Determinants of Pakistan’s Foreign Policy with Respect to Russia’s Past, Present and Future

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Abstract

Pakistan and Russia have a history of divergence and ambiguity in their foreign policies. Since Independence Pakistan’s policy towards Russia remained complex and contradictory. Historically there were highs and lows in their relationship, but uncertainty prevails in their approaches. This was due to Pakistan’s western inclination and Russia’s pro-India alliance. However, the relationship was revitalized in the last 2 decades as both states see strategic interest in improving the relationship. Russia has started to exert itself as a superpower in the current geopolitics whereas Pakistan has also managed to improve its status as a regional player with respect to geostrategic location, its proximity to hot waters and its role in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan’s foreign policy realignment took 50 years to adjust to improve the Pak-Russia relationship. One needs to assess the determinants of Pakistan’s foreign policy with respect to Russia with historical contradictions and current reality.

Key Words: Foreign Policy, Realism, Institutionalism, Liberalism, Constructivism

Introduction

Foreign policy can be defined as one of the tools to operate the process of international politics. It can be explained as the activities undertook by governments in order to maintain relationships in the international system (White, 1989). These are also called the external behavior of the states (Rosenau 1971). This term can also be defined as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment (Modelski, 1962). In other words “Foreign policy is the key element in the process by which a state translates its broadly conceived goals and interests into concrete courses of action to attain these objectives and pressure its interest (Lincoln & Padelford, 1967). Every state defines its own foreign policy according to its strengths and weaknesses keeping in mind the realities of the external environment. Foreign policy can be deduced to the form of broad trends of behavior and actions taken by states directed towards other states in an international arena using different tactics ranging from treaties, declarations m speeches, diplomatic activities, economic aid and use of military force.

Theoretical Framework

The understanding of how the international system work and how nation-states interact with each other is obtained through studying international relations theories. Diplomats and international relations experts use a wide range of theories in order to set the direction of their country. They may vary from liberal, equality
centric strategies to realist concepts. However, there are wide ranges of theoretical approaches when dealing with foreign relations. Some theories have emerged from within the discipline and some have been borrowed from other disciplines such as economics or sociology. These approaches have been highly influenced by internal and external factors such as military, material interest, and ideological beliefs. However, there are few schools of thought that provides an interesting analysis to study the behavior in international relations.

**Realism**

This approach is straightforward which states that every nation is working to increase its power and only those countries with greater power in the international system will only be able to progress. The theory further elaborates that the primary objective of any nation is self-protection with power consolidation. The state will not keep moral values intact whereas it can apply deceit and violence to achieve its national objectives. In the current scenario, the relationship between Russia and Syria can be taken as an example of realism. Despite the bloody civil war in Syria, Russia has managed to maintain its strategic relations with Bashar Al Asad to pursue Russian objectives in the region. Russia’s annexation of Crimea and China’s relations with North Korea despite North Korea’s poor human rights record shows how countries follow aggressively and realist approaches in the international arena. However, every state is autonomous and free from any influence of inherent society which can order relations among states. They can only build relations on their own consent. A realist believes that in an anarchic system state power is the only key because only through state power it can defend itself and survive. Realists’ overriding emphasis on anarchy and power leads them to a dim view of international law and international institutions (Mearsheimer 1994).

**Institutionalism**

Institutionalist shares many of the Realists ideas however it uses microeconomic theories to prove that cooperation among nations is possible. The central insight is that co-operation may be a rational, self-interested strategy for countries to pursue under certain conditions (Keohane 1984). Institutionalist professes that institutions can define rules, norms, and practices that can control and overcome the uncertainty that undermines cooperation.

**Liberalism**

It states that the current international system has the ability to evolve into a peaceful world order. Countries tend to follow liberal approaches, resolve differences through mutual cooperation rather than through the use of military force. The use of force can bring negative consequences like economic and civilian losses therefore countries use economic and social power to achieve their national interest. Globalization has made such tactics like trade and investment more impactful to economic interest. Countries use bilateral trade agreements as a weapon to fight with the opponent. The force has evolved into a new kind of war which is called a trade war. Liberalism is being adopted by most of the countries through international institutions like World Trade Organizations and the United Nations. This has made realism to wane.

**Constructivism**

This approach states that countries’ behavior and its foreign policy are based on its historical, cultural and social belief system. Nationalist governments tend to follow this approach. Germany used aggression as a catalyst in the Second World War. Constructivists also believe that nonstate actors and international institutions play an important role in framing the foreign policy of a country. An international institution like Amnesty International and Oxfam can pursue countries to resolve the political issue through lobbying. These are a set of assumptions about the world and human motivation. Constructivists argue that the nuclear arsenals of the United Kingdom and China, though comparably destructive, have very different
meanings to the United States that translate into very different patterns of interaction (Wendt 1995). Constructivism is also attentive to the role of social norms in international politics.

**Marxism**

Marxist theory of socialism states that capitalism brings destruction in societies so countries should implement socialist policies locally as well internationally. It believes that cooperative ownership should be placed which can help in satisfying human consumption. Private profit can only bring misery and poverty in society. Countries following Marxist ideology should expand the ideological boundaries to free other societies from the capitalist structure. During the cold war, this approach was mostly followed by socialist bloc. In today’s world, it is still being followed by numerous countries.

**Literature Review**

Taimur (2018) in the article “Pakistan’s growing relations with Russia” recommended to modify its foreign policy orientation according to the changing international and regional circumstances. Russia as a player has re-emerged as a global player therefore Pakistan should forget the Cold war baggage and look towards the different relationships with Russia. He argued that Pakistan should develop a balanced relationship with Russia and at the same time continue to have a good relationship with the US.

Kundi and Afridi (2018) in their commentary of “Why Visit Moscow does not materialize: Myths and Realities” analyzed the impact of Liaqat Ali Khan of not visiting the USSR in between 1949 to 1951. PM LAK’s visit to the US instead of the USSR dampens the relationship and undermined the policy of balanced co-existence. Hanif (2013) in his article “Pakistan-Russia Relations: Progress, Prospects and Constraints” proposes to bridge gaps between Pakistan and Russia through strategic partnerships and prudent foreign policy as both the country's eyes each other as future investment destinations. Nawaz’s (2019) analysis of “Pakistan-Russia Relations Redux: From Estrangement to Pragmatism” provides a historical perspective of estrangement and current gradual rapprochement. He posits the idea of having a good relationship with Russia is beneficial for economy and defense. Farwa (2018) article on “Upsurge in Pakistan Russia Economic ties” provides economic benefits of having good relations with Russia. Economic trade with Russia can enhance the growth prospects of Pakistan’s industries. Asdar Ali (2011) provides a detailed analysis of ideological issues faced by Pakistan soon after independence and the role of the communist party of Pakistan in his report “Communists in a Muslim Land: Cultural Debates in Pakistan's Early Years”. Mastry (2010) gives the historical context of India’s relationship with the Soviet Union in his research of “The Soviet Union’s Partnership with India”. PURUSHOTHAMAN (2011) analyzes the relationship with respect to India’s foreign policy. She concluded that the Pak-Russia relationship is unlikely to develop into a true strategic partnership. Hussain (2012) evaluates the Pak-Russia relationship in his research “Pak-Russia Relations: Lost Opportunities and Future Options” and proposes to build a new strategic partnership with Russia. Russian and Fatima (2015) propose to have a good relationship with Russia especially after the current war in Afghanistan. Qureshi (1999) provides a historical perspective on the activities of Muslims of British India during 1920 and their connection with the Soviet Union and the forming of the communist party and its role in the independence movement. Sultana (2019) analyzes the importance of Pakistan’s relationship with Russia under the geo-strategic paradigm. The role of CPEC in forging new alliances has been viewed as a game-changer in South Asia. Sielaff (2011) provides a complete analysis of the Soviet influence in British India. She provides an inside view on the relationship of Indian nationalism and Bolshevik against the British imperialism.

**Methodology**

Qualitative methods are used to get answers from the participant’s experience, meaning, and perspective. This includes group discussions, semi-structured and in-depth interviews and analysis of texts and documents. This paper used texts and documents to learn about distributed and private knowledge.
Research Design
The research design of the paper is qualitative research through analyzing reports, research articles, newspapers, and historical events.

Historical Research
This paper used historical research analysis. It is used to study, analyze and interprets past behaviors, policies, and events. The purpose is to get to the insights and conclude about the past and give policy recommendations for the future.

Data
Secondary data is used for analysis. Data is obtained from secondary sources that are research papers, articles, newspapers and historical books.

Research Question
What were the actual determinants of Pakistan's foreign policy towards Russia after independence and what was truly followed?

Research Objectives
To analyze the fundamental determinants of Pakistan’s foreign policy towards Russia after independence and what was truly followed.

Pakistan Russian Relationship in Historical perspective
The freedom movement of India was supported by USSR as it was against English colonization and dominion. Lenin grew cozy association with patriot lobbyist M.N Roy who was welcome to the socialist universal and was made Head of Eastern Segment on the Presidium of the Socialist Worldwide and set up a socialist gathering of India. This was the beginning of the Soviet's ideological enthusiasm for India. During the times of starting the opportunity battle, Indian National congress built up an ideological base with the Soviet Association. As Russia inclined towards anti-imperial ideology, it upheld the decolonization of numerous countries in Africa and Asia. This caused a long haul relationship among nationalist parties with Russia. The Indian National Congress built up a remote division in 1925 to plug its opportunity to battle and earn support.

After Independence Pakistan confronted various monetary difficulties as it was in urgent need of help. Pakistan began to assess various partnerships, particularly with the Soviet Association as it was exceptionally close to India. Not long after gaining freedom Indian PM Nehru intended to visit the US on seventh May 1949 which was not seen emphatically by the Soviet Union. Accordingly, it stretched out greeting to Pakistan's PM Liaquat Ali Khan. Anyway, Liaquat Ali Khan proceeded to visit the US which was taken as a clear repel to the Soviet Union. This arrangement drove Pakistan to join the western square whereas USSR-India relations grew further. Pakistan joins the western camp by marking the CEATO and SENTO collusions which further exasperated the stressed association with Russia. Then again India's association with Russia solidified further as fortunate with Russia's help to India on Kashmir issue. In the concise time of 1956-57, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Hussein Shaheed attempts to modify ties with Russia, anyway his exertion stays useless due to political precariousness in Pakistan and his resulting acquiescence in 1957. This relationship took a revolting turn in 1960 because of the occurrence of the US spy plane which flew from an airbase in Peshawar and was consequently shot somewhere around Russia. Russian President Nikita Khurushev directly threatened to bomb the airbase if it is used against Russia. During the 1965 war with India, no help was given by the western square regardless of Pakistan's signatory state status of SEATO and CENTO though India was given all the calculated help by Russia. The war finished in an impasse with
the two sides professed to have taken an area of one another. Russia intercedes and expedites a truce and understanding known as the Tashkent Agreement. In 1971 Pakistan was again left with dissatisfaction by its western partners. On the opposite side, Russia's help keeps on working for India. After the 1971 war, Pakistan's international strategy realigned itself towards the look east approach and active bilateralism. ZA Bhutto pursues a policy of having a better relationship with Russia. From 1973 till 1979 both countries enjoyed a good relationship however this cooperation was halted when Russia enters Afghanistan. The relationship further deteriorated as Pakistan supported the mujahideen which resulted in Russian withdrawal and the disintegration of the USSR. Due to economic and political instability in Russia the era of 1991 till 1994 saw little improvement in relations however Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Russia on April 1999 which was the 1st visit in 25 years of the bilateral relationship. After the incident of 9/11 Pakistan become the front state in the war on terror which was welcomed by the Russian federation. In Feb 2003 President Pervaiz Musharaf visited Moscow which resulted in the establishment of different working groups in strategic stability and anti-terrorism cooperation. In 2007 Prime Minister of Russia become the first PM to visit Pakistan in 38 years. In 2011 Russia invited Pakistan to become the part of SCO Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Pakistan supported Russian for the OIC membership. In 2012 Russian Foreign minister visited Pakistan and signed various MOU on energy production, railroad transportation, and metallurgy. Since then the relationship is moving with an upward trend in every coming day. However, the time lost in getting our policy to aligned has cost us greatly.

Determinants of Pakistan’s foreign policy towards Russia. Past Present and Future

Geography
Pakistan’s geo-strategic location is being regarded as an asset due to its proximity to world powers. It is surrounded by China in the North, India in the east, Afghanistan, and Iran in the west and Central Asian republics in the Northwest only separated by a thin area called WAKHAN. Before the dissolution of the USSR’s, all Central Asian Republics were under the Soviet Union connecting Pakistan through a small strip of WAKHAN. After the second world war, the new world order was established in which the world was divided into two blocs. The capitalist block lead by the USA and the communist bloc led by USSR. Both superpowers started to dominate each other in technology, nuclear weapons, ideological influence and international relations. In South Asia, USSR has been working against the British in Afghanistan long before the 2nd world war. It has already developed close relations with the Indian National Congress and has helped in establishing a communist party in India. After the independence, USSR invited Liaqat Ali Khan the first PM of Pakistan but the visit did not materialize and due to which a clear policy was lost. Being a superpower and a close neighbor Pakistan’s foreign policy should be have been based on the geographical consideration and not on a wish list or any other vested interest. This confusion has caused Pakistan's loss of many important issues which could have been solved amicably otherwise.

History
The Soviet Union supported the nationalist movement of India as it was against English imperialism. The first contact was established through a revolutionary leader M.N Roy. He established the communist party of India and was also become influential in opening a revolutionary school in Afghanistan in 1920. Pakistan came into being under the influence of Muslim nationalism which was derived through the roots of religious conservatism. Soviet Union’s ideological base was spread through communist movements which were institutionalized through establishing communist parties. In the newly formed country, the communist party of Pakistan was established in 1948 led by revolutionary Sajjad Zaheer. The Communist Party of Pakistan started to forge links with trade unions and labor leaders. It started to implement the idea of triggering and
guiding a communist revolution. The famous Rawalpindi conspiracy case was the outcome of these revolutionary movements. This led to the banning of the communist party of Pakistan. Ruling Muslim League remains on the right side of a political compass due to which USSR's close relationship was never materialized. Pakistan joins the western camp which fails to deliver on every front.

**Population**

From a historical perspective, Pakistan’s population according to the 1951 census was 75million. Being a newly born country, a large number of resources were required to manage the mass migration that occurred due to partition. That was a time to develop a close relationship with a superpower through long term assistance. However, today Pakistan has a large population of 200mn with the growing middle class, strong industrial base with a growing appetite of energy. Pakistan can capitalize on its market size by developing prudent foreign policy to lure bug economies like Russia to invest in infrastructure and can bring consumer industries in the country.

**Natural Resources**

Pakistan is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of natural resources. Large reserves of copper, gold, coal, gas, and gemstone can be found in vast lands of the country. All these resources are untapped which require extensive infrastructure investment. Pakistan should develop long term mutual assistance policy with Russia so that its technology can be used to tap the vast potential. Russian involvement in natural resource development around the globe is exemplary. Russia has been investing heavily in Africa and has invested 20$billion in projects ranging from energy production, mining to infrastructure and fisheries.

**Economic Development**

Historically Pakistan’s tilt towards America has left little room for enhanced economic cooperation. On the other hand, Russia’s investment in India has grown rapidly since its independence. A large investment was made in heavy industries, mining, steel plants, and energy production. Out of sixteen heavy industry projects, eight were developed through Soviet assistance. The famous IIT Bombay was one of the projects initiated by mutual partnership. Peace and Friendship treaty was signed in 1971 which opens the gate of cooperation in regional and global peace and security. Due to the crisis in USSR loans were extended by India in the form of technical credit. After the dissolution, both countries entered into a new friendship treaty and bilateral military-technical cooperation agreement was signed.

As compared to India, Pakistan and USSR established trade relations in 1950. Cotton, Jute, and Leather were exported to USSR. Oil consortium was established in 1958 and in 1971 USSR gave technical expertise and extended loan facility of $200mn for setting up of steel mill. But after that, no serious cooperation can be seen between the two countries. Pakistan’s foreign policy should have been developed keeping in mind our economic need at the time of independence, but the policy was kept in dark which caused a massive decline in infrastructure development.

After losing 50 years of development realignment in foreign policy with Russia can be observed. In 2012 Russian Foreign minister visited Pakistan and signed various MOU on energy production, railroad transportation, and metallurgy. Since then the relationship is moving with an upward trend in every coming day. In 2018 Russian consortium and KP Oil and Gas Company signed an agreement to establish an oil refinery in Kohat. In the same year, the Russian delegation invited Pakistan for world expo to be held in 2025 where Pakistan can demonstrate their quality products and enhance business prospects. After the inauguration of CPEC Russia’s interest has increased in the region. Pakistan’s geo-strategic location which interconnects south Asia, China and Central Asia is considered as a bridge to connect players of Eurasia. Russia has always wanted to reach warm waters due to which it wanted to join CPEC.
Military Cooperation

Pakistan has always remained under the influence of western powers due to which its military technology is of western origin. Soon after independence Pakistan and the US signed a mutual defense assistance agreement in 1954. But this relationship remains turbulent for many years due to military coup and war with India. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan brought Pakistan and the US together as military aid started to pour in. US assistance has always remained in the form of the final product without any technology transfer which had cost Pakistan’s exchequer heavily. On the other hand, USSR’s assistance with India includes the provision of production licensing which gives impetus to localization in weapons development. Pakistan’s conflict with India required resources to build its military through purchasing weapons and equipment from the west at an economic cost. This could have been avoided if Pakistan had developed good working relations with USSR during the cold war. Improvement in the relationship leads to strengthening military cooperation. Pakistan army participated in Russian army war games 2015 in Far East Russia. Friendship exercises were held in 2016 in which both the countries participated despite Indian opposition. Russia opted not to scum to the Indian pressure and continued with the participation in the exercises. Both countries have developed Joint Military Consultative Committee which is the highest platform for defense cooperation. The JMCC held its second consultative meeting in August 2019 in Moscow and proposed a third meeting to be held in 2020 in Pakistan. Military cooperation is moving in a positive direction which would help Pakistan in its defense needs.

Ideology

Pakistan came into being on the ideology based on the two-nation theory. Muslims of the subcontinent were a nation of unique culture, values, and religion. This ideology provides a basis for a separate homeland for the Muslims of India. Religion becomes the core identity for the demand of the new nation. The religious parties of undivided India opposed the idea of separation, but moderate Muslims represented by the All India Muslim League enforce the division. The theory was to have a separate homeland for the Muslims where they can exercise their civil rights. Soon after Independence the ideological base was diverted towards religious conservatism rather than towards secularism and progressive approach. This ideological confusion continues to haunt the basic structure of the state. Eastern wing of the country got separated after 24 years of independence which was considered being more progressive rather than conservative and was clear in its ideology. The western part of Pakistan remains in the ideological limbo. Different regimes bring different ideologies with them. Military regimes of Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan remained liberal but Zia ul Haque brings religious conservatism in the society. Z. A Bhutto regime was more progressive and liberal however he too had to face extremism. To make the conservative electorate intact he took decisions that were against the party policy of progressiveness and liberalism. Till today political parties do not provide a clear ideological design as they remain more of an opportunist.

On the other hand, India remains to be committed to its socialist ideology. The secular constitution was framed after independence which denounces the use of religion at the state level. Congress party was the enforcer of socialist ideology which provides a clear direction for the state to progress. This clarity equips the state of India to make decisions on the economic and foreign policy front. India’s relationship with USSR was further evolved due to the similarity in their ideological base. USSR was known for its propagation of socialism. It finds less difficulty in enveloping its relationship with India. This cohesive partnership with a deep-rooted ideological base helped both the countries to build a long-lasting relationship. Whereas Pakistan remains divided which did not help the country in developing its long term economic and foreign policies. The division was sowed only to disallow democracy in the country. The democratic system could have paved the way to establish an ideological base for the country. Consistent military takeovers weakened the democratic institutions which destroy the platforms of building ideological narratives. Policies were formed keeping in sight the political interest rather than national interest.
Political Structure

Pakistan’s political structure remains inconsistent throughout. The founding father wanted to have a democratic system in which fundamental rights were guaranteed by the state. However, things did not move as envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam. After the death of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the system was overpowered by bureaucracy. The first constituent assembly was suspended by Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad in 1954 when it was near to the completion of making a constitution. The second constituent assembly was reconstituted on 28th May 1955. Constitution was promulgated on 23rd March 1956, however, after two years in 1958 martial law was imposed and the constitution was abrogated. This started the decline of democratic norms in the country. Power was consolidated by military and bureaucracy. This system remains in place for 12 years. In 1970 the power was returned to the elected representative of the people. In 1973 new constitution was formed which provided hope for democracy. However, the period was short-lived. Again in 1977, martial law was imposed, and the country once again dived into chaos. Democracy returned after 10 years but due to the establishment’s deep-rooted influence, the democratic system failed to take off and was derailed after 11 years in 1999. This political wrangling continues for 9 years through military rule and pseudo civilian rule afterward. The collapse of the political structure provides impetus to flawed policymaking. Military rulers make foreign policies on personal interest so that they may remain an authority with the backing of a few world powers. Relationship with Russia during military regimes remains sour. In 1960 the government was inclined more towards the west as it supported the military establishment. Cooperation with the west was more based on quid pro quo against the socialist bloc rather than an independent sovereign foreign policy. During the 1970s relationship with Russia improved as the foreign policy was devised through political debate. The relationship declined after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan as the military establishment took aside. Whenever a policy was devised through political dialogue and through debates in the parliament, strong and robust narratives were produced. In the case of weakened political structures, the foreign policy failed to give desired results which hurt national interest. The current scenario paints an improved relationship with Russia only because of prudent foreign policy which got possible because of improved democratic institutions.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Since Independence Pakistan’s policy towards Russia remained complex and contradictory. Historically there were many ups and downs in their relationship but most of the time negativity prevails in their approaches. This was due to Pakistan’s western inclination and Russia’s pro-India alliance. Determining foreign policy by analyzing different factors was not initiated. Pakistan’s requirement of economic assistance could have been catered by adopting prudent foreign policy towards Russia. Economic cooperation treaties would have helped Pakistan in the development of its industrial base. Cooperation in the energy and the mining sector would have provided the impetus to the sustainable economic growth of the country. Healthy relations with Russia would have helped in the resolution of core issues with India specially the Kashmir issue. However, the relationship was revitalized in the last 2 decades as both states see strategic interest in improving the relationship. The foreign policy adopted by Pakistan after independence did not deliver the results as it was based on political interest rather than on national interest. Fundamentals were ignored and as a result, various opportunities were lost which could have helped Pakistan in resolving its border issues with India through Russia. Good and healthy relations with Russia could have generated wealth and would have reduced poverty in the region. Pakistan should forge long term strategic relationships with Russia keeping in view its geostrategic importance. Russia should be facilitated for joining the CPEC which will bring long term investment, security, and stability in the region. Trade routes from Pakistan via Central Asian states to Russia could become another game-changer in the region as it will improve the trade among the regional states.
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