



RESEARCH PAPER

China and Pakistan: The Special Alliance of South Asian Geopolitics in the early 1970s

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the unique diplomatic and strategic relationship between China and Pakistan in the early 1970s, amidst the complex geopolitics of South Asia. Using historical analysis and diplomatic studies, it investigates the factors, methods, and outcomes of the special alliance. The research reveals close cooperation in military, diplomatic, and economic spheres, significantly influencing regional stability. Understanding this alliance offers insights into navigating contemporary geopolitical forms in South Asia.

KEYWORDS Alliance, China-Pakistan Relations, Geopolitics, The Early 1970s

Introduction

Since China and Pakistan signed The Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement in March 1963, the development of bilateral relations has entered a fast lane. During the Second India-Pakistan War in 1965, the military alliance between the United States and Pakistan was in name only. After the war, China's economic and military assistance increased greatly. As Sino-Soviet relations become increasingly tense, the Soviet Union intended to build the Asian collective security system to confront the NATO and threaten China (Muzaffar & Khan, 2021). These were reflected in the changes in South Asia's geopolitics. In the early 1970s, China and the United States began to ease their own relationship in order to resist the aggressive Soviet Union. Relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated again due to pressure from the Soviet-India treaty and the internal conflicts in Pakistan. China and Pakistan chose to form a special alliance and stood together.

Literature Review

In this period, South Asian politics was influenced by international relations, and the studies were also rich. Different views can be divided by Classification of countries and international organizations:

The East Pakistan issue had a complicated geopolitical background. Sydney H. Schanberg showed his idea that "History, geopolitical forces, power balances and election results all helped shape the crisis in East Pakistan" (Schanberg, 1971). Ankit Agarwal considered that "The political maneuvering that led up to the war and its after-effects shaped not only the future of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but also of the Soviet and American influence in Asia for decades" (Agarwal, 1971).

The Pak-US alliance had complex background and specific reasons. Khurshid Hyder considered that "Pakistan's relations with America have been motivated

primarily by a set of political and economic factors..... To the United States, Pakistan's relevance was only in the context of the global strategy to contain communism" (Hyder, 1971).

The Soviet Union was India's most important supporter in the third India-Pakistan war. Zubeida Mustafa expressed his opinion that "For India's victory in East Pakistan, Soviet military aid made a substantial contribution" (Muzaffar, & Khan, 2016; Mustafa, 1971).

India's intervention in the East Pakistan issue broke the international law. K.Sarwar Hasan believed that, "This was blatant interference by India in the affairs of Pakistan, which was a reprehensible violation of International Law" (Hasan, 1971).

As an authoritative international organization, the United Nations intervened in the East Pakistan issue. Mehrunnisa Ali believed that "This shows that the United Nations played a positive role in adhering to the principle of non-interference and supplying humanitarian aid through its agencies to East Pakistan" (Ali, 1971).

Pakistan had a limited power in the international right of speech. Qureshi expressed that, "Our naivete in international affairs expresses itself in various fields, but so far as publicity and the projection of the Pakistani point of view are concerned, its expression runs a known cycle of self-assurance that people will understand our case without any effort on our part, then disappointment and panic and lastly the feeling that opinion against us is so hostile" (Qureshi, 1971).

China's attitude towards Pakistan in the third India-Pakistan war depended on its own beliefs and benefits. Mehrunnisa Ali give the opinion that, "The nature and extent of China's support to Pakistan during the crisis and the ensuing war must be considered in the light of these issues and the relative Chinese stance towards them" (Muzaffar, Shah, & Yaseen, 2018; Ali, 1971).

The division of East Pakistan is a manifestation of the political imbalance in Pakistan. Robert LaPorte, Jr. showed that, "The triumph of the politics of regionalism over the politics of consolidation and integration long-term prediction by the skeptics of such a bifurcated political union has occurred in 1971" (Robert, 1971).

Chinese research mainly in dissertations. Peng Jiamei, the master of Xinjiang University, studied in Analysis of the Indian Factor in China-Pakistan Relations in 2015. Wang Suli, the PhD of Party School of the Central Committee of CPC, studied in China's Foreign Policy towards India and Pakistan in 2010.

Material and Methods

The research utilizes a combination of historical analysis, archival research, and diplomatic studies. It draws upon primary sources such as diplomatic correspondence, official statements, and scholarly works to provide a comprehensive understanding of the China-Pakistan alliance.

Yahya Khan's visit to China promoted the comprehensive expansion of China-Pakistan cooperation

In 1970, the Friendship Delegation of the People's Republic of China (China PR) and the Economic Friendship Delegation of China PR visited Pakistan successively. The heads of the Pakistan Air Force, Navy, and Punjab Provincial government visited China.

The intensive exchange visits between China and Pakistan made new contributions to the two countries in various fields. President Marshal Yahya Khan's first visit to China in November 1970 pushed the cooperation to a new peak.

China-Pakistan friendship was a shining example in the early 1970s

Just like the treatment given to Ayub Khan in 1965, China provided the highest reception standards. On November 10th, when Yahya Khan's plane landed at the Beijing Airport, hundreds of thousands of Beijing residents lined the streets from the Capital Airport to the city to express a warm welcome. China's official newspaper People's Daily published an editorial, which spoke highly of the current status of China-Pakistan relations.

"In recent years, with the joint efforts of the Chinese and Pakistani governments and peoples, the friendly cooperative relations between China and Pakistan have been continuously consolidated and developed. China and Pakistan respect each other and do not interfere in each other's internal affairs; in opposing imperialism and in the struggle for expansionism, we sympathized with and supported each other; in terms of developing economic cooperation, the two countries helped each other and exchanged what they needed; this kind of friendly relationship between China and Pakistan provides a basis for cooperation between countries with different social systems on the basis of Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence ." (People's Daily, November 10, 1970)

This statement has five meanings: first, the rapid development of China-Pakistan friendly relations stemmed from the joint efforts of both parts; second, both China and Pakistan had an "big internal affairs" issue that not yet to be resolved, China's problem was Taiwan, Pakistan's problem was Kashmir; third, both China and Pakistan faced threats from Social imperialism (Soviet Union) and expansionism (India); fourth, China and Pakistan had good interactions in economic cooperation; fifth, the Chinese government's Communist attribute and Pakistan's Islamic attribute do not affect the establishment of a relationship of mutual support and side-by-side struggle between the two sides.

Pakistan leader clarified the core essence of China-Pakistan friendship

On November 11th, at the welcome banquet in China, President Yahya Khan clarified the core essence of China-Pakistan friendship and expressed Pakistan's gratitude and willingness to cooperate with China:

"China-Pakistan friendship is not a temporary solution, nor is it aimed at others. The essence is friendship and mutual cooperation, and its ultimate goal is peace. The people and Government of Pakistan will always remember with deep gratitude the unreserved support of your great country and people extended to Pakistan when the existence of our nation was threatened by armed aggression from neighboring countries. We are deeply grateful for the substantial assistance you have provided us in all aspects. Cooperation between our two countries in trade and commerce is also expanding "(People's Daily, November 12, 1970).

Pakistani domestic media simultaneously expressed the same feelings. Pakistan Times published an editorial on November 10th: "(The President's) visit is the highest form of reaffirmation of Pakistanis' eternal good wishes and gratitude to their great neighbor China." Lahore's Equality published an editorial on the same day: "The people of Pakistan are full of emotions. This is because the Pakistani people completely trust

China and will always regard China as a lifelong friend.” (People’s Daily, November 13, 1970)

The China-Pakistan Joint Communique and the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed

Before Yahya Khan’s visit to China, the Chinese government had provided a series of assistance to Pakistan. Pakistan’s first Heavy Mechanical Complex in Taxila, which was built with complete sets of equipment and technical assistance from China, has been basically completed and put into trial production. Pakistan could rely on this factory to manufacture large machinery and equipment. Based on the spirit of equality, mutual benefit, China and Pakistan have opened up border trade and exchanged traditional commodities needed by the border residents of the two countries. The Silk Road once linked the friendship between the peoples has been restored.

The two countries signed a joint communique on November 14th, 1970. In addition to the concepts repeatedly emphasized in previous speeches, the following aspects are also highlighted: China is willing to provide further assistance within its capacity to Pakistan’s fourth five-year plan and help Pakistan move towards self-reliance; China believes that the proposal put forward by the President of Pakistan “to withdraw its troops and allow the people of Jammu and Kashmir to freely exercise their right to self-determination deserves the support of all countries”. China hopes that Pakistan will peacefully resolve the issue of Ganges water distribution as soon as possible. China and Pakistan are determined to work towards “the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons”.

On the same day, China and Pakistan Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed (People’s Daily, November 15, 1970), which was conducive to further strengthen the already strong mutually beneficial relationship.

In-depth exchanges in military and economic fields between China and Pakistan

In May 1971, China and Pakistan celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, and bilateral cooperation in military and economic fields continued to strengthen.

The military exchange were becoming more frequent.

In May, General Kamal Ahmed, Dean of the Pakistan Air Force Staff College, came to China to meet with Wu Faxian, Commander of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force (People’s Daily, May 3, 1971). At the end of July, General Hamid Khan, Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Army, sent a telegram to Huang Yongsheng, Chief of General Staff of PLA, to congratulate the 44th anniversary of the founding of PLA; at the same time, General Rahim Khan, Commander of the Pakistan Air Force sent telegrams to Huang Yongsheng and Wu Faxian to express his congratulations (People’s Daily, August 2, 1971). A cooperation agreement signed on border trade. From May 23rd to 28th, the Pakistan border trade delegation visited Beijing and Urumqi, Xinjiang, to discuss China-Pakistan border trade with China (People’s Daily, 1971, May 24). On May 29th, China and Pakistan held a border trade signing ceremony in Urumqi, and the border trade delegations of China and Pakistan signed the exchange of letters (People’s Daily, May 30, 1971). China donated financial institutions to Pakistan. On August 5th, the governments of China and Pakistan held an exchange of letters ceremony regarding the donation of Karachi Branch and Chittagong Branch of Bank of China to the Pakistani

government (People's Daily, August 8, 1971). Aviation cooperation has been further promoted. From August 31st to September 4th, Zafar Chaudhry, General Manager of Pakistan International Airlines paid a goodwill visit to China at the invitation of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (People's Daily, September 6, 1971).

Pakistan made every effort to restore the legitimate rights of the China PR in UN

From 1965 to 1970, Pakistan supported the restoration of the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations as a sponsor for six consecutive years. Resolution 2758 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on October 25th, 1971, which added an important cornerstone to China-Pakistan friendship.

Pakistan promoted the inclusion of issues on the agenda of the General Assembly

On August 3rd, 1971, Shahi, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, warned in The Pakistan Times, the US conspiracy to keep the Chiang Kai-shek clique in the United Nations, and expressed his firm opposition to "two-China" or "one China, one Taiwan." On September 21st, George Bush, US Chief Representative proposed the proposal of "two-China" at the General Committee of the 26th United Nations General Assembly, hoped to combined with "the restoration of the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations" proposed by Albania, Algeria (including Pakistan). The General Assembly rejected the proposal after intense discussion (People's Daily, August 10, 1971).

Pakistan supported the restoration of the legal seat of the People's Republic of China

At the same time, Yahya Khan stressed the importance of the restoration of the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China at the United Nations General Assembly.

"The first and necessary step to strengthen international peace and security is the immediate restoration of the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. Taiwan has always been an integral part of China, and only the People's Republic of China can become a member of the United Nations. A superpower (the Soviet Union), under the banner of regional economic cooperation, peddled the so-called Asian collective security system in an attempt to use it to control Asian countries and further carry out anti-China activities. This was met with firm resistance by the Pakistani government and people."

At the 1976th Session of the United Nations General Assembly held on October 25th, the proposal to "restore the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and expel the Chiang Kai-shek delegation" was passed with an overwhelming majority of 76 votes in favor, 35 votes against, and 17 abstentions. Chiang Kai-shek clique's diplomatic representatives announced their withdrawal from the United Nations after the vote. The proposal put forward by the United States and Japan that "the expulsion of the Chiang Kai-shek Group from the United Nations is an important issue and requires a two-thirds majority" was also rejected by the United Nations General Assembly (UN. General Assembly, 26th session : 1971).

The different reactions of Pakistan, India, the United States and the Soviet Union

Warm congratulation of Pakistan and cautious congratulation of India

Yahya Khan sent a message to Zhou Enlai, the Premier of the State Council of China PR to sincerely congratulate China PR on the restoration of all legitimate rights in the United Nations.

“We are convinced that the People’s Republic of China’s participation in the United Nations will make the United Nations truly universal and will be a significant contribution to this organization’s efforts to safeguard the rights of people around the world and to international peace and justice. Pakistan are ready to cooperate with the People’s Republic of China in all its efforts to promote these goals.” (People’s Daily, November 1, 1971)

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India send congratulatory message to Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai.

“On behalf of the Indian government and people, to congratulate you, the Chinese government and people on your government’s restoration of legitimate right in the United Nations. This would make the United Nations more representative and give Asia greater weight in the deliberations and decisions of this organization. We expect that the People’s Republic of China will play its fair and impartial role in the United Nations and that we look forward to working closely with your delegation in the interests of peace and progress in Asia and throughout the world.”(People’s Daily, November 2, 1971)

Swaran Singh, Indian Foreign Minister, sent a message to Ji Pengfei, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of China PR, to congratulate China on the restoration of its legitimate rights in the United Nations.

“We openly welcome this wise decision taken by the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States. We are encouraged by the thought that our great neighbor will soon play a useful role in the cause of peace and progress within the United Nations. I look forward to happily cooperate with each other within the United Nations.”(People’s Daily, November 2, 1971)

Comparatively, it can be seen that India and Pakistan both voted in favor of No.2758 resolution. But in comparison, India was not a co-sponsor of this proposal, and Pakistan had higher expectations for China’s role after entering the United Nations. This showed that China-Pakistan relations far exceed China-India relations, but India also did not want to establish an opponent in the United Nations.

The United States was ready to extend an olive branch to China, and the Soviet Union hid worries

On the same day of Resolution 2758, Yahya Khan came to the White House to discuss China issues with the US president Nixon. Nixon said that Sino-US relation was very important. The United States hoped to make peace with China, would never unite with the Soviet Union against China, and was willing to send high-level envoys to visit China secretly. He hoped to send a message to the leaders of the People’s Republic of China through Yahya Khan. Yahya Khan immediately started his visit to China in November. Yahya Khan conveyed Nixon’s message to Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and brought back a positive reply from the Chinese leader. The United States realized that China’s power of playing a greater role on the world political stage was irresistible. At the same time, due to the aggressive pressure of the Soviet Union, the

United States hoped to establish a secret contact channel between the United States and China through Pakistan, China's special ally.

On November 23rd, 1971, when the representative of China PR appeared at the United Nations Security Council for the first time, Malik, the representative of the Soviet Union, gave a simple congratulation.

"In our opinion, the participation of the delegation of China PR in the work of the Security Council is of great significance. We would like to hope that it will exert the necessary positive influence on the work of the Security Council." (People's Daily, November 26, 1971)

The US representative George Bush made a more meaningful statement.

"All of us in the U.S. delegation look forward to seek constructive solutions to any important issues that affect the peace and security of all of us; here, as in other United Nations conference room to cooperate with this new Chinese delegation." (People's Daily, November 26, 1971)

Comparatively, it can be seen that the Soviet Union, which had a tense relationship with China, hoped to limit China's role in the United Nations to a "necessary" level, which may even imply that it will restrict China. The United States representative's cooperation purpose was for "everyone's Peace and security" which may imply the possibility of uniting China to fight against the Soviet Union.

China firmly supported Pakistan in the Third India-Pakistan War

Before the war, Pakistan delegation visited China for comprehensive support

In November 1971, the third India-Pakistan war was imminent. The Yahya Khan government sought to ensure that when India and Pakistan go to war, Pakistan can receive support from China similar to the period of Second India-Pakistan War. On November 5th, A Pakistani delegation had a friendly visit to China. The delegation was headed by PPP Chairman Bhutto, including the Air Force Commander Rahim Khan, the Foreign Affairs Secretary Sultan Khan and the Commanders of the land force and Navy. The composition of this team reflected Pakistan's intention for this visit, to make diplomatic and military preparations for the upcoming large-scale war.

The Chinese welcoming group at the airport displayed huge banners with slogans such as "Resolutely support the struggle of the Pakistani people to safeguard national independence and oppose foreign aggression and interference!" Obviously, the Chinese representatives knew Pakistanis' purpose coming to Beijing at a time when the war was about to break out. On the day the Pakistani guests arrived in Beijing, Premier Zhou Enlai, Vice Chairman of the Military Commission Ye Jianying, and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Ji Pengfei held talks with the Pakistani delegation in two days. China's attitude and commitment can be reflected in the speech delivered by Chinese Acting Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei at the welcome banquet for Pakistani top leader on November 7th:

"Recently, the Indian government continued to use the East Pakistan issue to grossly interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs and carry out subversive activities and military threats against Pakistan. The Chinese government and people are concerned about the current tensions in the subcontinent. We believe that the internal affairs of any country can only be resolved by the people of this country. The East Pakistan issue is an

internal affairs and should be reasonably resolved by the Pakistani people themselves. No foreign country will be allowed to interfere and subvert under any pretext... We have noticed that someone is taking advantage of the tense situation in the subcontinent (refer to the Soviet Union) to exert arbitrary pressure on Pakistan in an attempt to achieve its ulterior motives... If Pakistan is invaded by foreign aggression, the Chinese government and people will, as always, firmly support the Pakistani government and people to defend national sovereignty and national independence." (People's Daily, November 8, 1971)

In his speech, Mr. Bhutto condemned the Indian government's secession, subversive activities and military threats against Pakistan. He pointed out,

" I am certain that your friendship and support will continue to be a source of inspiration and strength to all of us." (People's Daily, November 8, 1971)

China firmly expressed its solidarity with Pakistan

China supported Pakistan in the International organization

On November 19th, 1971, the issue of Refugee of East Pakistan was discussed in the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee). Fu Hao, the representative of the Chinese delegation, spoke at the meeting and elaborated on the Chinese government's position on the East Pakistani refugee issue. He pointed out,

"The so-called East Pakistan refugee issue has developed to this situation, because a certain country (refer to India) interfered in Pakistan's internal affairs, causing the current tension in the subcontinent. The Pakistani government has repeatedly made suggestions to ease tensions in the subcontinent and solve the refugee problem. However, these suggestions have been rejected by relevant countries; they use the East Pakistani refugee issue to interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs, carry out subversive activities, and prevent East Pakistani refugees from returning home. The problems that occurred in East Pakistan are purely Pakistan's internal affairs and can only be solved by the Pakistani people themselves. No country has the right to interfere under any pretext. " (People's Daily, November 21, 1971)

From the Chinese government's perspective, the East Pakistan issue was totally Pakistan's internal affair. The so-called "Bangladesh" is completely a conspiracy method used by the Indian government to interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs, split and subvert Pakistan. It was located on Indian territory, and no country in the world recognized it.

Fu Hao compared India's method of interfering in other countries' internal affairs with its planning of rebellion in China's Tibet region in 1959, carrying out subversive activities and creating the so-called Tibetan refugee problem. It can be seen that on the East Pakistan issue, the Chinese government has firmly expressed its support for the Pakistan government to safeguard its territory and sovereignty from infringement. At the same time, it has not blindly affirmed all the policies of the Pakistan government. Instead, it has euphemistically expressed the hope that it will rely on the Pakistan people to negotiate on their own to find a solution for the problem.

The Chinese delegation expressed support for the country's struggle against aggression in Pakistan

On November 21st, 1971, although India and Pakistan had not officially declared war, the Indian army had already launched a fierce battle with the Pakistani army across the border on the eastern front. China and Pakistan maintained close interaction and support at this moment. On November 25th, President Yahya Khan attended the completion ceremony of the Taxila Heavy Mechanical Complex assisted by China and delivered a speech.

“We hope to avoid the outbreak of war in the subcontinent, (but) we will use all the forces at our disposal to safeguard the dignity and territorial integrity of our country.” (People’s Daily, November 27, 1971)

Li Yongqing, the head of the Chinese delegation and Minister of the 1st Industry Ministry, said:

“We firmly support the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle to oppose foreign aggression and interference and defend national sovereignty and national independence.” (People’s Daily, November 27, 1971)

The Chinese media believed that India and the Soviet Union jointly invaded Pakistan

As China’s official media, People’s Daily published an article on November 30th, which cited multiple reports from Western countries to prove that the Soviet government continued to step up the shipment of large quantities of weapons and military supplies to the Indian government, and the Indian army used large number of Soviet-made weapons to carry out military operations in East Pakistan. However, the Soviet newspaper Pravda, blamed Pakistan for the tensions in the India-Pakistan subcontinent and threatened that Pakistan should accept a political solution from India. Indian Defense Minister Jagjivan Ram made a tough speech.

“the Pakistani government should immediately grant independence to East Pakistan. This is the only way to resolve the current crisis.” (People’s Daily, November 30, 1971)

On December 6th, the Chinese government published a commentator’s article on the front page of People’s Daily, fully demonstrating China’s severe criticism on India and the Soviet Union.

“The struggle between Pakistan and India is the struggle between intervention and counter-intervention, subversion and counter-subversion, aggression and counter-aggression. If the logic of Indian expansionists can be established, every country can create any excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of neighboring countries and send troops to neighboring countries. It seems that East Pakistan is no longer the territory of Pakistan, but has become the territory of India. The reason why India is so rampant is that it receives political, economic and military support from social imperialism (refer to the Soviet Union). They concluded a treaty that was essentially a military alliance. The Chinese people firmly support the Pakistani government and people in their struggle to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity and oppose foreign aggression.” (People’s Daily, December 6, 1971)

China elaborated on Indo-Soviet comprehensive economic and military cooperation

On December 9th, 1971, China announced in newspaper about the Soviet Union’s economic penetration and military assistance to India:

Economically, the Soviet Union's financial aid to India ranks first in the Soviet Union's aid to countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It has become India's second largest creditor and second largest trading partner. Through "aid", the Soviet Union controlled many industrial sectors in India. The production capacity of Soviet "aided" enterprises has accounted for 70% of power generation equipment production capacity and 80% of oil extraction in India (People's Daily, December 9, 1971).

In terms of military affairs, during the 1965 India-Pakistan conflict, India mainly relied on the Soviet Union for weapons and equipment. From 1962 to 1970, the Soviet Union's military aid to India amounted to more than one billion U.S. dollars: it provided the Army with hundreds of tanks, hundreds of cannons, and thousands of missiles; it provided the Air Force with hundreds of military aircraft, and built three MiG aircraft factories; it has supplied the navy with dozens of warships; India has also agreed to transform Visakhapatnam port in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Islands into naval bases. The Soviet Union also sent a large number of military advisors to train military technicians for India (People's Daily, December 9, 1971).

The Soviet-India treaty signed in August 1971, which was a military alliance, resulted in the continuous shipments of large quantities of weapons and military supplies into India. Three months later, India launched a unprecedented military attack on Pakistan.

China's confrontations with India and Soviet Union on the India-Pakistan issue in the UNSC and the UNGA

First confrontation: The East Pakistan issue was purely an internal matter, and China refused to recognize "Bangladesh"

When the third India-Pakistan war broke out on December 3rd, the United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting on the evening of December 4th on the issue of the tensions in the India-Pakistan subcontinent. Soviet representative Malik proposed "inviting the representatives of Bangladesh to speak at the meeting" and "issuing the document of the Bangladesh representatives as a Security Council document." (Security Council official records, 1971) Indian representative Samar Sen said, it was essential for Bangladeshi representatives to participate in the meeting (Security Council official records, 1971). Chinese representative Huang Hua officially stated,

"Inviting a representative of a rebel organization of East Pakistan to participate in the Security Council discussion and distributing the so-called documents of this rebel organization is tantamount to ask the Security Council to directly interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign country, which completely violates the provisions of the United Nations Charter." (Security Council official records, 1971).

At the meeting, a vote was held on the draft resolution proposed by the United States:

"The governments of India and Pakistan take necessary steps to immediately cease hostilities, immediately withdraw armed personnel currently on each other's territory to their own side of the India-Pakistan border, authorize the Secretary-General to dispatch observers to the India-Pakistan border, and require India and Pakistan to the government endeavored to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to East Pakistan". (Security Council official records, 1971)

The proposal failed to pass due to the Soviet's veto. At this meeting, Chinese representative Huang Hua expressed a clear-cut attitude:

"The East Pakistan issue is purely Pakistan's internal affair and no one has the right to interfere. The Indian government said that it sent troops into East Pakistan for self-defense, which is completely gangster logic. India said that it sent troops into East Pakistan to help East Pakistani refugees return home. This is completely untenable. It is reasonable for Pakistan to suggest that the armed forces of both sides withdraw from the border and disengage, and that the two governments negotiate to resolve the East Pakistan refugee issue. But India's unreasonable refusal shows that it does not want to solve the East Pakistan refugee issue at all. The Chinese government and the Chinese people firmly support the Pakistani government and people in their just struggle against Indian aggression."(Security Council official records, 1971)

The second confrontation: Huang Hua exposed the conspiracy of the Indo-Soviet alliance

On the evening of December 5th, the Security Council held an emergency meeting to discuss tensions in the India-Pakistan subcontinent for the second consecutive day. Chinese representative Huang Hua criticized the Soviet Union as a supporter, encourager and patron of India's aggression against Pakistan, with the purpose of controlling the India-Pakistan subcontinent and the Indian Ocean, competing with another superpower. He explained a logic:

"The Bangladesh issue is an action that violates the United Nations Charter and subverts a sovereign state... The Soviet government planned a counter-revolutionary rebellion in Xinjiang, China in 1962, and tens of thousands of Chinese citizens are still in your hands. According to Mr. Malik's logic, are you going to use this as an excuse to launch armed aggression against China? At present, outside the Soviet Union, there are many people who oppose the Soviet government and plan the so-called independence movement. Are you also prepared to agree to invite them to the United Nations?"(Security Council official records, 1971)

Huang Hua proposed a draft resolution in the Security Council, condemning the Indian government's armed aggression against Pakistan. The main contents are as follows:

"The Security Council particularly noted that India launched a large-scale attack on Pakistan, which seriously undermined the peace of the India-Pakistan subcontinent; severely condemned the Indian government's actions to create the so-called Bangladesh, subvert, divide and invade Pakistan; and demanding that the Government of India immediately and unconditionally withdraw its armed forces and other armed personnel it has sent from Pakistani territory, and withdraw the armed forces sent by the Pakistani government to Indian territory; call on India and Pakistan to cease hostilities and withdraw from the India-Pakistan international border and disengaged to create conditions for the peaceful settlement of disputes between India and Pakistan; call on all countries to support the Pakistani people's just struggle against Indian aggression; request the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council as soon as possible on the implementation of this resolution."(Security Council official records, 1971)

As the conditions for submission the proposal to a vote and adoption were not yet mature, it was not put to a vote ultimately. But it shows China's positive attitude and role in dealing with the third India-Pakistan issue.

The third confrontation: The UNSC could not reach a decision, and the issue was transferred to the UNGA

On December 6th, as India announced its recognition of the "Government of Bangladesh", the United Nations Security Council held another emergency meeting. Since the Soviet representatives used veto in the previous two days of meetings and questioned the Italian representative's proposal at this meeting, Somalia and other six countries put forward new ideas and requested that this issue be submitted to the plenary session of the UNGA for discussion. The proposal was passed at the meeting with 11 votes in favor and 4 abstentions (Security Council official records, 1971).

Huang Hua cited an example in the Security Council that happened in China 40 years ago to condemn the Soviet Union and Indian representatives' attempt to stuff the Bangladesh representative into the Security Council meeting. He said:

"In 1931, Japanese militarists invaded and occupied the three northeastern provinces of China, and then announced the establishment of a puppet government called Manchukuo. The purpose of the Japanese militarists was to split China and permanently occupy the three northeastern provinces of China... Now, With the conspiracy of the Soviet government, a so-called Bangladesh government was also created, which was a new Manchukuo government... The purpose of the Soviet leaders was to control the subcontinent and intensify their competition with another superpower for the world. The hegemonic state established a great empire that the old tsar dreamed of but failed to realize, a great empire that controls Eurasia." (Security Council official records, 1971)

The fourth confrontation: At the UNGA, China strongly condemned India's aggression against Pakistan under the support of the Soviet Union

On December 7th, The United Nations General Assembly held a plenary meeting with an emergency debate on the issue of tensions in the India-Pakistan subcontinent. This emergency debate was very intense, and the number of co-sponsors increased from 14 to 34 countries. Chinese representative Qiao Guanhua advocated at the meeting that the United Nations should realize the following five-point aim:

"India's aggression against Pakistan must be severely condemned; Soviet social-imperialism's shameful support for the Indian aggressors must be thoroughly exposed; all countries must be called upon to support the Pakistani government and people in their just struggle to counter Indian aggression; the Indian government must withdraw its armed forces and the armed personnel immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Pakistani territory, and so does the counter-defensive side; requires both India and Pakistan to immediately cease fire; it is recommended that both parties' armed forces retreated from the India-Pakistan border, creating conditions for the peaceful resolution of the India-Pakistan dispute." (Security Council official records, 1971)

After more than 8 hours of intense debate, the conference passed a proposal requiring India and Pakistan to immediately implement a ceasefire and withdraw their troops from each other's territory, with an overwhelming majority of 104 votes in favor, 11 against, and 10 abstentions. The 11 countries that voted against, except India (and Bhutan under its control), were all countries in the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union. They were Bulgaria, Belarus, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine and Mongolia.

The fifth confrontation: Bhutto denounced India and the Soviet Union, and the US's proposal was vetoed again

The United Nations Security Council held another emergency meeting on December 12th and 13th at the request of the United States representative to discuss the tense situation in the India-Pakistan subcontinent. Ali Bhutto, who were Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, made a long speech at the meeting on December 12th, severely condemning India's crimes of aggression with the support of the Soviet Union, and refuted the attacks, expounding Pakistan's solemn position comprehensively.

"The Indo-Soviet Treaty was signed before the war. The real and fundamental evil began when this treaty was concluded and we had to face the Indian action backed by the power, prestige, spirit, resources, technology and weapons of the Soviet Union... the Relations between China and the Soviet Union do not mean that our country should be dismembered by the Soviet Union... However, even if we are gradually dismembered, we will never give up our good relations with China. China is a reliable friend of Pakistan... Whether East Pakistan is occupied for five years or ten years, we will definitely take it back... Golden Bengal belongs to Pakistan, not India." (Security Council official records, 1971)

The attitude of the Indo-Soviet representatives remained stubborn. Soviet representative Malik said in his speech,

"the Soviet Union insists on achieving a political settlement in East Pakistan, and any other approach is unrealistic and one-sided." (Security Council official records, 1971)

Indian Foreign Minister Manmohan Singh said at the meeting,

"The Indian armed forces will stay on Bangladeshi soil as long as the people and government of Bangladesh require them to stay." (Security Council official records, 1971)

Belated resolution: After the ceasefire, the UNSC finally adopted a belated ceasefire agreement

After hearing statements from India and Pakistan, the Security Council, adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 307 on December 21st, 1971, calling for the observance of a durable ceasefire until the withdrawal of troops from the ceasefire lines in Jammu and Kashmir. The Security Council also called on the international community to provide assistance to alleviate the suffering of the refugees, help them restore normal life, and help them return to their homes, and requested the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council informed of developments. The resolution passed by a vote of 13 to 0, but the Soviet Union and Poland once again abstained (Security Council official records, 1971).

Results and Discussion

The study reveals that the China-Pakistan alliance during the early 1970s was characterized by close cooperation in military, diplomatic, and economic spheres. China provided crucial support to Pakistan during periods of international isolation, while Pakistan served as a valuable ally for China's efforts to counterbalance regional rivals.

Conclusion

In the beginning of 1970s, although the world's Cold War pattern had not been broken, there were new changes at both scales. The United States was deeply mired in the Vietnam War and was increasingly worried about the threat of the Soviet Union's powerful military power. It decided to get closer to Communist China and seek an alliance. The South Asian subcontinent became a testing ground. Objectively speaking, the internal political power game between the East and the West in Pakistan was the fundamental cause of the turmoil in East Pakistan. India took the opportunity to intervene and launched a "Just Act", the entire incident turned into a war. As the United States becomes increasingly neutral between India and Pakistan, China became Pakistan's most trustworthy support since the mid-1960s, at least in the minds of politicians.

China-Pakistan friendship expanded from the political field to the economic field. China's performance in the 1965 India-Pakistan War gave Pakistani important expectations that China could help Pakistan in 1971. Pakistani politicians stated in 1965 that Pakistan would determine who were true friends based on actual performance. In the beginning of 1970s, economic cooperation between China and Pakistan had developed in an all-round way: the Taxila Heavy Mechanical Complex, China-aided projects had been put into production; the signing of the China-Pakistan Border Trade Agreement renewed the traditional Silk Road; China provided financial and project assistance within its capacity in Pakistan's Fourth Five-Year Plan; The China and Pakistan Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement was formally signed, and China-Pakistan cooperation further deepened.

This is a special alliance with strong aspirations but limited capabilities. In the words and sentences of the leaders and propaganda media between China and Pakistan: China's great victory at the United Nations was inseparable from Pakistan, a die-hard friend who was not afraid of external pressure, and China benefited a lot from the help of Pakistan in building Sino-US relations. At the same time, Pakistani people completely trusted China and would always regard China as a lifelong friend. But this alliance also shows obvious limitations: China was in the turbulent era of the Cultural Revolution, it could not provide any substantial military help in the drastic war, but only limited diplomatic and economic support.

The geopolitical landscape of South Asia ensured the continuation of this alliance. Both China and Pakistan were in a relatively weak and passive position in the geopolitical landscape at that time. China's relationship with the Soviet Union entered into an unprecedented tense situation after the Zhenbao Island conflict in 1969. China had to face the pressures from the United States and the Soviet Union. China's western borders was threatened by India with the support of the Soviet Union. Pakistan's situation was more dangerous. Since its independence, it was facing the dangerous of being dismembered by India. The distribution of power and interests in the east and west of Pakistan caused a lot of contradictions. The signing of the Soviet-India treaty suddenly worsened the situation. In order to ensure national security and geopolitical interests, this special alliance lasted from 1960s.

Recommendations

The findings suggest that the China-Pakistan alliance significantly influenced regional geopolitics, contributing to stability and shaping the trajectory of South Asian affairs during the early 1970s. Understanding the dynamics of this alliance can provide valuable insights for policymakers navigating contemporary geopolitical challenges in the region.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the special relationship between China and Pakistan in the early 1970s, highlighting its significance in the context of South Asian geopolitics and offering insights into the nature and implications of such alliances.

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