PAKISTAN BUILDS ANEW*

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto

There is no parallel in contemporary history to the cataclysm which engulfed Pakistan in 1971. A tragic civil war, which rent asunder the people of the two parts of Pakistan, was seized by India as an opportunity for armed ' intervention. The country was dismembered, its economy shattered and the nation's self-confidence totally undermined. Ninety-three thousand prioners of war were taken, including 15,000 civilian men, women and children. Considerable territory on the western front was overrun and occupied by India.

It was in this situation that, as the leader of the Pakistan People's Party, West Pakistan's largest political party in the National Assembly, I was called upon to assume the office of President. My foremost aim was to begin the task of reconstruction, economic, political and psychological, and to initiate processes which would produce the environment of peace in which alone such reconstruction could be successful. It was a formidable task.

II

Few observers abroad have any idea of the complex problems involved in Pakistan's regaining her sense of identity. If Pakistan had been dismembered by a civil war alone — tragic though that would have been — an adjustment to a new order would not have been so hard to achieve. But Pakistan had been the victim of unabashed aggressions: her eastern part seized by Indian forces. It was this fact that made it difficult for our people to be reconciled to the *fait* accompli, more so because the invasion was not an isolated phenomenon. On the contrary, it was but the climax of a long series of hostile and aggressive acts by India against Pakistan since, the establishment of the two as sovereign and independent states. Soon after the partition of the sub-continent in 1947, India totally disregarded not only the principles on which partition had been effected but all norms of international

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conduct by sending her troops into Kashmir, a Muslim-majority area, in defense of a Hindu maharaja who had been ousted by his rebellious subjects. Subsequently, India refused to allow the people of Kashmir to determine their future according to their own wishes, even though their right to do so had been embodied in resolutions of the United Nations which India had accepted. The pattern of India's succeeding actions toward her neighbors bore the same stamp of disregard for their rights. The relations between India and Pakistan have been particularly unfortunate. India has repeatedly massed troops on the frontiers of Pakistan, leading to two wars even before 1971.

Against this background, how could it be easy for the people of Pakistan to submit to aggression by India and to confer a certificate of legitimacy on its result?

This was but one dimension of the problem. Another was the fact that, since the early years of Pakistan's inception, democracy in Pakistan had been supplanted by dictatorship. The ruling elite, largely military, had recognized no principle of accountability to the people and had deprived them of all sense of participation. Decisions were taken in 1971 by a generals' junta which had sedulously cultivated its isolation from the people. When these decisions had a catastrophic result, popular reaction was one of incomprehension. A people broken and baffled takes time to embark on the task of revival and reconstruction.

We lay no claim to spectacular results, but it is a fact that Pakistan's recovery has been quicker than might have been expected under the circumstances. The prime factor in this revival, indeed its main stimultant, has been the restoration of democracy. Without popular participation in government, the movement toward reconstruction and peace would have lacked energy and a solid base. In April 1972, martial law was finally terminated and replaced by an Interim Constitution adopted unanimously by the representatives of the people. Popular governments were established at both the national and provincial levels. This meant that parties which are in opposition in the National Assembly formed their own coalition governments in two of the provinces. Within a few months of the passage of the Interim Constitution, a Constitutional Accord was signed by the leaders of all political parties in the country as the basis of the permanent Constitution. This national consensus on the country's fundamental law is now being embodied in a Constitution which provides for considerable

autonomy to the federating units and yet safeguards national unity.

The introduction of the democratic process is being accompanied by measures aimed at the establishment of an egalitarian society. These spring not from any abstract doctrine or ideological dogma but from the imperatives of progress. It was a mass movement which led to the creation of Pakistan. The nation's sense of identity and purpose could not, therefore, but be mutilated by an iniquitous system that widened the gulf between the rich and the poor. A native system of privileges and exploitation is as odious as one instituted by ālien rule. It was, therefore, essential to try to translate the egalitarian spirit of Islam, which continues to inspire our people into concrete terms of Socialist organization.

We are endeavouring to do this by imposing state control on a limited number of basic industries, by the enactment of effective measures for land reforms and the introduction of new labour laws. The economy we envisage is a mixed one, in which private enterprise is neither crippled nor allowed to appropriate the nation's wealth for the benefit of the few. Moreover, several reforms have been introduced in the social and educational fields.

Our target in our socio-economic program is not only a statistically gratifying increase in the GNP but an improvement in the lot of the common man, in the living standards of workers and peasants and a radical change in the social milieu. Such a change has to be felt by the people, and not only measured by economists, if it is to be real.

IV

The efforts of the government to spur national recovery would not have succeeded but for the resilience of the people of Pakistan. I pay tribute to their resolve not to be laid low by the upheaval of 1971. The signs of this determination are already observable. West Pakistan's export earnings in 1972 (up to December 15) amounted to $ 640 million compared with $ 660 million for both East and West Pakistan together and $ 461 million for West Pakistan, in 1971. Our foreign exchange reserves have doubled during was partitioned. In practical terms, therefore, it involves the relations between the states of the subcontinent, Unhappily, India never fully accepted the promise on which partition was founded and the relation-ship between India and Pakistan was consequently distorted.

Until the Simla Agreement of July 2, 1972, India's policy toward

Pakistan was hardly characterized by a spirit of peaceful co-existence. From the beginning, Mahatma Gandhi called Pakistan a "moral evil." The All-India Congress Committee adopted a resolution on June 14, 1947, which expressed the hope that "the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all." Even today, some Indian leaders dismiss Pakistan's existence as being based on no more than the medieval notion that religion alone constitutes nationhood. In doing so, they cling with stavistic fervour to the quasi-religious entity called Bharat, which in the mythical past embraced the subcontinent, and is now the alternative legal name for India in the Indian Constitution. The psychological basis of this attitude apart, its practical result can only be the suppression of the identity of the Muslim communities in the northeast and northwest. This identity is not rooted only in religion in the narrow sense of a theological system of belief and worship; it manifests itself it all facets of culture and, except during relatively brief periods of Gupta, Mughal and British rule, which overflowed the subcontinent, it has been sustained throughout history.

It is not a mere coincidence that the attitude of the Indian leadership toward the creation of Pakistan was identical in some ways to that of the British. In 1947, the British Prime Minister, the late Clement Attlee, expressed his "earnest hope" that the "severance" of India and Pakistan would "not endure." This was said at a time when Britain still hoped to retain South Asia within its sphere of influence. The denial of a national identity is an essential characteristic of a hegemonic attitude. Whether it was Britain or its Indian successors in the subcontinent, whoever has sought to establish hegemony over South Asia has been uneasy about Pakistan's independent existence.

Pakistan will never accept the concept of Indian hegemony in the subcontinent. Not only does this threaten our own existence and the stability of the subcontinent, but it is also equally against India's own real interests. Since her economy cannot sustain the role of a dominant power, she would have to depend to a large extent on outside assistance, and her prominence would be virtually that of whatever superpower she chose to ally herself with a given time. It is therefore in the interest of the global powers as much as of neighboring countries to see that a just balance is established in the subcontinent.

The realities of the subcontinent demand peace. If any progress is to be achieved, India must accept this overriding fact and approach the settlement of mutual problems and disputes in a more positive spirit. Such a spirit has not characterized her negotiations with Pakistan in the past. Too often her attitude has been marked by mental reservations. When the question of a "no-war" pact was first debated in 1950-191, Pakistan proposed that the pact should establish a machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Without such a provision, the pact would have amounted to a mere set of platitudes, a bland paraphrase of only one of the provisions of the U. N. Charter. Peaceful settlement of disputes is an essential concomitant of the renunciation of war. Despite this self-evident truth, India has not been willing to agree to the provisions of any such effective machinery.

India's negative attitude toward Pakistan descended to the overtly hostile in the conflict over the Rann of Kutch in April 1965, when India tried to seize that disputed territory in disregard of an agreement for a standstill, pending a peaceful settlement. Then followed the war of September 1965 over Kashmir, to be succeeded six years later by the cataclysmic war over East Pakistan. In spite of this past record, it was my hope that the Simla Agreement of July 1972 would lead to a more cooperative attitude on the part of India and her acceptance of the necessity of peace in the subcontinent. The agreement expressed the resolve of both governments to "put an end to the conflict and confrontation that had hitherto marred their relations" and asserted their determination that "the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations shall govern the relations between the two
countries."

When the Simla Agreement was concluded, I observed that it was a victory neither for India nor for Pakistan but for peace. Unfortunately, however, India does not seem so wholeheartedly dedicated to the attainment of peace as we had hoped. She allowed two factors to stand in the way of the normalization of relations between the countries of the subcontinent. The first was her wrangling over the delineation of the line of control in Kashmir, which held up the withdrawal of forces for four months, despite the provisions of the agreement to the contrary. Secondly, and more serious, India continues to hold in captivity the 93.000 prisoners, including 15,000 civilian men, women and children who fell into her hands on the surrender

of Dacca. The Third Geneva Convention of 1949, to which India is a signatory, expressly lays down that prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities. This is an unconditional obligation; it is not contingent on the conclusion of a peace agreement. India cannot evade her obligation by such fictions as her claim that the surrender of our forces was to a joint command of India and Bangladesh. Hostilities between India and Pakistan ceased on December 16, 1971 and still the prisoners of war have not been released. Humanitarian considerations apart, nothing creates more bitterness than this blatant violation of international law and morality. Nothing would accelerate the move toward durable peace more than its end.

There is another issue which would need to be resolved equitably if durable peace is to be established in the subcontinent. That is the dispute over the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian attitude has been that there is no dispute concerning that state. This stand is clearly not tenable. Indeed, the Simla Agreement admits the existence of the dispute by providing that the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir "shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side," and by requiring that the representatives of the two governments should meet, preparatory to the next meeting between the Indian Prime Minister and myself, to discuss, among other things, "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir." A settlement of this dispute has to be found, a settlement acceptable to the people of Kashmir. They have the right of self-determination. This is the position of the United Nations. This was also the position at one time of India herself. And this is the position to which Pakistan is pledged.

Will India in future persuade herself to be less inflexible and more amenable to the counsels of peace and justice? If the answer is, yes I have not the slightest doubt that the peoples of the subcontinent will move on to a new era of good neighborliness and mutual benefit. Released from unnecessary entanglements and the crippling burden of military expenditure, the social and economic progress of the subcontinent would be immense.

We expect India to recognize the realities of the subcontinent, the reality of the need for peace. We in turn have been urged to accept the reality of Bangladesh as a step toward ensuring peace in the region.

We do indeed accept the reality of the aspirations of our brethren in Bangladesh. We wish them well. We were grieved at the appalling tragedy that engulfed us both in 1971 and are resolved to work for the healing of the wounds inflicted on us in a cruel civil war. For all our unfortunate differences, we have lived and struggled together as a single nation for 25 years. Time will show that in spite of the bitterness engendered by the recent past, there are factors that unite us in mutual sympathy: We share a common historical inspiration and culture and we struggled together to achieve independence from both western imperialsism and Hindu domination.

My government is resolved to work for the reestablishment of normal relations with Muslim Bengal. As a first step in that direction, I released Sheikh Mujibur Rahman unconditionally soon after coming into office. Since then I have made a number of offers based on goodwill toward Muslim Bengal. I offered to return to Bangladesh some 30,000 Bengali personnel in the Pakistan Army and some 17,000 Bengali civil servants of different categories to assist Mr. Mujibur Rahman in strengthening his administration. Another expression of this spirit was our offer of a gift of 100,000 tons of rice to relieve food scarcity in Bangladesh. I have repeatedly offered to meet Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in order amicably to resolve differences between Dacca and Islamabad. These and other initiatives have elicited only a negative response from the other side. Mr. Mujibur Rahman continues to demand that Pakistan recognize Bangladesh before he will agree to have any discussion on outstanding issues; he also continues to hold trials of Bengali "collaborators", of whom over 50,000 are in jail; he periodically threatens to try some of the prisoners of war for "war crimes." His rigid posture has made the task of moving toward recognition of Bangladesh more difficult.

Nevertheless, I am confident that we can resolve these difficulties. Pakistan's prisoners of war: have been in Indian custody for over a year, and it should by now have been quite clear to both India and Bangladesh that recognition of Bangladesh cannot be extracted from Pakistan under duress and that the continued detention of Pakistani prisoners of war is no way of normalizing the situation in the subcontinent, from which Bangladesh, perhaps even more than India and Pakistan, stands to gain. For our part, we recognize that Pakistan's approach to the current realities in the subcontinent must be rational and that we must seek a reconciliation with Muslim Bengal. The problems that impede the improvement of relations between Pakistan and Muslim Bengal are by no means intractable.

I have pointed out some of the factors which hinder the establishment of a lasting peace in the subcontinent, a peace which can only come through detente and dialogue, and not through domination. The attempt of any state of the subcontinent to dominate the area will only result in instability. For no such state can support a dominant role with its own resources; inevitably it will be dependent for the maintenance of its role on foreign intervention. This is the reality which the global powers must accept in their relations with the subcontinent. This is the lesson of history, and recent history at that.

It was to a large extent the Soviet Union's involvement in the sub-continent which made possible India's invasion of East Pakistan. India's treaty of friendship with the U.S.S R., concluded in August 1971, preceded her war with Pakistan by only a few months. Whatever motivated the U.S.S.R. to enter into this pact, it certainly gave India the backing both military and psychological, to embark upon her armed aggression. The sophisticated military armaments which India had been receiving from the Soviet Union since 1965 were dramatically augmented in 1971, resulting in an unprecedented disparity between India's and Pakistan's military strength This together with the U.S S R.'s repeated veto in the Security Council, made it impossible to bring about a ceasefire, the withdrawal of Indian forces or a political settlement in East Pakistan.

Throughout the 1950s, the United States pursued a policy of maintaining a just balance in the subcontinent which brought about a large measure of stability in the region. Our alliance with the United States was concluded in this period and the United States made a generous contribution to Pakistan's economic development besides providing military assistance for defense. But while Pakistan's participation in the U S -sponsored pacts increased our defense capability, it also complicated our relations with the Soviet Union, with other Socialist countries and the non-aligned world.

After the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, the United States also provided massive economic and military assistance to India, with the result that India, confident in her refurbished military machine, threatened Pakistan's security. When she finally attacked Pakistan in 1965, the United States chose not to fulfil solemn pledges of helping in Pakistan's defense. In subsequently stopping military supplies to both nations, the United States did not even exhibit an attitude of genuine neutrality. Its refusal to give arms to either side

clearly worked to India's advantage because while India, in addition to her own military production, continued to receive armaments from the U.S.S.R., Pakistan's only source of military supplies was sealed. The imbalance led to instability in the area culminating in the events of 1971.

Coming to our neighbour China, it has been our experience over the years that she does not harbor any thoughts of disruption in the subcontinent. On the contrary, China has scrupulously adhered to the principle of non-intervention. Pakistan's relations with China are animated by our common struggle against hegemony and our adherence to the principles of an equitable world order. It is of the essence of such principles that they cannot operate against the legitimate interest of any third country. While standing by us in our severest crises in 1965 and 1971, China has nevertheless refrained from involving herself in the subcontinent in a disruptive manner.

The corollary of our assertion that the global powers should follow a balanced policy in relation to the states in the subcontinent is the need for Pakistan to preserve friendly and balanced relations with all world powers insofar as it is compatible with our self-respect and dignity. I am glad to say that there has recently been a marked improvement in our relations with the Soviet Union, especially since my visit to Moscow in March 1972. It is our earnest hope that the estrangement between the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China will not impede the development of this process.

In the case of the United States, even in the days when our relations were at a low ebb we remained conscious of our past association. In the crisis of 1971, the United States took a stand which was squarely based on the principles of the U.N. Charter and massively endorsed by as many as 1(14 member-states in the United Nations. However, within the United States this aroused accusations of an unjustified "tilt" in favour of Pakistan. The accusation is difficult to understand, taking into account the fact that the United States, in spite of its past commitments to come to our assistance, had sealed off supplies of all arms and was merely acting in concord with the unanimous views of the Third World. On February 9, 1972, President Nixon, in a message to the Congress, re-affirmed American concern for the well-being and security of Pakistan. This has lent a new arm to the relations between the United States and Pakistan, and the continuing efforts of both sides augur well for the future We are convinced that, freed from the incubus of Vietnam War, the United States can play a most beneficent role, not only in helping in our economic reconstruction and development but also in

safeguarding our security.

Our friendship with China has for some years been a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, based as it is partly on our geographical proximity, partly, on the similarity of our ideals and ambitions in relations to the Third World. China's support of Pakistan at crucial points in our history has evoked the spontaneous appreciation of our people. Our association with China, which was misinterpreted in the past, is now being better understood, with the current detente between China and the United States.

By maintaining friendly relations with all the great powers, on the basis of principles and not expediency, Pakistan hopes to avoid involvement in disputes and struggles between them. It is a part of our new policy that we should refrain from participating in multilateral pacts directed by one bloc of powers against another. Thus we have recently withdrawn from SEATO, in which Pakistan had in any case taken little part over the past few years. Bilateralism, with the greater flexibility it implies, will characterize our relations in the future. In a climate of confrontation betweens two great powers, such a policy, is, no doubt, subjected to severe tests. But in the climate of negotiations and conciliation which was inaugurated in 1972, it is the only policy which responds to the demands of the present historical phase of international affairs. Pakistan welcomes the new trends, not only on the grounds of principle but also because we seek and receive no benefit from the conflict between any two great powers.

IX

Pakistan's destiny is in evitably intertwined with that of the sub-continent. Nevertheless, her geopolitical position is not circumscribed by the subcontinent. There is a 371 mile-long border between Chinese Sinkiang and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir with its ancient silk route, and only Afghanistan's Wakhan corridor, varying in width from seven to 31 miles, divides the Soviet Union and Pakistan along 188 miles. Situated at the head of the Arabian Sea, Pakistan flanks the entrance to the oil-rich Persian Gulf and is therefore of strategic importance to many countries of the Middle East. Pakistan is also strategically placed in relation to the sea-lanes between Europe and the Indian Ocean. Once they regain their former importance with the reopening of the Suez Canal. Moreover, Pakistan provides an overland passage from Europe to the Indian Ocean, an area on which

international attention is being increasingly centered. Throughout history the part of the subcontinent now comprising Pakistan has been of vital importance as a gateway for trade and the passage of peoples.

Pakistan is also a leading member of the Muslim world, which sweeps in a vast arc from the Atlantic through Africa and Middle East to Indonesia, touching the shores of the Pacific. Imperishable affinities born of culture, religion and historical experience bind us to other Muslim nations and underline our community of interest. Together with our neighbours, Iran and Turkey, we have established an organization for Regional 'Cooperation for Development. We have supported the just cause of the Arab world, which in turn stood with us in our hour of trial in 1971. Their subsequent support has strengthened our position immeasurably. Not only has it demonstrated to Pakistan the friendship of her Muslim brethren, but it has displayed to the world the solidarity of the Muslim nations.

Inevitably, our political aspirations, our belief in equality and the rights of the underprivileged will be, expressed in our foreign policy. This is already evident in our relations with Asia. The severance of East Pakistan has not deflected our interest from South-inheritance establishes an Asian solidarity to which Pakistan bears wholehearted allegiance. As demonstration of the new orientation of our foreign policy we have recently recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the government of Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia. With China's emergence into the forefront of world affairs, Japan's surging economy and the restoration of peace in Vietnam, have our people not a right to expect a less-troubled and less-tormented Asia? Whether this comes about depends much on the future attitude of the great powers.

But Asian though we are, our vision is by no means parochial. We support the African struggle for emancipation from colonial rule and domination. We shall play our part in promoting the solidarity of the peoples of the underdeveloped world with whom we share the same problems. At the same time it will be our endeavour to develop positively our relations with North America and Europe. However, as a forward-looking nation, we reject any legacy of the past which has outgrown its usefulness. Hence Pakistan has recently left the Commonwealth, which had long since ceased to have any practical meaning This has become more evidenced since Britain stepped into Europe by joining the European Economic Community. Nevertheless, we maintain close bilateral relations with the United Kingdom

in matters which are of mutual concern to us. Our links with France and the Federal Republic of Germany are also strong, while we are forging new relations with East Europe. This is clear from our recognition of the German Democratic Republic and the signing of a solemn joint declaration with Romania in January of this year at the conclusion of the state visit to Pakistan of President Nicolae Ceausescu.

The last year has witnessed a profound change in Pakistan. A new Pakistan has emerged, not only in form but in inspiration and purpose. We have broken with the past, a past which founded itself on the exploitation of man by man. Now we seek to give expression to the aspirations of the common man which for so long have been stifled, aspirations for social justice and a more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth. Our new vision will be reflected in a foreign policy which, corresponding to a recognition of Pakistan's geopolitical position, will ensure that henceforth Pakistan will play a constructive and meaningful role in world affairs.