CONCLUSION

Two tasks were set in this study: to ascertain the nature of Chinese policy towards Pakistan during the period from 1969 to 1979, and to provide explanations for the continuity and/or changes in this policy. The findings on the first point have been summarised in the beginning of Part III. However, a recapitulation is in order to provide a better understanding of the situation.

Within the South Asian context, Chinese relations with Pakistan are a rare phenomenon. Unlike its links with India which graduated from amity to enmity within a period of eight years (i.e., 1954 to 1962), China's friendly relations with Pakistan have survived beyond two decades. Even twenty-three years after the conclusion of Sino-Pakistani border, trade and air-travel agreements, the Chinese Government and media frequently underscore the amity between Beijing and Islamabad. The Pakistan Government and media also periodically repeat this theme. Notwithstanding these claims and the commonly held assumption that the Beijing-Islamabad axis is a constant factor in South Asian and international politics, the fact remains that Sino-Pakistan relations have not been devoid of fluctuations. This becomes evident with the examination of Chinese support for Pakistan during the 1969-1979 period. So marked are the fluctuations in the level of Beijing's political, economic and military assistance to Pakistan that the period under review can be categorised into seven rather distinct phases.

The first phase, which lasted from early 1969 till 1970, was essentially the continuation of China's Pakistan policy of the mid-1960s. To the consternation of New Delhi, Islamabad's stand on the Kashmir issue was supported and India's assertions of sovereignty over the princely state questioned. At the same time, an interest-free loan worth US$40.6 million with a grant ratio of 67.89%
was extended to Pakistan. Significantly, supplies of Chinese major weapons including T-59 and PT-76 tanks, and MIG-19s were resumed after an interval of three years.

The second phase, which began towards the end of 1970 and continued until the first half of November 1971, was characterised by reduced Chinese support for Pakistan. On the Kashmir issue, the phraseology used to express Beijing's support for Pakistan began to lack the customary references indicating China's resolve to always continue this policy. More importantly, Pakistan was provided with extremely qualified support against India on the East Pakistan crisis. There was an obvious unwillingness to repeat Islamabad's allegations that New Delhi was conspiring with and supplying arms to the Awami League, that the Pakistan Army's crackdown was directed against this conspiracy, that the Bangladesh Government was a figment of India's imagination, and that India was raising the refugee issue to justify its interference in Pakistan's internal affairs and to receive economic assistance for its own economic development. Beijing was also noticeably cautious not to express its support for Pakistan's territorial integrity — the major issue at stake in the East Pakistan crisis. Significantly, China extended Pakistan a loan worth US$271.391 million with a 67.69% grant ratio, but expressed its inability to commit itself to supplying any additional major weapons once the delivery of those already agreed to in early 1970 was completed.

The third phase, which began in the second half of November 1971 and lasted approximately until the turn of 1974, witnessed a return to the 'Pakistan-centric' policy by China. Initially, during the outbreak of the 'undeclared' Indo-Pakistan war, the Chinese Government restricted itself to repeating Pakistan's allegations against the Indian role in the East Pakistan crisis, and to stressing
that these actions deserved serious condemnation. Once the 'declared' Indo-Pakistan war started on 3 December 1971, for the first time in eight months, Beijing expressed its firm support for Pakistan's territorial integrity. At the same time, it supported Pakistan at the United Nations. India, it insisted, was an aggressor and, therefore, should be condemned for aggression, and both India and Pakistan should withdraw their forces to their respective territories. More importantly, China engaged in behind-the-scenes diplomacy and supported the U.S. attempts to ensure that India was prevented from implementing its rumoured plan of capturing Kashmir and mounting a major attack on West Pakistan after occupying the eastern wing.

It was, however, after the bifurcation of Pakistan on 16 December 1971 that the Chinese Government provided Islamabad the maximum support in the period under review. It vetoed Bangladesh's admission to the United Nations and insisted that the nascent South Asian state's entry into the international organisation would not be approved by Beijing prior to the total implementation of the UN resolutions passed during the Indo-Pakistan war (1971). By doing so, it ensured that India, which was interested in securing Dhaka's entry into the United Nations, was prevented from exploiting 93,000 Pakistani prisoners and occupation of 5,000 square miles of Pakistan's territory as bargaining chips to settle the Kashmir issue on New Delhi's terms. Simultaneously, in addition to equipping Pakistan's air force and army with approximately 70 MIG-19 aircraft and 400 T-59 tanks, Beijing also undertook assisting Pakistan in setting up its own tank and aircraft overhauling and rebuilding complexes. At the same time, China took a decision to convert four project-cum-commodity loans amounting to US$110.4 million into grants and deferred the repayment of the November 1970 loan for twenty years thus raising its grant ratio from 67.68% to 82.12%. 
The fourth phase was essentially similar to the third. Beijing persisted in its policy of supporting Pakistan on political issues. It sided with Islamabad on the Kashmir issue and supported Pakistan's proposal put forth in the General Assembly for declaring South Asia a nuclear-weapon free zone. Beijing also continued supplying Pakistan with T-59 tanks and MiG-19 aircraft as well as assisting it in developing a defence infrastructure. The policy of assisting Pakistan in setting up developmental projects also continued. This phase, which lasted until the turn of 1976, differed from the third phase in one respect. It witnessed India's entry into the nuclear club and the Chinese reluctance to openly concede to Pakistan's request for extending the nuclear umbrella.

That this reluctance to support Pakistan against its major adversary, India, was to be the rule and not an exception was amply demonstrated in the fifth phase which lasted from early 1976 to the end of 1978. China markedly reduced the level of its support for Pakistan on various political issues. There was apparent reluctance on Beijing's part to consistently identify itself with Islamabad's position on the Kashmir dispute. The same reluctance was exhibited with respect to Pakistan's proposal for declaring South Asia a nuclear-weapon free zone. Even the emergence of a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul and its revival of the Pashtunistan issue failed to elicit direct and categorical Chinese support for Pakistan against Afghanistan. Neither did China supply any major weapons to Pakistan during this phase. Also, in marked departure from the past, Beijing began extending loans of nominal value on stringent terms.

The sixth phase once again witnessed a return to a pro-Pakistan policy. The Chinese Government and media consistently supported Pakistan against the Soviet and Afghan allegations that the Zia regime was permitting China, the United States, and various other
"reactionary" states the use of Pakistani territory for training and arming Afghan guerrillas. This phase, which lasted from early to mid-September 1978, however, did not witness a revival of Chinese support for Pakistan on the issues involving India. Neither did it see a resumption of major Chinese weapons supplies to Pakistan nor was any new loan, even of a nominal value, extended.

The seventh and last phase, with the shortest duration, lasted only for the period of Hafizullah Amin's rule in Afghanistan. During this phase, as in the previous, China shied away from consistently supporting Pakistan against India. In fact, it even ceased to support Pakistan against Soviet allegations of Islamabad's role in the Afghan guerilla warfare. However, it did begin negotiations with Pakistan for the sale of F-6(bis) aircraft.

These fluctuations in the level of Chinese support for Pakistan, this study has attempted to prove, can be explained within the framework of Beijing's fear of, and the strategies devised to counter, perceived threat of encirclement from China's opponent(s). In the 1950s, it has argued, Beijing perceived the United States as attempting to encircle China. To counter this perceived threat, the Chinese Government devised a strategy which, firstly, envisaged a close relationship with the Soviet Union. Secondly, it attempted to improve relations with the neighbouring states in order to reduce the American influence in countries already co-opted into the western alliance system and to prevent the neutral states from joining hands with the United States. Within the framework of this strategy, in South Asia Beijing established close relations with India and, at the same time, pursued a 'correct' policy towards Pakistan, a member of both SEATO and CENTO. In the 1960s, as the Sino-Soviet differences surfaced, Beijing came to view both the U.S. and the Soviet Union as attempting to encircle China. Since India, with which Chinese
relations had deteriorated at the turn of the 1960s, was viewed as the point where the U.S.-Soviet encirclement attempts intersected, the Chinese Government moved to establish a closer relationship with New Delhi's major adversary, Pakistan. Not only was a border agreement concluded, but Pakistan was also singled out as the first non-communist state to operate flights to China. More importantly, Beijing also began to support Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue. The climax, however, came in the mid-1960s when, during the Indo-Pakistan war, the Chinese Government issued an ultimatum to India in order to extricate Pakistan from the possibility of a defeat. Soon afterwards, Beijing also assumed the role of a major supplier of arms to Pakistan.

Towards the end of the 1960s, however, Beijing's threat perception once again underwent a change. The Soviet Union, with which China had major border clashes in 1969, was now perceived as the only state attempting to encircle China. To counter this perceived threat, the moderates advocated a new strategy with two major components; at global level, they favoured a policy of improving relations with the United States. At regional level, they argued in favour of once again attempting to improve relations with neighbouring states. This time the attempt was directed at neutralising the Soviet influence in states already friendly with Moscow, and at preventing the 'non-committed' states from establishing close economic, military and political links with the Soviet Union. During the immediate aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, however, the radicals who were in ascendancy opposed this strategy. Globally, they favoured the idea of opposing both the Soviet Union and the United States. Regionally, in South Asia they advocated the continuation of the mid-1960s' policy; India was opposed, and Pakistan was favoured. Hence, during 'Phase I',
Pakistan was not only supported against India on the Kashmir issue but it was also provided military and economic assistance. This situation underwent a change towards the end of 1969 and early 1970. Soon after gaining ascendancy, the moderates in China began moves to improve relations with India. As these moves showed signs of success, the Chinese Government also began to move away from a 'Pakistan-centric' policy. It was within the framework of this 'new' South Asian policy that the Chinese Government reduced the level of its support for Pakistan during Phase II. Towards the end of 1971, however, as the Indian Government attempted to dismember Pakistan with Soviet help, the Chinese Government temporarily shelved its 'new' South Asian policy and began to support Pakistan against India. Once Pakistan was dismembered, China's need for supporting Pakistan further increased. Beijing now perceived the situation as one in which Moscow had succeeded in increasing its influence in India and the newly born state of Bangladesh. Pakistan was the only South Asian state which was not viewed as being under Soviet influence but, beset with a number of political, economic and military problems in the immediate aftermath of the dismemberment, was considered vulnerable to Soviet influence. Since Pakistan's 'tilt' towards the Soviet Union would have completely blocked Chinese influence from its Southwestern borders, Beijing provided its maximum support to Pakistan in Phase III.

Once, however, Pakistan solved most of its problems resulting from the 1971 war, the Chinese Government once again initiated a slow and guarded move back to its 'new' South Asian policy. Nevertheless, its perception of the South Asian situation essentially remained the same. India and Bangladesh were still deemed closer to the Soviet Union and the possibility of Pakistan turning towards the Soviet Union was still deemed to exist. To counter this possibility Beijing
supported Islamabad economically and militarily. It also persisted in its policy of supporting Islamabad on various political issues.

Towards the end of 1975 and early 1976, however, as Indo-Soviet economic relations began to show signs of strain, Chinese perception of India began undergoing a change. India was still viewed as close to the Soviet Union. However, the relationship was not deemed devoid of contradictions. To exploit these contradictions, the Chinese Government hastened its moves to normalise relations with India. The Indian Government responded favourably to these moves and agreed, in mid-April 1976, to upgrade diplomatic relations to ambassadorial level. Following this major breakthrough, convinced that the pace of Sino-Indian rapprochement would not be sustained until India was convinced of China's 'genuine' interest in normalising relations, Beijing began to move away from the 'Pakistan-Centric' policy. This accounted primarily for a marked reduction in the level of China's political, military and economic support for Pakistan during the fifth phase. The reluctance to support Pakistan against the Taraki regime's revival of the Pushtunistan issue, however, stemmed from Beijing's interest in keeping its options open vis-a-vis the new pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. In any case, China considered the Shah's Iran better able than Pakistan to counter Soviet expansionism in the region.

The Afghan Government's decision to sign a Treaty of Friendship, which coincided with similar Soviet treaties with Vietnam and Ethiopia, however, changed the situation. Beijing now began to fear that the Soviet Union was attempting to use its links with Afghanistan to expand its influence both in the direction of the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia. To counter this perceived probability at a stage when a new and rather unfriendly regime had gained power in Iran, the Chinese Government once again began to rely on Pakistan.
China's need for Pakistan as a major base to train and arm Afghan guerrillas accounted primarily for a return to a pro-Pakistan policy in the Sixth phase.

The palace coup in Afghanistan and Amin's rise to power in mid-September 1979, however, once again changed the situation. As the prospects of a more nationalistic and independent regime staying in power seemed bright, the Chinese Government once again withdrew its support for Pakistan against the Soviet allegations of Pakistan's complicity in the anti-Saur revolution activities. This trend, however, also proved to be shortlived. On 27 December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and the Chinese Government once again reverted to a policy of siding with Islamabad against Kabul.

To state that the fluctuations in China's policy towards Pakistan during the 1969-1979 period can primarily be explained in terms of Beijing's perception of the Soviet Union as attempting to encircle China and its strategy to counter these attempts, however, is not to suggest that Sino-Pakistani relations are cushioned against being affected by all other forces. On the contrary, various other factors have also played a significant, if not a major role, in determining Beijing's Pakistan policy. During the East Pakistan Crisis (1971), for instance, the Chinese Government did not approve of the manner in which the Yahya regime was handling the situation in the eastern wing. Neither was it ignorant of the possibility of a relatively radical government gaining power in Bangladesh if events were allowed to take their own course. Thus, it decided, despite Pakistan's requests and professions to the contrary, to provide only extremely qualified support to Pakistan against the Indian attempts to exploit the East Pakistan crisis. Similarly, in the third phase, Beijing vociferously supported Pakistan at the United Nations partly to convince other Third World states that, unlike the Soviet Union,
the Chinese Government abided by principles and did not intend encouraging secessionism --- a problem frequently faced by developing states with a number of nationality problems. Also in the fourth phase, the fear that any categorical support for Pakistan against the Indian nuclear explosion might raise the spectre of a Sino-Pakistan nuclear collaboration and prompt India to develop nuclear weapons was instrumental in preventing Beijing from responding to Pakistan's call for the 'nuclear umbrella'.

The major question which arises from the above description and analysis of Sino-Pakistan relations during the 1969-1979 period, however, relates to the future of Chinese policy towards Pakistan.

Making predictions on the basis of past patterns is always fraught with danger. Nevertheless, on the basis of the findings of this study, it can be stated that China's Pakistan policy is part of its South Asian policy which, in turn, is a part of China's strategy of countering any perceived Soviet attempts to encircle China. Since for the foreseeable future, despite occasional signs of a thaw in Sino-Soviet relations, Beijing's relations with Moscow are likely to remain strained, it can be safely stated that the Chinese Government would persist in its attempts to neutralise India's relations with the Soviet Union. Hence, it will continue to retain its interest in moving away from a 'Pakistan-Centric' policy and pursuing the 'new' South Asian policy, outlines of which have been emerging since late 1970 and especially since 1976. Translated into practical terms, China will continue to avoid entangling itself in the disputes involving the two South Asian adversaries, and will encourage them to further normalise relations with each other. Concurrently, however, barring major changes in Afghanistan, the Chinese Government will require Pakistani territory to arm and train Afghan guerrillas. This is especially so because the Soviets,
following Chinese attempts to use the Sino-Afghan border for smuggling weapons into Afghanistan, have occupied and virtually annexed the Wakhan Corridor. Therefore, most likely in the foreseeable future, China is going to continue supporting Pakistan against Afghanistan and professing that the Sino-Pakistan relationship is based on principles and not affected by the exigencies of time.
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