

Bhutto and the Muslim World

Syed M.H. Shah

The 1971 civil war ultimately resulted in the emergence of an independent and sovereign Bangladesh. This bitter irony was anathema to a nation created in 1947 against domination by India's Hindu majority.¹ The failure of Islam to overcome the ethnic and geographic divisions between Pakistan's two wings violently challenged its very identity, its *raison d'être*.² It was India who had intervened openly in the 1971 civil war by extending her full support to Awami League's separatist aims. In particular the war had posed a dilemma that had nagged Pakistani leaders who were looking that how Pakistan's security could be guaranteed in the light of perpetual tension with large, more powerful India, "who made no secret of her feeling that Pakistan was a natural part of India and must revert to her".³ The 1971 war had proved Pakistan's total isolation as no substantial support was offered by any of her friends. As far as the Muslim countries were concerned, most of them lacked the power, coherence, and will necessary to intercede on Pakistan's behalf.⁴ Some of the Muslim countries had extended their moral and material support to Pakistan but it could not save her from disintegration. It indicated that Pakistani leadership had not been able to formulate their foreign policy in accordance with the requirements of the country. At such a critical juncture Pakistan had to redefine its foreign policy mainly inspired by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then rising to pinnacle of power.

In an attempt to bolster Pakistan's security and enhance its international standing, President Bhutto aggressively courted the nations of the Middle East.⁵ It was for the first time that Pakistan began to broaden and intensify its ties with the Muslim countries both bilaterally and within the context of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

During the neutral period, 1947-54, Pakistani leaders heavily relied upon superpowers in order to get financial assistance and resolve the dispute of Kashmir. None of these actors proved helpful in solving the first outstanding problem on Pakistan's foreign policy agenda, the dispute with India over Kashmir.⁶

Despite the fact that the founding fathers of Pakistan stressed for brotherly relations with the Muslim states of the world, yet in the first two decades Pakistan did not achieve what the people had aspired for. There are many reasons for this.

Perhaps the most significant reason was that Nasser and Sukarno, who were self-proclaimed socialists, anti-imperialists and anti-colonialists, were opposed to the idea of Pakistan's right to lead the Muslim world in the light of its primarily capitalist economic system and pro-Western foreign policy. By joining the Baghdad Pact (1954), entering into a military alliance with the U.S.A. (1954), joining the SEATO (1955) and remaining in the British Commonwealth, Pakistan's image was doubtful in the eyes of these leaders and Pakistan was considered as a "camp follower" and "satellite" of the West. Most of the Muslim countries considered U.S.A. responsible for imperialism and colonialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as undermining Arab League, dividing the Arab World and breaking ranks with the Muslim world in the paramount struggle against Israel. So Pakistan was considered by most of the Muslim countries as being either a naive and poor victim or else a willing and unprincipled agent of the age-old Western policy of divide and rule. Therefore, Pakistan was considered as unworthy for the leadership of the Muslim world.

Secondly, for the first two decades, the foreign policy of Pakistan was directed towards the West and no proper attention was paid for strengthening ties with other countries of the world. Pakistan failed to condemn the British, French and Israel aggression against Egypt during the Suez Crisis of 1956, which was condemned by India. This did not leave a good impression on the minds of the Arabs about Pakistan.

Thirdly, Prime Minister Suhrawardy, by his derogatory remarks about the weakness of Muslim countries and

meaninglessness of an Islamic bloc irritated the leaders of the Muslim states. He said:

Why don't we [the Muslim countries] get together rather than be tied to big powers like the United States. My answer to that is zero plus zero plus zero is after all equal to zero. We have, therefore, to go farther afield to get anything which is substantial.⁷

Though Ayub tried to bring about some changes in the foreign policy but it essentially remained focussed on the same areas where it was in the fifties. By 1971, Pakistan's foreign affairs were in disarray.⁸

Bhutto's Reorientation of Foreign Policy

After the emergence of Bangladesh, the remaining Pakistan was ethnically and religiously more homogeneous, and was widely regarded as geographically part of the Muslim South West Asia. A trend towards heightened Islamic consciousness and a yearning for closer ties with other Muslims countries grew more after the dismemberment of Pakistan. In this regard Pakistan was also helped to a greater extent by the changing situation in the Muslim countries. The supporters of Arab nationalism had been replaced either by pro-West leaders or "Islam loving" rulers. It was an age of what Bernard Lewis called "The Return of Islam".⁹ This led Bhutto to reorient Pakistan's foreign policy with special emphasis on the Muslim world just as pre-partition Muslims and the founding fathers had envisioned. To quote him:

The severance of our eastern wing by force had significantly altered our geographical focus. This will naturally affect our geographical perspective. The geographical distance between us and the nations of South East Asia has grown.... At the moment, as we stand, it is within the ambit of South and Western Asia. It is here that our primary concern must henceforth lie.... There is the whole uninterrupted belt of Muslim nations, beginning with Iran and Afghanistan and culminating at the shores of the Atlantic and Morocco. With the people of all these states we share a cultural heritage, religious beliefs and a good deal of history. There is thus a community of interests which is further buttressed by the similarity of our aspirations and hopes. Clearly we have to make a major effort in building upon the fraternal ties that already bind us to the Muslim world.¹⁰

After the secession of East Pakistan, the leadership had come to the conclusion that pro-Western policy had proved inadequate. Bhutto revised the pattern of foreign policy and decided to reassert fraternal links with the Muslim world. It was a policy, Bhutto believed, that would yield rich dividends for Pakistan and strengthen her image in the world.

Because of the significant developments during the late 1960's and in the early 1970's in the Muslim world, Pakistan began to pursue the policy of international Islamic brotherhood again. The Arabs had a humiliating defeat at the hands of Israel in six-days war of June, 1967 and Israel had also occupied a sizeable portion of Arab territory including Jerusalem. Nasser's prestige and influence in the Arab world was declining and there appeared stirring of an Islamic revival in Egypt. In August, 1969, a part of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Israeli-occupied Jerusalem was also destroyed by fire, which infuriated and galvanized Muslims around the world. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia condemned Israel and along with King Hassan II of Morocco, called for an Islamic Summit Conference. The Summit was held at Rabat, Morocco and twenty five Muslims leaders participated in it. At the initiative of King Faisal, the first Islamic conference of foreign ministers was organized in Jeddah in March, 1970 at which decision to establish a permanent Islamic political organization called the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was taken. At this conference a decision was also taken for the foreign ministers of Islamic countries to meet once a year to promote cooperation and establish institutional basis for Pan-Islamism. The death of Nasser and Anwar al-Sadaat's rise to power in Egypt also helped King Faisal to become the uncontested leaders of the Pan-Islamic Movement.¹¹ John. L. Esposito while observing the situation very rightly comments:

The 1970's represent a new phase in Muslim History. Throughout much of the Islamic world, from the Sudan to the Philippines, religion reasserted itself in Muslim politics in a major and, at times, often volatile manner. The expansion of Islam's role in public life became a key issue in many Muslim societies.¹²

Bhutto was fully aware of the changed circumstances and had clearly and repeatedly enunciated his foreign policy views. During the 1960s he was critical of Pakistan's excessive reliance

on the United States and the damage it had received on relations with other powers like the Soviet Union and China. Bhutto's courtship of the Muslim countries began soon after he assumed power. From January to June 1972, he visited twenty two Muslim countries of the Middle East and Northern Africa.¹³ These visits were meant to rebuild bridges of understanding as well as to achieve other objectives: (i) to thank the leaders of the Muslim countries personally for their material and moral support to Pakistan during the December 1971 War with India over Bangladesh; (ii) to assure them that Pakistan had recovered not merely the will to survive but also the grit, strength and ability to maintain a stable democratic policy and a viable economy inspite of the shock of defeat, the cost of war and the amputation of one wing of the country...¹⁴ (iii) to seek support for Pakistan and persuade India to agree to mutual withdrawal of troops and the repatriation of the prisoners of war, as well as a peaceful, durable and 'honourable settlement of the complex disputes between two countries;¹⁵ (iv) to persuade them not to recognize Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state to enable Pakistan and the leaders of its estranged countrymen in the eastern wing to resolve their differences peacefully and amicably; (v) to help Pakistan break out of the diplomatic isolation in which it found itself after the conduct of an internationally unpopular and embarrassing civil war.¹⁶

In retrospect, it is interesting to witness how successful Bhutto was in achieving the above mentioned objectives. No wonder, more trips were made to Muslim and non-Muslim countries in the following years and a host of third world leaders were invited to Pakistan. This aggressive use of personal diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy was employed by Bhutto not only because he loved publicity, but because he wanted to use a personal ability in foreign policy to assist him in the more problematic areas of domestic affairs. He may have even cherished the long range objective of becoming one of the most prominent leaders of the third world. Consequently, he used the Islamic links to help gain access to the third world movement, and the latter to further cement Pakistan's ties to the Islamic world.¹⁷

Bhutto's international travels built bridges, improved the image, refurbished relations, and generally enhanced the stature

of his country and himself. In short, he did a monumental job of marketing Pakistan in the diverse Muslim world.

Pakistan and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War

Bhutto took an opportunity to show Pakistan's friendship with the Muslim World to assist the Arabs diplomatically and politically when Egypt and Syria went to war with Israel during October, 1973. On the diplomatic front, Bhutto sent telegrams to President Sadaat of Egypt and Assad of Syria assuring them Pakistan's solidarity with their just and glorious causes. He also requested Secretary General of the United Nations, and President Nixon of the USA, to help in restoring a just and durable peace in the Middle East by asking Israel to vacate Arab occupied territories in accordance with the 1967 U. N. Security Council Resolution 242.¹⁸ Bhutto also convened a meeting of the Arab envoys assuring them that Pakistan would uphold the principles of justice and equity "uncompromisingly, unswervingly and unwaveringly".¹⁹ At this occasion Maulana Kausar Niazi declared that an attack on the Arabs was an attack on Pakistan.²⁰ The statement issued by Pakistan Foreign Ministry also condemned the "barbaric actions" and "indiscriminate bombings of cities" by the Israelis.²¹

Pakistan also involved herself actively with the United Nations and other international forums in making strong pro-Arab statements. Bhutto sent messages to the leaders of Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia when they joined the war and praised their decision as a "heroic act in the highest tradition of Islamic solidarity, which would be remembered by future Muslim generations with pride and admiration".²² At a press conference in Karachi on 20th October, 1973, Bhutto said that in the current Middle East conflict, the whole of the Muslim world is on trial...Pakistan is not a non-aligned state. Pakistan is finally aligned to the principle of justice and international law...and to a durable structure of international peace...Pakistan was doing 'everything within our power and capacity' to help the 'Arab position and to give a tangible support' to the Arab states in their struggle...Bhutto announced, 'we know the people of Pakistan have faith in their government and in the successful execution of this jihad'.²³ He also undertook a tour of Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia in order to forge a united Islamic front

against Israel. The material and moral support was also extended by Pakistan during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Two medical teams were sent to Egypt and Syria, each consisting of fifteen members — four doctors and eleven male nurses.²⁴

During this war, mass media in Pakistan also played a vital role of the pro-Arab propaganda campaign. The war was considered as a *Jihad* against the evils of Zionism, Imperialism and Israeli expansionism, a *Jihad* that was being won by the *mujahideen*.²⁵ This media campaign was so successful that it aroused the Pakistani masses. It led to the holding of special prayers in mosques on behalf of the Arabs; the establishment of blood banks for the wounded soldiers of Islam; and even the recruitment of able-bodied male volunteers eager to fight in the *Jihad* against Israel.²⁶

It was Bhutto who gave new ideas to the Third World. He opined that the Third World has emphasized, time and again, that poverty and affluence cannot co-exist. But...we ourselves have not fully realized the nature and value of economic power nor grasped the urgent need of developing science and technology for our progress, indeed for our very survival...The war of last October has, however, precipitated a chain of events and created an environment in which the developing countries can at last hope to secure the establishment of more equitable economic order...by the demonstrated ability of the oil-producing countries to concert their policies and determine the price of their resources. This may well be a watershed in history...an unprecedented shift will occur in the global monetary and financial balance of power. The Third World can now participate in the economic and financial councils of the world on an equal footing with the developed countries.²⁷

The myth of Israeli invincibility was shattered during the early Arab victories on the battle field which provided one of the best examples of Arab unity when OPEC under the leadership of King Faisal decided to drastically reduce oil shipments to the USA and other Western countries helping Israel. This created an acute oil shortage and an upward pressure on the prices of oil. The OPEC, which had contemplated oil price increases over the prior years, found it an opportune time to act, and increased the prices again within a period of two months. With money pouring

into oil rich Muslim countries of OPEC, ambitious development plans were formulated and implemented. These dramatic events electrified Muslims all over the world and gave them a feeling of immense pride, a sense of power, and great hope of their future. For devout Muslims, it was a sign of Divine Providence and a belief that Almighty God was moving to give His faithfuls their just reward after a long period of atonement, trials and tribulations.²⁸

Bhutto's political policies began to provide rewards when vast political, diplomatic and token military aid to the Arab side during and after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war provided definite proof of Pakistan's usefulness to the Muslim world. At minimal cost, Pakistan repaid the 1971 Bangladesh favours, and achieved a prominent position at the forefront of Islamic revival in the wake of the oil price increases.

The 1974 Lahore Islamic Summit Conference

On account of Bhutto's domestic and foreign diplomacy, Pakistan had sailed through the early crisis being confronted by it at the time of the emergence of Bangladesh. At this crucial juncture, an extraordinary event took place which further ensured Pakistan's prominent position among the Muslim nations and anointed — Bhutto's leadership with general Islamic acceptability. Following the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973, Tengku Abdul Rehman, the Secretary General of the Islamic Secretariat, and King Faisal, who had emerged as the de facto spiritual, political and economic leader of the Pan-Islamic movement, suggested Pakistan as the host for the Second Islamic Summit Conference.²⁹

- a) The nomination of Pakistan was seen by Pakistanis as a reward for Bhutto and Pakistani people for their contribution to Islamic cause over the years, and specially for their moral and material assistance to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.³⁰
- b) The holding of Islamic Summit Conference was seen by King Faisal and other Muslim leaders as a way to rehabilitate Pakistan's international image after the secession of East Pakistan.
- c) The Islamic Summit Conference in Pakistan was considered by the Islamic Secretariat and the leaders of certain Muslim

countries to be an appropriate time to bring about a rapprochement between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Second Islamic Summit Conference held in Lahore was a three-day affair that began on February 22, 1974. It was attended by 38 Muslim leaders and prominent governmental representatives, which included six kings, twelve presidents, six prime ministers, eight foreign ministers, the head of the PLO, the Secretary General of the Arab League, a delegation of *Motamer-al-Alam-al-Islami*, and the Secretary General of the *Rabit-al-Alam-al-Islami*. Not only it was the biggest gathering of its kind, but also one of the most successful.³¹ Bhutto made a particular effort to ensure attendance of the distinguished guests by sending special envoys to remind and persuade the leaders to attend the Conference. Bhutto was very careful in preparing the agenda for the Lahore Islamic Summit in such a way that it won unanimous approval.³²

The Conference covered three major areas of concern to the Muslim world:

First the Summit formally recognized the PLO headed by Chairman Yasser Arafat as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian nation", and called on all delegates to extend "full and effective support" to the Arabs and Palestinians in their "struggle for recovering all their occupied lands by all means" (which implied an endorsement of the use of force if need be).³³ The final declaration asserted that no agreement, protocol or understanding which postulate the continuance of Israeli occupation of the holy city of Jerusalem or its transfer to any non-Arab sovereignty...will be acceptable to the Islamic countries.³⁴ There was also a general consensus to provide all facilities to the PLO in the establishment of offices in all Muslim countries. All the participants agreed to condemn any or all states that provide Israel with military, economic and human assistance and to cut relations with Israel in all fields. Bhutto while expressing his solidarity with the Arabs declared that the armies of Pakistan are the armies of Islam.... We shall enter Jerusalem as brothers-in arms.³⁵

Second the Muslim countries felt need for closer economic cooperations for which economic committees consisting of the experts of five oil rich member-states (Kuwait, Libya, Saudi

Arabia, Algeria and UAE) and three poorer members (Egypt, Pakistan and Senegal) were established to develop ways and means to alleviate economic hardship in the poor member-states, which was aggravated by the increases in oil prices.³⁶ An Islamic Solidarity Fund was also established within the OIC Secretariat by providing an initial capital of \$26 million to finance economic, social and cultural projects in the Muslim world.³⁷

Third, ways and means were discussed as how the Muslim world, itself as a part of the community of developing countries should associate itself with the cause of the Third World. It was agreed that a new international economic order could be achieved only through a unified Islamic bloc in cooperation with Third World countries.

Bhutto, as Chairman of the Islamic Summit Conference, delivered an eloquent speech laced with Islamic rhetoric and symbolism at the concluding session:

We are a poor nation. We may not be able to contribute funds to the economic development of the Islamic World but, with Allah as my witness, I declare here today that we, the people of Pakistan, shall give our blood for the cause of Islam....We have been facing many difficulties, but these problems are now being overcome. The people of Pakistan are dedicated to the cause of Islamic solidarity. The people of Pakistan are soldiers of Islam and its armies are the armies of Islam. Whenever any occasion arises, the Islamic world would never find us wanting in any future conflict. *Inshaallah* we shall enter *Baitul Maqdis* as brothers in arms.³⁸

In his speech Bhutto also pointed out that the Muslim World had made substantial progress in a quarter century. On account of its poverty and powerlessness, it had faced many crises and suffered humiliation. In fact, the world believed that the Muslims would never rise again, but they did, and if the Muslims continue to present a united bloc they could achieve their objective no matter what was pitted against them. He added that his conscience would not have been at ease if the 65 million Bangladeshi Muslims had not been represented at the Lahore Islamic Summit.³⁹

This Summit proved to be an excellent vehicle for the speedy and honourable recognition of Bangladesh. Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh and a Pakistani-Bangladeshi rapprochement was a highly controversial and nettlesome issue

because of the opposition from influential sections in both countries. But this opposition quickly disappeared when a delegation of the dignitaries from seven Muslim countries went to Dacca and brought Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman to Lahore for a reconciliation with the Pakistani leadership in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood.⁴⁰ The Conference created a climate of mutual forgiveness, which a year later paved the way for release of 195 Pakistani prisoners-of-war that Mujib had kept to be tried for war crimes. Stanley Wolpert while commenting on the Islamic Summit says that Bhutto felt potentially much stronger than India; it was an overwhelming transformation, less than three years after disastrous Bangladesh war.⁴¹

Bhutto impressed the delegates of the Summit and the journalists who covered it, by restoring dignity, instilling hope and sense of purpose into a nation that was broken and in despair. Pakistan's newly enhanced position in the Muslim world greatly boosted its reputation. Even India saw Pakistan's new stature in the Muslim world with surprise and grudging respect for Bhutto's foreign policy and statesmanship.⁴² He gave Pakistan this linkage to the countries of Gulf...on defense lines, on economic lines, and on foreign policy lines.⁴³ It seemed that Bhutto was the statesman Pakistanis had yearned for since he was realizing Pakistan's long cherished dream of becoming one of the leaders of the Pan-Islamic Movement and playing an important role in bringing about Islamic solidarity. Bhutto impressed his countrymen with his ability to get along with leaders representing the whole spectrum of political opinion from radical socialist to conservative capitalist. He spoke to the audience in the Summit as a Third World leader, whose new economic strategy could topple the global dominance of both superpowers and the entire industrialized West.⁴⁴

The Summit successfully achieved the objective of closing amicably the sad chapter of East Pakistan. Pakistan was now in a position to start afresh with Bangladesh. The success of the Summit was a great pride for the nation and it enhanced Bhutto's image and prestige also. The Lahore Summit proved to Bhutto's greatest diplomatic triumph.⁴⁵ In 1974, it appeared that the Islamic world had suddenly gained the resources and the will to form a united book of nations with common interests and Bhutto wanted to be at the forefront of that movement.⁴⁶

Pakistan's Relations With Iran

Pakistan and Iran had long shared similar foreign policy problems. Both faced a potential threat from the Soviet Union to the north, and each was mired in bitter conflict with an immediate neighbour — Iraq for Iran and India for Pakistan. These challenges created an additional bond of solidarity to the one they enjoyed because of their common border and cultural heritage. The two nations also perceived a community of interests with the U.S. which had led both to join CENTO and conclude separate bilateral security arrangements with Washington. The Regional Cooperation for Development plan [R.C.D] was established in 1964 by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan in order to strengthen mutual economic, socio-cultural and technical cooperation among the three Muslim nations who were members of CENTO.⁴⁷ Such linkages served mostly as psychological security blankets for the Muslim nations rimming the Soviet Union. The RCD plan realized only nine joint purpose projects between 1964 and the late 1970s.⁴⁸ The RCD was a relatively low-key agency until Bhutto came to power, and it then expanded dramatically. Pakistan's defeat in 1971 coincided with an "increase in Iranian power and prestige". Pakistan relied heavily on Iran for the psychological uplift necessary to pull it out of the despair of defeat.⁴⁹

Bhutto and Shah both considered the successful Bengali separatist action of 1971 a dangerous precedent. It set out an example for other secessionist groups, especially those in Baluchistan, flanking the borders of Iran, Pakistan, and to a lesser extent, Afghanistan. While Pakistan struggled to put its house back in order, the Shah feared that internal Pakistani dissent would spill over into Iran. He and Bhutto shared an interest in resisting Baluch separatism and a suspicion that the Soviet Union had its eye on a Moscow-dominated Baluch state.⁵⁰ Shah was also concerned with the destabilizing effects of agitation for an independent Pushto-speaking state by Pathans living on both sides of the border between Afghanistan's Eastern Province and Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province.⁵¹ He actively sought a rapprochement between Kabul and Islamabad over the Pakhtoonistan issue. Shah viewed Pakistan as a good eastern buffer, which would perhaps provide a useful link in

improving Iranian relations with Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf Emirates.⁵²

The mutual interests developed into an Iranian political commitment to the territorial integrity of Pakistan in the mid-1970s.⁵³ Thus, as Bhutto sought help from its neighbour to the west, a major objective of Iranian policy was to 'extend maximum political and military support to Pakistan in order to assure stability in the region which would serve Iranian strategic interest' specially, Tehran's 'need to safeguard her lines of communications through the Hormuz Straits' near Pakistan's coast.⁵⁴

Iran extended significant support to Pakistan on vital issues like Kashmir and Pakhtoonistan.⁵⁵ Shah of Iran also sent shipments of oil to Pakistan on favourable terms, gave financial aid and substantial military assistance in dealing with rebel groups in Pakistan's disaffected province of Baluchistan. These close links resulted in Pakistan's exports to Iran by over 400 percent between 1972-73 and 1973-74, and nearly doubled in the following year.⁵⁶ A credit of \$850 million from Iran was important for Pakistan's economy, which went into educational institutions, building of textile mills and cement plants.⁵⁷ By expanding R.C.D's role, Bhutto was able to obtain substantial financial, military and political aid from Iran.

Bhutto and the Islamic Bomb

Bhutto is considered to be one of the architects and major force behind Pakistan's nuclear energy programme. He reorganized the Atomic Energy Commission and lobbied for increased funding to it as a Minister of Fuel, Power and Natural Resources in Ayub's cabinet during 1958.⁵⁸ He was so concerned about India's nuclear processing plant, which could give it nuclear capability that he announced that if India builds the bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own. We have no alternative.⁵⁹ His idea to allocate more resources to establish a Pakistani reprocessing plant was rejected by Ayub. Ayub could have been concerned about a prohibitively expensive arms race with India, a cut-off of all U.S. and Western aid, and averse reaction in the world that could diplomatically isolate Pakistan.⁶⁰

Bhutto was interested to see Pakistan to become nuclear. In his book entitled *The Myth of Independence*, Bhutto candidly dealt with the nuclear issue by writing:

All wars of our age have become total wars...and it will have to be assumed that war waged against Pakistan is capable of becoming a total war. It would be dangerous to plan for less and our plans should, therefore, include the nuclear deterrent.⁶¹

Considering the Indian threat as central in his thoughts on the nuclear issue, Bhutto warned:

If Pakistan restricts or suspends her nuclear programme, it would not only enable India to blackmail Pakistan with her nuclear advantage, but would impose crippling limitations on the development of Pakistan's science and technology.⁶²

Unconcerned with any short-term nuclear threat posed by India, he was more suspicious of India's long term intentions. Therefore, he opined:

Our problem, in its essence, is how to obtain such a weapon in time before the crisis begins. India, whose progress in nuclear technology is sufficient to make her a nuclear power in the near future, can provoke this at a time of her choosing...Pakistan must, therefore, embark on a similar programme in order to achieve nuclear parity and for her national security.⁶³

Bhutto found the opportunity to pursue his objective to develop Pakistan's nuclear option as the trump card in his foreign policy, when he rose to power again in 1971. Pakistan's nuclear capability could serve as a symbolic equalizer with India and an effective bargaining chip in deterring India's strength in conventional military terms. It could also assure Pakistan that it was not dependent on the West or China, but was independently secure. Further, it could enhance Pakistan's international status as a member of the group of nuclear powers and first nuclear power in the Muslim world. In this scenario, Bhutto believed that psychological and political leverage would accrue in dealing with friends and foes, and that Pakistan would be promoted to the position of leadership not only in the Muslim world, but also in the Third World.⁶⁴

India's explosion of a nuclear device in May, 1974 was alarming for Pakistan. Indira Gandhi, in a letter to Bhutto wrote: "there are no political or foreign policy implications of the

nuclear test and that India still adhered to its policy of using atomic energy for peaceful ends".⁶⁵ Bhutto, unpersuaded by this palliative, replied:

It is a question not only of intentions but capabilities. It is well-established that the testing of a nuclear device is not different from the detonation of a nuclear weapon. Given this indisputable fact, how is it possible for our fears to be assuaged by mere assurances, which may in any case be ignored in subsequent years. Governments change, as do nation attitudes. But the acquisition of a capability, which has direct and immediate military consequences, becomes a permanent factor to be reckoned with.⁶⁶

Bhutto later accused India of lacking the maturity that comes with great power status in the use of restraint when he added:

If ever there was a nation capable of using atomic weapons, it was India. If India was ever in a tight corner, it would not hesitate to use the atomic bomb...The nuclear status had been acquired to brandish a nuclear sword to coerce, to impose hegemony over neighbours and to extract political concessions.⁶⁷

The Indian explosion was considered by Bhutto as a fateful development and a "threat to Pakistan's security".⁶⁸ He further added that a more grave and serious event...has not taken place in the history of Pakistan.⁶⁹ Bhutto appealed for a "nuclear umbrella of all the five Great powers" or failing that a nuclear assurance from "at least one of them" as the "irreducible minimum protection".⁷⁰ His appeal was given no consideration by any of the Great powers and went unheeded.

Bhutto succeeded in getting United States of America committed to \$100 million arms deal to Pakistan by assuring her that Pakistan would stay in CENTO, and would develop a nuclear bomb only if his country was not provided with a "sufficient deterrent". However, the U.S. government did not supply with any heavy or offensive weapons to Pakistan in order not to antagonize India.⁷¹

Under these circumstances, Bhutto redoubled his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons capability for his country — motivated by Pakistan's national interest and his personal ambition. He was fully aware of his country's resources and knew that Pakistan could not acquire nuclear capability alone. In order to

achieve this goal he gave an impression to some Muslim countries that the development of nuclear energy was not possible unless he would receive financial and technological support from them.

The Arabs had suffered four military defeats at the hands of the Israelis and lost a big piece of land, including the Holy City of Jerusalem. The continuous supply of substantial economic and military aid from the U.S. had strengthened Israel with the most sophisticated conventional military arsenal. It also possessed a number of nuclear bombs which could be used against the Arabs if the position of Israel was threatened. This strong position of Israel was a continuous threat for the Arabs who did not possess sophisticated military capabilities.⁷²

Bhutto realized that the increase of oil prices which had resulted in the petrodollars flowing to oil-rich Muslim states, had given these countries a new sense of pride and power. He felt that they could use their enhanced power to do something potential about their negative global image.

There was a revival of interest in Islam in Pakistan and other Muslim countries. The Second Islamic Summit Conference was a unique display of Islamic unity and Bhutto got most of the credit for its success. Bhutto thought that it was an appropriate time for selling his concept of an "Islamic Bomb" to the two of the wealthiest Pan-Islamic and anti-Zionist leaders in the Arab world, namely Colonel Qadhdhafi and King Faisal. Since both of them were well-known for supporting Islamic causes around the world and financing for an Islamic Bomb was not a difficult task for them.⁷³

Pakistan was more advanced technologically in the area of nuclear energy than any other Muslim country. It was also known for its Pan-Islamic and pro-Arab sentiments. Bhutto had assured the leaders of the Muslim world that he could be trusted in sharing the nuclear arms technology and probably even a bomb if the Arabs felt endangered by Israel powerful war-machines. He succeeded in convincing them that the existence of an Islamic Bomb itself would deter Israel from ever using her nuclear arsenal against the Arabs, and probably encourage her to reconsider invasion and occupation of further Arab territory.⁷⁴

The explosion of a nuclear device by India had strength-

ened Bhutto's idea of an Islamic Bomb. He could convince his Arab financiers with the argument that there was a Christian bomb, Jewish bomb, and now a Hindu bomb, why not an Islamic bomb?⁷⁵ "Bhutto believed that the Muslim world could not afford the luxury of lagging behind those who had the bomb, because if it did, it would not only be inferior and weaker, but would continue to be dominated. A way of becoming powerful and exerting pressure on the world stage was to have an Islamic bomb. The logic was persuasive, and touched the Pan-Islamic sentiments of his patrons. Immediately after the Islamic Summit, Pakistan set about the task with considerable zeal.⁷⁶ In January 1975, Qadhdhafi was rather indiscreet in indicating the efforts that he had made to get an atom bomb when he said: "A few years ago, we could hardly manage to procure a squadron of fighter planes. Tomorrow, we shall be able to buy an atom bomb and all its component parts. The monopoly of the atom will be broken any day now".⁷⁷

Pakistan's plans to make an atomic bomb were known to some extent by the various intelligence agencies. But all doubts were cleared when the deposed and imprisoned Bhutto himself wrote about his contribution in bringing Pakistan to the threshold of nuclear capability. To quote him:

When I took charge of Pakistan's Atomic energy Commission, it was....only a name. Assiduously, and with granite determination, I put my entire vitality behind the task of acquiring nuclear capability for my country. I sent hundreds of young men to Europe and North America for training in nuclear science...Due to my singular efforts, Pakistan acquired the infrastructure and the potential of nuclear capability. It was not a simple task to catch up the lost time in a poor and underdeveloped country like ours. When I assumed charge of Atomic Energy, Pakistan was about twenty years behind India's programme. When I ceased to be Prime Minister, I believe, that at most, Pakistan was five to six years behind India.⁷⁸

In another revealing statement, Bhutto said:

The major portion of the [reprocessing] project had been completed, and we had thoroughly prepared ourselves to show the world that we also knew how to explode a nuclear bomb....My countrymen wanted me and my government to produce a nuclear bomb.⁷⁹

In fact Bhutto wanted the world to know that he was the man who had coined the term "Islamic bomb", and if ever

Pakistan exploded a nuclear device, Bhutto could be remembered for having fathered it. He referred to it as "my greatest achievement"⁸⁰, placing it above the stabilization and consolidation of the rump Pakistan, his domestic socio-economic reforms, the Simla Agreement with India, the 1973 Constitution, the strengthening of brotherly ties with the Muslim world, and even the hosting of the 1974 Lahore Islamic Summit Conference.

It was because of Bhutto's efforts that closer ties between Pakistan and the Middle East countries were established. The Middle East countries lacked professionals, skilled, semi skilled and unskilled workers. This provided an opportunity for Pakistanis to have jobs in these countries. Bhutto administration facilitated and even encouraged the outflow of Pakistani manpower and thereby greatly accelerated the process. It is to Bhutto's credit to have perceived the mutuality of interests between Pakistan and the Muslim world.

Bhutto's Islamic diplomacy had three fold objective. (a) to earn foreign exchange for Pakistan, (b) to reduce unemployment/underemployment in the country, and (c) to establish and strengthen Pakistan's links with the Muslim world, all in the name and worthy cause of Islam. Pakistan's foreign policy capitalized on the economic assets of the oil-rich Muslim states by linking these countries to the rest of the Third World, of which Pakistan was a part; a process which 'would complement their individual resources and give them collective strength'.⁸¹

Pakistan and the Middle Eastern Aid

The "Politics of Islam" during Bhutto's era brought in a substantial inflow of worker remittances. It also generated increased Middle Eastern Grants, loans, oil at concessional prices and investments.

Prior to Bhutto's assumption of power, Pakistan was totally dependent upon Western economic and military aid which amounted to \$6.5 billion.⁸² Direct financial assistance to Pakistan from the Muslim world was virtually non-existent.⁸³ The only loans Pakistan actually received from the Muslim countries were a \$ 5 million supplier's credit from Kuwait in 1969-70 and a \$30 million general purpose loans from Libya in 1973-74.⁸⁴

From 1974 onward, Pakistan began receiving increased aid programmes from the Middle East. In 1974-75, the Middle Eastern members of OPEC edged out the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD) as the major international aid donors. In that year, the Muslim countries pledged \$896 million or 51.4 percent of the record aid commitment of \$1.744 billion made to Pakistan by various donors.⁸⁵ Iran agreed to advance \$580 million over a three-year period,⁸⁶ and the members of OPEC pledged the rest of the aid.⁸⁷ The traditional major aid donor of Pakistan, the USA, committed \$194 million, while the USSR made its largest commitment ever to Pakistan by pledging \$214 million, mainly for the steel plant she was building near Karachi.⁸⁸

In 1975-76, the Saudi Development Fund pledged a soft loan of \$30 million and the Saudi government made a grant of \$30 million to help meet Pakistan's balance of payments deficit.⁸⁹ King Khalid gave Pakistan a gift of \$30 million during 1976, of which \$10 million was meant for the construction of an Islamic Centre in Islamabad.⁹⁰ In 1975-76, Abu Dhabi had given Pakistan \$100 million, Iran \$628 million, Kuwait \$44 million, Libya \$80 million, and Qattar \$10 million.⁹¹

Arab governments and private Arab entrepreneurs also invested funds in Pakistani commercial and industrial enterprises. The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company bought stocks worth \$32 million in a fertilizer plant and \$21.6 million in an oil refinery in Multan. Sheikh Zayed — the ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the UAE funded scholarships (especially for medical and engineering students), financed graduate centres for the Arabic language and Islamic Studies at the universities in Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar, funded the establishment of expansion of libraries, contributed to the building of a modern airport, and built a 200-beds modern hospital in Rahimyar Khan.⁹² Saudi Arabia had given Pakistan a loan of \$50 million for a fertilizer factory to be set up at Mirpur Mathelo, a credit of \$34 million to modernize and expand two cement factories, and a credit of \$10 million to establish a polyester factory in Karachi.⁹³

Although these measures were purely economic and beneficial to both the Middle East and Pakistan, yet these

developments had religious overtones. Esposito has rightly observed that "Islam had become a prominent part of the Bhutto government's approach to foreign policy".⁹⁴ This renewed socio-economic relationship with the Muslim world was perceived as an outcome of not only Bhutto's diplomatic skill but his leanings towards the Islamic ideals of brotherhood and partnership. They were supposed to safeguard him against the onslaught of the religious scholars against his declared socialist policies. Armed with such potential religious diplomacy abroad as well as his policies of Islamization at home had assured him a smooth and landslide victory in the coming elections.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Davin T. Hagerty, "Pakistan's Foreign Policy Under Z.A. Bhutto", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, Summer 1991, p.55.
2. *Ibid.*, p.55.
3. S.M. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*, London, Oxford University Press, 1978, p.392.
4. Davin T. Hagerty, *op.cit.*, p.56.
5. *Ibid.*, p.56.
6. *Ibid.*, p.57.
7. *Dawn*, December 12, 1956.
8. Davin T. Hagerty, *op.cit.*, p.59.
9. Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and the West*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964, pp.95-114.
10. *Pakistan Affairs*, May 16, 1972, p.1; Also quoted in Khurshid Hyder, "Pakistan Under Bhutto", *Current History*, Vol.63, No.375, November, 1972, p.203.
11. Abdullah M. Sindi, "King Faisal and Pan-Islamism", in Willard A. Beling, (ed.), *King Faisal And The Modernization of Saudi Arabia*, London: Croom Helm, 1980, pp.189-192.
12. John L. Esposito, (ed.), *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.17.

13. For detail please see Government of Pakistan, Z.A. Bhutto, *A Journey of Renaissance*, Islamabad: Ministry of Information, 1972.
14. *Ibid.*, p.7.
15. Indicated by the joint communiques and statements issued by the various governments. For example, see: Pakistan-Kuwait joint communique of May 29, 1972, *Pakistan Horizon*, Third Quarter 1972, pp.135-137.
16. *Ibid.*, p.136.
17. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, *The United States and Pakistan: The Evolution of An Influence Relationship*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982, p.65.
18. Government of Pakistan, *Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto-Speeches and Statements: August 14 — December 31, 1973*, Karachi: Department of Films and Publications, 1973, pp.126-127.
19. *Pakistan Times*, Rawalpindi, 12 October, 1973.
20. *Dawn*, Karachi, 8 October, 1973, p.1.
21. *Dawn*, Karachi, 11 October, 1973, p.1.
22. Bhutto, *Speeches and Statements: August 14 — December 1973*, *op.cit.*, pp.151-512.
23. *Dawn*, Karachi, 21 October, 1973.
24. *Pakistan Times*, Rawalpindi, 13 October, 1973 p.1.
25. M.G. Weinbaum and Gautan Sen, "Pakistan Enters The Middle East", *Orbis*, Vol, 22, No.22, Fall 1979, p.6000.
26. *The Pakistan Times* and *Dawn* from October 6, 1973 to October 28, 1973 bear this out. p.1.
27. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, *The Third World: New Directions*, London: Quartet Books, 1977, p.85.
28. *The Daily Jang*, October 29, 1973.
29. *The Outlook*, Karachi, Vol.2, No.49, March 9, 1974.
30. *Dawn*, Karachi, October 21, 1973, p.1.
31. Rafiq Akhtar, *Pakistan Year Book*, Karachi, East-West Publishing Co., 1974, pp.122-125.
32. *The Daily Jang*, February 26, 1974.

33. Lahore Islamic Conference: Resolution on Middle East and Jerusalem and Conference Declaration, *Asia Research Bulletin*, Vol.3, No.10, March 31, 1974, p.2590.
34. Quoted in Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980, p.234.
35. "Speaking with a United Muslim Voice", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol.83, No.9, 1974, p.12.
36. Shaukat Ali, *Pan-Movements in the Third World: Pan-Arabism, Africanism, Islamism*, Lahore: Publishers United, 1976, p.248.
37. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 1, 1974, p.13.
38. Reyazul Hasan, "The Islamic Summit Conference", *Iqbal Review*, Vol. XV, No.1, April 1974, p.59.
39. *Ibid.*, pp.59-60.
40. Shaukat Ali, *op.cit.*, p.242.
41. Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.233.
42. India was interested to maintain good relations with the Muslim world and in fact expanding them further in the wake of oil-boom and the petro-dollar influx into OPEC. There seemed more possibilities for trade and commerce with 44-country, a strong Islamic bloc. India needed to import the numerous natural resources including the vitally important petroleum that the Muslim world produced. She, on the other hand, also had raw materials, manufactured and semi-manufactured goods, and services (professionals, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers) to export. Besides reducing unemployment and underemployment at home, these exports earned India precious foreign exchange it needed to buy machinery, military equipments and technical know-how from the West, and repay its foreign debts. India also wanted to retain its leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement and assume the leadership of the Third World, both requiring winning over the sizeable Islamic bloc. It was surprising, unpleasant and even worrisome development for India to see Pakistan's ability to strengthen its 'fraternal bonds' with Muslim countries and assume so prominent a position in the emerging Pan-Islamic movement. It may have been a source of worry to India because Pakistan had already started and planned to increase rearming itself with the inflow of petrodollar aid and remittances from the Middle East. There also arose an opportunity for Pakistani armed forces to get invaluable practice on the latest military equipments by advising and training their counterparts all

over the Middle East. It strengthened Pakistan's position which was alarming for India.

43. *The Muslim*, April 10, 1989.
44. Wolpert, *op.cit.*, p.233.
45. *Ibid.*, p.224.
46. Davin T. Hagerty, *op.cit.*, p.62.
47. Rafiq Akhtar, (ed.) *Pakistan Year Book 1976* (Karachi: East-West Publishing Company, 1977), p.299.
48. N. Barat-Novbari, "Regional Cooperation Among Pakistan, Iran and Turkey: Some Recent Developments", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 6, (Summer 1983), p.26.
49. Davin T. Hagerty, *op.cit.*, p.63.
50. *Ibid.*, p.64.
51. *Ibid.*, p.64.
52. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Iran and Pakistan: Cooperation in an Area of Conflict", *Asian Survey*, Vol.17 (May 1977), p.479.
53. *Ibid.*, p.479.
54. Quoted in Davin T. Hagerty, *op.cit.*, p.64.
55. During 1965 and 1971 wars with India, Iran provided invaluable moral, material and logistical support, and in 1966 supplied Sabre jets to Pakistan. For details see Zubeida Mustafa, "Recent Trends in Pakistan Foreign Policy Towards Middle East", *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, 1975, p.i.
56. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Iran and Pakistan: Cooperation in the Area of Conflict," *Asian Survey*, Vol. XVII, No. 5, May 1977, p.480.
57. Zubeida Mustafa, "Pakistan and the Middle East", *Pacific Community*, 7 (July 1976), p.603.
58. Salman Taseer, *Bhutto: A Political Biography*, London: Ithica Press, 1979, p.154.
59. Quoted in D.K. Palit and P.K.S. Namboodri, *Pakistan's Islamic Bomb*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979, p.15.
60. Quoted in Zalmay Khalilzad, "Pakistan: The Making of a Nuclear Power", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XVI, No. 6, June, 1976, p.246.
61. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, p.153.

62. *Ibid.*, p.153.
63. *Ibid.*, p.154.
64. *The Outlook*, [Karachi], Vol. 2, No. 49, March 9, 1974.
65. Palit and Namboodri, *op.cit.*, p.16.
66. *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.
67. *Pakistan Times*, June 8, 1974, p.1.
68. Zalmay Khalilzad, "Pakistan and the Bomb", *Survival*, Vol. XXI, No. 6, November-December 1973, p.146.
69. Zalmay Khalilzad, "Pakistan: *The Making of a Nuclear Power*", *op.cit.*, p.589.
70. Enver Qureshi, "Pakistan's Islamic Bomb", *Pakistan Economist*, Vol. 10, No. 39, September 29, 1979, p.10.
71. Zalmay Khalilzad, "Pakistan and the Bomb", *op.cit.*, p.246.
72. *Pakistan Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 39, September 29, 1979, p.10.
73. Zalmay Khalilzad, "Pakistan and the Bomb", *op.cit.*, p.145.
74. Palit and Namboodri, *op.cit.*, pp.8-9.
75. *Observer*, [England,], December 9, 1973, p.1.
76. Steve Wiessman and Herbert Krosney, *The Islamic Bomb: The Nuclear Threat to Israel and the Middle East*, New York: Times Books, 1981, pp.62-64.
77. *Ibid.*, p.53.
78. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, *If I am Assassinated*, Delhi: Vikes Publishing House, 1979, p.137.
79. Zalmay Khalilzad, "Pakistan and the Bomb", *op.cit.*, p.245.
80. Salman Taseer, *op.cit.*, p.154.
81. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, *The Third World: New Directions*, *op.cit.*, p.86.
82. *Twenty-five Years of Pakistan in Statistics: 1947-1972*, Karachi: Central statistical Office, 1972, p.306.
83. Weinbaum and Sen, *op.cit.*, p.602.
84. *Pakistan Economic Survey 1974-75*, Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, (n.d.), pp.121, 130.

85. The wealthy Western nations involuntarily transferred major part of their foreign aid to the oil-rich nations for purchase of oil. The oil-rich nations then converted their enormous petro-dollar earnings to foreign aid.
86. The Iranian credit to Pakistan was repayable over eight years with a grace of three years bearing an interest of 2 percent per annum....[For details see Zubeida Mustafa, *op.cit.*, pp.12-13].
87. The members of OAPEC extended a credit of \$49 million to Pakistan during 1974-75. Again cash donations to the tune of \$40 million was given to Pakistan by the Muslim countries of the Middle East when an earthquake struck the northern regions of Swat. [For detail see Zubaida Mustafa, *op.cit.*, pp.13-14]. In 1974-75, Saudi Arabia had pledged an interest free loan of \$100 million to Pakistan, of which \$53.4 million was actually disbursed. [Anwar H. Syed, "Pakistan in 1976: Business as Usual", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XVII, No. 2, February 1977, p.188].
88. Feroz Ahmed, "The New Dependence", in Hassan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid, (eds.), *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*, London: Zed Press, 1983, p.7.
89. A.H. Syed, "Pakistan in 1976", *op.cit.*, p.188.
90. *Ibid.*, p.188.
91. *Pakistan Economist*, March 19-25, 1977, p.22.
92. Anwar H. Syed, "Pakistan and its Neighbourhood: Pressures and Politics", *International Security Review*, Vol. IV, No. IV-V, Winter 1979-1980, p.416.
93. Zubeida Mustafa, "Recent Trends in Pakistan's Policy Towards the Middle East", *op.cit.*, p.13.
94. John L. Esposito, "Pakistan: Quest for Identity", in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Islam and Development: Religion and Socio-Political Change*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1980, p.151.