had come to occupy a 'principal place' in the Indian armed forces. This military relationship, the Chinese media maintained, was further consolidated when the Soviet Government concluded with the Indian Government in August 1971 a treaty nominally 'for peaceful and friendly cooperation' but in reality for military alliance.³

By virtue of this economic and military 'aid' and political support, the Chinese news media claimed, the Soviet imperialists had succeeded in infiltrating their influence into various domains of India. On 31 December 1971, for instance, distorting a statement by Indian Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram, an NCNA propaganda report stated that the Soviet 'control' of India's economy amounted to 30 percent in steel production, 35 percent in oil-refining, 20 percent in electric power, 60 percent in electrical equipment, and 85 percent in heavy machines. It also reported the Soviet Government as 'controlling' 75 percent of the production of electricity generating installations, 80 percent of the production of the oil extraction and exploration industry, and 25 percent of aluminium output in India.⁴

Another NCNA report wrongly reported that the 'Soviet Union [had] purchased with a number of aircraft [supplied to India] the right of voyage to Madras and Bombay for the Soviet Pacific fleet' and that, at the same time, the Soviet Navy had acquired 'the right to use some of [Indian] ... naval bases' in exchange for 'several naval ships to

³See, for example, NCNA, 29 December 1971, in SWB:FE, No.3875, 30 December 1971, pp.A2/1-3.
India'. As a result of this Soviet penetration into the Indian economy and military, Chinese news media pointed out by referring to various Indian newspapers, 'India had become a safe egg in the Soviet basket' and 'was behaving like a satellite of Russia'.

The Soviet Union was perceived by Beijing as attempting to draw the nascent state of Bangla Desh into its sphere of influence as well. This perception was reflected in the manner in which the Chinese media reported Soviet moves in 'East Pakistan'. Soon after the end of the Indo-Pakistan war, for instance, Moscow proceeded to establish economic relations with Bangla Desh. On 23 December 1971, the Soviet Consul in Dacca called on the representatives of Bangla Desh, expressed his government's support for the new state, and conveyed Moscow's willingness to assist Bangla Desh economically. This was followed on 28 December 1971 by talks between the Chief of the Soviet trade mission in Dacca, V. V. Zverev, and the Bangla Desh Minister of Finance. Upon conclusion of these talks it was announced that the Soviet Government had evinced interest in signing a trade agreement with Bangla Desh, and that the pact would be concluded as soon as possible. While reporting these talks on 31 December 1971, NCNA identified them as 'Soviet Social-imperialism's attempt to make economic penetration into East Pakistan after it was occupied by the Indian reactionaries with Soviet abetment and support'. By proposing to supply cotton for its textile mills and assisting Bangla Desh in the reconstruction of its jute industry, it maintained, the Soviet

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Union was aiming at exploiting jute (Bangla Desh's famous product) and cheap labour. Moreover, probably to underscore that the Soviet Union was attempting to convert Bangla Desh gradually into a satellite as well, the news of Soviet-Bangla Desh talks on economic cooperation was followed, within a few hours, by a detailed account of the manner in which the Soviet Union had succeeded in converting India into a satellite by providing 'economic assistance'. The Soviet military aid, though limited in scope, was also projected by the Chinese media as aimed at controlling Bangla Desh's military institutions and acquiring bases in the Bay of Bengal. A Jien-min Jih-pao editorial on 28 August 1972, for instance, wrongly claimed that the Soviet decision to assist Bangla Desh in harbour-clearing operations in Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar formed part of Moscow's attempts to use Chittagong as a naval base.

The Soviet Union, however, was not perceived by Beijing as restricting its moves to include only India and Bangla Desh in its sphere of influence. Instead, as reflected in statements by various Chinese leaders and NCNA accounts of the developments of South Asia, Beijing perceived Moscow as aiming, as the next step, to control the whole of 'the South Asian subcontinent and from there to control the entire Indian ocean ...'. Meanwhile, an NCNA report suggested by quoting the Japanese paper Yomiuri Shimbun, the Soviet Union was to use India as a "pawn" to "ensure a passage through the Indian Ocean for expansion in South-East Asia" and "open a "broad lane" for the

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Soviet fleets in "expansion from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean".\(^{11}\) The ultimate aim of all these moves, another NCNA report had already pointed out during the 1971 war, was to encircle China.\(^{12}\)

It is within the context of the perception of a heightened Soviet threat of encirclement, and attempts to counter it, that the Chinese support for what was left of the 'old' Pakistan - or the 'new' Pakistan can be explained. Beijing was interested in preventing the Soviet Union from expanding its influence in the entire subcontinent. This interest dictated that it should support the only subcontinental state which was not perceived as being under Soviet influence, i.e. Pakistan. This was particularly essential in the immediate post-war period because the 'new' Pakistan was faced with a number of economic, military and political problems.

The chief economic problem was the almost complete depletion of foreign exchange reserves. Added to this was the task of grappling with a number of military problems resulting from the 1971 war, such as securing the release of the POWs and the evacuation of occupied territory, and also replenishing losses and reducing the margin of Pakistan's military inferiority vis-a-vis India to manageable proportions. Simultaneously, the Pakistan Government, was also facing serious political problems. The secession of Bangla Desh had set in motion secessionist tendencies in Sind, NWFP and Baluchistan.

Faced with these problems, soon after assuming power, the Bhutto regime was looking for external sources of support. Because of their disapproval of Pakistan's handling of the East Pakistan crisis, the West European States were unwilling to provide support, as was the


United States, despite its having concluded a Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with Pakistan in 1959. Under these circumstances, there was a possibility that the new regime, which had deemed it important to contact the Soviet ambassador first and which, for the first time in Pakistan's history, had permitted the media to publish statements demanding better relations with Moscow,\textsuperscript{13} might turn towards the Soviet Union to solve its problems. It was to counter this possibility which, in Beijing's view, could have brought Moscow closer to its goal of encircling China that the Chinese Government supported the 'new' Pakistan politically, economically and militarily during the 1972-73 period.

However, this does not suggest that interest in counteracting the perceived Soviet threat of encirclement was the sole reason for China's support for Pakistan during the two years following the secession of Bangla Desh. As during the 1971 war, China's support for Pakistan was partially geared to projecting its image, in direct contrast to that of the Soviet Union, as a state which stood for principles. This is evident from the statements given by various Chinese leaders on the issue of Bangla Desh's admission to the United Nations. On 25 August 1972, for instance, Huang Hua criticised Moscow and New Delhi for clinging to the 'obdurate course' of 'forcing' the Security Council to admit Bangla Desh into the UN. 'This involves', he said, 'an important question of principle: Do they have regard for the purposes and principles of the Charter? Should the Charter obligations be carried out? And should the relevant United Nations resolutions be respected?'. "Since China has taken part in the work of the United Nations", he asserted, "China

\textsuperscript{13} See, for example, Wali Khan's statements in \textit{Dawn}, 12 and 29 January 1972.
must act according to principles. We can never compromise on important questions of principles'. 14 Explaining these 'principles', moments later he stated: 'The people of the whole world are clearly aware that the Chinese people have consistently and firmly supported the just struggles of the oppressed nations and people of the world and firmly opposed imperialist schemes of aggression, interference, control and subversion'. The Soviet Social-Imperialists, on the other hand, he maintained, 'have been carrying out aggression, interference, control and subversion against other countries on the South Asian subcontinent and other parts of the world'. 15 By drawing this comparison, the Chinese Government not only attempted to allay the developing states' fears that Beijing might exploit their nationalities problems but also hoped to draw these states closer to itself in its struggle with the Soviet Union for influence in the Third World.

Specifically, the Chinese Government hoped to improve relations with the Middle Eastern States by siding with the 'new' Pakistan. Beijing had previously tried to cultivate these states, using two different approaches; first by supporting the radical Arab states in the 1950s, and then by bolstering the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the 1960s. Both these approaches had met with little success; the radical Arab states did not respond to Beijing's overtures favourably, and the PLO, after enjoying a period of excessive attention from the PRC, also tilted towards the Soviet

By the late 1960s, therefore, Beijing had come to rely on Islamabad for improving relations with some of the Middle East/Persian Gulf states due to Pakistan's cultural, historical and religious ties with these countries.

After the 1971 war, however, Pakistan's significance as a 'link' with these states had further increased. Following the secession of its eastern wing, Pakistan had emerged as a transitional zone between South Asia and the Middle East/Persian Gulf region. It was often speculated, though probably without any concrete evidence, that any further disintegration of Pakistan would result in the creation of a Soviet supported Baluchi state on the mouth of the Persian Gulf. This would have directly threatened the security of the oil supply lanes on which the economies of the Middle Eastern states depended. The oil producing states of the region, therefore, were concerned about the territorial integrity of Pakistan. Although initially unable to translate this concern to actual military and economic assistance, these states did express their support for Pakistan by siding with it on the issue of the release of POWs. Beijing probably realised that supporting Pakistan at this juncture would

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17 In 1971, for instance, China had relied on Pakistan for establishing diplomatic relations with Iran, Anwar Hussain Syed, China & Pakistan Diplomacy of an Entente Cordial, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), p.146.


19 It was not until after the oil embargo in October 1973 that these states began assisting Pakistan economically.

20 For pro-Pakistan statements made by various Middle Eastern leaders, see, 'Documents', Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXIV, No.1, First Quarter, 1972, pp.175-186.
highlight the existence of, and thus pave the way for diplomatic contacts, between China and the Middle East/Persian Gulf states. Though there is no evidence to substantiate the claim, this consideration was probably the strongest with respect to Iran. The Shah of Iran had been most vocal in expressing his concern over any further threat to Pakistan's territorial integrity, especially in Baluchistan due to the possibility of it spilling over into Iranian Baluchistan. He had, therefore, begun assisting the Bhutto regime in undertaking developmental projects in Baluchistan. By supporting Pakistan at this stage, and contributing to the development of Baluchistan, the Chinese Government probably hoped to win the Shah's good will and further consolidate relations with Iran, which had only recently established diplomatic relations with Beijing.\(^1\)

Nevertheless, the argument that Beijing's interest in ensuring that a problem-ridden Pakistan did not provide opportunity for Moscow to expand its influence in the entire South Asian region was the principal factor accounting for high level Chinese support for Pakistan in the 1972-73 period is vindicated by the developments in late 1973 and early 1974.

Pakistan's economy, which was in disarray and heading towards a prolonged period of stagnation in 1971-72, began showing signs of recovery by mid-1973. Agriculture recorded a growth rate of above 3 percent during 1972-73 --- a significant improvement to virtually no net growth in this sector since 1969-70. The large scale

\(^1\)Initially this concern was reflected in Iran's aid to Pakistan in setting up joint projects in economically backward provinces of Baluchistan. On 11 May 1973, however, in the wake of Baluch insurgency and Afghanistan's revival of the Pushtunistan issue, the Shah of Iran, at a banquet given in Bhutto's honour, categorically said that Iran would 'not stand for any other misfortune' which might occur to Pakistan. \textit{Asian Recorder:} 1972, pp.10666-67, \textit{Kayhan International}, 12 May 1973.
manufacturing industries also showed signs of improvement; compared
to a nominal growth rate of 1.2 percent in 1970-71, the level of
industrial production increased by 11.9 percent in 1972-73. The
increases in agricultural and industrial production, in turn,
favourably affected income in the trading, transport and related
service sectors.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's foreign trade sector expanded faster than
the national income, and coupled with a substantial reduction in the
rate of borrowings from abroad, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves
doubled from US$170.9 million in December 1971 to US$341.7 million in

This rapid rate of economic growth was circumscribed in the
second half of 1973 by a number of difficulties arising from natural
factors such as floods, and international developments like the
energy crisis. However, in spite of these impediments, Pakistan's
economy maintained a steady pace of growth. The fact that its
agricultural and industrial production, and GNP increased by 5 %, 7 %
and 6.1 % respectively during the fiscal year 1973-74 indicated that
Pakistan's economy had regained the strength and resilience lost
during the East Pakistan crisis and the subsequent Indo-Pakistan
war.

Simultaneously, Pakistan's military position vis-a-vis India
also improved by the end of 1973. Having secured Indian withdrawal
from occupied territories in December 1972, Pakistan also succeeded
in securing the release of most of its prisoners in August 1973.

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22 Pakistan Economic Survey: 1972-73, (Islamabad: Government of
24 Ibid, pp.xi-xv.
Significantly, through its rapid weapons acquisition programme, Pakistan also succeeded in reducing the margin of inferiority vis-a-vis India; as previously mentioned, the ratio of Pakistani tanks and aircraft to those of India improved from 1:2.1 and 1:3.2 in 1972 to 1:1.5 and 1:3.0 respectively by the end of 1973. Even the ratio of Pakistani to Indian naval vessels improved from 1:4.2 to 1:2.9 during the same period.\(^{25}\)

Parallel to these developments the Chinese Government resumed, after an interval of twenty months, its efforts to normalise relations with India. As a first step, Beijing ceased to categorically identify the Indo-Soviet 'collusion' as the main cause of unrest in the South Asian region. Instead, it began with phraseology which suggested that probably only the Soviet Union was responsible for the differences among the regional states. On 18 June, for instance, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chi Peng-fei maintained that the unsettled situation in the subcontinent was inseparable from the activities of 'certain expansionist forces'. To indicate that these 'forces' did not include a South Asian state, he continued to point out that 'to realize their expansionism, these expansionist forces are trying hard to exacerbate discord among the countries of the subcontinent while stepping up their activities of infiltration and subversion in every way, thus gravely endangering the region's peace and security'.\(^{26}\) Similarly, on 30 August 1973, while welcoming the Delhi Agreement, Chi Peng-fei stated that 'there

\(^{25}\)See Chapter VI.

\(^{26}\)NCNA, 19 June 1973, in SWB:FE, No.4326, 21 June 1973, p.A3/1 (emphasis added). This was in marked contrast to Huang Hua's statement of 25 August 1972 in the Security Council when he had categorically mentioned India and the USSR as aiming to maintain and aggravate tension on the South Asian subcontinent so as to profit from it, R.K. Jain, op.cit., pp.212.
are people who do not wish to see a detente in the South Asian region'. In order to attain their expansionist ambitions, he continued, 'they are continually resorting to interference and subversion in countries of this region, sowing discord among them and trying to create new incidents to fish in troubled waters'.

Significantly, instead of accusing both the Soviet Union and India for Pakistan's dismemberment, Beijing gradually began shifting the blame totally onto Moscow. In his address to the General Assembly on 2 October 1973, for instance, Chiao Kuan-hua referred either directly or indirectly to the events of 1971 on three different occasions. On two of these he blamed only the Soviet Union for Pakistan's bifurcation, whereas on the third occasion he identified the Soviet Union as having supported India in dismembering Pakistan by armed force.

At the same time, the Chinese Government began making guarded gestures of interest in normalising relations with India. Unlike in the past when its leaders referred only to 'the Chinese peoples'... friendliness toward all people of the whole South Asian subcontinent', for instance, while speaking at a banquet in Pakistan, Chi Peng-fei used a different expression. 'The Chinese people', he said, 'cherish feelings of friendship for all the countries of the subcontinent'. Such indications were supplemented with Beijing's attempts to use third parties to reestablish contacts

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with New Delhi. In December 1973, there were reports that when the Indian President, V.V. Giri, visited Rumania, President Ceausescu, apparently with Chinese blessings, sounded him out on the prospects of Sino-Indian rapprochement.31

The major Chinese move to improve relations with India however, was made during Bhutto's visit to Beijing in May 1974. At a banquet given in his honour on 12 May 1974, Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping welcomed 'the new developments [that had] taken place in the situation in South Asia'. 'We are glad to see', he stated, 'that agreements have been reached among the countries concerned of the subcontinent, which have led to the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council and thus created favourable conditions for the normalisation of relations among the countries with India as well as Bangla Desh'. 'The Chinese people', he said, 'have always cherished profound sentiments for the people of the South Asian countries. We are ready to develop good neighbourly relations with the countries of the subcontinent on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence and further enhance our traditional friendship with their people'.32

The fact that China did not initiate these moves until the prospects of Pakistan resolving its post-war problems seemed bright, and that Beijing did not categorically evince an interest in normalising relations with India before 'the relevant UN resolutions' passed during and after the 1971 war were actually implemented supports the contention previously made that Beijing's policy towards the 'new' Pakistan during the 1972-1973 period was guided by its

counter-encirclement strategy. China wanted to ensure that a weak and truncated Pakistan did not turn towards Moscow for want of any alternative source of support and thus enable the Soviet Union to 'control' the entire subcontinent. Therefore, it sided with Islamabad on issues arising out of the 1971 war and furnished it with economic and military aid. However, once convinced of 'Pakistan's consolidation and development', and sure that it '[stood] staunchly on the South Asian subcontinent', Beijing resumed its efforts to normalise relations with India.

It was at this beginning of China's move back to the 'new South Asian policy', it had temporarily shelved just before the 1971 war, that the Indian Government exploded a nuclear device on 18 May 1974. As previously discussed in Chapter VI, Pakistan reacted very strongly to this development; not only did it accuse India of nuclear blackmail, but it also urged the permanent members of the Security Council, especially China, to provide Pakistan with a 'nuclear umbrella'. China's response to this call was extremely guarded; it initially neither echoed Islamabad's accusations against New Delhi nor indicated any inclination to extend any nuclear guarantees. Towards the end of June 1974, it did move slightly away from this cautious policy and indirectly criticised India for its war preparations, arms expansion and recourse to nuclear blackmail, but

33 That this factor was prominent in China's consideration is reflected in various speeches and articles published just before and during Bhutto's visit to Beijing in May 1974 when Beijing expressed an interest in improving relations with all the South Asian states. See, for example, 'Warm Welcome to Friendly Envoy from Pakistan', Jen-min Jih-pao, 11 May 1974, in FBIS:CHI, 13 May 1974, p.A/2; and the Sino-Pakistan Joint Communique issued at the end of the visit, NCNA, 14 May 1974, in FBIS:CHI, 15 May 1974, p.A/3. Even Deng was careful to emphasise that it was against the background of India's implementation of the UN resolutions passed during the 1971 war that China wished to improve relations with all South Asian states. NCNA, 12 May 1974, in FBIS:CHI, 13 May 1974, p.A/6.
it remained careful not to commit itself specifically to supporting Pakistan against an Indian nuclear threat.

This guarded attitude can be explained firstly, in terms of China's stand on disarmament. Since July 1963, it had been proposing a world summit conference to achieve the goal of 'the complete, thorough, total and resolute prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons'. Unless this goal was achieved, Beijing had consistently argued, it was 'unreasonable' and 'impossible' to expect non-nuclear states not to develop nuclear weapons for the purpose of self-defence. It could not, therefore, possibly go back on its own stand and criticise India's detonation of a nuclear device.

Secondly, as already mentioned, after an interval of twenty months Beijing had only recently resumed its efforts to normalise relations with New Delhi, and did not wish to further delay the possibility of 'neutralising' India by criticising it at this stage.

Thirdly, and most importantly, Beijing's reluctance to commit itself specifically on Pakistan's side or give an impression of willingness to extend its 'nuclear umbrella' stemmed from the Chinese Government's calculations of the repercussions of such a decision. The Indian nuclear programme had been primarily developed in response to the Chinese nuclear programme. Soon after China's first nuclear explosion, Dr. Homi Bhaba, an Indian scientist, had mobilised support among both houses of the Indian Parliament and secured additional funds for accelerating the pace of development in the nuclear field. Although this pace slowed down after Dr Bhaba's death in 1966, Dr Sarabhai, his successor, had once again initiated efforts after 1970 to compete with China in the nuclear field and, to this end, had

designed a ten years programme, which envisaged that India would acquire the capability to explode a nuclear device, and then the capability to deliver nuclear weapons. 35 Once the Indian Government detonated the nuclear device on 18 May 1974, the Chinese Government feared that any specific commitment of extending a 'nuclear umbrella' to Pakistan would not only accelerate the pace of India's nuclear programme but also might prompt the Indian Government to move from being a 'nuclear-capable' to a 'nuclear-weapon' state. Such a development was viewed as creating additional strategic problems for China; its nuclear capability was already insufficient to compete successfully with the Soviet Union, and it feared that an additional nuclear threat from the southwestern border would weaken its position and increase its vulnerability vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. To counter this possibility, Beijing chose to adopt a cautious attitude and refrained from openly siding with Islamabad against New Delhi's detonation of a nuclear device. 36

While opting for a guarded posture on this issue the Chinese Government supported Pakistan on Kashmir and approved its proposal to declare South Asia a nuclear-free zone. Simultaneously, during the 1974-75 period, Beijing continued to provide military and economic assistance to Islamabad. This continuity, once again, can be explained in terms of China's perception of the situation in South Asia.

The Indian Government was perceived, as in the immediate post 1971 war period, to be under Soviet influence. This perception was reflected on a number of occasions. Five days before Brezhnev's

36 Interview with an official of Pakistan's Foreign Office, February 1982.
visit to India in November 1973, for instance, an NCNA report identified 'political figures and public opinion in India' as expressing 'dissatisfaction with India's **alliance** with the Soviet Union' and as demanding that 'the Indian Government scrap the Indian-Soviet treaty, [and] pursue an independent foreign policy ...'.

This was followed, during Brezhnev's visit, by a number of propaganda reports in the Chinese media which directly identified India as 'controlled' by the Soviet Union. A **Radio Peking** commentary on 26 November, for example, using phraseology and information similar to that of the immediate post-war (1971) period, maintained that the Soviet Union had become India's second largest creditor.

'What is particularly significant', it stated, 'is that through their so-called assistance, the Soviet revisionists control the important economic lifelines of India. According to Soviet newspapers, the enterprises built with Soviet assistance already control 80 per cent of the Indian engineering industry, 60 per cent of the electrical appliance and equipment industry, 35 per cent of the petroleum-processing industry, 38 per cent of the steel industry and 20 per cent of the electric power industry'. 'To facilitate its control of the Indian economy', it continued, 'Soviet revisionism has sent several groups of so-called experts and advisers to infiltrate various branches for the Indian economy. The projects [like the Bhilai Steel works] built with Soviet assistance are all strictly controlled by the Soviet Union from the beginning to the operational stage, including design and planning, capital investment, installation of equipment and facilities, supply of raw materials and

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even management'. This 'intensified economic control', the
commentary claimed, was supplemented with increased Soviet military
infiltration in India. In recent years, it explained, the Soviet
revisionists had increased their efforts to help India in military
expansion and preparations for war, and 80% of the arms obtained by
New Delhi were of Soviet origin. Through this 'so called military
aid' the Soviet Union had penetrated India's military sphere.
'According to reports', it continued, 'the Soviet revisionists, by
providing India with warships and promising to build naval bases for
her, have obtained docking, refuelling and maintenance facilities at
India's two principal naval bases, Vishakapatnam and Port Blair in
the Andaman Islands'.

This Chinese view of close Indo-Soviet relations was once again
reflected during the Indian annexation of Sikkim. On 2 September
1974, for instance, a 'commentator's' article in the Jen-min Jih-pao
condemned the Indian Government's decision to introduce the
Constitution Amendment Bill seeking to grant Sikkim an associate
status. Then it asserted 'that this expansionist act of India's has
been abetted and supported by Soviet revisionist social-imperialism'.
Commenting on Soviet support for the Indian decision, it stated:
'Calling black white in extolling the Indian expansionist action,
Soviet revisionism has ... exposed itself as the protector of the
Indian expansionists ...'.
Similarly, soon after Soviet Defence Minister Grechko's visit to India in February 1975, the Chinese media identified India as under Soviet influence. An NCNA commentary on 2 March, for example, quoted the Indian paper 'Patriot' as stating that the broad outlines of a draft agreement on collaboration in defence production had been drawn up before Grechko's visit, and that while the Indian Air Force needed deep 'penetration fighter bombers, the navy needed to develop the two naval commands in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea and the southern Naval area into effective "sea control forces"'. Then it stated: 'However, no one is so naive as to believe that the 'air control' and 'sea control' capability belongs to India only, without direct ties with the Soviet desire in this regard'. Expanding on this thesis, it argued that Moscow was supplying arms to India to expand its own naval presence in the Indian ocean and ensure that India remained dependent on Soviet arms.41

Even the Chinese media's treatment of the emergency in India underscored Beijing's perception of India's close links with the Soviet Union. On 29 June 1975, for example, while commenting on the situation in India, an NCNA article accused Mrs Gandhi's regime of '[throwing] internationally itself into the arms of the Soviet revisionist and social-imperialism'. and of 'always [receiving] the support of the overlords in the Kremlin'.42

The Bangla Desh Government was also perceived as under Soviet influence. The manner in which the Chinese media reported Moscow-Dacca relations, however, indicated that Beijing was uncertain of the extent of Soviet influence in Bangla Desh. On 21 November

42 Jen Ku-ping, 'The atrocious features which have been completely revealed', NCNA, 29 June 1975, in SWB:FE, 1 July 175, pp.A3/1-2.
1973, for example, an NCNA report stated that 'by offering assistance to Bangla Desh in salvaging sunken war vessels, Soviet revisionism has continued to stay at Chittagong, thus obtaining a foothold in the Indian Ocean ...' Only four days later, an article transmitted by Radio Peking maintained that after the 1971 war 'Soviet revisionism had Chittagong, in Bangla Desh, on its mind and [it] attempted to turn it into another important naval base of Soviet revisionism in its expansionism towards the Indian Ocean'. Since only moments ago it had stated that 'Soviet revisionism has obtained the right to anchor its vessels for maintenance and repair at Vishakapatnam ... and Port Blair', the mere reference to Soviet 'attempts' suggested that Beijing was not certain if Moscow actually had succeeded in acquiring base rights in Chittagong. Similarly, Bangla Desh was not included among the South Asian states where the Soviet moves had 'aroused vigilance and opposition'. But at the same time, unlike India, it was not identified as a state where public opinion was demanding an independent foreign policy, and expressing dissatisfaction with their country's 'alliance' with the Soviet Union.

The only state which was not perceived by Beijing as under Soviet influence was Pakistan. As in the 1972-73 period, however, the Chinese Government continued to fear that, in its bid to encircle China, Moscow would attempt to draw Pakistan into its sphere of influence as well. This fear was apparent in an NCNA report on

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Soviet policies in South Asia and the Indian Ocean transmitted at the turn of 1974. It stated that 'after its success at the end of 1971 in supporting India's dismemberment of Pakistan, the Soviet revisionists plotted a further disintegration of Pakistan by establishing a 'great Baluchistan state' and a 'Pushtunistan state' at Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, Baluchistan province and nearby areas so as to secure a passage to the Indian Ocean through Afghanistan and Pakistan, realizing thereby the long cherished desire of the old tsars'. Then it quoted Pakistani newspaper reports that "some guerrilla warfare experts trained in Russia" were conducting "guerrilla warfare" training in the mountains of ... Baluchistan". It also referred to the movement of Soviet trawlers along the coastal areas of Pakistan since 1972 as a part of Soviet espionage activities, and drew attention to the discovery of a Soviet arms cache in the Iraqi embassy in early 1973. 'All these are evidence', it asserted, 'of the attempts of Soviet revisionist social-imperialism to further dismember Pakistan'. This assertion was immediately followed by another one; 'in the past few years', it said, 'Soviet revisionists constantly exerted political pressure on South Asian countries in an attempt to make them abandon their policy of neutrality and non-alignment and join an "Asian Collective Security System". When threat or enticement failed to attain its purpose, ... [Moscow] resorted outright to subversion against the government of other countries'.

46 Since this report identified India and Bangla Desh as closely linked to the USSR, and singled out only Pakistan as a target of Soviet subversion, it was obvious that the second assertion once again referred to Soviet moves against Pakistan. Although this whole account of Soviet moves and arms was

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largely unsubstantiated and, as proven by Moscow's subsequent Pakistan policy, incorrect, it indicated China's fear that the Soviet Union would try its best to steer Pakistan on to a pro-Moscow policy.

It was to counter this possibility that, while initiating its move back to the 'new South Asian policy', Beijing continued to support Pakistan politically, economically and militarily during the 1974-75 period. At the turn of 1976, however, the level of this support registered a decline.

As before, Chinese perceptions of, and moves to counter, Soviet presence in the subcontinent account for this change.

Towards the end of 1975 and early 1976, Chinese perceptions of the South Asian situation had begun to undergo a change. This change was closely linked to the developments taking place in the region at this time.

Bangla Desh, after being ruled by Sheikh Mujib had experienced a coup on 15 August 1975. This had brought to power a group of army officers who, despite their declared policy of 'friendship to all and malice to none', were known for their pro-western sympathies, anti-Indian attitude and liberal democratic values. Therefore, it was apparent at the outset that the new regime would not have close links with either India or the Soviet Union. Any doubts in this connection were dispelled by the reaction of these two states to the coup in Dacca. The Indian Government, in a statement issued on 16 August expressed its 'deep shock' at the death of Sheikh Mujib, and pointed out that it could not remain unaffected by the political

developments in a neighbouring country.\textsuperscript{48} The Soviet Government, on the other hand, initially adopted a cautious attitude; its propaganda organs restricted themselves to providing only brief and factual reports of the coup.\textsuperscript{49} Six days later, when Pravda did comment on the situation, it expressed grief for 'tragic death of Mujibur Rehman who [had] helped to establish and develop the friendly relations and cooperation between the People's Republic of Bangla Desh and Soviet Union'. Then referring to the new President, Mushtaq Ahmed's policy speech, it stated:'... [P]olitical observers in various countries... are asking whether forces hostile to both the national liberation movement as a whole and to the striving of the people of Bangla Desh for peace, neighbourly relations and socio-economic progress will not influence the further development of events in the country. This concern does not arise by chance: such forces do exist. They are imperialism, Maoism and the internal reactionaries'.\textsuperscript{50}

Against the background of this reaction, which at best could be described as one of scepticism, the Chinese Government ceased to view Bangla Desh as closely linked with Moscow. Instead it began to perceive and portray this South Asian state as '... firmly defend[ing]... [its] sovereignty and national independence and pursu[ing] a genuinely non-aligned policy ...'.\textsuperscript{51} Consonant with this perception, Beijing accorded a much overdue recognition to Bangla Desh on 31 August 1975, and five weeks later agreed to

\textsuperscript{48}Asian Recorder 1975, 24-30 September 1975, p.12797.
\textsuperscript{49}SWB:FE, No.4985, 19 August 1975, p.(i).
establish diplomatic relations with it. Meanwhile, it also contracted to import 14,000 tons of raw jute from Bangla Desh.52

Thereafter, and especially following the coup and the counter-coup of November 1975,53 in an attempt to retain the advantage gained in Bangla Desh vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, the Chinese Government continued to indirectly advise Dacca against improving relations with Moscow. This took the form of frequent criticism of the Soviet response to the change of regime in Bangla Desh. A Jen-min Jih-pao newsletter on 19 February 1976, for instance, reminded 'everyone' that 'after the August 1975 coup d'etat in Bangla Desh, the enraged Soviet revisionists, [had] immediately lashed out at Bangla Desh'. 'When a new coup d'etat with foreign involvement took place', it continued, 'Soviet revisionism was once again elated. On the very day of the coup, Tass released seven news items to give it frantic publicity. After the coup d'etat was suppressed in a few days, Soviet revisionism, annoyed and angered, immediately started up its propaganda machinery to attack Bangla Desh's policy of independence ...'.54 An NCNA commentary transmitted in March 1976 also highlighted that following the change of government in Dacca, which was 'a heavy blow to the Soviet Union ... [in its] schemes to control Bangla Desh', the 'Brezhnev clique' had 'openly exerted pressure on the new Bangla Desh Government asking it to be "loyal" to the "tested external policy" of the former regime and "adhere to it"'. 'Last December', it pointed out, 'Pravda

published an article which said in a **threatening tone** that the fate of Bangla Desh cannot be described as anything of no concern to other countries in the world.\(^{55}\)

The Chinese perception of India also underwent a change. This change was also linked to a change in India's relations with the Soviet Union. Since the 1950s India had been receiving Soviet project aid to develop heavy industry in the public sector, and its imports from the Soviet Union were largely capital goods. This had enabled India to develop, by the mid-1970s, a substantial heavy industrial base with a potential for a self-sustaining and self-accelerating process of technological change and development. At this stage, India's economic needs shifted away from capital goods. Now it required intermediate products or maintenance imports such as fertilisers, newsprint, and raw material such as oil and non-ferrous minerals.

The Soviet Union, however, was reluctant to step up its supplies of these items either because it was hard pressed to fulfill such needs, or because it had limited surpluses which could be easily sold for hard currency in the world market without any difficulty.\(^{56}\) Therefore, India's imports from the Soviet Union declined by 47 per cent to US$258.2 million in 1975 after registering, on an average, an increase of 163.67 per cent during the 1972-74 period.\(^{57}\)

Meanwhile, irritants developed in Indo-Soviet trade. The Indians complained of a Russian quest for one-sided advantages in


\(^{56}\) *Times of India*, 5 April 1976.

trade, and made recurrent charges, not always substantiable, that the Soviet Union was re-exporting Indian commodities to the West in exchange for hard currency. Since all Indo-Soviet trade was in rupees, this Soviet practice, India maintained, was denying India much-needed foreign exchange. Then there was the issue of fixing the rouble-rupee exchange rate. Following the Indian decision to detach the rupee from the pound sterling, the Soviets attempted unilaterally to revise the exchange rate from 11.39 to 8.66 roubles per hundred rupees. Since this would have increased India's debt to the USSR by 35%, the Indians resisted the decision, and hence the two states were engaged in an acrimonious debate on the exchange rate.

The Chinese Government, therefore, began to perceive India as a state which was close to the Soviet Union, but whose relationship with Moscow was not without contradictions. This was apparent from the manner in which Beijing's propaganda organs dealt with the Indo-Soviet relations. During the period from August to October 1975, for instance, the Chinese media transmitted four items which dealt directly or indirectly with New Delhi's relations with Moscow. Of these, two repeated the old theme of an Indo-Soviet 'alliance'. The first one, an article broadcast by Radio Peking on 9 August, argued that over a long period of time, Moscow and New Delhi had 'colluded' with each other. 'Supported by Soviet revisionists', it elaborated, 'the Gandhi government has behaved like a tyrant in South Asia in a bid to become a sub-super power. ...To realise their wild

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ambitions for world hegemony, the Soviet revisionists regard India as their tool for carrying out aggression and expansion in Asia, the South Asian subcontinent and the Indian Ocean area'. 60

The second item, a Radio Peking commentary on 15 October, restricted itself to stating that 'in the South Asian subcontinent, Soviet revisionism has placed India in the orbit of its social-imperialism'. 61 The remaining two items, however, concentrated on the differences developing between the two states on the economic front. The first item, for instance, reported in detail an Indian Express editorial of 9 August criticising the Soviet aid to India. The editorial, NCNA pointed out, had stated that the composition and quality of Soviet aid did not always match the requirements of the present stage of India's economic development. It also noted the Indian paper's criticism against Indian design and engineering services surrendering the role of prime consultants in order to qualify for Soviet credits for certain projects. 'Nor is there any reason', it quoted the editorial, 'why Soviet personnel should be needed for operating Soviet-assisted plants and projects a decade and more after their completion. Indians are quite capable of running such plants entirely on their own'. 62 The second item, a Jen-min Jih-pao article published on 30 August, also pointed out, by relying heavily on Indian sources, that the Soviet usury in the forms of 'loans' had brought India enormous debts, and reduced it to a


dumping ground for inferior Soviet products. 63

To take advantage of these differences, the Chinese Government
further intensified its efforts to improve relations with India.
Before discussing the nature of these efforts, however, it is
essential to point out that probably an element of urgency was added
to these moves due to the Chinese fear of a 'stepped up' Soviet
threat in South East Asia. Following the U. S. defeat in Indo-China,
Beijing feared, the Soviet Union was attempting to increase its
presence among China's Southern neighbours. A Jen-min Jih-pao
article on 4 July 1975, for instance, pointed out that lately the
Soviet revisionists were taking 'unusual interest' in South East
Asia. The Soviet declaration that it did not want to 'fill the
vacuum' in the region, it maintained, could only help reveal Moscow's
'guilty conscience'. 'It is precisely the Soviet revisionists', it
asserted, 'who, taking advantage of the US imperialists' defeat in
Indo China and redeployment of strategy, are trying in every way to
squeeze into South-East Asia to "fill" the so-called "vacuum". 64
Three weeks later, another Jen-min Jih-pao article contended that
Moscow was seeking 'stepping stone[s]' to expand its strength so that
it will be able to seize natural resources, ports, sea straits and
bases in South East Asia step by step'. 65 This was followed, on 29
July 1975 by an NCNA commentary which argued that the Soviets were
attempting 'to place the South East Asian countries in the orbit of
the Soviet hatched "Asian Collective Security System" designed to

64 'Guilty conscience', Jen-min Jih-pao, 4 July 1975, in SWB:FE, No.4948, 7 July 1975, p.A'/1
65 Jen Ku-ping, 'Reject the Wolf at the Front Door, Guard against the Tiger at the Back Door', Jen-min Jih-pao, 29 July 1975, in SWB:FE, No. 4968, 30 July 1975, p. A2/1
serve Moscow's policy of 'aggression and expansion'. Although not mentioned in these and the subsequent articles, the fear of Soviet moves in South East Asia probably revived the Chinese fear, expressed as late as November 1973, that the USSR would use India as a "pawn" to ensure a passage through the Indian Ocean for expansion in South East Asia". It was probably an interest in countering this possibility as well that prompted Beijing to speed up its efforts to improve relations with New Delhi.

The first indication to this effect came in October 1975 when a minor Sino-Indian border clash took place in the disputed Tulung pass region. Beijing refrained from exploiting the incident to criticise the Indian Government, and it was not until 3 November, two days after the Indians publicised the clash, that the Chinese Government issued an official statement on the incident. This statement, which was notable for its tone of restraint, blamed Indian soldiers for the clash, but then added: 'We hope that the Indian Government will take effective measures to insure that there will be no occurrence of similar incident in the future'.

This was followed by a number of other indications of Chinese interest in normalising relations with India. The Chinese ceased the previous practice of highlighting or criticising Indo-Soviet 'alliance' during various Soviet leaders' visits in India. On 29 February 1976, for instance, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Firyubin visited New Delhi. In marked contrast to Marshal

Grechko's visit the previous year\textsuperscript{69}, the Chinese media refrained from reporting or commenting on the visit. At the same time, NCNA transmitted a report which, instead of highlighting India's close links with the USSR, gave a detailed account of Indian dissatisfaction with the Soviet economic behaviour. The issues it considered most worth mentioning included the Soviet attempts to seek one-sided advantage in the trade, Soviet practice of 'Switch trading', refusal to shift the focus of its exports to India from capital goods to fertilisers, petroleum, petroleum products and metal materials, and an unwillingness to reschedule debt repayments and a softening of the loan terms.\textsuperscript{70} Simultaneously, the Chinese media also ceased to identify India by name as a state providing base facilities to the Soviet Navy.\textsuperscript{71}

More importantly, beginning in January-February 1976, the Chinese Government initiated behind-the-door negotiations with India to upgrade, after an interval of fifteen years, the diplomatic representation to the ambassadorial level.\textsuperscript{72} The Indian Government responded to these moves favourably. As a first step, it agreed to the installation of a general telex line in the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi on reciprocal basis. This was followed by its invitation to China to participate in the Sixth regional conference of UNESCO National Commission for Asia and Oceania. The Indian Government also supported Chinese candidature for Asian Development Bank.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{69} NCNA, 2 March 1975, pp. A2/1-2
\textsuperscript{71} See, for example, 'The Truth Behind the Lies', Jen-min Jih-pao, 21 March 1976, in SWB:FE, No. 5167, 24 March 1976, pp.A2/1-2
\textsuperscript{72} Since 1961, both the Indian and Chinese embassies in Beijing and New Delhi respectively were headed by Charge d'affaires. New York Times, 1 6 and 21 April 1976
\textsuperscript{73} Times of India, 9 January 1976
Significantly, it reacted favourably to Beijing's suggestion for upgrading the level of diplomatic representation. Therefore, after three months of negotiations, the Indian government announced on 15 April 1976 that it was restoring the level of diplomatic representation in Beijing to ambassadorial status. The same day, a Chinese Deputy foreign Minister, Han Nien-fung also conveyed to the Indian Charge d'affaires in Beijing, Mehrotra, his Government's official agreement to an exchange of ambassadors in the near future.

Following this major breakthrough, Beijing persisted in its efforts to improve relations with New Delhi. In July 1976, for instance, in a friendly gesture, the Chinese Foreign Minister received the Indian ambassador, K. R. Narayan, even before he had presented his credentials and told him to start functioning. Later, in September 1976, while presenting his credentials to the Indian President, the Chinese ambassador, Chen Chao-yuan, described the past setbacks in the relations between the two countries as unfortunate and expressed the confidence that, with the exchange of ambassadors, relations between India and China would further improve.

Simultaneously, Beijing began to avoid taking steps that might annoy New Delhi. In Nepal, for instance, in spite of its willingness to provide technical and economic assistance to the Himalayan Kingdom, China refused to provide technical know-how to the United Nations Development Programme to reconstruct the Parthiv Dam in the Pokhara Valley, which had been constructed by India in 1962 and

74 Times of India, 16 April 1976.
75 New York Times, 16 April 1976
76 Times of India, 28 July 1976
77 Times of India, 21 September 1976
collapsed in 1975 due to construction defects. Even on the Farrakha Barrage issue, with one exception when NCNA maintained that India had 'deliberately avoided' responding to Dacca's 'reasonable proposals', the Chinese Government refrained from siding with Bangla Desh against India. In fact there were reports of the Chinese cautioning Dacca against adopting too anti-Indian a stand.

More importantly, to avoid raising the spectre of Sino-Pakistani collusion, after an interval of four years, Beijing once again began moving away from its 'Pakistan centric' policy. Pakistan was no more solely credited for the normalisation of relations in South Asia. Instead India's contribution to the process was also acknowledged. A Jen-min Jih-pao newsletter on the Indo-Pakistani decisions to restore diplomatic relations in May 1976, for instance, not only praised 'the long efforts made by the Pakistan Government' but also merited India with 'making a positive response to Pakistan's good will and [taking] one step forward toward improving relations with Pakistan'. At the same time India was also occasionally considered praiseworthy for its economic achievements. An NCNA report in September 1976, for instance, identified both India and Pakistan as the states which had achieved success in the recent years in the promotion of agricultural production.

It is against this background that the changes in China's Pakistan policy at the turn of 1976 can best be explained. As in

78 Times of India, 15 September 1976.
80 Indonesian Times, 23 December 1976
81 'New Developments in India-Pakistan Relations', Jen-min Jih-pao, not dated, in FBIS:CHI, 19 May 1976, pp. A/11-12 (emphasis added)
late 1970, Beijing was aware that it would be difficult to sustain the momentum of Sino-Indian rapprochement unless the indication of a move away from a 'Pakistan centric' approach were supplemented with concrete actions in this direction. Therefore, it was necessary to reduce the level of its political, military and economic support for Pakistan. Probably Beijing, which had hitherto been following Pakistan's lead in its Policy towards India, would have been reticent to take this step suddenly if it was not for the changed Chinese perception of Pakistan's foreign policy. Since the secession of East Pakistan, the Bhutto regime had been attempting to improve relations with the Soviet Union. By the mid-1970s, these efforts began to show signs of success as the Pakistan and Soviet Governments began expressing 'confidence that the relations between the two states would strengthen and develop further'.

The Chinese Government viewed this development with apprehension. Privately, the Chinese were reported to comment that Pakistan was moving away from its previous policy of bilateralism. Publicly, the Chinese media began to suggest indirectly that Pakistan was slackening in its 'vigilance' against the Soviet threat. An NCNA commentary on 16 August 1975, for instance, identified Japan, Nepal and the Philippines as the countries where the 'Soviet revisionists' feverish call for "Asian Security System" had aroused the vigilance of and criticism by public opinion', but failed to include Pakistan in the list. The next year in February, a Jen-min Jih-pao newsletter stated: 'At present, the super-power under the signboard

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83 Pakistan Times, 1 December 1976.
84 Interview with an ex-minister in the Government of Pakistan, October 1981
of socialism on the one hand talks hypocritically and profusely about friendship and cooperation with the South Asian peoples while on the other hand stepping up its infiltration and expansion ...'. Then it identified 'some Pakistani personages' as pointing out 'that it is essential to maintain vigilance against the scheme of Soviet social-imperialism, thereby suggesting that Pakistan was probably not being careful in this respect. It was most likely this Chinese perception, and disapproval of Pakistan's relations with the USSR which made Beijing not to feel any hesitation in dropping the level of its support for Islamabad in 1976.

The same situation continued to exist in 1977 as well. The Chinese persisted in their efforts to normalise relations with, and neutralise the Soviet influence in, India. In January 1977, therefore, when Bangla Desh's Chief Martial Law Administrator, General Ziaur Rehman visited Beijing, the Chinese Government adopted a very cautious attitude. At the banquet, for instance, unlike General Zia who spoke of the 'hardships caused by diversion of the waters of the River Ganges', Li Xiannian merely talked of the Soviets' 'sinister intention to control and enslave the South Asian countries'.

This Chinese policy was pursued with even greater vigour when the Janata Party came to power after the March 1977 elections. On the one hand, Beijing welcomed the new regime and identified its ascent to power as a 'significant change'. On the other hand, the Chinese media maintained that an 'alliance with the Soviet Union was

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88 NCNA, 30 March 1977, in SWB:FE, No. 5478, 1 April 1977, p. A3/1
a major reason for Indira Gandhi's defeat in the elections. By providing military and economic aid, it was argued, the Soviet Government had tied India to 'its worn-out Chariot to make [it] an important bridgehead for the expansion of the sphere of influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean ...'. Moscow wanted to retain this advantage in India and, therefore, had supported Indira Gandhi before the election. After her defeat, however, it had quickly changed its tune and was trying 'by hook and by crook to retain India'. Under these circumstances, the Chinese media suggested, the Janata Government should 'raise its vigilance' and not be swayed by Moscow. In fact, quite interestingly, the Chinese propaganda organs even indirectly suggested that the new regime should abrogate its treaty with the Soviet Union. On 2 April 1977, for instance, NCNA reported the Indian Tribune's criticism of the Indo-Soviet treaty and then quoted it as stating that 'Egypt had a similar treaty with the USSR, which it had abrogated'.

However, as it became obvious that, notwithstanding its previous opposition to the Indo-Soviet treaty, the Janata Government did not intend terminating the treaty or drastically altering the nature of Indo-Soviet relations, Beijing reverted to highlighting Soviet 'exploitation' of India. The Chinese media began to present even more exaggerated accounts than before of the Indo-Soviet differences. A Jen-min Jih-pao article in mid-April 1977, for instance, asserted that the Soviet exports to India were 20-30% higher, and imports 20-30% lower priced than the world market prices. This markedly

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91 Ya Fei, 'Truth of Soviet Indian "production cooperation"', Jen-min Jih-pao, 12 April 1977, in SWB:FE, No. 5486, 14 April 1977, p.A2/1
differed from the assertion made in March 1976 that the Soviets were paying 15% less and charging 15% more for their imports from and exports to India. Simultaneously, however, the Chinese media was careful to indicate that it considered the Janata Government more aware of, and willing to counter, Soviet 'exploitation' of India than the Indira regime. On 22 April 1977, for example, NCNA reported approvingly that the Soviet offer of 'assistance' for the expansion of the Bokaro steel plant, which was made and accepted during the Indira regime, had been spurned by the Indian Government barely four days before the Soviet Minister's official visit to India. The Indian Government, it emphasised, had opted to expand the plant with India's own resources. Even on international issues, China's propaganda organs credited the Janata Government with more willingness than its predecessor to question the Soviet stand. Commenting on the Indian Prime Minister, Morarji Desai's visit to Moscow in October 1977, for instance, an NCNA report emphasised that Desai had taken 'strong exception to double standards set by nuclear powers and discriminatory conditions sought to be imposed on non-nuclear countries'. It also highlighted that, unlike Moscow which only criticised the American presence, Desai had asked both the United States and the Soviet Union to eliminate bases and military and naval presence from the Indian Ocean. This favourable projection of the Janata Government was supplemented with Beijing's moves to expand the scope of Sino-Indian contacts. In July 1977, it concluded agreements with India for import of 600 tons of Shellac,

93 'India Rejects Soviet Assistance for Steel Plant', NCNA, 22 April 1977, in SWB:FE, No. 5496, 26 April 1977, p.A2/1
and export of non-ferrous metal including Zinc, Mercury and Antimony worth Rs 14.2 million. Beijing also permitted Indian ships to call at the Chinese ports. Meanwhile, visits were exchanged in the field of health, agriculture and sports. More importantly, the Chinese Government passed verbal messages to US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance and Yugoslavia's Foreign Minister Milos Minic, indicating its interest in 'restoring normalcy' in its relations with India. The interest in maintaining and, if possible, accelerating the momentum of rapprochement dictated that Beijing should continue to keep its support for Islamabad limited.

Most probably, as in 1976, Beijing did not hesitate to do so due to the developments in Pakistan. Following the March 1977 elections, which the opposition claimed were rigged Pakistan plunged into another round of domestic instability. Unable to control the situation, Bhutto began to claim that the United States, due to its disapproval of Pakistan's nuclear programme, was assisting the Pakistan National Alliance (P.N.A.) to overthrow Bhutto's government. At the same time, in retaliation, he began to strengthen Pakistan's links with the Soviet Union. There were reports that he even agreed to conclude an agreement granting the Soviets a right to use the naval base at Gwadar. Before the validity of these reports could be confirmed or denied, the Pakistan Army, led by General Zia-ul-Haq, took over power in July 1977. Soon afterwards, Zia began to accuse Bhutto of various crimes in order to reduce the P.P.P.'s

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96 Times of India, 7 October 1977
98 Interview with former Pakistani Minister for Information.
chances of regaining power. Simultaneously he also began to groom temporarily Wali Khan, leader of the outlawed NAP, which had been sympathetic to the Soviet Union, as the new leader of Pakistan. Since these developments, both before and after the coup, were not viewed favourable by Beijing, the Chinese Government most probably felt little compulsion not to sustain the Sino-Indian rapprochement by keeping its support for Islamabad limited.

This trend continued in 1978 as well. Beijing persisted in its efforts to improve relations with New Delhi. At a press conference in Nepal in February, for instance, Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping underscored that China was 'eager' to establish closer relations with India and that both the states needed to make efforts to achieve this goal. Three weeks later, while presenting his report to the Fifth National People's Congress, Hua Guofeng reiterated China's interest in further improving relations with India. 'The Chinese people', he stated, 'have always cherished feelings of friendship for the Indian People. The people of both countries wish to see an increase in friendly contacts and an improvement in their relations'. Then referring to the Sino-Indian boundary issue, he said: 'There are questions pending between China and India: nevertheless, relations can be further improved provided serious efforts are made on both sides'. Early the following month, on 8 March 1978, for the first time in sixteen years, Beijing sent a delegation of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries to India. To underscore the significance

100 Times of India, 5 February 1978
Beijing attached to this visit, the delegation included some senior Chinese Foreign Ministry officials and was led by a seasoned diplomat Wang Bingnan who had played a key role in bringing about the Sino-US detente. These delegates, throughout their two week long visit, consistently stressed the need to restore Sino-Indian amity. On 13 March, for instance, in his address to the Indian Parliamentary members, Wang Bingnan emphasised that the quarrel between India and China was temporary, while their friendship was everlasting. 'We hope', he said, 'that with continued joint efforts of our two governments and people, the friendly relations and cooperation between China and India and the traditional friendship between our peoples will witness a new progress'. More importantly, although technically leading an unofficial delegation to India, Wang Bingnan met various Indian leaders and extended an invitation from the Chinese Foreign Minister to his Indian counterpart, Vajpayee, to visit China.

The Indian Government, as before, responded favourable to these moves. The invitation to Vajpayee was accepted in principle with a proviso that an appropriate time would be fixed only after 'due and careful preparations'. At the same time it was stressed that, notwithstanding the Sino-Indian differences on the boundary issue, India was willing to expand the scope of 'functional and commercial

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105 Minister of State for External Affairs Somarendra Kundu's statement to the Rajya Sabha, Times of India, 18 March 1978
contacts' with China. Accordingly, for the first time in sixteen years, a group of Indian journalists was sent to China in May 1978. This was followed, also after an interval of sixteen years, by a high-powered Indian business-team's visit to Shanghai and Canton in August 1978.

The progress towards normalisation, although at a pace slower than what China or even India would have preferred, proved disconcerting to Moscow. Concerned that the Chinese moves towards India were closely linked to the conclusion of Sino-Japanese treaty, the escalation of tensions between China and Vietnam and the sudden progress in Sino-US relations, the Soviet Government attempted to thwart the process of Sino-Indian normalisation. The Soviet propaganda organs mounted a campaign to remind New Delhi of China's anti-India policies. The Chinese Government, it was pointed out, had always harboured expansionist ambitions against India, and to that end was occupying Indian land in NEFA, supporting Pakistan in the north-west and assisting Naga and Mizo guerrillas in the north-east. Beijing, it was argued, was also responsible for most of the troubles India faced in its relations with its neighbours. The Farrakha Barrage issue, for instance, one author argued, was created through Chinese encouragement rather than the Bangla Desh government's own wishes. Significantly, it was stressed, Beijing wanted to cause

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106 See for example, Desai's statement to the Lok Sabha, *Times of India*, 17 March 1978; Vajpayee's statement on 20 July 1978 to the Lok Sabha, *Radio New Delhi*, 20 July 1978, in SWB:FE, No. 5876, 28 July 1978, p. A3/12; and Vajpayee's statement in Tokyo that India was endeavouring to improve relations with China so that the boundary issue could be resolved peacefully, *Times of India*, 17 August 1978


108 *Times of India*, 12 July 1978

109 Akbaruddin, *op.cit*, p. 85
trouble between India and the Soviet Union. At the same time, Soviet leaders began indirectly cautioning Indian leaders against courting China. When Vajpayee visited Moscow in September 1978, for instance, Gromyko criticised 'Beijing leadership's great-power hegemonistic policy and then said:

'Can one show any vacillation in this situation? The schemes of the forces that are hostile to world peace and international security in Asia should be rebuffed and rebuffed decisively. It is necessary to unmask and frustrate their aggressive designs and expansionist proclivities in time."

To counter these Soviet moves, and to convince the Indian Government of its continued interest in improving bilateral relations, Beijing continued its policy of emphasising and approving of the normalisation of relations among the South Asian states. Most importantly, it continued to move away from its 'Pakistan centric' policy. Pakistan was no more identified as the victim of aggression in the 1971 war. Neither was any attempt made to absolve India of any blame for the war by criticising only the Soviet Union for the conflict. Instead, both Pakistan and India were identified as parties to a quarrel in which one was supported by the Soviet Union against the other. Also in marked departure from the past, occasionally India's contribution to the normalisation of relations in South Asia was acknowledged and praised more than that of Pakistan. On 27 October 1978, for instance, almost one-third of an NCNA 'feature ' article dealt with, and approved of, the steps taken

by the Indian Government to improve relations with neighbours. Pakistan, on the other hand, was mentioned only in passing without being commended for its regional policy.\textsuperscript{113} It was in line with this policy that Beijing kept its military and economic aid for Pakistan limited. Neither did it exhibit any willingness to support Islamabad on the Kashmir issue and South Asian Nuclear free zone proposal to an extent it had been willing to do in the pre-1976 period.

At the same time, as discussed in Chapter VIII, the Chinese Government also demonstrated a hesitation to directly and categorically support Islamabad against the new regime in Afghanistan after the Saur revolution. This reluctance, however, requires a different set of explanations.

Despite its support for North Vietnam, Beijing had been concerned as early as 1973 that a unified Vietnam might pose some problems for China. At the same time, it had also been apprehensive that the Soviet Union would contend with China for influence in Vietnam, but had hoped that Hanoi would continue to work out a "Sino-Soviet balance".\textsuperscript{114} Following the unification of Vietnam, however, this hope gradually waned because of Hanoi's domestic and foreign policies, and by the end of 1977 Beijing began to fear that Moscow was increasingly relying on Vietnam to expand its influence in South East Asia. This fear was not categorically expressed until mid-1978 when, in the wake of growing Sino-Vietnamese differences on the treatment of the Hoa people, Chinese media began to reporting Soviet interest in acquiring naval bases in Vietnam and identifying Moscow as 'the behind-the-scene provocateur and supporter' of

Vietnam. However, indications to this effect were given as early as January 1978 when an NCNA commentary accused Moscow of attempting 'to sow discord between Beijing and Hanoi and stressed that, in line with its previous practice Moscow was stirring up trouble and adding fuel to the Kampuchea-Vietnam conflict so as to acquire a dominant position in South East Asia.

Simultaneously, the Chinese Government increasingly became apprehensive of Soviet moves in the Horn of Africa. After a series of setbacks in Egypt, the Sudan and Somalia, the Chinese media pointed out, the Soviet Union had 'chosen to place a big ante on the Horn of Africa'. Taking advantage of the dispute over the Ogaden Region which was left over by the colonialists, it was claimed, Moscow had fomented singlehandedly an armed conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia. This was achieved, Beijing explained, by first providing Somalia with a great quantity of various weapons and then supplying arms to Ethiopia and dispatching a large numbers of Soviet military personnel and Cuban mercenaries there. These moves, Beijing feared, were a part of the Soviet attempt to gain a foothold in the strategically significant region of the Horn of Africa which, in turn, was to enable Moscow to 'extend infiltration in the whole of Africa, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

It was against this background that, on 28 April 1978, the pro-Soviet PDPA led by Taraki assumed power in Afghanistan. From the

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117 See, for example Chu Yu, 'From Angola to the Horn of Africa', Peking Review, vol. 21, No. 16, 21 April 1978, pp.9-11; and 'Watch and see How Moscow Will Act', Peking Review, vol.21, No.12, 24 March 1978, p. 40
outset, there were indications that Beijing viewed the emergence of the new regime with apprehension. The Chinese media did not go beyond providing brief and factual reports of the coup. Neither did Beijing recognise the Taraki regime until it was officially requested by Kabul to do so.\footnote{Beijing recognised the new regime only on 7 May 1978, NCNA, 8 May 1978, in FBIS:CHI, 8 May 1978, p. A/18} This apprehension stemmed, firstly, from China's fear that, despite its continuous emphasis on an independent and non-aligned foreign policy, the new regime might turn towards the Soviet Union. This fear was reflected, to some extent, on 7 May 1978 in an NCNA report of Taraki's press conference of 6 May. To the exclusion of all other policy points discussed by the Afghan President, it only highlighted his statement that Kabul would follow an independent an non-aligned foreign policy. However, it duly cited 'a foreign news agency' and an Afghan daily Anis as the source of information, used frequent quotation marks and refrained from commenting favourably on the statement, thereby indicating that Beijing was sceptical of the extent to which the declaratory policy was to be actually implemented.\footnote{NCNA, 7 May 1978, in FBIS:CHI, 9 May 1978, pp. A/13-14} Two days later, this fear was expressed in slightly more candid manner by a pro-Beijing, Hong Kong newspaper Wen Wei Po which stated that since the April coup, 'people have been concerned about the diplomatic policy the new regime will adopt'. Then, suggesting that the possibility of Kabul establishing close links with Moscow was on the cards, it said: 'If Afghanistan should lean towards the Soviet Union, there will be no peace in South Asia'.\footnote{"Special article" column by Ku Chin-hsin, 'Afghanistan Beckons to Beijing --- Will Afghanistan 'Lean Toward' the Soviet Union?', Wen Wei Po, 9 May 1978, in FBIS:CHI, 11 May 1978, p.N/1}

Secondly, Beijing's apprehension stemmed from the fear that the
Soviet Union might exploit its links with the PDPA to expand its influence in the region. This fear was expressed, for the first time, in a Wen Wei Po article which emphasised that the Soviet Union had attempted to control Afghanistan by providing aid, that the Afghan armed forces were 'influenced by the Soviet Union', and that western reporters were worried that Afghanistan may one day become 'a Cuba in the heart of South Asia'. During the next few months the Chinese media also expressed this fear in indirect and relatively milder terms. On 12 May 1978, for instance, while criticising the anti-Pakistan remarks made by the Soviet envoy in Islamabad earlier in the month a Jen-min Jih-pao commentary claimed that the action was 'attributable to Moscow's anxiousness to strengthen its strategic plan in the arc expanding from Africa to South Asia through West Asia ... '. Although it did not specifically refer to the April coup, in the immediate aftermath of which the anti-Pakistan remarks were made, the fact that 'West Asia' was specifically mentioned as a part of the 'Soviet strategic arc' indicated Beijing's fear that Moscow might use its links with Kabul to extend its influence westward in the direction of Africa. Four weeks later, another Jen-min Jih-pao commentary, while criticising Soviet-Vietnamese relations, stated that Moscow was 'stepping up its strategic disposition along the arc from Africa through West Asia to Southeast Asia'. Once again this commentary did not specifically mention Afghanistan but its categorical reference to West Asia reflected Beijing's concern that Moscow might attempt to gain a foothold in Afghanistan to extend its

121 Ibid, p. N/1
influence eastward in the direction of Vietnam in order to encircle China.

Nevertheless, probably prepared to accept that its apprehensions regarding the Taraki regime might be ill-founded, Beijing kept its options open vis-à-vis Kabul. Campaign was launched by the Chinese media. Significantly, Kabul's growing links with Moscow were noted but not criticised. It is within the context of this policy that China's reluctance to side with Pakistan against Afghanistan's 'threat' to the NWFA and Baluchistan can partially be explained. Most probably the Chinese Government did not want to reduce its chances to improving relations with Kabul by supporting Islamabad on an issue it had hitherto chosen to remain neutral about. Neither did it probably want to create a pretext for the Soviet Union to exploit the situation and increase its influence in Kabul.

However, there are other possible explanations as well. Firstly, China had never approved of the Pakistan Government's policy towards the NWFP and especially Baluchistan. As early as December 1971, in his internal report to the Party, Chou En-lai had stated that 'there are mistakes in the domestic policy of Pakistan [such as] the massacre in East Pakistan and the lack of a policy towards nationalities'. A few years later, as the Baluch insurgency got underway, according to one Pakistani source, Chou En-lai had 'advised' Bhutto to compromise with and avoid alienating the Baluchis to avoid any further disintegration of Pakistan. Against this background in a move reminiscent of the early phase of the East

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124 See, for example, NCNA, 19 May 1978, in SWB:FE, No. 5820, 23 May 1978, p. A3/10
125 Issues and Studies, vol. XII, No. 1, January 1977, p. 115(?)
126 Interview with a former Minister in the Government of Pakistan, October 1981
Pakistan crisis Beijing probably chose to remain silent on an issue which had essentially been created by Islamabad's failure to resolve the 'federal issue' and was merely being exploited by a neighbouring state.

Secondly, and more importantly, in Beijing's assessment, even if its apprehensions regarding the Taraki regime and Moscow's exploitation of the situation were proved correct, Iran and not Pakistan was more capable of countering the Soviet moves. Therefore, after the Saur revolution, the Chinese Government tended to rely on and strengthen its links with Iran more than Pakistan. This was referred in the composition and reporting of the two Chinese delegations that visited Iran and Pakistan within a period of ten weeks. The delegation that visited Pakistan in June 1978 to attend the ceremony marking the completion of the Karakorum Highway, was led by Vice-Premier Geng Biao with Vice-Minister of Communications Pan Chi, as its deputy leader. The delegation to Iran in August 1978, on the other hand, was led by Premier Hua Guofeng and included Vice-Premier, Chi Teng-Kuei, as its member. Significantly, at the end of Hua's visit to Iran, a Jen-min Jih-pao article pointed out that West Asia was finding itself 'seriously menaced by forces of aggression from outside' and then stated 'The consolidation of Iran's independence and security is of great significance to the preservation of peace in and around the Indian Ocean and to the fight against the super-power contention there... An independent and prosperous Iran is a force that must not be ignored, whether in relation to peace and stability in West Asia or to the Third World's common cause of united struggle against hegemonism'. 127 In contrast,

no such reference as made about Pakistan by the Chinese media either during or after Geng Biao's visit to Islamabad in June 1978.

Towards the end of 1978, however, the situation changed. On 3 November, Moscow signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Vietnam, followed by a similar treaty with Ethiopia on 20 November. Only two weeks later, on 5 December, the Soviet Union concluded a Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation with Afghanistan as well. From China's point of view, the last treaty confirmed Beijing's apprehension that the Taraki regime might 'lean toward' Afghanistan, was now perceived and portrayed as a state which had entered into a military alliance with the Soviet Union and which was one of the Soviet 'fortresses' in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The Soviet-Afghan treaty also heightened Chinese fear that Moscow might use Afghanistan to step up its 'expansion and aggression' in the region. On the one hand, the treaty was viewed as indicating Soviet intention of seeking a warm water port in the South and oil in the Middle East. On the other hand, it was perceived as a part of Soviet attempts to encircle China. This was reflected, among other, in a Jen-min Jih-pao Commentator's article which argued that 'by concluding with one Asian country after another treaties of 'peace and friendship' or of 'good neighbourhood and co-operation' (Moscow) hopes to build up a network of treaties and eventually bring those countries together in a 'collective security system'. This attempt of pushing expansionism in Asia, it pointed out, among other


objectives, was intended to encircle China.\footnote{130} Under these circumstances, contrary to whatever hopes it seemed to have entertained, Beijing could not rely on Iran to control these Soviet moves.

Following the continuously deteriorating situation, the Shah of Iran left the country on 16 January 1979 and the new government, which took over the reins of power on 1 February, was not prepared to smile at Beijing which had only four months before eulogised the Shah's rule. Hence, by a process of elimination, the Chinese Government once again had to rely on the other frontline state, Pakistan. Beijing needed Pakistan as a venue to train the Afghan guerrillas who by then were preparing to wage a 'holy war' against the Communist regime and the Soviets in Afghanistan. It also required Pakistan as a channel to smuggle weapons into Afghanistan for the Afghan guerrillas so as to ensure that Moscow got bogged down into a Vietnam type quagmire and did not expand its influence beyond the Central Asian state.\footnote{131} It was against this background that the Chinese Government visibly became more friendly towards Pakistan than had been the case for the last few years. Beginning on 20 January 1979, within a short period of two months, three high-level delegations were exchanged between the two states with the last one, led by the PLA's Air Force Commander-in-Chief Zhang Tingfa, culminating in Beijing's categorical support for Pakistan's territorial integrity. This was followed by China's consistent


\footnote{131}{It is important to point out that before the Soviet Union occupied the Wakhan Corridor, China shared a border with Afghanistan. This route, however, is high, narrow, roadless and easily blocked off. Therefore, while occasionally using this route to supply arms to the pro-Beijing "Shola-e-Javed", Beijing still needed Pakistan as a better and safer route to supply arms to the Afghan guerrillas.}
support for Islamabad against the justified Soviet and Afghan allegations of assisting and arming Afghan guerrillas. However, this support was not accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the level of Beijing's support for Islamabad on issues including New Delhi. Once again, the exigencies of the Sino-Indian rapprochement accounted for this attitude.

As the Chinese Government began to view the Soviet Union as attempting to encircle China by concluding a series of bilateral treaties of friendship, it further intensified its efforts to cultivate better relations with the first neighbouring state to have signed such a treaty with Moscow, India. This attitude was most noticeable during the Indian Foreign Minister Vajpayee's visit to Beijing in February 1979. The Chinese media and leaders consistently emphasised that the border dispute was only a short episode in the long history of the Sino-Indian relations; that the friendly relations between the two states was in the fundamental interests of the two peoples; and that, while working to iron their differences out, India and China needed to bend their efforts to identify common ground so as to 'constantly' develop their relations. These themes were not played down even when Vajpayee cut his visit short due to China's attack on Vietnam. In fact, a few hours after his departure on 19 February 1979, a lengthy NCNA article hailed the visit as a success and identified it as signifying that 'Sino-Indian relations once again proceeded along the broad road of dialogue and

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Neither did Beijing react negatively to New Delhi's criticism of its attack on Vietnam, and to the news that Soviet and East European cargo aircraft were flying military supplies to Vietnam via Calcutta. Even the Soviet Prime Minister, Kosygin's criticism of China during his visit to India in March 1979 failed to elicit a strong negative Chinese response; instead of lodging a protest, Beijing only expressed its regret that Kosygin was allowed to criticise China on India's soil. It was within the context of this policy of convincing India of the genuineness of its desire to improve relations that the Chinese Government continued its move away from the 'Pakistan centric' policy on issues involving India. Significantly, most probably due to the objections raised by Vajpayee during his visit to Beijing, China considerably reduced its support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. There were even reports that Beijing unofficially suggested to Islamabad that it should 'forget about the dispute and concentrate on improving relations with India.' This Chinese policy of keeping its support for Pakistan limited vis-a-vis India, while siding with it against Soviet-Afghan allegations, might have had continued if it was not for the change of government in Afghanistan. In a palace coup on 16 September 1979, Hafizullah Amin, the main organiser of the April 1978 coup, ousted and killed Taraki and took over power. Basically a 'nationalist communist', Amin had always been in favour of Afghanistan keeping its options open and not adopting a subservient role in its relations with the Soviet Union. Soon after coming to power, therefore, while

133 NCNA, 19 February 1979, in FBIS:CHI, 22 February 1979, pp. A/16-18
134 Times of India, 26 February 1979
135 Times of India, 22 March 1979
136 Interview with a ranking Pakistan Army Officer, May 1984
still relying on the Soviets, Amin sought to improve Kabul's relations with the Western bloc, and especially the United States. There were also reports that Amin established contact with the Chinese Government. Although the exact nature of these contacts is difficult to ascertain, Beijing probably began to entertain hope that if enabled to reduce the level of domestic instability and consolidate the revolution, Amin might move away from the Soviet Union. It was probably this interest in encouraging Kabul to move back to a 'comparatively neutral policy' which prompted Beijing to refrain from siding with Islamabad against Kabul. In fact, the fact that Beijing frequently reported Amin and Zia's references to the need to improve relations suggests that it encouraged this trend. The Chinese reluctance to issue any statement countering Soviet allegations of Pakistan's bid to undo the revolution also seems to have stemmed from its interest in drawing Kabul away from Moscow. Since any attempt to refute Moscow's allegations was likely to involve the previously often repeated argument that the situation in Afghanistan was partially a result of the wrong policies pursued by the Afghan Government, a reference which was likely to annoy Amin, the Chinese Government opted to remain silent. This silence, however, was broken on 27 December 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, ousted and killed Amin and installed Babrak Karmal as the head of the Afghan Government.

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