

A Study of Pak-Turkey Convergence on International Issues

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Abstract

Turkey, a grand empire remained centre of importance in history. Muslims conquered the area in her glory and converted it into a land of peace and prosperity. It was a centre of Islamic emporium for a long period. The lords of states gave up their true duty of being true with their compulsory obligations, left it skeleton of past power. First and second world wars proved a severe shell for it. As a result, with the passage of time, as the Blocks appeared on the face of modern politics, Balkan states joined the social block. In 1991, at the dismemberment the area got an awareness to get independence. Today Turkey developed itself into a moderate and developed Muslim state. Pak-Turk relations base on sincere and solid grounds from the very first day and provide close relations to both the nations. Today as a progressed Muslim state Turkey and Pakistan have very co-operative relations. It is the largest investor after China in Pakistan. This research paper is going to discuss Pak-Turk relations in this new era.

Key Words: Pakistan, Turkey, Convergence, International Issues

Introduction

As the Yugoslavia broke up crisis emerged in Bosnia which was a state of former Yugoslavia. Muslims of Bosnia announced independence Serbs of Bosnia opposed it. Later on, Serbian republic supported the Serbs and they



killed thousands of Muslims in Bosnia. Bosnian Muslims took refuge in the neighboring countries. Bosnia remained under Ottoman Empire during their golden days. Turkey tried its level best to mediate on the issue, but Turkey to be desirous of the membership of European Union could not intervene. At that time, this issue became a test case for Europe. The Turkish government opposed the partition plan and forecasted it would encourage aggression in the other parts of the world. On the other hand, same situation could happen with Albanian province of Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia.

The Pakistan point of view on Bosnian Issue during 1995

With the breakup of the Republic of Yugoslavia, there emerged a crisis that was to soon invite direct military intervention of a superpower like the U.S.A. Bosnia was predominantly inhabited by Muslims.¹ On declaration of Bosnia as an independent country, the Serbs turned against Bosnian Muslims and an ethnic bloodshed both of unprecedented scale was played out by the Serb Fascists. Bosnia Muslims had ancestral linkage with the Turks as Bosnia was conquered by Sultan Murad of Turkey, in spite of strong internal pressure, did not want to directly intervene as the desirous of an entry into the European Union and any unilateral action on its part would have jeopardized its chances of European Union membership.

Turkey Point of view on International Issues

The Bosnia

Rifts may emerge other likely charged, areas such as was situation in the Balkans. Bosnia, a part of former Yugoslavia, declared independence of the Bosnian, Serbs were opposed to the idea of a Muslim Bosnian state² Serbia was supported by the Bosnian Serbs and a communal civil war started in Bosnia. Thousands of Bosnian Muslim had to lose their lives for the cause of an independent Bosnia. Thousands more had to seek shelter in neighboring Countries. Ethnically speaking, the Bosnian Muslim were Turks and Bosnia itself had been a part of the Ottoman Empire during the hay – days of Ottoman Turks. Turkey, in spite as any such engagement could have so easily jeopardized Turkey's chance of winning the much-desired European Union membership. The situation had become quite critical and demanded careful but immediate handling. Turkey wasn't in favor of Bosnia being divided on

ethnic or communal lines as it could have encouraged undesirable communal rifts in many other likely charged areas such as Kosovo. Mr. Suleiman Damriel, the then president of Turkey expressed his reservations. Over the proposed ethnically based partition and opposed the idea of partitioning Bosnia in no uncertain terms.

Pakistan point of view on Bosnian Issue

Happenings in Bosnia were deeply disturbing for the people as well as the government of Pakistan. Taking a straightforward and unambiguous stance from the very first day, the Government of Pakistan stressed upon the need of showing respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia Herzegovina. Expressing concern over genocide of Muslims of Bosnia, Pakistan demanded of the international community a quick response for cessation of atrocities against the people of Bosnia. Endorsing the U.N. resolution over the matter, the government of Pakistan pressed for the lifting of arms embargo over Bosnia so that the Bosnian Muslims could at least defend them against inhuman and unparalleled Serb fascism.

Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the then president of Pakistan, held a reception in honor of the visiting Bosnian president expressed his views thus. "The people of Bosnia Herzegovina are fighting against overwhelming odds to uphold the principles on which human Civilization is based. We admire them for their courage and grieve for their losses. We support their cause and will continue to plead their case in the United Nations, the organization of Islamic countries and the Non-aligned Movement. We shall continue to urge the international community, to act decisively in support of justice and humanity".

Pakistan shared, with other Muslim countries, the deep desire of ensuring the safeguarding of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and welfare of the Muslims of Bosnia.

Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize Bosnia as an independent, sovereign state. After recognizing Bosnia, Pakistan demanded that members of former Yugoslav army vacate Bosnia and let the people of the incumbent republic resolve the matters of the people in the legitimate and suppression free manner.

The OIC held a meeting in New York on August 12, 1994. The OIC was formed to call on the U.N secretary general and convey the common concerns of Muslim countries over Bosnian issue. Jamshed Marker, the Pakistan Ambassador to the UN, presented a memorandum to the UN secretary general and called the Bosnia issue a Jest case for the world community in general and the U.N.O in particular.

On June 25, 1992 Bosnia Herzegovina was admitted to the United Nations as an independent sovereign state. Serbians had already been working on their plan of a greater Serbia since April 1992 by fermenting unrest and communal inflammation inside Bosnia and Croatia. Pakistan, in collaboration with countries like Morocco, Venezuela, Djibouti and Cape Verde, submitted a resolution in the United Nations pleading that arms embargo against Bosnia should be lifted.

It was suggested that direct military aid to the defenseless Bosnians be provided so that the Bosnians could defend themselves more effectively. Pakistan also expressed satisfaction over a United Nations Secretariat report which revealed lacunas in the plan of arranging safe heavens us for Muslims inside Bosnia. Pakistan, nonetheless, offered to pledge forces for peace purposes in Bosnia under UN flag.

The Pakistan inspired resolution regarding resolution of Bosnia issue was put to vote in the United Nation. There were six votes in favor of the resolution and there wasn't even a single one in opposition but most of the big powers, with the exception of the U.S.A, acted in absentia. The resolution failed to achieve its real objective as the arms embargo against Bosnia could not be lifted and Bosnians' suffering had to continue for time to come.

Pakistan, however, did not lose heart with its efforts of finding a way to the solution of the Bosnia issue. In July 1992, Pakistan called a special meeting of OIC foreign ministers. Foreign Ministers from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia Egypt, Senegal, Palestine, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Indonesia, Djiboutian, and Morocco were invited to Islamabad to discuss the issue of the Bosnians' suffering. A new strategy was to be chalked out since Pakistan's earlier resolution had been defeated at the U.N forum.

The meeting was attended by foreign minister of almost all the major Muslim states. Pakistan condemned the proposed plan of dismemberment of Bosnia Herzegovina and called for a just solution of the issue which could also ensure integrity and self-esteem of the Bosnian people. The members of the OIC ministerial conference also proposed that troops from Muslim countries be called up on priority basis if deployment considered necessary under UN charter.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawas Sharif, on the day of the inauguration of the two-day OIC meeting, said, "Bosnia, which is a victim of aggression, should not be deprived of its right of Individual and collective self-defense".³ He further said, "The following principles should form the basis of the future negotiations on Bosnia – the immediate and complete cessation of hostilities, vacation of territories acquired by the use of force, and an end to ethnic cleansing." He said that the world community had failed to deliver justice to the aggrieved Bosnians and dismemberment of Bosnia, he warned, would set a precedent which could, in the long run, drag the world into an ever ending anarchy and bloodshed.⁴

On June 9, 1992, the National Assembly of Pakistan, through an unanimously passed Resolution, strongly criticized Serb atrocities and supported the imposition of sanction on former Yugoslavia for its role in the merciless slaughtering of Muslims.

Pakistan and Turkey Point of View on Kuwait and – Iraq Issue

Turkish foreign policy came face to face with an unexpected challenge on August 02, 1990 when Saddam's Iraqi forces suddenly invaded the oil rich Gulf state of Kuwait. First hand response from Turkey was that military intervention was regrettable and that the matter deserved to be tackled with reference to the U.N resolutions. However, over the long term, the balance of power in the region was going to be disturbed and Turkey had to take up a stance. The regional players were in position to grapple with the menace of Iraqi might and foreign intervention was fraught with the fears of undesirable changes. Turkey had another, more immediate and more pressing, concern two Iraqi oil lines passed through Turkey and Turkey was also a conduit of a number of exports from and import into it from Iraq and many other

regional countries. Turkey had invaluable financial and commercial interests attached to the activity generated because of its ties with Iraq. Turkey was non-Arab actor and professed to stay neutral in the conflict. Turkey has, since the start of the conflict, adopted the policy of staying away from internal matters of Iran – Iraq Issue. After the Arab Israel conflict of 1973, Turkey has made a conscious effort of enhancing relations with the Middle Eastern states because of economic imperatives. Turkey's import of oil products have been largely dependent upon fluctuating oil prices.

In the 1990s Turkey embarked upon the task of developing a broad-based market for itself in the Gulf region. It had become an important trading partner with most of the Arab countries. The economic matters paved way for relationship in other areas also, although main thrust of Turkish interest was in the financial sector only. Since Turkish membership of NATO was a strong turning point in Turkey's involvement in any international enterprise, the country had to maintain balance between not averting NATO interests and guarding interests of Gulf States. Iraq's aggression against Kuwait brought Turkey into very disturbing kind of situation. The invasion on Kuwait was reflective of Saddam's desire of a hegemonic role in the region. Iran had been weakened by the turmoil of revolutionary strife and fatigued with Iraq, the western powers urged Turkey to immediately respond to the situation. A National Defense meeting was held and the Turkish president, prime minister and cabinet ministers emphasized upon the need of tackling the issue with serious intent. It was decided in the meeting that Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline would not be closed, nor would Turkey take other steps against Iraq. Turkey, it was hoped, would stay neutral in this inter-Arab dispute and would also keep ties with the West intact. The western pressure, however, was simply too much to be ignored. Some concrete measures were being expected of Turkey. Turkey could greatly influence Iraq into a weaker bargaining position by stopping export of Iraq's crude oil.

Statement coming from Turkey suggested that despite disapproving of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Turkish authorities appeared to be interpreting the crisis as a dispute between two Arab states. By proposing a settlement through

diplomatic means the Just statesmen were more inclined to adopting an attitude of non-interference.

The Anatolian News Agency presented the whole matter as an instrument of endangering the atmosphere of peace and friendship in the region. There was also reference to the Security Council resolution which prohibited export of oil from disputed territories (Kuwait, the Agency Reported had violated the resolution).

There was pressure on Turkey to stop all trade with Iraq and end transit facilities. Saddam Hussain's refusal to vacate Kuwait forced Turkey to take some hard decisions. Turkey, however, had to look after its own interests as well and Mehmet Kaceciler, the Minister of state, declared that Turkey would not go for closure of two pipelines from Iraq. However Turkey could not long withstand the international pressure and the Kirkuk yurmurtalik pipeline carrying 1.5 million barrels of oil per day were closed. President Turget's decision was harshly criticized by the opposition as well as some members of the ruling party. The president had to bypass the cabinet and the assembly in arriving at a decision regarding the Kuwait issue. The change in the Turkish policy came as a shocking surprise to outsiders. However, the changed stance also helped the president win trust of many who had so far, been accusing him of siding with the Islamist extremists. The Gulf War, however, was to be a turning point in the geo polity of the region and the Turkish foreign policy was to assume new shape and direction from then onwards. In spite of the fact that Turkey had to face constraints on border related matters, it got compensation in the form of strong U.S appreciation of the Turkish step.

On September 05, the Turkish assembly approved the government's proposal of sending Troops to the Gulf. Turkish forces had already been effectively deployed on Turkish northern Border with Iraq. There was a heated debate in the parliament but ultimately the approval was obtained under article 92. Suleiman Demriel, the leader of the True Path Party, strongly opposed the proposal. The sanctions against Iraq could only have the desired impact if Turkey cooperated. The West had managed to bring Turkey in line with its point of view and the Turks were gradually becoming a party to the dispute. Turkey had shown this change of heart to win the heart of the West. Turkey

had in the past been worried about declining western interest in the entity of Turkey as an actor on International political area. Turks had finally arrived at an opportunity of enhancing their leverage in the world politics. Oslo termed the Gulf crises the last opportunity for Turkey to determine its future and embark upon a journey of global acceptance and sustainable progress.

In the Gulf crisis, Turkey's main aim had been to exploit the opportunity for gaining an edge in regional politics. Turkey not only won confidence and approval of NATO countries but also benefitted through purchase of 8 billion dollars modern military hardware. It was hoped that the developments would strengthen Turkey's chances of getting into the European Union the U.S was expected to support Turkey on sensitive issues like the Cyprus – conflict.

Turkey, nonetheless, expressed keen desire for settlement of the matter in line with the U.N Charter. The Turkish authorities were hopeful that the matter would not be allowed to get out of hand and sanity would not be allowed to get out of hand and sanity would prevail amongst players to the cause. Turkey also gave voice to its fears that Iraq might never again and again the seats and straight in international politics that it once had.

Throwing light on Turkey's stance regarding the crisis, president Turgut said, "Turkey firmly supported the U.N resolutions and allowed the use of its air bases for combat and bombing expeditions of NATO planes. This action facilitated the victory of the Coalition forces and presented un-necessary loss of life. Turkey contributed immensely to the coalition forces by pinning down the tenth Iraqi division on the border. Throughout the conflict Turkey followed an unswerving policy".⁵

Pakistan and the Gulf War during Nawaz Shrif Era

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait presented a dilemma like situation to Muslims. The Iraqi act was obviously a gross violation of international law and norms. The aggression was a slap in the face of the civilized nations and a quick response was expected of all the sovereign states of the world. In address to the European Centre Global Panel April's edition calling it a gross violation of international rules, Pakistan condemned the invasion and demanded that Iraqi forces should immediately vacate it. The dispute between Iraq and

Kuwait, Pakistan insisted, to settle it amicably and through diplomatic means. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan prime minister, termed Iraqi invasion outrageous and strongly reprimanded the Iraqi establishment for putting peace of the whole region at stake. Mr. Nawaz Sharif had to face stiff opposition at home as the emotionally charged Pakistani public considered Saddam Hussain the new savior of “Muslim Ummah” and there were huge demonstrations in favor of Saddam. The political parties and print media were in unison in condemning U.S bombing of Iraqi cities. At the end of the Gulf War in April 1991, Pakistan’s ambassador to the U.N addressed the Security Council and said, “As a matter of principle, Pakistan opposes to any kind of interference in the internal affairs of any country and that is especially so in case of a brotherly Muslim country whose territorial integrity must be respected”.⁶

Pakistan expressed concern over civilian casualties as a result of horrifying bombing by NATO countries. Pakistan clearly expressed its stance and said it would always stand by the Universal rule of respect for sovereign states of all the nations. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif observed that Pakistan would support Kuwait’s claim to Sovereign status but would not actually indulge in the conflict by dispatching troops for combat or by sending military equipment.

The government, however, was faced with a dilemma internally. Some political and religious parties were painting the whole picture in such a way that Saddam Hussain was being publicly portrayed as custodian of Islamic faith and values. The army chief Mirza Aslam Baig added fuel to fire by issuing a statement that smacked more of favouring the Saddam version of the whole incident. The domestic scenario created problems for the government and there was a touch of uneasiness among the government circles. Mirza Aslam Baig, on December 02, 1990 while addressing the 10th international seminar on defense, science and technology, urged upon the need of Muslim standing upon foreign aggressors interfering with internal conflicts between Muslim countries”.⁷

Besides criticizing the US policy towards Pakistan for its suspension of military aid to Pakistan, he also pointed out that the US policy towards

Pakistan for its suspension of military aid to Pakistan, he also pointed out that the U.S had not fulfilled its commitment in the wars of 1965 and 1971".⁸ The statement by General Aslam Baig was truly reflective of the aspirations of the Pakistani People. The government of Pakistan, none the less, reiterated its support for Kuwaiti claim to Sovereignty. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's prime minister at the time, decided to go on a Peace mission to six Islamic countries of the Middle East to discuss a formula for stopping the Gulf War. The government's stance on the issue had become quite unpopular amongst the masses.

There was quite obvious polarization in the country. The prime minister intended to convince the Gulf state to re-evaluate the situation and try to settle the matter indigenously. Commenting upon the situation, Mr. Nawaz Sharif said, "The biggest harm that the Gulf War has done is to the unity of the Muslim community. Can there be reader tragedy than that Muslim should become instruments of pain and sorrow to other Muslims?"

The US authorities were full of praise for Pakistan for the latter's principle stand during the Gulf War. Pakistan had by then pledged 11000 troops that were stationed at different bases in Saudi Arabia. This was in spite of the fact that Pakistan had reservation against the U.S for suspension of aid because of Pakistan's pursuance of nuclear program. All through Iraq Kuwait Conflict Pakistan government upheld the demand of implementation of all the U.N resolutions for the just settlement of the matter.

The Amir of Kuwait applauded Pakistan for demanding unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In his statement, the Amir said, "your country's point of view is based on Sublime principles which testify to your commitment to defend the international legitimacy and Supremacy of the ethics of sovereignty and equality".⁹

The government's approach to the issue was in line with the general principles of Pakistan foreign policy. Pakistan supported Kuwait's demand of a return to its sovereign and independent status. However, the government also stressed upon the need of resolving the issue under U.N umbrella.

On March 25, 1991, the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif paid a visit to Kuwait and congratulated the Amir on the liberation of his country. He also expressed sorrow over destruction wrought about and the how ever caused by the war for the people of Kuwait, He vowed to do all possible to help the Kuwaitis recover their status and hard-hit economy.

Turkey and occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet Union during 1979-88

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was significant occurrence of the last decade of the Cold War. The whole world community was disturbed by the event and Turkey, like all freedom loving countries of the world, condemned the aggression of the Soviet troops immediately withdraw.

On January 1, 1980, the president of the security Council received a letter calling for an urgent meeting of the member states to discuss implications of soviet aggression on international politics. The litter was signed by 52 countries including Pakistan and Turkey. Six rounds of talk were held between the six permanent members of the Security Council but nothing fruitful just ensured the 32 members states also participated in the talks and views were exchanged regarding the problems arising out of soviet invasion. Turkey out rightly and strongly hit out at Soviet Union for having endangered peace and stability in the whole region.

The circumstances forced Pakistan to take vital decisions with regard to its foreign policy inclinations. Domestic situation in Pakistan was also being seriously undermined by the aftereffects of the invasion. There were 85000 Soviet troops stationed close to Pakistan borders and Pakistan had no option but to take a strong stand on the issue. Public opinion, inside Pakistan, however differed on the matter and there were sections of society that favored Pakistan staying away from the conflict. Many analysts now rue Pakistan's then stance of active engagement in the situation and hold the policy makers responsible for the present situation.

The international community was overwhelmingly opposed to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In no time, fifty-one members including Pakistan requested the U.N to take notice of situation in Afghanistan in the backdrop of international peace and stability. Six non-permanent members proposed a

resolution strongly condemning the military intervention and demanded immediate withdraw of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

The Soviet representative at the Security Council had to resort to veto to block the passage of the resolution. Pakistan initiated a long pronged and comprehensive plan of diplomatic efforts to pressurize the Soviet might into accepting the Afghans' right of sovereignty and self-determination.

President Zia -ul- Haq, in an interview to Economic review, stated, "We are worried about 85000 Soviet troops who walked into Afghanistan. The soviet troops are capable of launching minor as well as major pursuits inside Pakistan." However, Pakistan could not afford a direct confrontation with Soviet Union for obvious reasons. In spite of not being in a position to openly challenge a super – power, Pakistan wasn't to be arm twisted, either.

For enabling Pakistan to play an effective rote in the situation, the Western powers provided Pakistan with financial and military assistance. Pakistan had not become a frontline state in fight against Soviet regime; it had also become the most active supply line for equipping the fighting Afghans with modern weapons and was technique.

Pakistan also had to brace itself for the massive influxes of refugees in the wake up of the fighting in Afghanistan. More than 20000 refugees were crossing over into Pakistan on monthly basis since the onset of the Soviet invasion. Pakistan's economy was under serious strain as the country was spending a million dollars a day on catering to the needs of 2.4 million refugees.

By the close of 1987, a visible flexibility in approach had begun to be noticed by the world community. The Kabul authorities were showing willingness to get involved into a meaningful dialogue with the opponents for resolution of the matter. In February 1988, President Gorbachov announced that Soviet troops could withdraw if a settlement on the mode of withdrawal and future form of the Kabul regime could be reached. It was hoped that the crisis would ultimately be resolved.

The signing of the Geneva Accord marked beginning of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The Soviets, however, were trying to strengthen their

puppet ploy in Kabul so that the stiff-armed resistance to their stooge representative could be effectively countered.

Orem of peace in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Soviets could not be realized. Along and blood ridden struggle against the Najib rule ensued and bloodshed continued. Besides, there was internal strife among various armed groups at was with the Najib regime. The militant factors could not agree to a formula regarding formation of an all representative government in Kabul. Pakistan had great concerns about situation in Afghanistan as it wanted a long term and durable solution to the matter Return of the refugees was a genuine wish of Pakistan as it was financial and political drain on the resources of the country.

On February 20, 1988, Mr. Zain Noorani, Pakistan state Minister for Foreign Affairs; expressed fears that a horrible civil war could start in Afghanistan if the issue of a transitional government was not sensibly tackled. Pakistan was rightfully concerned about 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan becoming a permanent liability and also endangering the social and economic fabric of a country with deep economic worries. A broad-based setup was required to ensure sustainable peace at the end of Najib regime.

In her inaugural speech at the Envoys Conference in Islamabad on March 25, 1990, the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said, “The Afghan problem remains unsolved and the virtual stalemate still continues. It is time that we find all – acceptable early solution which facilitates the return of the Afghan refugees and just settlement of the matter”.¹⁰

Conclusion

Turkey, having a glorious and brilliant history of Muslim Rule provided excellent victories for the Muslim era. Except a few decades it is getting back for her historical past. Sub-continent particularly Pakistan has its sincere ties with Turkey. It can be said that Turkey along with Malaysia, Indonesia, Central Asian States is a good example of Scientific and technological development and progress. Within the last half century particularly three decades back Pakistan is getting many connecting ties with the Turkey. They have many commonly united angles in their policies. It may be said both the countries can get strength by cooperating one another.

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