CHAPTER IV

PAKISTAN IN U.S.
SECURITY VORTEX
The 1980 U.S. Presidential election was a watershed in modern American History. Between 1976 and 1980 the outlook of the American public had undergone a sea change. By 1980 the after effects of the traumatic Vietnam war, the over emphasis on "pre-Watergate levels of integrity" and the dependency on detente with the Soviet Union to reduce the defense budget and the tense jockeying in international relations, gave rise to "a new, outward-looking state of mind."¹ The series of events, such as the Angolan crisis, the fall of the Shah of Iran and its replacement by a radical anti-U.S. Islamic revolutionary front, the Iranian hostage crisis and the direct presence of Soviet armed forces in Africa, together spawned in the American public the feeling that the U.S. was militarily inferior to the Soviet Union.² Therefore, for the first time after 1950s, American posture towards the Soviet Union in the face of


² Daniel Yankelovich and Larry Kaagan have quoted several surveys to show that while in 1979 (before the Afghanistan and hostage crisis in Iran) only 3% of the American public considered Foreign policy as the nation’s most important concern, by the beginning of 1980, 42% of the public regarded foreign policy as the most important problem facing the country. In addition, by Mid-1980, 53% of the American public considered U.S. militarily weaker than Soviet Union. See: Ibid.
the perceived threat to U.S. power, had become a crucial election issue for the presidential candidates. As an adjunct, the military strength and preparedness of the United States became a very hotly debated contention. Communist baiting had once again become respectable if not acceptable. The front-runner Ronald Reagan, who later won the elections, made "conservation" as one of the planks of his campaign. Reagan made clear "what conservation was. In foreign policy it was anti-Communist and particularly anti-Soviet."

During the campaign, Reagan was vitriolic about what he perceived was Soviet global ambitions. To him the Soviet Union was the "evil empire" which had to be challenged and interdicted with the American mite. Reagan's anti-Communist rhetoric was unbridled and he harped on the theme that "the Soviet Union understood only military force and a willingness to use it." He attacked the policies of his democratic challenger, Carter, terming him weak and incapable of exhibiting the courage required to counter the Soviets. Ronald Reagan went on the offensive accusing Carter of presiding over the plummeting decline in American power circumscribing U.S. military strength to "its lowest ebb

---


in a generation." The Republican challenger never lost an opportunity to blame the Administration for "U.S. international impotence under President Jimmy Carter" and Reagan cleverly "capitalised on a growing national concern that other countries were taking advantage of the United States militarily and politically."6

As an adjunct to his pronouncements, Reagan portrayed himself as the leader who could take radical measures to revive the lost prestige and stature of the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. To many Americans, Ronald Reagan was the "Rambo" -- the "muscular hero with an oversize machine gun" -- of the United States of America.7 Reagan was a great campaigner and he played to the galleries most dramatically and effectively. He shrewdly assessed the feeling of insecurity and uncertainty sweeping the United States.8 He therefore carefully modulated his pronouncements to lift the sagging American "macho" image.


8 Even before the onset of the Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet "invasion" of Afghanistan, the American public was calling for tougher measures against the Soviet Union. About 53% of the American public were of this view. Soon after the invasion, the percentage of American public who called for tougher measures increased to 67 percent. See Yankelovich and Kaagan, n.1, p.705.
"To Americans in the 1980, it was the show of power that mattered, not the substance. Ronald Reagan understood better than anyone that America wanted the exhilaration of a President who talked like Rambo -- without risks." In a CBS interview during the run up for the elections, he even suggested "forcefully" for a blockade of Cuba as a signal to the Soviets that they will get "tit for tat" for creating crises as in Afghanistan. His campaign thrust was therefore designed to make him appear to be the only hope for a nation that was being increasingly challenged by the growing Soviet "menace." As a Presidential candidate, Reagan "promised to rebuild our [America's] military strength." His declared objective was to up the spirit of the American psyche and establish U.S. predominance in the international world. He made this the rallying point of his election campaign to the relief of Americans who were tired of seeing U.S.A. being "pushed around." "The national pride [of the U.S.] has been deeply wounded; Americans are fiercely determined to restore our [American] honor and respect abroad," making it easy for the "Reagan

---

9 Ignatius, n.7, p. 175.


Administration to win support for bold, assertive initiatives."\(^{12}\) The American public which was poignantly concerned about the perceived threat to its economic prosperity and military superiority, rejected the incumbent and gave the Californian one of the most resounding election victories in the 20th century. Thus, the U.S. had a President who abjured what was perceived to be, in the words of former Republican Senator from North Carolina and former Chairman of the Subcommittee on Separation of Powers of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, the "Psychological malaise and negativism that marked the tone of his predecessor's tenure."\(^{13}\)

**Reagan's Perception of Soviet Goals**

In the 1950s, to sustain its supremacy, the United States gave shape to the encirclement strategy and the containment policy. However, in the 60s and 70s, the intensity of the Cold War declined and American primacy in almost all the fields were seriously challenged. The process of detente had come to stay during these years till December 1979 when the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan precipitated a new crisis in

\(^{12}\) Yankelovich and Kaagan, n.1, p.696.

international relations. The Afghan crisis rudely awakened even the liberal Washington policy makers from their strategy of competing with Moscow less on military terms.

President Reagan therefore became the crusader of a hostile propaganda against Moscow and symbolized a new thinking that was emerging. If the military hardliners found new takers for their thesis that under the pretext of detente, the Soviet Union was only buying time to militarily strengthen itself, in the new American President, they found not only a more ardent subscriber to this thesis but also some one who exhibited the strength to take bold steps to reverse the trend. To President Reagan, the Soviet Union posed the gravest threat to American prosperity and he was prepared to counter this perceived threat by augmenting Washington's defence capabilities. His declared objective was to restore U.S. authority "not on the shifting sands of moral preaching, but on the firm pillars of assertive national will backed by the military strength."  

In brief, Reagan viewed the International system once again in bipolar terms. Every international issue, concerning small nations or big ones, whether a friend or a foe, came to be viewed in the context of Soviet-U.S. rivalry. The United States, therefore accorded importance to

---

nations that were in a position and were inclined to assist the United States to re-establish its dominance in the international arena. This policy was clearly reminiscent of the U.S. containment and encirclement policy of the 1950s. "Reagan's approach also recalls the containment policy of former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, which divided the globe into mutually exclusive camps of friends and enemies based on the bipolar standard." The only major difference was that primary emphasis was not laid on the conclusion of formal military pacts unlike in the 1950s.

The Vietnam War had acted like a "formative episode" in the American foreign policy and engendered a break in the containment strategy of the U.S. Reagan was the first President who made the revival of that policy a cardinal aim of U.S. foreign policy. "Ronald Reagan, like John F. Kennedy, rode into office on a wave of public support for the augmentation of containment" and promised to restore the military balance and the national economy, "to revive the nation's confidence in the justice of its foreign mission, and to reassert the support of foreign commitment." 

Reagan attributed the weakening of the U.S. prestige abroad and its impotency in handling the problems like the Iranian hostage crisis, to the

15 Ibid., p.6.
cut in defense spending sponsored by the Carter Administration. The reduction in defense spending affected adversely Washington's ability to respond quickly to crises in areas outside Europe. Alongside this, the manifold increase in the Russian military strength especially its strategic ability to project power outside traditional sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, was considered as another development that had to be countered.

Reagan was clearly determined to reverse the trend by substantially increasing American military strength. The thinking was that "U.S. leadership and authority are to be restored -- not on the shifting sands of moral preaching, but on the firm pillars of assertive national will backed by the military strength required for international power and competition with the Soviet Union." President Reagan was in fact only reflecting the growing restlessness of the American public who were concerned with the decreasing military strength of the United States. Thus, while in 1971 only 11 percent of the American public favoured an increase in defense budget, by December 1978, it increased to 42 percent and climbed steeply to 74 percent after the Afghan crisis. In this kind of policy lay the hidden potential for Pakistan to once again establish itself as the American linchpin in South Asia. After the Afghanistan crisis, "there was a broad consensus" that it would be in Washington's

17 Harrison, n.1, p.3.
18 Yankelovich and Kaagan, n.1, p.706.
interest to provide military and economic aid to Pakistan.\textsuperscript{19} With a President who was prepared to enlist the support of any nation to checkmate and limit Soviet influence, it became abundantly manifest that no other extraneous consideration would stand in the way of developing a proximate U.S.-Pak strategic relationship. In a televised interview on 16 June 1981, Reagan made his thinking clear and stated that "Pakistan is also in a very strategic position now in view of what has happened to Afghanistan and that he believed that it is in our [U.S] best interest to be supportive of Pakistan."\textsuperscript{20} What made Islamabad an automatic choice and hoisted on it unprecedented strategic importance was that unlike during the first Cold War, the main theater of contention had now shifted from Europe to South West Asia.

\textit{Pakistan as a Frontline State}

Reagan’s perception of Pakistan has to be understood in the context of the new President’s overall foreign policy objective of restoring American dominance in international relations. "The comprehensive aim of

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
American policy under Reagan has been to restore the US to a position of global dominance in the economic, military, political, and ideological spheres. This objective was considered sacrosanct and little else mattered to the new President. Any nation that could contribute to the U.S. aim of restoring its past influence and power, was considered to be a friend and an ally who should be assisted. The Administration entertained "fantasies of rolling back Soviet power."

The direct Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was seen in Washington as the biggest threat to the achievement of the new foreign policy objective. It made the defence planners in the United States to evolve a new strategy to counter what was believed to be Moscow's ambitions of gaining control over areas crucial to American interests. This strategy hinged on the conclusion that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan had brought Moscow perilously close to the vital interests of the United States in the Persian Gulf. The richest oil region of the world it was argued, would soon be within the reach of the Soviet Union. Therefore,

---


22 Ignatius, n.7, p.176.

23 In a poll conducted in the U.S. after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, 78% of the American public were of the opinion that the Soviet Union "unthwarted by American strength" were "motivated" to gain more influence in the oil-producing countries. ABC/Harris Poll, January 22, 1980, cited in Yankelovich and Kaagan, n.1, p.698.
to insulate this region from the Soviet Union, a strategy was evolved by the United States which had the following elements.

The first arm of the strategy was regional in scope. It aimed at the enhancement of the defense capabilities of the nations in the South West Asia/Persian Gulf. This strategy was emphasised for the reason that it was felt that almost all the nations "starting from Pakistan in the East, to Oman and Yemen, and to Tunisia and Morocco in the West, face serious economic problems and potential subversion or regional threat from Soviet proxies." Reflecting this thinking the American Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Nicholas A. Veliotes, submitted before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States that "Our [U.S.] Programme is directed at supporting our efforts to bolster the security of countries both in the region, and en route, which are crucial for U.S. access to and presence in the region in times of crisis."

The second arm of the strategy was more country specific. The American objective was to enlist the support of Pakistan to achieve the following objectives.

- The first was to arm Pakistan which now bordered the Soviet Union in the Khyber Pass so that it would cooperate in frustrating the

---


25 Ibid.
efforts of the "advancing Soviets." For the United States, Pakistan became the "frontline state" in the American strategic planning to counter the Soviet "thrust." In addition, "many in the Reagan administration had a vision of Pakistan as it was or was imagined to be in the 1950s: a tough, dependable, anticommunist ally."26

What also enhanced Islamabad's importance for the military strategists in Washington was that it was considered to be the only buffer or hurdle which could frustrate Soviet ambitions of reaching the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. If Moscow succeeded in reaching the Indian Ocean, it was argued that the Soviet Union would come perilously close to the oil rich areas of American Strategic interests. Washington clearly held the view that what ever may be the price it had to pay, Islamabad had to be insulated from Moscow. In no case it was felt that Pakistan should be militarily permitted to be threatened by Moscow's vastly superior armed strength. It was argued in Washington that Pakistan "borders an area of active fighting in Afghanistan and could become a target of opportunity due to its flanking position on the approaches to the Persian Gulf or a victim of Soviet attempts to eliminate its present sanctuary for

Afghan guerrillas."27 President Reagan voiced the opinion that Pakistan had a historical and noble task to perform in protecting mankind from totalitarian machinations. Welcoming President Zia to the United States in 1982, Reagan said: "Pakistan stands in the front rank of the nations shouldering a great responsibility for mankind."28

- The second objective of enlisting the cooperation of Pakistan was to bog down the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Their intention was to bleed the Communist forces in a manner reminiscent of the U.S. imbroglio in Vietnam. This, it was reckoned, would interdict any further Soviet advances into the Persian Gulf.

- Thirdly, it became apparent that the United States was also looking for "access to airport, airfield, and other facilities to improve our [U.S.] ability to sustain naval and aircraft deployments"29 in and around the Gulf region. These facilities were required for the Central Command (CENTCOM) which became operational in January 1983. This new military formation, the sixth in U.S. military command, was to specifically cover

---


nineteen countries of Southwest Asia, Persian Gulf, and the Horn of Africa, ranging from Kenya and Somalia to Pakistan and Afghanistan. To bolster the U.S. strength to intervene in the South Western region, there were constant references to attempts by Washington to seek access and base facilities in the area.

Pakistan had continuously denied that it had afforded facilities to U.S. aircraft of the CENTCOM to use its air bases. The official denials were, however, contradicted by the opposition Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) when it declared that Pakistan had allowed the U.S. to build as many has six air bases in Baluchistan. But it had become clear that the U.S. had been using bases in Pakistan regularly especially for the use by the P-3 Orion which was the land-based anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and maritime patrol aircraft. It had also been revealed that the U.S. had exchanged with Pakistan a secret document in 1982 permitting the use of Pakistan airbases by American planes.

---

30 Lawerence Lifschultz, "US-Pakistan Strategic Relationship" in the Muslim(Islamabad), published in Strategic Digest(Delhi), vol.XII, no.12, December 1986, p. 1792.


33 Lifschultz, n.30, p.1793.
There were similar reports that Pakistan's defence facilities were being used by a variety of U.S. military ships and planes.\textsuperscript{34} Similarly, the visits by senior officials of the U.S. Central Command also revealed that Pakistan had a larger role in the CENTCOM than what was admitted. For instance, General B. Christ, the Commander-in-Chief of the command was in Pakistan from 19 January 1986 on a four day visit.\textsuperscript{35} It can be safely inferred that a visit by the Commander-in-Chief for four days would not be undertaken without specific reasons. In no way could it have been a simple courtesy visit. Lt. General Robert C. Kingston, Commander-in-Chief of the CENTCOM overseas forces had also visited Pakistan in July 1984. This visit was also quickly followed by a visit by the U.S. Naval Secretary to Pakistan in August 1984. All these visits and several others only lend credibility to the conclusion that Pakistan was actively cooperating in U.S. military strategies. Therefore, it had become clear that Pakistan was not only identified as a nation that could be used as a conduit for arms to Afghan rebels and help contain Soviet moves, but also help Washington by providing the U.S. with critical military support facilities.

\begin{itemize}
\item Fourthly, it had also been revealed that Pakistan had agreed to use
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{34} Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Pakistans Foreign Policy in 1986" in Raza Mehti, ed., Pakistan Today(Lahore, 1987), p.29.

\textsuperscript{35} Muslim, 1 January 1986.
its armed forces in emergencies to defend U.S. national interests in the Middle East. Pakistan would have been able to perform this role well in view of the thirty thousand odd Pakistani troops that were present in some of the Gulf nations. These troops were performing the important task of protecting the governments in power and helping to maintain status quo -- something in which the United States had a great stake. Pakistan being a Muslim nation, the presence of its armed forces had not attracted the ire of Islamic nationalists. On the other hand, any American presence in the Muslim soil would have incited the Muslim nationalists into further anti-U.S. opposition. In view of the close U.S.-Israel relations, a "more visible U.S. military presence in the region during peacetime" would have run against "the indigenous political climate." Thus, by the mid-1980s, Pakistan began to occupy an important position in the U.S. strategic schemes.

---


New Arms Transfer Policy

In the true spirit of the election campaign, once Reagan won the White House, a series of hardline anti-Soviet policy measures were announced in Washington shedding from foreign policy all moral considerations which had influenced certain policy formulations of the previous Administration. Liberalised arms transfer policy was identified as one of the chief methods to achieve the new goals. Reflecting this line of thinking, the newly elected President on 8 July 1981, announced a policy initiative outlining a new thinking on conventional arms transfers. This was done primarily to support and bolster the defence strength of allies and friends. It signalled the active promotion and encouragement of arms sales abroad to strengthen nations to withstand what was perceived to be Moscow's aim to bring more number of strategically placed nations within its fold. This new liberal policy revealed the following assessment of the need to effect arms transfers.

- Assist nations in deterring aggression by bolstering the defence capabilities of friends and allies.

- Enhance the capability of friends and allies and thereby increase the effectiveness of U.S. forces to act in conjunction with each other "to project power in response to threats posed by mutual adversaries."
Increase the capability of U.S. forces to deploy and operate with allies by strengthening U.S. mutual security relationships.

Signal to friends and adversaries that the U.S. is a dependable ally and that it has deep interests in the security of its partners and friends and that it would not allow them to be militarily weak.

"... foster regional and internal stability, thus encouraging peaceful resolution of disputes and evolutionary change."

"... help to enhance United States defense production capabilities and efficiency."^38

The basic reason for a change in the arms transfer policy according to the President was the feeling in Washington that there was a tremendous growth in the "challenges and hostility towards fundamental United States interests, and the interests of its friends and allies ... ." that threaten stability in many regions.^39 This liberalisation was perceived to be a necessary step to help friends and allies to "complement American security commitments and serve important United States objectives" and was viewed as "an essential element of its global defense posture and an indispensable component of its foreign policy."^40

---


^39 Ibid., p.127.

^40 Ibid.
It became abundantly clear that in this kind of new approach, the self-restraint imposed by the previous Carter Administration would not now hamper large-scale arms transfers to countries which shared the American fears of an expanded Soviet role and would be of strategic assistance to the U.S. Once the new arms policy was announced there was little doubt that Pakistan would become one of the main beneficiaries of this change in policy. It would be interesting to point out that James L. Buckley, the Under Secretary for Security Assistance, Science and Technology, while making the first policy announcement regarding the new thinking on arms transfer policy on May 21, 1981, singled out Pakistan as a nation which was ignored in U.S. strategic calculations at America's own peril.41

The immediate emphasis of the American policy was to strengthen nations that were affected or were considered to be facing Soviet threat in the wake of the Afghan crisis. Logically therefore, Pakistan now considered to be a "front line" State became a major beneficiary of this new emphasis. The geographical positioning of Pakistan made it an automatic beneficiary of the new arms policy as it fitted perfectly into the

41 In the entire speech devoted to security assistance, Pakistan was the only nation that was mentioned as an example of America's "well intentioned efforts" having lead to the "awkward result" of hampering Pakistan's ability to defend itself. He added that in Pakistan's ability to defend itself, the U.S. have "the most immediate and urgent self interest", in Department of State Bulletin, vol.81, no.2052, July 1981, p.52.
newly declared policy of assisting nations in Washington's effort to contain the Soviet Union. Thus started an effort by the Reagan Administration to align with and arm Pakistan disregarding all the other regional factors that influenced the policies of the previous Administration.

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN

Once Reagan assumed office, it was abundantly clear that Pakistan would not have to wait any more in the wings looking for economic assistance and for an opportunity to strengthen its defence forces. In consonance with the assignment of a specific task to its one-time ally, Washington reversed the reluctance of the Carter Administration to extend unconditional support to Islamabad. Soon, there began a flurry of activity by the new officials to seek ways and means to checkmate further Soviet moves and to "punish" Soviet Union for its Afghan involvement. The goal of the Administration was best reflected in the statement of the Democratic member of the House, Charles Wilson, when he said that there were "58,000 dead in Vietnam and we owe the Russians one and you can quote me on that" and that the money spent to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan "was better spent to hurt our adversaries than other money
in the Defense Department."

Within a month of the new Administration assuming charge in Washington, Belgium, Canada, U.S., France, Britain, Italy, Japan, Netherlands and West Germany, the nine creditor nations, granted Pakistan a moratorium on the repayment of debt totalling $280 million. Soon, on 10 May 1981, the U.S. and Pakistan signed an agreement re-scheduling payments for the consolidated debt amounting to $105.5 million to be paid in 28 equal and successive semi-annual installments of $3.8 million, plus interest, commencing on 1 January 1992, with the final instalment payable on 1 July 2005. Immediately thereafter, institutions and governments aiding Pakistan pledged about $1.17 billion in economic assistance in the year ending June 30, 1982 in comparison to $900 million for the fiscal year 1981. The U.S. was the largest contributor in this effort.

Alongside the economic aid and assistance which Pakistan was now suddenly getting from the American allies, the Reagan Administration moved on the military side to re-arm Pakistan. Several rounds of

---

discussions were held with Pakistan officials as well as influential American Senators and Congressmen to reach a consensus on the assistance the U.S. would be providing Pakistan. The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Arthur W. Hummel Jr., was summoned to Washington in April to review American assistance programme to Islamabad. In July, a Pakistani Military delegation held extensive talks with U.S. Defence Department on the $1.5 billion arms aid to Pakistan. In August, Pakistani Foreign Minister, Agha Shahi, visited Washington and held detailed discussions with U.S. Secretary of State, Alexander Haig and U.S. Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger. Soon thereafter, in the second week of September, U.S. Under Secretary of State James L. Buckley left on a hastily arranged two day trip to Islamabad to what was considered to be final round of discussions with Pakistani Officials.46

Finally, on the basis of the extensive talks undertaken by U.S. Ambassador, Hummel, and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shahi with the U.S. Defence Secretary and Secretary of State, Buckley offered an aid package consisting of $3 billion in military loans and economic aid to Pakistan over the next five years.47 At the end of the talks an agreement was reached with Pakistan. As a part of the agreement, the U.S. undertook


to supply Pakistan with the state-of-the art F-16 fighters manufactured by General Dynamic Corporation. The exact number of aircraft to be sold was kept a secret, but at a news conference in Islamabad at the end of the talks, it was announced by Pakistan Foreign Minister that the planes would be partly financed by Pakistan and partly by its "Islamic friends."48 Though the agreement did not include any quid pro quo for the U.S., its diplomatic sources said that the aid will give the U.S. the right to use Pakistan’s military bases in case of need49 -- something which Pakistani officials constantly denied.

The Administration simultaneously moved for an appropriation of $100 million in economic support funds for fiscal 1982 in addition to the $50 million for Public law 480 assistance. The Reagan Administration had attached such critical importance to the assistance to Pakistan that even before the agreement had been reached, the Administration requested the Congress to grant authority to the President to waive the 1979 ban which prohibited aid to nations which had developed or were developing nuclear weapons.

But, despite the best efforts of the Reagan Administration, the Congress was not willing to accept at face value the Administration’s argument that aid to Pakistan should be without strings. The Republican


49 Ibid., 26 June 1981.
dominated Senate quickly adopted two restrictions on the proposal that required the President to submit annual, classified reports to the Congress about Pakistan's nuclear programmes. The second amendment proposed a time period during which aid could be granted. It limited the aid period to six years rather than lift the ban permanently as the Administration desired.

During the final debate the Administration continued to resist all attempts by the protagonists of non-proliferation to impose restrictions of arms aid to Pakistan. It stubbornly opposed the adaption of an amendment proposed by Sen. John Glenn (D. Ohio), an outspoken critic of nuclear proliferation. According to the proposed amendment, aid to Pakistan and India were to be cut off if either India or Pakistan were to explode a nuclear device. But it was abundantly clear that nuclear nonproliferation was less important to the Reagan Administration than removing the Soviets from Afghanistan. To achieve this goal, the Administration argued that strategic imperatives should take precedence over other considerations. The Administration argued that the imposition of conditions on aid would erode Gen. Zia's prestige at home and portray him as an untrustworthy leader. The Glenn amendment was nevertheless passed in the Senate by a 51 to 45 margin. However, due to intense

---

lobbying by the Administration, the scope of the amendment was diluted through a change proposed by a fellow Republican of Reagan, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. The altered version, of the amendment settled the issue by making the termination of aid automatic if any "non nuclear country exploded a nuclear device."

Pakistan was particularly fortunate in the timing of the introduction of the Administration’s aid proposal. This proposal was taken up after the rather boisterous and lengthy debate on the supply of AWACS to Saudi Arabia. The seemingly exhausted law makers did not appear to be in the mood for another fight and the groundswell of opposition the Administration expected to the proposal did not materialise. They were not prepared for another bruising fight and one White House aid describing the mood of the Congressmen said: "Nobody’s up for another battle like that."

Given this mood the Administration was able to quietly win, and the Senate in the cloud of the AWACS debate voted to end a two-year-old ban on aid to Pakistan approving the first $100 million instalment of the aid.

The Reagan Administration was in such a hurry that it wanted to at least make a symbolic gesture to Pakistan by providing it the $100 million in Economic Support Fund (ESF) though there was no current

---


52 Ibid., 9 November 1981.
allocation for it. Since the Administration could not possibly ask for an increase in the overall budget, it reprogrammed the budget already approved for the year. On April 30, 1981, the Secretary of State Alexander Haig wrote to the U.S. Senate requesting for such a reprogramming. On May 15, 1981 the President wrote to the Senate and on the same day, the Budget Director Stockman wrote to the President regarding the reprogramming. The net effect of all this was that the Defence Budget of the U.S. was reduced by $100 million from the "050 fuel account" to permit a comparable increase in the International affairs function. The economic aid and the military aid were to be

53 Hearings and Mark-up, Security and Economic Assistance to Pakistan n.10, p.47.

54 Ibid.
almost equal in magnitude. Please see table below:

**PROPOSED U.S ASSISTANCE - 1983-87**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>FMS</th>
<th>IMET</th>
<th>ESP</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>Public Law 480</th>
<th>Total Military</th>
<th>Total Economic outlay</th>
<th>Total Disbursements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983.........</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>275.8</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984.........</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>300.8</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>275.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985.........</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>326.0</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>301.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986.........</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>326.0</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>326.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987.........</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>326.0</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>326.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total...</strong></td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1,554.6</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>1,479.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The professed objective of the new Administration was to make Pakistan strong, both militarily as well as economically. The economic assistance was designed primarily to help Pakistan manage its "downstream debt-servicing requirements." The military assistance programme on the other hand was aimed at building up Pakistan's defence strength to "give Pakistan the ability to handle with its own resources a range of limited cross-border threats from Soviet or Soviet-backed Afghan forces; and second, to keep the Soviets from thinking that they can coerce, subvert, or intimate Pakistan with impunity." 

---

55 Ibid., p.21.  
56 Ibid., p.23.
The economic component of the aid programme was made under 14 major heads. The total amount under these heads for the aid period of 82-87 came to U.S. $1625 million. The lions share was taken by the Agricultural sector.

On the other hand, the Administration did not make public the military purchase list. What items were sought by Pakistan and what was willing to be sold was even made available to Congress Committees only on a "classified basis." The exact details of the weapons list remains classified to-date. But from the information made available to the Congress on a non-classified basis, the list included highly sophisticated weaponry. According to the agreement which was concluded in December 1981, Pakistan signed Letter of Acceptance (LOA) for arms totalling $1.5 billion. The most significant part of the sale was the U.S. decision to give Pakistan 40 F-16 high performance aircraft. The first six aircraft were to be delivered within a time span of 12 months within the signing of the LOA and the remaining within 27 months of the conclusion of the LOA. The other major defence equipments were 100 M48A5 tanks, 10 AH-IS helicopters, 24 M 901 improved TOW vehicles, 75 M198 howitzers, 40 M110 A2SP howitzers, 35 M88AI recovery vehicles, 75 M113 armoured personnel, 64 M109 A2SP howitzers, 1000 TOW missiles,

---

57 Ibid., p.22.
night vision devices, and related ammunition.\(^{58}\)

But on deeper analysis it could be concluded that the United States was primarily concerned with only inducing Pakistan to play a role in American strategic objectives. The new found concern for Pakistan's mounting debt problems was all a part of this strategy. Similarly, the U.S. despite its frequent arguments that the arms U.S. was supplying Pakistan were to strengthen Pakistan militarily to handle a variety of situations arising from the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, the true motive must have been only to make Pakistan willing to cooperate with the U.S. In other words, the new Administration was willing to "pay the price" for Pakistan's cooperation irrespective of what its consequence would be for Pakistan or for that matter, the impact it could have on the overall security environment in the subcontinent. All other important concerns like the possibility of an arms race in the subcontinent and the issue of nuclear proliferation were brushed aside. The Administration did not even appear to be concerned with the point whether the weapons to be supplied as inducements were most suited for the Pak-Afghan terrain. The Administration was certainly attempting to justify the sales of arms to Pakistan on the ground that they were required to protect Pakistan

from Soviet tactics in Afghanistan. It is interesting to note that it was also argued in Washington that the extent of Soviet military pressure on Pakistan was over estimated. "Those pressures must have been greater than we might have predicted with respect to the refugee burden, but perhaps less than we feared on the military side."59 It was also averred that the diplomatic and intelligence experts were of the opinion that "the military pressure will likely continue to be of a limited nature."60 The Administration on the other hand refused to assign much weightage to such suggestions and went ahead with the sales.

Unsuitability of arms for declared purpose

The doubt whether the type, quality and quantum of weapons that were being supplied to Pakistan would be best suited to the declared objectives of the U.S. came up for serious discussions in several of the various Committee hearings that were conducted in the immediate aftermath of the Afghan crisis. Influential Senators and Congressmen had questioned the wisdom of Washington undertaking a weapons programme that was


disproportionate to the need of the hour. The Administration came in for criticism for its apparent unconcern for defining a clear nexus between its actions and objectives. An analysis of the kind of arms the U.S. agreed to supply to Pakistan would cast serious doubts whether the true motives of Washington were to strengthen Pakistan militarily to face problems from the Afghan border or were primarily meant as an inducement to Pakistan to encourage it once again to become an American surrogate. Of the items that were supplied to Pakistan, the decision to sell the F-16 aircraft was the most resplendent instance of U.S. unconcern for the nature of weapons it was willing to sell Pakistan. This nailed the American claim that it was only determined and willing to strengthen Pakistan vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

The sale of 155 mm howitzers (M198) to Pakistan again cast very serious doubts on U.S. intentions. This howitzer was top-of-the-line in its class. It has a very effective cannon capable of firing a wide range of anti-personal to anti-tank projectiles weighing around 44 Kg to a distance of 18100 metres. Its production even in the United States commenced only in 1978. It is interesting that the first battalion of M198s became operational even in the U.S. only in April 1979. The 155 millimeter

---


62 Ibid., p.676.
howitzer is a rather bulky and huge piece of artillery weighing 7163 Kg. Its mobility in mountainous terrains would be so circumscribed that it would only play the role of only a fixed piece of artillery. In warfare, 155 millimeter howitzers are primarily used in the plains. On the other hand, a smaller model like the 105 or even the 120 millimeter would have been better suited in mountainous terrains along the Pak-Afghan border. It could therefore be safely concluded that the United States deliberately chose not to resist Pakistan's request for the latest version 155 for the fear of disappointing its ally during the courtship phase.

The Reagan Administration made a valiant effort to convince the Congress that the arms being sold to Pakistan was not directed against India but was urgently needed for use along the Afghan border. But the Senators and Congressmen were not totally convinced by such claims. They accepted the argument that these arms could be used against India and exhorted the Administration to ensure that identification of weapons for Pakistan was made rationally. In the report and recommendation of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on fiscal year 1983, Supplemental and Fiscal Year 1984 Foreign Assistance Legislation, it was clearly stated that: "We recognize that much of military equipment going to Pakistan can be used in both mountains or plain areas, but we should be sure that all the equipments
we provide is useful in meeting the threat from Afghanistan."63 This statement further vindicated the view point that several of the U.S. legislators even feared that the Reagan Administration in its over-eagerness would provide arms that might not even be suited for the Afghan border.

**The F-16 Controversy**

The 1981 agreement between Pakistan and the United States provided for the supply of the high performance F-16A aircraft to Pakistan. Once again the United States introduced into the subcontinent, an aircraft of a new generation. This centerpiece of the arms agreement generated a series of debates in the U.S. Congress,64 amongst certain sections of the intelligentsia in Washington and in New Delhi about the need to undertake the supply of such highly sophisticated weapons system.

Two main arguments were advanced against the sale of the aircraft

---


64 Influential Senators Hatfield and Moynihan and Bumpers moved a resolution on 10 November, for the disapproval of the sale of the F-16s. However, the resolution failed to carry by a 7 to 10 vote when it came up for voting in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: U.S. Senate, 97th Congress, 1st Session Committee on Foreign Relations, Report together with Minority views, *Consideration of Resolution of Disapproval of the Sale to Pakistan of F-16 Aircraft*, Calendar No. 388, Report no. 388, Accession no. Y1.1/5 97-276 of the Library of Congress, (Washington, D.C., Federal Documents Collection, 1981, p.4.)
to Pakistan. The first was that the F-16 aircraft was not the best suited for the Afghan borders and the second was that it would heighten tensions in the subcontinent and alienate India. The Administration put forth several arguments, often contradictory to each other, to justify the sale of F-16s to Pakistan. The major arguments of the Administration were the following:

- The F-16 planes were most suited for use in the Pakistan-Afghan border.
- The F-16s would be absolutely required in the eventuality of a Soviet or Soviet backed incursion into Pakistan.
- The F-16 aircraft is the symbol of U.S. commitment and sincerity towards Pakistan.

The F-16A aircraft manufactured by the General Dynamics Corporation of the United States was still considered the top of the line aircraft. When the U.S. sold F-16 to Pakistan, it was the third country (Israel and Egypt were the other nations) outside NATO members to receive what was considered to be the flying marvel of the time. The restriction imposed on the free sale of the aircraft, clearly indicated the level of the sophistication of the aircraft and the need to protect its technology. At the same time, the decision to sell the aircraft to Pakistan revealed the importance the U.S. had attached Islamabad and its eagerness to ensure that there is no irritant in U.S.-Pak bilateral relations.
Pak-Afghan terrain is considered to be one of the most treacherous mountainous areas in the world. The passes are very narrow and hilly with hardly any plains. For any air role in this area, the aircraft best suited would have been a close ground support slow moving aircraft in comparison to the high speed F-16s. The very fact that the Russians were primarily using the MI-24 gunships in the area is illustrative of this point.

The F-16s on the other hand cannot be classified as an aircraft that could play a significant defensive role. The Electronic Counter Measure and Electronic Counter Measure (ECCM) devices that the planes carried, made them mostly suited for attack purposes and less than impressive for defensive roles. Senior American Air Force Officers had testified that F-16s were comparable to the ultramodern high performance F-15s which are even today considered to be a top-of-the-line aircraft. When the United States had repeated that its aim was to only strengthen Pakistan’s defence capabilities, the F-16 could carry a weapon load of 10,000 pounds for a greater distance than the F-15s.\textsuperscript{65} With reduced internal fuel, the load could be increased to 15,200 pounds.\textsuperscript{66} If the emphasis was on providing weapons to Pakistan for defensive purposes,


then the Northrop F-5ES or the F-5FS aircraft with proven defence capabilities would have been the ideal choice.\textsuperscript{67} As an alternative, the Northrop F-5Gs were also offered. Pakistan rejected this plane precisely for the reason that it had a smaller combat radius despite the attractive prospects of co-production of the aircraft. If Pakistan would have opted for the F-5Gs, then it would have had ultimately a larger number of aircraft. Pakistan rejected this offer despite the reason that "co-production, or eventual complete production of a weapon, was an important element in the choice of a weapon."\textsuperscript{68} Further, if the main objective of the U.S. was to provide an aircraft for use in the Pak-Afghan border, then it should be able to perform the ground support role most effectively. According to Pakistan's own admission, if premium would have been placed on the need to have such a plane with enhanced ground support capabilities, then the choice would have fallen on the A-10 which was considered superior particularly against armoured targets.\textsuperscript{69} In addition, U.S. officials had unequivocally argued that in the eventuality of an

\textsuperscript{67} These planes have more Compact Radius than the F-16s but lesser ferry range and speed. The F-5ES, F-5FS have weapon systems more suited to defence. For details, see: Ibid., pp.342-44 and 398-99.

\textsuperscript{68} Stephen P. Cohen, \textit{The Pakistan Army} (California, 97th Congress, 1st Session, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1984), p.25.

invasion from Afghanistan, armored vehicles would be used. They contended that "it is a misguided notion that armor or anti-armor units would have no role in the event of an attack from Afghanistan." If this were so, then the aircraft best suited would have been the A-10 Corsair. But, Pakistan was interested in a multirole aircraft that would perform both the ground support role as well as the air superiority role.

An analysis of the strength of the Afghan airforce revealed that the sophistication level of the aircraft in use was only at best ordinary. To counter any incursions by these aircraft, the F-16 would not have been required. Even if it were feared at that time that there would be frequent violations of the Pakistani air space, it would have been limited to attacks on refugee camps and not on any Pakistani military, commercial or industrial targets. Therefore, in the absence of any intelligence or other information that there would not be any large-scale attack on Pakistan, the need for an aircraft like F-16 was questionable. Even if the refugee camps were to be protected from attacks, sophisticated air to

---

70 Hearings and Mark-up, *Economic and Security Assistance in Asia and the Pacific and Legislation for fiscal years 1984-85 (Part-5)*, n.58, p.319.

71 In 1979 the Afghanistan airforce consisted of only 10,000 men and 169 combat aircraft. The most advanced aircraft in Afghanistan’s airforce was the MIG-21 of which there were 3 Interceptor Squadrons with a total number of 35 planes. The mainstay was 6 Squadrons of less sophisticated planes with a total of 80 MIG-17, and 24 SU-7BM. Even in 1980 the last two categories of aircraft was considered nearly obsolete. For details, please see: *The Military Balance 1979-80* (London, September 1979), p.62-63.
surface missiles would have been adequate. The supply of large numbers of Stinger hand held anti-aircraft missiles to Mujahideen by the U.S. buttresses the argument that air incursions by Afghanistan could be handled by equipment of this capability.\(^{72}\)

An analysis of the various U.S. pronouncements revealed that the hidden objective of Washington was to induce Pakistan to play a decisive role to make the Soviet Union "pay a price" for its intervention in Afghanistan. The various opinions that emerged during the several congressional hearings also buttressed this view.

The arms as supplied to Pakistan were not selected for use in the Afghan border. The F-16 multirole aircraft was not best suited for the border.\(^{73}\) On the other hand, if the emphasis was primarily to improve Pakistan's capabilities to deal with problems emerging from the Afghan border then the ideal choice would have been the F-5G defensive interceptors.\(^{74}\)

---

\(^{72}\) It is interesting to note that by 1987, the reports emanating from Pakistani and Mujahideen sources admitted great success in downing Soviet fighter planes. These claims were made almost on a monthly basis and the reports indicated that the aircraft were brought down by either machine gun, light anti-aircraft, or Stinger missiles: Please see, U.S. House of Representatives, 100th Congress, 1st Session, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings, *Provision of an Airborne Early Warning System For Pakistan* (Washington, D.C., 1988), p.77.


\(^{74}\) Views of Selig S. Harrison, in: Ibid.
It is also interesting to note that the Administration was put on
dock when it tried to justify that the arms package was even designed
to face a Soviet attack. While appearing before the House Committee on
Foreign Affairs, James Buckley, was confronted with a difficult question
by Mervyn M. Dymally, who surprised an unprepared Buckley who
answered that the "Central theme" of the American arms delivery was to
equip Pakistan to defend itself against "a potential threat" from the Soviet
Union. Dymally soon countered the contention by questioning the
professed goals of the U.S. Administration when Pakistan itself was not
considering an attack from the Soviet Union as a possibility. To buttress
his argument, he quoted Agha Shahi, the foreign Minister of Pakistan who
said "...the danger of an attack by the Soviet Union should be allayed.
And the Soviets have categorically assured us, and this has been stated
by President Brezhnev a number of times, that we should not take into
account this possibility."75 An invasion from the Soviet Union was
most unlikely and similar opinions were also strongly voiced during earlier
hearings.76 A cornered Buckley tried to explain away the statement that

75 Ibid., p.74. For a variety of views on U.S. arms sales to Pakistan please
see the above cited Hearing and also: Hearings and Markup, *Economic and
Security Assistance in Asia and the Pacific and the Legislation for fiscal
years 1984-85 (Part-5)*, n.58.

76 U.S. House of Representatives, 96th Congress, 2nd Session, Sub-committee
on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings
and Mark-up, *Economic and Security Assistance in Asia and the Pacific and
(continued…*)
what the Pakistani Foreign Minister may have implied was a "massive Soviet sweep to the sea."77

Further, it can be reasonably inferred that the United States was clearly aware that the F-16s would hardly be of immediate use to Pakistan to face incursions from across the border. The justification furnished was only an excuse that the Administration used to quench Pakistan's quest for arms and to keep Islamabad happy enough to continue playing the role of an American ally. The delivery schedule of the planes was such that it would have taken 5 years before they could become fully operational. According to American admission itself, even the first six of the F-16 were scheduled to be delivered only in 1982 and that they would not receive the full range of support including "aerospace ground equipment, of spare parts, and of contractor support" limiting the use of this aircraft "primarily for training" and probably for not more than "7 or 9 flying hours a month by Pakistan."78

Further, American officials also argued in a contradictory fashion about the real motivation behind the American readiness to sell F-16

76(...continued)

77 Hearings and Mark-up, Security and Economic Assistance to Pakistan, n.58, p.74.

aircraft to Pakistan. James Buckley, the U.S. Under Secretary for Security Assistance argued before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that the F-16 aircraft was important "to upgrade its [Pakistan's] existing capabilities in the vital area of air defense." He further added that the "40 F-16s are admirably suited to serve as Pakistan's primary air defense aircraft. The aircraft can also provide close air support." At the same time, when he had to deal with the question whether the aircraft would tip the military balance against India, he added that "the provision of 40 F-16s, the last of which is not scheduled to arrive in the country until late 1985" will not alter the balance. If the statement of the Under Secretary is analysed, it begs the question as to how the F-16 would then be able to prevent incursion during the intervening years. On the other hand, if the United States genuinely desired to sell Pakistan aircraft to face the threat from across the Afghanistan border, it could have easily

79 Ibid., p.295.
80 Report of a Staff Study Mission to Pakistan and India, n.69, p.13.
81 Despite all the noises which Pakistan made about the particular need to have F-16 itself, it was revealed that these aircraft have not been able to counter swift incursion by Afghan Bombers in Northern Pakistan. This was despite the fact that Pakistan had 40 of the aircraft and two years had elapsed since the first batch of the planes arrived in Pakistan. Washington Post, 13 October 1984.
convinced its ally Egypt to part with some of the F-16s it owned until Pakistan received the ordered aircraft from the U.S. The U.S. is indeed known to have worked out several "loans" of weapons in the past to several nations when it was deemed to be of strategic importance.

The various hearings held in the Congress regarding U.S. assistance to Pakistan revealed that the United States wanted to sell the F-16s primarily as a symbol of its commitment to support Pakistan. It is discernible from the several U.S. Congressional Hearings that the choice of the aircraft itself was that of Pakistan. The Administration made all efforts to push the deal hastily. Though the suitability of the aircraft itself had come up for several discussions, the Administration virtually stonewalled all suggestions for the sale of a less sophisticated plane stating that if the United States failed to carry out its commitment, then it would send wrong signals and jeopardise the burgeoning U.S.-Pakistan strategic relations. The U.S. then in order to support the Pakistani request advanced various justifications. It was often repeated in the various hearings that it was Pakistan which decided on this aircraft after an "exhaustive" process. In the same breath the American officials also admitted that "various possible alternative aircraft" was suggested by the

---

82 From the several congressional hearings, it can also be concluded that the decision to go for the F-16s was that of Pakistan. This was admitted to by senior administration officials. See: Report of a Staff Study Mission to Pakistan and India, n.69, p.13.
United States; implicitly admitting that according to the U.S., various other aircraft could also satisfactorily safeguard Pakistan's security and perform the roles which the United States expected of Pakistan. It was further revealed in a Congressional hearing that the Defense Department and a special Airforce team had "specifically advised the Government of Pakistan that the F-16 was not the best plane for Pakistan to acquire in 1979 or 1980." Therefore, the U.S. efforts to support the request of Pakistan may not have stemmed from any actual estimate of Pakistan's security requirement, but from the desire to please its ally or "pay the price" that it asked for. The constant repetition by the senior officials of the Administration that the sale will "reassure" Pakistan of the dependability of the U.S. as an ally supports this analysis. It was, therefore, only an admission that the U.S. should be willing to pay the price for Pakistan's envisioned role.

Thus by the end of 1983, Pakistan was once again well ensconced in American security schemes. It had also become a beneficiary of large-scale arms transfers. But, Pakistan was not totally satisfied with the arms supplied by the United States. The Military Generals slowly built up a case for additional advanced weaponry. Several reports in the government controlled media appeared in Pakistan describing the frequent raids

---

undertaken by Afghan airforce. Whether these raids were actual or not was something which was not verifiable.

It was also interesting to study the pattern, frequency and timings of the alleged Pakistani air-space violations by the Soviet and Afghan air force. A close study of the alleged violations revealed a strange coincidence -- reported violations increased prior to requests from Pakistan for sophisticated defence equipment and during Congressional hearings to consider the supply of arms to Pakistan. Similarly prior to the visits of top U.S. officials to Pakistan also, reports emanated regarding the bombing of Pakistani territory by planes crossing the boarder from Afghanistan. A plane flew into Parachinar in Pakistan and bombed it on the day of the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, George Shultz, to Pakistan in July 1983. A similar incident also took place during the visit of Brzezinski to Pakistan. The coincidence became so glaring that the Secretary of State, George Shultz, was questioned by press men, during a news conference on 4 July 1983, whether he read anything into the incidents or if it were a mere coincidence. But with the reports about Pakistani air space violations increasing to a crescendo, Pakistan soon made a request for an early warning aircraft. The Pakistani request

---

was for a Grumman Hawkeye E2C\textsuperscript{85} aircraft which could act as a command center for fighter aircraft and provide early warning of any approaching aircraft. Even though the request was made only in 1983, it could be concluded that Pakistani officials had hinted about this requirement and sent feelers to the U.S. during the negotiations leading to the agreement.\textsuperscript{86}

\textit{Democratic Values Ignored}

Banning of political parties, mass arrests, political repression, denial of the right to freedom of expression of speech and movement and the strangulation of the mass media were all common place during the forty-five odd years of Pakistani independence. The fact that Gen. Zia assumed power after overthrowing the democratically elected government of Pakistan also did not appear to matter to the United States under President Reagan.

Carter Administration had given importance to the promotion of human rights. It even made this an important yardstick to determine whether the country would be eligible for conventional arms transfers.

\textsuperscript{85} The E2C airborne Command Control Plane is a smaller version of the Airborne Warning And Control System (AWACS) that virtually is a mobile air command system.

The Carter policy has made it clear that through arms transfers it would attempt to "promote and advance respect for human rights in recipient countries." 87

The Reagan Administration on the other hand adopted a virtually militaristic approach to foreign policy and ignored Pakistan's record of human rights. The new Administration's policies were a radically sharp departure from the previous Administration. According to the thinking of the new Administration, "concern for human rights has not only ceased to function as a constraint on American military sales and assistance; but the protection of human rights has ceased altogether to be a goal -- even a subordinate goal in American foreign policy." 88 It was rather interesting to note that Reagan nominated for the post of Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs (a post created by Carter) a man who in 1979 had testified before the Senate that the United States should remove all conditions from the statute books that need to be satisfied by any nation before the United States could have dealings with it. 89 It was as ironical as a Fox being assigned the duty of guarding

---

87 Report, Changing Perspectives on U.S. Arms Transfer Policy, n.27, p.38.
chickens. This nomination was a doubtless reflection on the kind of casualness with which the Administration dealt with human rights issues.

In an address on May 21, Under Secretary Buckley "characterized Congress' adaptation of a series of restrictions on sales" to nations whose behaviour is disapproved of "in the case of human rights" as compounding the "self-inflicted injuries," which, in his view, had resulted from the Carter approach to arms transfer policy. It made no explicit mention of human rights as a factor which would influence the transfer of American conventional weapons. Therefore it became evident that human rights considerations would no more be a bar to any assistance the U.S would like to give to Pakistan. It was a clear case of human rights considerations being surrogated to strategic considerations. Thus with the U.S. exerting no pressure on Pakistan, General Zia found no reason to be cautious about his treatment of political prisoners and the violation of human rights. Amnesty International in its report lamented the increasing human rights violations and the wanton political imprisonment and torture which had increased dramatically. "Police beatings and torture of arrestees" had became common leading to deaths and further, when "deaths have occurred, allegations of attempted suicide" were reportedly used by

---

"police to cover up evidence of torture." 91 The U.S. Embassy and most Pakistani observers had also held the view that the "human rights situation in Pakistan had deteriorated steadily since 1977." 92 For Ronald Reagan, it did not matter as to how and what Zia did with his people. "Zia's decision to erect a chaste Islamic State in Pakistan implied a frontal assault on anything and everything that detracted from that goal", 93 and this did not matter to Reagan. The inalienable and sacred right of every individual considered inviolable in the American constitution were all crushed by Zia in Pakistan in the name of Islamisation. Zia created "Commissions to study the Islamization of the economic and educational systems", and appointed "religious scholars to serve as judges and advisors to High Courts." 94


The situation was that Reagan was prepared to "abandon everything" to the President's "consuming and myopic anti-Sovietism" as Senator Mark O. Hatfield chose to describe. Human rights were not a serious matter for the new Administration. By any reckoning, the Administration did not even consider it necessary to broach the topic with any seriousness with Pakistani authority, much less exert pressure for its enhancement. Thus when Zia visited the United States in 1982, he was given a red carpet welcome and Reagan gave him advanced electronic counter measure equipment for the F-16 that the U.S. was selling.

96 Pakistan had initially refused to take delivery of the first batch of F-16s stating that it wanted the advanced Electronic Counter Measures equipment ALR-69 and radar system. The most interesting aspect of this sale is that this equipment did not find a place in the original letter of notification submitted to Congress. Statement of Jane Coon, Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of Near Eastern and south Asian Affairs, Department of State, quoted in: Hearings and Mark-up, Security and Economic Assistance to Pakistan, n.10, p.74. For a variety of views on U.S. arms sales to Pakistan please see the above cited Hearings and also: Hearings and Mark-up, Economic and Security Assistance in Asia and the Pacific and the Legislation for fiscal years 1984-85 (Part-5), n.58. It was clearly reported that though Congress had approved the sale of F-16s in 1981, "at that time it Congress was not told of any plans to include the advanced radar equipment." Congressional Quarterly Almanac (Washington, D.C.), vol. XXXIX, 1984, p.144. On questioning by Senators, the administration explained its action saying that the decision to sell the ALR 69 instead of the ALR-46 is not an independent transaction and that the value of the radars would be below $10 million not making it necessary for a separate notification to be made under Section 36 (b) of the Arms Export Control Act. See: Hearings and Mark-up, Economic and Security Assistance in Asia and the Pacific and the Legislation for fiscal years 1984-85 (Part-5), n.10, p.243.
Pakistan. And when it came to human rights issue, Reagan described that Zia -- the man who had presided over the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan -- was "totally dedicated to democracy in Guatemala." For his concern for the Guatemalan situation, The Washington Post, in a sardonic manner, in a tongue in cheek style, wrote that for this reason, Zia "deserves more U.S. military aid."97 "Reagan Administration has greatly increased that military assistance program [to Pakistan], despite documented reports that human rights violations continue on a much larger scale than in previous years"98 and Pakistan was a major beneficiary.

India Disregarded

In South Asia, India's dominance was always acknowledged and recognised by the United States though this had not prevented Washington from undertaking large-scale arms supply to Pakistan during the height of the Cold War. Even during this phase, the successive U.S. Administrations took care not to completely isolate India for the fear that it would not only upset the regional balance and increase tensions in the

regions, but also lead to closer Indo-Soviet relations. The Carter Administration in fact had accorded this perception more weightage than any previous Administration. Especially after the relaxation of tensions of the first Cold War, the regional balance in South Asia was a parameter which gained in importance in Washington. The U.S. had during this phase virtually turned a blind eye to Pakistan's continued exhortations for arms supplies, especially after the 1971 Indo-Pak war. In addition, there was no definite role which the defence planners in the United States had envisaged for Pakistan during this phase.

With the inauguration of President Reagan's Administration, however, the earlier importance attached to India's concerns regarding arms transfers to Pakistan were totally disregarded. The new initiative sought only to strengthen Islamabad as it had become a "frontline State" in U.S. eyes. The emphasis was to ensure how best Pakistan could be equipped and strengthened so that it could play a vital role in safeguarding American interests by making it harder for Moscow to "destabilize" Pakistan. "The Administration not only sought to end the congressional mandated aid cut off, but also significantly reversed the earlier policy of taking Indian views into consideration in deciding what kind of arms to transfer to Pakistan."99 But now in the changed scenario, the need to maintain regional balance during a crisis in American foreign policy was considered

irrelevant. Echoing this policy and justifying the new approach to Pakistan, James L. Buckley, Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology, further argued that the best way to influence Pakistan’s nuclear objective was in "satisfying Islamabad’s legitimate security concerns", rather than adopt a punitive approach of denying the country arms.100

India was extremely perturbed over the possibility of U.S. arms supplies being used against it. That there was a distinct possibility of U.S. arms being used against India was supported by perhaps, a majority of American scholars of South Asia.101 The United States on the other hand showed very little concern for the criticism that was levelled against it for the composition of its aid package to Pakistan. Several members of the Congress also raised doubts regarding the exacerbation of tensions in the subcontinent that would be caused by the supply of F-16 to Pakistan. "The delivery of F-16s to Pakistan, America’s most sophisticated and effective offensive aircraft, will only serve to upset the delicate balance of power in that region and create unnecessary tension with our proven


101 Hearings and Mark-up, Security and Economic Assistance to Pakistan, n.10, p.113.
friend and ally, India." The logical inference from the military package the U.S. formulated for Pakistan leads to the inescapable conclusion that Washington was least concerned about the impact the arms transfers could have on Indian security.

The Reagan Administration was only keen to augment Pakistan's defence capability. Whether Pakistan's quest was aimed against India which was considered to be the source of Islamabad's feeling of insecurity was irrelevant to the U.S. The U.S. promised to refurbish the "Pakistani armed forces with the most sophisticated weapons systems in the American arsenal" and Reagan was, unlike his predecessors, "indifferent to Indian complaints." The U.S. decision to supply the ALR-69 electronics counter measures or the AIM 9L version of the Sidewinder missiles instead of the AIM 9 version bears uncontroversible testimony to this analysis. Pakistan sought the upgraded versions of equipment for the F-16s "to improve its combat capability against India, in place of systems adequate to serve the limited defensive interceptor role that Pakistan aircraft should realistically be expected to play in the event of Soviet or


Afghan border pressures." It was also further argued that the "crucial flow" in the supply of F-16 is that "Pakistanis are really much more interested in the planes as being of great value in a conflict with India than as being useful in preventing incursions over the Afghanistan border." It has also been authoritatively allured that the artillery weapons ordered by Pakistan were also designed to bolster Pakistan's defence capability vis-a-vis India and not against either the Soviet Union or even Afghanistan. The M-48 and M-60 tanks or the 155 millimeter howitzers were not the type of weapons "best suited to the Afghanistan frontier" but "equipments primarily intended to improve Pakistan's balance of power with India." The right choice would have been light tanks, and 75 and 105 millimeter howitzers." The result was that as Rahul Singh wrote in the New York Times, "Not since the

104 Hearings and Mark-up, Economic and Security Assistance in Asia and the Pacific and the Legislation for Fiscal Years 1984-85 (Part-5), n.58, p.243.


106 Selig S. Harrison of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was the main advocate of this view. He vehemently argued before the various Committees of the U.S. Congress that the U.S. aid package was misconceived. For details please see : Report, Changing Perspectives on U.S. Arms Transfer Policy, n.27.


era of Dwight D. Eisenhower, when the United States looked upon India’s neutralist leader Jawaharlal Nehru as a stooge of Moscow have relations between Washington and New Delhi reached as low a point as they have today."109