

Early Days of Sino-Pakistan Relations

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan and China got independence one after another. China of Chiang-Kai-Shek had very little interest in Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent. However, they were hostile to the division of Subcontinent on religious ground. When Pakistan got independence, it did not receive any felicitations from China; on the other hand Pakistan took no interest in Chinese revolution. Pakistan only got activated when India became the floor-runner in recognition of China. After Indian recognition, Pakistan also recognized China. The real test of relationship was, when India stopped supply of coal for Pakistani trains and Chinese helped Pakistan, Pakistan on the other hand refused to condemn China in 1950s Korean War. The start of the relationship was neither warm nor cold. Pakistan had assumed that China was a neighbor and neighbor can not be changed. Moreover in case of Chinese assumption of Security Council seat, Pakistanis realized that Kashmir question would be discussed at UN, therefore, close and friendly relationship with China was necessary but Pakistan also needed economic and military assistance which could only come from Western block. However, maintaining normal relations with China was considered necessary. Therefore, Pakistan strongly supported Chinese' entry into UN Security Council and at Bandung Conference.

Key Words: Xia Dynasty, Himalayas, Buddhism, Chiang-Kai-Shek, NATO

Introduction

China and Pakistan cherish the oldest civilizations in the world. They are though among the youngest countries of the World. (Younus, 2009) Pakistan's Indus valley civilization is approximately dating back to 2500 BC. The age of China's Xia dynasty is over 4000 years old. Both the territories remained in cultural contact for hundreds of years but the two lands remained cut off geographically by the Himalayas for most of history (Sattar, 2007). It is not known when the people of the two areas contacted each other but as far back as 1000 B.C, one of the first eight foreign embassies established in China was from the region, which now constitutes the Republic of Pakistan (Sherwani, 1964). When Buddhism was the supreme religion in China, craftsmen from Swat used to construct metallic statues for the Chinese government. Rock carvings reveal the travels of Chinese envoys to Kashmir about 2000 years ago (Ali, 2005). In the eighth century Islam penetrated into Chinese territories. The Muslim conquerors entered into China from the

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Central Asian region. Sinkiang and some other adjacent regions were brought under Muslim control and the historic bond with the South Asian Muslims was strengthened. The historic relations remained intact even after the arrival of the British in India and the cultural and commercial interaction between the two peoples continued (Jain, 1974).

At The Dawn of Independence

There are approximately fifty million Muslims in China and in few provinces like Sinkiang, 94%, Ninghsia, 75%, Kansu, 69% and Shensi, 41% overwhelming majority is Muslim (Jain: 1977). Both Pakistan and China are ideological states, the former came into being with an Islamic ideology on 14th August 1947 and the latter proclaimed a socialist ideology on 1st October 1949 at the end of Chinese civil war. After the establishment, it was noticed that Pakistani people were more inclined towards West than Communist bloc. From the very beginning, the people of Pakistan had some sort of reluctance towards the Communist political system and Communist way of life. The repugnance for Communism was evident in the Pakistan's foreign policy of the initial days. Pakistanis inclined towards Islamic causes as the leaders of Pakistan wanted to make Pakistan the fort of Islam. The earlier period of Pakistan's foreign policy saw her hosting to various Islamic conferences. At that time there were references of Pakistan being the largest Muslim state to share responsibilities for the causes of Muslim countries. Some Muslim countries even didn't like the policies of Pakistan and called it over-optimistic and amateur approach. In November 1951 the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Salah-el- Din Pasha, told an Indian correspondent in Cairo that Egypt looked to India for moral support in her struggle for national liberation. King Farouq lampooned Pakistan's over-zealous devotion to Islamic causes by saying to his courtiers, 'Don't you know that Islam was born on 14th of August 1947?'" Another large Muslim country Indonesia was also inclined towards India. Although Pakistanis were chauvinistic about Islam and Muslim countries but they were living in the world of realism. They realized the defense of the country prior to everything and for this their policy-makers were inclined towards the West. The Communist countries neither looked at religious ideologies with benevolence nor did they have predilection towards the Western countries. But Pakistan stood for the Islamic causes and for intimate relations with the West also. Pakistan did not look to Communist block for support and help. Consequently, the Chinese had no inkling towards Pakistan; and the Russians sent no felicitations, at all, on the establishment of Pakistan (Burke, 1991).

Pakistan between Communism and Militant India

To understand the history of Pakistan's foreign policy, it is necessary to understand how Pakistan and the Communist countries looked at each other and how the mutual dislike started between them. Although the start of the mutual

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relations was not fine but it seemed that despite Pakistan's revulsion for communism, it did not see communism a serious threat to its security; it viewed India to be the prime threat to its defence. India was regarded as the greatest and most imminent source of danger to the country and the problem of defence against India had been the uppermost in the minds of Pakistanis. Indian Muslims had got India divided and got emancipation from the British slavery in spite of the opposition of Hindu majority who stood for independent but united India. Pakistanis were convinced that Hindus and Muslims belonged to two different civilizations. Despite living for one thousand years in India, they never mixed with each other. India had always been divided into Muslim India and Hindu India. Pakistanis were confident that the Hindus were entirely from different stock. Hindu and Muslim lives were antipathy to each other and Indians had proved this with their constant propaganda campaign against Pakistan even after the division of the Sub-Continent. The Hindus had accepted the division as a temporary necessity. The All India Congress Committee observed that when the passions would subside then the false doctrine of two nations would be discredited and discarded by all (Menon: 384). Sardar Patel was convinced that the new state of Pakistan was not viable and could not last long and Pakistan would collapse in short time (Azad, 1959). Pakistan's policy makers had full realization of the strategic location of Pakistan. The constant Hindu propaganda campaign, religious outbursts against the raions detre of Pakistan and the military bluffing made the Pakistanis realized that the Communist countries were situated away from Pakistan's geographical boundaries, but India was the immediate neighbour and the enmity of India would be more costly to Pakistan. It seemed that the main aim of Pakistan's foreign policy had been to obtain a shield against a possible attack from India, while the main aim of India's foreign policy seemed to be to isolate and weaken Pakistan (Choudhury, 1968). But it does not mean that all was well on the other side of the bridge, in the communist countries. Pakistanis might have extreme hatred for the Indians but they despised the communism also. In retrospective the Muslim scholars, it seemed, had no penchants for communism. They regarded the rise of communism an anathema to Islamic principles and ideology. Muslim scholars considered communism an un-Godly political system. They thought that communist system destroys the human capabilities and the communists do not believe in God. The famous poet of Urdu Literature Dr. Iqbal, long before the movement for Pakistan was born, had declared in a letter to the daily *Zamindar* of Lahore on 'Islam and Bolshevism' that 'To hold Bolshevik views, in my opinion, are to place oneself outside the pale of Islam (Burke, 1991).

Even after the creation of the country, the views of Pakistani politicians didn't change. The first Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan had special loathing for communism. Even before partition, in the interim government of India, when Nehru appointed his sister as Indian Ambassador for Russia, Liaqat Ali Khan declined to suggest a name for the post; he even tried to block the move. Later on, after the establishment of Pakistan he encouraged the United States that it should guarantee the territorial integrity of Pakistan so that Pakistan should concentrate on

economic improvement and this would keep out the impending menace of communism. When the Americans approved arms aid to Pakistan, the Russians protested and in retaliation Pakistan formulated six charges against the Kremlin and the fifth of which was that 'they have reduced the Russian people to a sub-human species because without complete freedom of thought man cannot remain man. They do not believe in God and cannot therefore have any morals, because religion whatever it may be is the basis of all moral codes (Burke, 1991). Muslim religious figures particularly hated the communist political system. Maulana Abul Maududi, a well-known religious scholar and the head of Jamaat-e-Islami declared the communism based on the ideas of Marx un-Islamic. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, chief of National Awami Party, although he was inclined towards forming intimate and cordial relationship with communist countries, also rejected the communism as Godless system (Daily Dawn, 13th Dec.1969). The reason for his penchant for communist countries might be his abhorrence for the Western imperialistic system. It seemed that in the initial days of Pakistan, the foreign policy of the country was heavily influenced by Islam. But it is enigmatic that if Pakistanis were so opposed to the communist system then why they considered the Indians instead of communists as their enemy number one. There might be two reasons for this. Pakistan realized that the world had already been divided into two blocks, Cold War was in progress and if Pakistan sided with the Western Powers then Pakistan would not be alone if it was invaded by the communist states. This was evident even in 1960, when U-2 was shot down and President Ayub Khan stated that 'in case of communist aggression against Pakistan, response would come from somewhere else and Pakistan would not be alone.(Kux, 2002) Secondly as the age of colonialism was over so the communist states would not commit any aggression against Pakistan. But in case of Indian aggression the Western countries would not come to Pakistan's help and secondly India would not even hesitate to occupy Pakistan because it considers Pakistan to be its lost territory and the International community would also consider Indo-Pak war as civil war. If India attacked Pakistan or Pakistan-held Kashmir on the excuse that it was recovering what it claimed to be Indian territory, Pakistanis feared that the great powers would again be unwilling to intervene out of consideration for their global policies and unable to thwart Indian aggression (Khan, 1964). As the main concern of the Christian West was the containment of Chinese communism (or Soviet communism), in the same way the main concern of Muslim Pakistan was the containment of militarist or militant Hinduism (Saeed, 1964). For years Pakistanis had been struggling in SEATO to acquire the material help of the Western countries against India. Pakistanis were very concerned about the rise and spread of communism but they thought that it was a menace to all and was not likely to make Pakistan its exclusive target whereas Indians themselves have made it clear more than once that Pakistan was their number one target (Saeed, 1964).

As compared to Pakistani leaders, Nehru was interested in neutral foreign policy from the very beginning. Nehru's India had no negative notions about

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communism. Nehru was more inclined towards communist countries than the 'Imperialist' West. Foreign Policy was Pandit Nehru's forte. He excelled in this field to the 'point of dangerous perfection' (Bhutto, 1966). His interest in the foreign policy was evident from his establishing cordial relations with World leaders even before the emancipation of his country. He assumed the control of the foreign policy of the Indian National Congress in 1927 and also visited Soviet Union the same year. Nehru assumed the Foreign Ministry of the Interim Government which was appointed in 1946 just before the division of the Sub-Continent. As an astute student of world affairs, Pundit Nehru established a profitable relationship with the USSR. He sought to bring India close to that country at a time when many nations were fearful of the remotest contacts with communist states (Bhutto, 1966). Nehru appointed his own sister Lakshmi Punditji as the Indian Ambassador to Soviet Union.

Sino-Pakistan Relations in the Wake of Partition

In the case of China, Nehru established very smooth relations with Chiang Kai-Shek but the Muslim leaders of All India Muslim League had not concentrated on the foreign policy options before the partition of Sub-Continent. Chiang Kai-Shek, on the other hand, had also never taken much notice of Pakistan or of the movement that led to its creation. However keeping in view the Chinese condition at the hands of imperialist powers in 19th and 20th centuries, he despised the divisions of the states. Chiang Kai-Shek visited India in 1942 and appealed British to leave India and give immediate independence to the Indians. His appeal of the grant of independence to the Indians was also the demand of Indian National Congress, who started 'Quit India Movement' the same year and Gandhi said that the 'British leave India to God', but Chiang Kai-Shek's announcement was opposed to the political philosophy of All India Muslim League which was pressing the British for the division of India on the basis of two-nation theory (Yunus, 1986). Even after the establishment of Pakistan, it was not ready to jump into the foreign relations arena instantly. Pakistan's resources were very meager. It just wanted to contact few important countries for financial help and for defence equipment against India, which was bent upon the destruction of it. Pakistan faced tremendous problems in the wake of partition, which has no parallel in history. Keeping in view the plethora of problems, foreign relations were the last priority. There was not a penny in the national exchequer, commerce and trade was completely at standstill. It is indeed a miracle of modern history and a tribute to the high patriotism of the people of Pakistan that the country successfully had overcome its trials and tribulations of the time. Once the worst was over, it looked beyond its own frontiers to foster links with the outside world and play its natural role in the foreign affairs (Anonymous, 1956). 'China Digest's New Delhi correspondent Harin Shah rightly commented on 10 August 1947, that:

‘The trends in Pakistan are likely to invite deep interest in China too. So far the leadership of Pakistan has no time to think much of affairs beyond their borders’ (Arif, 1984).

Contrary to this prediction the course of Sino-Pakistan relations was not smooth. Many hurdles appeared in Sino-Pakistan relations in the early years of their independence. Pakistan followed fickle and capricious policy towards China, sometimes Pakistan’s policy was favorable to China and sometimes it was unfavorable at all. It seems that the policy remained directionless. (Bhola:1986) In 1947, when Pakistan got independence, its northern neighbor, China, was still in the throes of revolution. Fierce fighting was going on between Mao’s Red Army and Chiang-Kai-Shek’s Nationalists. Unfortunately, Pakistan had neither been closer to Chiang-Kai-Shek’s Nationalist government nor to Mao’s communists. Gandhi and Nehru on the other hand were very close to Chiang-Kai-Shek. As Pakistan was faced with its own problems and China was suffering from the civil war, both the countries didn’t show any haste in developing diplomatic relations. Both India and Pakistan, however, had to take the decision of recognizing People’s Republic of China because of the proximity of China to both the countries. They shared wide borders with China. It would have been simply preposterous to close one’s eyes to a cataclysm of the kind that had occurred in the neighboring country (Yunus, 1986).

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

When Pakistan came into being, China was governed by the Kuomintang with Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek at its head (Singh, 1977). In the initial months, Pakistan suffered economically. It had faced myriads of problems. Finance was the biggest problem for Pakistan in 1948. Even the country could not find resources to establish diplomatic relations (Bhola, 1986) Pakistan’s first priority was the stabilization of the state and only then she could establish relations with other countries. Panikar, the first Indian Ambassador, on the other hand, took up his duties in China in the spring of 1948. India not only set up diplomatic relations with China but it also became the ‘floor leader’ (Burke, 1991) in persuading other countries to recognize China. After recognizing China, India also considered it logical that People’s Republic of China should have seat in the United Nations Security Council. During a stopover in London en route to Washington, on 10th October 1949, Nehru pressed Prime Minister Attlee for an early recognition to China. Pakistan was interested in the developments inside China but was not in special urgency to recognize it. However consultations in the Commonwealth countries made it clear that soon India would extend recognition to China and there were chances that China would also take its permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council and Kashmir issue would be under consideration in the

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Security Council. There were some speculations that Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek's rag tag army would re-conquer the mainland China but most of the countries believed that he was a spent force. Pakistani leaders were also convinced that Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek's remnant of an army could not regain the mainland of China (Sherwani, 1964). In such circumstances, Pakistan also did not want to lag behind India. India started negotiations with China for the latter's recognition and India's complete break with the Formosa, which was one of the preconditions for establishing diplomatic relations with China. India recognized China on 30th December 1949. Pakistan followed and recognized new Chinese regime on 4th January 1950, the third non-communist country to do so. (Mahdi, 1986) However the designation of ambassadors still took a lot of time. The Chinese Ambassador arrived in Karachi on 3rd September 1951 and General A. M. Raza, the first Ambassador of Pakistan to China presented his credentials to Chairman Mao Tse-tung on 13th November 1951 (A: November 1951). The economic problems of Pakistan, instability in China, Indo-Pakistan war in Kashmir, the doubts that Chiang Kai-Shek could come back and could overthrow the communists and international situations as the major World powers except Russia were against the establishment of communist political system in another country might be some important reasons for the delay in the transfers of Pakistani and Chinese ambassadors. As Pakistan was not inclined towards communism, it didn't feel any haste in sending diplomats nor was China interested because it was preoccupied with its internal affairs. Pakistan had only recognized China because of her competition with India. It seems that the establishment of relations was delayed for two reasons; Pakistan did not follow diplomatic norms in extending recognition. Pakistan's decision for recognition was conveyed to the Chinese Foreign Minister by the Pakistani Ambassador in the Soviet Union. The Ambassador wrote:

"I have the honour to inform Your Excellency, I have got the order from our government. Pakistan government announced the recognition of establishment of Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China in Peking as the legal government of China" (Jain, 1977).

It was against normal diplomatic norms that instead of the foreign office contacting China, Pakistan's Ambassador to Soviet Union was directed to send recognition. This was not a dignified way and Chou En-Lai, who was the Foreign Minister also, considered it derogatory to his dignity. The other reason for delay in establishing diplomatic relations was that there was no mention of Pakistan government's intention to withdraw recognition from the Kuomintang Government. Pakistan soon realized its mistake and the government issued an official communiqué on 24th January 1950 which stated that the Government of Pakistan had withdrawn the recognition from the Chinese Kuomintang

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Government located in Taiwan. The Government of Pakistan also instructed its Ambassador in Soviet Union, on 29th January 1950, to write a letter to the Chinese Government in continuation of his earlier letter of 5th January 1950. Because of the sparseness of funds, Pakistan requested China to treat Lt Col Muhammad Sadiq, Consulate General in Kashgar as Pakistan's trusted representative in Sinkiang and allow him to manage the office in that capacity and provide him all necessary facilities. China rejected Pakistani request and argued that Lt Col Sadiq would be considered as a foreign national till the formal exchange of diplomatic representatives between the two countries takes place. Chinese refusal to accord diplomatic status to Lt Col Sadiq in Sinkiang might be its apprehensions about the possibility of Pakistan carrying on subversive activities in the sensitive area of Sinkiang (Bhola, 1986). Sinkiang was the Muslim majority province of China. The diplomatic bickering was soon resolved and the course of new relationship between the two countries took its way. After the recognition of China, Pakistan became the champion of China's permanent seat in the United Nations. Pakistan brushed aside all those forces who wanted to keep China out of the United Nations. Pakistan realized that as the communists were actually at the helm of affairs and the de facto communist government was established in China then international community should give de jure status to them. China should occupy its seat in the United Nations Security Council as a sovereign state. At least this was the official stance of Pakistan about the Chinese representation in the early phase of Pakistan's foreign policy. Foreign Minister of Pakistan Zafrulla Khan argued in the United Nations that:

“China is not applying for admission to the United Nations. It is a member state, a permanent member of the Security Council, one of the big five. I do venture to submit that whether it is willing or not, it is entitled as of right to be represented in the UN like every other member state, until it is a contingency that might apply to every other member state also-expelled in accordance with the provisions of the charter” (Bhola, 1986).

Some political thinkers say that in recognizing Peking government, Pakistan was guided by geo-political and economic considerations. Ideology, an important factor in Pakistan's foreign policy, was not taken into account. Pakistani leaders realized that they would have to live with China-communist or non-communist as a neighbour. Pakistan thought that it could not change the neighbour. Pakistan's relations with India, Afghanistan and Soviet Union were not friendly; Pakistan didn't want to antagonize another powerful neighbour by refusing recognition to it (Aziz, 1982). However, it is not necessary that ideology might be a bar in establishing diplomatic relations with non-Muslim countries in generally and communist states in particularly. Apart from some political theories trade might be

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another impetus for Pakistan's early recognition of China. After two years of the recognition of China, Britain devalued her currency, India followed but Pakistan refused. India immediately retaliated by refusing to accept the new rates of exchange of the Pakistani rupee and closed trade with Pakistan. (Sherwani: 76) As more than half of the Pakistani trade was with India, Pakistan could not afford any trade barriers with India but India as it was the dominant and economically in good position, stopped the supply of coal to Pakistan. As a result of India's ban on export of coal to Pakistan, Pakistan's rail system was badly affected. Soon Indo-Pak trade also came to a standstill. Now Pakistan realized that instead of depending upon India, it should diversify its trade with other countries. Pakistan was also looking for customers for its Jute and Cotton. Stoppage of trade with India posed a serious threat to Pakistan's rail transport which was dependent on Indian coal. It was not easy to explore new markets. In those dark days of Pakistan's history, China came to Pakistan's help and made a barter agreement for supply of coal against Pakistan's raw Jute and cotton. During his official visit to United States, Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan explained that Pakistan considered Peoples Republic of China an established fact and recognized it in order to ease the flow of trade. In the Korean War also Pakistan adopted a policy which was hailed by both the United States and China. Pakistan did not vote for imposition of trade sanctions on China and North Korea and the Chinese appreciated it. In the same way Pakistan condemned North Korean aggression against South Koreans which later on even President Kennedy appreciated. (Kux: 2002) When China fought against the Western forces in North Korea and China was denounced by the West, Pakistan abstained in the censure. Pakistan was leaning on China. In February 1953 Prime Minister Nazimuddin said that the contemplated blockade of China 'would affect many friends of United States who want to trade with China. In our case we want to sell our cotton (Ahmad, 1955).

One of the main aims of Pakistan for the early recognition of China was to get the Chinese support on the Kashmir question, which though could not materialize as China adopted very cautious policy about Kashmir. China believed that United States through the manipulation of United Nations wanted to send its own troops to Kashmir which would jeopardize the security of China. As China was not the member of the United Nations Security Council, it had grave apprehensions against the same. China thought that Security Council was a stooge in the hands of Americans and small countries like India and Pakistan could not withstand Super Powers' pressure and would allow the American forces in Kashmir, which the Americans would use against China as a base. Therefore, China expressed satisfaction over the Bogra-Nehru talks conducted in August 1953, outside the ambit of Security Council. China thought that the Sub-continent rival should solve the dispute peacefully through negotiations.

Conclusion

The start of relationship between Pakistan and China was not good. China had hardly taken any notice of the establishment of Pakistan. China was in the throes of Revolution in this period. Pakistan was facing tremendous problems at its birth. Pakistan focused its policies to the internal problems. Pakistan had also lacked resources to establish diplomatic relations with China.

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Pakistani people had been living under British rule and Western Countries had abhorrence towards Communism. Religious classes, in Pakistan, had also considered Communism antipathy to Islam. Moreover, China was not the member of United Nations' Security Council; therefore, Pakistan was not interested in establishing diplomatic relations with it. The initial phase of Sino-Pakistan relations was not smooth. Sometime Pakistan would support China and sometime it will be voting against it. It cannot be said that relations between two countries were strengthened in initial first few years of their establishment.

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