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# **Beyond India: The Utility of Sino-Pakistani Relations in Chinese Foreign Policy, 1962-1965**

By Christopher Tang, November 2012



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**Beyond India:  
The Utility of Sino-Pakistani Relations in Chinese Foreign Policy, 1962-1965**

Christopher Tang

As scholars increasingly explore the People's Republic of China's (PRC) diplomacy toward the Third World throughout the Cold War, Sino-Pakistani relations have remained curiously outside this purview. This lacuna is particularly striking considering the importance of Pakistan in facilitating the Sino-American rapprochement in the long-term, but also for the myriad benefits it offered Beijing in navigating the early 1960s in the short-term after relations were significantly enhanced. Though the relationship has by no means been ignored, scholars have instead overwhelmingly interpreted its establishment and significance for China almost exclusively through the lens of prolonged Sino-Indian tension after 1959. As such, these studies have largely failed to situate the Sino-Pakistani relationship within the larger context of China's foreign policy at the time.

In excessively filtering this bilateral relationship through the lens of India, scholars have obscured the degree to which Chinese leaders saw benefits in Pakistan that went far beyond tending to Sino-Indian issues. To be sure, India was *the* salient factor bringing Pakistan and the PRC together in 1962, but India alone cannot sufficiently explain Beijing's interest in cultivating and sustaining the Sino-Pakistani relationship. Instead, Pakistan fit neatly within Beijing's larger foreign policy trajectory at the time. The relationship thus implicated and alleviated China's India problem while also transcending this single issue. It is therefore critical to consider the consolidation and meaning of Sino-Pakistani ties within the wider scope of Chinese foreign relations in the early 1960s.

In response to this perceived oversight in the existing literature, this paper argues that cordial relations with Pakistan greatly aided Beijing's daunting task of appearing as a country that was at once both revolutionary and peaceful. In aiming to challenge the U.S. and the USSR and secure leadership of world revolution on the international stage while also reigniting class struggle at home, by 1962 Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman Mao Zedong was eager to embrace a revolutionary foreign policy. At the same time, the need to court international legitimacy and Third World friends across the Afro-Asian-Latin American world encouraged



Beijing to cultivate an image as a peaceful defender of developing world interests. In seeking to carve out this, at times contradictory, international image, the Sino-Pakistani relationship proved particularly useful for CCP leaders. Through Pakistan's embrace of revolutionary Afro-Asian discourse, its ongoing national liberation struggle in Kashmir, and its 1965 war with India, China's support for Ayub Khan's regime allowed it to claim a revolutionary foreign policy. Furthermore, in China's quest to self-identify as a defender of international peace, Pakistan proved helpful by also painting India's Jawaharlal Nehru as a hostile opponent to Third World unity, actively promoting China as a pursuer of international peace, and aiding PRC efforts to deter U.S. expansion of the Vietnam War.

Most studies of the Sino-Pakistani relationship offer scant attention to the nuances of China's larger foreign policy goals vis-à-vis Pakistan. A large number of these works summon the notion of a 'special relationship,' which asserts that the two states share a mutual understanding rooted in their common enmity toward India.<sup>1</sup> Though these studies offer a more detailed analysis than the 'mono-causal' school, which refuses to look beyond the contextual vacuum of the India factor, they nevertheless ignore alternative or larger foreign policy motivations for the PRC's embrace of Pakistan in 1962.<sup>2</sup> John Garver's comprehensive study of Sino-Indian relations recognizes Pakistan's value to the PRC outside of India, but the nature of Garver's focus precludes further exploration of these issues.<sup>3</sup> In Taylor Fravel's groundbreaking study of China's border relations, the 1963 Sino-Pakistani border settlement and subsequent bilateral relations are presented as Beijing's response to unrest in Tibet, the insecure Sino-Indian border, and domestic Chinese instability following the Great Leap Forward.<sup>4</sup> Fravel thus fails to consider how additional influences including Sino-Soviet rivalry, China's broader Third World

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<sup>1</sup> See B.N. Goswami, *Pakistan and China: A Study of Their Relations* (New York: Allied Publishers, 1971); Anwar Hussain Syed, *China & Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1974); P.L. Bhola, *Pakistan-China Relations* (Jaipur: R.B.S.A. Publishers 1986).

<sup>2</sup> For 'mono-causal' explanations of Sino-Pakistani relations, see J.P. Jain, *China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1974), and Sailen Chaudhuri, *Beijing-Washington-Islamabad Entente: Genesis and Development* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

diplomacy, and Mao's call for a revolutionary foreign policy might also have influenced Beijing's interest in Pakistan.

In attempting to determine the full array of, and meaning behind, Beijing's interests in consolidating bilateral relations, this paper draws upon a close reading of Chinese behavior and rhetoric vis-à-vis Pakistan between 1962 and 1965. This study draws heavily from Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive documents, including internal Foreign Ministry reports on Pakistan, and memoranda of conversations between Chinese and Pakistani leaders and officials.<sup>5</sup> After ties were strengthened following the Sino-Indian border war of October 1962, by late 1965 the Sino-Pakistani alignment had demonstrated its ability to present the PRC as both the leading force of world revolution and also a responsible defender of international peace. In so doing, the relationship effectively displayed the degree to which Chinese interests in Pakistan implicated, but were by no means limited to, the India factor.

### **Pakistan in the PRC's Revolutionary Foreign Policy**

#### *The Context of the PRC's Revolutionary Foreign Policy*

When Sino-Pakistani relations were first consolidated following the Sino-Indian border war in late 1962, the PRC had already begun embarking on reasserting revolutionary ideology both at home and abroad.<sup>6</sup> This effort emerged from both international and domestic origins. In the international realm, the Sino-Soviet split was not only common knowledge by late 1962, but had also come to occupy a central concern for Beijing alongside persistent Sino-American tension. In 1959, Mao was dismayed by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's cozying up to Washington through the 'spirit of Camp David,' as well as Moscow's failure to back the PRC's actions in the 1959 Sino-Indian border crisis.<sup>7</sup> When, the following year, Khrushchev recalled

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<sup>5</sup> The Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive, Beijing, The People's Republic of China. (hereafter *CFMA*)

<sup>6</sup> Though Pakistan had been among the first non-socialist states to diplomatically recognize the PRC, which it did in January 1950, its relationship to the U.S. and its membership in both SEATO and CENTO precluded close Sino-Pakistani ties. While Zhou Enlai's conduct at the Bandung Conference in 1955 went a long way toward reducing mutual suspicion, and though both sides exchanged high level visits through the late 1950s, Sino-Pakistani relations failed to produce any substantial bilateral pacts before the 1963 boundary agreement, originally negotiated in mid-late 1962.

<sup>7</sup> See Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 138-150.

all Soviet technical advisors from China, the rift deepened considerably. For Mao, the Soviets had abandoned socialist revolution, and the capital of world revolution was thus shifting from Moscow to Beijing.<sup>8</sup>

Domestically, the fallout of the disastrous Great Leap Forward (GLF) had a profound effect upon top-level politics within the CCP leadership. Personally discredited by the GLF calamity, Mao was reduced to the sideline of everyday decision-making in the late 1950s and more pragmatic leaders, including Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, began to guide economic recovery. By 1962, however, Mao was growing wary of these leaders and, succumbing to the influence of the perceived Soviet abandonment of socialism, was suspicious of their seeming jettison of class struggle in tending to the dismal Chinese countryside.<sup>9</sup> Seizing the moment of an August 1962 CCP work conference at Beidaihe, Mao insisted on the need to avoid the Soviet slide toward capitalism.<sup>10</sup> For Mao, Soviet-revisionist style leadership was threatening the Chinese revolution at home. To correct this, the Chairman was determined to reinvigorate class struggle and personally return to the decision-making helm. At the CCP Central Committee's Tenth Plenum that October, Mao again insisted on the need to combat revisionism both at home and abroad.<sup>11</sup> In 1963, the Party thus initiated the Socialist Education Movement, a critical forerunner to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution designed to reassert the importance of class struggle in the process of social transformation.<sup>12</sup> For Mao, Soviet revisionism was a threat requiring comprehensive vigilance in the PRC's foreign and domestic policy.

In the face of Soviet revisionism abroad and the need for mobilization through struggle at home, Mao emphasized the PRC's need to pursue a more revolutionary foreign policy. Directly challenging the head of the CCP's International Liaison Department and fellow Long Marcher, Wang Jiaxiang, and his call for "three reconciliations and one reduction" (*sanhe yishao*) under which the PRC would conciliate with its enemies (imperialists, revisionists, and reactionaries)

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<sup>8</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 212.

<sup>9</sup> See Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3 – The Coming of the Cataclysm, 1961-1966* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 276-277.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 283. See also Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 220-224.

<sup>12</sup> Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 273; MacFarquhar, *Origins 3*: 334.

while reducing its aid to world revolution, Mao argued for precisely the opposite.<sup>13</sup> In the fall of 1962 at the Sixth All-Country Foreign Affairs Conference, Mao stipulated a PRC foreign policy premised upon the dissemination of ‘Mao Zedong Thought’ overseas and support for national liberation movements across the Afro-Asian-Latin American world.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, supporting national liberation in the Third World was central to the revolutionary foreign policy Mao envisioned. As Chen Jian describes, Mao came to view the developing countries of the Afro-Asian-Latin American world as the “world’s countryside,” and China was thus encouraged to play a leading role in the liberation struggles of these regions.<sup>15</sup> This preeminent role was fundamentally tied to the Sino-Soviet split, and Mao’s belief that the spirit of revolution had moved from Eastern Europe to the developing world.<sup>16</sup> After 1962, therefore, Mao had advanced a new paradigm to replace his earlier “two camps” theory.

Now, the Chairman asserted, between the two superpowers there existed “two intermediate zones.”<sup>17</sup> The first included the economically backward countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, while the second was comprised of the advanced capitalist countries of Europe. For China, it was imperative to promote revolution in the first of these zones, while seeking to neutralize those countries of the second zone. By leading national liberation in the first intermediate zone, Mao hoped to forge a “broad international united front” against the superpowers.<sup>18</sup> For both international and domestic reasons alike, therefore, China’s foreign policy veered distinctly to the left after 1962. It was within this context that Sino-Pakistani relations first began to take on tangible substance and meaning.

### *Pakistan and the PRC’s Revolutionary Rhetoric*

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<sup>13</sup> See Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 83, 211; Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 28.

<sup>14</sup> Lorenz M. Lüthi, “Chinese Foreign Policy, 1960-1979,” in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa ed., *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945-1991*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 154.

<sup>15</sup> Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 212.

<sup>16</sup> Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*, 81.

<sup>17</sup> Lorenz M. Lüthi and Chen Jian, “East Asia, 1962-1972,” *The Regional Cold Wars in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East: Crucial Periods and Turning Points*, (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, forthcoming), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 146.

Though Pakistan and the PRC had shared formal diplomatic relations since 1950, the relationship only truly took on coherence midway through 1962. At this time, with a view toward negotiating the shared border and therein dealing a blow to their mutual Indian enemy, Chinese and Pakistani officials began regular contact, eventually leading to a border settlement in early 1963. Throughout their exchanges, Chinese leaders regularly deployed the language of Third World revolution, decrying the hegemony of the two superpowers, and striving to situate the PRC at the head of world revolution. Though the revolutionary rhetoric Chinese leaders summoned was often sanitized of its typical socialist jargon for the benefit of non-communist Pakistan, Pakistani leaders and officials welcomed the anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, and anti-reactionary thrust of Beijing's words. Pakistan was particularly responsive to Chinese verbal attacks on the Americans, who had dramatically stepped up aid to India after 1959, and the Soviets, who themselves had been cozying up to India by the late 1950s. As such, Sino-Pakistani exchanges proved a forum in which the PRC could articulate the revolutionary foreign policy trajectory it sought after 1962.

In a July 1962 discussion with then Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Ali Muhammad Rashidi, Mao argued that although Afro-Asian countries including Pakistan and the PRC suffered from backward economies, the hardworking nature of the Afro-Asian people meant that if they united together, they could surmount superpower hegemony.<sup>19</sup> This critique of superpower interference was also prevalent in the joint communiqué issued following the March 1963 Sino-Pakistani border agreement, in which the two countries “reaffirmed their belief in the national sovereignty and equality of all countries and in the basic right of all peoples to decide their own destinies in accordance with their free will.”<sup>20</sup> In an interview with Pakistani reporters following the agreement, Zhou Enlai criticized American economic aid to Pakistan, dismissing it

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<sup>19</sup> “Conversation between Mao Zedong and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi,” 15 July 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01799-01, 2.

<sup>20</sup> “China-Pakistan Joint Communiqué, 4 March 1963,” in Arif, K.ed *China Pakistan Relations 1947-1980* (Lahore: Vanguard Books Ltd., 1984), 38.

as a form of neo-colonialism.<sup>21</sup> In a conversation the following August with the new Pakistani Ambassador Raza, Zhou suggested Pakistan ought to cast off American domination just as China strives to evade Soviet interference and “great power chauvinism.”<sup>22</sup> For Beijing, anti-American and anti-Soviet critiques were a critical component of their international struggle and defined a more revolutionary trajectory in foreign policy. As far as the Ayub Khan regime was concerned, this discourse succinctly captured Pakistan’s own sense of international isolation given the American and Soviet backing of India.

Alongside challenges to superpower hegemony, Chinese officials often drew upon the larger theme of Third World revolution in their discussions with the Pakistanis. In November 1963 talks with a Pakistani official, Zhou Enlai expressed satisfaction that anti-colonialism was on the rise in places like Vietnam and Algeria.<sup>23</sup> Referencing the recent assassination of South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem, Zhou said the incident proved that the U.S. had officially assumed the torch of colonialism from the French and British. In a March 1965 conversation with Pakistani President Ayub Khan, Zhou claimed that as an Afro-Asian country, China was interested in opposing old rules and setting up new ones.<sup>24</sup> With Pakistan itself keen to gain international support for its struggle against India, they too shared a vested interest in engaging with the Afro-Asian community. Indeed, in its quest to convene a second Afro-Asian Conference in the mid-1960s, the PRC found Pakistan to be a particularly invested and helpful partner.

With Nehru firmly associated with the Non-Aligned Movement, Pakistan hoped to make in-roads with the Afro-Asian community to thwart its isolation and draw attention to the Kashmir issue. Though also sharing this interest in challenging Nehru in the Third World, Chinese leaders were driven more by their goal of rivaling the Soviet Union for leadership of the

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<sup>21</sup> “Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistan Associated Press Agency Reporter Safdar Ali Qureshi,” March 31, 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-06, 104; See also, “Chou En-lai’s Interview with the Correspondent of Associated Press of Pakistan, 31 March 1963 (Extracts),” in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 42.

<sup>22</sup> “Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza Regarding Preventing Nuclear Proliferation and Other Issues,” 12 August 1963, *CFMA*, 113-00452-05, 21.

<sup>23</sup> “Record of a Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, and Head of Pakistan’s Delegation Participating in the PRC’s National Day Celebration, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani,” 18 November 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01188-03, 27.

<sup>24</sup> “Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Ayub Khan,” 5 March 1965, *CFMA*, 105-01927-02, 92.

developing world.<sup>25</sup> As early as March 1963, Zhou identified to Pakistani officials China's interest in supporting a second Afro-Asian Conference free from "Western imperialists and colonialists."<sup>26</sup> In a February 1964 Sino-Pakistani joint communiqué, both parties endorsed the need for a new Afro-Asian meeting to improve solidarity in the community.<sup>27</sup> That May, Pakistani Ambassador Raza told PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi that the Pakistanis saw the Soviets as standing side by side with the Indians, and Pakistan was thus willing to back China's call for Soviet exclusion from the meeting.<sup>28</sup> Over the ensuing year, Pakistan, alongside Sukarno's Indonesia, would become China's main force in trying to define the agenda and scope of the conference.

In a June 1964 letter to Ayub Khan, Zhou Enlai expressed his excitement in working closely with Pakistan and Indonesia to plan the conference.<sup>29</sup> An internal Chinese Foreign Ministry report written the following month highlighted the possibility Indonesia might back out of its role, and suggested Beijing promote Pakistan's involvement in conference strategizing even more enthusiastically.<sup>30</sup> With so few Third World countries willing to back China's clear effort to color the Afro-Asian agenda with Sino-Soviet power politics, Pakistan was a uniquely valuable ally on this matter. Indeed even the conference's planned host, Algerian leader Mohamed Ahmed Ben Bella, was unsympathetic to Beijing's anti-Soviet campaign.<sup>31</sup>

After Ben Bella's June 1965 overthrow forced the delay of the conference and the Soviets were eventually permitted to participate in the rescheduled event, Beijing set out to sabotage the

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<sup>25</sup> Lüthi and Chen, "East Asia," 6.

<sup>26</sup> "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistan Associated Press Agency Reporter Safdar Ali Qureshi," March 31, 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-06, 105.

<sup>27</sup> "China-Pakistan Joint Communiqué on Premier Chou En-lai's visit to Pakistan, 23 February 1964," in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 46.

<sup>28</sup> "Record of a Conversation between Chen Yi and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza," 22 May 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01625-01, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi [CCP Central Documents Research Office], ed. *Zhou Enlai Nianpu, 1949-1976*. Vol. II (hereafter *ZELNP2*) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997), 653.

<sup>30</sup> "The Pakistani Foreign Minister Warns of the Possibility that the So-Called 'Chinese Threat' Might be Discussed at the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, and Zhou Enlai's Letter to Ayub Khan Concerning Pakistani Suggestions on the Situation in Southeast Asia: Bhutto Speaks on Several Issues," 6 July 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01875-01(1), 2.

<sup>31</sup> Lorenz M. Lüthi, "The Palestinians between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China," Paper presented at the conference, "The Afro-Asian World," McGill University (Montreal, Canada), March 2012, 15.

meeting.<sup>32</sup> Though neither Pakistan nor the PRC could successfully deter Soviet participation, Pakistan had proved an impressive ally in initially promoting the conference, and aligning with Beijing against the Soviets. Though the Pakistanis had their own reasons for such behavior — namely, Soviet support for India — Chinese efforts vis-à-vis the Afro-Asian movement were more an articulation of its rift with the Soviets and its desire for leadership of Third World revolution. Nevertheless, in its embrace of Beijing’s revolutionary rhetoric and promotion of the second Afro-Asian Conference, Pakistan proved its worth to a Chinese foreign policy trajectory that implicated, but also went far beyond, its struggle with India.

### *PRC Support for Pakistan on the Kashmir Issue*

The Sino-Pakistani relationship most explicitly advertised China’s revolutionary foreign policy through the PRC’s support for the national liberation of Kashmir. At the heart of Indo-Pakistani animosity since the establishment of two countries, Pakistan had consistently called for a plebiscite in Kashmir which would allow the predominantly Muslim population to self-determine the fate of their homeland. Although the Pakistanis had pressured the PRC to reappraise its officially neutral stance throughout 1962-63, Beijing refused to rush such a move. Though the memoirs of former Pakistani Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto misleadingly suggest consistent Chinese support on Kashmir, until early 1964 CCP leaders spoke only vaguely about the issue.<sup>33</sup>

In a March 1962 conversation with the Pakistani Ambassador Rashidi, Zhou Enlai cavalierly advised Ayub Khan’s government to resolve the ‘regional dispute’ quickly through bilateral negotiations with India.<sup>34</sup> In talks that September and October, Zhou and CCP Chairman Liu Shaoqi said they were reluctant to get involved in the Kashmir issue lest they further exacerbate Sino-Indian tensions, and again suggested peaceful negotiations.<sup>35</sup> Even upon

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<sup>32</sup> Lüthi and Chen, “East Asia,” 6.

<sup>33</sup> Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence* (London: Oxford University Press 1969), 132.

<sup>34</sup> “Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi,” 8 March 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01799-02, 12.

<sup>35</sup> “Record of a Conversation between Liu Shaoqi and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza Upon the Presentation of Credentials,” 1 September 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01801-02, 32; “Summary of a Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza,” 5 September 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01802-03, 44.



completion of the March 1963 Sino-Pakistani boundary agreement, the joint communiqué displayed an unchanged Chinese position of bilateral settlement.<sup>36</sup> As Chinese leaders made clear in discussions and reports in early 1963, the PRC was loath to encroach upon what they saw as “Pakistan’s domestic affairs,” and thereby commit a clear violation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that formed the bedrock of China’s bilateral relationships.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, following its recent struggle to retain control of Tibet and its ongoing battle with the U.S. over Taiwan, Beijing was concerned that support for Pakistan in Kashmir would set a dangerous precedent for third party interference on territorial issues.<sup>38</sup> This concern was particularly pronounced amidst the palpable Sino-Indian tension of 1962-1963.

Though, by late 1962, the PRC was eager to support national liberation movements across the globe, it was unwilling to be pushed into backing Kashmir. By November 1963, however, Ayub’s government was “pleading for Chinese moral support” for the Kashmir struggle.<sup>39</sup> Candidly portraying China’s concerns, Zhou responded by saying that at best the PRC could offer only an “abstract” statement of support. Anything more, Zhou said, would provoke India to make similar claims in Tibet.<sup>40</sup> Notwithstanding this concern, after buying time until Sino-Indian tensions had cooled, by early 1964 the PRC was ready to add Kashmir to its list of Third World national liberation causes.

Indeed, the Kashmir issue was the centerpiece of the February 1964 visit of Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi to Pakistan. In talks, Zhou discursively configured Kashmir as a national liberation struggle by arguing that India’s mistreatment of Muslims there demonstrated its “great power chauvinism.”<sup>41</sup> In a private conversation between Chen Yi and Bhutto, Chen continued the

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<sup>36</sup> *ZELNP2*, 538.

<sup>37</sup> “PRC Embassy in Pakistan Concise Report Regarding Sino-Pakistani, Pakistani-American, Pakistani-Indian, Pakistani-Soviet Relations over the Past Half-Year,” 20 February 1963, *CFMA*, 204-01282-01, 9.

<sup>38</sup> “Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistan Associated Press Agency Reporter Safdar Ali Qureshi,” March 31, 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-06, 104.

<sup>39</sup> “Record of a Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, and Head of Pakistan’s Delegation Participating in the PRC’s National Day Celebration, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani,” 18 November 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01188-03, 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> “Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, Ayub Khan, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,” 21 February 1964, *CFMA*, 203-00635-01(3), 39. It is also conceivable that Zhou’s reference to mistreated Muslims was informed by the PRC’s recent endorsement of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s national liberation struggle against Israel (see Lüthi, “The Palestinians between the Soviet Union and the PRC”).

Chinese effort to define Kashmir as a struggle for liberation from oppressive, hegemonic forces.

As the record recounts,

Chen: “Muslims there want liberation (*jiefang*).”

Bhutto: “No, they just want equal treatment.”

Chen: “Yes, but the meaning of liberation is precisely not suffering oppression (*bushou yapu*).”<sup>42</sup>

Satisfied with adequately articulating the meaning of the Kashmiri struggle, CCP leaders formally switched their policy to one of support for self-determination.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, the joint communiqué issued was shrouded in the rhetoric of the Afro-Asian movement, in which both sides pledged support for national liberation movements throughout the Afro-Asian world.<sup>44</sup> In a speech concluding the visit, Chen Yi further advanced the moral aspect of the PRC’s new position, arguing that Indian efforts in Kashmir “stifle and ignore justice.”<sup>45</sup>

After having waited for the dust of the Sino-Indian border war to settle, by 1964 the PRC was eager to pursue its revolutionary foreign policy posture by upholding self-determination in Kashmir. Henceforth, the PRC could showcase Kashmir alongside its support for national liberation movements in Algeria, Palestine and, most notably, Vietnam. If the PRC’s policy shift on Kashmir was a discursive articulation of China’s revolutionary foreign policy, its more tangible commitment to Pakistan in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war would offer Beijing a more explicit opportunity to prove its dedication to Third World struggle.

#### *Chinese Support in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War*

Though the PRC was eager to shed its hostile image after the Sino-Indian Border War of 1962, the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war offered an opportunity to stand behind a Third World ally in the face of aggression from an India backed by both superpowers. In reality, it was the Pakistanis that initiated hostilities in April 1965, after they provoked armed conflict in the Rann

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<sup>42</sup> “Record of Conversation between Chen Yi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,” 25 February 1964, *CFMA*, 203-00635-01(7), 87.

<sup>43</sup> *ZELNP2*, 621; “China-Pakistan Joint Communiqué on Premier Chou En-lai’s visit to Pakistan, 23 February 1964,” in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 46.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Renmin Ribao*, 20 February 1964.

of Kutch region of Indian Kashmir. Ayub Khan was convinced that an indigenous Kashmiri uprising would follow, though none came. Shortly after the invasion, the PRC offered rhetorical support. A May 1965 statement appearing through the *Xinhua* newswire condemned India's "great power chauvinism," which "disrupt[ed] Afro-Asian solidarity" by pitting Asians against Asians.<sup>46</sup> Immediately, New Delhi felt threatened by the possibility of Chinese intervention and on 7 May India's Foreign Minister decried "Chinese collusion" and the "veiled threat" of Chinese military support.<sup>47</sup> With 1962 fresh in Indian minds, the 'China threat' could not be taken lightly. Though Pakistan had clearly been the aggressor, Beijing was eager to champion Third World causes and defend the Kashmiri national liberation struggle.

Perhaps partly out of fear for eventual Chinese entry and a dreaded two-front war, India counterattacked on 6 September and began moving toward Lahore. The following day, the Chinese significantly enhanced their rhetoric, now moving toward threats of military entry. Following a meeting between Zhou Enlai and the Pakistani Ambassador, an official PRC statement asserted that New Delhi "must bear responsibility for all the consequences of its criminal and extended aggression."<sup>48</sup> Aiming to deter Indian advances into Pakistan, the statement was left intentionally vague. When U.S. President Lyndon Johnson suspended aid to both India and Pakistan as a result of the war, the Pakistani war effort relied even more heavily on Chinese deterrence.<sup>49</sup> One day after the Johnson administration's decision, Beijing demanded India dismantle its "aggressive military structures...illegally built" along the Sino-Indian border.<sup>50</sup> A week later, the Chinese reissued their demand, this time buttressing it with an ultimatum threatening "grave consequences" for noncompliance.<sup>51</sup> Further holding out the specter of intervention, Chinese troops were moved into positions along the Sino-Indian border.

Ultimately, the Chinese threat was not enough to prevent Pakistan's defeat, and Ayub Khan reluctantly accepted the UN proposed ceasefire on 22 September. Though it is difficult to

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<sup>46</sup> "Hsinhua statement on Indo-Pakistan border conflict, 4 May 1965," in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 64.

<sup>47</sup> "Statement by the Spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, 7 May 1965," in Arif ed., *China Pakistan Relations*, 65.

<sup>48</sup> "Chinese Government statement, 7 September 1965," in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 73.

<sup>49</sup> Dennis Kux, *Disenchanted Allies: The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 161.

<sup>50</sup> "Chinese note to India, 8 September 1965," in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 75.

<sup>51</sup> "Chinese note to India, 16 September 1965," in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 84.

determine whether China would have ever actually intervened militarily on Pakistan's behalf in 1965, their issuance of threats was not without weight. Though many scholars suspect Beijing was merely bluffing, it is important to remember that the PRC's ultimatum always carried the risk of foreign reprisal on China from an India ultimately backed by both superpowers.<sup>52</sup> This risk was particularly poignant given the recent history of Sino-Indian hostilities in 1959 and 1962.

For Beijing, however, there was significantly more at stake than might have appeared in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war. The PRC was eager to demonstrate solidarity for a Third World ally against imperialist and reactionary aggression, to undermine superpower hegemony (via India), and to defend Kashmir's national liberation struggle. As Chen Yi told Cambodian dignitaries following the war, though the PRC was against military intervention generally speaking, its recent actions in support of Pakistan indicated that when a "friendly neighbor (*youhao linbang*)" was faced with a critical moment of potential peril, China could not "lay witness to its mortal danger without trying to rescue it (*jiansibujiu*)," nor could it "sellout a friend (*chumai pengyou*)."<sup>53</sup> By supporting Pakistan in 1965, the PRC could pursue the revolutionary foreign policy it deemed necessary to combat revisionism at home and abroad. While these goals carried large ramifications for the Chinese revolution, CCP leaders were mindful of the need for China to present itself as a non-hostile defender of international peace. Here, Pakistan would again prove useful for Chinese foreign policy goals that implicated, but transcended, India.

## **Pakistan and the PRC's Image as Defender of International Peace**

### *The Context of the PRC's Strive for a Peaceful Image*

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<sup>52</sup> See KH Pringsheim, "China's Role in the Indo-Pakistani Conflict," *The China Quarterly* 24 (Oct.-Dec 1965): 175; Yaacov Vertzberger, *The Enduring Entente: Sino-Pakistani Relations, 1960-1980* (Washington, D.C.: Praeger, 1982), 37; Robert McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 331.

<sup>53</sup> "Record of Conversation between Chen Yi and Penn Nouth," 27 September 1965, *CFMA*, 105-01377-02, 79.

Since the establishment of the PRC, the CCP was eager to gain both foreign and domestic legitimacy for its rule. On the international stage, Beijing was determined to secure support for its struggle to regain Taiwan, and thereby consolidate its role as the sole representative of the Chinese people. This effort manifested itself in the goals of: establishing relations with a wide number of countries and, in the process, amassing a larger number of votes in favor of the PRC replacing Taiwan at the United Nations.<sup>54</sup> Under Mao's early Cold War logic of "leaning to one side" amidst the "two camps" of the United States and the USSR, the PRC was more heavily bound to amassing support within the socialist world. By the early 1960s, however, the Sino-Soviet split and Mao's theory of the "two intermediate zones" encouraged China to look to the Third World to accrue widespread support for the PRC's international legitimacy. Buttressing Mao's belief that the spirit of revolution had shifted to the Third World was a keen awareness that African decolonization had produced a number of new nation-states on the continent in the early 1960s. If the PRC was to improve its international image and broaden its global influence, the burgeoning Third World was the place to start.

Domestically, the CCP was perpetually in need of bolstering regime legitimacy through political mobilization for the Chinese revolution. As evidenced by the Korean War, the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, and the U.S. war in Vietnam, PRC leaders frequently drew upon external threats to drum up support for large domestic programs.<sup>55</sup> While such threats proved effective, however, there were limits to how much the PRC could manipulate the international setting for its domestic purposes. Amidst the need to curb the image of China as a hostile aggressor abroad, domestic propaganda aimed to present the PRC as a peaceful defender of Third World interests. Such messages resonated with pervading popular narratives of the Chinese people's "victimization" at the hands of imperialist forces since the Opium War, and more traditional notions of Chinese "centrality" in the world.<sup>56</sup> Though these discourses were often tinged with ideological content premised upon the spread of "Mao Zedong Thought," at their heart they advanced China's return to a position of "centrality" and influence on the global stage.

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<sup>54</sup> Chen Jian, "China, the Third World, and the Cold War," [unpublished essay] 11-12.

<sup>55</sup> See Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, chs. 4, 7, 8. See also Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 8-13.

Out of this two-pronged search for legitimacy at both the international and domestic levels, emerged the PRC's quest to present itself as non-hostile defender of international peace. Designed to parallel its support of national liberation and revolutionary challenge to superpower hegemony, this effort aimed to alleviate the notion of a threatening China that had cumulatively emerged following the Korean War, the Taiwan Strait Crises of 1954 and 1958, and the Sino-Indian border war. While revolutionary national liberation appealed to some Third World states including Pakistan, Algeria, and Vietnam, it was a message that did not translate well to some developing nations eager for stability and economic development. China's effort to court Third World allegiance through its cultivation of a peaceful image thus aimed to differentiate the PRC from the hostile forces of imperialists, revisionists, and reactionaries.

The latter category was a thinly veiled attack on Nehru, who was closely associated with the Non-Aligned Movement that paralleled the Afro-Asian Movement as the offspring of the Bandung legacy. Though the PRC's main rival in the Third World was the Soviet Union, China's quest for leadership of the developing world also required dismantling Nehru's credibility there. Consequently, Nehru was frequently attacked as a superpower pawn whose hostility threatened Third World solidarity. These criticisms were thus tied to the larger critique of American imperialism as a form of neo-colonialism for the developing world. Washington, Beijing frequently remarked, aimed to interfere with Third World development by deploying economic and military aid. Finally, PRC courtship of Third World countries aimed to attack Soviet revisionism. While the intricate details of Moscow's 'revisions' to Marxism-Leninism were unintelligible to most non-socialist Third World audiences, Beijing strove to paint the Soviets as having 'sold out' the need to protect the developing world from imperialist aggression and interference. Indeed, this was a major theme of the infamous anti-Soviet polemics issued by the Chinese throughout 1963-64.<sup>57</sup> Amidst the hostile forces of imperialists, revisionists, and reactionaries, therefore, the PRC was to stand alone as the defender of Third World peaceful

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<sup>57</sup> See in particular polemics #4, #5, and #6 in "Apologists of Neo-Colonialism," *Peking Review*, 6 (43), (25 October 1963) (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1963): 6-15; "Two Different Lines on the Question of War and Peace," *Peking Review*, 6 (47), (22 November 1963), (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1963): 6-16; "Peaceful Coexistence – Two Diametrically Opposed Policies," *Peking Review*, 6 (51), (20 December 1963), (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1963): 6-18.

development and international peace more broadly. Through its relationship with Pakistan, China's effort to cultivate such an image was given considerable support.

### *Pakistan and the PRC as Defender of the Third World*

In their relations with Pakistan throughout the early to mid-1960s, the Chinese consistently aimed to present themselves as much more in touch with Third World interests than either of the superpowers or India. Although Pakistan needed little convincing on the latter, Beijing aimed to ensure that Ayub Khan understood the vast disparity between China and the two superpowers. While Washington and Moscow aimed to exploit the developing world, China sought to nurture its growth and ensure its integrity amidst the global Cold War, PRC leaders implored.

In a March 1962 conversation with Pakistani Ambassador Rashidi, Zhou Enlai claimed that China aimed to help Third World countries oppressed by imperialist "aid."<sup>58</sup> The Americans use this aid to pit Asians against Asians, Zhou claimed, and they deployed "divide and conquer" tactics as evidenced in their interference in Tibet and Taiwan. The following July, Mao told Rashidi that the Americans compel Pakistan to smoke "the opium" of economic aid.<sup>59</sup> The next year, Chinese leaders intensified this articulation of their protection of the Third World. In July 1963, Chen Yi told Ambassador Raza that the PRC was willing to support any country encountering imperialist and reactionary aggression by combating this with "just struggle (*zhengyi douzheng*)."<sup>60</sup> China has proven this commitment, Chen went on, through its support for anti-imperialist struggles in Algeria, Cuba, the Congo, and for anti-Indian resistance in Nepal. If Pakistan encounters Indian reactionary or American imperialist aggression, Chen pledged, the PRC would come to Pakistan's defense.

An August 1963 report sent by the PRC embassy in Pakistan to the Chinese Foreign Ministry concluded that Pakistan was supportive of the notion of the PRC as a Third World

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<sup>58</sup> "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi," 8 March 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01799-02, 13.

<sup>59</sup> "Record of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi," 15 July 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01799-01, 5.

<sup>60</sup> "Summary of Conversation between Chen Yi and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza," 23 July 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01845-04, 23.

leader.<sup>61</sup> Pakistan saw China's power to be steadily growing, the report detailed, and as such its international prestige was also on the rise. Pakistan viewed China as a true and genuine friend, and deemed it to be "upholding the cause of justice (*zhuchi zhengyi*)."<sup>62</sup> Such views were exhibited in the joint communiqué following February 1964 Sino-Pakistani talks, which expressed satisfaction for many newly liberated states joining the UN, while also asserting that only with PRC entry to the UN could Afro-Asian interests be "adequately represented."<sup>63</sup> As bilateral relations progressed, the Chinese offered significant interest-free loans to Pakistan which aimed to challenge American aid there. In March 1965, Zhou Enlai told Ayub Khan that such loans were designed to help Pakistan oppose colonial and imperialist domination.<sup>64</sup> As PRC leaders sought to carve out this image of Third World protector, such ideas resonated with a Pakistan alienated by superpower support for India.

In a March 1962 meeting, Ambassador Rashidi told Zhou Enlai that a strong China allows Pakistan to feel a sense of "security, liberty, [and] honor."<sup>65</sup> A few months later, he told Mao that U.S. aid reduces Pakistan to "begging," whereas China was the "shining light of all oppressed peoples and young nations."<sup>66</sup> Identifying the PRC's national development as a useful model for all Third World countries, Rashidi called Mao the "doctor that has cured China's illnesses."<sup>67</sup> It was in Pakistan's interest for the PRC to grow strong, he went on, as this would defend Asia against imperialist and colonial forces, and would help "lift" all Asian countries out of dependency on U.S. aid. A powerful PRC would ensure that the U.S. would "not dare" encroach on Pakistan's internal affairs. Continuing this argument for China's benevolence in the face of superpower aggression, in a July 1964 statement Ayub Khan argued that the U.S. was lacking in "moral character" and he questioned why developing countries would want to rely on

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<sup>61</sup> "Our Views on Pakistan's Foreign Policy," 31 July 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01186-05(1), 93-94.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>63</sup> "China-Pakistan joint communiqué on Premier Chou En-lai's visit to Pakistan, 23 February 1964," in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 47.

<sup>64</sup> "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Ayub Khan," 5 March 1965, *CFMA*, 105-01927-02, 92.

<sup>65</sup> "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi, 8 March 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01799-02, 10.

<sup>66</sup> "Record of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi," 15 July 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01799-01, 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*



either of the two superpowers.<sup>68</sup> While skeptics might be inclined to dismiss Pakistan's laudatory remarks as pandering to China, regardless of whether or not their words were genuine, they offered Beijing tangible support in its effort to self-identify as the defender of Third World interests. Moreover, Pakistan's endorsement came from an indisputably Third World, Afro-Asian country with credible grievances against both superpowers and Nehru's India.

Indeed, Beijing's quest for Third World leadership necessarily summoned the need to discredit Nehru, and dismantle his hold on the Non-Aligned Movement. To do so, PRC leaders aimed to paint Nehru as an expansionist aggressor, backed by both superpowers. As a "lackey" of the U.S. that also possessed ties to Moscow, Nehru's India was anything but "non-aligned." Upon signing the Sino-Pakistani border agreement in March 1963, the two sides discussed in detail the nature of Nehru's India. Chen Yi argued that India had "betrayed Afro-Asian unity (*beipanle Ya-Fei tuanjie*)."<sup>69</sup> Pakistan, Chen asserted, knows the harm Nehru's policies pose to Third World unity better than anyone. India's conduct at the Sino-Indian border was "arbitrary (*manhengwuli*)" and made clear Nehru's "expansionist ambitions (*kuozhang yexin*)."<sup>70</sup>

Zhou Enlai continued in this vein, attacking the myth of India's non-alignment given the massive military aid Nehru received from the U.S. and the UK.<sup>71</sup> Nehru thus acted hypocritically behind his "cloak of non-alignment."<sup>72</sup> As such, Zhou asserted, India was increasingly isolated within the Afro-Asian world. Since it was India that provoked China in 1959, Nehru's reliance on hostility had discredited him in the eyes of the Third World.<sup>73</sup> Though India *should* be a strong Afro-Asian country, Zhou concluded, its behavior harmed solidarity within the community, and more closely resembled American imperialism rather than Third World peaceful independence. Dovetailing these descriptions of Nehru's India, Chinese leaders

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<sup>68</sup> "The Conflict between Pakistan and the United States Continues to Deepen," 8 July 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01627-04(2), 21-22.

<sup>69</sup> "Record of Conversation between Chen Yi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," 1 March 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-01, 5; See also "Speech by Chen Yi at the banquet, 3 March 1963 (Extracts)," Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 37.

<sup>70</sup> "Record of Conversation between Chen Yi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," 1 March 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-01, 5.

<sup>71</sup> "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," 2 March 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-02(1), 9.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*; "Chou En-lai's interview with the correspondent of Associated Press of Pakistan, 31 March 1963," in K. Arif ed., *China Pakistan Relations*, 42.

<sup>73</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi [CCP Central Documents Research Office] ed., *Zhou Enlai junshi huodong jishi [A Record of Zhou Enlai's Military Affairs]*, vol. 2 [hereafter *ZELJS2*] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2008), 321.

were quick to frame the Sino-Pakistani border settlement as a symbol of Afro-Asian unity and cooperation. Zhou claimed the agreement demonstrates to the Afro-Asian people an example of how “countries with differing social systems” can “coexist peacefully and settle by peaceful means the boundary questions between them.”<sup>74</sup> By defining the Sino-Pakistani settlement as an act of Third World unity and peace, CCP leaders aimed to unmask Nehru as an expansionist aggressor.

This theme continued in October 1963 discussions with Pakistani officials when Zhou criticized Indian expansionism. U.S. aid to India emboldened Nehru, Zhou claimed, and thus served a purpose similar to Washington’s support of Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan. American support encouraged Nehru to make bold claims in Kashmir, just as it did in Ladakh, which the PRC had originally claimed.<sup>75</sup> When Pakistani Ambassador Raza replied that Zhou was now the true leader of the Bandung-inspired movement, Zhou advanced that no single person can lead the Afro-Asian community, but instead it requires everyone banding together to thwart superpower aggression.<sup>76</sup> While Zhou’s veiled attack on Nehru was clear, it bespoke the degree to which the PRC’s interest in discrediting him transcended its own tensions with India. Instead, Chinese efforts to disparage the Indian leader fit within its larger project of posing as the defender of Third World interests, to thereby secure a legitimizing position of centrality on the international stage.

Naturally, Pakistani leaders responded well to the PRC’s campaign against Nehru, and supported the notion of Chinese leadership of the developing world. In a September 1962 discussion with Zhou Enlai, Ambassador Raza declared that India’s “double-dealing (*liangmianshoufa*)”—that is, its flirtations with both of the two superpowers—proves its claims to neutrality and so-called “non-alignment” to be hypocritical.<sup>77</sup> Following the Sino-Indian border war, in a statement to the National Assembly of Pakistan in November 1962, then Foreign

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<sup>74</sup> “Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistan Associated Press Agency Reporter Safdar Ali Qureshi,” March 31, 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-06, 98; See also *ZELNP2*, 544.

<sup>75</sup> “Record of a Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, and Head of Pakistan’s Delegation Participating in the PRC’s National Day Celebration, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani,” 18 November 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01188-03, 26.

<sup>76</sup> *ZELNP2*, 585.

<sup>77</sup> “Summary of a Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza,” 5 September 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01802-03, 43.

Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra “applauded” Zhou Enlai’s “act of great statesmanship” to issue the PRC’s unilateral ceasefire and limit the magnitude of hostilities in the face of Indian aggression.<sup>78</sup>

Upon the occasion of the Sino-Pakistani border settlement, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto identified Afro-Asian unity as helping to combat India’s effort to isolate Pakistan.<sup>79</sup> Ambassador Raza echoed this theme, arguing that bilateral relations with China were necessary to combat Nehru’s effort to alienate Pakistan internationally.<sup>80</sup> In response to the angry reactions in New Delhi and Washington to the border agreement, Pakistani officials saw this as nothing more than “imperialist forces [seeking] to destroy Afro-Asian solidarity.”<sup>81</sup> In February 1964 talks, Bhutto described Nehru’s support from the Soviet Union as provoking disillusionment across the Afro-Asian world.<sup>82</sup> Bhutto advanced the need to expose Nehru to Afro-Asian countries, and support those already engaged in disputes with India. In response, Chen Yi made reference to China’s need to appear peaceful on the international stage, arguing that although China knows the truth about Nehru, it cannot be seen to be leading other countries against India. Many Third World countries know about Nehru’s hypocrisy, Chen continued, but are afraid to speak up. After Chen identified Cambodia’s Norodom Sihanouk as one such leader, Bhutto proclaimed that with Chen’s permission, he himself would immediately say all the things Sihanouk dare not say.<sup>83</sup> Though the PRC’s interest in unseating Nehru at the head of the Third World leadership went beyond China’s grievances with India, there was no better partner for this task than Pakistan.

Though China’s larger effort to become the defender of the Afro-Asian Third World would never fully materialize, nevertheless PRC leaders did succeed in blemishing Nehru’s name and India’s international credibility more broadly. In October 1964, Bhutto told the PRC

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<sup>78</sup> “Statement by Mohammad Ali, Foreign Minister of Pakistan in the National Assembly, 22 November 1962 (Extracts),” in Arif, *China Pakistan Relations*, 30.

<sup>79</sup> “Record of Conversation between Chen Yi, Zhou Enlai, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,” 2 March 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-02(1), 9.

<sup>80</sup> “Record of Conversation between Chen Yi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,” 1 March 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01846-01, 6.

<sup>81</sup> “Record of a Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, and Head of Pakistan’s Delegation Participating in the PRC’s National Day Celebration, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani,” 18 November 1963, *CFMA*, 105-01188-03,25.

<sup>82</sup> “Record of Conversation between Chen Yi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,” 25 February 1964, *CFMA*, 203-00635-01(7), 85.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

Ambassador to Pakistan that even Nehru's successor Lal Bahadur Shastri had conceded that India was not receiving good results in the Non-Aligned Movement.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, according to Indian evidence, Shastri even went so far as to say that Beijing had successfully managed to isolate India in the Afro-Asian world at large.<sup>85</sup> Though this ultimately proved insufficient for China's larger foreign policy goals in the Third World, it was no doubt integral to the PRC's interests motivating its relationship with Pakistan.

*Pakistan and the PRC as a Pursuer of International Peace*

China's relationship with Pakistan in the early 1960s further proved helpful in portraying the PRC as actively promoting international peace more generally. As CCP leaders aimed to correct the pervasive image of a hostile and aggressive Communist China, their Pakistani counterparts proved adept at facilitating this endeavor. When Beijing strove to develop nuclear weapons in the early 1960s and thwart the Soviet-American-British effort to conclude a Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Pakistan was helpful in defining PRC intentions as ultimately rooted in peace. In a March 1962 conversation with Zhou Enlai, Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi claimed that a Chinese nuclear capability would help to prevent imperialist and reactionary elements interfering in Asia.<sup>86</sup> In particular, Rashidi clarified, the U.S. would no longer be able to interfere in Taiwan, and India would be forced to relinquish Kashmir. Ultimately, he reasoned, a Chinese nuclear device would serve to benefit all Asian people.

After the Chinese successfully detonated their first atomic bomb in October 1964, Bhutto applauded the achievement and said it reflected the Chinese people's interest in peace.<sup>87</sup> China's position on peaceful nuclear deterrence, Bhutto claimed, influenced all Afro-Asian-Latin American countries. By helping to define the Chinese nuclear capability as peaceful and defensive, Pakistani leaders assisted the PRC in forging an identity as a protector of the peace

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<sup>84</sup> "Content of Conversation between PRC Ambassador to Pakistan Ding Guoyu and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," 18 October 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01254-01, 2.

<sup>85</sup> Lüthi and Chen, "East Asia, 1962-1972," 5.

<sup>86</sup> "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Rashidi," 8 March 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01799-02, 13.

<sup>87</sup> "Summary of Conversation between PRC Ambassador to Pakistan Ding Guoyu and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," 18 October 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01254-01, 1.

that was clearly distinct from the two superpowers. This was a message Pakistan readily carried to the larger international community and was not restricted merely to the issue of nuclear weapons. The British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in July 1964 proved to be a particularly remarkable Pakistani effort to help craft China's international image.

Before the London-based meetings had commenced, Zhou Enlai requested that Ayub Khan work to dispel the myth of the "China threat" and articulate China's "fondness for peace."<sup>88</sup> When talks began, Ayub argued that India was working alongside the Soviets to isolate China, and he dispelled the Indian idea that China sought to use Tibet as a military base from which to harm India.<sup>89</sup> Ayub criticized the Soviet-American détente, saying it unfairly aimed to alienate Beijing. Summoning his own personal experience dealing with Beijing, Ayub claimed that Chinese leaders spoke and negotiated rationally. As such, it was criminal to deny the PRC a UN seat, thereby estranging them internationally. From the available Chinese documentation it is difficult to fully gauge the effect of Ayub's words on those in attendance. However, the fact that a number of the attending representatives of Commonwealth nations came from Third World developing states was likely a fact not lost on either Pakistani or Chinese leaders. In its quest to combat an image of hostility and aggression and secure a position of legitimacy on the international stage, China's efforts were greatly aided by Pakistan's willingness to promote China as a pursuer of peace. When, in 1965, the United States militarily intervened in Vietnam and the PRC was concerned about a possible expansion of hostilities, Pakistan would again serve a useful role in communicating Beijing's interest in avoiding escalation.

#### *Pakistan and the PRC's Efforts of Deterrence on Vietnam*

Pakistan proved useful to the PRC in seeking to deter U.S. aggression in Vietnam namely because the two sides shared similar positions on the issue. Though the PRC actively supported

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<sup>88</sup> "The Pakistani Foreign Minister Warns of the Possibility that the So-Called 'Chinese Threat' Might be Discussed at the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, and Zhou Enlai's Letter to Ayub Khan Concerning Pakistani Suggestions on the Situation in Southeast Asia: Bhutto Speaks on Several Issues," 6 July 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01875-01(1), 2.

<sup>89</sup> "Agha Shahi Discusses Ayub Khan's Speech at the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference," 15 July 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01875-01(4), 76.

North Vietnam's national liberation movement, in the early to mid-1960s, like Pakistan, it too promoted reconvening the Geneva negotiations and stood firmly opposed to U.S. intervention. Once the Americans did intervene in early 1965, both sides were eager to ensure that the war did not expand into North Vietnam. Though this concern was far greater for neighboring China, Ayub Khan's government was eager to help convey to Washington Beijing's interest in avoiding expanded hostilities.

Indeed, in addition to debunking the "Chinese threat," Ayub used the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in July 1964 to outline both Pakistan's and the PRC's ideas on mounting tension in Vietnam. Ayub made clear that the PRC was against the expansion of hostilities, but naturally would be compelled to respond if the U.S. attacked North Vietnam.<sup>90</sup> Navigating the nuances of Beijing's interest in supporting national liberation while also appearing peaceful, Ayub informed Western journalists in London that anyone who did not think China would respond to U.S. intervention in North Vietnam would be miscalculating.<sup>91</sup> Though the PRC needed to appear strong to the threatening United States, it was also genuinely interested in deterring an American war in Vietnam that might very well embroil the PRC as Hanoi's ally, or even directly threaten Chinese soil.

PRC leaders were thus grateful for Ayub's assistance at the meeting, and Zhou wrote him thanking him for Pakistan's own pledge of non-involvement in Vietnam (as a member of SEATO).<sup>92</sup> In a later discussion of Zhou's letter with PRC diplomat Xiong Xianghui, Ayub identified a number of points Zhou had wanted him to articulate at the meeting. These issues included: the CCP's interest in peace, the PRC's determination to abide by the two Geneva resolutions governing Southeast Asia, the fact that the PRC has not intervened in Indochina despite foreign speculation to the contrary, and finally that if the U.S. intervenes there the PRC could not simply "brush this aside."<sup>93</sup> Since Ayub only received Zhou's letter *after* the

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>91</sup> "Ayub Khan's Address to the Press in London," 14 July 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01257-08(3), 33.

<sup>92</sup> See "The Pakistani Foreign Minister Warns of the Possibility that the So-Called 'Chinese Threat' Might be Discussed at the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, and Zhou Enlai's Letter to Ayub Khan Concerning Pakistani Suggestions on the Situation in Southeast Asia: Bhutto Speaks on Several Issues," 6 July 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01875-01(1).

<sup>93</sup> "Summary of Discussion with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," July 19, 1964, *CFMA*, 105-01875-01(2), 64.

conference had concluded, however, Ayub was unable to fully convey these views. Nevertheless, Zhou's request speaks to the degree to which Pakistan was viewed by Beijing as a trustworthy and credible medium to convey its interest in peaceful resolution and deterrence of hostilities. As Ayub told Xiong Xianghui, though the UK spoke poorly of China throughout the Commonwealth Conference proceedings, Pakistan and several African countries "stuck up for" the PRC.<sup>94</sup> After U.S. intervention in Vietnam began in earnest and Beijing was genuinely frightened by the specter of an expanded war onto North Vietnamese or even Chinese soil, it turned to Pakistan to "signal" its deterrence to Washington.

Since the consolidation of the Sino-Pakistani relationship in 1962, the Ayub Khan government had been keen to serve as an intermediary for improved Sino-American communication.<sup>95</sup> Though PRC leaders were initially lukewarm on the idea, the Pakistani invitation did not go unnoticed. In the wake of the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident and American intervention in Vietnam in early 1965, CCP leaders were increasingly concerned about the implications for China's national security. Fearing an expansion of the conflict onto Chinese soil, Beijing engaged in a campaign of "tough talk" designed to deter American expansion of the war.<sup>96</sup> With Beijing's fears un-assuaged and its message seemingly falling on deaf ears in Washington, Chinese leaders decided to turn to Pakistan.

Using the occasion of April 1965 Sino-Pakistani talks, Zhou Enlai requested that Ayub Khan use his upcoming trip to Washington to communicate to U.S. President Lyndon Johnson the PRC's four-part position on Vietnam.<sup>97</sup> First, the PRC would not initiate aggression against the U.S. Second, the Chinese mean what they say. Third, the Chinese are well prepared. Finally, if the U.S. expands the Vietnam War into China, the Chinese people will fight back. If the Americans drop bombs on the PRC, Zhou added, the Chinese will respond on the ground or move against U.S. positions everywhere. If U.S. bombs touch Chinese soil, Zhou warned, that

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> See "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza," 12 August 1963, *CFMA*, 113-00452-05, 20; "Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi and Ayub Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," 21 February 1964, *CFMA*, 203-00635-01(3), 45.

<sup>96</sup> Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 140; See also *ZELNP2*, 620-621, 718; *ZELJS2*, 411.

<sup>97</sup> *ZELNP2*, 723; *ZELJS2*, 432. See also Priscilla Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam, and the World Beyond Asia* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 491-498.

would be considered an act of war, and “war has no boundaries.” Despite Zhou’s carefully articulated message, the ‘signal’ to the U.S. to avoid escalation went temporarily undelivered, as Johnson abruptly cancelled Ayub’s visit in anticipation of his unfavorable musings on U.S. intervention in Vietnam.

Though Ayub would eventually convey Zhou’s message in April 1966, by then it had already been communicated through other means. Nevertheless, Beijing’s decision to entrust Pakistan with “signaling” the PRC’s deterrence bespeaks the degree to which Pakistan served to benefit the PRC’s larger goal of avoiding unnecessary hostilities and defending the Third World from imperialist aggression. Moreover, Beijing’s “signaling” through Pakistan identifies the extent to which the relationship existed beyond merely the India factor. Though, as James Hershberg and Chen Jian surmise, Ayub Khan saw the request as a way to “boost his country’s stature...enhancing his own prestige...in high-stakes big power diplomacy,” for the PRC the message was one of genuine interest in avoiding embroilment in the American war in Vietnam.<sup>98</sup> By continually promoting China as a non-hostile pursuer of international peace, and by aiding Beijing’s effort to avoid a Sino-American confrontation in Vietnam, Pakistan proved helpful to Chinese leaders in their articulation of foreign policy concerns that occasionally implicated, yet fundamentally transcended, India.

## **Conclusion**

While the consolidated Sino-Pakistani relationship that emerged in the early to mid-1960s was premised upon both countries’ ongoing tension with India, it is misleading to portray relations as mono-causal. Though the India factor reigned supreme as far as Pakistan was concerned, the same cannot necessarily be said for the PRC. Indeed, for Chinese leaders the cultivation of relations with Pakistan offered Beijing support in its difficult quest to enact a foreign policy trajectory that appeared at once both revolutionary and peaceful. Though seemingly contradictory, this nuanced PRC foreign policy emerged from Beijing’s myriad concerns and needs, both international and domestic.

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<sup>98</sup> James G. Hershberg and Chen Jian. “Informing the Enemy: Sino-American “Signaling” and the Vietnam War, 1965,” in Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain*, 223.



As Mao returned to preeminence in PRC decision-making in 1962 with a determination to oppose revisionism at home and abroad, the Chairman was eager to reassert revolutionary class struggle in China's foreign policy. Driven by Sino-Soviet competition for leadership of the Third World and the need to reignite domestic mobilization in the PRC following the Great Leap Forward, China's foreign relations aimed to challenge superpower hegemony and promote struggles of national liberation. Here, Pakistan proved a willing and helpful aid in Beijing's quest. Keen to respond to superpower support for India and promote self-determination in Kashmir, Pakistan offered the PRC an opportunity to put its revolutionary foreign policy into action. By deploying the anti-superpower rhetoric of Afro-Asian solidarity, by shifting its policy on Kashmir in 1964, and by supporting Pakistan in its 1965 war with India, Beijing did precisely this.


At the same time, the PRC had to be continually mindful of maintaining an image of defending international peace in the early 1960s. Particularly following the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, Beijing was cautious about appearing as a hostile and aggressive international pariah. While the PRC was determined to challenge the hegemony of its American and Soviet enemies, it could ill afford to sacrifice international legitimacy and the position of centrality it sought in the Third World. This image was also critical to the CCP's regime stability at home, where China's international standing carried ramifications for the validity of the continuous Chinese revolution.

Again, Sino-Pakistani ties proved useful to these ends. Receptive to Beijing's self-portrayal as a defender of Third World Afro-Asian interests, Pakistan was expectedly conducive to painting Nehru as a traitor to solidarity in the developing world. Further, Ayub Khan's regime made great efforts to promote the PRC internationally as a peaceful world leader untainted by the superpower tendency of interfering in Third World affairs. When U.S. intervention in Vietnam threatened Chinese security in 1965, Pakistan willingly played intermediary, conveying Beijing's desire for avoiding expanded hostilities with the Americans.

Though Chinese goals in Pakistan implicated India in a number of ways, they *always* transcended Sino-Indian issues. Instead, PRC leaders saw in Pakistan the ability not only to alleviate the India problem, but also to put into practice their larger foreign policy goals. From

Beijing's perspective, therefore, the Sino-Pakistani relationship of the early to mid-1960s was always designed to go beyond India.

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