CHAPTER VI

INDIAN OCEAN POLITICS OF PAKISTAN AND CHINA

PAKISTAN

Pakistan's initial interest in the Indian Ocean was confined to the security of sea lanes between East and West Pakistan. But Pakistan's naval capability had never been able to keep the merchant shipping and naval deployments open between Karachi and Chittagong. Firstly, building a strong naval force to match the strength of the Indian Navy was never within Pakistan's national means. Secondly, until the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, Pakistani strategists believed that East Pakistan could be defended from West Pakistan, which assumed that Pakistan could capture Indian territories in Punjab and Rajasthan which might then be bargained with Indian advances in East Pakistan. This was a great strategic fallacy, as is evident from India's successful blockade of the Bay of Bengal in December 1971, which prevented any resupply to Pakistani troops. Though a strong Pakistani Navy could be a critical factor in the outcome of war in East Pakistan, yet the challenge was too severe for an effective response.

Since 1971, the Arabian Sea region has become the primary concern of Pakistan's naval operations. This sea is an
important waterway for Pakistan to Europe and East Africa which requires Pakistani naval forces to provide protection for her flag merchant marine between the coastal zones and the Red Sea. The protection of coastal trade with Oman and other states in the Persian Gulf is also the responsibility of the Pakistani Navy.

Pakistan's Navy was relatively small and mostly antiquated in its fleet and equipment. Only recently was a limited programme of modernisation and new weapons like 'Harpoon' missiles introduced. There had always been budgetary constraints on the Pakistan Navy because of an inherent bias in favour of the Army and the Air Force in Pakistan's defence policy. Pakistan has neither the means nor the political will to seek naval parity with India, which is in the process of building the largest littoral navy in the third world. Therefore, Pakistan orally focuses on denying Indian sea control in the Arabian Sea, which India would certainly attempt in any future conflict with Pakistan. Pakistan continues to lag behind India both in quality and quantity of its naval power. Even the modernisation programme of the Pakistani armed forces has only marginally touched the navy.

In past, Pakistan had gained some importance in the US security arrangements in the Persian Gulf. Pakistan's importance to the evolving US backed security regime in the region stemmed from two facts. First was the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, which made Pakistan a buffer between the Arabian Sea and the Soviet forces. This was precisely the US perception of Pakistan as a 'front-line' state that had brought her squarely into the Western defence calculations for the Gulf. Recognising that "Pakistan was in a very vulnerable strategic position," US leaders had decided to support Pakistan with economic aid and military sales programmes. This strengthened speculation that the US wished to negotiate with Pakistan for the acquisition of military base facilities for pre-positioning of RDF military equipments, access to air base facilities for anti-submarine, surveillance aircraft and reopening electronic surveillance bases near Peshawar. Although some US strategists had shown interest in the


development of naval facilities at Gwadar and Pasni along the Makran coast of Baluchistan, this option was neither pursued vigorously nor considered feasible, for domestic political reasons as well as for divergent perspectives on Arab-Israeli issues. Pakistani leaders always preferred to keep security relations with the US at a high level. Pakistan's bilateral military co-operation with the GCC states, which included the training of armed forces, loaning of military advisers and, in the case of Saudi Arabia, stationing troops, supported the overall US security objectives in Persian Gulf.

On the Soviet and US naval deployments in the Indian Ocean, Pakistan's response was not very different to other littorals of the region. Pakistan had consistently voted for the IOPZ proposal and had repeatedly expressed concern about the dangers inherent in the presence of the superpowers' naval forces. But Pakistan adopted a broader approach to the issues of

arms reduction and lessening of tensions in the region. It viewed attempts by regional powers to establish dominance in the Indian Ocean to be as dangerous and menacing to regional security as the naval forces of extra-regional powers. Pakistan like other small states in the region has become apprehensive about the Indian Navy's awesome expansion and modernisation programme that is oriented towards becoming dominant and influential.

PAKISTAN AND PEACE ZONE PROPOSAL

The Indian Ocean washes about 600 miles of Pakistani coastline as compared with about 3,500 miles of Indian. While Pakistan stretches over 5 percent of the Indian Ocean, India covers more than 36 percent of its shores. In a sense, therefore, Pakistani stakes in the politics of Indian Ocean, are much lower than India's. Pakistani interest in the neutralisation of Indian Ocean is even less than Sri Lanka's, although the latter is also encircled by just about 600 miles of the

Indian Ocean. This can perhaps be explained in terms of Pakistan's world outlook which does not regard military alliance with super powers, and their consequent presence in the region, as detrimental to its national interest, whereas Sri Lanka's does.

Pakistan's attitude towards the Indian Ocean can be said to have two aspects, psychological and substantial.

The psychological aspect pertains to Pakistan's obsession with inappropriateness of name of the Indian Ocean, which is obviously a reflection of Pakistan's discomfiture at the importance that India legitimately gets by its historic association with the name of the Indian Ocean. Pakistan had proposed quite a few times that the name should be changed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, a scholar from the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi, read a paper at a conference on "The Indian Ocean Area" organised by the Georgetown University's Centre for Strategic and International Studies some time in March, 1971. Making out a case for calling the Indian Ocean by another name, Mr. Sherwani suggested that it
should be called "the Eastern Ocean or the Afro-Asian Ocean", as it washes the coasts of Australia, and many other countries in Asia and Africa. Radio Pakistan in a commentary on 2nd February, 1974 recalled that President Sukarno wanted to name it as "Indonesian Ocean". Mr. Sherwani suggested that Indian Ocean perhaps be named as the "Afro-Asian Ocean".

More important, however, is an examination of the substantial aspects of Pakistani attitude. Like any other nation, Pakistan has to take care of commercial and strategic interests. Pakistan imports and exports goods worth thousands of crores every year, most of them through the sea routes. Pakistan has to import most of its oil requirements.

Other vital imports on which the country's survival depends are metals including steel, minerals, and machinery of all variety. Biggest foreign exchange earners of the country are cotton, cotton yarn, its manufactures and rice. Being bulk items, the relevance of merchant shipping and the need to protect sea routes is obvious.
As regards strategic interests, Pakistan's Oceanic environment includes India, Iran and the Gulf region. As far as Iran and the Gulf region is concerned, Pakistan does not perceive any threat to its security from there. In fact they are regarded friendly neighbours, with the potentiality of supplementing Pakistan's defence efforts. India, whether alone or with the support of its "allies", is perceived as the main threat to Pakistan's security.

While Pakistan had never any doubt about the seriousness of this threat, its consciousness of this threat has become many times, so acute after India's naval siege of 1971. Therefore, any formulation of Pakistani attitude in regard to the Indian Ocean is deeply conditioned by its perception of a threat from India.

Pakistani attitude can thus be described in terms of two interrelated strands: (a) While the curtailment of Big Power influence in the Indian Ocean has been advocated from time to time, there has always been an equal emphasis on the curtailment of Regional Powers too, which always meant India; and (b) support to the ideas of the Indian Ocean as a 'Peace Zone' has been more
superficial than real. The first strand can be traced back to the days of President Mohammed Ayub Khan who can claim to have made maximum contribution to Pakistan's strategic thought. In his political autobiography 'Friends not Masters' Ayub Khan refers to his meeting with General Maxwell Taylor in December 1963, the record of which is as follows:

"He (Taylor) mentioned the American desire to station a nuclear task force in the Indian Ocean. I said that the U.S.A. was free to do what it like on the High Seas, but I could not understand what military or political advantage they would get from such a move. They were in a position to achieve their objective from their existing locations. Where was the need to add another element of tension in the Indian Ocean littoral? Politically the move would be most unpopular and countries in Asia and Africa would strongly resent it. So far as Pakistan was concerned, such a force would only add problems and encourage India to act in an even more
irresponsible manner."6

In January 1971 at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference at Singapore, the Pakistani delegate Mr. Ahsanul Haq (then Commerce Minister) took the stand that Pakistan wanted Indian Ocean to be set free from all great power rivalries. But in March 1971 at the Georgetown University's Conference on the Indian Ocean referred to above the Pakistani delegate Latif Ahmed Sherwani said that a strengthened Indian navy would be a threat to Pakistan whose interests can be safeguarded if the Indian Navy by itself does not dominate the Indian Ocean.

Pakistan's concern with Indian naval threat was the Indian Ocean politics which reached its climax during the 1971 war. Ironically it was during the debate on the draft resolution on the declaration of the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace in the First Committee of the U.N. General Assembly that Pakistan gave vent to it. Speaking on 10th December, 1971 the Pakistani delegate Mr. Hyder said:

"Within the last few days a spokesman of the Defence Department of the Government of India has announced that the Indian Navy is bombarding 4 to 70 miles of the Pakistani coastline - an indiscriminate bombardment. A blockade is being applied to the coast of Pakistan. Surely this is not the interpretation given by all sponsors to the paragraph 3(b) which calls for the 'unimpeded use of the zone by the vessels of all nations', nor indeed does it tally with paragraph 3(a) which calls for action necessary to ensure that "warships and military aircraft may not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, geographical integrity and independence of any littoral or hinterland states of the Indian Ocean in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the U.N."."
Curtailment of regional powers, and establishment of some sort of a regional arms balance was specifically emphasised by Pakistan in the First Committee's debate on disarmament in November, 1973. Speaking on the Occasion, Pakistan's Ambassador Iqbal Ahmed said:

"While denuclearisation of the Indian Ocean is a worthy objective, one can hardly ignore the fact that it touches on strategic interests of the great powers. Meanwhile, a beginning can be made with a renunciation by the littoral and hinterland states of their nuclear options. These elements - peaceful settlement, regional arms balance and regional non-proliferation - seem to Pakistan essential to the concept of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean."  

That the curtailment of regional powers is essential to the concept of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean was re-emphasised by Radio Pakistan on 2nd February 1971, while commenting on the Indian - Srilanka Joint Communique recently signed by their Prime Ministers.

Radio Pakistan said, "The Indian Ocean to be an effective zone of peace must be free not only from the rivalry of The Big Powers, but also from the domination and hegemony of the regional powers who have powerful navies of their own." 9

It would be interesting to note that while expressing concern about the hegemony of regional powers, Pakistan had in its mind only India, and not Iran, the other regional power in its neighbourhood. In fact Pakistan had been the direct beneficiary of Iran's growing power. The Government of Pakistan publicly acknowledged the help rendered by Iran during the Wars of 1965 and 1971. The navies of the two countries had been participating in joint exercises in the Arabian sea since 1958 under the auspices of CENTO. Referring to Pak-Iran - naval cooperation, the Jerusalem Post speculated on 9th January, 1973: "Iran, which can afford a powerful navy, and Pakistan, may be planning to try to

make the northern part of Arabian Sea their private waters.

Similarly, Pakistan made a distinction between Super Powers and chose to issue special warnings to the Soviet Union only as regards exclusion of big power build up in the Indian Ocean.

Formally speaking, thus, Pakistan is on record as being a votary of the concept of a Peace Zone. But its policies had been contrary to the realisation of this concept. As has been hinted earlier, it has been partial in denunciation of the big power presence in the region. Secondly, it had been partial in demanding the curtailment of regional powers in the Indian Ocean. But thirdly, and most significantly, it had been a party to the vigorous reactivation of the western military presence in the region, by demanding an active role for the CENTO in June 1973.

Although Mr. Bhutto was originally committed to Pakistan's withdrawal from Western military alliances, in practice the withdrawal was confined only to SEATO after he came to power. In June 1973, at the Ministerial
Council Meeting of the CENTO in Tehran, Pakistan after many years was represented at the high level of a Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs, Aziz Ahmed. Mr. Ahmed complained about the lack of support from CENTO in the last two wars with India, and sought CENTO partner's intervention to solve the subcontinent's problems. Mr. Ahmed was reported to have sought a revised role of CENTO which would take into account the "new threat" from Soviet treaties with India and Iraq, and insurgency movements in the Gulf region. At a news conference, the CENTO Secretary General Nasir Assar, and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Ali Khalakbari referred to increasing leftist guerilla activity in Turkey, Iran, and lately in Baluchistan, where Soviet and Chinese arms and machine guns were being sold like toys. Replying to a question, Khalakbari said that CENTO members, had reviewed and discussed Soviet 'military pacts' with India and Iraq, and admitted that CENTO "discussed methods but to the question how to combat the threat, he refused to elaborate."
The contradiction between Pakistan's vigorously revived interest in the CENTO and its lip service to the concept of a Peace Zone emerges still more sharply if one recalls Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike's statement in the course of her speech to the U.N. General Assembly on 12th October 1971. Speaking at a public meeting at Pasni-port on the Makran coast on 8th September, 1973, Prime Minister Bhutto, without naming the Soviet Union, warned a foreign power "to keep her hands off the warm waters of the Arabian Sea on the Baluchistan Coast." Stating that he knew how a particular power was deeply interested in controlling these waters, he said, "These waters are equally vital and important for Pakistan as to that big powers and Pakistan would defend these waters at any sacrifice. These waters belong to us and no foreign power would be allowed to cast a covetous eye on them." Pointing out that Pakistan's costal areas controlled the Persian Gulf and were the outer defence lines of the gulf region, Mr. Bhutto declared, "Destiny has placed those coastal areas under the control of Pakistan and we shall see that we retain them free from
outside influence."10.

Earlier, while speaking on the draft resolution on Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, in the First Committee of the General Assembly on 10th December 1971, the Pakistani delegate had said:

"The so-called Treaty of Friendship - in fact military alliance - recently concluded between the USSR and India has indeed been one of the causative factors in this extremely unfortunate current situation of aggression on the sub-continent".11

To sum up the first stand of Pakistani thinking on the Indian Ocean, it can be said that generally speaking Pakistan wants the Indian Ocean to be free from the militarisation by big powers as well as regional powers, but would welcome arms build up by a regional power if it is friendly and has greater reservation about military activities of one great power than about others'. This brings us to the second related strand of

Pakistani attitude that Pakistan support to the idea of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace had been more superficial than real. Pakistan voted for the General Assembly resolution of 16th December 1971 on Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a 'Zone of Peace'. Pakistan was included as a member of the 15 - Nation Adhoc Committee set up by the General Assembly on 15th December, 1972 to suggest practical measures to promote the concept of a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan also supported the General Assembly that "All areas under the jurisdiction of non-aligned states should, therefore, by definition be zones of peace". A country which was not non-aligned could not keep the infringement of the concept of Peace Zone by the Powers that be. Under the circumstances, one cannot resist the conclusion that Pakistan's support to this concept was merely formal, superficial and propagandist.

CHINA

The Peoples Republic of China had joined the world organization only in December 1971 largely due to the support received from Afro-Asian majority in the U.N.O.
It, therefore, could hardly afford to take a negative attitude on Afro-Asian initiative. While supporting the Afro-Asian draft resolution, China at the same time used that opportunity to malign India and the Soviet Union in the world forum.

Before considering the Chinese Comments and attitude on Afro-Asian resolution on Indian Ocean, it is necessary to briefly describe the Chinese stand on disarmament question and peace zone etc. China contended that "arms as such do not lead to a war". The crucial question, as Chen, the Chinese representative, stated on 26 October 1972, was "who wields these arms and what kind of policy they serve". Arms in the hands of those who "pursue an imperialist policy", he said, "will become tools for oppressing the people of various countries and waging wars of aggression", while arms in the hands of those oppressed and aggressed countries fighting for self-defence "will constitute a force in defence of peace". The enhancement of self-defence capabilities by a great number of small and medium
countries "confronted with the aggression, interference, subversion and control by imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism has nothing to do with the 'arms race' at all", Chen added. 12

From China's viewpoint, the important question before "the great number of third world countries" was not disarmament (for they had nothing to disarm) but the strengthening of their national defence capabilities to resist foreign aggression and oppression and safeguard their national independence and state sovereignty. According to China, the root cause of unrest in the world laid in the policies of aggression, expansion and war pursued by the two Super Powers - the USSR and the USA - and therefore "genuine disarmament" should start with them. "Any disarmament which does not affect the two super powers is humbug", Peking stated.

Reporting from the United Nations, the Hainhua correspondent observed on 5 November 1972 that the peace and security of the Peoples of the world was being

seriously threatened by the two Super Powers, by their rivalry for world hegemony, by their unbridled arms race, by their armed aggression and threats and increasing intervention and control against the small and medium sized countries. This theme was reflected in many statements of the Chinese delegates to the UN. In his statement of 15 November 1971, Chiao Kuan-Hua expressed his firm opposition to the "power politics and hegemony of big powers bullying small ones or strong nations bullying weak ones". He added: "The one or two supper powers are stepping up their arms expansion and war preparations and vigorously developing nuclear weapons, thus seriously threatening international peace".

In his subsequent statement on 24 November 1971, Chiao asserted that the threat to world peace and the security of the peoples of all countries "originates precisely from those two Super Powers". He described the Partial Test Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation

13. Hsjinhua dated November 6, 1972

Treaty as "in essence a camouflage for their own nuclear arms expansion in the name of nuclear disarmament, a means for consolidating the nuclear monopoly of the two Super Powers and carrying out nuclear threats and nuclear blackmail against the Asian, African and Latin American countries as well as other medium and small countries". Unless the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons was realized, it was "impossible to expect other countries, which are subjected to the threats of the two nuclear powers, not to develop nuclear weapons for the purpose of self-defence", Chiao remarked. Peking, he added, could not give up that necessary self-defence. As a first step towards the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, he demanded that the countries possessing nuclear weapons should undertake the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other, and in particular, undertake not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries or nuclear free-zones.

Commenting on the establishment of nuclear-free zones or peace zones, which was demanded by many
countries, Chiao Kuan-hua characterized those demands as "just demands" which his country supported. However, it was stated that to free those zones truly from the threat of nuclear war, it was necessary, first of all, for all the nuclear countries to guarantee that they would not use nuclear weapons against these countries and zones and would withdraw all their nuclear forces and dismantle all their nuclear bases and nuclear installations from these zones. Otherwise, "it will be totally impossible to establish nuclear-free zones or peace zones, and the danger of nuclear war will still exist," Chiao added.¹⁵

What Peking desired was that the USA and the USSR, which possessed large quantities of nuclear weapons, should, "first of all issue statements separately or jointly to openly undertake the obligation:

1. Not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and in any circumstances and not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries and

¹⁵. Ibid
against nuclear free zones;

2. dismantle all nuclear bases set up on the territories of other countries and withdraw all their nuclear armed forces and all nuclear weapons and means of delivery from abroad.

It is, thus, clearly evident from the above, that, according to China, the demand of the peoples and countries about the establishment of nuclear-free zones or peace zones (such as the one in the Indian Ocean) was directed primarily or rather solely against the policies of expansion and nuclear blackmail etc. pursued by the two Super Powers. The 13 Power Afro-Asian draft resolution on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace was considered by the Chinese representative Chen, as reflecting "the urgent desire of many Afro-Asian countries to safeguard their national independence and State sovereignty". It also reflected "their just demand to oppose the Super Powers contention for hegemony and division of spheres of influence in the Indian Ocean".

"In this sense", Chen remarked, "the Chinese delegation supports this draft resolution in principle". The words
"in this sense" and "in principle" are, indeed, quite significant. The first phrase indicated that the Chinese were keen on interpreting the objectives, purposes etc. contained in the resolution in their own way, while the latter denoted that Peking's support for the Afro-Asian proposal was only "in principle" and not without reservations.

The Chinese delegate Chen then took serious objection to India being one of the cosponsors of the draft resolution. Peace in the Indian Ocean, he stated on 10th December 1971, was "being seriously undermined" by India. The latter, he said, had launched "a large-scale armed aggression against Pakistan" with "the abetment and support of the Soviet Union" and "with the aim of serving the Soviet Union in its contention with another Super Power for hegemony over the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent". Such "flagrant acts of aggression", Chen asserted, "must be severely condemned. Firm support must be given to the Pakistan peoples' heroic resistance. Aggression repulsed; peace must be restored. Otherwise there can be no talk at all
about the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Indian cosponsorship of the resolution was described by Chen as "hypocritical and "sheer sinister double-dealing" in which India was said to be trying "to deceive the world under the camouflage of an international agreement thus gravely undermining the seriousness .... of the draft resolution."16.

Chen referred to the Chinese Government's statement that "at no time and under no circumstances will China be the first to use nuclear weapons". He also pointed out that Peking had not stationed a single soldier abroad; it had no military bases on foreign soil and "has done nothing harmful to other countries". China, he added, "will never be a super power that carried out aggression, subversion, control, interference or the bullying of other countries -- neither today nor ever in the future". It was by these pious declarations and verbal assurances, that Chen sought to prove that the obligations which China had

16. Ibid dated December 11, 1971
undertaken "far exceed that the draft resolution calls upon the countries concerned to do". The question "now", he observed, was that the USSR, the USA, Britain and India, which had close relations with the Indian Ocean, "must undertake obligations". Otherwise, "the root cause of aggression and the threat to the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent will still remain and peace and security in that area will have no guarantee at all". The Afro-Asian draft resolution, Chen asserted had failed "to point that out explicitly, and that is a serious defect".

Thus, China had refused to view the problem of the Indian Ocean solely from the point of view of great power rivalry, which might have included even China and France. The Chinese viewpoint differed from the Afro-Asian approach in that Peking sought to evaluate things from its well-known strategy of opposition to Super Power hegemony and tried to impress upon the small littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean the threat emanating from the Indian side. Peking's attitude had been indeed, the reflection of Chinese support for
Pakistan and hostility towards India. The expression of Peking's views in that regard could not be divested from the stand taken by China during the Bangladesh crisis and the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. The events of 1971 were too fresh in the minds of Chinese leaders to be completely ignored.

In any discussion of the Indian Ocean, however, the main focus of Chinese attack had been the Soviet Union. One effect of the Sino-US rapprochement in the wake of Nixon's visit to China had been that the two countries had now come to view each other's military presence and activities in certain areas and nuclear build-up with benevolence even if they had not come to share common concern about the Soviet threat in all cases with the same intensity.

( P.T.O. )
SINO - PAK AXIS

Pakistan had been extending facilities to the Chinese navy in the ports of Chittagong and Khulna in the Bay of Bengal. A top Pakistani naval delegation under the leadership of the Naval Chief Vice-Admiral Muzaffar Hasan visited Peking in September 1970. It had talks with Chou-En-lai and was received by Mao Tse-tung. This was followed by Yahiya Khan's visit in November 1970 when China gave a loan of Rs. 100 crores to Pakistan. Sino-Pak axis was not a danger to India by land only but also from Persian Gulf side in the Indian Ocean. From there both could mobilise the Shaikhdoms against India. By having a foothold in Pak ports in the Bay of Bengal, they could attempt to destabilise India by supply of arms to insurgents through the Ganges. Their presence across the Mac Mahon Line on one side and in the Bay of Bengal on the other could sandwich the north-eastern region of India. Under these conditions Andaman and Nicobar islands would also have been exposed to the Chinese threat. The Kashgar-Gilgit-Karachi Road had a great significance for China as it provided direct overland access to the Indian Ocean. Besides others, probably
Indian Ocean too was a consideration for Chinese support to Pakistan at the time of Bangla Desh War in 1971. When tension between India and Pakistan started rising, it showed that it would come to the rescue of Pakistan in the hour of crisis. In May 1971 China had given to Pakistan an interest free loan of 20 million dollars and equipped 2 military divisions. An Ordnance Factory was also established in the then East Pakistan with the Chinese aid. China had also transferred some submarines and gunboats to Pakistan for use at the time of the Bangla-Desh crisis.

After coming closer to China, Pakistan started acting as a bridge between China and the U.S.A. Bhutto Z. A. clearly spoke of this role of Pakistan in his book 'The Myth of Independence'. To quote him, "India is afraid when she hears talks about bridges of understanding between China and the United States". He expected better and cordial relations between these two countries after the Vietnam War. To quote him again, "If that war ends satisfactorily, it might lead to a
reduction in tension between United States and China which would be to Pakistan's advantage"17.

CHINA, INDIA & PAKISTAN

The liberation of China took place in 1949. Before it, India and China had been friends from times immemorial. Buddhism further cemented the bond of friendship. Both were culturally rich. Chinese scholars and travellers used to come to India for intellectual and spiritual pursuits. During the Second World War Dr. Kotnis had gone to China to serve the suffering Chinese masses. Chiang Kai Shek, the Chinese leader, had supported Indian National Struggle. After the liberation of China under the leadership of Mao, India supported China against the U.S.A. in international politics. It advocated Chinese claim for admission in the U.N.O. even at the displeasure of the U.S.A. India had carved out a distinct place for itself in international politics under the leadership of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. But soon after, the Chinese leadership became jealous of India's prestige in the

world in general and non-aligned and third world countries in particular. China decided to deliver a jolt to India. The two countries had two different systems—economic and political. China wanted to prove that its system was better and the Indian one was hollow. India on the other hand took no notice of the Chinese designs and continued its emphasis on economic progress and development even at the cost of its security interests.

After the uprising in Tibet and the flight of Dalai Lama to India and his asylum here, China became too bitter. Increasing bitterness and hostilities culminated into Sino-Indian war of 1962 in which India was badly humiliated before the Chinese might. From the world of illusion Indian leadership came down to the ground reality. India's position was adversely affected in the Indian Ocean region.

**THE AXIS: A WEAK LINK IN THE CHAIN**

After the defeat of Indian forces at the hands of Chinese army, India realised the bare reality. Earlier it was in illusions. It started looking after its
security problems seriously. Its prestige at this time was at its lowest ebb in the Indian Ocean region in particular and the whole world in general. It had two facet problem before it - to secure its bounderies from external threats and to regain its lost prestige in the international politics. For this, it was imperative for it to break the Sino-Pak axis. The first opportunity came to India in 1965 when Pakistan tried to take advantage of demorlisation of India following the defeat of 1962. It wanted to grab Kashmir by force. To destabilise Indian integrity it sent its soldiers in the garb of intruders in Kashmir to take it by force. India had no option but to retaliate. Thus war broke out between the two neighbours in South Asia. China gave an ultimatum to India for making intervention in the war but due to straight forward policy and firm attitude of the Government of India and the attitude of the U.S.A. and other western countries, this did not happen. India came out victorious in the war. But the victory was not complete. In Lahore and Sialkot sector, India was in advantageous position whereas in Gujrat and Rajasthan it was not so.
The next war which was thrust on India broke out in 1971. Due to ethnic, cultural, geographical and lingual contradictions East Bengal could never merge in Pakistani mainstream. Economic exploitation and oppressive form of Government had sown the seeds of resentment which ultimately culminated in the Bangla uprising. The atrocities of the Pak army compelled the people of East Bengal to take up arms and declare secession of East Bengal from Pakistan. Due to oppression by the Pak military administrators, nearly a crore of refugees had fled to India putting severe burden of various kinds on it. It called upon the international community for help but in vain. A wave of sympathy swept over the country and India supported the Bangla struggle for independence. In utter frustration Pakistani war planes strafed Indian airports and the war broke out in Dec. 1971 between Pakistan and India in which India delivered a crushing defeat to Pakistan and Bangla Desh became a free and sovereign state and Pakistan stood truncated. During the war, the U.S.A. and China both were sympathising for Pakistan but they remained helpless witnesses to the humiliating defeat of
their common friend - Pakistan. To intimidate India, the U.S.A. sent its fleet (Enterprise') into the Indian Ocean waters. This fleet wanted to interfere in the war from the Bay of Bengal. But due to the treaty of friendship between India and the U.S.S.R., such a move could not materialise. Indian victory and the emergence of free and sovereign Bangla Desh changed the whole scenario of Indian Ocean and South Asian politics. Peking - Pindi - Washington axis proved too weak and could neither be effective then (1971) nor afterwards because of the changes during the regimes of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

Even after 1971 Mrs. Gandhi did not become complacent regarding national security interests. In 1962 the Chinese were strategically better placed in comparison to India. In the north east (then known as NEFA) they were commanding and controlling high altitudes and Indian forces were well within their easy firing range being placed below. And as Indian soldiers were neither in hitting position geographically speaking nor they had the training of mountain warfare. Thus
we could not retaliate the Chinese attack. The same was the case with Aksai Chin region in the north-west also. Terrain combat training was immediately taken up. The strategic disadvantage of the north-east was compensated with the merger of Sikkim into India according to the wishes of the people. After this, the Indian forces are occupying higher position. In the last days of her regime, she changed the security scenario in the north-west by gaining commanding control over Siachen glacier. Pakistan began to establish its ownership right on the undemarcated Siachen area by organising local as well as foreign mountaineering expeditions from 1974. India protested to the opening of the Karakoram high way which passed through Kashmir territory. On April 3, 1984, to strengthen their occupation of Siachen and to capture Nubra valley region in Laddakh, Pakistan sent reinforcement troops along a wide stretch of high altitude area - from Kargil to Siachen and Nubra valley region. Ten days later, the Indian forces launched a massive attack 'Operation Meghdoot' on Pakistani soldiers and succeeded in pushing them down on the other side.\footnote{18} Thus India gained a commanding position in the North-West also.

\footnote{18. Hindustan Times, Aug. 24, 1992 (Box Story by Man Mehan).}
Strategically Pakistani troops are not in a comfortable position. They keep on shelling Indian side but not effectively. The Indian troops from the heights are in a position to do more damage to the "enemy" below. Since then several rounds of talks have taken place between India and Pakistan in this regard without yielding any outcome. After talks with Indian leaders in the month of August, 1992, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan in an interview stated that both the countries have "agreed in principle to pull back their troops from Siachen". It is a very funny statement. One can understand India pulling back troops from the Siachen heights to ease tension. But where will Pakistani troops go to? They are already 1500 to 2000 feet below the Indians on the other side of the glacier. From Siachen, India can put on pressure on Karakoram highway, Tibet, Gilgit, Pakistan and even Afghanistan. It is to the utmost disadvantage to Sino-Pak axis.

With these changes the security environment in the sub-continent, the things have become quite different.

on the other hand defence preparedness is also being
given due and proper attention by India. Nuclear energy
propelled submarine at its disposal, India is well set
to have "a Blue Water Navy" in the Indian Ocean. It has
developed missile technology tremendously. "Trishul",
"Prithvi", "Nag" & "Agni" missiles have been successfully
test fired. Indian space programme too is going ahead
with speed. It is planning to send a space craft to the
planet "Mercury" in the beginning of the 21st Century.

China, due to quick strides in Indian security
preparations and also due to its own internal compulsions,
has started normalising its relations with India. Rajiv
Gandhi’s China visit paved the way for better and
cordial relations between the two countries and pending
the solution of the border problem. China is sincerely
reciprocating the Indian gesture.

'PRITHVI'.