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'WHAT DO WE GET FROM PAKISTAN?' MAJOR SHIFTS IN U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS 1947-1982

Russell Williams

Clemson University, russelw@clemson.edu

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"WHAT DO WE GET FROM PAKISTAN?"
MAJOR SHIFTS IN U.S.-PAKISTAN
RELATIONS, 1947-1982

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
Russell Ryan Williams
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Accepted by:
Dr. Edwin Möise, Committee Chair
Dr. Alan Grubb
Dr. Michael Silvestri

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines two crucial periods in the history of U.S.-Pakistan relations and how American policy makers' strategic thinking about Pakistan shaped the course of relations. Following the Korean War and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States invested heavily in the military forces of Pakistan. During both periods, it was widely held that the Soviet Union endeavored to threaten the Middle East and gain an outlet onto Indian Ocean. American planners believed that because of Pakistan's strategic location, it would be essential to preventing Soviet expansion in the region. In many ways, U.S. thinking in both periods closely resembled British thinking about South and Central Asia during the 19th and early 20th century. It was believed that Tsarist Russia sought to threaten British India as well as acquire warm-water ports on the Indian Ocean. Dubbed "The Great Game," this interpretation of Russia and South Asia and its impact on American thinking in the region will also be discussed.

This history of U.S.-Pakistan relations focuses primarily on the perspective of U.S. policy makers and thus most of the research is based on official documents of the U.S. Department of State and other government agencies. Much of this research was completed at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland and the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta, Georgia.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Monica. Her support and sacrifice made this endeavor successful.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincerest thanks go to Dr. Edwin Möise whose guidance, patience, and excellence as a teacher made this thesis possible. I would also like to thank Dr. Alan Grubb, who was always a source of encouragement and an insightful and tireless reader. I am also indebted to Dr. Michael Silvestri whose course in Spring 2006 inspired the focus of this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Steven Marks. Working for him these last two years has been a pleasure. I would also like to thank my in-laws Ron and Sybil Houser and my parents Monk and Donna Williams for their encouragement and generous financial support. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. David Yelton of Gardner-Webb University's History Department who, along with my dad, inspired me to pursue this degree.

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INTRODUCTION

From the birth of Pakistan in 1947, the relationship between the United States and Pakistan has been governed almost entirely by U.S. security interests. For most of the decades after WWII, the primary security interest of the United States was in preventing the expansion of Soviet spheres of influence throughout the globe. When American planners believed that it was in the best interests of the U.S. to project its military and political influence through Pakistan to the supposed detriment of Soviet interests, the relationship was a close one. But, when Pakistan did not appear to be useful to this end, the relationship ranged from effectively non-existent to hostile.

Beginning in 1954, Dwight Eisenhower transformed Pakistan into the base of U.S. influence in South Asia, and to a lesser extent, the Middle East. Pakistan was to become a regional military force heavily subsidized with U.S. dollars. However, less than 10 years later, John Kennedy considered allowing Pakistan to drift from U.S. orbit and asked, "What do we get from Pakistan? In return for the protection of our alliance and our assistance what do they do for us?"¹ Kennedy had long favored a South Asia policy of strengthening India instead. Given the crushing defeat China dealt India in the fall of 1962, and the expectation that China would try to finish the job, Kennedy no doubt believed that improving relations with the larger and more prosperous nation of India was well worth the

¹ "Memorandum of Conversation, December 20, 1962" *FRUS, 1961-1963, Volume XIX*, pg. 455-456

loss of Pakistan. During the Nixon administration the U.S. once again developed close relations with Pakistan. Though this period was not marked by any formal agreement between the governments, U.S. policy was to “tilt” toward Pakistan. This improvement in relations would, in part, facilitate the opening of formal relations between the U.S. and China this “tilt” would not prevent Pakistan from being humiliated in a war with India in 1971 nor would it prevent East Pakistan from becoming the independent state of Bangladesh. Throughout the 1970’s U.S.-Pakistan relations deteriorated and reached their nadir following the destruction of the American Embassy in Pakistan in November of 1979. However, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December, relations between the U.S. and Pakistan improved dramatically. The United States took a renewed interest in Pakistan’s security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and once again Pakistan became a major recipient of U.S. military aid. At the beginning of the present decade Pakistan went from being perceived by many American policy makers as a reckless incipient nuclear power, to an invaluable ally in the War on Terror following September 11, 2001. In short, the history of U.S.-Pakistani relations has been marked by rapid swings. Depending on the situation, the U.S. has ignored, lauded, condemned, or courted Pakistan. How does one explain this history and what can it tell us about future relations with Pakistan?

Though this thesis will focus primarily on America’s relations with Pakistan, in many ways, U.S. decisions to arm Pakistan were the extension of years of speculation on the strategic importance of northwestern India. Since the late 19th century, when many Britons were convinced that the Russian Empire

threatened British interests in Central and South Asia, geopolitical thinkers speculated on the best means of regional defense for India and later of the Indian Ocean littoral. Most agreed that firm control of Northwestern India was essential to defending India and limiting Russian expansion. In the 1940's, men like Olaf Caroe and K.M. Panikkar wrote along similar lines with the major difference being that they added to the debate the implications of an independent South Asia, and at least in Caroe's case, Partition as well. Though he believed that Partition had weakened the defensive capabilities of India, he concluded that a strong Pakistani military could protect the Subcontinent, as well as the Persian Gulf, from Soviet expansion.

Despite Caroe's advice, following the division of British India into Pakistan and India, the United States believed its interests would be better served by a strong India. Pakistan was an afterthought. This began to change following the outbreak of the Korean War. To begin with, American officials became convinced that the Soviet Union had initiated the hostilities and the U.S. should thus prepare for Soviet incursions elsewhere. Many officials believed that the Persian Gulf and South Asia were two regions vulnerable to Soviet attack. While India would have been a natural choice for the defense of the Gulf and the Subcontinent, American officials found India's commitment to non-alignment frustrating. In addition, Pakistani officials actively promoted their country as staunchly anti-communist and more than willing to accept U.S. military aid. Coupled with the belief of some U.S. military and diplomatic officials that Pakistan possessed a unique geographic importance and potential as a regional

military force, Pakistan became the focus of U.S. policy in South Asia. In addition to ideas concerning Pakistan specifically, a third factor was a U.S. plan to contain Soviet expansion by creating a chain of U.S.-armed allies along the southern border of the Soviet Union. Combined, these factors led to a formal alliance between the U.S. and Pakistan in 1954.

Following the deterioration of the alliance in the 1960's and the brief warming of relations during the Nixon administration, Pakistan remained on the periphery of U.S. strategic interests. In fact, for much of the Carter administration, Pakistan was a source of a frustration. The United States was dismayed by both the instability of Pakistan's government and its efforts to build a nuclear weapon. In November of 1979, in the midst of series of setbacks for the U.S. in the Muslim world, the American Embassy in Pakistan was completely destroyed by an angry mob and two U.S. servicemen were killed. Many American officials were overwhelmed by the response of the Pakistani government and relations were perhaps at an all-time low.

The situation would change dramatically in a little over a month. On Christmas Eve 1979 the Soviet Union conducted a large-scale invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan's northern neighbor. Overnight, Pakistan became a chief concern of U.S. policy makers, though there was debate about what exactly the Soviets wanted. Some claimed that the invasion was a Soviet move to threaten the Persian Gulf and much of the world's oil supply while others claimed that it was part of a historic Russian effort to obtain access to warm water ports on the Indian Ocean. President Carter, speaking on national television, suggested it was a

combination of both. A fourth, much less prominent explanation held that the Soviets were concerned that Afghanistan would destabilize the mostly Muslim states in Soviet Central Asia and the invasion was an attempt to rein in Afghanistan.

Ideas concerning Pakistan and the U.S. response also varied. Some claimed that Pakistan needed U.S. arms to prevent further Soviet expansion. Others claimed Pakistan would “acquiesce” to Soviet pressure and somehow become a Soviet satellite without firm U.S. support. A third, and again, much less prominent line of reasoning held that the U.S. should support Pakistan in order to funnel U.S. aid to the Afghan insurgents. By late 1982 the United States would spend \$600 million a year on military and economic aid to Pakistan. Only Israel, Egypt, and Turkey received more assistance.²

While the situations precipitating the U.S. decisions were very different, the logic behind them was similar. In both the mid-1950’s and the early 1980’s, U.S. military planners believed that Pakistan’s geographic location merited military aid far out of proportion to its overall political and economic importance. This thesis seeks to explore the logic behind these decisions in greater detail and to determine to what extent the U.S. received a return on its investment in Pakistan.

This study begins with a brief look at the history of strategic thinking about South Asia that began in the late-19th century and continued to be a topic of debate through the independence of India and Partition. There follows a chapter

² Dennis Kux. *The United States and Pakistan: Disenchanted Allies, 1947-2000*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 266

examining the early history of U.S.-Pakistani relations that culminated in the alliance of 1954. This chapter focuses primarily on official documents and publications of the U.S. government, as well as articles on the subject in the American media. A third chapter examines the alliance of the 1980's. It will also rely primarily on government sources though it should be noted that many relevant documents are not yet declassified. The concluding chapter will look at the periods together, discuss the similarities and differences between these two episodes, and attempt to place these periods into a larger, historical context.

CHAPTER 1

The Great Game

The strategic value accorded Pakistan is almost entirely because of its geographic location. Pakistan has been considered valuable not only to defending the Indian Subcontinent but also to controlling the Indian Ocean and defending the Persian Gulf. In the first two cases, one possible source of influence may be the so-called “Great Game” between the British and Russian empires. In the most popular terms, the British and Russians saw themselves as rival, global powers and many Britons were convinced that Tsarist Russia desired both a warm water port on the Indian Ocean and a means to threaten British India. Several historians claim that an invasion of India was actually attempted by Russian Tsar Paul I in 1801. According to Peter Hopkirk’s account, a force of more than 20,000 Cossacks left the city of Orenburg in February of 1801. Apparently, this quixotic and half-hearted adventure got as far as the Aral Sea, roughly a thousand miles short of the Khyber Pass, and after Paul was murdered Alexander I recalled the troops.³ Any long-term plans would have required expanding Russian influence into Central Asia, traversing the Western Himalayas in present-day Afghanistan, and gaining the cooperation of the tribes who controlled the mountains. These things would have been difficult in and of themselves but certain Britons believed that following this, the Russians would attempt to invade or at least threaten

³ Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, (New York: Kodansha International, 1990) 26-30 and J.A. Naik, *Soviet Policy Towards India, from Stalin to Brezhnev*, (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1970) 3-4 Though several historians believe the invasion was actually attempted, the story may be apocryphal. There is not clear evidence one way or the other.

British India by developing naval bases from which to mount major military operations. Despite the manifold reasons why the Russian empire would not have pursued such ends, it is believed that the British sought to gain the allegiance of the tribes who inhabited the regions northwest of India and, with their help, short-circuit Russian plans. Apparently, a contest developed between small numbers of Russian and British agents in the mountains of what is now Afghanistan. This version of the Great Game placed a heavy emphasis on far-reaching intrigues, disguises, and dramatic showdowns. The classic portrayal of these operations is found in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901). However interesting the possibility of such intrigue may be, it is doubtful that the Great Game unfolded in such dramatic fashion. In fact, the entire concept itself may have greater root in the British imagination than in the rugged passes of the Hindu Kush. Naik cites several British historians who claim that the Tsarist government never took military operations against India seriously.⁴ Gerald Morgan's "Myth and Reality in the Great Game" approached the subject by examining various departments of the Raj to determine if there ever existed a British intelligence network in Central Asia. Morgan insisted that evidence of such a network does not exist. At best, efforts to obtain information on Russian moves in Central Asia were rare, ad hoc adventures. At worst, intrigues resembling the adventures in *Kim* were baseless rumors and Morgan claims such rumors "were always common currency in Central Asia and they applied as much to Russia as to Britain."⁵

⁴ Naik, 5-6.

⁵ Gerald Morgan, "Myth and Reality in the Great Game," *Asian Affairs*, vol. 60, (February 1973) 64.

Malcolm Yapp's lecture, "The Legend of the Great Game" offers additional evidence that the popular understanding of Anglo-Russian relations over Central Asia in the 19th century is seriously flawed. Yapp points out that Britons had used the term "The Great Game" in the late 1800's to describe several different things in relation to its interests in Asia.⁶ In addition, the meaning of "The Great Game" that is popular now does not reflect the real concerns of the British in relation to India in the 19th century. Yapp believes that the primary concern of British authorities in India was control of the indigenous population, not preventing a Russian invasion. But however spurious the assumptions regarding the Anglo-Russian rivalry of the 19th and early 20th centuries, they are no less compelling. According to Yapp, "reading the history of the British Empire in India and the Middle East one is struck by both the prominence and the unreality of strategic debates." And the prominence of the debates serves to obscure the real challenge the British faced in India which was their internal control, not the external threats from the far side of the Himalayas.⁷ While the situation of the U.S. in the South Asia during the Cold War would be quite different, it will be shown that the U.S. also concerned itself more with the threat of external Soviet influence and/or action in the region than with the internal challenges to the newly independent nations, particularly in the case of Pakistan.

As mentioned earlier, many discussions of the Great Game assume that, in addition to threatening India through overland operations, Tsarist Russia coveted

⁶ Yapp, Malcolm. "The Legend of the Great Game," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, no. 111, 2001, 179-198

⁷ Ibid.

ports on the Indian Ocean. In some ways the latter fear would become part of a separate strain of Anglo-American Russo-phobia relating to warm-water ports in general. William Green of Boston University and the U.S. Naval Reserves claims that the Russian desire for warm-water ports is a geopolitical myth. As far as South Asia is concerned, the myth apparently has its origins in both the real expansions of Russian economic and political influence in Central Asia during the late 19th century and the British concerns with instability in India. Green, like Yapp, believes that the British misplaced their concerns, focusing on the potential threat of Russia and ignoring the real threat of Indian uprisings. Also contributing to the life of this myth was the sensational forgery titled “The Testament of Peter the Great.” The testament is a list of precepts that would supposedly lead to Russian world domination. It includes, among other things, a command to “progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. He who can gain possession of these points is the real ruler of the world... and force our way into India which is the treasure house of the world; once there, we can dispense with English gold.” First appearing around the time of Napoleon and most likely a piece of French propaganda, it was found useful by British journalists in the late-19th century, the Nazis, and Western journalists in the 1980’s to explain Russian foreign policy.

Even though most writers acknowledged that the document was a forgery, they usually insisted that Russian policies were still consistent with the basic ideas. Green believes that the document influenced general and geopolitical strategist Karl Haushoffer in the 1920’s at the University of Munich. Haushoffer

developed several maps that portrayed the “natural” geopolitical boundaries of the world in which the Soviet Union had maritime access to the Arabian Sea and often his ‘Greater Soviet Union’ even incorporated all of India. During the early stages of WWII, Germany, believing strongly in the warm-water/Indian ocean thesis, offered the Soviets “direct access to the Persian Gulf.” The Soviets declined the offer because, according to Green, they had naturally greater strategic interests in Eastern Europe.⁸ This would not be the first or the last time that Russian/Soviets would not act in accordance with their rivals’ specious assumptions.

As both WWII and British control of India were coming to an end around the same time, Indian-born and Oxford-educated Kavalam Madhava Panikkar wrote on the security of the Indian Ocean in light of the waning strength of Great Britain, the persistence of Russian interests, and the independence of India.⁹ In an article for *Pacific Affairs* in 1945 titled “Regional Organization for the Indian Ocean Area,” Panikkar claimed the Indian Ocean had been a “British lake” and the security of the region had been a matter of British naval power based in India. But as Britain gave up control of India and the Soviet Union sought an outlet into the Indian Ocean, Panikkar believed that a policy of cooperation among all of the new nations of the Indian Ocean littoral would be crucial, not only to peace in the region but world peace as well. The centerpiece of this regional approach would be India as it “alone can provide air and naval bases capable of undertaking the

⁸ William Green, “The Historic Russian Drive for a Warm Water Port; Anatomy of a Geopolitical Myth,” *Naval War College Review*, vol. 46, no. 2 (1993) 80-102

⁹ Peter John, Brobst, *The Future of the Great Game*, (Akron: University of Akron Press, 2005) 26

defense” of the Indian Ocean.¹⁰ In his article in *International Affairs* in 1946 “The Defence of India and Indo-British Obligations,” Panikkar addressed the place of an independent India and “the future peace in Asia and perhaps the whole world.” Panikkar reiterated his earlier claim of India’s unique position as a potential base of defense for the entire Indian Ocean region but with much greater emphasis on the necessity of Britain to help develop that potential. Panikkar also discussed India’s interest in the security of the Persian Gulf and the stability of nations that bordered then British India including Persia and Afghanistan, the latter of which Panikkar would later call “India’s historical ‘half-way house for invaders’ from Central Asia.”¹¹ Panikkar also asserted that Russian interests in Persia and Afghanistan and elsewhere on India’s fringes would be irreconcilable with the interests of India “at least for a very considerable time.”¹²

Panikkar expanded on the subject of the interconnected security of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean in his book *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History* published in 1945. Among Panikkar’s many concerns was the importance of the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union in WWII, apparently “a lesson not likely to be forgotten,” (but the reader is not told by whom) and the “unprecedented development of Central Asia” by the U.S.S.R. which Panikkar believes “will demand an outlet into the sea.”

Apparently, this would then lead to a revolution in Soviet geopolitical strategy

¹⁰ K.M. Panikkar, “Regional Organization for the Indian Ocean Area,” *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 3 (September 1945) 246-251.

¹¹ K.M. Panikkar, “The Defence of India and Indo-British Obligations,” *International Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 1 (January 1946) 85-90 and Brobst, 47.

¹² Panikkar, *International Affairs*, 89-90

with respect to the Indian Ocean and could evolve into a significant threat to the Subcontinent. The reader learns that “a strong military state on the Persian Gulf,” given “the growth of the power of shore defenses [and] the effectiveness of the attack of land-based planes” could project its strength out to the sea as well as construct “an impregnable base and resist successfully all attacks from the sea.” If this power could then maintain a large and powerful navy “then the Persian Gulf could become what Scapa Flow is to the Atlantic and Wilhelmshaven to the Baltic.” Accordingly, this was a problem of the utmost importance for the future of India.¹³ While no such situation would develop to threaten South Asia, Panikkar represented yet another strain of thinking in a tradition that dealt with South Asian security by assuming that Russia had both the impulse and the means to project its influence into this theatre.

At the same time that Panikkar published his ideas on the future of South Asia and the Middle East, Sir Olaf Caroe also wrote extensively on the subject. As a veteran of the British Imperial government in India, fluent in both Urdu and Pashto, one time governor of the North-West Frontier Province, and having frequently written articles in the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* and the journal *Round Table*, Caroe was one of the highest-ranking and most knowledgeable contributors to the subject of geopolitical strategy in South Asia. The main thrust of Caroe’s work was that the Great Game between the Russian and British Empires would continue but with a change in players and a slight shift in geographic focus. Caroe claimed that an independent India, and later Pakistan

¹³ K.M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945) 88-90.

after Partition, would be essential to checking traditional Russian designs on South and Central Asia as well as Russian interest in the oil-rich Persian Gulf. Caroe appears to have been one of the first advocates of Pakistan's strategic value and his ideas resembled the eventual U.S. policy. For Peter John Brobst, however, the similarities are coincidental. Brobst asserts that Caroe did not have a significant impact on the initial U.S. approach to South Asia. He makes this claim based on the fact that Caroe advocated an approach that placed the Indian subcontinent at the strategic center of post-war geopolitics. However, U.S. policy makers in the early years of the Cold War placed India and Pakistan on the strategic periphery.¹⁴ The overall scheme aside, Brobst does point out Caroe's belief that Pakistan would be essential to defending both the Indian Subcontinent and the Persian Gulf from the Soviet Union. In Caroe's book *Wells of Power*, a geopolitical piece on the security of the Persian Gulf oil fields, he asserted that for the nations of the Gulf, "life and security are bound up with the destiny of the territories around them, curving in an arc from Arabia in the west, round the Fertile Crescent, through Persia and Afghanistan to Pakistan." In a chapter devoted to a plan of defending the Gulf by building a string of airbases along this arc, Caroe identified "the main base area of defense" as Egypt, but such an arc "which fails to embrace Pakistan is incomplete."¹⁵ Caroe also made much of the leadership potential of Pakistan. Particularly in relations with Afghanistan and Persia, both of which "feel acutely the imminence of Russia," Pakistan would enjoy the "the natural bonds of Islam." In addition, Pakistan had inherited "a

¹⁴ Brobst, xix

¹⁵ Olaf Caroe, *Wells of Power*. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1951) 179-180

government and an administration based on Western liberal ideas' with which she might "animate the Muslim world" and at the same time claim membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. Caroe hoped that Pakistan would inspire "a conscious policy for securing the immense resources around the Persian Gulf, and for establishing a group of Welfare States to combat Communism in South-Western Asia."¹⁶

Much of the U.S. logic in its alliance with Pakistan was based on the potential of the young, impoverished nation to take a prominent leadership role in the Muslim world as well as form the eastern flank of a defensive perimeter along the Soviet Union's southern border. Brobst, however, goes to great lengths to explain the differences between Caroe's ideas and those of U.S. planners and why Caroe did not influence U.S. opinion. For the most part, his explanation is convincing. What does this mean for scholarship on the U.S.-Pakistani alliance? Should Panikkar and Caroe be dismissed as geopolitical futurologists whose projections did not come to pass for any number of reasons? On the other hand Caroe and Panikkar make it clear that U.S. thinking did not take place in a vacuum. U.S. policy makers were another generation in a line of strategists wrestling with the problems of stabilizing South and Southwestern Asia vis-à-vis an ambitious and southward-looking Russia. Their ideas represent useful contrasts to the eventual policies of the United States in the region. This is particularly important given the scholarly consensus that American policies in Pakistan have failed to produce stability in the region. In the opinion of most South Asia scholars this is especially true in the case of Pakistan, which has, in many ways,

¹⁶ Caroe, 188-192

been a source of instability in South Asia. To determine the extent of American responsibility in the failure of its Pakistan policies one must start at the beginning of the relationship which commenced with Pakistan's bloody birth in 1947.

CHAPTER 2

U.S.-Pakistan Relations: 1947-1954

The First Phase

Given the terms of Partition, Pakistan was an incredibly weak nation. While it was a relatively large country in both population and landmass, it was divided into two wings, separated by over a thousand miles and a hostile power in India. The terms of the Partition also left Pakistan economically weak, as it inherited only 10% of British India's industrial base and 17.5% of its financial assets.¹⁷ In terms of leadership it is was also misshapen, as 55% of the population lived in East Pakistan, what is now Bangladesh, yet West Pakistanis dominated the government and the military.¹⁸ Culturally there was little on which to build a Pakistani identity as several different languages were spoken and several distinct cultural identities asserted themselves long after independence. Pakistan also failed to obtain complete control over the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir in 1948. The ensuing contest with India over the state demanded much of Pakistan's political and military energy and does so even today. Psychologically, Pakistanis were also distracted by fears that India would attempt to "reunite" the subcontinent and extend the rule of the Hindu majority over South Asian Muslims. Given these

¹⁷ Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History*. (London: Hurst and Company, 1998) 95-99 and Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defense*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 49-56

¹⁸ Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 383.

manifold weaknesses, why, then, did the United States come to favor Pakistan over India?

This chapter will examine the first years of U.S. relations with the independent nations of South Asia. Consistent with the rhetoric of Pannikar, Caroe, and others, U.S. policy was constructed around maintaining the unity of the region. This is particularly evident in the U.S. response to the Kashmir dispute. But at the same time, if there was a preference for either India or Pakistan in these first years, American policy makers clearly favored India. Not only was India larger, more populous, and relatively more prosperous, but also Pakistan was, as indicated above, incredibly weak. This is not to say that no one appreciated Pakistan's potential. While the U.S. accorded India greater overall importance, there were those who believed that Pakistan had more to offer in military terms. Conversely however, there were those who believed Pakistan was a weak link in the security of South Asia. Nonetheless, the prevailing view among U.S. policy makers was that Pakistan's weak geographic position made it a poor potential ally. The fundamental feature of American policy in the region was a conviction that South Asia was low on the list of strategic priorities.

Robert McMahon's *The Cold War on the Periphery* makes it clear that, at least initially, U.S. policy makers did not favor either nation. The very concept of Pakistan had not been around for very long and only in the 1940's had the idea gained significant popularity. Thus most British officials and their American counterparts thought of the subcontinent in unitary terms. Even after Partition, British and American planners called for a regional and even-handed approach. It

was believed that favoring one particular nation would only multiply the existing intraregional disputes. This balanced approach was also expected to help resolve these same disputes. It was believed that if tensions could be resolved, greater cooperation between India and Pakistan would be possible on several levels, not the least of which would be defense.¹⁹

This balancing act aside, McMahon identifies a dichotomy in U.S. policies on the region, which, on the one hand, accorded Pakistan strategic value, but believed India had greater political and economic potential.²⁰ Prior to the Partition, George Marshall and Asaf Ali, then Indian Ambassador to the U.S., discussed India's role in the Second World War as the arsenal of the China-Burma-India Theatre. Ali claimed that if India had been properly prepared, the war would have been shortened by at least two years. The Ambassador claimed that the political and economic development of India would also enable it to be "a bastion for the world against the great northern neighbor which now cast its shadow over two continents."²¹ This was probably one of the earliest in a series of signals from Indian officials that touted the potential of India to the U.S. Corollary to these signals were messages that began to appear in 1948 proclaiming India's commitment to democracy and alignment with the West. Girja Shanker Bajpai, then Secretary General of Indian External Affairs, told the head of Near Eastern Affairs for the U.S. State Department, Loy Henderson, that

¹⁹ Robert J. McMahon *The Cold War on the Periphery*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 12

²⁰ *Ibid.* 11

²¹ "Memorandum of Conversation, February 26, 1947," *FRUS, 1947, Volume III*, pg. 148

“should the world once again become involved in conflict, India could only associate itself with those nations holding the same ideals of freedom and democracy.” Apparently, the only things keeping India from declaring this publicly were that India “could not withstand the aggression from Russia or the internal difficulties which might ensue.” It is not clear if Bajpai believed these “internal difficulties” would be the result of Indian Communists’ reactions or some other form of anti-Western activity. Later in the conversation Henderson shared what he believed to be the prevailing opinion of the State Department concerning India stating that “long term close and friendly relations between India and the United States was the anchor of stability of the whole area from Africa to South East Asia.”²²

The U.S. preference for India was so acute that the American General Consul in Pakistan wrote in 1948 that Washington’s policy towards Pakistan was wholly inadequate. Although Muslims might be “retrograde, uninformed, [and] venal” and an accident of geography had made them vital to U.S. interests, Pakistan’s leaders were far more acceptable than “the torturous Hindu who despises as he grovels before, or politely infuriates by obfuscation the unclean European.” The Consul recognized that backing Pakistan overtly would compromise the U.S. standing with “the far greater and richer India...but... so what?”²³ This of course represented the minority view of the situation particularly

²² “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of South Asian Affairs, April 2, 1948,” *FRUS, 1948, Volume V*, pg. 502-504

²³ “Doolittle (U.S. Consul-General, Lahore), to the Secretary of State, September 4, 1948,” National Archives, 845.00/9-448, box 5959 cited in Jalal, Ayesha “Towards the Baghdad Pact: South Asia and Middle East Defense in the Cold War, 1947-1955” *International History Review*, vol. 6, no. 3 (August 1989) 415

following the first successful test of the atomic bomb by the Soviet Union and the Communist conquest of the Chinese mainland. H.W. Brands believes that these events conspired to confer greater importance on the visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to the United States in the autumn of 1949. According to Brands “American legislators hailed the arrival of the great man... [and] American pundits praised the pandit as Asia’s new savior.”²⁴ Assistant Secretary of State George McGhee argued in November 1949 that “in all of Asia [India] is now the only nation that is large enough and has the power potential to resist determined Communist military effort with any possibility of success... If we are to have an effective policy in Asia... India must be the keystone of that policy.”²⁵ Though the trip would actually do more to damage American-Indian relations, an influential group of American lawmakers would continue to tout the importance of India, including Hubert Humphrey and John F. Kennedy.

India was also preferred because of the relative weakness of the Pakistani military. While there existed generalizations about the “martial traditions” of the ethnic groups that constituted much of Pakistan, in reality Pakistan was seen as a military liability to the defense of South Asia. In 1948 a State Department document addressed “The Russian Menace to India.” India’s northwestern frontier was a potential “trouble-spot,” because of Partition and “the resultant military weakness of Pakistan.”²⁶ Aysha Jalal’s research on the development of the

²⁴ H.W. Brands, *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the rise of the American Empire, 1918-1961*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 203-204

²⁵ “George C. McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State, NEA, to James E. Bruce, Director, MDAP, November 14, 1949,” MAP Index folder, NEA Lot 484, DSR cited in McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 19

Pakistani military establishment also adds an interesting dimension to the strategic value of Pakistan. According to Jalal, British military planners in 1946 painted a grim picture of Pakistan's defense potential both in strategic terms and in regard to the development of military resources. Pakistan's two wings, West and East, constituted the two main land frontiers of British India. Though some envisioned Pakistan as a future bulwark against Soviet threats to both South Asia and the Persian Gulf, in the immediate aftermath of Partition, Pakistan was strategically exposed by its very make-up. British officials estimated that "to defend itself, Pakistan would have to maintain an army and an air force approximately the same size required to defend the whole of India." None of the necessary industrial or military installations created by the British lay in what constituted Pakistan nor did Pakistan possess the resources for their construction.²⁷

The idea that Pakistan's geographic position was a weakness as much as it was a strength is evident in a State Department document from 1948. According to the paper "the geographic position of Pakistan places her in a difficult military position." Among other things, the defense of the North-West Frontier Province is "aggravated by the presence within this area of thousands of nomadic tribesmen." Perhaps echoing the basic tenets of the Great Game, the paper goes on to describe "invasions into the Indian subcontinent" having swept through this area and "new invasions... particularly any by Russia, would inevitably follow this route." Accordingly, "the brunt of the defense therefore, of the Indian subcontinent would

²⁶ "Outline- The Russian Menace to India" dated July 29, 1948. RG 59, Lot 54D341, Box 23, Folder 788.51, DSR, NA

²⁷ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 50-51

be Pakistan's," a Pakistan that at the time was believed to be "extremely weak" militarily. However, in the same document, there are highly optimistic statements about Pakistan. The young nation was described as "potentially a formidable military power" and among its strengths: a large population and a highly organized Defense Ministry. The author then speculates on likely boons to the "potential strike force" of Pakistan. Among them are Pakistan gaining military assistance from Great Britain or from other Islamic nations and oil being discovered in Balochistan.²⁸ The sentiment in this document seems to indicate a dichotomy in U.S. thinking in which Pakistan's geographic position is both an asset and a weakness. Further evidence of this appears in a memo of the State, Army, Navy, and Air Force Coordinating Committee from May of 1948. On the subject of sharing information classified as "restricted" with Pakistan, the author notes "it is understood the United States Army is particularly interested in cultivating friendship and cooperation of Pakistan [and] this cooperation may be more easily obtained if it is possible to make restricted information available to Pakistan."²⁹ It is not clear from the document why the U.S. Army had particular interests in developing American-Pakistani cooperation but it is very likely that the Army shared the view that Pakistan could become a military asset to the United States.

Regardless of whether Pakistan constituted a "trouble-spot" or a valuable strike force at some future date, the most significant factor affecting the U.S. view

²⁸ "Pakistan Military Strength" dated May 1, 1948. RG 59, Lot 54D341, Box 23, Folder 707.1, DSR, NA

²⁹ "Recommendation for the Reclassification of India and Pakistan, May 24, 1948," RG 59, Lot 54D341, Box 9, Military Affairs Folder, DSR, NA

of Pakistan was that South Asia did not represent a major priority for America's newly-minted cold warriors. As discussed earlier, Loy Henderson did assure Girja Bajpai in April of 1948 that close relations between India and the U.S. would benefit the Indian Ocean area, but in the next breath he informed Bajpai that "unfortunately, at the moment the United States has found it necessary to concentrate its efforts and resources on resisting aggression in certain other parts of the world."³⁰ The clearest demonstration of this sentiment came in the form of the U.S. arms embargo placed on both India and Pakistan following their first armed conflict over Kashmir.

Though overwhelmingly Muslim in population, Kashmir had been given to Hindu Rajputs in the 19th century by the British and the state continued to be under Hindu control even after the formal independence of Pakistan and India. Since not formally ruled by the British, the princely state could have maintained its independence and there were movements within Kashmir that advocated as much. However, both India and Pakistan had supporters in Kashmir who worked for the state's accession to one or the other. As the dispute between India and Pakistan grew from skirmishes inside Kashmir into what could be called an actual war, both nations attempted to purchase arms and ammunition from the United States. On March 12, 1948 however, President Truman approved a recommendation by George Marshall that the United States not issue licenses "for the export of military material for either India or Pakistan."³¹ Following this, the

³⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of South Asian Affairs, April 2, 1948," *FRUS, 1948, Volume V*, pg. 504

primary goal of U.S. policy in the region became to “prevent any increase in the military potential of either [Pakistan or India].”³² This of course resulted in lobbying by representatives from both countries who argued that their situations, for various reasons, required the U.S. embargo be compromised somewhat. However, the United States did not formally lift the ban until India and Pakistan agreed to a cease-fire in January of 1949. Regardless of Pakistan and/or India’s potential as military assets for the United States or the potential danger to South Asia posed by the Soviet Union, when it came to substantial action, the United States believed its interests could be better served by limiting the military potential of both nations.

Pakistan’s Early Boosters

It is not clear if Pakistani leaders knew that their nation was low on the list of American strategic priorities. It is clear, however, that this leadership recognized the dire circumstances facing Pakistan, and this in turn led them seek help beyond their borders. In the pursuit of aid, both economic and military, Pakistani officials often emphasized two qualities: the strategic value of Pakistan to the United States and Pakistan’s firm orientation away from the U.S.S.R. and communism in general.

The Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, M.A.H. Ispahani, wrote to Secretary of State George Marshall in October of 1948 detailing the difficulties facing the Pakistani military and in particular the specific shortages faced by the

³¹ “Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Truman, March 11, 1948,” *FRUS, 1948, Volume V*, pg. 496

³² “Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Satterwaite) to the Acting Secretary of State, November 10, 1948,” *FRUS, 1948, Volume V*, pg. 519.

armed forces. The ambassador also advertised Pakistan's usefulness to the U.S. claiming that "in a period of emergency, Pakistan can form a base for both military and air operations," and Pakistanis "remain well-equipped and strong, ready to meet any emergency that the international situation may hurl upon the world." Ispahani also reminded Marshall of Pakistan's "extensive strategic frontiers" which demand "adequate border patrols for their defense." In addition to defending Pakistan's borders, "the preservation of internal security- law and order" also required "a well-trained and equipped army" since "certain ideological and political trends have recently shown themselves more and more clearly in lands like Indonesia, Malay [*sic*], Burma and even India." While recognizing that "this ideology," which one could safely assume was Communism, was "foreign to Islam and it [was] not acceptable Moslems, it nevertheless becomes necessary to guard against its inroads into Pakistan."³³ While Ispahani accurately described the situation facing Pakistan and, possibly, its importance to the U.S., his letter greatly exaggerated Pakistan's military capabilities at the time. Pakistan did not need U.S. aid to "remain" well-equipped and ready to meet "any emergency." Indeed, by all indications the Pakistani armed forces were inadequately equipped to offer much more than token resistance to a determined invasion or token support to forces elsewhere. In general, U.S. policy makers believed that the military forces of the South Asian countries were "barely sufficient to meet existing demands for the maintenance of internal security." In addition, it was

³³ Copy of letter from M.A.H. Ispahani, Pakistani Ambassador to the United States to George Marshall, Secretary of State, dated October 19, 1948. RG 59, Lot 54D341, Box 23, Arms Policy Folder, DSR, NA

believed that the South Asian nations would not “for the foreseeable future effectively resist a full-scale invasion by the U.S.S.R.”³⁴

In March, Pakistan’s foreign minister Zafrullah Khan met with American officials in New York to discuss the Kashmir dispute. Among his arguments for Pakistan’s position on the embattled princely state was that if the people of Pakistan did not receive satisfaction this would constitute a serious danger to India “because Pakistan essentially was the only protection of India from the Northwest— meaning the Russians.” Khan followed this with a statement on Pakistan’s position regarding the U.S.S.R.. According to Khan “Pakistan was not sympathetic with Communism and... their position was taken in the event of any major struggle.” But he wondered aloud whether, if the Kashmir dispute was resolved unfairly, would the people of Pakistan “have any heart to fight against the U.S.S.R.? If the U.S.S.R. cross through the Khyber Pass into Kashmir, the Indians would have no defense whatever unless Pakistan was with them.”³⁵ The British foreign minister Ernest Bevin shared this view of Kashmir’s importance vis-à-vis the Soviets and told Secretary of State Marshall that “the main issue was who would control the main artery leading into central Asia” and that should India initiate fighting in the coming spring “this might open up considerable possibilities to the Russians to exploit the situation in order to gain a foothold in Northern India.”³⁶ As for marketing Pakistan’s anti-communist credentials,

³⁴ “Appraisal of U.S. National Interests in South Asia,” *FRUS, 1949, Volume VI*, pg. 21-22

³⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Charles P. Noye of the United States Mission to the United Nations, March 22, 1948,” *FRUS, 1948, Volume V*, pg. 317

³⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor of the Department of State, October 27, 1948,” *FRUS, 1948, Volume V*, pg. 434

Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan declared it “unthinkable that Pakistan could fall prey to Communism since (1) the latter was contrary [to] tenets of Moslem religion in respect [to] democratic ideals, property ownership, and individual’s position; (2) states outside the Communist orbit should fully know Communist ideology was oppressive in [the] extreme.”³⁷

In contrast to the notion that Pakistanis were reliable anti-communists, Stewart Alsop suggested in a column in *The Washington Post* that Pakistan could be forced into the Soviet orbit fairly easily. According to Alsop, if Soviet-sponsored proposal in the UN calling for sanctions against Arab states passed, several states would have been placed in desperate financial situations. In the case of Iraq, Alsop believed that once the sanctions were in place, Iraq would have suffered a “violent political explosion” at which point pro-Soviet forces in the country would have had an opportunity to gain control. At the same time, the Soviet Union would have offered Iraq a loan in exchange for certain concessions, concessions that would have “assured effective Soviet political control of Iraq.” Alsop believed that Pakistan, “also subject to sanction under the Soviet resolution,” would have followed suit, having no choice but to turn “to its powerful northern neighbor.”³⁸ Alsop’s reasoning is questionable. It is highly unlikely that Pakistan and Iraq would have become Soviet satellites immediately after the Soviet Union’s efforts in the UN resulted in their financial ruin.

³⁷ “The Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State, October 29, 1948,” *FRUS, 1948, Volume V*, pg. 435

³⁸ Stewart Alsop, “Matter of Fact, The Edge of the Abyss” *The Washington Post*, pg. 13, June 9, 1948

In December of 1949 the State Department addressed the impact of the Communist victory in China on Communist activities in South Asia. Apparently the Pakistani government was concerned enough about Communist activity to declare a state of emergency. The State Department's view of the situation is not clear. A memo cited a "responsible Pakistan Government official" who claimed "no political significance' attached to the ordinance, but he added there could be no doubt that an emergency existed."³⁹

Despite Alsop's suggestions and the signs of Communist activity in Pakistan, General Henry F. Meyers, an American military attaché in Karachi in the late 1940's and early 1950's, offered a very optimistic and favorable view of Pakistan as an ally of the U.S. In his lecture "Soviet Interests in Pakistan and their Military Implications" Meyers identified three "premises" of U.S. policy in South Asia and highlighted the potential boon to U.S. interests in the region if Pakistan were favored over India. Meyers first tackled the assumption that "because of the separation of East and West Pakistan, that Pakistan cannot exist." According to Meyers "the Muslims are a close corporation... [and] will fight to the death to keep their Islamic principles in this Islamic country which they have now set up after years of struggle." Meyers also believed that telephone and radio links, in addition to sea and air routes, enabled East and West Pakistan to remain "closely linked" and continue "making headway in solidarity." Meyers also attacked "the idea that India, as an industrial country and because of the loud shouting of their leaders, is the bulwark against communism in the Far East." Here Meyers noted

³⁹ "Projects recommended for India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Burma, and Ceylon under Provisions of Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949," December 4, 1949, RG 59, Lot 54D341, Box 23, Arms Policy Folder, DSR, NA

the importance of Karachi to rail and sea traffic in Pakistan as well as the determination of Pakistanis to improve their country. Meyers also claimed in regard to East Pakistan, “if [Communists] envelope the sub-continent thru Burma... they can be stopped here if Pakistan is given any backing.”⁴⁰ This statement is quite misleading as it would require much more than simply “any backing” to forestall an action against East Pakistan given that the bulk of the nation’s armed forces were located in West Pakistan at the time. According to a report from April of 1949, East Pakistan possessed “none of the requisites of military strength.”⁴¹ Meyers also made much of the “magnificent airfields in Pakistan” and their “immense strategic importance for any long-range bombing of the U.S.S.R.” Meyers believed that if the U.S. failed to meet Pakistan’s security needs and Pakistan retaliated by denying the U.S. use of the bases, “we [would] be in a sad way if we suddenly [found] ourselves plunged into war.” On the subject of Soviet interests in Pakistan, ostensibly the subject of the lecture, Meyers had less to say. Apparently the U.S.S.R. sought to force Pakistan to overspend on its defenses while putting “on a front of friendliness.” Though the logic is not entirely clear, Meyers claimed that the military implications of the Soviet endeavors were that the Western powers would continue to favor India and

⁴⁰ “Soviet Interests in Pakistan and their Military Implications,” undated, RG 59, Lot 54D341, Box 23, Arms Policy Folder, DSR, NA. Though the paper is undated it is likely that Meyers gave this lecture sometime after June of 1948 but before February 25, 1950. In the lecture Meyers mentions the departure of Paul H. Alling, the first U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, and the fact that the new ambassador had not yet arrived. Alling was forced to leave Pakistan in June of 1948 due to illness and died in January of 1949. H. Merle Cochran was then appointed as Alling’s replacement in March of 1949 but did not proceed to the post. Avra M. Warren presented his credentials as the U.S. Ambassador in Pakistan in February of 1950.
http://pakistan.usembassy.gov/pakistan/former_ambassadors.html

⁴¹ “Security Requirements of Pakistan,” April 18, 1949

lead to Pakistan denying “the use of airfields and bases in Pakistan in war with the U.S.S.R.”⁴² In a statement that may have been a sign of what was to come, Meyers claimed, “we feel that Pakistan must be considered as a separate nation and oriented toward the Middle East and not toward India and Asia. We feel that as Turkey is the Western anchor of the Muslim Bloc, Pakistan is the Eastern anchor.” In many ways, Meyers’ vision of Pakistan’s role in a coalition stretching from the Mediterranean to the Himalayas is very similar to the role Pakistan would play in CENTO, a defensive arrangement Pakistan would join 1955. Meyers’ perspective is also significant in that in 1954, he headed the team that determined the requirements of Pakistan’s military following the Mutual Assistance Agreement signed by the U.S. and Pakistan in May 1954.⁴³

The second inaugural address of President Truman also began to alter the situation in Pakistan’s favor, even though the President did not necessarily take the line of Meyers. According to an information memo of the State Department in March of 1949, in accordance with the inaugural address, the U.S. would embark on a program of military assistance that, instead of merely containing aggression, would be a “positive policy for peace.”⁴⁴ In April, the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff developed a paper addressing the military requirements of Pakistan. While Meyers seemed more concerned with convincing his listeners that Pakistan was a viable ally and that airfields in the country represented a

⁴² “Soviet Interests in Pakistan and their Military Implications,” undated

⁴³ James W. Spain, “Military Assistance for Pakistan,” *The American Political Science Review* vol. 48, no. 3 (September 1954) 747

⁴⁴ “Military Assistance, March 11, 1949” Office of Public Affairs, Department of State, RG 59, Lot 54D341, Box 23, Arms Policy Folder, DSR, NA

significant strategic prize, this paper addressed specific security problems of Pakistan, in particular the problem posed by the U.S.S.R. Apparently, the responsibility of meeting a possible Soviet attack “against India and the sub-continent as a whole” rested on Pakistan, “with or without the help of Afghanistan or India.” In addition to shouldering this responsibility, Pakistani leaders were also described as giving considerable thought to participating in a “regional Middle East or South Asian bloc” as well as desiring to lead “a Muslim bloc” themselves.⁴⁵

Among the possible implications of the Meyers lecture and the Policy Planning paper was that certain U.S. officials had begun to view Pakistan as independent of India, at least in terms of defense. As has been shown, British and Indian thinkers tended to consider the fate of India and Pakistan inextricably linked, particularly in terms of security. According to a report of the British military in India prior to the Partition, it was “impossible to consider the strategic defense of Pakistan and Hindustan (India) separately.”⁴⁶

America’s Official, Strategic View of Pakistan and South Asia

The most important document of 1949 concerning the relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. was a paper produced by the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee. The paper identified the importance of the region to U.S. national interests. According to the authors, the region possessed economic and military potential but it was not invaluable. If the U.S. were to lose

⁴⁵ “Security Requirements of Pakistan” dated April 18, 1949, RG 59, Lot 64D563, Box 21.

⁴⁶ “Defense Implications of a partition of India into Pakistan and Hindustan,” prepared by lieutenant general Arthur F. Smith, chief of the general staff in India, April 1, 1946 cited in Jalal, *State of Martial Rule*, 50.

access to the raw materials, manpower, and military bases of the area or if the Communists gained control of the area and its vast population, this would “gravely affect the security of the U.S.” and adversely affect future U.S. economic interests in the region. It was also believed that “any substantial decrease in South Asian exports to Europe might have an adverse effect on the European Recovery Program.” Compounding these challenges were the recent developments in China, which the authors claimed increased the importance of retaining the Indian subcontinent as a “Western salient on the Asian continent.” Based on this, SANACC listed three strategic objectives of the United States in relation to South Asia. The first two were the prevention of Soviet “encroachment or domination” of the region and the prevention of the U.S.S.R. from obtaining military support from the nations of South Asia “either directly or through the use of their facilities.” The third objective was the development of a cooperative attitude in the countries of the region that would facilitate Western democracies’ use of areas and facilities “for military operations against the U.S.S.R. in the event of war, and... the development for operational use” of base facilities in the Karachi-Lahore area of Pakistan. In particular reference to base facilities, the authors believed that as long as Afghanistan’s northern borders remained secure then bases in the area could prove “important in conducting air operations against the industrial regions of the Soviet Heartland, or in defending Middle East Oil.”⁴⁷

Of course a major assumption of SANACC was that the Soviet Union had an interest in South Asia and the authors noted that “until very recently... Soviet influence was negligible.” This influence apparently increased following the

⁴⁷ “Appraisal of U.S. National Interests in South Asia,” *FRUS, 1949, Volume VI*, pg. 8-17

decline in British control and the Soviets were “at least preparing the way for greater Communist activity in South Asia” which included “Soviet provocateurs... intermittently active in northern Afghanistan, and agents of the Soviet Embassy in Kabul reportedly... in contact with the Afghan tribes of the North West Frontier,” at the time a particularly unstable province of Pakistan. The paper also addresses the anti-Western propaganda employed by the Soviets in South Asia as well as the fact that “no disillusion or suspicion of Communist doctrine [had] matured among the people.” This was apparently mitigated by the fact that “the traditional religious-social order was antithetical to Communism.”⁴⁸

SANACC also addressed the issue of neutrality and South Asia. The committee advised that if the U.S. did not commit the minimal amount of assistance “deemed essential by the countries of the area, South Asia might give effect to its predilection for strict neutrality vis-à-vis the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. or, at worst, it might fall into the Soviet orbit.” The paper also claimed that in either event, the U.S. should find it difficult to prevent South Asian nations from developing outside the U.S. orbit and the U.S. would potentially be denied the region’s strategic value. Policy makers’ belief that the neutrality of South Asian countries would bring about essentially the same results as if they were to fall into Soviet orbit⁴⁹ would become an important factor in later U.S. policy decisions in the region.

While the Meyers lecture, and to a lesser extent the previously discussed Policy Planning Paper on Pakistan written in April 1949, appeared to emphasize

⁴⁸ Ibid. 15-17

⁴⁹ Ibid. 12

Pakistan's security role apart from the rest of the region, the SANACC committee strongly endorsed a regional approach to military assistance. According to their report, "we may defeat our own purpose if... we alienate the friendship of one or more of the other South Asian powers." The committee also admitted that if assistance was given to one nation, the other nations would increase their pressure for comparable aid. However, SANACC also admitted that "India is the natural political and economic center of South Asia and aid given to the peripheral countries would have to be adapted to the conditions in India." Although obtaining use of facilities in Pakistan specifically was among the four strategic objectives of the U.S. in the region, the committee observed that "the effective use of the Karachi-Lahore area in Pakistan might well depend upon the access to facilities in India as well as Pakistan." It would seem then that though SANACC placed particular value upon Pakistan's strategic assets, the committee endorsed a regional policy in South Asia and admitted to the possibility that Pakistan would be useful as long as India remained open to the United States as well.⁵⁰

Further comment on Pakistan's military value to the U.S. came in a memo of the Joint Chiefs of Staff attached to the SANACC paper. The JCS believed that, with the exception of Pakistan, the nations of South Asia, under "present and prospective conditions" had little value to the U.S. The terrain, the lack of communications, and other essentials of modern combat forces would pose difficult logistical problems if "military operations of consequence by either Western or indigenous forces were to be supported in the South Asia area." The authors added an important qualification to this statement, noting that South Asian

⁵⁰ Ibid. 28

countries contiguous to the U.S.S.R., Afghanistan and presumably Pakistan⁵¹, did “offer the possibility of ideological and intelligence penetration of the U.S.S.R. because the peoples of Soviet Central Asia have national and personal affinities with the peoples” of South Asia, and the Near and Middle East. In addition, the JCS also believed that the domination of South Asia by the Soviets would make available to the U.S.S.R. “certain raw materials and would threaten sea routes that are now relatively safe.” In the next sentence the Joint Chiefs make perhaps the most important statement of the period regarding the strategic value of South Asia stating that the “inaccessibility of the area from the north” and the “more remunerative objectives” in Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East “make it unlikely that, in the event of war, the U.S.S.R. would expend substantial military effort in South Asia.”⁵²

1950-1951: The Turning Point

At the end of the 1940’s Pakistan still occupied the fringes of America’s strategic outlook on the Cold War. American planners believed the U.S.S.R. had little interest in the region as a whole, much less Pakistan. In addition there existed a laundry list of reasons why the United States should cultivate relations with India over Pakistan. It would not take long however for American priorities in South Asia to shift dramatically. This would eventually include bringing Pakistan into U.S. plans for the defense of the Middle East. The turning point in Pakistani-U.S. relations was the Korean War. For many years, American officials

⁵¹ Pakistan was separated from the Soviet state of Tajikistan by a thin strip of land controlled by Afghanistan.

⁵² “Memorandum of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 24, 1949,” *FRUS, 1949, Volume VI*, pg. 30

believed that Korea was an event orchestrated by the Soviet Union and that the Soviets could potentially implement similar “plans” elsewhere. U.S. officials saw the Middle East as an area of potential Soviet incursions and in anticipation of such actions planned to fight the Soviets with Pakistani troops.

According to Robert McMahon, the Korean War transformed American attitudes and policies towards Pakistan more than any other single event, and it appears that this was a result of both plain serendipity and American fears about future “Koreas.”⁵³ Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan had come to the United States in May of 1950 to continue Pakistan’s quest for American economic aid and Khan received favorable coverage in American newspapers. A *New York Times* editorial on May 3 hailed Pakistan’s devotion to the cause of freedom and in particular cited Khan’s declaration that “ ‘no threat or persuasion, no material peril or ideological allurements’ could deflect his country from its chosen path of free democracy.” In addition, the *Times* believed that Khan had made it plain that “Pakistanis understand their peril and are determined upon their defense.”⁵⁴ According to George McGhee, while Jawaharlal Nehru’s visit had received much more media attention, Khan did enjoy substantial talks with President Truman and the State Department, “including assurances that Pakistani forces would be available in the event of a Communist military threat to South Asia from the north.” Whether or not it occurred to Truman or a member of the State Department that Pakistani forces would probably not have a choice in the matter or that the prospect of such a threat appeared remote is not known. Regardless,

⁵³ McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 123

⁵⁴ “Pakistan’s Courage,” *New York Times*, pg. 20, May 5, 1950

McGhee, then assistant secretary for Near East and South Asian affairs, also wrote that the Prime Minister and his wife were a hit on the Washington social scene, appearing on Eleanor Roosevelt's television show. For McGhee, "compared to the wishy-washy neutralist Indians [Pakistanis] were a breath of fresh air."⁵⁵

Before leaving the U.S., Khan also received medical treatment in Boston at the end of June.⁵⁶ On June 25, North Korea invaded South Korea. Three days later, the Prime Minister announced that Pakistan would " 'back the United Nations to the fullest' in any action it may take in the Korean War" and a few days later, in New York, declared that Pakistan accepted the UN resolution to aid South Korea "knowing full well what the implications [were]."⁵⁷ Pakistan's willingness to support the U.S. in the first days of the war made such an impression that John F. Kennedy, who later played a major role in reversing America's South Asian strategic orientation back in favor of India in 1962-63, welcomed Mohammed Ayub Khan to the United States in 1961 by declaring that "during the difficult days which faced our country at the time of the war in Korea, one of the first to offer us assistance was your country."⁵⁸ Kennedy made this statement ignoring what S.M. Burke, McMahon, and others are quick to point out which is that Pakistan's statements of solidarity with the U.S. and the UN in the summer of 1950 did not result in substantial Pakistani material or personnel

⁵⁵ George C. McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle World*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1983) 96-97

⁵⁶ Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 36

⁵⁷ Attributed to the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, June 28 and July 2, 1950 in S.M. Burke and Lawrence Ziring's *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 127

⁵⁸ *United States Department of State Bulletin*, August 7, 1961 cited in *ibid.* 126-127

contributions to combat operations in Korea.⁵⁹ Despite persistent U.S. requests, Pakistan did not provide military personnel for the UN effort in Korea for fear that dispatching any troops would be a grave risk to its local security vis-à-vis India, though U.S. officials believed that if tensions in South Asia were removed, Pakistan would probably contribute troops.⁶⁰ In 1951, Pakistan offered troops for Korea but in exchange for the United States' "complete and unqualified" support of Pakistan in disputes with India and Afghanistan. Secretary of State Acheson rejected the offer believing that such a deal would have completely alienated the U.S. from India and Afghanistan.⁶¹ Despite this, many historians consider the public relations victory for Pakistan in the minds of American policy makers at the time one of the key factors in the eventual ascendancy of Pakistan over India in American strategic planning.

McMahon also considers the Korean War fundamental to American and British reassessments of Middle East security. At the very least the war contributed to a heightened sense of urgency regarding the protection of the region's invaluable resources. However, McMahon points out that the growth of U.S. interest in Pakistan was limited.⁶² In September of 1950 representatives of the British Foreign Office and the U.S. State Department, including George

⁵⁹ Burke, 126; McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 125; Kux, 37-38

⁶⁰ "The Ambassador in Pakistan to the Secretary of State, July 25, 1950," *FRUS, 1950, Volume V*, pg. 1416 and "Conclusions and Recommendations of the South Asian Regional Conference of United States Diplomatic and Consular Officers, February 26-March 2, 1951," *FRUS, 1951, Volume VI*, pg. 1678

⁶¹ "The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Pakistan, May 24, 1951," *FRUS, 1951, Volume VI*, pg. 2205-2206

⁶² McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 130-131

McGhee, met and discussed “the help Pakistan might provide in stemming any military advance towards the Middle East and the Near East generally.”

Apparently, the group agreed only that Pakistan might help but with the important qualification of being “free from internal worries on the subcontinent.” McGhee also made it clear that while the U.S. had “taken an increased interest in [India and Pakistan’s] military strength” because of Korea, “the relative priority position of India and Pakistan [had] probably gone down” because of “increased demands... from other more critical areas.”⁶³

The impact of Korea on British thinking is somewhat clearer in a conversation between B.A.B. Burrows of the British Embassy and State Department officials in October of 1950. Burrows sought to convince U.S. officials that the Middle East deserved greater priority in American plans for both a “global war” and “a localized Korean type conflict.” Burrows spoke of his country’s military presence in Egypt in particular as an example of forces dedicated to defending the Middle East. In the same way, the British wanted the U.S. “to come into a Korea like situation in the Middle East quickly [and] for this purpose the U.S. would need forces stationed in the area... which would help prevent such a situation from arising and help to prevent the outbreak of global war and the loss to the West of the Middle East.” Later on, in discussing nations that would possibly contribute to the defense of the Middle East, Burrows mentions that Pakistan “could probably be counted on for substantial help.” George McGhee however informed Burrows that the U.S. planned to concentrate

⁶³ “Record of Informal United States- United Kingdom Discussions, September 18, 1950” *FRUS, 1950, Volume V*, pg. 200 also cited in McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 131

its efforts more “upon the strengthening of Turkey” and stated his belief that “whichever side might hold the area, the oil fields would be neutralized through air bombardment.”⁶⁴

Although the basic policy of the U.S. regarding Pakistan did not change immediately following the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, it appears that the notion that Pakistan could be of assistance to the U.S. in defending the Middle East and South Asia gained greater purchase in 1950 and 1951. McMahon cites a State Department conference in Colombo, Ceylon in March of 1951. Among other things, the conference concluded, “the most effective military defense of this area [presumably the arc of nations from Turkey eastward to India] would be provided by strong flanks which on the east would include Pakistan.” According to a representative of the U.S. Navy at the conference, U.S. interests in the region “would be reinforced by moving at once in this critical period to develop Pakistan’s capacity to support us in war.”⁶⁵ The impact of the American policy makers’ frustration with India also played a role in the reasoning of the conference goers. According to Ayesha Jalal, Loy Henderson, U.S. Ambassador to India at the time, concluded that “Washington should ‘deal with... [Nehru] firmly and patiently’ and ‘go ahead with Pakistan as a friendly country.’”⁶⁶ Not long afterwards in Malta and in London, British and American military and diplomatic officials spoke with more certainty on the necessity of Pakistan to

⁶⁴ “Memorandum of Conversation, October 24, 1950” *FRUS, 1950, Volume V*, pg. 230-233

⁶⁵ “United States Strategic Interests in South Asia,” in South Asia Regional Conference of U.S. Diplomatic and Consular Officers, February 26- March 2, 1951, George C. McGhee Papers at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library cited in McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 132

⁶⁶ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 125

defense of the Middle East. The meeting at Malta, ignoring the persistent material shortcomings of the Pakistani military along with the persistent economic and political weaknesses, concluded “both Pakistan and India have strong land forces which are well placed to intervene promptly in this area.”⁶⁷ George McGhee, speaking with British officials in London a few weeks later, claimed that Pakistan’s role in defending the Near East, “particularly in the mountains facing Russia... was obvious and would probably be the decisive factor in ensuring the defense of this area.”⁶⁸ By May of 1951, speaking to members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, McGhee claimed, “without Pakistan, I don’t see anyway to defend the Middle East.” The Chairman of the JCS at the time, Omar Bradley, remarked, “perhaps we should throw civilian production in the ashcan and arm these countries- Pakistan, Turkey, and Western Europe.”⁶⁹ How seriously Bradley took the arming of Pakistan and others in response to McGhee’s comments is not clear but Bradley’s response, as well as McGhee’s statement, illustrate an important development in the relationship between Pakistan and the United States. Pakistan was not considered simply a potential contributor to Middle East defense but essential. Regarding Bradley’s response to McGhee, it is quite possible that Bradley made this comment in passing or at least without considering it seriously,

⁶⁷ “CINCNELM and Cs-in-C, Middle East, to the British Chiefs of Staff and the United States Joint Chiefs of United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 13, 1951” *FRUS, 1951, Volume V*, pg. 94-95. The phrase “this area” refers specifically to the “Mesopotamian Valley and... the Persian Gulf” which appears earlier in the document.

⁶⁸ “Memorandum of Informal United States-United Kingdom Talks, April 2, 1951,” *FRUS, 1951, Volume V*, pg. 106

⁶⁹ “State Department Draft Minutes of Discussions at the State-Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, May 2, 1951,” *FRUS, 1951, Volume V*, pg. 120

as he does lump Pakistan and Turkey in with “Western Europe.” Despite this possibility, Bradley’s affirmative response was still significant simply because of his position. A dismissal of McGhee’s claims could have and likely would have altered the direction of U.S. thinking on Pakistan.

Another significant shift in the thinking of the U.S. regarding Pakistan in 1951 is evident in the State Department’s policy statement on Pakistan in July. In previous years, while addressing the deep rifts in the subcontinent, the United States had at least paid lip-service to the idea that the fates and potentials of India and Pakistan were tied together. In the State Department’s policy statement on Pakistan in May of 1950, the authors describe India-Pakistan entente as remote and India potentially “Japan’s successor in Asiatic imperialism.” In the end however, the authors admit, “our interests should be better served by cooperation than by rivalry between India and Pakistan as long as Soviet expansionism threatens South Asia.”⁷⁰ The policy statement for 1951 describes Pakistan as “geographically a part of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent,” but “it is politically independent with an inherent importance separate and distinct from India.” Furthermore, Pakistan “cannot expect any assistance from India in defending its frontiers...[and] India may refuse to give open support should aggression against Near East countries occur.” The policy statement concludes by stating that Pakistan’s orientation towards the Middle East, its control of the historic invasion routes into South Asia, and “its present leaning toward the West gives Pakistan a

⁷⁰ “Policy of the United States with Respect to Pakistan, April 3, 1950,” *FRUS, 1950, Volume V*, pg. 1499

political identity which transcends the historical ties that tend to bind it to India.”⁷¹

While the subcontinent had been partitioned for less than four years when the State Department made this judgment, it appears that the U.S. frustration with a neutral India, fears for the security of the oil-rich Middle East, and the persistence of traditional understandings of Pakistan’s geo-strategic importance led the U.S. to remove Pakistan conceptually from the subcontinent. By doing so, the U.S. would to make Pakistan a Middle Eastern power without having to resolve Pakistan’s basic obstacle to development: its obsessive fear of India.

1952-1954: An Alliance Takes Shape

While it would appear that the U.S. had made up its mind in 1951 that military assistance for Pakistan had become necessary, it would not offer such assistance immediately. It appears that much of the discussion revolved around taking the rather broad directive of assisting Pakistan and figuring out a way to implement it. The lack of substantial U.S. action resulted in yet another attempt by Pakistani officials to make a case for their country. In July 1952 the Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., Mohammed Ali,⁷² met with Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett. Ali claimed that while “relatively few months ago, Pakistan’s main concern militarily...[was] meeting any aggressive designs of India... [but] the more recent developments in Korea and China, and within Russia itself, had

⁷¹ “Department of State Policy Statement: Pakistan, July 1, 1951,” *FRUS, 1951, Volume VI*, pg. 2217

⁷² Mohammed Ali would become the Prime Minister of Pakistan less than a year later, a change the U.S. would welcome in “National Intelligence Estimate 79, June 30, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-54., Volume XI*, pg. 1079-1080

changed the picture entirely and now Pakistan's main concern was the fear that she might be subjected any day to aggression from Communists." Accordingly, Pakistan had "revised its entire strategy and... build up its forces to oppose Communist aggression." The Ambassador also proffered the theory that because of the lack of funding for the defense of the Middle East it would be "only common sense strategy" for the Communists "to concentrate any opening hostilities on an area... whose defense potentials [had] not been built up by the United States." The Secretary of Defense of course did not see things this way and reminded the Ambassador of the aid had been made available to Pakistan and the more immediate concerns of the U.S. elsewhere.⁷³ It should be noted however that from 1947 to 1952, Pakistan received less than half a million dollars a year in U.S. aid.⁷⁴

Similarly, 1952 passed without significant changes in the American approach to Pakistan. However, other nations did weigh in on Pakistan's proposed role in Middle East defense, along with diplomat and outspoken India-booster Chester Bowles. In November British officials, acting independent of the U.S., developed separate plans for including Pakistan in a defensive arrangement. The reactions of France and Turkey indicate perhaps how other nations would have reacted to American plans for Pakistan had they been consulted. According to Dennis Kux, French officials noted that Pakistan was farther from the Middle East

⁷³ Memorandum of Conversation, July 24, 1952," RG 330, Entry 199, Box 320, DSR, NA

⁷⁴ U.S. aid to Pakistan until 1954 was limited to technical assistance and emergency loans of wheat. "Memorandum by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council, March 2, 1954," *FRUS, 1952-54, Volume XI*, pg. 1122-1123 and U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1954*. Washington D.C., 1954. pg. 902.

than was Greece, which was not being considered in British or U.S. plans, and Turkey expressed worry about the reaction of India and Afghanistan.⁷⁵ Around the same time, Chester Bowles claimed “no sensible person could question the creation of MEDO⁷⁶ or eventual inclusion of Pakistan in its orbit...[and] in the face of the threat of Soviet aggression all of them must sooner or later hang together or assuredly they may hang separately.” However, in the same telegram Bowles wondered about the impact of Pakistan’s participation on the region considering that none of the nations contiguous with Pakistan would do so. In addition, Bowles believed the Soviets, who had been placing pressure on Iran and Afghanistan, would not increase their involvement to counter a stronger U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Bowles also claimed that since Britain, France, and South Africa were regarded as colonial powers in Asia and associated with the defense arrangement, the U.S. would be seen as “party to an effort to perpetuate a dying colonial order in the name of collective security.”⁷⁷ Despite the potential problems in the U.S. approach or the consequences of its implementation, plans for Pakistan appeared to move forward. As for Bowles, the victory of Eisenhower a few weeks earlier had rendered him a lame duck. In early December, the State Department’s South Asia chief Donald Kennedy informed the British, “Bowles would soon be

⁷⁵ “British Embassy Ankara to Foreign Office, November 21, 1952” and “Embassy Paris to Foreign Office, November 7, 1952,” DO 35/6650, PRO cited in Kux, 48

⁷⁶ MEDO stood for Middle East Defense Organization and while this was the popular expression of the idea Bowles addressed, no actual organization would ever take on the name but this idea would bear a striking resemblance to the Central Treaty Organization founded a few years later.

⁷⁷ “The Ambassador in India to the Department of State, November 20, 1952,” *FRUS, 1952-54, Volume IX*, pg. 317-318

out anyway,” and according to Kux, added that “the pluses of helping the Pakistanis militarily outweighed the minuses.”⁷⁸

When Dwight Eisenhower took office in January of 1953, the fortunes of Pakistan improved once again. Kux claims that when Eisenhower tapped John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State, the new Secretary brought with him a positive impression of Pakistan, and just the opposite of India. Dulles, like most American policy makers, abhorred India’s neutralism, and by the same token appreciated Pakistan’s endorsement of American efforts regarding Korea.⁷⁹ In addition, the Secretary visited Pakistan in May and June of 1953, where Pakistani leaders reiterated their claims of Pakistan’s military value to the U.S. During Dulles’ visit Pakistani General Mohammed Ayub Khan⁸⁰ offered an interesting twist on the argument for arming Pakistan. Khan felt “very strongly that if Pakistan were strengthened by United States economic and military aid, it would result in India dropping its present intransigent attitude, both towards Kashmir and other problems... a strong Pakistan would frighten India out of her passiveness...”⁸¹

Though sources do not indicate how Dulles received this rather dubious argument, Dulles concluded “Pakistan is one country that has the moral courage to do its part resisting communism...[that] Pakistan would be a cooperative member of any defense scheme that may emerge in the Middle East and that we may not await formal defense arrangements as [a] condition to some military

⁷⁸ Kux, *Disenchanted Allies*, 49

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 52

⁸⁰ Khan would later become President of Pakistan following the declaration of martial law in 1958.

⁸¹ “Memorandum of Conversation, May 23, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-54, Volume IX*, pg. 132

assistance to Pakistan.”⁸² Before the National Security Council in June, Dulles “described himself as immensely impressed by the martial and religious characteristics of the Pakistanis. These qualities had made him and Mr. Stassen (director of the Mutual Security Agency) feel that Pakistan was a potential strong point for us.” At the same meeting Dulles also offered a new twist on the Middle East Defense Organization, one that he believed “offered much more than the former project.” Instead of centering the arrangement on Egypt as the British had planned, Dulles’ offered a defensive “northern tier” of countries including Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan.⁸³ Aside from “feeling the hot breath of the Soviet Union on their necks,” the Pakistanis were also “most keenly aware” of this threat and were geographically located to stand in the way of Soviet aggression.⁸⁴ Following Dulles’ efforts, other memos touting Pakistan’s importance circulated, and General Khan spoke on the subject before an audience at the National War College in September of 1953.⁸⁵

The *New York Times* also addressed the issue in November. An editorial claimed there were “several factors that make close association with Pakistan desirable from our point of view.” Aside from Pakistan “developing along the sturdy democratic lines we admire,” the *Times* points up the young nation’s rapid

⁸² “The Secretary of State to the Department of State, May 26, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-54, Volume IX*, pg. 147 cited in Kux, 55-56

⁸³ “Memorandum of Discussion at the 147th Meeting of the National Security Council, June 1, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-54, Volume IX*, pg. 383

⁸⁴ “Memorandum of Discussion at the 153rd Meeting of the National Security Council, July 9, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-54, Volume IX*, pg. 395 and “United States Policy Towards South Asia, February 19, 1954,” *FRUS, 1952-54,, Volume XI*, pg. 1112

⁸⁵ “Notes on Ayub’s Address to the National War College on September 29, 1953,” and “Additional Justification for Grant Military Aid to Countries of Near East and Africa other than Greece, Turkey, and Iran, undated” RG 59, Lot 57D421, Box 11, Folder 400.1

“economic and social progress.”⁸⁶ The credibility of this editorial is questionable given that the U.S. recognized that the dismissal of the Pakistani Prime Minister in April of 1953 had been orchestrated by the Pakistani military, and the National Intelligence Estimate from June of 1953 described Pakistan’s present and probable economic situation as poor.⁸⁷ Also in 1953, the United States gave Pakistan 700,000 tons of wheat which “saved the country from the ravages of famine.”⁸⁸ In addition to the supposed progress of Pakistan, the author also restated a familiar claim as to the military tradition and military potential of Pakistan going so far as to argue that the relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. might prove to be as vital to India’s defense as to that of Pakistan.

In February of 1954, the National Security Council made enlisting Pakistan specifically in efforts to combat communism an objective in NSC 5409. This included giving Pakistan “special consideration... in providing grant military assistance, in view of Pakistan’s attitude and key position among the countries of South Asia.”⁸⁹ A draft of this paper included remarks that, for some reason, do not appear in the final version, published in the *Foreign Relations of the United States*. Among them is a statement that points out the persistent American belief that the strategic importance of South Asia “would not be as great as that of many other areas of the world” that would likely be involved in a global war. The draft

⁸⁶ “Pact with Pakistan,” *New York Times*, pg. 30, November 5, 1953

⁸⁷ “Emerson to Secretary of State, April 20, 1953,” RG 84, Box 42, File 350, DSR, NA cited in Jalal, *State of Martial Rule*, 179 and “National Intelligence Estimate 79, June 30, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-54., Volume XI*, pg. 1081-1082

⁸⁸ “United States Policy Towards South Asia, February 19, 1954,” *FRUS, 1952-54., Volume XI*, pg. 1116

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 1095

also stated that ocean and mountain barriers separate South Asia from the Soviet Bloc, rendering the area “relatively immune” to all but extremely costly and probably unprofitable attacks. However, the draft continues stating that “the sole exception to this geographical immunity is Pakistan which might be drawn into a general war as the result of a Soviet invasion of Iranian territory.”⁹⁰

As for actual military aid for Pakistan, President Eisenhower agreed in principle to proceeding with this in January of 1954 with the provision that the U.S. attempt to allay fears that the U.S. would aid Pakistan against India. To do this the Eisenhower, Dulles, and Stassen agreed to emphasize that U.S. aid would be

“part of a regional security pact being initiated by Turkey and Pakistan with other countries in the area potential additions and... indicate to India that [the U.S.] would be prepared to extend military aid to India under the same type of agreement as was offered to Pakistan.”⁹¹

On February 14 the *New York Times* reported that the National Security Council had decided to grant Pakistan aid the previous week. The author pointed out the still unresolved problem of Indian opposition to such a deal but remarked that “the importance of bringing in Pakistan on the defense of the Middle East is greater than the importance of preserving pleasant relations with Mr. Nehru.” In addition, the reader learns that some in the Eisenhower administration felt that the harsh debate on the subject may “do some good by separating the neutralist nations from the pro-Western nations in that part of the world.” Consistent with the discussions of Eisenhower, Dulles, and Stassen in January, the article also

⁹⁰ “United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to South Asia,” undated, RG 273, Policy Papers 5406-5409, Box 29, Folder “Background Documents on NSC 5409,” DSR, NA

⁹¹ “Memorandum of Conversation, January 5, 1954,” *FRUS, 1952-54., Volume IX*, pg. 443

emphasized the initiative of Turkey and Pakistan. According to the author, “once the nations on the Soviet Union’s southern border agreed to work together to defend themselves against Soviet aggression, then the United States will offer to become their arsenal.”⁹² Turkey and Pakistan fulfilled this requirement on February 19 and on February 24 Eisenhower announced that Pakistan would receive military assistance to strengthen the defense potential of the Middle East.⁹³ In May the U.S. and Pakistan signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement and later in the year Pakistan joined the U.S. and others in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. As mentioned previously, in 1955 Pakistan would also join the U.S.-backed Baghdad Pact, which would later become the Central Treaty Organization, and in 1959 sign a bilateral Agreement of Cooperation with the United States, Turkey, and Iran. In a few years, Pakistan went from the periphery of America’s strategic vision to being, in the exaggerated words of General Mohammed Ayub, “America’s most allied ally in Asia.”⁹⁴

Conclusion

It is difficult to find an analysis of American-Pakistani relations in this period that is not defined by the exaggerations and miscalculations of the governments in Washington and Karachi. While Jalal’s *State of Martial Rule* has appeared throughout these pages and is perhaps the seminal work on the development of the military domination of Pakistan, Jalal’s article for *The*

⁹² “Pakistan to Get Arms,” *New York Times*, pg. E5, February 14, 1954

⁹³ “Text on Pakistan Arms Aid,” *New York Times*, pg. 2, February 26, 1954

⁹⁴ Mohammed Ayub Khan, “The Pakistan-American Alliance, Stresses and Strains,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 42, no. 2, (January 1964) 195

International History Review is more indicative of her sense of the development of American policies with respect to Pakistan. Jalal began by assuming that the present-day Middle East and South Asia are the result of rivalry between the United States and Great Britain more than of the rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. As a result of this rivalry, both the British and the Americans pursued the cultivation of their own client states and plans for regional alliance systems. Once it became clear to the British that they could not compete with the U.S. in terms of either financial or political clout, the British acquiesced and backed U.S. efforts. Jalal's novel approach aside, American officials appear to have possessed faint understanding of the "subcontinental realities" with which their British counterparts, though far from perfect, had much more experience. According to Jalal, the United States disregarded the reaction of both India and the Soviet Union to military aid for Pakistan. In addition to being "short-sighted" and "insolent," the U.S. made decisions "irrespective of British interests," decisions that essentially tore "apart the fragile web of Great Britain's interests in both South Asia and the Middle East." In the case of Pakistan, Jalal insisted that the U.S. decision to prop up the "pro-Western ruling clique" in Pakistan was made regardless of the "long-term effects on [Pakistan's] fledgling state structure." The same was true of the U.S. decision to encourage Pakistan's aspirations to leadership in the Muslim world. Thus, according to Jalal, before even granting aid, the U.S. "chalked out [Pakistan's] future at home as well as abroad."⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Jalal, *Towards the Baghdad Pact*, 417-433

Like Jalal, Robert McMahon's work on the formation of American policies in South Asia is also of fundamental importance though McMahon examined American-Pakistani relations in a more traditional context. McMahon believed that America's relationship to Pakistan was in large part a reaction to Cold War fears of Soviet moves against the Middle East, and to a lesser extent, South Asia. In his article for *The Journal of American History*, McMahon claimed that while most interpretations of the Cold War tended to see "American policy makers operating from a clear-headed conception of national interests," in the case of Pakistan, "American policy...was driven by a remarkably imprecise and inchoate formulation of the nation's strategic needs." McMahon believed that U.S. planners never addressed, specifically, how Pakistan would stabilize the Middle East or precisely how Pakistani troops would help thwart a Soviet incursion into the region.⁹⁶

McMahon and Jalal's appraisals of U.S. policy are accurate to a certain extent. It is doubtful that American officials understood the innumerable conflicts that beset South Asia nor did American planners grasp that their policies would, in part, help warp the development of Pakistan's civil and military institutions. At many points, the rhetoric of U.S. policy makers regarding Pakistan's strategic importance does not appear coherent or, in many cases, accurate. However, this view of American-Pakistani relations should be tempered by an understanding of the immediate experiences of both the American and Pakistani officials. Many of the U.S. officials who touted Pakistan's strategic value were operating under the

⁹⁶ Robert J. McMahon, "United States Cold War Strategy in South Asia: Making a Military Commitment to Pakistan, 1947-1954," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 75, no. 3, (December 1988) 814-815 and 839

expectation that a global war with the Soviet Union was very likely. Many of these officials were no doubt greatly influenced by the Second World War, a war defined, in part, by the strategic assets of the Allies and the Axis. Pakistani officials also harbored expectations of an imminent, global war and believed their region, contiguous with the Soviet Union, would no doubt be involved. Together with the staggering odds against their nation's survival, the results of both internal weakness and regional tension, it is hardly surprising that Pakistanis leaders promoted to potential allies a feature of their country that could at least be construed as a strength. While none of this justifies incoherent or misleading assessments of Pakistan's value to the United States, it does improve our understanding of a series of policy decisions that exaggerated Pakistan's strategic value, increased regional tensions, and afforded little benefit to America's Cold War efforts.

CHAPTER 3

U.S.-Pakistan Relations, 1976-1982

From Ally to Afterthought

The alliance of the 1950's between the United States and Pakistan began to crumble in the early 1960's. There are several explanations for this, not the least of which was the election of John F. Kennedy, who had for several years advocated a South Asian policy that favored India. In addition, the shooting down of the U-2 spy plane based in Peshawar, Pakistan, in May of 1960, also contributed to the deterioration of U.S.-Pakistani relations. Sharp differences in American and Pakistani opinion regarding the Sino-Indian War in 1962 and 1963 and the U.S. arms embargo following the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan in 1965 ended America's close relationship with Pakistan for the time being. Both McMahon and Kux believe that after the 1965 war, the U.S. consciously maintained a considerably lower profile in the region. Though the Nixon administration made it U.S. policy to "tilt" toward Pakistan, the United States did not provide substantial aid to Pakistan until after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in late December, 1979. This chapter will focus on U.S. thinking regarding Pakistan in the years and months before the invasion as well as on the shift in U.S. thinking afterwards. It will be shown that prior to the Soviet action against Afghanistan, U.S. policy regarding Pakistan focused primarily on encouraging the practice of democracy, discouraging the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, and discouraging Pakistan's nuclear ambitions. Discussion of

Pakistan's strategic importance was almost entirely absent. However, after the invasion, U.S. policy focused particularly on Pakistan's strategic value and, more importantly, Pakistan's ability to aid the Mujahedin in Afghanistan fighting the Soviets.

The Decline of Democracy in Pakistan

As evident in previous pages, Jalal's *The State of Martial Rule* is invaluable to understanding how the military and civil service came to rule Pakistan to the detriment of democratic institutions. Though focusing primarily on the first decade of independence, Jalal also endeavors to explain, however briefly, the ways in which the patterns of that first decade persisted long afterwards. In the final chapter, Jalal addresses the series of dictatorships that ruled Pakistan from 1958 to 1990. The ruler of Pakistan at the beginning of the Carter administration, Zulfikar Bhutto, came to power following another costly war with India in 1971 in which Pakistan was not only humiliated by her rival but also lost over half of her population, as East Pakistan gained independence as Bangladesh. Bhutto was unusual in Pakistani history as he did not come into power as a military leader but as a civil servant who had served Pakistan for many years in foreign affairs. Bhutto was also the first leader of Pakistan to advocate socialism. As leader of the Pakistan People's Party, Bhutto promised wide-ranging economic, social, and political reforms. However, Jalal points out that despite his personal prestige, Bhutto's reforms still needed the cooperation of the civil bureaucracy and his political, if not actual, survival still required at least the tacit support of the Pakistani military. To gain the cooperation of Pakistan's civil servants, Bhutto

had to expand political patronage within the civil service, which, according to Jalal, only perpetuated the corruption of Pakistan's government. As for the military's persistent threat to his regime, Bhutto was required to placate it through an expansion of its budget. Bhutto did not adequately address the absence of accountability for the military and civil bureaucracy, the fundamental problem of the Pakistani government. Consequently, Islamic parties began to grow in popularity. Jalal believes this was a reaction not only to the shortcomings of Bhutto's government but also to a broader feeling that the events of 1971, and the lingering after-effects, had been the result of the state's lack of Islamic morality. The Bhutto government attempted to cultivate support among Pakistan's more traditional sources of political power, big landowners in particular, and at the same time to develop Bhutto's Islamic credentials.⁹⁷

As Bhutto managed to keep control of Pakistan into 1976, George McGovern, then Chairman of the Subcommittee on Near East and South Asian Affairs for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, visited Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. McGovern's subsequent report began by addressing the foreign policy outlook for Pakistan. In addition to cultivating relationships with the Arab world, China, and the United States, Pakistan was attempting to improve its ties to Bangladesh. This was approached with some caution given the likely impact such developments would have on relations with India. It was quite clear to McGovern that the Pakistanis and Indians were both still suspicious of each other as McGovern's party was informed "in Islamabad and in Delhi that there was no

⁹⁷ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 313-319

doubt that the other side was preparing for war at that moment.” In geopolitical terms, Pakistanis expressed a great deal of foreboding according to McGovern. Many were not sure that a historically turbulent relationship with Afghanistan could be improved, and worried about long-term Afghan and Soviet plans. According to McGovern this had led to Pakistan diligently “trying to promote solutions to continuing issues with her neighbors” as well as seeking moral and monetary support from the West as well as Arab states.⁹⁸

Regarding American military aid to Pakistan, McGovern claimed that the Pakistanis had been discreet in their requests for military equipment in 1975 and that most of the purchases had been for non-lethal equipment. Since the Pakistanis appeared to be willing to restrain their requests, the only problem seemed to be the question of sophisticated American military aircraft. On this point McGovern endorsed what he saw as the U.S. arms policy in South Asia, avoiding the potentially provocative build-up of any armed force. McGovern believed that while Pakistan should maintain defense forces that could deter an attack, “Pakistan cannot afford to build a military force which would threaten neighbors.” To do so would initiate an arms race throughout the subcontinent and “a building of the military chips higher and higher to no avail.”⁹⁹

While the foreign policy outlook for Pakistan appeared far from bright, McGovern’s report indicated that the primary challenges facing Pakistan were internal weaknesses, not the least of which was the rule of Bhutto. While it is

⁹⁸ George McGovern, *South Asia: 1976*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976) 1-2

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 2-3

noted that Bhutto maintained the charisma that had brought him to power initially, he was also forceful, ruling “with a firm hand which many believe is becoming more authoritarian.” McGovern pointed out the growing numbers of political prisoners as well as the “ominous growth” of Pakistan’s central intelligence bureau, central police, and central security force. In addition to his “extremely personal hold on power,” McGovern stated, “Mr. Bhutto appears to have done little to build political institutions which could outlast him. There is no heir apparent.” The bulk of McGovern’s report deals with the myriad problems that faced Pakistan at the time including its under-developed democratic institutions, a drain of educated and skilled workers to other nations, 80% illiteracy, and high infant mortality. In the end, while McGovern claimed to feel that “Pakistan may be on the way to eventual, relative prosperity,” he warned of the growth of authoritarianism, the paucity of bureaucratic talent, and the considerable financial difficulties facing Pakistan.¹⁰⁰

The Carter Administration

While interviewing Arthur Hummel, the former ambassador to Pakistan in 1994, Charles Stuart Kennedy remarked, “the Democratic party... in very rough terms seems to lean toward India.” Considering that some of the major policy changes regarding South Asia have coincided with changes in the White House in terms of party control, Kennedy’s remark is not without merit. Party predilections aside, Jimmy Carter also had personal ties to India in that his mother had served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the country. According to Hummel, Pakistanis themselves believed that Democrats would prefer India and Republicans would

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 3-7

prefer Pakistan. As for Hummel himself, he believed that the Pakistani assessment had “quite a bit of truth in it,”¹⁰¹ and as it turned out, the Carter administration would preside over the low point in the history of Pakistani-American relations in November 1979. It should be noted however that developments inside Pakistan were likely more influential than any biases of the Carter administration. In fact, at the beginning of the Carter presidency, the assessments of South Asia and Pakistan in regards to U.S. security and political interests were quite optimistic.

In March 1977, in a statement before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Adolph Dubs, then Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs, stated that at that time the South Asian nations all enjoyed full and normal diplomatic relations for the first time since 1962. Dubs also believed that the regional tensions that had characterized the relations among South Asian countries were decreasing. Direct U.S. security interests in South Asia were limited and the U.S. accordingly pursued a policy of restraint regarding the sale of military equipment. The U.S. had no military bases on the Subcontinent nor did the U.S. seek such bases and aside from “modest military training programs, we offer no grant military aid in South Asia.” Regarding the political interests of the U.S. in the region, Dubs admitted that while not insignificant they were relatively modest and were best served by “encouraging the evolution of a stable regional system, free of outside domination.” Dubs also commented on the recent election that had taken place in Pakistan. Dubs claimed that during the election there were “broad-ranging, extremely free debates on the

¹⁰¹ Interview of Arthur Hummel, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan (1977-1981), by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 13, 1994 for *Frontline Diplomacy*, the U.S. Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, 2000

domestic issues confronting” Pakistan.¹⁰² Dubs comments are curious given that the elections of March 7 would precipitate a serious deterioration in U.S.-Pakistan relations.

In one of the few election years in Pakistan’s history, Bhutto had faced a nine party opposition coalition, which, as Jalal notes, had nothing in common except the objective of dismantling the regime.¹⁰³ Despite the challenges facing the Bhutto government, the election ended in a landslide victory for Bhutto. This victory however was quickly followed by widespread claims of rigging. According to Arthur Hummel, who had been appointed as the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan in June 1977, Bhutto had no reason to rig the election but did so and was simply caught at it.¹⁰⁴ Henry Byroade, Hummel’s predecessor, suggested however that Bhutto was losing badly in key areas the night of the election and the next day won 155 of 200 seats in the Pakistan National Assembly.¹⁰⁵

The election resulted in widespread violence in the major urban areas of Pakistan and a U.S. State Department decision to block the export of tear gas rounds to Pakistan as a punitive measure.¹⁰⁶ Bhutto responded to the American action in a letter to then Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Bhutto suggested to Vance that the United States had been supporting his opposition who had “launched a violent campaign designed to subvert the Constitution and undermine

¹⁰² “Department Discusses South Asia and U.S. Assistance Programs,” *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 76, no. 1972, (April 11, 1977) 346

¹⁰³ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 318

¹⁰⁴ Kennedy’s interview of Arthur Hummel

¹⁰⁵ Kux, 228

¹⁰⁶ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 319 and Kux, 229

the stability of Pakistan.” Apparently, Bhutto had also discussed “concrete instances” of U.S. interference in Pakistan with Byroade, although Kux claims “Pakistan’s intelligence service had been unable to produce anything concrete when pressed by the Pakistani government for evidence.”¹⁰⁷ Bhutto also claimed that the Soviets were “massively” interfering in Pakistan and informed the Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan that the Soviets wanted to “dismember” Pakistan. According to Kux, it is doubtful that, at least in the case of the U.S., Bhutto’s accusations were much more than attempts to gain political leverage on the Americans.¹⁰⁸

According to Hummel, Bhutto’s “anti-American slant only showed up when he was in such dire trouble after he rigged the elections... before that he’d been a relatively close friend of the United States... there was no anti-American slant before that.”¹⁰⁹ If Bhutto’s actions were indeed acts of desperation they did little to improve his situation in Pakistan for the long term as members of the Pakistani military ousted Bhutto in June 1977. Led by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, this junta promised new elections for the near future and Zia himself assured Bhutto that he would return to power shortly. As it turned out however, Zia would rule Pakistan until 1988 and he had Bhutto executed for murder in

¹⁰⁷ “Letter from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Cyrus Vance, May 3, 1977,” National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Box 59, Pakistan Folder, Jimmy Carter Library and Kux, 230

¹⁰⁸ Kux, 230-231

¹⁰⁹ Kennedy’s interview of Arthur Hummel

April 1979 following a lengthy trial and numerous requests for clemency from Carter and others worldwide.¹¹⁰

Despite these developments in Pakistan, the U.S. State Department did not back away from its positive outlook on South Asia. On March 16, 1978, Adolph Dubs would again appear before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. Dubs claimed “regional tensions are at their lowest level since 1947” and cited, “a constructive dialogue between India and China” and “a continued improvement in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.” Apparently the State Department credited these developments to the leadership of the individual nations of South Asia and noted that their stabilizing effects were “very much in line with the foreign policy objectives of the United States.” In regard to Pakistan specifically, Dubs offered a brief summary of the passing of the Bhutto regime and the lack of substantial policy decisions on the part of Zia’s “interim” government. Dubs did not indicate he had a sense that Pakistani-American relations were going to worsen in the near future nor did he indicate awareness of events outside Pakistan that would shortly destabilize the region. Dubs claimed that the internal political situation in Afghanistan was stable and that Afghanistan’s President, Mohammed Daoud Khan, remained “very much in control and face[d] no significant opposition.” In addition, Dubs stated, “Afghanistan’s relations with its neighbors are good, and this contributes significantly to the region’s political stability... Afghan-Pak [*sic*] relations are

¹¹⁰ Kux 233-238 and “Letter from Glenn A. Olds to President Carter, April 7, 1978,” “Letter from Vance Hartke to President Carter, March 27, 1979,” and “Memorandum for the President from Brzezinski, September 8, 1977,” White House Central File, Countries File, Folder 119, Jimmy Carter Library

better than they have been in years.”¹¹¹ Despite Dubs’ public optimism and apparently to the State Department’s complete surprise, Daoud’s rule would end abruptly in a coup the next month.¹¹² Daoud and his family would be killed and a government much more friendly to the Soviet Union would take its place. Dubs himself became the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan in July 1978 and was killed by Afghan insurgents on February 14, 1979.¹¹³

Greater Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan

Changes in the U.S. outlook on South Asia would be reflected, in part, in David Newsom’s address to the Council on Foreign Relations in October 1978. Newsom, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the State Department, began by offering a less-than-favorable assessment of past U.S. policy in South Asia. Newsom believed that in previous decades the U.S. had been

“Preoccupied with the outside threats to the area...[and] not sufficiently conscious of the conflicting motives of the nations of the area in joining with us. They had their local objectives, their local rivalries which often transcended their concern over external forces.”

In some ways, Newsom’s comments could be considered an indictment of U.S. policy regarding Pakistan as it appears that Pakistan, particularly in the early 1950’s, may have used the specter of Russian expansion to gain American arms that were, in reality, intended for the struggle against India. Regardless, Newsom went on to state that the “one dimensional strategic view of the 1950’s and 1960’s

¹¹¹ Adolph Dubs, “South Asia: Recent Developments,” *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 78, no. 2014, (May, 1978) 48-50

¹¹² Zalmay Khalilzad, “Superpowers in the Northern Tier,” *International Security* vol. 4, no. 3, (Winter 1979-1980) 23.

¹¹³ “Envoy’s Death, Big Power Quarrel in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, pg. E2, February 18, 1979 and “The Great Game Revived,” *The Wall Street Journal*, pg. 12, February 16, 1979

has been replaced by a more diverse and more complex outlook.” Though the U.S., Newsom argued, no longer looked at the region “exclusively through the prism of East-West rivalry,” he acknowledged that the Soviet Union saw “important interests of its own in South Asia.” Among them was a historical effort to “improve its access to the Indian Ocean.” In addition Newsom stated that while the U.S. had no desire to return to the “rhetoric and political environment of the 1950’s and 1960’s,” it was not in U.S. interests, nor those of South Asian nations, for the Soviets to pursue their objectives “through the achievement of predominant and exclusive influence over individual nations,” undoubtedly a reference to the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan in the preceding months.¹¹⁴ Though Newsom did not address many problems of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship specifically, his address still represents not only an important shift in U.S. policy regarding Soviet interests in the region, which had not been a major concern for some years, but also an enlightening and revealing comment by the State Department regarding its previous policies.

In the same issue of the *Department of State Bulletin*, there appeared a statement of the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Leslie Gelb. The bureau acted as a link between the State Department and the Department of Defense and in October 1978 Gelb appeared before the House Armed Services Committee to speak on the subject of the Soviet Union and the Indian Ocean. While Newsom eschewed a “one dimensional strategic view” of the region, Gelb’s statement indicates that the U.S. had not completely abandoned a strategic

¹¹⁴ David D. Newsom, “South Asia: Superpowers and Regional Alliances,” *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 78, no. 2021, (December, 1978) 52-53

view of South Asia. Though admitting that the Soviets maintained a “fairly low military presence in the Indian Ocean,” Gelb claimed that “for centuries Russians have wanted a secure southern border and outlet to the sea.” “Thus,” according to Gelb, “the Soviets are seeking to increase their political influence in littoral states and to maximize regional support for Soviet policies and objectives.”¹¹⁵

At a meeting in December 1978 between the Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S., Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, and Carter’s chief national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, there is evidence that Soviet influence in South Asia was growing. On the subject of Khan’s recent appointment to the Pakistani embassy in Moscow, Khan believed that it “probably did reflect a Pakistani desire to reach a better accommodation with the Soviets.” Khan went on to reassure Brzezinski that “Pakistan would not be jumping into the Soviet camp nor harming its ties with the U.S., but the Soviet presence in South Asia is a reality that is making itself felt and Pakistan would be unwise to offer provocations,” an approach Brzezinski considered “very sensible.” For Brzezinski’s part, he sought to reassure Khan regarding U.S. policy in the region, stating, “Our improved relations with India are helpful to all parties, including Pakistan.” Perhaps resurrecting America’s South Asia policy of the early Truman era, Brzezinski also informed Khan that South Asian nations “must think in regional terms for their security.” Though recognizing Pakistan’s history vis-à-vis India, Brzezinski claimed there was “a larger historical convergence of interest in independence and stability” in the region. Despite his reassurances, Brzezinski did point out a salient concern of the

¹¹⁵ Leslie H. Gelb, “Indian Ocean Arms Limitations Negotiations,” *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 78, no. 2021, (December, 1978) 54

Carter administration regarding Pakistan, “the critical issue [of] how Pakistan handles [its] domestic problems.” Brzezinski also addressed the U.S. desire to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in South Asia, to which, the NSC staff member present noted, Khan did not reply. Other than these two issues, according to Brzezinski, the U.S. and Pakistan had “no clouds on our bilateral horizon.”¹¹⁶

In March 1979 Zalmay Khalilzad presented what he believed was evidence of increased Soviet pressure on Pakistan. Khalilzad presented a background paper titled “Soviet Foreign Policy towards the Northern Tier Countries” to the Study Group on the Soviet Union and the Problem of Regional Instability at the Council on Foreign Relations. Aside from enumerating the Soviets’ general policies and objectives regarding the so-called Northern Tier, Khalilzad also offered a brief history of the Soviet Union’s relations with Pakistan. Khalilzad’s history of the relationship was marked by an emphasis on the Soviets’ propaganda campaigns against Pakistan as well as their traditional support of India in the subcontinent’s frequent disputes. In the context of Pakistan specifically, Khalilzad claimed, among other things, “Afghanistan is in a particularly favorable position to help pro-Soviet forces in Pakistan.” He also discussed at some length the impact of the events in Afghanistan on the Pakistani province of Balochistan.¹¹⁷ The sparsely populated province had been the subject of a massive military intervention from 1973 to 1977 in response to a

¹¹⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation, December 19, 1978,” National Security Affairs, no. 7, Brzezinski Material, Box 33, Folder 9/78-2/79, Jimmy Carter Library. A memo the next day from NSC staff member Thomas Thorton to Brzezinski suggested the conversation was “something of a milestone in U.S.-Pakistani relations.”

¹¹⁷ “Soviet Foreign Policy Towards The Northern Tier Countries,” by Zalmay Khalilzad, a background paper for the March 28, 1979 meeting of the Study Group on the Soviet Union and the Problem of Regional Instability. Box 226, folder 2, Council on Foreign Relations Records, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. 24

tribal/autonomist insurrection.¹¹⁸ According to Khalilzad, “given the importance of the Arabian Sea for the industrial world, the long-standing Soviet desire for a warm water port, and the existence of unrest in the area separating Afghanistan from the Arabian Sea, Balochistan,” Pakistan’s increased security concerns were justified. According to a Khalilzad article for *International Security* later that year, “the control of Balochistan... would extend Soviet influence to a vital area. Direct Soviet access to [the Arabian Sea] would greatly increase its capacity to interdict oil transports.”¹¹⁹

In addition to these strategic concerns Khalilzad believed that “the takeover of Afghanistan by Khalq¹²⁰ is likely to increase the probability of joint Afghan-Soviet support of secessionist elements in the Balochistan provinces of Pakistan and Iran and in the North West Frontier Province.” Apparently, the traditional Balochi leadership had been losing ground to radical “leftist groups... more closely aligned with the Soviet Union.”¹²¹ While the author would later recognize that the pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan had too much trouble dealing with its own insurgency to offer much support for one in Balochistan, he would still maintain that, “in the case of a war between Baloch secessionists and

¹¹⁸ Talbot, 216 and 224-226

¹¹⁹ Khalilzad, “The Superpowers and the Northern Tier,” 25

¹²⁰ The term “Khalq” referred to a radical faction of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan. It is widely held that the policies of Khalq precipitated the Soviet invasion.

¹²¹ Khalilzad, “Soviet Foreign Policy Towards the Northern Tier Countries,” 24-25 Khalilzad, incidentally, would go on to become a protégé and colleague of Brzezinski in the early 1980’s at Columbia University and would serve as Special Advisor to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs advising on the Soviet War in Afghanistan among other things. Anderson, Jon Lee, “American Viceroy,” *The New Yorker*, vol. 81, no. 41, (December 19, 2005) and <http://iraq.usembassy.gov/iraq/ambassador.html>

the Pakistani armed forces, the Afghans might intervene, either alone or in conjunction with the Soviet Union.”¹²²

According to Ronald Spiers, Reagan’s first ambassador to Pakistan, General Zia was also quite concerned about Soviet interest in Balochistan and the region as whole. Zia “had countless meetings with Congressional visitors, Cabinet members, and other U.S. dignitaries” at his home where “he would display a map, on which he super-imposed a red area, which was the part of Asia occupied by the Soviets. He really believed this strategic view of the world and was genuinely concerned with the “red horde” knocking on his door.” Spiers maintained that he believed the “Soviets were essentially improvisers and didn’t have any grandiose world plan” and though he did not think the Soviets were “really interested in annexing Afghanistan... I thought that there would be a good chance that if the Soviets were successful in Afghanistan, they would be tempted to look at Balochistan as a necessary buffer and become a threat to Pakistan.”¹²³

In May of 1979, a U.S. policy statement reiterated U.S. concerns for the region as well as indicated an easing of the U.S. stance against Pakistan’s nuclear ambitions and internal political problems. Jack Miklos, Adolph Dubs’ replacement as Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, spoke before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. Compared with Dubs’ statement before the same committee, a little over a year earlier, Miklos’ assessment was far less optimistic in regard to South Asia as a whole.

¹²² Khalilzad, “The Superpowers and the Northern Tier,” 25-26

¹²³ Interview of Ronald Spiers, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan (1981-1983) for *Front Line Diplomacy*, the U.S. Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, 2000

While Dubs had remarked at South Asia's growing stability and the lack of regional tensions, Miklos pointed out, among other things, that several of the states were unstable and most had turbulent internal political situations. While Miklos claims these countries suffered primarily from internal problems, at the same time he insisted "the Soviet Union has and will continue to try and extend its influence where it can." On the subject of Pakistan specifically, however, Miklos' statement indicated that the U.S. wanted to improve its relations with Pakistan. Miklos, similar to past American policy makers, stressed Pakistan's importance as "a pivot between the states of the Indian subcontinent and the oil-rich states of western Asia."¹²⁴

Miklos also discussed the Zia regime in relatively positive terms, "warmly" welcoming the announcement of plans for national elections in Pakistan and pointing out that Zia had "recently named a Cabinet of essentially nonpartisan figures to carry on the work of government and prepare for the elections." On the subject of Zia's plans to introduce additional Islamic principles to Pakistani law, such as the introduction of Sharia courts, and measures to establish interest-free banking, Miklos admitted that though "some foresee that Islamic edicts may fall haphazardly and unequally on different elements within the society... we welcome [the Islamic resurgence in Pakistan and other countries] to apply the humanitarian and social ideals of this great religion." On the subject of Pakistan's effort to build a nuclear weapon, Miklos' comments also appear relatively conciliatory. He acknowledged that members of the committee felt that U.S.

¹²⁴ "Statement of Jack Miklos, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, May 15, 1979," *Crisis in the Subcontinent: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980) 3-9

policy “should have a coherent policy toward the region which does not conflict with the bilateral concerns between the United States and any particular nation.” In simpler terms, the subcommittee wanted to know why the United States still gave aid to Pakistan despite Pakistan’s continuing efforts to build a nuclear weapon. This carefully worded statement went on to emphasize “the very real policy dilemma” presented by Pakistan’s nuclear efforts. However, Miklos also acknowledged Pakistan’s importance to the U.S. in the region “especially given the chaotic situation in Iran and Soviet activities in Afghanistan,” as well as the tradition of friendship between the U.S. and Pakistan. Miklos claimed that, not only was Pakistan “one of the more moderate states in the Third World... we are linked to Pakistan by a 1959 agreement, and the continuing independence and territorial integrity of the country is of fundamental importance to us.”¹²⁵ This final statement is interesting considering that it ignores the waxing and waning of U.S.-Pakistani relations since 1959 as well as the lack of substantial action taken by the United States during the creation of Bangladesh.¹²⁶ Dubious generalization aside, his statement likely reflected a desire, within the State Department and elsewhere, to continue aid to Pakistan in light of its growing value in regard to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Though he acknowledged that Pakistan should have been denied further aid for its nuclear enterprise legally, Miklos closed his

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Kux, 206 and Interview of Richard Post, U.S. Consul General in Karachi (1979-1982), by Charles Stuart Kennedy in February 1990 for *Frontline Diplomacy*, the U.S. Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, 2000

initial statement hoping “all concerned will keep an open mind on solutions to this problem.”¹²⁷

The American Embassy in Islamabad

The testimony of Jack Miklos was perhaps the most important policy statement regarding Pakistan prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It is quite clear from this testimony that, in the eyes of at least the U.S. State Department, Pakistan had become much more valuable to United States. However, it is also clear from the Miklos statement that Pakistan presented a major policy dilemma to the U.S. as the Pakistani government continued to develop its nuclear program. Although the State Department was clearly making efforts to justify aid to Pakistan, the relationship between the two countries would get far worse before they would be drawn together following the events of December 1979. An important policy dilemma that is not evident in Miklos’ testimony, but one that, combined with the reduction of U.S. aid, would bring Pakistani-American public relations to their nadir, was the growing influence of Islamic radicalism both inside and outside Pakistan.

On November 20, 1979 several hundred armed Shia radicals took control of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The next day, according to Richard Post, the American Consul General in Karachi at the time, the Voice of America first broadcast reports of the takeover in Pakistan. It was then reported by the BBC and “attributed to the Voice of America.” Following this, Pakistanis “immediately got the idea that the Americans are doing this and are taking over the Mecca mobs. Having already connived with the Israelis to take over the

¹²⁷ “Statement of Jack Miklos,” 9

mosque in Jerusalem.”¹²⁸ The U.S. Ambassador at that time claimed that the local radio in Islamabad reported that “Americans and Israelis had occupied the Holy Places in Mecca...[and] we never could figure out and could not find, in all of the reporting, intercepts, and everything else the source of the rumor that swept through Pakistan—that it was the American and the Israelis.” As the rumors spread “people commandeered buses and trucks” and headed for the U.S. Embassy.¹²⁹

A significant number were students from nearby Quaid-i-Azam University and, according to Hummel, included “a small group of Palestinians who had probably been planning some kind of action against our embassy...they arrived at the Embassy compound with hoses for siphoning gasoline out of tanks, pails to put the gasoline in, and grappling hooks with ropes already attached to them. They knew what they were doing.” This view is supported in part by Barrington King, the Deputy Chief of Mission in Islamabad at the time, who claimed “the Iranians and Palestinians were probably mixed up in this.”¹³⁰ The Pakistani security forces in Islamabad that would normally have been charged with dispersing the crowd were concentrated in nearby Rawalpindi protecting General Zia as he pedaled the city streets to encourage the use of bicycles. In the four hours it took for the Pakistani military to arrive at the Embassy, the mob grew to around 2,000 people, two Americans and two Pakistani employees of the

¹²⁸ Kennedy’s interview of Richard Post

¹²⁹ Kennedy’s interview of Arthur Hummel

¹³⁰ Interview of Barrington King, Deputy Chief of Mission, Islamabad (1979-1984), by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990 for *Frontline Diplomacy*, the U.S. Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, 2000

Embassy were killed, and the compound was almost completely destroyed. Though in the aftermath Hummel described the Pakistanis he encountered as “shamefaced...[and] everybody knew that what had been done was wrong,” he also claimed “the whole thing was swept under the rug as fast as they could do it, they didn’t want a public affirmation of guilt or an apology.” According to Thomas Thornton, who worked closely with Brzezinski at the time, relations with Pakistan were “about as bad as with any country in the world except perhaps Albania or North Korea.”¹³¹ In spite of Thornton’s recollection, the next public discussion of U.S. policy in South Asia indicated that the situation was not nearly so severe.

Howard Schaffer, the Country Director for India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka at the State Department, spoke before the Foreign Policy Conference for Asian-Americans in New York City on December 1, 1979. Schaffer discussed the destruction of the Embassy and the questions surrounding the Pakistani government’s slow reaction but he pointed out that “in contrast to the Iranian regime, the government of Pakistan acknowledged its responsibility for the protection of our diplomatic mission.” Schaffer also addressed the continuing problem posed by Pakistan’s nuclear ambitions. Though he would make statements similar to those of Miklos regarding the United States’ pledge “to support the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan,” Schaffer claimed the U.S. had cut off further economic assistance as well as terminated a “modest military training program” because of such ambitions.¹³²

¹³¹ Ibid. and Kux, 242-245. Kux interviewed Thornton on September 28, 1995

Schaffer's address is also interesting in that it indicates that the State Department at that time viewed South Asia as whole. In language similar to what was written about South Asia immediately after WWII, Schaffer declared, "we recognize as a fact of life that no matter what measuring stick one uses... India is the most important power in the region." Taken with Brzezinski's insistence on a regional approach to South Asia, Newsom's repudiation of the purely strategic view of the Subcontinent pervasive in the 1950's and 1960's, and the efforts of the U.S. to prevent an arms race between India and Pakistan, Schaffer's comments suggest that the Carter administration had a great deal in common with the early Truman administration in regards to South Asia. This appears to be confirmed by Schaffer's claim that the U.S. "desire to pursue equally good relations with all of the countries in the region means that there will be no "tilt" in U.S. policy toward any country."¹³³

The Invasion of Afghanistan

The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan began on December 24, 1979. In a memorandum for President Carter on December 26, Brzezinski indicated the initial U.S. reaction to the invasion as well as its impact on Pakistan. The President's national security advisor framed the situation in strategic terms, labeling it a "regional crisis," noting that both Iran and Afghanistan were in turmoil and Pakistan was "both unstable internally and extremely apprehensive externally." Brzezinski went on to suggest that "if the Soviets succeed in

¹³² Howard B. Schaffer, "Review of U.S. Policy in the 1980's," *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 80, no. 2035, (February, 1980) 63

¹³³ *Ibid.* 61

Afghanistan, and if Pakistan acquiesces, the age-long dream of Moscow to have direct access to the Indian Ocean will have been fulfilled.” Apparently, Brzezinski was very concerned with this notion of Pakistan’s weakness, claiming that unless the U.S. somehow projected “both confidence and power into the region,” Pakistan would likely be intimidated and “could eventually even acquiesce to some form of external Soviet domination.” Among what he calls preliminary thoughts, Brzezinski stated first that it was “essential that Afghanistani [*sic*] resistance” continue which meant “more money as arms shipments to the rebels, and some technical advice.” He then declared that “to make the above possible we must both reassure Pakistan and encourage it to help the rebels.” Brzezinski pointed out that “this will require a review of our arms policy toward Pakistan, more guarantees to it, more arms aid, and alas, a decision that our security policy toward Pakistan cannot be dictated by our non-proliferation policy.”¹³⁴

In addition to considering these issues, the White House was also apparently concerned with the implications of the U.S.-Pakistan defense arrangement signed in 1959. According to a memorandum from Thomas Thornton to Brzezinski, the agreement had been “reaffirmed several times” during 1979 including in a discussion between Vance and Agha Shai, an advisor to Zia, and “implicitly” during a phone conversation between Carter and Zia. Thornton also claimed “we have told the Paks that the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan is within the boundaries of the agreement.”¹³⁵ Frank Reynolds of ABC News

¹³⁴ “Memorandum for The President from Zbigniew Brzezinski, December 26, 1979,” National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Box 17, Folder 12/26/1979-1/4/1980, Jimmy Carter Library

¹³⁵ “Thornton to Brzezinski, undated,” National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Box 17, Folder 12/26/1979-1/4/1980, Jimmy Carter Library

questioned Carter directly on the subject on New Years Eve, 1979, asking, if he perceived “that the Soviets are mounting a threat to Pakistan would you commit American troops to the defense of Pakistan?” Carter claimed, “We are bound by... a long standing agreement, with Pakistan, that if threatened from an outside force, for instance the Soviet Union, that we would consult with them and take action, including military action if necessary, to protect Pakistan.” When asked why the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Carter claimed, among other things, “the Soviets have long had their eyes on access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, and of course the two nations that stand in their way now, between Afghanistan and those warm waters, are Iran and Pakistan.”¹³⁶ It appears that this traditional explanation of Soviet behavior pervaded U.S. thinking, at least publicly, for much of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan despite the fact that neither the Soviet Union nor Tsarist Russia had ever expressed interest in ports on the Indian Ocean.

In addition to reaffirming prior obligations of the U.S., the Carter administration also endeavored to enlist the support of China in aiding Pakistan. A document labeled “Talking points for HB” instructed the original recipient to make clear to the Chinese that “we also see the move into Afghanistan as aimed at Chinese prestige in Pakistan and India, as well as U.S. interests in the Gulf.” The paper also stated that as the U.S. was unlinking the sale of military equipment to Pakistan from the nuclear issue, “it would help if China could provide arms for

¹³⁶ “Internal Transcript of the Interview of the President by Frank Reynolds, ABC News, December 31, 1979,” National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Box 17, Folder 12/26/1979-1/4/1980, Jimmy Carter Library

the Afghan nationalists and for Pakistan also.”¹³⁷ On January 3, 1980 Brzezinski also addressed the role of China in Afghanistan in a memorandum to Carter. He recommended altering the wording in the U.S. arms policy on China from “we will not sell arms to China” to “we will not sell offensive arms to China.” Brzezinski also reemphasized what he believed were the strategic implications of Soviet influence spreading rapidly from Afghanistan to Pakistan and Iran. In addition Brzezinski believed that “the recommended subtle change in terminology, initiating a limited defense arrangement with China, could be the point of departure for a wider security effort in the region.”¹³⁸

The very next day in an address to the nation, Carter reiterated a strategic view of the Soviet invasion. Carter declared on January 4, 1980, “we must recognize the strategic importance of Afghanistan to stability and peace. A Soviet occupied Afghanistan threatens both Iran and Pakistan and is a stepping stone to their possible control over much of the world’s oil supplies.”¹³⁹ In an interview on January 7, while discussing efforts to develop an aid package for Pakistan, President Carter also expressed his belief in the importance of preparing “for the long-range meeting of any threat to peace in the Mideast, Persian Gulf, northern Indian Ocean area.” The interviewer responded to this by asking if Carter believed the Soviet Union was “really going for the Persian Gulf?” Carter

¹³⁷ Talking Points for HB, undated,” National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Box 17, Folder 12/26/1979-1/4/1980, Jimmy Carter Library. “HB” was most likely Harold Brown, Carter’s Secretary of Defense

¹³⁸ “Memorandum for The President from Zbigniew Brzezinski, January 3, 1980,” National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Box 17, Folder 12/26/1979-1/4/1980, Jimmy Carter Library

¹³⁹ “Text of the President’s Address to the Nation, January 4, 1980,” National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Box 17, Folder 12/26/1979-1/4/1980, Jimmy Carter Library

answered that while this was a factor in the situation, “no one can know what the Soviets’ plans might be” and it was important to strengthen the “countries in the area that might be threatened so that they can repel any potential invasion.”¹⁴⁰

Despite Carter’s public comments, Kux points out that there were clear indications that Zia was skeptical of U.S. proposals for military aid.¹⁴¹ The head of the CIA, Stansfield Turner, addressed his concerns regarding aid to Pakistan a few days later. Turner wrote that “to persuade the Paks that we are sufficiently serious for them to cast our lot with us, we will have to give evidence that our commitment is to be more than a one-shot affair.” Turner recommended offering Pakistan A-7 combat aircraft. Turner also expressed concern that “the Paks and many others are anxious to see whether our policies towards the troubled region of Southwest Asia show a coherence and a comprehensible purpose.”¹⁴²

On January 14, the State Department released the details of a \$400 million aid package for Pakistan. That same day a lengthy article appeared in the *New York Times* that called the Pakistani military forces “the largest and most experienced in Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf region.” Echoing claims made about the Pakistani armed forces in the early 1950’s, the article claimed that this large and experienced force was in “urgent need of modern weapons.” According to “American intelligence analysts” not only was Pakistan’s geographical position “a potential advantage to the West,” “rearmed and

¹⁴⁰ “Excerpts of Interview with the President by John Chancellor, NBC News, January 7, 1980,” Records of White House Counsel to the President, Box 105, Pakistan File, Jimmy Carter Library

¹⁴¹ Kux, 248 and “Pakistan Is Reluctant to Accept Limited U.S. Arms Pledge,” *Washington Post*, pg. A12, January 6, 1980

¹⁴² “Memorandum for the President from Stansfield Turner, January 10, 1980” Document no. NLC-6-59-5-13-2 Jimmy Carter Library

modernized, Pakistani forces could balance a Soviet military presence in Afghanistan to some extent.”¹⁴³ The next day in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Brzezinski addressed the issue of aid for Pakistan but instead of emphasizing the potential of the Pakistani military he stressed the administration’s willingness to use force to protect its interests in the Middle East and Carter’s “firm” and “purposeful” responses to the strategic challenges facing the U.S. He also acknowledged that U.S. concerns about Pakistan’s nuclear ambitions had now taken a back seat to the demands of checking Soviet expansion.¹⁴⁴ Despite this rhetoric, General Zia, in a vastly improved bargaining position following the Soviet invasion, famously dismissed the offer as “peanuts.” Claiming “if you took Pakistan out of the region you will find that you have not one inch of soil where America can have influence— right from Turkey down to Vietnam,” Zia also insisted that “Pakistan will not buy its security for \$400 million.”¹⁴⁵

The public battle over aid aside, the CIA’s secret assessment of the situation in January 1980 suggested that at the time, the Pakistani government was not actively aiding the insurgency in Afghanistan. It was believed that “most of the military supplies obtained in Pakistan by the insurgents have been purchased from private dealers,” and at best the Islamabad government was unwilling, for various reasons, to either aid or hinder the guerillas.¹⁴⁶ The assessment also made

¹⁴³ “Pakistan Forces: Strong but Short of Arms,” *New York Times*, pg. A4, January 14, 1980

¹⁴⁴ “An Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski,” *Wall Street Journal*, pg. 20, January 15, 1980

¹⁴⁵ “Pakistani Dismisses \$400 Million in Aid Offered by U.S. as ‘Peanuts’” *New York Times*, pg. A1, January 18, 1980

¹⁴⁶ “The Afghan Insurgents and Pakistan: Problems for Islamabad and Moscow,” an intelligence memorandum whose research was completed on January 21, 1980, Document no. NLC-12-1-5-2-0 Jimmy Carter Library, pgs. i and 2

clear that while “Moscow could decide to take military action on Pakistan’s side of the border against the insurgents, or even against the Pakistanis,” this would be in the context of fighting an insurgency, not initiating plans to undermine Zia’s government. Though a non-response by Zia to Soviet attacks on Pakistani military installations would seriously, and perhaps dangerously, damage Zia’s domestic credibility, “Moscow would be unlikely to risk such action unless it was confident Pakistan could not count on outside help.”¹⁴⁷ It appears that a Special National Intelligence Estimate on Pakistan confirmed this assessment. In February a memorandum for Brzezinski stated “the likelihood of a large scale Soviet military intervention at this time in Pakistan is low.” However, this NIE also concluded that the decisive factor in Soviet actions inside Pakistan “will be the capabilities of opposing forces rather than the nature of the U.S. commitment to Pakistan,” and “Moscow will increase its pressures on Pakistan” to end its support for the insurgents in Afghanistan.¹⁴⁸

While rhetoric concerning Pakistani fears and American commitments persisted for the remainder of the Carter administration, the U.S. and Pakistan failed to reach an agreement on an aid package. A major U.S. policy shift concerning Pakistan did not occur. While the Soviet invasion certainly transformed U.S. policy makers’ perceptions of Pakistan, the substantive turning point in the relationship came with the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in January 1981.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. i and 5

¹⁴⁸ “Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from The Situation Room, February 8, 1980,” Document no. NLC-1-14-1-23-9

The Reagan Administration

As mentioned previously, the ebb and flow of the U.S.-Pakistani relationship corresponds quite closely with the changes in the White House. Democratic administrations correspond with either deterioration in relations or, in the case of Truman and Johnson, benign neglect. Republican administrations saw the development of closer U.S.-Pakistani ties and, in the case of Eisenhower, a formal agreement for mutual defense. This pattern persisted under Reagan. Whereas the Carter administration offered \$400 million in aid that, in some cases, Pakistani leaders suggested would undermine the security of their country more than protect it, the Reagan administration offered Pakistan a \$3.2 billion aid package in March 1981.

According to Kux, not only was the Reagan administration much more generous financially but it was also more willing to overlook some of the issues that had strained relations prior to the Soviet invasion, among them Pakistan's nuclear ambitions and internal political climate. Kux bases this on interviews not only with American officials close to the situation but with Pakistanis as well. Jane Coon apparently sensed that the Reagan administration "could live with Pakistan's nuclear program as long as Islamabad did not explode a bomb." On the subject of democracy's absence in Pakistan, Pakistani general K.M. Arif was informed by then Secretary of State Alexander Haig, "your internal situation is your problem."¹⁴⁹

The idea that the Carter administration failed to accommodate Pakistan in efforts to confront the Soviet invasion is quite pervasive. Arthur Hummel, who

¹⁴⁹ Kux, 257-258

would serve as Ambassador to Pakistan until July 1981, considered the Carter aid package “meager” and a “failure.” Hummel also claims to have brought the situation to the attention of Secretary of State Haig and then played “a direct part” in changing legislation that enabled the Reagan administration greater freedom in aiding Pakistan.¹⁵⁰ Richard Post, also in Pakistan under both Carter and Reagan, for his part, claimed that “immediately there was a much warmer view towards Pakistan.”¹⁵¹ K.M. Arif believes that there was a dramatic change in the U.S. attitude “toward our region, the ‘polar bear’ and the evil empire.”¹⁵²

However, this portrayal of President Carter may not be entirely accurate. Barrington King, whose time in Islamabad straddled both administrations, claimed “all the Reagan administration did was just to continue the Carter policies... you couldn’t even have told there was a change of administration for all the difference it made.”¹⁵³ As evident earlier, there was a significant effort on the part of the Carter administration to eliminate the nuclear issue as an obstacle to aiding Pakistan. This may be a case in which the Carter administration’s reputation as a foreign policy failure obscures what actually happened.

Perhaps reflecting the changes in the White House, the State Department renewed its attempts to convince members of Congress to waive certain aspects of the Foreign Assistance Act. Jane Coon, speaking before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on April 27, 1981 requested that Congress amend “the waiver

¹⁵⁰ Kennedy’s interview of Arthur Hummel

¹⁵¹ Kennedy’s interview of Richard Post

¹⁵² Kux 258

¹⁵³ Kennedy’s interview of Barrington King

provision of section 669 of the Foreign Assistance Act”¹⁵⁴ which would then allow Pakistan to receive funding despite its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

According to Coon, this would “provide the President with needed flexibility and permit him to pursue a consistent nonproliferation policy within the context of our overall national security interests.”¹⁵⁵ The State Department would also send Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance James Buckley to Pakistan in June to discuss with the Zia regime ways “to assist Pakistan in meeting the unprecedented threats to its independence and sovereignty.”¹⁵⁶

In an interesting twist on the subject of Pakistan’s efforts to build nuclear weapons, State Department representative James Malone spoke before the Atomic Industrial Forum in December. Malone believed that had it not been for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the U.S. and Pakistan would have remained “fundamentally estranged over the issue.” But the invasion, he contended, brought an immediate warming of the relationship and subsequent American assistance. According to Malone, not only did this serve U.S. interests in the region and greatly improve Pakistan’s security but it apparently also offered “the best prospect of deterring the Pakistanis from proceeding with the testing or acquisition of nuclear explosives.” Malone declared that the Pakistanis had “no doubt that such a move on their part would necessarily and fundamentally alter the premises of our new security relationship with them.” Malone’s logic is

¹⁵⁴ Frequently referred to as the Symington Amendment

¹⁵⁵ Coon, Jane “Aid to Pakistan,” *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 81, no. 2051, (June, 1981) 53

¹⁵⁶ “U.S. Assistance to Pakistan,” *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 81, no. 2053, (August, 1981) 83

questionable considering that \$3.2 billion in aid demonstrated that the U.S. was concerned with Pakistan's security perhaps to such an extent that seriously withdrawing aid was not a viable option.

In September, Buckley, along with M. Peter McPherson of AID, spoke before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Buckley stressed the importance of changing provisions of the Foreign Assistance act but with particular emphasis on the strategic value of Pakistan vis-à-vis the Soviets. Buckley's discussion of Pakistan's strategic importance did not differ markedly from prior discussions and if anything is a reflection of the consistency with which U.S. officials portrayed Pakistan, emphasizing its location "athwart the sea lanes to the Persian Gulf," as "an essential anchor to the entire Southwest Asian Region," and in possession of "highly professional," if poorly equipped, armed forces. Alexander Haig would make similar comments before the committee in November, insisting that "Pakistan...lies between the Soviets and the gulf."¹⁵⁷

Haig's statement is interesting for several reasons. In the first place it could be considered misleading, as Pakistan was not, geographically speaking, in between the U.S.S.R. and the Persian Gulf. One could also ask: "what exactly did U.S. policy makers expect their investment in Pakistan to yield?" Unfortunately, most of the policy planning documents that would shed light on this question are still classified or remain as yet untapped archival sources. But given what is available, it is reasonable to assume at least a few things. First, U.S. policy

¹⁵⁷ Alexander Haig, "Overview of Recent Foreign Policy," *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 82, no. 2058, (January, 1982) 16

makers believed Pakistan could serve as a conduit for aid to Afghan insurgents.¹⁵⁸ The U.S. could not arm or supply insurgents in land-locked Afghanistan through any contiguous state other than Pakistan, thus making the Pakistani government's sympathy for U.S. aims essential. A second reason the U.S. invested in Pakistan was genuine fear for the stability of the country and the region. In a region populated by a radical Iran and now chaotic Afghanistan, the government of Pakistan had lost half its population a decade earlier, had fought insurgencies in Balochistan for several years in the 1970's, had experienced widespread rioting and a military takeover in 1977, and had never achieved control of the North West Frontier Province, the nexus of Soviet-Afghan-Pakistani tensions. While a severely weakened Pakistan would not irrevocably harm U.S. interests in South Asia it was surely worth avoiding if at all possible. By strengthening the Zia regime the United States strengthened a military dictatorship whose favor had been curried by U.S. arms, but the alternative would have been to risk the further deterioration of an already unstable region.

In addition to these fairly sound reasons, in both the Carter and Reagan administrations there were discussions of "historic" Russian ambitions to acquire access to the Indian Ocean in addition to notions of Soviet "threats" to the Persian Gulf. Richard Post has expressed some skepticism regarding the former explanation, suggesting that in particular Brzezinski may have "bought [it], or at least wanted people to think [he] bought the warm water port theory."¹⁵⁹ It is likely that individuals promoted the idea that the Soviets were pursuing either

¹⁵⁸ "Talking Points for HB" and Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004) 62

¹⁵⁹ Kennedy's interview of Richard Post

objective because it was a simple explanation that justified American aid to a diverse insurgency in a complicated politico-military situation. It is also possible that people promoted this reading of the Soviet Union because they subscribed to traditional explanations of Russian history similar to those held by the British and Germans in past decades, explanations that were either incoherent to begin with or contradicted by events.¹⁶⁰

Any event, by late 1982, Pakistan was scheduled to receive over \$600 million in U.S. aid each year. Only Israel, Egypt, and Turkey received more assistance.¹⁶¹ In less than three years Pakistan had moved from the periphery of the American strategic vision and a source of diplomatic tension to a place firmly at the center of U.S. policy in South Asia and the major means of U.S. influence in the region.

¹⁶¹ Kux, 266

CONCLUSION

What Do We Get From Pakistan?

The history of U.S.-Pakistan relations is defined by its ups and downs. The United States has, at various points, ignored, lauded, condemned, or courted Pakistan. At the times when the two countries enjoyed close relations, it was a result of U.S. thinking concerning the Soviet Union.

In the 1950's, the U.S. believed that, through a close relationship with Pakistan, the U.S. would exert greater influence in the Middle East and South Asia and limit the expansion of Communist influence. Part of this effort involved the creation of the treaty organizations CENTO and SEATO and the intention that Pakistan would play a pivotal role in both. In addition, American policy makers also believed that by arming Pakistan, the U.S. would be creating a military force that would somehow improve the security of both the Middle East and South Asia. However, the policies that fostered such a relationship were based on greatly exaggerated notions of Pakistan's commitment to anti-Communism, its potential as a military asset, and the belief that in the event of a global war the U.S. would be well served by its investment in Pakistan. As far as CENTO and SEATO are concerned, neither organization was particularly influential and Pakistan began pursuing closer relations with China in the early 1960's. It is unlikely that Pakistan would have proved to be as valuable a military asset as some proposed and, as mentioned earlier, its value was never tested.

In the 1980's, the U.S. pursued closer relations with Pakistan in order to confront the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Initially in this period, some U.S. officials may have sincerely believed that the Soviets intended to move beyond Afghanistan, pursuing a port on the Indian Ocean, threatening the Middle East, or both. However, some U.S. officials, Richard Post and Ronald Spiers among them, claim that they saw the Soviet invasion as an effort to reassert control over Afghanistan; failing to do so would have "created major political pressures in the Central Asian Soviet Republics," home to millions of Soviet Muslims.¹⁶² This school of thought believed that close relations with Pakistan were necessary primarily for U.S. to arm Afghan insurgents; essential to making the Soviets pay as heavy a price as possible for their Afghan adventure.¹⁶³ Though this reasoning would actually dictate U.S. action much more than the others, the erroneous ideas concerning Soviet intentions were never publicly repudiated.

So what did the U.S. get from Pakistan? The shortest answer is "Rarely what it expected or claimed." Pakistan's value to the United States has often been misunderstood. In the 1950's, and to a lesser extent the 1980's, Pakistan's importance to the U.S. was exaggerated. The Soviet Union never threatened South Asia or the Middle East in such a way that Pakistan was an integral part of U.S. countermeasures. When Pakistan did serve a critical role in U.S. Cold War plans it did so as an intermediary for U.S. arms to Afghan insurgents, not as a rampart against Soviet thrusts into South Asia or the Persian Gulf. If ever the Soviets

¹⁶² Kennedy's interview of Richard Post and the interview of Ronald Spiers.

¹⁶³ "Memorandum for the Secretary of State, January 2, 1980," and Memos from Secretary of State George Schultz to Reagan regarding the visit of Zia to U.S., November 29, 1982 cited in Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars*, (New York: Penguin, 2004) 51 and 62.

intended either it is unlikely Pakistan would have presented more than token resistance.

In addition to shedding light onto the history of U.S.-Pakistan relations, this study also suggests something of the Cold War in general. U.S. officials often times expected the Soviet Union to make bold, strategic moves in prelude to a broader conflict. At no point did the Soviets act against either the Persian Gulf or South Asia in such a manner. In the case of Afghanistan, the Soviets were more preoccupied with consolidating control of a peripheral state that could have potentially destabilized the Soviet Muslim populations of Central Asia. In geostrategic terms, the U.S.S.R. did conform to the expectations or predictions of U.S. policy makers.

The fact that U.S. notions of Pakistan's strategic value never materialized should be seen as a further indictment of geostrategic thinking in general terms. However enticing a geostrategic reading of history or contemporary politics may be, the fact is that states are far more improvisational and the events that necessitate policy shifts are rarely anticipated or predicted.

This study also reveals something about America's past and present relationships with the Third World. Throughout the waxing and waning of U.S.-Pakistan relations, one of the constants was Pakistan's instability. While explanations for its weaknesses are quite diverse, some have argued, convincingly, that the emphasis placed on Pakistan's military by the U.S has contributed to Pakistan's problems and actually destabilized Pakistan and South Asia even more. This has occurred in spite of the claims by American officials in

both the 1950's and 1980's that U.S. aid would stabilize and strengthen Pakistan. This, unfortunately, is not an isolated occurrence in U.S. foreign relations. The history of these two periods of American-Pakistan relations should be seen as further proof that many of America's Cold War efforts in the Third World failed to produce the stability they promised. This has implications for the present period of U.S.-Pakistan relations. For much the 1990's, Pakistan was once again on the periphery of the American strategic vision. This of course changed following September 11, 2001. Once again, Pakistan's proximity and relationship to Afghanistan became the subject of considerable U.S. interest. While the geostrategic considerations that had shaped U.S. policy in Pakistan during the Cold War are no longer present, the close cooperation of the Pakistani government and armed forces have become essential to U.S. foreign policy objectives. For this new period of relations to be beneficial for both parties, it is essential that American and Pakistani policy makers understand the logic that underpinned previous eras and avoid making some of the same mistakes. U.S. officials, in particular, should recognize that whatever Pakistan's present usefulness, its systemic problems, along with those of South Asia in general, will likely persist long after the next shift in U.S. priorities.

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