CHAPTER - 4

INDIA, IRAN AND THE NEIGHBOURS
India's connection with Afghanistan dates back to the ancient period. In fact, it had become a part and parcel of greater India for a long time. We have seen great Mughal emperors from Kabul wielding influence on India and ruling India for centuries.

Afghanistan has remained the most backward country and because of its, mountainous region, in the 20th century, it attracted the terrorists to gain power over the region. One such is the Taliban movement. Taliban Movement in Afghanistan since 1994 has been the major opposing forces. Their administrative entity is the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), the Islamic State of Afghanistan. They are led by coalition of groups, which call themselves as the United National Islamic Front for the salvation of Afghanistan or the United Front.

Talibans were basically rural based from Afghanistan and Pakistan. They were the products of the religious schools or Madrasas. They grew out of the necessity to fight especially against the Soviets. These schools recruited the guerilla fighters or Mujahidin. Their leaders were all mullas trained in Qandahar. The head of the Taliban, Mulla Mohammad Omar, assumed the title Amir-ul-Momneen-the Commander of the faithful. He is assisted by Shoras or the consultative bodies. It was he who renamed Afghanistan to Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 1997 October.

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2 Ibid.
Taliban opines that it has to be recognized as the legitimate authority in Afghanistan because it claims that it has brought security to the country's population after years of anarchy under the warlords. Here most government offices barely function and their administration is very harsh and oppressive. When Taliban realized that it could not operate on its own, it immediately attracted Pakistan and Saudi Arabia for aid. They provided military and financial aid to Taliban to make it an effective military force. An estimated 15,000 of the Taliban's fighting forces comprise of non-Afghans i.e., from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan Gulf States and even China. By paying money it secured the support of former Mujahidin groups, particularly those of associated with Hizb-e-Islami.

In 1996, the groups opposed to the Taliban formed a United Front. The President of the ousted government Burhanuddin Rabbani remained President of the ISA, and the titular head of the United Front. The real power was the Front's Military leader, Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was also ISA's minister for defense. The alliance received assistance of various kinds-military, financial and diplomatic from Iran, Russia and neighboring states.

There has been three phases to the ongoing war in Afghanistan. In every phase foreign powers have intensified the conflict by supporting one side against the other. The first phase was marked by the Soviet invasion.

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4 Ibid.
and its occupation of Afghanistan 1979-1989.\(^6\) In the second phase, after the Soviet withdrawal, various Mujahidin parties sponsored by neighboring powers, vied for control over the country and its capital Kabul. It was under these circumstances that Taliban emerged in 1994 and ultimately succeeded in taking control of Kabul.\(^7\) In the third phase—the present—the coalition known as United Front supported by Russia and Iran had succeeded in controlling a part of the little territory against the Taliban, which received support primarily from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

On April 22, 1978 the People’s Democratic party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a small-factionalized Marxist - Leninist Party took power in a coup.\(^8\) In 1992 Rabbani became the President of Afghanistan. Hence, in order to control power, from 1994 onwards Taliban started its military operations.

**Iran’s Assistance**

As far as Iran was concerned, like Pakistan, it was interested in the affairs of Afghanistan. It wasted no time in helping Afghanistan to fight against the inimical forces against Afghanistan. It was responsible for sending military assistance to the United Front, providing significant levels of weapons and training till the capture of Taloqan by the Taliban in late 2000.\(^9\) This limited the Front’s access to secure supply routes. United Front really thanked Iran’s gesture in supplying arms but they stated that they had

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Human Rights 2001, p. 13.
paid to Iran all their purchases in cash.\(^{10}\) This argument has been doubted by many that so much financial transaction could not have been conducted for arms transfer keeping in mind the financial conditions of the United Front. Most of its big cities were lost to Taliban and United Front’s ability to generate could have been nearly impossible. Both the military governor of Taloqan and the Chief Civil Official in the Panjshir valley indicated to Human Rights Watch that the tax revenues gathered by the United Front were just sufficient to cover expenditure for the provision of basic public services.

It was during the Soviet’s occupation in 1979-1988 that Iran’s helping hand was extended to Afghanistan. It was reported that some two million Afghans fled to Iran and they founded some nine-resistance groups in exile.\(^{11}\) Iran also supported in Afghanistan some pro-Iranian Shia resistance groups including Hizb-i-Wahdat, Nasr and Sepah. However during the initial period Iran was not of much help morally and politically. They had to concentrate on refugee issue as they shared the same border.

In the year 1987, the Soviet’s withdrew its troops and this coincided with the death of Imam Khomaini of Iran. This led Iran to think about its strategy in Afghanistan. Under Imam Khomaini the policy towards Afghanistan had been driven by ideological and sectarian interests.

\(^{10}\) Human Rights Watch 1999, June 17\(^{th}\).
\(^{11}\) Human Rights 2000, p. 35.
However, in the year 1989 itself Iran began to broaden its contracts in Afghanistan and they wanted to build relations with parties other than traditional Afghan Shia proxies. In 1991, Iran signed a trilateral treaty on cultural co-operation with the government of Tajikistan Hizb-i-vahdat and Burhanuddin Rabbani’s Jamiat-e-Islami. This aimed at spreading Iranian influence in Afghanistan.\(^\text{12}\) At the same time Iran established contacts with Ismail Shia and Uzbek groups in Afghanistan and this furthered the relationship with United Front groups. So in the 1992, these forces-under the command of Tajik Commander Massoud, Uzbek Gen: Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ismail Shi’a leader Jaffar Naderi, and the Hazara leader Hizb-i-Wahdat, Abdul Ali Mazari-seized Kabul and pre-empted a UN brokered transfer of power that was to have taken place a few days later.\(^\text{13}\)

Between 1992 and 1995 Iran supported various factions separately. The prime beneficiary of this support was the Hizb-i-Wahdat. The Iranian government also provided military support to Dostum’s forces, reportedly prompting open complaints of “outside Iranian interference” from other parties, mostly from Massoud.\(^\text{14}\)

The real Iranian involvement in Afghanistan came in 1995 when Taliban posed a serious military threat not only within Afghanistan but also to the border touching Iranian frontiers. Taliban entered Pakistan and they

\(^{12}\) Rubia – Fragmentation of Afghanistan, p. 252.

\(^{13}\) Human Rights 2000, p. 2.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 36.
captured Hizb-i-vahdat leader Mazari. They later killed him. Later Taliban captured a place called Herat, near the Iranian border. This posed a threat to the Iranian interests.

Iranian support to Afghanistan was both diplomatic and military till the capture of Kabul in 1996. After that Iranian's diplomacy did not work much here.

United Front always claimed that supply problems were a severe constraint on the Front’s military operations. Iran could not send proper arms and ammunitions due to this problem. United Front moreover, had no control on substantial airfields rendering a major hurdle in transportation.

In October 1998, a large train shipment of weapons and ammunitions enrooted from Mashhad, Iran to United Front forces was intercepted in Qirqizistan. When Kyrgyz MNB (KGB agency) opened the train they found from Iran 100 mm and 115 mm tank ammunition for the T-55 and T-62 tanks respectively, 1.22 howitzers 120 mm mortar bombs, rockets etc. Whether all these weapons came from Soviet Union or Iran is not clear. Iran boosts of growing arms industry that currently produces a many other things, 122 mm rockets compatible with the BM-21 system, 122 mm mortar

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15 See Anthony Davis – Afghanistan’s Taliban (London), Jane Intelligence Review – Vol. 7, pp. 57-58.
17 Ibid.
bombs, and larger-caliber tank ammunition. In addition to these weapons, the shipment also comprised of nonmetal and dual-use goods, including explosives etc., and also boots, blankets.

A number of Iranian made anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines have been found in Afghanistan for United Front. They included NR4 AIP (Anti-Personnel) blast mine (copy of Israeli No.4 A/P mine), YMI A/P blast mine, m/m (minimum metal) (copy of Italian Ts 50 A/p Mine), YM 11 A/J (antitank, or anti-vehicle), blast mine m/m (copy of Italian SB 81 A/T mine), YM 111 A/T blast mine, m/m (copy of Chinese, T72 A/T mine) and M19 A/T blast mine m/m (copy of U.S. M19 A/T mine).

Taliban victory was felt everywhere in Afghanistan. Following victory over Harat and Kabul in Sept. 1996, the supply of men, weapons and other material from Iran was re-directed to other Front held cities, notably that of Bamian and Mazar-i-Sharif. Both these cities have airfields which are capable of handling mid sized cargo aircraft such as the Soviet designed An-24 and An 32 and American designed C-130 Hercules-all in service with the Iranian military. Many of them have witnessed Iranian military Cargo Planes arriving and departing from the Bamian and Mazar-i-Sharif airports during the years from 1996 to 98. After sometime the Talibans captured even Bamian and Mazar-e-Sharif. Iran was forced to depend on land route.

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21 See Anthony Davis e-mail Communication with Human Rights of 1999.
Journalist Anthony Davis and other two journalists were eyewitness to see Iranian airplanes flying and landing on these airports. All these planes carried arms and ammunitions. When in 1998 United Front began to lose all its grounds, Iranian re-supply also started crippling. Talibans sealed the fate of Iran to enter Afghanistan even by land routes by 1998.

Since Iranians could not provide any help either land or air route to United Front, they began to support to the Jamiyat forces of Massoud. In February 1998 Massoud made his first trip to Tehran secretly in order to meet with senior Iranian military and civilian leaders. Massoud’s forces not only represented the last substantial anti-Taliban military units remaining in the fields but also controlled the Tajik border area of east of Dasht-i-Qala. Human Rights watch opined Iranian military aid was decided among Massoud’s Jamiyat forces and the forces of Hizab-e-Wahdat in Afghanistan. Iranian officials reportedly monitored the shipments and ensured that Hizb-i-Wahdat received the equipments it needed. Massoud was very angry at Iran’s behavior. They thought that only United Front or ISA had the authority after Afghanistan’s defence. But these complaints had little impression upon Iran. United Front had very little option but to accept Iran’s coalitions.

Part of Iranian government’s support of the United Front had focused on widening ground access to outside supplies. Until the fall of Taloqan in

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22 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
September 2000, the bridge of Dasht-i-Qala was key to this approach. Work on bridge had started in the year 1999 itself. Many Iranian engineers and workers struggled very hard using their skill. Many journalists had interviewed the construction crew.\textsuperscript{26} Iranian engineers started construction of new bridge across the Amu Darya River. The Iranian engineering team reportedly attempted to avoid contact with other foreigners in the area and appeared reluctant to concede that they were from Iran. At the time of Taliban attack, the bridge was still in progress. Had the United Front control over this bridge, then it would have allowed heavy traffic up to Tajikistan and a truck road running to join Russian-Tajik military base.

The Iranian government had also been involved in training anti-Taliban forces i.e., Northern Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{27} When Human Rights Watch visited United Front controlled areas in June 1999, military training was being provided by small teams of proximity, approximately five to eight military instructors who arrived from Iran periodically to lead courses at a training centre near the village of Farkhar at the Takhar province. Human Rights Watch researchers visited the place and spoke to a number of students, who confirmed the regular presence of five to eight Iranian military instructors at the camp.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Human Rights, 1999, p. 10.
This was the training the Iranians were giving to the anti-Taliban Afghans before the Taliban strike. This surely would have taxed the Iranians.

While Iran was assisting Afghanistan against Taliban, India was not silent nor had maintained isolation. India and Iran will facilitate US and Russian plans for limited military action against Taliban if the contemplated tough new economic sanctioning doesn't bend Afghanistan’s fundamentalist regime Iyer stated a newspaper.29

Indian foreign Secretary Chokila Iyer attended the crucial session of the second Indo-Russian joint working group on Afghanistan in Moscow. Indian officials were of the opinion that India and Iran would play the role of facilitators while the U.S. and Russia would combat the Taliban from front with the help of two Central Asian countries (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) to push Taliban lines back to the 1996 position 50 Km away from Mazar-e-Sharif city in Northern Afghanistan.30

Several Diplomats stated that anti-Taliban move followed a meeting between US Secretary of State Collin Powell and Russian Foreign minister Igor Ivan V. Later between Powell and Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh in Washington. Russia, India and Iran had also series of discussions. India and Iran were to provide logistic support for action against Taliban.

30 Ibid.
India and Iran had been assisting the Northern Alliance and the Afghan people under their humanitarian programme since Taliban's ouster of the Rabbani government in 1996. The US needed Russian assistance because of Soviet knowledge of the Afghan terrain. The former Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan in 1979 and withdrew in 1989.

Shia Iran, on its part was reluctant to tolerate a Sunni militia regime on its border that gives Pakistan a Sunni country and a sponsor of the Taliban—"a strategic sway" on considerable parts of the Iranian border. Iran was also affected by a Taliban-sponsored movement in Isfahan province where Sunnis have a sizeable population. Iran was also worried over the unending war effort of the Taliban to get supremacy in Afghanistan that was harming her economic interests. India, Iran and Russia, for example, were working on a broad plan to supply oil and gas to South-Asia and South-East Asian countries through India. Unfortunately the instability in Afghanistan posed a threat to this effort.

India like Iran was very apprehensive about the increasing infiltration of Afghan trained foreign mercenaries into Kashmir. Security agencies had reported that as many as 15,000 hardcore militants have received in such places in Afghanistan as Khost, Jalalabad, Kabul and Qandahar since 1995. There were nearly 55 terrorist training camps located in Afghanistan and were funded by Islamic fundamentalists to carry out attacks against non-Islamic nations.

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31 David Icke — Afghan war planned as for back as June — News Room htm, p.3, 26 June 2001.
32 Ibid.
33 See W.W.W. Davidick, Com.
34 See W.W.W.Davidick, Com.
In fact, India’s Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had made his trip to Tehran. He had met President Mohammad Khatami of Iran to work closer in restoring peace to the war-torn Afghanistan. In fact, Vajpayee was the first premier to visit Iran since 1993. In the meeting both of them insisted on closer ties between them. “Iran and India can co-operate for the sake of progress and the establishment of stability and peace in the region (Afghanistan).” Vajpayee also met the Iranian defence minister and they decided to support Commander Ahmed Shah Massoud, the Veteran Afghan opposed to Taliban.

The Iranian Foreign minister Dr. Kamal Kharrazi stated, “We will speak to our friends in Pakistan”. Also added “there is a need to change policies towards Afghanistan, and they must encourage Afghan groups to sit down and negotiate”. Experience has proven that the “Afghan crises has no military solution and that the warring sides in Afghanistan should sit down at the negotiating table”, the official” Iranian news agency IRNA reported. On the other hand Islamabad always had denied giving them any military support.

On the whole, to say, India’s official position is for a peaceful and lasting solution to the Afghan problem. But strongly advocated strict economic sanctions against Taliban and is also not averse to a limited military action to weaken it.

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36 Ibid.
India and Iran - Kashmir problem

As we have discussed earlier that India had cultural contacts with Iran from times immemorial, their friendship grew more as days passed on. It is true that there were several upheavals i.e., their relationship especially regarding Iran’s relationship with Pakistan etc. But nonetheless especially after 1950 treaty their friendship continued though Shah’s regime had several differences like their lenience to western policies, yet Shah of Iran visited India during Jawaharlal Nehru’s regime in the year 1959. But even after the visit also India had more contact with Iraq and Iran was busy with supplying of oil to Bangladesh. Though Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India had visited Iran in 1974 and Shah had reciprocated her visit by visiting in 1978, still their friendship lacked the real zeal. The credit goes to Atal Bihari Vajpayee for being instrumental in fostering the relationship between the two countries.

Vajpayee was he External Affairs Minister in the Janata Party government and Ayatollah Khomeini had become the leader of Iran over throwing Shah regime in 1979. Vajpayee described Imam Khomeini as the father figure of Iranian Revolution. He regarded it was the time to extend India’s friendship to them. He said, India viewed the revolution of Iran as a reflection of Iran’s quest for identity and national self-assertion and a desire to charter an independent course without outside Big Power influence.

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Sushama Gupta, Pakistan as a Factor in Indo-Iranian Relations 1947-78 (New Delhi, 1988), p. 46.
Later when Iran was busy fighting with Iraq led to a rift in the relationship. Iran's highly inflammatory media campaign about Kashmir and Indian Muslims brought a new factor in Indo-Iranian relationship.\textsuperscript{38} The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the former's disintegration together with the end of cold war and the emergence of Pan Americans in the West Asian and North African (WANA) region brought additional pressure on India and affected ties with Iran and other organization of Islamic Conference states (OIC).

The destruction of Baberi Mosque on Dec 6, 1992, all the Islamic states criticized India. The most critical stand was taken by Iran.\textsuperscript{39} It appealed to Indian government to make wise and calculated decisions. Ayatollah's Khomeini supporters staged even a demonstration in front of Indian embassy in Tehran.

It is believed that the 1979 Iranian revolution had a favorable impact on the Kashmiri Muslims. Among the organizations Jamat-e-Islami not only welcomed the change in Iran but also openly supported the new Islamic Iranian leadership.\textsuperscript{40} The Jamaat-e-Islami during 1987 elections to the Assembly got majority in the Muslim United Front. This comprised of twelve religious and political organizations in the Kashmir valley. Most of the people believed that the Muslim United Front got financial assistance from Iran and also they (Iran) were to a greater extent responsible for forming

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 149.
Muslim United Front. This was because these MUF members got invitations to attend either religious conferences or Iranian Revolution day celebrations at Tehran.\(^1\) The key leaders of this Front were Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Moulavi, Abbas Ansari, Prof. Abdul Ghani, and Dr. Ghulam Qadir Wani etc. When the Front’s basic ideology is taken, it reflects the teachings of Imam Khomeini’s. This was applicable to both Shias and the Sunnis.

In Iran also Kashmir issue and coming of Muslim United Front was highly talked and the Press, radio also had given enough footage. An Iranian Newspaper had described the contest between the National Conference Congress and the MUF as one of infidels and the Islamic revolutionaries.\(^2\)

In the early 1990’s Iran had cut off ties with India. When Indian External Affairs minister Gujral wanted to visit Tehran to highlight Iran’s concern over the developments in Kashmir, it had prohibited him from visiting. But after Iraq – Kuwait crisis, due to US pressure India and Iran came together.\(^3\) This was also mainly because of the fact that war of eight years (1980-1988) with Iraq had taxed its economy to the maximum extent. Iran now realized that Gulf countries had throughout opposed the Iranian revolution.\(^4\) So it decided to re-orient its foreign policy to focus more on

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\(^{1}\) Ibid.  
\(^{3}\) Farah Naaz, Indo – Iranian Relations in nineteen, IDSA.  

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Asia and Far East than into the Arab world. As a matter of fact, culturally, geographically and ethnically Iran was closer to India, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Before this Gulf war, Iran used to export its items to Arab countries but now they found it difficult to do it. One Iranian economist stated the Arabs are rich and despise us. They prefer to buy western products and we have nothing to offer them except oil of which they have much more than we do. On the other hand, our economy can be complementary to that of let's say Pakistan, we can provide them oil and get agricultural products in return. The trend can be extended up to and India. We can build joint ventures with China; we can look into East India.

It was mainly because of compulsion that forced Iran to normalize ties with India. As Iran's foreign Minister Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati hoped for good ties with India. "We know that it is also the will of Indian government. Even though, he said, Iran's most important foreign policy principle was non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries including India, but Iran as a Islamic country supports Muslims and Islam". He also said, "If Muslims in India, or elsewhere are under pressure or if they are in difficult situation, we take decisions and provide support based on humanitarian aspects and Islamic principles. The situation is same in Kashmir."

44 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Times of India, November 12-13, 1992.
Since both the countries are willing to restore friendship all over again, it was Madhavasinh Solanki, the then External Affairs minister turn to visit Tehran in the year 1991 November. Iran here had shown sensitivity to India’s concern in this regard and to make it clear that Jammu and Kashmir was the integral part of India. Solanki also stated that both president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Dr. Velayati had expressed a keen desire to carry forward India-Iranian relations comprehensively and open a new chapter in both the states.\(^\text{47}\)

Mr. Velayati also assured India that regarding Kashmir they had all the concern. President Rafsanjani during a visit to Pakistan in September 1992 voiced support for the right of self-determination of Muslims of Kashmir in his address to the joint session of Pakistan’s Parliament in Islamabad.\(^\text{48}\) President Rafsanjani was the first leader of an Islamic country to express such sentiments or endorse Pakistan’s stand on Kashmir, nor will he be the last. On the other hand, if the line he adopted on Kashmir started gaining general acceptance among OIC countries, then India could find Kashmir becoming the biggest obstacle in is relations with them. Besides the substance of his speech, it was the manner and place where he said that it gives importance. He told his hosts that Kashmir was not merely their problem but an Islamic problem. Tehran by law gave priority to Islamic and neighboring countries. He also added that anything that harms Pakistan, generally speaking harms Iran. We have a common destiny”.\(^\text{49}\)

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
\(^{48}\) Ibid.
\(^{49}\) Times of India, November, 17, 1992
He was quite contrary to India's friendship and alliance. President Rafsanjani not only rejected India's stand that the OIC countries have no locus-standi on Kashmir issue, Baberi Masjid as well as issues concerning Indian Muslims. He placed "Iran solidly behind Pakistan in its fight to secure for its Muslim brethren in Kashmir the right to self-determination." He went even further by declaring that the fundamental premise of Iranian foreign policy was to "address the rights of Muslims wherever they are". He also complained against the United Nations for not implementing the resolutions and the Kashmir question. Before leaving Pakistan, President Rafsanjani reiterated his stand on Kashmir and said Iran has consistently defended the Kashmir right to self-determination, despite his country's good ties with India.

The Indian government watching Iran's wavering stand described it as unexpected because India's Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had explained India's position on the question to President Rafsanjani, during their talks at NAAM Summit at Jakarta. The spokesman also called that the two countries had reviewed the situation about six weeks ago at a high level meeting when Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. Eduardo Faleiro visited Iran. The Spokesman stated that any suggestion that the UN resolutions were still relevant to Kashmir was unacceptable. Any bid to refer the issues affecting Indians belonging to a particular faith amounted to interference in the country's internal affairs.

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50 Ibid.
51 Times of India, September 8, 1992, p. 3.
52 Ibid.
Despite similar views on Kashmir both Pakistan and Iran had differences over Afghanistan, Shia-Sunni, Central Asia, Saudi-Arabia and Arabs. In his address to Pakistan National Assembly, President Rafsanjani made in fact an oblique reference to these inferences. Iran was taking them in its strides just as New Delhi should be doing vis-à-vis Tehran. But according to Paper Pioneer Iran’s support to Kashmir in Pakistan led to calls for end to India’s subservience to Pan-Islamism.

When one looks at Iran’s foreign policy, it is self-evident that both as a neighbor and a champion of Muslim causes, it has closer ties to Pakistan. It is quiet obvious here because Muslim or Islamic interests come here. It is unrealistic for India to expect Iran to observe balance in its relations with Islamabad and New Delhi.

Iran in its contradictory policy once again expressed its full support for the territorial integrity of India and made it clear that it would not back separatists in Kashmir. Iran’s Foreign Minister Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati told this to the visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Mr. J. N. Dixit in Tehran in July 11, 1993.

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53 Ibid.
56 Times of India, July 12, 1993.
The then, Prime Minister of India Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao visited Iran in Set 21-23, 1993 to boost Indo-Iranian ties. Iran's assurance to India that it had no desire to interfere in India's internal affairs including Kashmir was received by Kashmiri-Muslims with shock and disbelief. This was because Iran as considered second only to Pakistan in its support for the Kashmiri's struggles for freedom. In fact Iran's stand here was a welcome change India and from Iran's point of view, they were more concerned in having ties with India than to think of interfering with its internal problems at that point of time.

It is true that in 1991 Iran had supported Kashmir struggle and offered to mediate for a settlement of the problem. Jama-at-e-Islami leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani remarked that Iran had always supported us and will support at moral, political and diplomatic levels. But its militant arm Hizbul Mujahideen expressed surprise over Iran's shift in stand and said that they had belied all hopes. It alleged that by taking a pro-Hindu stand on Kashmir, Iran had falsified its pledge as an Islamic country to support the oppressed peoples of the World.57 If we look from Iran's point of view they did not mean to antagonize with India over a small group of militants.

During the Hazratbal crisis, Iran said India was following a wise policy of seeking settlement of the Kashmir issue without outside interference and appreciated its restraint, sagacity and wisdom in handling

57 Ibid.
the Hazrabal crisis. India’s first Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Alaeddin
Broujerdi assured Iran’s support to India in the OIC, but at the same time
urged New Delhi to the speedy steps to resolve the Kashmir issue. He
stated that any delay would complicate the matter and Iran would not like it.

India’s Minister for External Affairs Mr. Dinesh Singh briefed the
visiting minister on the status of India’s dialogue with the OIC, a process in
which Iran has assured to play a crucial and construction role. Iran is a
country, here it should be noted that it is more concerned about the welfare
of the Muslims all over the world. It is to be noted here that India is the
second largest Muslim population in the world. Iran struck to the Simla
agreement to be the basis and India’s insistence by Pakistan and other OIC
states is all right but New Delhi must evolve a clearly enunciated realistic
and workable policy towards Kashmir and initiate talks with Pakistan. Iran
also felt that the insurgency in Kashmir was self-sustaining.

During the UNHRC meeting in Geneva in February - March 1994,
Iran played a crucial role in persuading Pakistan to withdraw the resolution it
had tabled on Kashmir. It might be recalled that Pakistan after having
presented a resolution on Kashmir first amended the resolution and then
voluntarily withdraw the same at the last moment. This was mainly under
the pressure from Iran and China as also from other OIC states who
preferred to remain outside the contest. India’s Foreign Secretary Mr.

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60 The Hindu, November 16, 1993.
Krishna Srinivasan said that fifteen countries had specifically asked Pakistan to withdraw its resolution after Iran’s intervention. Referring to the Iranian ambassador’s statement in Geneva about a group of ambassadors from Muslim countries visiting Jammu and Kashmir, he said, it could not be assumed that the envoy’s visit would be termed as an international fact finding mission. He explained that all New Delhi based ambassadors including those from the Muslim countries with the exception of Pakistan and Libya did not require any prior permission to visit Kashmir. He also said “Iran and China have been helpful in persuading Pakistan to withdraw and also added that any effort by Iran to persuade Pakistan to create a constructive climate for an Indo-Pakistan dialogue to resolve bilateral issues would be acceptable. Whereas Pakistan did everything to mobilize support for the resolution. India had kept a low profile and worked in normal code. India also on the other hand coordinated its policy with Iran and had monitored day-to-day affairs of the ongoing events. It was sure of defeating the Pakistani resolution if it was put for voting. The co-operation between India and Iran made it possible for India show grace and avoid any kind of embarrassment.

It was in this connection that the ailing External Affairs Minister Mr. Dinesh Singh had travelled to Tehran to meet Iranian leaders on the UNHRC meet at Geneva. He also met the Chinese foreign minister in Tehran who was visiting Iran. There was a considerable speculation of China-India-Iran axis, which had been advocated by Iranian President

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62 Ibid.
63 Times of India, March 21, 1994.
Hashemi Rafsanjani while on an official visit to China. Mr. Broujerdi soon during the visit to Pakistan said that though there were no written assurance from India about the visit to Muslim envoys to Kashmir, it was something that was discussed in the meeting with the Indians. He hoped that the Ambassador’s visit will take place and would facilitate in finding a solution to the Kashmir issue. He said Iran would fulfill its responsibility of bringing about the visit. Iran, he said had always supported Islamic causes and it was in this context that it had supported the cause of the Kashmiri’s. He reaffirmed that there was no change in the Iranian stand on this matter.

The Iranian ambassador in New Delhi, Mr. Reza Shaikh Attar who visited Jammu and Kashmir along with other Ambassadors in Delhi during early May 1994 charged the government of taking him on the orchestrated trip to the strife torn Indian state. Mr. Attar wished to break away from the group of Ambassadors to meet people even at the cost of losing security cover. In the wake of India’s swift rebuttal of any deal of Geneva during UHRC, Iran appeared to reassure Islamabad that tilt towards India was not at the cost of its traditional friendship with it. The Iranian Ambassador’s sudden change of stand during his visit to Srinagar benefited Pakistan, which as chairman of OIC, highlighted to the detriment of India’s interests.

The Iranian Ambassador was summoned back and despite Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati’s statement to India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir

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64 Ibid., March 20, 1993.
65 Ibid.
issue amongst themselves, no solution came forth. Iranian Ambassador said that India’s reaction was positive in resolving the Kashmir issue with Pakistan.

Iran on its side though made every effort to make an amicable settlement for India and Pakistan over Kashmir issue, it came under criticism in 1994. The visit of Dr. Hassan Rohani, Deputy Speaker of Majlis was characterized as rather unfortunate departure from diplomatic norms, which strained Indo-Iranian ties. India also stated that Dr. Rohani made unwarranted reference to the persecution of which Indian Muslims suffered at the hands of Right-wing forces in India that Rohani was being assured of Baberi Masjid to be rebuilt. If the Deputy Speaker had spoken in that manner, this was purely to help the Muslims and probably this was not to offend the Indians as a whole. Indians also criticized the postponement of President Ali Akbar Rafaqanji’s visit to India in October 10, 1994 due to plague scare as “transparent ploy.” In fact, here in Iran, it was more due to the Power struggle between President Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khomeini’s so called politics within Tehran’s Byzantine power structure, which led the visit to be postponed to April 1995. As one newspaper noted as long as Iran remains, a regimented society under an Islamic fundamentalist leadership, only the mere trappings of democracy the relations between New Delhi and Tehran will never quite free of tension.

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66 The Times of India – March 1994, pp. 7-9.
68 Times of India, October 14, 1998.
To sum up, the Iranians have always stated that their diplomacy aimed at doing what was best to India, Kashmir and Pakistan. It is true at times it was closer to Pakistan in the name of Islamic brotherhood and also due to the CENTO alliance. But ultimately Iran wanted to see that peace and tranquility prevailed in Kashmir and South Asia, so that her own geopolitical and economic interest would be protected.

India, Iran and Pakistan – Triangular Relations

The triangular relations of India, Pakistan and Iran form one of the interesting issues to be studied. This relationship has become more complex and delicate in the recent times in the context of the contemporary political scenario. All the three countries have long standing relationship. In fact, India and Iran had come closer in the past. However, Pakistan, being a new nation its relationship with Iran forms only part of our recent history since the creation of Pakistan as a separate country. Thus the relation between the three countries has been marked by constant suspicion, tension and diplomatic maneuvering.

In fact, after the partition between India and Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan was much smaller and weaker than its counterpart (India) in natural resources, manpower and economic development. The partition had taken place in the wake of bitter controversy and rancour between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League on the creation and validity of the concept of Pakistan. When the leaders of the Muslim
League took over power in the newly created state of Pakistan, they were convinced that India had not accepted Pakistan.

Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan. Liaqat Ali Khan during his stay in Iran on his way back home from London in May 1949 remarked, “My hope for the future is that Iran and Pakistan will be like one soul in two bodies. All the Muslim countries are our heart”. The Shah, who returned from the visit in 1950, stated at a banquet hosted in his honour by the Governor-General of Pakistan, “what could be more natural than love between the two nations that are neighbours and profess the same faith? Iran ill never forget the affectionate regards and sincere feelings of this sister and co-religion nation”.

India was perceived by Pakistan as a big powerful country and it felt threatened all the time. With Iran it was quiet comfortable sharing same rapport as any other Muslim state. Hence Pakistan fashioned its defence strategy and foreign policy to seek external support through alliance to make up for its vulnerability against India. To this end on one side Pakistan joined the US sponsored military alliance like CENTO and SEATO on the other side it sought to close relations with the Muslim countries of West Asia. It was in this background that the basis of Iran - Pakistan relations were laid during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi.

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70 Ibid.
71 Kalim Bahadur, Pakistan as a Factor in Indo-Iran Relations (ed.) book by Girijesh Pant – Contemporary (New Delhi), pp. 119-120.
It was during the Shah's visit to Pakistan, the Pakistani leaders while welcoming Iran, projected India as the expansionist power and herself as victim of Indian designs. On the occasion, Khwaja Nezamuddin, the Governor General said "Pakistan has, from the beginning, striven to promote the friendly relations between Muslim countries and we have met with readiest response from Persia with whose people we have closer, cultural, social and spiritual ties for centuries."  

Iran under Pahlavi dynasty had been turned into a strong bulwark of American interests in West Asia. Pakistan had also attended the Pan-Islamic Conference held in Tehran in 1950. In 1951, when Iran nationalized Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Pakistan supported Iran on religious grounds. Khaja Nezamuddin, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan said, "Islam is a body and Muslim states represent limbs of it. Pain inflicted on one part of the body gives pain and anguish to the whole body."

In the early fifties, the United States intelligence agencies were instrumental in toppling the nationalist Mosadeq regime and restored the Shah as the king of Tehran. This has been discussed in detail. Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact in 1955. Iraq and Turkey were the other members. This was later renamed as Central Treaty Organization or CENTO Pakistan also became member to SEATO.

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72 Pakistan Times, March 2, 1960.
74 Dawn, March 1, 1950.
Pakistan had joined the Baghdad Pact in the control of its conflict with India. According to Ayub Khan, “The crux of the problem from the very beginning was India’s hostility towards us. We had to look for allies and secure our position.” With the military alliance of all the CENTO members, Pakistan hoped that they could confront India. While Pakistan reaped the fruits of alliance, the two alliances got military and economic aid from US. The argument that Pakistan’s inclusion was also to contain India’s neutralism is a bit too far fetched.

Pakistan in particular expected the alliances to provide political support in finding an amicable settlement of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN resolutions. The Kashmir issue led to three wars between India and Pakistan. It is to be noted though Iran as friendly at times with India, still throughout the period of active consideration of the dispute before the war (1950-1965), Pakistan got the support of Iran. This was in accordance with UN resolutions called for plebiscite on Kashmir.

As already been discussed, Iran gave diplomatic support to Pakistan over Kashmir. In the Iranian Majlis, Kashmir was described as inseparable part of Pakistan. Deputy speaker Syed Ahmad Sarai said, “We believe the decision of Security Council should be binding and the Kashmir issue settled through plebiscite under the auspices of United Nations. It is

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however, regrettable that India on the one hand criticized the defense arrangements as envisaged in the Baghdad Pact and on the other hand believed in the outmoded maxim of might is right\textsuperscript{78}. In 1962, Iran volunteered to act as a mediator between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue but tilt was clearly in Pakistan’s favour. Iran’s Foreign Minister Mr Zahedi, for instance, declared that “Iran had been telling India to solve the Kashmir problem with Pakistan on the basis of self-determination\textsuperscript{79}. Iran also helped to restore diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan after a break of two years. King Zaher Shah of Afghanistan was persuaded to tone down his support for the Pashtoonistan issue\textsuperscript{80}.

Pakistan was disappointed particularly after US gave military aid to India in 1962 Indo-Sino war. A détente in Iran-Soviet relations and a reappraisal of Pakistani foreign policy led to mooting of proposal of regional pact involving Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. This was first made open by Ayub in August 1962. Afghanistan refused and the idea remained in paper\textsuperscript{81}.

India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru had seen Iran as one of those third World countries which had not been directly taken over by the colonial powers but had suffered politically and economically during the

\textsuperscript{78} Pakistan Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. 1, No.2, 15\textsuperscript{th} March 1950, Col. 35.
\textsuperscript{79} Dawn (Karachi), 22 December 1955.
\textsuperscript{80} The Patrio (New Delhi), 16\textsuperscript{th} July 1962.
days of imperialism. India therefore, had sought close economic and political relations with Iran as with other third world countries. In the early years after Independence, India and Iran had signed the Commerce and Navigation Agreement in 1954.\textsuperscript{82} Other trade agreements were signed in 1961, 1963, 1968 and Indo-Iran joint Commission was set up in 1969\textsuperscript{83}. The well-known India-Iran Agreement on Kudremukh Iron Ore complex was signed in 1974. India also welcomed the Islamic revolutionary regime. A Janata Party delegation by Ashok Mehta had gone to Qum to meet Ayatullah Khomaini and Indira Gandhi, India’s former Prime Minister, then in opposition, had also sent message of goodwill and greetings.

Pakistan on the other hand did not favour any close ties between Iran and India especially on the political and economic front.\textsuperscript{84} In the midst of these tumultuous relationships broke out the Indo-Pakistan wars in the year 1965. Iran during the war had tilted towards Pakistan, which was natural for it.\textsuperscript{85} The first instance of military assistance from Iran to Pakistan as manifest in 1965 war. Iran considered the defence of Pakistan was its defence. Iran supplied small arms and ammunitions, although reports its collaboration with navy also. On September 8, the Iranian Foreign Ministry denounced the “Indo Pakistan war as an act of aggression committed by Indian forces against Pakistan”.\textsuperscript{86} In the General Assembly also Iran called for settlement to be achieved on the basis of self-determination. Abdur

\begin{footnotes}
\item Kalim Bahadur, p. 121.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Savita Pande, p. 128.
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Rasul Azimi, the editor of Paigham-e-Imaoze, stated that, “Iran came out to help Pakistan against Indian aggression with full consciousness that it was helping the defence of its own country”. The officials of the Iranian circles also confirmed this position. A statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry declared that Iran was concerned with India's aggression against Pakistan, a fraternal Muslim nation.

In fact, after the war, Iran gave two lakhs tones of oil to the Pakistanis. The inability of CENTO nevertheless disappointed both Iran and Pakistan. However Pakistan wanted CENTO to be dissolved, while Shah of Iran did not wish to do the same.

Throughout the war, Iranian authorities were in constant touch with Pakistani officials. At the United Nation General Assembly, the Iranian representatives declared on October 14, 1965 that any “settlement to be durable must be achieved not only on the basis of the principle of self-determination to which both parties had previously subscribed.

From Iran's point of view it had done full justice in aiding Pakistan because more than India, Pakistan needed help. It needed more medical help and attention to which Iran only complied to its rescue. Besides this,
Iran also provided shelter to the PIA fleet and other Pakistani civilian aircraft. The PIA aircraft were garaged each night and Tehran from where they operated the essential defense measures.\textsuperscript{92} Here Iran did not want to cut of any alliances of friendship with India”.

In the year 1971 Yahya Khan visited Iran. It was here that Iran assured Iran’s support to Pakistan\textsuperscript{93}. Iran even offered to mediate between India and Pakistan but India rejected the offer.\textsuperscript{94} Even after imposition of martial law, Iran-Pakistan joint exercises followed, under which Iran transferred F-5 and F-86 jets to Pakistan and also helicopters (under license in Italy through Iran) guns etc.\textsuperscript{95}

Iran’s stand in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war was little tough. But when again war between India and Pakistan in the year 1971, Iran’s stand to a great extent was less offensive. Iran did not condemn India openly as an aggressor but criticized India for intervening in Pakistan’s internal affairs. At the General Assembly, the Foreign Minister said “Nothing can justify armed intervention on the part of India against territorial integrity of Pakistan. It also sought for immediate end of military operation, an unconditional ceasefire.”\textsuperscript{96} Iranian Foreign Minister further stated in the UN General Assembly on December 7\textsuperscript{th}, “No matter how grave has been the situation of Pakistan with

\textsuperscript{92} United Nations General Assembly Official Records, Henceforth called (GAOR), Session 20, Plan Mtg: 1362 – 14\textsuperscript{th} October 165, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{94} Times of India – September 1, 197.
\textsuperscript{95} Statesman – May 19, 1971.
\textsuperscript{96} Dawn, May 9, 1978.
regard to the humanitarian question of refugees, nothing can justify armed intervention on the part of India against the territorial integrity of Pakistan. To approve such an action or to cover it up by silence and convenience would be tantamount to undermine the very foundation of the system of international relations upon which our organization is based.  

Iran considered the territorial integrity of Pakistan as a matter of grave concern to its own security. As Shah stated in an interview to the editor of Blitz: “An Indo-Pak settlement is the first imperative not only for the security development and prosperity of the Indian sub-continent but also for the neighbouring region and particularly Iran. The same idea as conveyed in the address of the Iranian Foreign Minister to the UN General Assembly on 27th September 1991 when he observed, “Recent developments in the relations between India and Pakistan are of grave concern to us. A separatist movement in East Pakistan and the subsequent flight of refugees India have strained to a critical point the already tensed relations between the two countries. We support every effort under the banner of UN to deal with the humanitarian aspect of the problem on both sides of the borders. As to the political aspect of the problem without wishing in way to interfere in the affairs of Pakistan, we are confident that the Pakistan government will do utmost to eliminate through pacific means the causes of friction and strife which brought panic and unhappiness among brothers in Pakistan.”  

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99 Blitz (Bombay), 26 June 1971, p. 1.
The Indo-Pakistan war flared up not from any conflict between the two neighbours, but from Pakistan's internal anomalies. The internal state imperialism i.e., the exploitation of East Pakistan by its Western counterpart in the economic, political and cultural spheres of life had begun to fell on Pakistan's internal stability. When the demand for a separate state was going on in East Pakistan, Shah observed, "President Yahya Khan must remember the basic cannons of history, firstly the interest of the majority must remain the overriding consideration where the majority of people were impoverished. Secondly, the rich should not be permitted to become richer at the expense of the unprivileged. Finally, world was heading towards social justice and Pakistan could not remain silent in this movement."

Further he also added that he did not want to interfere in the internal affair of Pakistan. However, as a friend of the country, he would say that General Yahya Khan must introduce the necessary reforms before elections were held and top priority must go to uncompressing fight against corruption.

The actual crisis began in March 1971, after the refusal of President Yahya Khan and Zulfaqar Ali Bhutto, the leader of Pakistan People Party (PPP) to allow the Awami League, who had won mandate in the December 1970 elections, to form the government under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and to implement its six-point programmes. When the triangular negotiations between Yahya Khan, Bhutto and Mujibur Rahman failed, the Army cracked down in East Pakistan on 22 March 1971.


\(^{101}\) Ibid.
Iran always wanted to be a neutral country since India and Pakistan were his allies so this was the reason that in March 1971 Iranian Foreign Ministry, strongly advised all powers to refrain from entering in the internal affairs of Pakistan in the period of crisis.\(^{102}\) On 16 June, the Iranian Foreign Minister visited Karachi to deliver message from the Shah to Yahya Khan. On his return, he expressed Iran’s full support to Pakistan.\(^{103}\)

As result of Pakistan’s entire civilian aircraft fleet was moved to Iran for shelter and from there they were also permitted to fly and bring essential supplies from other countries friendly to Pakistan. Material also included critical components of anti-aircraft defense, ammunition and reconnaissance, etc.\(^{104}\)

Yahya’s reign of terror was so much that there was massive influx of refugees from East Pakistan into India, threatening its social and economic structure and straining to a critical point, its already strained relations with Pakistan. T.N. Kaul, the then Foreign Secretary was sent to Iran in April 1971 to impress upon the Shah the dangers of the continuance of Pakistan’s policy in East Pakistan.\(^{105}\) This was followed by the visit of the then minister for Industrial Development, Moniual Haq Choudhary, in June 1971 with a special message from the Indian Prime Minister for Shah. He and the Iranian government were apprised of the seriousness of the

\(^{102}\) Times of India (New Delhi), 18\(^{th}\) April 1969.
\(^{103}\) Kayhan International (Tehran), 29 March 1971.
\(^{104}\) Dawn, July 24, 1974.
situation on India’s eastern borders. Tehran had maintained a cautious balance between its support to Pakistan and its sympathy was expressed on the question of refugees for which Iran called for humanitarian solution.\textsuperscript{106}

Iran also offered to mediate between India and Pakistan over the East Pakistan issue.\textsuperscript{107} India vehemently declined to this proposal. The then Minister of External Affairs, Swaran Singh told the Lok Sabha, “the question of mediation or good offices of any third country did not arise as the issue of Bangladesh is a matter between the military junta of West Pakistan and already elected representatives of East Bengal and not between India and Pakistan”.\textsuperscript{108}

It was then Iran went to support Pakistan. In addition to allowing civilian aircraft in Iran, it offered modern fire fighting equipment and experts when the oil tanks in Karachi were hit by Indians. Iran also promptly met critical shortage of ammunition and aircraft when Karachi was blocked.\textsuperscript{109}

Iran’s Ambassador in the United Nations agreed “an immediate end of military operation, an unconditional ceasefire should be followed by withdrawal of troops from the territories occupied by both sides”. India believed that this stand for calling for a ceasefire and withdrawal first and a

\textsuperscript{109} K.R. Singh – Quest for Security (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 63-64.
settlement of the refugees there after, was supportive of Pakistan's position. Support to Pakistan was expressed outside the United Nations also.\textsuperscript{110}

Iran's support to Pakistan on post-war issues was also total. In early 1972, Iran joined Pakistan in refusing to acknowledge the latter's break up as final. The joint communiqué issued after the Shah's visit to Pakistan in January 1972 said, "Future relations between the two wings of Pakistan should be resolved through negotiations between their elected leaders".\textsuperscript{111} The communiqué also called for the withdrawal of Indian troops from occupied Pakistan's territories.

On 23\textsuperscript{rd} September 1972, the Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan, Hoveida, declared that his country was against the hasty admission of Bangladesh into the United Nations and emphasized the need to settle the POW's issue in order to normalize the situation in the sub-continent. The joint communiqué, issued after President Bhutto's visit to Iran in 1973, expressed deep concern over the plight of 93,000 prisoners of war and 12,000 civilians as their continuous detention by India was in flagrant disregard of the United Nations resolutions. It also regarded the threat of trial by some prisoners of war by the Dacca authorities a step that would undermine normalization in the sub-continent.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{111} Echo – Vol. 19, No.281, 16 December 197, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{112} Kayhan International – 25 January 1972.
As regards the recognition of Bangladesh, Iran publicly stood behind Pakistan by not recognizing the break away state until Pakistan had itself done so in February 1994.\footnote{GAOR, Session 27, Plen. Mtg. 2037, 23 September 1972, pp. 7-8.}

However Iran was happy to welcome Simla Agreement calling it a “constructive starting point”\footnote{Surendra Gupta – Pakistan’s Thrust in the Muslim World (New Delhi, 1991), pp. 63-67.} but it gave whole credit to Bhutto. So on the economic front, Iran came forward to help Pakistan resolve its difficulties aggravated due to loss of domestic market of East Pakistan and inflated oil bills.\footnote{Pakistan Times – (Islamabad), 18 October 1979.} In addition to this, Iran gave loans to Pakistan worth $ 580 million and $ 1.50 million.\footnote{Surendra Gupta. Pp. 63-67.} The loan of $ 580 million was the largest that Iran had extended to any country except Egypt.

Iran had always wanted to maintain balance between these allies. So Iran’s relations with India grew slowly. In fact, for all the support and help Iran had given to Pakistan, it wanted to help Iran by offering to provide land routes for Indian goods to Iran as the former’s port were full.

It is true that since Pakistan faced with lot of problems Iran had gone their rescue and as a result it had distanced itself from India. Added to this Iran expressed concern over India’s decision to establish diplomatic ties with Israel. More important, Iran promised to continue to support “self determination of people of Kashmir under UN resolutions”.\footnote{News – December 11, 1972.}
By September 1993, Indian Prime Minister visited Iran. At the Geneva Conference on human rights, Pakistan agreed for three point formulae. Firstly, to defer the voting on the resolution for one year. Secondly, Iran will continue to exert pressure on India to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and to improve the human rights situation there. Thirdly, India had agreed to allow a fact-finding team of Muslim ambassadors to visit the state. Sixteen countries supported the package.

Iran's on human rights had not been that good for there was problem with Kurd ethnic minorities and the Bahais religious community. Iran was definitely uncomfortable with Pakistan-U.S. relationship especially with regard to Central Asian republics. Iran would also not like to see India, Pakistan join hands under U.S. pressure, which could go against its own interests.

Iran and India developed friendship and in the dispute between Iran and Soviet Union over Azerbaijan, Nehru supported the former. India supported Iran when it nationalized the oil company, supporting the country's rights over its resources.

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118 Pakistan Times – March 12 1993.
119 Times of India – 26 September 1993.
As far as oil pipeline was concerned the then Deputy Prime Minister of India L.K. Advani refused to have pipeline from India through Pakistan to Iran. Indian insistence on obscuring Pakistan’s role in the Iranian Pipeline deal was component of its strategy to exacerbate Islamabad’s contemporary global paraiah status.

It was in May 2002, that Washington justified its growing involvement in the region when it identified Iran, India and Pakistan as a “troubled triangle”. The U.S. strategy is to involve the U.S. government in the region to reduce the troubled nature. The U.S. Army war college’s Larry Goodson stated “the U.S. faces. A real conundrum in that we have to stay in order to achieve (our) strategic interest of stabilizing and transforming these troubled regions but our very presence there is going to continue to attract some of the more militant jihadists who want to challenge their conception of the U.S. project for the world. Anti-American attitudes are at an all time high in some areas. We really can’t stay and yet we dare not go”.

Washington, meanwhile, was utilizing a carrots-and-sticks policy as it tried to disrupt the rapprochement between Iran and its neighbourhood that would end Tehran’s international isolation. The Bush administration’s carrot was an offer to sell India and Pakistan advanced F-16 fighter jets capable of dispatching nuclear payloads. India was yet to accept the offer. As far as Pakistan, given Iran’s close co-operation with arch-foe, India, it had steered

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122 Ibid.
a more ambivalent courses, welcoming a permanent US presence in Afghanistan even as it offers to act as an intermediary between Washington and Tehran on the nuclear dispute.

In February 2005, Pakistani officials said the proposed sale of F-16 jets to Islamabad had no links with the US-Iran stand off. They were responding to reports in the media insinuating that, in return for the F-16's Pakistan agreed to co-operate with Washington's efforts to undo the Iran's nuclear program. Pakistan admitted that on its top nuclear scientists Abdul Qadeer Khan supplied Iran with centrifuges used to enrich uranium for atomic warheads and some officials criticized Iran for co-operating with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Tension prevailed between Pakistan and Iran, and Iran has been accused of sponsoring an ethnic led insurgency in the Baluchistan province that connects the two countries.

India on the other hand developed friendship with China. Iran likewise has improved its relations with China, Beijing and Tehran signed a preliminary accord with $ 70 billion to $ 100 billion by which China will buy Iranian oil and gas.

As a part of Tehran' eastern bound move, it has built solid trade relations with India and is pursuing a common policy in Central Asia, a key strategic region. In January, the state run Indian Oil Corporation reached an

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123 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
agreement with the Iranian firm Petropars to develop a gas block in the gigantic South Pars gas field, home to the world’s largest reserves. At the same time, India also co-operated with Iran on securing Persian Gulf sea-lanes and helped Iran to develop its Chabahar port. This was partly aimed at frustrating Pakistan’s ambition to make its own port at Goadar, just a few kilometers to the east, into the regional hub. Moreover Pakistan could not stand India and Iran getting any closer to each other.

At the same time, there was rapid expansion in energy ties. Iran and India were engaged in a joint project to build a gas pipeline that would also cross Pakistan. Dubbed the “peace pipeline the $ 4.5 billion project could cement relations among the three through creating financial incentives for peaceful co-existence. But Washington signaled its displeasure with India’s collaboration with Iran when the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that Washington had concerns over the pipeline deal. In a rare snub to Washington, India responded by saying that long-term energy security would dictate its energy polity not politics. “I think that there are a number of companies”, said Indian Petroleum Secretary S.C. Tripathi.

“A large number of countries are having economic relations with Iran, therefore, it should be possible for us also to work out on reasonable and well-drafted and well-crafted hydrocarbon agreement in Iran. I think it should be possible.”

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127 Ibid.
128 Iran – May 3, p. 7.
129 Ibid.
In addition to this India and Iran have also cultivated limited military relations conducting a joint naval exercise in March 2003. This was not liked by Pakistan. This was possibly motivated on Tehran’s part by the U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf.

From Islamabad’s point of view, Tehran was seen as almost as much of a threat as New Delhi was. Ayesha Siddiqa, an Ex-Pakistani Government Director of Naval Research said that “Strategically it will be positive for Pakistan to support a hostile policy towards Iran”.\footnote{\textit{Iran Daily} – Ayesha Siddiqa’s article “Troubled Triangle – Iran, India and Pakistan – May 3, 2005.} In addition to this Talat Masoud, a retired Pakistan Lieutenant General told Voice of America radio “Pakistan would welcome a permanent U.S. military presence. He said that officials in Islamabad would be happy to see a permanent U.S. presence believing that it would provide support in the event of hostilities with its neighbours”.\footnote{Ibid.} Pakistan had insecurity between India and Iran’s alliance and wanted US presence to be felt as a pressure against these two so that Pakistan’s vested interests would not suffer.

It is to be noted here that Iran had is own concern for its safety and security. From Iran’s point of view, the increasing militarization of the region coupled with U.S attempts to build alliances with India and Pakistan can only be interpreted as growing threat. Tehran responded to that threat by boosting its relationship with Russia and emerging super power China.\footnote{Ibid.}
Some people are of the opinion that (mostly Pakistanis)\textsuperscript{133} as things stand future trends could include Iran gravitating towards China, Russia and India, even as pro-Western Pakistan government continues to build close ties Washington. In an Intelligence estimate published in February, the National Intelligence Council on which the Central Intelligence Agency and other Intelligence agencies represented warned that India and China would emerge as global players by 2020.

The recent trend as it goes in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century. Iran is an energy-rich country and is certain to figure in great power calculations and alliances—whether these powers are the U.S. China or India—to a greater extent than Pakistan. Tehran's fate depends on several factors, not least how quickly Central Asia's energy resources came to tap and what policy the EU and Russia decide to follow in the region.

At the moment, the view from Tehran is even more agreeable. To the West, the US remains bogged down in Iraq, where the Shiite government is governing. To the east, a solidifying network of alliances promises greater security for Tehran. For the time being, Iran appears to be well on top of the waves sweeping over the region.

\textsuperscript{133} Iran Daily – 20 Feb. 2005.