



IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH ASIA

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ABSTRACT :

The immediate neighbors occupy a place of priority and primacy in a country's foreign policy. But more often than not the immediate neighbors get indulged in a host of conflicts which at times is given an ideological coloring. The Indian sub-continent is no exception to this rule. The sub-continent was one country before 1947. The colonial masters while, leaving, however, partitioned the country into two nation. The partition of India has a history of its own. The partition in 1947, was not a final verdict, as the events following a quarter - century are the evidence when Pakistan was further partitioned and a new nation with the name of Bangladesh was formed.

While the partition of India was the creation of colonial masters, the partition of Pakistan was the creation of the misdeeds of its own rulers. Whatever ideological grounds one may put forward they appear to be far from convincing as far as these partitions are concerned. Since the Partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan and India remained in contention over several issues. Although the Kashmir conflict was the predominant issue dividing the nations, other border disputes existed, most notably over the Rann of Kutch, a barren region in the Indian state of Gujarat. The issue first arose in 1956 which ended with India regaining control over the disputed area. Pakistani patrols began patrolling in territory controlled by India in January 1965, which was followed by attacks by both countries on each other's posts on 8 April 1965. Initially involving border police from both nations, the disputed area soon witnessed intermittent skirmishes between the countries' armed forces. In June 1965, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson successfully persuaded both countries to end hostilities and set up a tribunal to resolve the dispute. South Asia is the second most violent place on earth after Iraq. While conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan have attracted global attention, parts of India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal have also experienced long-running conflict. The result is human misery, destruction of infrastructure and social cohesion, and death.



KEYWORDS : Bilateral Resolution, Ideological Conflict, Democratic Secularism.

INTRODUCTION

Ideological Conflicts:

Relations with and policy towards nation is of immense importance for any country. All countries want peace and security on their borders and friendly neighbors to live with. But the irony of the fact is that not many a states have managed to succeed as history and traditions no less than size and resources often eventuated divergence and conflict among neighboring countries.

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coloring. The Indian sub-continent is no exception to this rule. The sub-continent was one country before 1947. The colonial masters while, leaving, however, partitioned the country into two nation. The partition of India has a history of its own. The partition in 1947, was not a final verdict, as the events following a quarter - century are the evidence when Pakistan was further partitioned and a new nation with the name of Bangladesh was formed. While the partition of India was the creation of colonial masters, the partition of Pakistan was the creation of the misdeeds of its own rulers. Whatever ideological grounds one may put forward they appear to be far from convincing as far as these partitions are concerned.

The events following each of these partitions suggests that these partitions did not help in creating friendly neighbors. While India and Pakistan did come into conflict quite early as independent countries. The story was repeated between India and Bangladesh, despite the fact that Bangladesh owed its very existence to India. India as we know had even before independence a vision of a foreign policy. India's major policy imperative in this region was the exclusion of the foreign interference. India consistently endeavored since independence to keep at bay the foreign powers from this region and to establish the principle of bilateral resolution of problem between countries in their region without inviting foreign intervention. The big power however, often intruded in what they regarded as the interests of their globalism. The Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh relations particularly as far as major issues of contentions between them are concerned and which so far have not been resolved by resorting to bilateralism can be attributed to these trends.

To quote V.P. Dutt the Indo-Pakistan relationship is a complex mix of national prejudices, inflated psych, injured ego and plain rivalry. This was rooted in the history of partition and the manner in which the subcontinent was divided into two separate countries in which major roles were played by the imperialist policy of divide and rule of the British, the growing awakening of the Muslim middle class and the fear of the Muslim landlords of Hindu dominance the spread of petty chauvinism symbolized by the Hindu sabha and the RSS and the diffidence of the congress leadership in the face of these challenges to seriously struggle for the support of the Muslim masses.

The impulse and much of the enthusiasm for partition was provided by the Muslim, elite of up and Punjab. Soon after independence, west Punjab by the Muslim leadership captured the leadership of Pakistan. The most anomalous feature of Pakistan was the composition two parts, east and west, separated by a thousand miles territory of India. There was cultural and linguistic deference between two wings of Pakistan.

Pakistan has been facing the problem of identity and integration since its emergence. Although Pakistan was created on the basis of religion but it could not resolve the problem of identity and integration. The Bengali Muslim had little in common except religion with his counterpart in west Punjab. The two nation theory which was advocated by Muslim leadership was never accepted by Indian national congress. After independence, Indian leadership declared that it will have no religion of its own, but the Pakistan the state was founded on religion and it became its 'raison d'etre. India adopted parliamentary democratic system, Pakistan towards initially bureaucratic and subsequently military dictatorship.

Pakistan's search for security and for parity with India has also led to divergent foreign policy perceptions and equally divergent goals in foreign policy. If India tried to block foreign intervention in the region, Pakistan invited it to get even with India. On one hand Pakistan made a military alliance with one big power, while on the other hand Indian leadership followed the path of non- alignment. Pakistan's alliance with China has remained a major foreign policy problem for India. Much of the rationale of Pakistan's approach and stance was evident In Ayub Khan's book – "friends not masters." The book made it clear beyond any doubt Pakistan's sole objective in joining military and other alliance stemmed from the perceived need to deal with India from a position of military strength.

The emergence of Bangladesh was an event of major importance in the sub- continent. For the people of Bangladesh, it was the end of a nightmare of terror and tortures, a reassertion to their individuality and personality, and an opportunity to decide their own future development. For India, it was a major victory of democratic secularism. The politics of hate and violence had been rejected and one more country in the region had opted for democracy and secularism. India could reasonably feel assured about its security in one important sector of the eastern border. Together Bangladesh and India in friendship and on the basis of mutuality of

interests and equality of relationship could help and create conditions of peace and security in the subcontinent, promote the development and welfare of the people of these two countries. There was widespread optimism about future developments.

The Indo- Bangladesh, honeymoon moved to be shorter lived than the Sino-India honeymoon. Beginning with the natural calamities of 1972-73 which resulted in the economic crisis of the country, followed by the political storm, deep troubles were in store for Indo-Bangladesh relationship, and the tragedy was soon to strike Dhaka. The assassination of the father of the Bangladesh and the subsequent emergence of military rulers in Bangladesh saw India watch helplessly the political developments taking place in that country. The government of India in a statement on 16 August expressed "deep shock" at the assassination of Sheikh MujiburRehman whom "we held in high esteem in India as one of the outstanding personalities of our time". The statement pointed out that Bangladesh development were an internal matter for the people of Bangladesh to decide but that India could not remain unaffected by them.

The emergence of Bangladesh was irreversible, but the close amity between India and Bangladesh has been reversed, a new chill inevitably began to envelope Indo-Bangladesh relations. Since the major thrust of the current developments was anti-Indian expectedly many old wounds were opened and some of the outstanding issues become noticeably more acerbic. On 20 April 1976, India lodged a strong protest with Bangladesh against unprovoked shooting from across the border in Meghalaya in which one of the border security force personnel was injured, on 30 April, India expressed surprise and pain renewed outbursts anti India propaganda in the Bangladesh press and Categorically denied that India was behind some behind some stray bands of "miscreants" who had created trouble in small parts Political expediency and political compulsions more than the ideology can be said to have shaped the process of Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh relations. More than this fact an anti-India propaganda that suited successive regimes in both the neighboring countries to legitimize their rule and to remain in power has remained an important factor, and it is therefore that many an issues in these countries have remained unresolved.

There is also a cultural dimension to this syndrome. There is, for instance, the dogma of the "Greater Indian Culture" which prefers to see only the impact and imprint of Indian art, religion and civilization on other societies of South, South-East and Far-East Asia. According to the proponents of this dogma, since Buddhism and Jainism originated in India, other countries which follow these religions are merely the extensions of "Greater Indian Culture". The stress on a common cultural heritage of India and other Asian Countries was important perhaps at one time especially in the context of the nationalist movement in order to draw a distinction between the Oriental and occidental societies as well as to develop a historical perspective of the post-war resurgence of Asia. The theme of cultural uniformity, when overplayed, may also create misapprehension in the minds of India's neighbors. For the theme reinforces the psychology of insecurity they already entertain in view on the Common Cultural Heritage of the region as a means to advance its own quest for regional hegemony.

To quote Anirudha Gupta "In South Asia, in particular we should try to see the cultural diversities that make each nation-state of the region unique in relation to all others. Obviously this approach demands unqualified respect for cultures and people of other nations. There is one school that has gone sterile by insisting that since Pakistan was broken as a result of the partitioning of this sub-continent. It has no history, no culture and, therefore, no right to nationhood. It asks, "Can religion alone become a basis for a nation state"? The question was answered by the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ail Jinnah himself in these words. "Pakistan would be modern democratic state with sovereignty resting on the people and the members of new nation having equal rights of citizenship regardless of their religion, caste or creed". Again in a speech as President of the Constituent Assembly "Pakistan would be modern on Aug. 11, 1947, Jinnah categorically stated "... you may belong to any religion or cast or creed-that has nothing to do with the business of the state" The importance of this statement—especially in the context of latter-day developments can be contested; but there can be no denying that in the process of building a modern state, the rulers of Pakistan were caught up in an unresolved conflict between the demands of state and religion.

CONCLUSION

So it is quite clear that several historical and cultural factors have influenced the process of state formation in South Asia. The state in Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has taken over the role to protect and promote the interests of the religious, linguistic majority; hence from a strictly legal point of view, the minorities in these countries can live only on the surface of the majority—though this should not mean that the state discriminates against them as a matter of policy. In each case the theocratic character of the state is constitutionally enshrined. Pakistan and Bangladesh are Islamic Republics; Nepal is a Hindu Kingdom, and Sri Lanka has adopted Buddhism as state religion. These characteristics are conditions by historical process almost as much as by those determining India's choice to opt for democratic secular polity. It is as difficult for Pakistan to go secular as for India to turn into a theocracy.

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