

## **Ideological Aspect of Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Pros and Cons**

Dr. Humaira Masood Dar<sup>1</sup> & Dr. Zahid Yaseen<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

*Foreign policies of the states are based on long term and short term goals. Success of any foreign policy is derived from the continuity and linkage between these two goals. Article 40 of the constitution of Pakistan lays stress on Islamic unity and good relations with Muslim countries. It further states to preserve, support, promote, and foster peace, security and peaceful means to settle down the issues at international level. The Pakistani policymakers since its inception had tried to coordinate the long cum short term goals to make a respectable place in the world community. Religious solidarity, ethnic bond, and common cultural and historical heritage are the factors which can be traced out as an activating force behind Pakistan's foreign policy. This study is an endeavour to discuss the major aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy which have been influencing the decision-making since 1947. It concludes that the religious affinity can help the Muslim states to transform themselves into a unit if they take some practical steps.*

**Key Words:** Pakistan's Foreign Policy, Ideological Aspect, Religious Affinity

### **Introduction**

Foreign policies of the states are based on long term and short term goals. Success of any foreign policy is derived from the continuity and linkage between these two goals. These goals determine from the ideology which a nation or a state inherit or possess. The word 'ideology' used for religious, political and social set of ideas which help the human beings to formulate their

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Political Science GC Women University Sialkot

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science GC Women University Sialkot

thinking and approach (Teun, 1998). Religion was the first element which in the past used as an ideology by the nations, later, socialism, capitalism, communism and many more ruled over the world as political ideologies. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the existing nations were looking for different ideas for their survival and identification, the emergence of a new nation without any ideology was unimaginable.

Nationalism was the most authenticated and recognized ideology for the colonial world for their survival at the global arena in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, yet the existing power were moving towards the next phase, adopting economic theories as their political identification either it was communism of Soviet Union or Capitalism of Anglo-Saxon world (Odd, 2013).

The liberation movement of Sub-Continent, since the beginning divided into two types of nationalism, Indian nationalism and Islamic brotherhood (Jaffrelot, 2002). With the passage of time, this Islamic brotherhood transformed into Muslim nationalism and widened the gulf between the two communities of colonial India; Hindus and Muslim (Cohen, 2004). This gulf later named as Two Nation Theory (Ahmad, 2007).

Political solution of this widened gulf (a separate state for the Muslims of India) in the Sub-continent when took an ideological tone, (Pakistan Means there is no god but Allah) it had created a wave of enthusiasm among the new emerging Muslim nation. Yet this religious tone later has become the cause of many 'confused' explanations of its existence.

### **Forefather's Vision about Pakistan**

Pakistan is dreamt as the vanguard of Islamic renaissance in Asia. National Pakistani poet Allama Iqbal said, a separate state for the Muslim of

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India will provide Islam an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism, was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and bring them into close contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times (Ahmad, 1966).

While the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam perceived Pakistan as a factory where trained Muslims in every field of life were produced and spread to the rest of the Muslim world - to create awakening among them. This educated and trained group of Muslims will eventually result in the creation of a solid, cohesive bloc - a third bloc. It will be neither communist nor capitalistic but truly socialistic bloc, based on the principles which characterized caliph [Hazrat] Umer regime” (Sherwani, 1980).

Therefore, Pakistan, after its creation rather being an addition in the conglomeration of the countries was going to work on its mission which its founding fathers visualized and stated. Initially, it had three major objectives towards its foreign policy approach supported by its constitution;

- to seek friendly relation with the Muslim world,
- to help other Muslim countries in their economic and political problems
- to have a grouping of Muslim states.

Quaid-i-Azam sent Ferooz Khan Noon<sup>3</sup> (1893-1970) as his special envoy to some Muslim countries in October 1947 and later a six member delegation visited Muslim states like Iran, Afghanistan and Egypt. Although, the open objective of these efforts was not to unite the Muslims of the world under one

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<sup>3</sup> Malik Ferooz Khan Noon was well known Pakistani politician, held many high position. He was seventh prime minister of Pakistan (16 December 1957 – 7 October 1958). He wrote five books including his biography.

banner yet Pakistani unconditional support for all Muslims and Arab cause, either it was linked to Palestine cause or the liberation movements in Islamic states earned a respect for Pakistan. Quaid-i-Azam laid stress on the importance of unity among the Muslim states: My... message to our brother Muslim states is one of friendship and goodwill. We are all passing through perilous times. The drama of power politics that is being staged in Palestine, Indonesia, and Kashmir should serve an eye opener to us. It is only putting up a united front that we can make our voice felt in the council of the world (Shahid, 2010, October 17).

The opening of World Muslim Congress in February 1949 held in Karachi was first step towards the vision of “third force” in world politics. During the conference, it was decided to revive the *Motamar Alam Islami*<sup>4</sup>, which had been set up in Makkah in 1926. Same conference on a bigger scale was held in February 1951, in which a resolution was adopted that declared aggression against any Muslim country to be treated as aggression against the entire world of Islam (Pasha, 2005).

It was also decided that the Headquarters of the Motamar would be in Karachi, Pakistan. These activities and Pakistani support for Muslim cause forced to say some commentator that “it was almost possible to talk of a Middle East bloc formed by Pakistan and the Arab states (Pasha, 2005).

Political unity was unimaginable without economic unity so another important step towards that was, to mobilize the resources of Muslim states for

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<sup>4</sup> Motamar Alam Islami is world Muslim congress to promote solidarity and cooperation among the global Islamic community. It has consultative status in the United Nations. Ghulam Qadar Khan and World Muslim Congress, *The Motamar-E-Alam-E-Islami* (Motamar-e-Alam-e-Islami, 1952).

the benefit of Muslims; an international Islamic Economic Conference was called in 1949.

The conference decided to set up a permanent International Islamic Economic Organization (IIEO). The aims of the proposed organization were to develop trade, commerce, industry, mining, banking, insurance, communication and other forms of economic activities in the Islamic world. It also aimed at raising the living standards and enhanced the national prosperity of the people of the Muslim world (Sheikh, 2003). The attempt failed due to lack of interest of the member states and resentment from Egypt. In 1952, Pakistan proposed a Muslim Summit Conference to study ways and means of evolving a system of consultation but indifferent attitude of other Muslim states stamped the failure of common Muslim front (Hussain, 1966).

Pakistan's early effort towards Muslim bloc had two objectives in mind: first to mobilize Islamic world as Quaid-i-Azam perceived, as a third force and second, Pakistan could have a patronage of Muslim bloc against Indian hegemonic design in South Asia and used this bloc as leverage for its dealing with India.

Pakistan changed its foreign policy priorities and focused its attention towards west after five years of untiring, unsuccessful efforts to change Islamic world into a political and economic bloc in Asia (Hans, 1962). It should be remembered that the process of an economic Union for western European states was going on in Europe at the same time and successfully implemented in the form of European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957.

Pakistan's alliance with the west created hostility among the Arab states<sup>5</sup> (Hale & Julian, 1972) which lasted until the end of 1960s. Although during that period Pakistan worked closely with non Arab Islamic states like Iran and Turkey.

Next phase of Islamic revivalism is linked with East Pakistan tragedy and Bhutto's arrival in the government. Pakistan once again became the torch bearer of Islamic solidarity and turned toward Muslim world with full vigor. This time concept of third force had one advantage, it was the "oil" leverage of Arab states. Although Pakistan's dream of Islamic bloc was not reached at the level of European Union due to certain difference among the Muslim states, lack of any visionary leadership and absence of any super power umbrella (Shah, 1993).

After 1970s, Pakistan adopted a policy of bilateral relations with the Muslim world and tried to be neutral in issues related to the dispute between the two Muslim states like the Iran-Iraq war (Ahmad, 1980). In 1979, a new phase of cooperation with the Muslim world was started. It was linked with Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Iranian Revolution. During this era once again Pakistan made a proposal for united Muslim front when president Zia talked about the Muslim problem "in the context of one Ummah" (Fair, 2010). This era had created a warmth among some Muslim states but Pakistan's relation with Iran was cooled down due to anti-American factor in new Iranian government. Iran designated Pakistan as an American ally due to their cooperation in Afghan proxy war.

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<sup>5</sup> American support for Israel regarding Palestine issue was the source due to which Arab states were having anti-American feeling in that era and Pakistan's association with American led security pacts also made it the target of that Arab hatred.

After cold war, Pakistan has to face a conflicting situation in its decisions, it always has to choose between the west and its Islamic orientation either it was the Gulf crisis of 1990 or American invasion of Afghanistan (2001) or on Iraq (2003). Pakistan's support for the Americans was lukewarm concerning to Middle East issues in 21<sup>st</sup> century but for Afghan issue it had to reverse its policy to provide support for American invasion of Afghanistan of which negative consequences can be seen throughout the Pakistan till now (Meernik, 2004).

### **Reactive Policies in Foreign Affairs**

Reactive foreign policy is mostly linked with the security oriented policies of the state. It means that the “minimalist conception of security policy would be reactive in nature”, (Meernik, 2004) for any state. Question arise how can one judge that the foreign policy of any state is reactive in nature? The answer comes from this definition which says “a minimalist security policy would be defensive in design and reactive in execution”. Why Pakistan has a reactive foreign policy? The answer of the question derives from its foundational history (Sathasivam, 2005) and those three assumptions on which Indian policy makers constructed their foreign policy building

- Entire subcontinent to be a single strategic unit on cultural and territorial bases
- Two nation theory is inappropriate and against Indian “secular tradition” and to secure its secular ideology, the “accession” of Kashmir is permanent and irreversible
- The most important guiding assumption is Indian hegemony in South Asia is natural and desirable (Musharaf, 2006).

A state living with these assumptive rather practical foreign policy in neighborhood, automatically adopt a defensive and reactive approach in foreign policy. Pakistan first tried to adopt a Middle Eastern Muslim oriented approach to challenge India's first and third assumption, the weakness in Muslim states forced it to join alliances with western nations. Indo-China tussle provides it to follow the old concept of "enemy's enemy is friend", in spite of ideological difference, a strong bond started between the two - Sino-Pakistan friendship. The failure to conventional force parity and Indian nuclear blast led it the way towards nuclear program. Even in 2001, when Musharraf joined American war on terror, he justified his decision with the logic if we did not support, India would do (Cassese, 1998).

### **Support for Right of Self Determination**

*"All people have the right to self determination. By virtue of that they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (Ahmed, 1993).*

Pakistan had achieved its independence through the right of self determination, so it was always amongst the supporter of that right to the oppressed nations either it was for the Anglo-French colonies in 1950s or the liberation movements of 1990 in Bosnia (Shahid, 2010, October 17). It was even stood side by side with Afghan during their struggle against the Soviet invasion. Its support for Kashmiri right of self determination is as old as its birth. This support also got inspiration from its ideological aspects yet it is not limited to the Muslim community only. It had the same attitude towards South Africa when it followed the policy of apartheid or racism which is forbidden in Islam.



From the very beginning, Pakistan's stance on anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism was that "whenever there is a question of liberty and independence from imperialism or of opposing colonialism, of pushing forward a people's march towards freedom, Pakistan is always to the fore and second to none" (Kissinger, 1982).

### **Peaceful Coexistence**

"Our objective should be peace within and peace without" ... we have no aggressive design against anyone... we stand with the United Nations charter". (15 August 1947)

Following this Quaid's instruction, Pakistan has no territorial ambitions. It does not wish to seek any inch of other states territory but it also wish to secure its integrity although it failed to do it in 1971 against an international conspiracy. Pakistan wished to have good neighborly relation since its nascence because it believed, "Weapons do not bring security; they bring tension" (Ayub, 1967).

Its economic development based on peace on its frontier which is at atrocious position now a day ( aqq n , 2005). Its wish to work for the well being of its people effected due to its generically terrible relations with its neighbors (India and Afghanistan). Liaquat Ali Khan, in 1949, proposed to western states to take the guarantee of Pakistan/India defense so that both states could focus on the "economic wellbeing of their people which is an anti-dote against communism" (Ahmed, 2003). (It was like American guarantee to Western Europe against communism) Again after Indian nuclear test in 1974, Pakistani government asked for any type of nuclear umbrella from nuclear powers but the response from them was quite disappointing like the past.

Pakistan's all proposals turn South Asia into a nuclear weapon free zone were, in reality, symbolize its hidden wish to do something for the welfare of its people rather to waste its resources on the arm race. It has no major differences with its neighbors except India since its inception. It gives a lot importance to its relations with Iran and Afghanistan, because the unanimity of culture, traditions and religion can become a source of unified approach within region. It is yet proved to be a miles away dream.

Besides this regional approach of peaceful coexistence, Pakistan has also adopted the policy of the "live and let live" at international level, first it condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and then in 2003, it vigorously rejected the concept of pre-emptive strike. This theory was a threat to interstate relations of the whole world and insisted in preserving the centrality of the United Nations, observance of Charter principles by all States, and implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council without selectivity or discrimination (Cohen, 2004).

Pakistani countered to Indian accusations of terrorism and weapon of mass destruction alleging that India had breached UNSC resolutions from 1948 to 1957 which call for a plebiscite among Kashmir's to choose rule by either to join India or Pakistan.

### **Regional Determinants: Pro China Policy-Indo-Centric policies-Afghan Policy**

Since the years, Pakistan policy makers visioned it in regional environment, their international policies were also had a regional constraint in it. It was natural because Pakistan's internal and extern policies are more entwined due to its more perilous geostrategic position (Rizvi, 1993).

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Having two largest populous emerging economies (China, India) in its neighborhood without any geophysical advantage forced it to focus on regional issues to maintain an equalizer between the two.

Pakistan could not have two cakes at the same time due to its inherited enmity with India, so it adopted a pro-China policy which in later years has become the guarantee of Pakistan's survival. According to Rizvi (2003) the challenge posed by the hegemonic pretensions- India for Pakistan and Soviet Union for China created a share perception between the two states. In early years if Pakistan played a role of "useful link" between the world and China, now Pakistan has the reciprocity. In recent years, Chinese support for Pakistan against American attitude is an asset for Pakistan.

Due to inbuilt insecurity against Hindu (pre-partition) hegemony, Pakistan's policies since the beginning turned into indo-centric. Its defense policies, its alliances, and its enmities, its peaceful regional proposal, all centralized only with one theme, to maintain Pakistan's position as independent sovereign state against Indian regional superiority (Shahid, 2010).

Afghanistan, another important troublesome neighbor, with whom Pakistan shares a "long, mountainous, and largely un-policed border" (Razvi, 1971). it (Pakistan) wished to have a warm good relations with its religiously, culturally adjacent neighbor but it is a phony expectation. A safe border with Afghanistan would provide many economic and strategic dividends to Pakistan. Its northern areas would be safe and it could become a bridge between the resources of Central Asia and Middle East. But from Pakhtunistan

to recent Talibanisation<sup>6</sup> issues emerged from those Pakistani regions which directly or indirectly linked to Afghanistan. All Pakistani governments, one way or other tried to accommodate its landlocked neighbor for international trade. It has given the shelter to millions of Afghan refugee since 1979 which disturbed the very fibers of Pakistani society up till now.

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan's birth as an ideological state indicates its certain foreign policy parameters such as its links and integrity with Muslim countries (Burke, 1974). Liaquat Ali Khan described that Pakistan emerged on the basis of Islamic ideology therefore the Muslim state meant to facilitate the Muslims to live according to the Islamic teachings. The religious ideology sought to create an environment of Muslim brotherhood. Therefore, Pakistan should promote cordial relations with the Muslim countries (Khan & Balv, 1991).

Pakistan's emotional attachment to the Muslim issues is not only limited to those Muslims living in Islamic states but also extends to those Muslims who are living in non-Islamic states. This ideological attachment works as a bridge among the Muslims which stretches out between the Indus basins to Mediterranean.

Islamic solidarity and regional existence are those long term policies of Pakistan which help the foreign policy makers to chalk out short term ones. Yet a short analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy indicates that its policy makers are unsuccessful to coordinate its short term goals with the long term

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<sup>6</sup> Talibanisation is a phenomenon introduced after the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan. Their certain intolerant policies when followed by certain groups within Pakistan considered the extension of same mentality within the border regions. For certain details see Stockholm

ones. Consequently, Pakistan's foreign policy is felt to be continuously moving on a roller coaster. One time "frontline ally turned to be the most sanctioned ally" is a repeated story and failure of Pakistani policy makers.

Pakistan's support to the Muslim cause since 1947 could not gain for it those political advantages in the region which it visioned. The rich and powerful Muslim states could not provide a standing against its regional geostrategic weakness and issues (Kashmir) while Afghanistan and Iran in spite of being Muslim neighbors more or less proved to be troublesome time and again.

Pakistan's support for Afghanistan against Soviet although cloaked the Islamic brotherhood but its negative consequences still haunt the very fibers of its society. Pakistan's stance against Israel as an aggressor is going to be weakening when the Arab Muslim states moving towards the acceptance of its existence (Israel) as a neighboring state.

Ideological aspects of the foreign policies mostly help the states to strengthen their standing in the world but if it creates negativity and complexity better to go with lord Palmerstone, British Foreign Secretary's (1846-51) famous saying "no permanent friends and no permanent enemies, only permanent interests".

Divergent issues which emerged from time to time and effected the Muslim position in different corners of the world could not be ignored by the Pakistan's policymakers. Islamic ideological influence that Pakistan's support

for Palestine cause,<sup>7</sup> Kashmir dispute, for the independence of North African colonies in 1950s and 1960s, Bosnian Muslims in 1990s was unconditional and without any fear of western or American displeasure. Pakistan has no conflict of interest with Israel but it still does not recognise and establish diplomatic relations with it because it finds it unjustified to recognise an ‘aggressor’ on Muslim territory.

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<sup>7</sup> Pakistani envoy in UN general assembly made a record speech of six hours opposing the partition resolution which UN general assembly approved on 29 November 1947. He voted against the resolution. His vigor and enthusiasm earned a respectable stature for Pakistan in Arab world. For details see

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