



Advance Social Science Archive Journal

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol.3 No.1, January-March, 2025. Page No. 2325-2339

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23055380>

PAKISTAN-SOVIET UNION RELATIONS (1947-60): DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, SECURITY INTERESTS AND ALLIANCE POLITICS

**Muhammad Naveed
Akhtar**

Assistant Professor, Department of History and Political Science Ghazi University, Dera
Ghazi Khan

mnakhtar@gudgk.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of the relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union during the period 1947-1960, focusing on the aspects of diplomatic relations, security interests, ideological differences, and alliance politics. The period was very important in shaping the future course of bilateral relations, as it was a time of the emergence of Pakistan as a new state and the consolidation of the Cold War. The Soviet Union was not originally in favour of the ideology of the establishment of Pakistan but did not take an openly hostile attitude and did establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan. But mutual suspicion, ideological differences, divergent perceptions of national interests, and competing foreign-policy priorities hampered the development of close relations. Ideological differences between Pakistan's Islamic identity and the Soviet Union's Marxist-Leninist orientation and Moscow's concerns about Pakistan's strategic location in South Asia led to tensions. Security and economic demands of Pakistan, especially its apprehensions about India and Kashmir, gradually led to increased ties with the United States. Pakistan's involvement in Western-sponsored security arrangements thus became a major cause of Soviet concern in the 1950's. The study suggests that ideological differences are not the only factors that can account for Pakistan-Soviet relations. Instead, security needs, economic considerations, regional tensions and Cold War alliance politics were all factors in determining the nature of the relationship. The study explores these factors and thus illuminates the impact of foreign-policy decisions of a newly independent and strategically vulnerable state on its ties with a major Cold War power. The study concludes that the years 1947-1960 laid the basic foundations of cooperation, suspicion and strategic competition that later defined the relations between Pakistan and the USSR.

Keywords: Pakistan, Soviet Union, Cold War, Alliance Politics, Security, Diplomacy, Great Powers, Ideology and Economic Dependency.

Introduction

With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the political and strategic environment of South Asia changed, and a new foreign-policy orientation was needed. In Pakistan's early foreign relations, the ties with the Soviet Union were of a special nature as they were evolving in the context of the emerging Cold War. Moscow did not initially take a hostile attitude towards

the establishment of Pakistan, though it did not accept the ideological basis of the establishment of Pakistan, but it did establish diplomatic relations with the new state. However, the contacts were still limited, and relations were marked by suspicion, ideological differences, and conflicting perceptions of national interests.

This was a tough start for a number of reasons. The Islamic ideological identity of Pakistan was in sharp contrast with the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Soviet Union, and some Pakistani and Soviet policymakers felt the two countries were ideologically incompatible. Meanwhile, Moscow's doubts were exacerbated by Pakistan's Islamic orientation and its strategic location in South Asia. Security issues, especially the rivalry with India, the Kashmir issue, economic weakness and the need for military assistance, also had a strong impact on Pakistan's foreign-policy priorities. These pressures slowly pushed Pakistan towards getting closer to the United States and ultimately joining Western-led security alliances. This orientation was a significant factor in Soviet distrust (Askari, 1993, p. 112).

The study deals with the period from the independence of Pakistan in 1947 till 1960, which is the formative period of Pakistan-Soviet relations. It covers the development and establishment of diplomatic relations, ideological differences, Pakistan's security and economic needs, its attitude towards the U.S. and the Western alliance system, and Soviet reactions to Pakistan's foreign-policy attitude. Special focus is laid on the Kashmir issue, regional security issues and alliance politics in the context of bilateral relations. It also takes into account the evolving Soviet attitude towards South Asia after Stalin's death and the significance of Pakistan's strategic orientation to the West. It suggests that ideological differences played a role but should not be seen as the primary factor when considering the strategic, economic and geopolitical interests of both countries.

Research Question

This study's central research questions are as follows:

1. What were the political, ideological, diplomatic, and geopolitical factors that influenced the relationship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union from 1947 to 1960?
2. In what way did Pakistan's security interests, especially its concerns with India and Kashmir, affect its foreign-policy orientation and relations with the Soviet Union?
3. What impact did Pakistan's pro-West policies have on Pakistan-Soviet relations (1947-1960)?

Soviets' mistrust of the leadership in India and Pakistan.

The view of South Asia in Moscow was influenced by the notion that bourgeois nationalism in the colonies had turned into imperialism. Soviet expert on Asian affairs E. Zhukov condemned the national bourgeoisie of former colonies for granting formal independence, but imperialist powers changed their direct rule into more sophisticated means of control. He asserted that the bourgeoisie of newly independent states were in the service of imperialism and called Gandhi and Nehru "lackeys of imperialists" and "betrayers of their nations" (Zhukove, 1947, Jain, 1978, p. 180-181).

The Soviet Union was initially not very interested in the newly independent states of South and Southeast Asia. This made it harder for Moscow to affect what was going on in the region up to the death of Stalin. Stalin regarded India and Pakistan as pawns of "Anglo-American imperialism" and their leaders as agents of imperialism (Naseem, 1989, p. 37). Their

independence was largely ignored by the Soviet media, and authoritative Soviet writings described the partition of India as an agreement between the "Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism" that allowed Britain to maintain its influence in the subcontinent. Soviet commentators also condemned India and Pakistan for staying in the Commonwealth, as proof of their continued dependence on Britain, during the Cold War (Callard, 1959; Levi, 1962, p. 212, 214).

The initial leadership of Pakistan also did not build a good relationship with Moscow. Prior to independence, the leaders of Pakistan had little interaction with the Soviet Union and were still under British political and institutional influences. The leadership of Pakistan was largely pro-Western due to their education, ideology, cultural exposure and personal ties with Britain. They felt that the Western countries had more capacity to offer Pakistan economic, scientific and technological aid. Diplomatic relations were established through an exchange of letters on 1 May 1948, and ambassadors arrived in December 1949 and March 1950. In June 1949, Liaquat Ali Khan was invited to visit Moscow, but he declined and visited the United States instead. His remarks on his visit to the USA in May 1950, which highlighted the common ideals of Pakistan and the USA and praised the American people, further heightened the Soviet distrust (Askari, 1993, p. 113).

Nehru, on the other hand, was seen by Moscow as a progressive, leftist leader. But his liberalism, pro-British stance, and Pan-Asianism led to a more critical attitude on the part of the Soviets. Moscow was afraid that Nehru's policies would lead to an Indo-Chinese alliance after the defeat of Japan and the withdrawal of the British. Indian strategic planning was also interpreted by the Soviets as proof of the continued British influence (Dyakov, 1946; Jain, 1978, p. 180). Reports of strategic road construction because of the proximity of Soviet power were interpreted as proof of India's subordination to British political and military interests (Naseem, 1989, p. 18).

Ideological Divergence and Its Implications

The Communist and Islamic worlds are communities of strong believers, both able to produce intense psychological commitment and a missionary spirit. Islamic political thought does not lack democratic elements, but Muslim states have had both liberal and authoritarian political systems. Sometimes, according to Werner Levi, these similarities can mask the basic differences between Islam and Communism. But Levi also said that ideology doesn't always make a difference in foreign policy. States tend to form friendships and rivalries based on national interest, not on the basis of ideology or similarity/dissimilarity (Levi, 1962, p.112).

The foreign-policy vision of Pakistan before independence also reflected the significance of national interest. Firoz Khan Noon said that Pakistan would consider as its friend any power that helped in its independence, be it Hindu India, Britain or Russia (Rajput, 1948, pp. 8-9; Levi, 1962, p. 215). However, those who favour the alarmist view contend that the conflict between Pakistan and the Soviet Union was essentially ideological. They felt that Marxism-Leninism, which was atheistic in nature, was not compatible with a state based on Islamic principles. This argument was backed up by Stalin's criticism of religion-based states. So the ideological gap between the Islamic roots of Pakistan and the Marxist and atheist roots of the Soviet Union was felt to be important (Naseem, 1989, pp. 19).

The other reading highlights the similarities between Islam and Communism, including the focus on social change. In Arif Hussain's opinion, even though there are differences in the

organization, an Iqbalite society may have significant similarities with a communist society from an Iqbalite point of view. He also said that the contact with the West was more historical than ideological and that similarity or difference in ideology could be highlighted based on the situation. In the end, states have a tendency to become closer when they share common interests, despite any ideological differences (Arif Hussain, 1966, pp. 91-93; Naseem, 1989, p. 19).

The Partition of India (1947) and the initial diplomatic contacts

The attitude of the Soviet Union towards South Asia underwent great change around independence, especially when the wartime alliance of the Soviet Union and the Western powers was replaced by the rivalry of the Cold War. International politics was increasingly seen by the Soviet leadership in the light of a conflict between two opposing camps. In September 1947, Andrei Zhadnov drew a line between "imperialistic" and "democratic" camps, and classified newly independent states based on their affiliation with these camps, with India being part of the "imperialistic" camp (Singh, 1983, p. 4; Bhatti, 1996, p. 100).

India first tried to develop ties with Moscow. Nehru sent his sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, as India's first ambassador to Moscow in August 1947. But she was met with a cold Soviet response and was not allowed to visit several Soviet republics. The Soviet leaders still saw India as under the influence of British imperialism and Soviet press condemned Congress leaders for their collaboration with Anglo-American interests. Moscow also did not recognise Gandhi's role and didn't send any condolences after his assassination (Bhatti, 1996, p. 100; Callard, 1959).

The start was even tougher for Pakistan. The Soviet Union saw the division of India as a continuation of Britain's "divide and rule" policy. On 4 July 1947, New Times had suggested that British policy was aimed at sharpening national antagonisms and maintaining a scope for British interference in India's affairs (Burke and Ziring, 1990, pp. 97-98). By the time of partition, Pakistan was the main proponent of the idea and was therefore seen by Moscow as a tool of imperialism.

In contrast to India, where certain intellectuals had an interest in the political and economic ideals of the communists, in Pakistan the ideological leadership was generally critical towards Bolshevism. Soviet-Pakistan relations started sluggishly, though Nehru had been trying to cultivate friendship with Moscow prior to the attainment of independence. Moscow did not immediately recognize Pakistan or send a congratulatory message after its creation. The first formal move was in April 1948 when Foreign Minister Zafarullah Khan suggested exchange of ambassadors (Burke and Ziring, 1990, pp. 101-102). Diplomatic relations were then established and the Ambassador of Pakistan presented his credentials in Moscow in December 1949, while the Soviet Ambassador arrived in Pakistan in March 1950.

Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan's Visit to USA

In 1949, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was invited to visit Moscow, but he opted to visit the United States. The Government of Pakistan never gave a fully satisfactory explanation for this change of plans. One reason was that Pakistan was in dire need of economic and military aid for economic and military development, and the United States was better equipped to offer such aid. However, Pakistan was not originally planning to have exclusive relations with Washington. On his American visit Liaquat Ali Khan stressed again and again that there was a

great potential for mutual benefit for Pakistan in better relations with the Soviet Union, especially in the field of agriculture (Mohammed Ahsen Chaudhri, 1966, p. 492).

Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to the United States, however, did signify an important change in the foreign-policy orientation of Pakistan. The visit was deemed a success, with some misconceptions between Pakistan and the United States being cleared up and new avenues for cooperation being identified. The Korean War (1950-1953) further enhanced the interest of the Americans in Asia and the strategic significance of Pakistan. As a result, public opinion in Pakistan was inclined to improve relations with the United States, though there was a great deal of enthusiasm for the development of ties with the Soviet Union.

Even with this new trend, there were several developments that impacted relations with Moscow. The Soviet Union recognized Israel in May 1948, which led to protests by Pakistani students in Karachi. Moscow also came under criticism for its attitude towards the International Islamic Economic Conference, which led to discontent among the Pakistani organizers. The government was also concerned by reports of communist infiltration in the Muslim League. Pakistan was also not very comfortable with the Soviet demand for a fully staffed office in Peshawar, a strategically important town, close to Khyber Pass and the tribal areas of the NWFP. The growing amount of American economic and military aid led Pakistani leaders to feel that the Soviet Union was incapable of providing the kind and amount of aid needed for Pakistan's development and security. Thus, even before the first Soviet ambassador, Pakistan's initial interest in closer relations with Moscow had noticeably waned (Levi, 1962, p. 215).

In the initial years of Pakistan, the leaders and intellectuals of the country often stressed the ideological underpinning of Pakistan's foreign policy. But this ideological focus was more to account for and justify the creation of Pakistan and its international recognition than being the only factor in determining foreign policy. Liaquat Ali Khan pointed out that Pakistan's new and uncertain international status was not yet understood and that the forces which inspired its development were not yet known (Hameed A. K. Rai, 1981, p. 2). Hence, he further elaborates on the reasons for the creation of Pakistan:

"Pakistan was founded by the indomitable will of a hundred million Muslims who felt that they were a nation too numerous and too distinct to be relegated forever to the unalterable position of a political minority, especially when, in the vast subcontinent which was their homeland, there was enough room for two great nations—the Hindus and the Muslims—to enjoy peace and full sovereignty in their respective dominions. They believed that thus alone would the vast multitude of the followers of Islam be uninhibited in the development of their culture and free to follow their own way of life. Pakistan was founded so that millions of Muslims should be enabled to live according to their opinions and to worship God in freedom, which they sought for themselves; they conceded to others, with the determination to live as peaceful neighbours, when to live as more than neighbours seemed to be more than hazardous. Like some of the earlier founders of your great country, these Muslims, though not Pilgrims, nevertheless embarked upon an undertaking, which, in aim and achievement, represented the triumph of an idea. That idea was the idea of liberty which has had its ardent followers in all climates and all countries. When our time came, its call summoned us too, and we could not hold back. The partition of the

subcontinent into two independent sovereign states did not, nor was it expected to, eliminate or efface minorities. But it brought magnitudes within focusable limits and saved the political architecture of the new Asia from a strain which might well have proved excessive and dangerous" (Hameed A. K. Rai, 1981, pp. 2-3).

But this does not imply that he was unaware of the realist principle of power struggle between nations and states, the sensitivity of security and survival, national interests of the state and external threats. Liaquat, therefore, said, "Our strongest interests, therefore, are: firstly, the integrity of Pakistan... Pakistanis are likely to acquiesce in this that the slightest dent should be made in the territorial integrity of their country. Secondly, our culture... and thirdly, our desire and our dire need is for economic development" (Hameed A. K. Rai, 1981, pp. 7-8). Pakistan was aware of the precarious situation both within and outside and required a powerful ally outside.

Pakistan's Policy of Non-Alignment

The Cold War split the world into two great power blocs, the Soviet Union and the United States. Pakistan wanted to remain non-aligned to both the blocs and wanted to be friendly with both the Communist and non-Communist countries. As a result, in the early years, the relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union were confined and there was not much political and popular contact between the two countries (Chaudhri, 1966, p. 492).

In April 1949, India decided to stay in the Commonwealth and Nehru accepted an invitation to visit the United States, which caused Moscow to re-evaluate its stance on India. The Soviet Union, in turn, invited Liaquat Ali Khan to visit Moscow in June 1949, the first Commonwealth head of government to be invited to the Soviet Union as Nehru was getting ready for his visit to the US (Burke and Ziring, 1990, p. 1990). Liaquat Ali Khan was then invited to Washington by the United States. At first, Pakistan said this would not have any impact on his proposed visit to Moscow, but the Soviet Union eventually ceased to press the invitation. Liaquat's good remarks about the USA resulted in growing Soviet criticism, such as the suspension of trade talks and the cancellation of a visit by Pakistani writers. He was accused of "zealous subservience to Washington" and of preparing Pakistan to serve as a base for anti-Soviet activities (Kapur, 1983, p. 104). Pakistani observers also doubted the Soviet Union's ability to give the material and technical aid which Pakistan badly needed (Burke and Ziring, 1990, p. 100; Sattar, 2007).

The attitude of India in the Korean War slowly altered the attitude of the Soviet Union towards New Delhi. Moscow came to see non-alignment as a positive factor in international politics, especially when Nehru shifted from criticism of North Korean aggression to championing China's interests in the United Nations. This improvement in Soviet-Indian relations was reflected in Stalin's meeting with Indian ambassador Radhakrishnan in 1952 (Bhatti, 1996, p. 104). The Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case of 1951 also had an impact on relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. Liaquat Ali Khan had arrested senior military officers who were accused of plotting to overthrow the government with the help of the USSR and set up a Communist type government (Malik, 1994, p. 9).

The Soviet attitude on Kashmir also shifted. Moscow was relatively quiet in UN debates until the end of 1951, but in January 1952 it was more active and attacked the Western use of the Kashmir issue in the Cold War context. Meanwhile, the American aid to Pakistan and Washington's attitude on Kashmir further worsened the relations between Pakistan and the

Soviet Union. However, Pakistan remained adamant about its foreign policy of friendship with all countries. For several years there was cultural exchange and trade with the Soviet Union, and the Communist commentators depicted Pakistan as a victim of Anglo-American rivalry (Levi, 1962, p. 217). Nehru, on the other hand, led India to non-alignment, which he termed enlightened self-interest. The policy aimed at avoiding bloc politics and enabled India to take a stand on various international issues on their merits (Rizvi, 1974, p. 2). In a speech at Columbia University in 1949, Nehru said:

“...the pursuit of peace, not through alignment with any major power or group of powers, but through an independent approach to each controversial or disputed issue; the liberation of subject peoples; the maintenance of freedom, both national and individual; the elimination of racial discrimination and the elimination of want, disease and ignorance which affect the greater part of the World’s population” (Nehru Archives, 1947).

The Muslim League had not formulated a comprehensive foreign-policy program prior to independence as its main concern was the establishment of Pakistan unlike India. Following independence, however, the leadership of Pakistan voiced its desire for better ties with Muslim countries and for international peace and respect of sovereignty (Rizvi, 1974, p. 2). The fundamental principle of the early foreign policy of Pakistan was enunciated by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who stated that:

“Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, 1949).

The Changing Cold War Environment and Pakistan’s Security Concerns

The beginning of the 1950s witnessed a significant change in the relationship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. In 1953, a number of events led to a shift in the USSR's stance on South Asia from a passive to an active one. Washington's policy of containment of the Communist bloc was reinforced by the election of General Dwight D. Eisenhower in the United States. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles wanted to build a chain of alliances throughout the Middle and Far East to fortify the “soft underbelly” of the non-Communist world (Haqqani, 2013, pp. 1-2, 46, 48).

Pakistan was open to American initiatives because of its own security concerns. Its leadership saw India as the main security threat and felt military and economic aid was necessary for the country's survival and development. In May 1953, Dulles visited the subcontinent, after which there were a number of high-level contacts, which culminated in the signing of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement in May 1954. Pakistan later became a member of the Western security pacts such as SEATO and Baghdad Pact, and an important ally of the Americans in the region (Sharma, 1972; Zia, 1990, p. 155, 189, 244; Bhatti, 1996, p. 105).

Several factors interwoven with each other drove Pakistan to take steps towards the United States. These comprised the quest for political and diplomatic assistance on Kashmir, the

requirement of military supplies, economic problems and the lack of a viable Pan-Islamic security structure. By the end of 1952, Pakistan was in a critical economic situation, with high inflation rates, unemployment, and public discontent. In such a situation, U.S. economic and military aid seemed more and more vital to the nation's security and development. So, Pakistan's alliance policy was not only ideology but a calculation of national interest as well. Its aims were survival, economic development, military security, international recognition and its cause on Kashmir. Such factors were increasingly hard to distinguish from the growing Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Pakistan's accession to Western Alliances and Soviet response

Moscow was very apprehensive of Pakistan's move towards the Western security system. The Soviet reaction took several forms. First, Moscow repeatedly protested in diplomatic circles against the military cooperation between Pakistan and the U.S. In November 1953, the Soviet Union sent a series of protest notes requesting clarification of Pakistani-American negotiations concerning military cooperation and possible American air bases in Pakistan. Pakistan dismissed the Soviet worries and said it had no plans to allow foreign air bases on its soil (Sattar, 2007; Soherwordi, 2024).

In March 1954, another Soviet protest was raised, which condemned the Pakistani-American aid pact as an unfriendly act. Pakistan again called the protest "unjustified. The Pakistan-Turkey agreement of April 2, 1954, which was later to be linked with the Baghdad Pact, and the creation of SEATO, were met with similar Soviet objections. Moscow saw these as an extension of Western strategic influence into Asia and as threats to Soviet security. Second, the Soviet Union improved its ties with Afghanistan. Soviet experts helped Afghanistan with economic and infrastructural projects, which were of strategic importance to Moscow. The relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan worsened, especially regarding Pakhtunistan. The tension at the border escalated, and Pakistan eventually closed its border, though this had repercussions for Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union. In December 1955, Bulganin and Khrushchev visited Kabul, during which the Soviet leadership gave Afghanistan a great deal of help and affirmed its stance on Pakhtunistan.

Third, Moscow has changed its stance on Kashmir. The Soviet Union had until 1953 been largely indecisive on the issue in the United Nations and had often abstained from votes on the issue. However, later on Moscow began to lean more and more towards India's point of view and during Bulganin and Khrushchev's visit to India in 1955, Moscow voiced solidarity with New Delhi on Kashmir and Goa. These developments proved to Pakistan that its pro-Western stance had repercussions on its relations with Moscow. Meanwhile, Soviet policy implied that Pakistan's security relations could not be divorced from the overall Cold War struggle.

The Politics of Non-Alignment and Soviet Reorientation toward South Asia

Stalin's death in 1953 ushered in a new leadership in the Soviet Union and a new attitude toward the newly independent states of Asia and Africa. India seemed to be an important potential partner for Moscow due to its policy of non-alignment and its criticism of Western policies. In August 1953, Prime Minister Malenkov commended India's "significant contribution" towards the termination of the Korean War and hoped that "relations between India and the USSR will grow stronger and develop in the spirit of friendly cooperation" (Kadwai, 1985, p. 106). By 1954, India had become an important focus of Soviet diplomacy

among non-Communist countries. Moscow was actively promoting India's presence in international bodies such as the UN Disarmament Commission and the Commission on Indo-China. In India, however, Pakistan's defense pact with the U.S. was seen with some concern. Nehru called it "a development of the greatest concern" because it "would bring the Cold War nearer and disturb the area of peace" (Bhatty, 1996, p. 106).

The relations between the Soviet Union and India thus grew more cordial. The Soviet media was praising the Nehru government, and India was being portrayed as a force for peace in Asia. Diplomatic and cultural contacts grew, and Moscow provided aid for the Second Five Year Plan of India. Discussions were started in September 1954 for the establishment of a big steel plant at Bhilai, and an agreement was reached in February 1955 (Bhatty, 1996; Brands, 1990). The expansion of the Soviet-Indian relationship was particularly important for Pakistan as it happened at the same time as Pakistan's closer ties with the United States. In November 1955, Khrushchev and Bulganin visited India, and Moscow expressed strong support for Indian stand on Kashmir and stressed the importance of unity, independence, integrity, and non-alignment of India. The Soviet leaders said that the question of Kashmir as one of the states of the Republic of India had been decided by the people of Kashmir when they decided to join the Indian Union and the Soviet Union accepted their decision (Levi, 1962, p. 212). Military alliances were also condemned by the Soviet leadership as tools that prolonged the Cold War and raised international tension. On the way back, Khrushchev and Bulganin stopped in Afghanistan where they once more endorsed Kabul's position on the Pakhtunistan issue. Khrushchev and Bulganin visited Afghanistan and again supported Kabul on the Pakhtunistan question (Bhatty, 1996, p. 107).

American Containment and Pakistan's Strategic Alignment

The United States was seeing the Soviet Union and Communist China as the same threat. Washington wanted to create a strategic cordon around the Communist powers by forming alliances with Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles expressed this attitude when he said: "In our own interest you have to pay close attention to what is going on in the rest of the world, and we need to have friends and allies. The reason is that we have enemies, powerful enemies, who are plotting our destruction. These are the Russian Communists and their allies in other countries, who already number 800,000,000 people" (Hussain, 1987, p. 72-72).

Pakistan's security needs coincided with these American strategic objectives. American aid seemed especially appealing since Pakistan was in need of military hardware, economic aid, and international diplomatic support. American aid also helped to confirm Pakistanis' impression that Washington was more useful than Moscow in providing immediate practical benefits. The relationship, however, made Pakistan's avowed policy of friendship with all nations more complicated. The Pakistani government continued to insist that it was not giving up its independent foreign policy, and its increased involvement in the Western security arrangements increasingly influenced Soviet perceptions of Pakistan. Cultural contacts and trade between Pakistan and the Soviet Union continued for several years. But the communist commentators painted a picture of Pakistan as a victim of Anglo-American rivalry and suggested that the leaders of Pakistan were playing with the Western powers for their own interests (Levi, 1962, p. 216). Soviet criticism grew more and more harsh as Pakistan's role in the containment efforts of the West increased.

Economic Dependence and the Logic of Alliance Politics

The military dimension is not the sole factor in comprehending Pakistan's alliance policy. Economic weakness was also a factor. From 1951 onwards, Pakistan was given economic aid by the USA in the form of various agreements. Following the initial agreement in February 1951, additional agreements were made in February 1952, March 1953 and December 1953. Under these arrangements, Pakistan was given considerable financial aid, US \$500,000 under the first agreement, US \$10 million under the second, and by 1953, a total of US \$34.2 million had been provided under the subsequent agreements (Naseem, 1989, pp. 82-23).

There were also restrictions in these agreements. Pakistan was not allowed to take technical assistance from any other country or international organization without the consent of America. It was also dissuaded from engaging in trade with countries designated by Washington, especially the Soviet Union and countries in Eastern Europe. Thus, economic aid was closely linked with the foreign-policy orientation of Pakistan. Saddiqui claims that Pakistan was very vulnerable to outside influence due to its internal weaknesses. In 1953-55, Pakistan was beset by domestic turmoil, economic problems, weak political structures, and significant foreign-policy goals of survival, identity, development, international status and Kashmir. These situations allowed for a greater possibility of external intervention and alliance dependence (Saddiqui, 1981, pp. 25-26).

In this view, Pakistan's leadership saw an alliance with the United States as better than dealing with its security challenges on its own. Western alliance system provided military and economic aid to Pakistan and also enhanced its international importance. Pakistan thus joined a group of countries that were on the fringes of the Soviet Union and China. Another reason for the alliance system was the domestic political weakness of several developing states, as Saddiqui argues. Governments with low levels of legitimacy looked for outside assistance to bolster their positions. In Pakistan, the alliance system thus had a dual role to play in national security and for the ruling political and military elite (Saddiqui, 1981, p. 25).

The Search for International Identity and Strategic Relevance of Pakistan

Alliance diplomacy also had an impact on the international image of Pakistan. According to Saddiqui, states try to create unique images in international society, but these images are often influenced by the perceptions and propaganda of other states. By the mid-1950s, India had gained an international reputation for non-alignment, moral rectitude and anti-imperialism, while Pakistan was increasingly seen as a reactionary pro-Western country (Saddiqui, 1981; Ram, 1982; McMahon, 1994).

To challenge India for influence in the Muslim world and the Middle East, Pakistan tried to highlight its Islamic identity. But with India's greater international stature and Nehru's role as the leader of the non-aligned movement, it was hard for Pakistan to match its influence. Nevertheless, Pakistan's alliance policy proved to be successful in enhancing its strategic importance. The country was important to the Western and Soviet calculations of foreign policy. Although Moscow's reaction was hostile, Pakistan was no longer treated with indifference. Membership of SEATO and CENTO also gave Pakistan an international identity other than the non-aligned one of India (McMahon, 1994).

Alliance diplomacy was used for two purposes in this sense. It offered Pakistan security, economic resources and at the same time enhanced its international profile. Pakistan was

now closely linked to the United States and its allies, and the Soviet Union came to view Pakistan as a crucial part of the Western strategy in Asia.

The Need for Relations with Both Blocs under Ayub Khan

Although Pakistan was close to the USA, its leadership realized the need to keep relations with the Soviet Union and China due to geographical and economic factors. This strategic dilemma was evident in Ayub Khan's observations. He felt that Pakistan had to have relations with Moscow due to geographical realities, economic and military considerations. Meanwhile, he saw American help as essential.

"For economic and other reasons we cannot afford to turn our faces away from USA," said Ayub Khan, "Emotional approach has no answer. Cold War is receding; our value not so much as it used to be. The reasons why we are not getting out of SEATO and CENTO. We shall be quite happy if we are told to leave. Even France is not walking out of SEATO." His views on India and Kashmir also reflected the security calculations of Pakistan's foreign policy: "I don't see any chances of settlement on Kashmir. A weak government in India with powerful armed force is a source of danger. We have to live much more cautiously. Under such a situation, what do we do?" Keep leaning against the enemy and await our chance. Wisdom and patience is the key to the problem" (Khan, 2007, p. 87). Even in the pro-Western leadership of Pakistan, it was realized that it was not strategically desirable to maintain permanent enmity with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Economic Diplomacy and Its Support for India.

While criticizing Pakistan's Western alignment, the Soviet Union sought to make non-alignment economically attractive to India. Industrial and trade cooperation was among the most obvious forms of Soviet assistance. The Bhilai steel project was a sign of Moscow's dedication to Indian economic development. The second Indo-Soviet trade agreement was signed in 1958, which was a major step towards expanding economic ties. The payments were to be made in Indian rupees, and the Soviet aid was to be remunerated by Indian exports. As a result, Indian exports to the Soviet Union grew significantly in the period 1960-65. Political and economic support from the Soviet Union led to a growing cordiality in Indo-Soviet relations. India was strongly critical of Anglo-French intervention against Egypt in 1956, but was more cautious on the issue of Soviet intervention in Hungary. In late 1957, Moscow also backed India on Kashmir by threatening to veto the Jarring Commission report, thus blocking further discussion. Meanwhile, the Soviet leadership also made several overtures to improve relations with Pakistan if Islamabad cut back on its reliance on Western alliances. Moscow realised that Pakistan's alignment had been dictated by its economic and military requirements and its demand for support on Kashmir.

Soviet Policy after Stalin and the Principle of Peaceful Coexistence

Stalin's death was a significant change in Soviet foreign policy. The new leadership took a more flexible attitude towards newly independent states in Asia and Africa. By 1955, the Soviet Union had come to see the importance of the developing world in the diplomatic arena. Relaxation of tensions after the Austrian Peace Treaty and the Bandung Conference prompted Moscow to rethink its ties with the newly independent countries.

The national bourgeoisie in the former colonies was further redefined in the twentieth Party Congress in 1956, in a manner that was more Stalinist. Nikita Khrushchev stressed the role of uncommitted states in international politics. The Congress decided to accept peaceful

coexistence as one of the basic principles of Soviet foreign policy. The doctrine maintained that the conflict between socialism and capitalism could be peaceful, and that international politics were still a field of political and ideological struggle, rather than a field of destructive global war. The new Soviet attitude opened up new possibilities for relations with non-Communist and not necessarily pro-Western countries. India was a key example of this policy, and Pakistan was more problematic, as it was a member of the Western alliances.

Pakistan's Western Alignment and Continuing Soviet Suspicion

The Soviet Union remained suspicious of Pakistan's military ties. Moscow was suspicious of Pakistan's backing of Western policies on the Suez Canal and its criticism of Soviet action in Hungary. The Soviet Union vetoed the first resolution in Security Council proceedings in February 1957, one that included the use of a UN force for the demilitarization of Kashmir.

Pakistan's security ties with the United States continued to worry the Soviets about the potential use of Pakistani territory for military operations against the Soviet Union. In April 1958, Moscow accused Pakistan of permitting the establishment of launching sites for guided missiles and rockets and military bases near Soviet territory. Pakistan has denied the allegations and said it was not aggressive in its plans (Ram, 1982: Brands, 1990).

The Soviet Union reiterated its charges and threatened that the Pakistani government would be held responsible for the consequences of turning the Pakistani territory into a foreign military base in its Aide-Mémoire dated 18 February 1959. Pakistan replied by repudiating the menacing character of the Soviet communication and reaffirmed that it was not interested in aggression against any other country nor would it permit its territory to be used for aggressive purposes. Things got even worse after the bilateral Defense Agreement between the U.S. and Pakistan was signed in March 1959. Soviet criticism grew, especially when a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft based in Peshawar was shot down. The incident strengthened the Russians' conviction that the territory of Pakistan could be utilized for the intelligence and military activities of the Americans against the Soviet Union.

Security Needs and the Deterioration of Pakistan-Soviet Relations

Domestic insecurity, economic dependence, regional rivalry and Cold War competition were the factors that led to the deterioration of Pakistan-Soviet relations during the 1950s. Pakistan's leaders wanted security from India, economic aid for development, military modernization and diplomatic support on Kashmir. The United States had the means and was ready to give significant support, and Washington also saw Pakistan as strategically important for containing the spread of Communism. Thus, Pakistan's involvement in SEATO and the Baghdad Pact was a result of its national security considerations as well as the overall strategic plans of the United States. But these alliances raised high Soviet suspicions. Moscow reacted by diplomatic protests, closer relations with Afghanistan, greater support for India, and a more positive attitude toward India on Kashmir (Chaudhry, 1966, p. 496).

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union began to change its overall foreign policy following Stalin's death. It had a more flexible attitude towards the developing world with its policy of non-alignment, economic cooperation with India, and the doctrine of peaceful coexistence. Pakistan continued to be a major focus of Soviet diplomacy because it was strategically vital due to its orientation towards the West. The leadership of Pakistan was cognizant of this problem. In spite of maintaining close military and economic ties with the United States, personalities like Ayub Khan also felt that relations with the Soviet Union could not be

neglected due to geographical, economic and strategic considerations. The issue was thus not merely one of ideological differences but of reconciling Pakistan's immediate security and development needs with the implications of alliance diplomacy. By the end of the 1950s, Pakistan was more important internationally due to its western alliance, but this increased the Soviet distrust. The resulting pattern influenced the course of the future relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union: Pakistan remained heavily reliant on Western aid and increasingly looked towards a more flexible diplomacy and better relations with Moscow and the other great powers (Papotia, 1988, p. 74).

The U-2 Incident and the Strain in Pakistan-Soviet Relations

During the early years of Ayub Khan's rule, Pakistan received economic and military aid from the Americans, which helped to sustain its pro-Western policy toward the Soviet Union. Pakistan also permitted the Americans to use air bases on its soil, through which the U.S. intelligence gathered information on Soviet military movements. It boosted Pakistan's strategic value to the United States while at the same time putting it at risk of Soviet counterattack. The U-2 incident of May 1960 brought the relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union to a critical stage. One American reconnaissance aircraft was launched from Peshawar, flew into Soviet airspace, and was downed by a Soviet missile. The pilot was able to parachute from the plane and lived, but was later found guilty of espionage by the military division of the Soviet Supreme Court. The incident caused great Soviet anger not only against the USA but also against Pakistan, from where the aircraft had come. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was said to have penciled Peshawar as a likely place for retaliation on his strategic map. On 13 May 1960, the Soviet government formally protested to Pakistan. The incident greatly raised the security concerns of Pakistan. The attitude of Moscow towards Kashmir was also not in favour of Pakistan. At this time, the Soviet Union blocked Security Council resolutions on Kashmir, such as proposals for a plebiscite and for India and Pakistan to settle the dispute. The actions showed the close interaction which had grown between Moscow and New Delhi on the Kashmir question. While Ayub Khan publicly dismissed the Soviet threats with assurance, the Pakistani government was growing more aware of the gravity of the situation. During his stay in London, Ayub Khan said that the threat from the Russians was nothing new and Pakistan had no fear of it. However, the incident prompted Pakistani decision makers to rethink the strategic risks of hosting American aircraft in Pakistan. Pakistan's vulnerability was exposed in case of a direct confrontation between the superpowers, because of the possibility of Soviet retaliation.

The Soviet warning thus brought in a note of realism in Pakistan's foreign policy calculations. Pakistani leaders realized that, due to its geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, Pakistan could be a major target of Soviet military power in a global conflict, unlike the United States. So Pakistan wanted to put more restrictions on the use of its airfields. Islamabad told Washington that, in the future, it would allow the use of Pakistani airfields by American aircraft only after the next stop had been told to Islamabad. The U-2 incident thus brought to light the security price of Pakistan's close military ties with the United States and led to a more cautious attitude toward the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

The years 1947-1960 marked a very formative period in the relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union, characterized by diplomatic insecurity, security rivalry, ideology and Cold

War alliance politics. Post-independence, Pakistan had to deal with the problems of legitimacy, international recognition, economic weakness and territorial security. The Soviet criticism of the Pakistan Movement and its Islamic ideology had a negative impact on Soviet perceptions of Pakistan, and Pakistan's leadership continued to be wary of the Soviet Union due to its early policies and ideological differences.

Pakistan tried to keep its foreign policy somewhat independent and not get entangled in either of the Cold War camps until 1953. But the increasing security worries, especially the perceived threat from India, restricted the Commonwealth support on Kashmir, the failure of Pan-Islamic cooperation, and Pakistan's worsening economic situation paved the way for closer ties with the United States. Pakistan later became a member of SEATO and CENTO and became a part of the Western security system.

These alliances had a profound impact on the relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. Pakistan's military ties with the West were a strategic threat to Moscow, who reacted by diplomatic protests, supporting Afghanistan on the Pakhtunistan question, and by increasingly adopting a pro-India stance on Kashmir in the United Nations. The U-2 incident of 1960 further demonstrated Pakistan's vulnerability arising from its strategic cooperation with the United States and highlighted the geographical proximity of Soviet power. In this way, Pakistan-Soviet relations had moved from restricted diplomatic contacts to one that was highly affected by Cold War rivalry by 1960. Alliance politics were the source of economic, military and diplomatic assistance for Pakistan while also causing considerable Soviet concerns. More generally, the era illustrated how the security and economic vulnerabilities of the newly independent states could affect their foreign-policy decisions and establish patterns of dependence on major powers.

References

- Ayub Khan, M. (2007). *Diaries of Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, 1966–1972* (C. Baxter, Ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Bhatty, M. A. (1996). *Great powers and South Asia: Post-Cold War trends*. Institute of Regional Studies.
- Brands, W. J. (1990). *India and Pakistan: The first fifty years*. Cambridge University Press.
- Burke, S. M., & Ziring, L. (1990). *Pakistan's foreign policy: An historical analysis* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Callard, K. B. (1959). *Pakistan's foreign policy: An interpretation*. Oxford University Press.
- Chaudhri, M. A. (1966). Pakistan's relations with the Soviet Union. *Asian Survey*, 6(9), 492–496.
- Chopra, S. (1983). *Perspective on Pakistan's foreign policy*. Guru Nanak Dev University Press.
- Dyakov, A. (1946). Contemporary India. *Bolshevik*. In R. K. Jain (Ed.), *Soviet South Asian relations, 1947–1978* (Vol. 2). Radiant Publishers.
- Haqqani, H. (2013). *Magnificent delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an epic history of misunderstanding*. PublicAffairs.
- Hussain, A. (1966). *Pakistan: Its ideology and foreign policy*. Frank Cass & Co.
- Hussain, S. R. (1987). Pakistan's relations with the Soviet Union, 1947–87. *Strategic Studies*, 10(3), 72–74.

- Jain, R. K. (Ed.). (1978). *Soviet South Asian relations, 1947–1978* (Vols. 1–2). Radiant Publishers.
- Kadwai, M. S. (1985). *Indo-Soviet relations*. Rima Publishing House.
- Kapur, K. D. (1983). *Soviet strategy in South Asia*. Young Asian Publications.
- Khan, L. A. (1981). The aims of a new nation. In H. A. K. Rai (Ed.), *Readings in Pakistan's foreign policy*. Aziz Publishers.
- Levi, W. (1962). Pakistan, the Soviet Union and China. *Pacific Affairs*, 35(3), 211–222.
- Malik, H. (1994). *Soviet-Pakistan relations and post-Soviet dynamics, 1947–92*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- McMahon, R. J. (1994). *The Cold War on the periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan*. Columbia University Press.
- Naseem, A. (1989). *Pak-Soviet relations, 1947–65*. Progressive Publishers.
- Popatia, M. A. (1988). *Pakistan's relations with Soviet Union*. Pakistan Studies Center.
- Rai, H. A. K. (Ed.). (1981). *Readings in Pakistan's foreign policy*. Aziz Publishers.
- Rajput, A. B. (1948). *The Muslim League yesterday and today*. [Publisher details unavailable].
- Ram, R. (1983). *Soviet policy towards Pakistan*. S. Chand.
- Ray, H. (1985). *How Moscow sees Kashmir*. Jaico Publishing House.
- Rizvi, H. A. (1974). *The Soviet Union and Indo-Pakistan subcontinent*. Progressive Publishers.
- Saddiqui, K. (1981). Pakistan's external environment. In H. A. K. Rai (Ed.), *Readings in Pakistan's foreign policy* (pp. 25–26). Aziz Publishers.
- Sattar, A. (2007). *Pakistan's foreign policy, 1947–2005: A concise history*. Oxford University Press.
- Sharma, P. K. (1970). *India, Pakistan, China and contemporary world*. National Publishing House.
- Singh, S. N. (1983). *The Yogi and the Bear: The story of Indo-Soviet relations*. Allied Publishers.
- Soherwordi, S. H. S. (2024). *A divergent foreign policy alliance: The US towards military-ruled Pakistan (1947–65)*. Peter Lang.
- Zhukov, E. (1947). Situation in India. *World Economy and World Politics*, (23). In R. K. Jain (Ed.), *Soviet South Asian relations, 1947–1978* (Vol. 1). Radiant Publishers.