

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN DEFENSE POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN, 1947-1954

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The Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan have increased the significance of Pakistan as a "frontline" state, vital to Washington's plan to protect the Middle East from further Soviet encroachment. In recognition of Pakistan's important geostrategic position, the United States concluded a \$3.2 billion economic and security agreement with the country in 1981, and concluded a follow-up agreement for over \$4 billion in March 1986. In this article, Devin T. Hagerty argues that contrary to popular belief, Pakistan's current role is not a new one in American strategic planning. He analyzes the initial era of security relations between the U.S. and Pakistan from 1947 to 1954, and discusses the parallels between the 1981 agreement and the considerations leading to the famed "northern tier" concept of John Foster Dulles. Mr. Hagerty concludes that the strategic thinking which evolved in that crucial period, resulting in the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement of 1954, forms the basis for the present-day relationship.

The December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made South Asia vastly more important in the eyes of American policymakers. Due largely to the ongoing conflict, Pakistan plays a significant role in American strategic planning. U.S. policy promotes Pakistan as a "frontline" state, one whose military strength is vital to the defense of South and Southwest Asia in general and the Persian Gulf in particular.

This is not, however, merely a consequence of the Soviet move of 1979. It is important to recognize that Washington has accorded Pakistan a similar status since the early 1950s. A clear understanding of the present defense relationship between Washington and Islamabad requires a familiarity with the initial era of strategic relations between the two countries. Because the basis of the relationship remains much the same today as thirty years ago, an understanding of that era can be instructive for current U.S. policy.

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On May 19, 1954, Pakistan and the United States signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MDAA) which pledged Washington to provide military equipment and training assistance for Pakistan's armed forces. This was the forerunner of later agreements which associated the United States and Pakistan in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Baghdad Pact, later the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). SEATO and CENTO were the direct results of the strategic thinking which produced the May 1954 agreement.

American planning had gone through several distinct phases prior to 1954. During World War II, the Roosevelt Administration had deferred to the British when formulating its policies toward an increasingly restless India. For nearly two years following the partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947, Washington had continued to elicit British advice and studiously avoided "choosing sides" between the two new Dominions. At this time and thereafter, Pakistan's desire to involve itself in a military relationship with the United States grew.

Between early 1949 and late 1950, Pakistan underwent what might be termed a "gravitation" toward the Middle East. Both American policymakers and their Pakistani counterparts came to view Pakistan's strategic significance in terms of the Middle East (or the area now commonly referred to as Southwest Asia) instead of South Asia. In 1951 and 1952, the Truman Administration's search for comprehensive defense arrangements in the Middle East took account of Pakistan's potential role in such a framework.

These American efforts failed, however, until Secretary of State John Foster Dulles abandoned such plans in favor of a more modest set of agreements involving mostly non-Arab Middle Eastern actors, including the United States and Pakistan. Secretary Dulles's "northern tier" concept was not new in official American thinking, but it had previously lacked the forceful and pragmatic direction he provided. The idea continues to influence American policy in Southwest Asia, especially in light of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

I. 1941-1947: ANGLO-AMERICAN COOPERATION

American policy prior to the independence of India and Pakistan was characterized by deference to Britain's primacy in South Asia. The British role has been described well:

In the pre-independence era, the strategic unity of the region had rested on Britain's dominant political position, its control of the seas, and a strong Indian Army that could protect

Burma and Afghanistan as well as project its force into the Middle East and South Asia.¹

While America's official relations with India developed steadily during the war, the Roosevelt administration held the view that Anglo-American cooperation in the China-Burma-India theater must take precedence over any active American involvement in the struggle being waged for Indian independence.²

In Lahore on March 23, 1940, the All-India Muslim League, which claimed to speak for India's substantial and regionally concentrated Muslim minority, demanded the creation of a separate sovereign state named Pakistan.³ Thereafter, as this goal progressed from idea to reality, official American reports from India discussed the viability of the demand and analyzed the strength of the Muslim League and its president, Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah.⁴ Neither these reports nor official American views in Washington reflected the possibility of a security relationship between the U.S. and a future "Pakistan."

There existed for the United States, however, a valid reason for not unduly alienating the Muslim League. In a transmission from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to President Roosevelt, passed through the President's Special Representative in London, Ambassador W. Averill Harriman, it was pointed out that "Approximately 75% of the Indian troops and volunteers are Muslims."⁵ Because of this and as a result of the low support perceived among strong military elements in India for the Indian National Congress (the Muslim League's chief rival which, while asserting a secular identity, enjoyed predominantly Hindu support), the Prime Minister would not take "any political step which would alienate the Muslims."⁶ The Roosevelt administration accepted

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1. Fred Greene, *U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 124.
 2. See Gary R. Hess, *America Encounters India, 1941-1947* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); M. S. Venkataramani and B. K. Shrivastava, *Roosevelt, Gandhi, Churchill: America and the Last Phase of India's Freedom Struggle* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1983). Both accounts are highly critical of Roosevelt's policies toward India during the war.
 3. Hess, *America Encounters India, 1941-1947*, p. 19.
 4. Useful documents representative of official American assessments of Jinnah and the Muslim League may be found in the State Department decimal file in the Diplomatic Records Division of the National Archives (cited hereinafter by file number), and in the State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office) (cited hereinafter as *FRUS*). Examples include: Letter from Calcutta, 5 April 1941, 845.00/1226; Letter from Calcutta, 8 May 1941, 845.00/1232; Letter from Calcutta, 4 August 1941, 845.00/1250; Telegram from the Personal Representative of the President in India (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 25 April 1942, *FRUS*, 1942, 1:642; Telegram from New Delhi, 15 September 1942, 845.00/1600; Telegram from New Delhi, 7 April 1943, 845.00/1911.
 5. Telegram from London, 26 February 1942, *FRUS*, 1942, 1:608.
 6. *Ibid.*

the view that the two allies "must not on any account break with the Muslims who represent a hundred million people and the main army elements on which we must rely for the immediate fighting."⁷

Thus, while the United States did not advocate the Muslim League's position or envision a future strategic relationship with Pakistan, it appreciated during the war the need to be on friendly terms with Jinnah and the League. This war-induced, positive view toward the soon-to-be ruling party of Pakistan, and respect for the military potential of the Indian subcontinent's Muslims, would affect American-Pakistani security relations after independence.

II. 1947-1949: THE U.S. VIEW OF SOUTH ASIA

Between the end of the war and August 14, 1947, when India and Pakistan gained independence, events elsewhere in the world often diverted the attention of American policymakers from South Asia. The United States had become active in containing what it perceived as dangerous Soviet expansionism, and the Truman Doctrine, enunciated on March 12, 1947, served notice that the United States would oppose further gains in territory and influence for the Soviet Union anywhere in the world. Accordingly, U.S. aid began to flow to Greece and Turkey, and then Iran, as a means of countering aggressive Soviet activities. In addition, the Marshall Plan called on the nations of Europe to cooperate in planning for postwar recovery, and pledged massive U.S. aid for this cause. The Cold War had begun in earnest, but South Asia was of little relative importance to policymakers in Washington.

There existed, however, several recurrent themes that ran through U.S.-Pakistani relations during the August 1947-April 1949 period. The first was a continuation of Washington's pre-independence desire to consult with London on matters of importance in South Asia. The second was Washington's insistence on taking a "regional approach" to the area; that is, the United States would not allow itself to be brought into controversies between Pakistan and India. America would avoid choosing sides, and advocate reconciliation of all disputes. The third factor evident during this period was Pakistan's increasing willingness to side with the West in the Cold War. This factor became extremely significant in light of India's developing policy of non-alignment between the two super-powers.

Even prior to independence, the State Department was deeply concerned about the defense of areas being vacated by the British. In May

7. Letter from Churchill to Roosevelt, 4 March 1942, *FRUS*, 1942, 1:612.

1947, the State Department inquired of its ambassador in London, "In view of British withdrawal from Burma, India, Egypt, and possibly Palestine, how do the British themselves forecast the future course of Empire defense and of their defense commitments?"⁸ The response to this query was that

The reduced U.K. economic and manpower resources indicate voluntary curtailment, if not abandonment, of certain former overseas commitments on the presumption that they can best be met by transferring certain of them to the members of the Commonwealth, certain of them to the U.S., accepting certain of them in cooperation with the Dominions and the U.S., and by reposing certain of them in the UN.⁹

The American Embassy in London concluded that the new nations of South Asia would have to "assume responsibility for their defense like any other dominion, within a framework of close cooperation with the U.S. and the U.K."¹⁰

This was a backdrop for the "Pentagon Talks" of 1947, a series of discussions between the British and the Americans regarding, among other subjects, the defense of former British possessions.¹¹ Although Britain had insisted, prior to the talks, that "in the East they consider that the discussions should cover countries up to and including Afghanistan, but not India or Pakistan," it was inevitable that one could not speak of Afghanistan in this context without mentioning at least Pakistan, which had inherited Britain's concerns regarding the Durand Line.¹²

Recognizing the strategic importance of Pakistan, the British Government entertains hopes of arriving at a common defense agreement with the Dominion of Pakistan as well as with the Dominion of India. The apparently favorable disposition of the people of Pakistan holds the prospect not only of a close understanding between the United Kingdom and Pakistan but also an effective contribution by Pakistan to the stability of the Muslim world.¹³

Given Britain's weakened condition as a result of the war, however, this was an understandable overestimation of the role she would play in

8. Telegram to London, 17 May 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, 1:750.

9. Telegram from London, 11 June 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, 1:752.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 754.

11. *FRUS*, 1947, 5:485-626.

12. Memorandum prepared in the Department of State, undated, *FRUS*, 1947, 5:495.

13. Statement by the United States and United Kingdom Groups, undated, *FRUS*, 1947, 5:609.

the defense of her former colony. Thus, although the talks closed with mutual pledges of cooperation, the nature of Western involvement in South Asian security remained unclear at the end of 1947.¹⁴ Furthermore, in light of more pressing demands on Western resources elsewhere in the world, the actions of the Pakistani Government itself at this time emerge as critical.

With regard to Pakistan's defense capability at this time, Mohammad Ayub Khan, the first Muslim commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army (1951-1958), and later Pakistan's president (1958-1959), recalls:

our army was badly equipped and terribly disorganized. It was almost immediately engaged in escorting the refugees who streamed by the million into Pakistan; and not long after that it was also involved in the fighting in Kashmir. Throughout this period we had no properly organized units, no equipment, and hardly any ammunition. Our plight was indeed desperate. But from the moment Pakistan came into being I was certain of one thing: Pakistan's survival was vitally linked with the establishment of a well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led army. I was determined to create this type of military shield for my country.¹⁵

This sentiment dominated Pakistani thinking in the years after independence. The dilapidated condition of Pakistan's armed forces and concern for its borders in the face of territorial disputes with its neighbors, India and Afghanistan, forced Karachi to turn away from South Asia for security assistance. In 1947-1948, neither the British economy nor Britain's political climate would allow for significant guarantees of Pakistan's defense. As the predominant power in the postwar world, the United States was Karachi's logical choice to fill the role of military benefactor. A mere two months after independence, therefore, the Pakistan government approached Washington with a request for over \$300 million in military aid.¹⁶

The United States balked at this and similar appeals for such aid by both India and Pakistan during the August 1947-April 1949 period, due to the "tense situation prevailing in the Indian Subcontinent as a result of disputes over Kashmir and other issues."¹⁷ This informal em-

14. *Ibid.*

15. Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends, Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 20-21.

16. Office Memorandum, Division of South Asian Affairs, Department of State, 19 May 1948, 890.20/5-1948, p. 3.

17. Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Truman, 11 March 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, 5:496-97.

bargo was to be the foundation of Washington's impartiality in its dealings with the new nations of South Asia. The approach was not without its critics, however, both American and Pakistani, who believed the American embargo was a tacit acceptance of India's superior military strength vis-à-vis Pakistan.

In a dispatch dated February 14, 1948, Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel Hoskot, the American military attaché in Karachi, noted that top level discussions within the Pakistan armed forces had indicated that Pakistan would be part of the Anglo-American bloc in the event of worldwide disorder; this was reason enough to extend military assistance. Two months later, Hoskot maintained that the embargo was arousing Pakistani antagonism. Merely a loan and spare parts for military vehicles of American manufacture would engender continued goodwill. The current American attitude might "endanger" future relations and drive Pakistan to secure relief elsewhere. Hoskot reasoned that the United States had a "wide open opportunity" to "elicit full support" and gain a "complete and lasting" friendship with Pakistan at "this critical time."¹⁸

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Ambassador to Washington, Mr. M.A.H. Ispahani, attempted to convince the State Department to lift the embargo, arguing that Pakistan "from an international point of view . . . cannot be overlooked or treated lightly. In a period of emergency, Pakistan can form a base for both military and air operations."¹⁹

Playing on American Cold War fears and the Pakistani state's religious basis, Ispahani warned:

Certain ideological and political trends have recently shown themselves more and more clearly in lands like Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, and even India. Although this ideology is foreign to Islam and is not acceptable to Muslims, it nevertheless becomes necessary to guard against its inroads into Pakistan.²⁰

The letter left no doubt as to which way Pakistan would lean in the Cold War, but American officials clung firmly to the evenhanded embargo policy. The State Department response did, however, indicate that export license applications would be considered for spare parts.²¹ This minor

18. Telegram from Karachi, 14 February 1948, 845f.00/2-1448; Telegram from Karachi, 24 April 1948, 845f.00/4-2448.

19. Letter from the Pakistani Ambassador to the Secretary of State, 19 October 1948, 845f.24/10-1948.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Letter from the Department of State to the Ambassador of Pakistan, 2 December 1948, 845f.24/10-1948.

revision in policy was a sign of growing sentiment in official American circles for action with respect to the security of South Asia.

Hoskot's input was no doubt significant in the shaping of what was evidently the first detailed, comprehensive statement regarding postwar American security concerns in the region, entitled "Need for SANACC [State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee] Appraisal of Possible United States Military Interest in South Asian Region." This report briefly described previous defense arrangements on the Indian subcontinent and then stressed Britain's continued "primary role" in South Asia. In light of uncertainties in relations between Britain and its former colonies, doubts as to British economic and military resources, and the actual requests for aid received from Pakistan and India, the paper stated concisely the American perspective:

Bearing in mind the commitments which the United States has made elsewhere, it would appear to be in our interest that the British continue to have, from the global point of view, the paramount responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in South Asia. However, it is believed incumbent upon this Government to give serious consideration to the possibility that U.S. interests would be served by our assisting the governments of South Asia in the defense sphere.²²

With regard to Pakistan's aid requests, the SANACC report reasoned: "Pakistan was thinking in terms of the U.S. as a primary source of military strength, and since this would involve virtual U.S. military responsibility for the new Dominion, our reply to the Pakistan request was negative."²³ In spite of this assessment, however, the memorandum warned: "The weak military defenses of the South Asian countries, combined with the unsettled political and economic conditions obtaining in most of them, make this area a 'danger-spot' in the present international scene."²⁴

The SANACC report invoked the threat of growing Soviet influence in the area, citing a cable from the American Embassy in Moscow as grounds for concern. That transmission, dated December 1, 1947, had ventured the theory that the Kremlin, having lost confidence in the possibility of further gains in Europe, might shift its attention to "direct

22. Office Memorandum, 19 May 1948, p. 1.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

development and exploitation of what Stalin termed the great 'reserves of the revolution in the colonies and dependent countries.'"²⁵

Soviet contact with "subversive elements" in South Asia, the creation of alignments within the U.N., "virulent anti-Western propaganda," and worker and peasant agitation were described as the means by which the Soviets hoped to gain influence in the region. In light of this threat, SANACC proposed that the U.S. government

evaluate more precisely than it has done in the past the extent of its national and strategic interest in South Asia and the steps which it might take (1) to bring about as great a degree as possible of political, economic, and military stability in the South Asian Countries, and (2) to prevent any encroachments which the USSR may have in mind.²⁶

Before recommending a course of action, the May 1948 memorandum stated that "in considering any program of military assistance in this area, a regional approach would be necessary." Pakistan and India would, from this perspective, have to "be viewed as a whole from the standpoint of defense."²⁷

Finally, the report suggested six possibilities as worthy of further consideration: (1) the use of air bases in northern India and Pakistan, in case of a future conflict, (2) the use of Indian and Pakistani manpower, (3) the maintenance or stimulation of military production in South Asia, to serve as a "supplementary source of materials in connection with the defense of the area," (4) military training programs in the area, (5) direct military assistance, and (6) an exchange of views between the U.S. and the U.K. on the extent of potential British military aid to the area, and "their attitude toward any supplementary American program of assistance to the countries in this area."²⁸

This first thorough assessment of American security policy in post-independence South Asia reflected the continuing trends in State Department thinking during the August 1947-April 1949 period, as well as Pakistan's desire to side with the United States in its search for security. Anglo-American collaboration and a regional approach to South Asia remained the foremost considerations for U.S. policymakers. And increasingly, the Soviet threat was perceived as significant enough to warrant consideration of extending military assistance to the exposed nations of the area. For the time being, however, South Asia continued to be a

25. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

low priority for America's strategic planners. In an August 1948 report by the SANACC Subcommittee for Rearmament, for example, it was assumed that, even with the lifting of the informal embargo, India and Pakistan would qualify for only a limited amount of military assistance.²⁹

Pakistan's continuing frustration over the embargo was evident during a meeting between Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and American Secretary of State George C. Marshall in October 1948. Liaquat was "frank and open" during the exchange as he expressed Pakistan's desire to maintain a stand against Communist "infiltration." The Prime Minister also mentioned, with reason, that the arms embargo favored India and harmed Pakistan, largely because of the ordnance factories India inherited at partition.³⁰

This plea, along with Ambassador Ispahani's letter of October 1948, may have contributed to the repeal of the embargo on March 29, 1949. The change, however, brought little cheer to Pakistani officials. Along with notice of the decision came the news that significant quantities of war materiel would not be forthcoming, owing to American commitments in other areas.³¹

For this reason, American policy at the time of the embargo's repeal remained essentially the same as that enunciated in the memorandum of May 1948. The follow-up to that document did, however, reveal the beginnings of a shift in the way American policymakers viewed Pakistan's strategic place in South Asia and its role in the Cold War calculus. An April 1949 SANACC "Appraisal of U.S. National Interests in South Asia" concluded that American policy required:

The maintenance of internal security within the countries of South Asia and their freedom from Communist domination. To this end we should re-examine our capabilities of providing military materiel to South Asia in the light of over-all requirements for U.S. military assistance. At the minimum we should endeavor to meet the legitimate requirements for military equipment of U.S. origin already possessed by South Asian countries.³²

This consideration of military aid to the nations of South Asia clearly reflected a heightening of the Cold War elsewhere. The April 1949

29. Report by the SANACC Subcommittee for Rearmament, 18 August 1948, *FRUS*, 1949, 1:262.

30. Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State, 29 October 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, 5:435.

31. Telegram to New Delhi, 31 March 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, 6:1696.

32. Report by the SANACC Subcommittee for the Near and Middle East, 19 April 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, 6:9-10.

SANACC document described, for the first time, the deteriorating situation in China as a cause for added concern in South Asia. It speculated that the fall of China to the Communists would "increase our interest in and possible future dependence on South Asia." Triumph for Mao would force the U.S. to "prevent the extension of Soviet influence in South Asia and . . . retain this area as a Western salient on the Asian continent."³³

But events east of the region were not the sole concern in this expanding picture. An appendix to the SANACC document, issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), detailed the added importance of Pakistan to the Middle East:

The Karachi-Lahore area in Pakistan may, under certain conditions, become of strategic importance. In spite of tremendous logistic difficulties, this area might be required as a base for air operations against central USSR and as a staging area for forces engaged in the defense or recapture of Middle East oil areas.³⁴

The SANACC report and its JCS annex shared an increased sense of American competition with the Soviets on a battleground of dynamic emerging nations. In a telling statement which could have been applied to any number of newly independent countries in the postwar world, SANACC warned:

Old values are being changed and new ones sought. New friendships are being formed. The new political leaders are seeking assistance and support, and it is largely on the basis of the responses which they receive that friendship is being measured, and that new alliances will come into being.³⁵

This observation certainly was accurate in South Asia, but there were fundamental differences in the nature of the "friendships" the two major actors in the region sought. Pakistan, weaker than India, at odds with Afghanistan, and closer to the Soviet Union geographically, was willing to commit itself firmly to the Western camp. India, more powerful and more skeptical of the Soviet menace, refused to offer any *quid pro quo* in exchange for Western military assistance. Moreover, Pakistan's proximity to the Middle East made the country all the more attractive to American strategic planners. Thus the JCS could state bluntly that "While the countries in South Asia, *excepting Pakistan*, are of negligible strategic

33. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

34. Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 24 March 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, 6:30.

35. Report by the SANACC Subcommittee, 19 April 1949, pp. 13-14.

importance to us, encroachments by the USSR would endanger our national policy of Communist containment.³⁶

III. 1949-1950: PAKISTAN'S "GRAVITATION" TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST

Pakistan's place in American strategic planning from April 1949 to January 1951 was unclear. The well-defined South Asian context within which the new nation previously had been viewed by American policy-makers gave way to an expanded but rather hazy perspective. The events of this period forced U.S. officials to redefine America's relations with a dwindling "free world." In 1949, the Communist People's Liberation Army swept across China, chasing America's wartime ally, Chiang Kai-shek, to Formosa. September of that year witnessed the first Soviet explosion of a nuclear device. In June 1950, the North Koreans launched an invasion into South Korea, in what many American officials saw as a diversionary tactic, intended to draw Western attention away from other areas of potential Soviet-inspired aggression.

Meanwhile, two trends developed in America's relations with India and Pakistan. Most apparent was the growing strain between Washington and New Delhi, the result of increasingly divergent views of the world in the two capitals. Less obvious was the inexorable "gravitation" of Pakistan toward the Middle East in the minds of Pakistani and American officials alike. Consequently, American policymakers' "regional approach" to South Asia crumbled and Washington came to view Pakistan as America's only dependable friend in the region. The United States remained, however, unsure of the extent to which it wished to develop its relations with Karachi.

This uncertainty was evident in a June 1949 Policy Planning Staff memorandum intended to determine the feasibility of an arrangement similar to the North Atlantic Treaty in the Middle East:

The membership of a Middle East regional pact presents difficulties. Inclusion of India would make the group too large and unwieldy. On the other hand it would be unrealistic to include Afghanistan and Pakistan without India since the usefulness for security purposes of Afghanistan and Pakistan depends very largely on the facilities in depth to be found in India. Since Iran has obvious connections with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, two regional groups — Middle Eastern

36. JCS Memorandum, 24 March 1949, p. 30 (emphasis in original).

and South Asian — might be formed, Iran being included in both.³⁷

This rather ambitious reasoning clearly shows that American strategic planning regarding this “region” had not matured much beyond a belief in its importance as an area of competition in the widening struggle between East and West.

This was the situation when a variety of senior Pakistani officials arrived in Washington, encouraged by the revised American arms policy and eager to cement new ties with the United States. From June to September 1949, talks were held between American officials and, in turn, the Foreign Secretary, the Defense Secretary, the Finance Minister, and the Foreign Minister of Pakistan. During these meetings, the Pakistani representatives “informally but repeatedly declared their readiness to associate themselves closely with the U.S. in long-range defense planning.” Pakistan, the visitors stressed, could be a “sturdy bulwark against Communism.” These statements were accompanied by requests for an estimated \$125 million in military assistance.³⁸

The various discussions produced nothing really new. Their only result was a reiteration of Pakistan’s desire for a security relationship with the United States, and of American officials’ unwillingness to assent to anything more binding than possible limited military assistance³⁹. This inertia in American policy was perhaps attributable to Washington’s preoccupation with the Soviet nuclear blast of September 1949 and the official creation of the People’s Republic of China in October of that year.

While Pakistan remained on the back burner, its larger neighbor, India, did not. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, described by the *New York Times* as “the world’s most popular individual,” arrived in Washington in October 1949 for a four-week tour of the U.S. The visit was significant for America’s relations with Pakistan because of the profound disappointment felt by American officials upon discovering firsthand that Nehru had no intention of taking sides in the Cold War. That the leader of a nation virtually next door to two hostile Communist giants could perceive nineteenth century colonialism still as more threatening than twentieth century Communism was utterly incomprehensible to American policymakers, in view of the previous month’s events.⁴⁰

37. Memorandum by Mr. Gordon P. Merriam of the Policy Planning Staff, 13 June 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, 6:37.

38. M. S. Venkataramani, *The American Role in Pakistan, 1947-1959* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1982), pp. 78-88.

39. *Ibid.*

40. S. M. Burke, *Pakistan’s Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 119-22.

For the time being, however, this disappointment did not cause any fundamental change in the nature of America's involvement with South Asia. In fact, the region was largely ignored as senior American policy-makers wrestled with the new challenges posed more directly by Soviet and Chinese Communism.⁴¹ When American policy toward Pakistan was reviewed in April 1950, a by then familiar situation was described: Pakistan had made repeated requests for military assistance, all of which had been turned down. At the same time, American planners did recognize the implications of such a policy:

If some military aid is not forthcoming from us, it is clear that the Government of Pakistan must request this aid from other sources. During the past year it has turned to Czechoslovakia for some items. We recognize that the final political orientation of Pakistani leaders will be influenced by the responses they receive to these requests. We may desire bases and other facilities in Pakistan in the event of war. Our response to Pakistan's requests for military aid should increase its willingness to make bases available to us.⁴²

Moreover, it was again deemed desirable that "comprehensive high-level discussions should be held with the U.K. to clarify the extent to which our respective policies toward Pakistan and South Asia afford a basis for cooperative effort in the area."⁴³

While these views mirrored those held by the State Department since the decision, in principle, to lift the embargo in March 1949, it was also recognized that Pakistan might play a major role in the Middle East: "With regard to Pakistan's endeavor to assume leadership of a Middle East Muslim bloc, it may in time become desirable critically to review our concept that Pakistan destiny is or should be bound with India." Furthermore, it was thought that a "strong Muslim bloc under the leadership of Pakistan and friendly to the U.S., might afford a desirable balance of power in South Asia."⁴⁴

The unsatisfactory state of American relations with India, coupled with Pakistan's own desire to gain influence in the Middle East, led

41. Two important policy statements reflected official American preoccupation with East Asia and the Pacific at the end of 1949 and the beginning of 1950. These were an NSC report to the President entitled "The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia," 30 December 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, 7:1215-20; and a 12 January 1950 speech by Secretary of State Acheson entitled "Crisis in Asia — An Examination of U.S. Policy." *Department of State Bulletin*, 23 January 1950, pp. 111-18.

42. Department of State Policy Statement, 3 April 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 5:1491-92.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, p. 1496.

Washington to think of Pakistan's potential utility outside of South Asia. It also undermined further Washington's commitment to a regional approach, leading American policymakers to seek something other than a purely South Asian model in which U.S. concerns regarding India needed to be balanced.

It was during this transition period that Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan became the first Pakistani head of state to visit the United States. In a series of speeches given across the country, Liaquat maintained that Pakistan's "Islamic ideology" not only gave stability to Pakistan itself, but provided religious and cultural links with the Middle East which would "prove a stabilizing factor in Asia."⁴⁵

In a talk given on May 18, 1950, Liaquat attempted to draw attention to Pakistan's strategic position. West Pakistan, he stated, "borders on Iran and Afghanistan and has an important situation in relation to the communications to and from the oil-bearing areas of the Middle East."⁴⁶ These words, aimed at projecting a new value in Western relations with Pakistan, struck a resounding chord among American officials who themselves had perceived that Pakistan's importance might lie in the Middle East rather than in South Asia. Western support, encouraged by such considerations, would serve Pakistan's interests in both regions, a point of which its leaders never lost sight.

The Prime Minister's visit stood in stark contrast to that of Nehru, and not accidentally, we may assume. While the Indian Prime Minister had declined to condemn Communism in terms acceptable to Washington, Liaquat emphasized both the incompatibility of Communism and Islam and the "fighting qualities" of Pakistan's "anti-Communist Muslim warriors."⁴⁷ America's first personal glimpse of the two statesmen did much to enhance Pakistan's image in the United States.

Soon after Liaquat's departure from America, North Korea invaded South Korea, which served to increase Pakistan's importance in American strategic thinking. An August 1, 1950 memorandum by the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to the Secretary of Defense warned that the Communists "might conceivably be emboldened to take greater risks" by attacking Berlin, Turkey, Japan, or Pakistan.⁴⁸ In the view of the National Security Council (NSC), an attack on Pakistan would "incur

45. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*, p. 123.

46. Liaquat Ali Khan, *Pakistan, the Heart of Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 82.

47. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*, p. 124.

48. Memorandum by the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force to the Secretary of Defense, 1 August 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 1:354.

[a] serious risk of global war," owing to Pakistan's membership in the British Commonwealth.⁴⁹

Collaboration with the British in South Asia, a continuing guideline for American policy, could thus lead the United States into a major war, were Pakistan to be invaded. Seen in this light, the informal talks between the State Department and British officials on September 18, 1950 were especially significant. That the Korean War had prompted the discussions was obvious from the American opening statement on South Asia:

Recent events in Asia have intensified our interest in the area and we are anxious to examine with the U.K. how, within the context of the greater interest and responsibility to which the U.K. is best fitted, we can supplement its efforts to preserve political and economic stability.⁵⁰

The British side began by reviewing Britain's military commitment to South Asia. The U.K. had continued to supply India and Pakistan, mainly by "furnishing necessary maintenance requirements for the present establishments." NATO and British Commonwealth obligations had, however, limited Britain's capacity to aid these nations. Indeed, "the U.K. was being forced to cut down its assistance to India and Pakistan." In reply, State Department representatives reported that, although American assistance had also been very limited, the U.S. involvement in the crisis in Korea had made American policy "somewhat more positive," and the U.S. had "taken an increased interest" in the military strength of India and Pakistan. American assistance, however, would necessarily remain minimal.⁵¹

While the views expressed above marked nothing fundamentally new in either country's policies toward the region, there was then

some discussion of the possible help Pakistan might provide in stemming any military advance towards the Persian Gulf and in the Near East generally, and it was agreed Pakistan might provide some help in this respect if it were ever free from internal worries on the Subcontinent.⁵²

The Americans later added that "the U.S. was inclined to welcome Pakistani initiative in the Muslim world" because it "had no confidence

49. Report by the National Security Council, 25 August 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 1:381.

50. Record of Informal United States-United Kingdom Discussions, 18 September 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 5:196.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-200.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

in the effectiveness of Egypt's influence." Pakistan was, moreover, "the most progressive and capable of the Muslim countries."⁵³

As has been shown, by the end of 1950, the United States considered Pakistan not only a potential force in the Middle East, but a leading one at that. This attitude can be attributed to several causes: (1) American disillusionment with India's strict adherence to an uncommitted position in the Cold War, (2) Pakistan's own unwillingness to "accept a position subordinate to India" and its desire to "counterbalance India's greater strength by developing close relations with its Muslim neighbors to the West,"⁵⁴ (3) U.S. officials' tendency to view this possibility as positive, (4) Pakistan's potential utility as a base for "air and naval operations in the Oman-Persian Gulf area" and "bomber strikes against any part of the USSR,"⁵⁵ and (5) the American realization that a moderate Islamic nation, friendly to the West, might exert a positive influence on hard-line Arab states in the Middle East. This last idea was expressed in a December 1950 policy statement that recognized the potential benefits of encouraging

Turkey, Pakistan, and possibly other Muslim non-Arab states, through the bonds which they enjoy with the Near Eastern states, to exert a constructive influence upon the latter, with particular reference to the reconciliation of Arab-Israeli differences, the strengthening of the area's non-Communist orientation, and the attainment of constructive area cooperation.⁵⁶

This link between Turkey and Pakistan would later prove significant for America's strategic relations with Pakistan. First, however, the U.S. would try its hand at alliance making in the Middle East.

IV. 1951-1952: ATTEMPTS AT MIDDLE EAST DEFENSE

Strategic relations between Washington and Karachi in 1951 and 1952 must be viewed within the context of America's search for adequate defense arrangements in the Middle East and not South Asia. Given Indo-Pakistani hostility and India's refusal to chart a course supportive of Western interests in the Cold War, any attempts to secure a coordi-

53. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

54. Policy Statement Prepared in the Office of South Asian Affairs, Department of State, 9 October 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 5:248.

55. Paper, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence, GSUSA, 1 December 1950, FW780.5/12-150.

56. Policy Statement prepared in the Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State, 28 December 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 5:278.

nated defense effort in South Asia were doomed to failure. Furthermore, Indian policy gradually came to be seen as potentially helpful to Moscow. These factors, combined with Pakistan's continued anxiety about India and willingness to associate itself with Western defense planning, made it easy for Washington to gloss over the history and geography which bound Pakistan to India and South Asia.

The potentially negative consequences of overlooking historical ties were realized in years to come. Foremost among these, of course, was the impediment this role for Pakistan would pose to closer relations between the United States and India. This possibility was outweighed, at the time, by the pressing need for the effective defense of American interests in the turbulent Middle East.

Historically, as one analyst has put it, the "system of leadership and control through diplomacy, political manipulation, economic influence, prestige and military arrangements had rested in the last analysis on Britain's ability to bring substantial power to bear in the Middle East."⁵⁷ But the effect of World War II on British power and strength had changed this military predominance. Lacking the financial resources to maintain its commitments in Greece and Turkey, the British "gave" to the United States the responsibility for doing so in 1947. That year also saw Britain deposit the issue of Palestine "in the lap of the United Nations," while in 1948 the British "simply withdrew their forces and their administration, leaving the fate of Palestine to be settled by an Arab-Jewish war." Already, in 1945-1946, intense American pressure had been needed to counter Soviet penetration of Iran.⁵⁸

This progressive decline of British strength in the Middle East and the need to prevent the loss of the strategic bases, lines of communication, and resources of the region led the United States to consider the organization of joint defense in the area. The Korean conflict, as mentioned above, was an additional impetus for action along these lines, for it was thought that the weak countries of the free world, especially those in the Middle East, were now ready targets for Communist aggression.⁵⁹ In the spring of 1951, the United States and Britain began planning for the creation of an Allied Middle East Command (MEC). Rather than a security pact or a commitment of forces, the Americans envisioned an arrangement whereby

the considerable assistance which the United States is now
furnishing to certain individual countries of the Middle East

57. John C. Campbell, *Defense of the Middle East* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1958), p. 11.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 32-33.

59. See *ibid.*, pp. 34, 38.

can be made more effective, and British primary responsibility for the area can be made more meaningful, through the coordination of American, British, and indigenous efforts under a concept of the defense of the Middle East as a whole.⁶⁰

This attempt to "develop a certain amount of solidarity and cooperation in the area"⁶¹ would eventually include Pakistan which, the British reported, stood ready to cooperate in the defense of the Middle East.

Pakistan's potential contribution was discussed at two meetings of senior officials in early 1951. At a February conference of Middle Eastern chiefs of mission, held in Istanbul, it was agreed that Pakistan could provide support for Iran in the event of an attack on that country. Furthermore, since Pakistan had an interest in the creation of a regional arrangement including Turkey, Iran, the Arab states, and Afghanistan, Turkey and Pakistan might be encouraged to form an "axis of cooperation" on Middle Eastern matters.⁶²

These Pakistan-Iran and Pakistan-Turkey links were soon encouraged again during a South Asian Regional Conference of U.S. Diplomatic and Consular Officers, held in Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon. The participants decided that any regional defense arrangement in the Middle East which included Iran should also include Pakistan, and that "In the light of Pakistan's present orientation to the West and its active cooperation with the countries of the Middle East, the United States should encourage Pakistan's participation in problems common to the Middle East, and its orientation toward Turkey."⁶³

This aim was considered important enough for the United States to entertain "giving Pakistan assurances" with respect to its defense against an attack by India.⁶⁴ Such consideration clearly precluded a regional approach to South Asia. Regardless of its historical and geographic ties to the subcontinent, Pakistan would be considered part of the Middle East by American strategic planners. These views were clearly expressed by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, Mr. George McGhee, who referred to Pakistan's potential

60. Letter from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense, 27 January 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 5:22.

61. Memorandum of Informal U.S.-U.K. Discussions, 14 February 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 6:1658.

62. Agreed Conclusions and Recommendations of the Conference of Middle Eastern Chiefs of Mission, Istanbul, 14-21 February 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 5:59.

63. Agreed Conclusions and Recommendations of the South Asian Regional Conference of United States Diplomatic and Consular Officers, 26 February-2 March, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 6:1664-69.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 1664-69.

contribution to Middle East defense as probably "the decisive factor in assuring defense of the area."⁶⁵

The conclusions reached at Istanbul and Nuwara Eliya were early expressions of the "northern tier" concept developed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in 1953. In 1951, however, American policymakers saw this regional approach not as an end but as a means to the creation of a larger defense structure in the Middle East. Thus Washington persisted in its attempt to fashion such a comprehensive arrangement throughout 1951 and 1952.

In May 1951 the State Department's Policy Planning Staff visualized a structure wherein Turkey would be a major center of Western power and the "voluntary support of the Arab states, Israel, Iran, Pakistan, and contiguous land areas" would be attracted for area security. This "command set-up" would not involve U.S. combat forces or constitute a formal American defense commitment. It would, in conjunction with the British and the French (the latter to be included at their own insistence), help the states involved plan and prepare for the defense of the area. American officials hoped that this cooperation would ensure the continued flow of oil to the West, provide strategic bases in the event of war, and possibly even "contribute to the establishment of a practical *modus vivendi* between the Arab states and Israel."⁶⁶

Pakistan's potential utility in such an arrangement was more fully developed in a July 1951 State Department policy statement:

Pakistan has the military manpower which could assist Near East countries in blocking Russian aggression, especially through Iran. The Pakistan Army, properly equipped, would be in a position to send troops to Iran's assistance and so to fulfill one of the traditional functions of British-Indian troops in past wars.⁶⁷

Confirming the existence of a direct link between India's noncommittal policies and Pakistan's importance in the realm of defense, the statement continued:

Furthermore, as Pakistan does not suffer from the violent anti-Westernism and deep-rooted neutrality that prevent India from cooperating fully with the U.S. and its allies, Pakistan

65. Memorandum of Informal United States-United Kingdom Discussions in Connection with the Visit to London of the Honorable George McGhee, 2-3 April 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 5:106, 1689.

66. Working Paper Drafted by the Policy Planning Staff, 23 May 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 5:144-45.

67. Department of State Policy Statement, 1 July 1951, p. 2208.

might be persuaded to afford military bases to the U.S. and the U.K. in the Indian Ocean area.⁶⁸

Finally, the report concluded that Pakistan's Islamic identity, its geographical proximity to the Middle East, and its "present leanings toward the West" gave it a "political identity" which transcended the "historical ties that tend to bind it to India."⁶⁹

By the fall of 1951, it was clear that America's strategic relations with Pakistan would be dictated more by the strategic interests of Washington and Karachi than by concerns for Indian sensibilities or any notion of a regional approach to South Asia. Put simply, Pakistan was willing to play a role in the containment of Communism if this meant that its military forces would be bolstered and its security enhanced. India wanted no part of the Cold War and objected vehemently to its extension into South Asia through the vehicle of U.S. security arrangements with Pakistan. Additionally, on issues of major importance to the United States, such as the Korean War and the peace treaty with Japan, Pakistan's expressed policies were much closer to those of the Americans than were India's.⁷⁰ New Delhi and Washington were positively pugnacious during the U.N. wrangling over Korea, while India was joined only by the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Burma, and Yugoslavia, among the nations involved, in refusing to sign the peace treaty with Japan. Thus, in addition to seeing the potential value of a military relationship with Pakistan, Washington saw little of strategic significance to lose in its relations with India. American policymakers lacked, at this time, only a wider context within which to place a military agreement with Pakistan.

Egypt's refusal to join just such a larger structure, the MEC, dashed any hopes of an imminent Middle East defense body with substantial Arab (as opposed to Muslim) participation. Although the United States, Britain, France, and Turkey subsequently announced their intention to pursue plans for a military coordination organization in the region, with or without Cairo's participation, Egypt was clearly a missing link due to its leadership of the Arab League and the key position of the Suez area.⁷¹ Without Egypt, the MEC, as envisioned in the spring of 1951, was essentially a dead issue.

Immediately following Egypt's rebuff, Pakistan stepped up its efforts to involve itself more closely in a defense relationship with the United States. Two factors may have contributed to these renewed overtures. In

68. *Ibid.*, p. 2216.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*, pp. 126-33.

71. *Department of State Bulletin*, 19 November 1951, p. 817; Campbell, pp. 42-48.

addition to Pakistani fears that the United States might consequently take a decreased interest in Middle East defense, the October 16, 1951 assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan seems to have shaken Karachi into heightened fears for Pakistan's security. In October and November, Mr. M. Ikramullah, Pakistan's former Foreign Secretary, and Sir Zafrullah Khan, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, held discussions with American officials on defense-related issues. These meetings were marked by Pakistan's usual requests for military assistance and continued American reluctance to make promises. The Pakistani representatives attempted, of course, to paint as grim a picture of Middle East security as possible: the Soviet threat loomed large and Pakistan, with the aid of the United States, could contribute to the defense of the region; otherwise, it might be forced to secure arms aid elsewhere.⁷²

The tone of the discussions pointed up the reluctance of either side to make commitments without firm guarantees in return. Pakistan visualized U.S. protection against an Indian attack and a more formal commitment than that proposed by the four MEC powers. For its part, the State Department desired an informal defense structure in the Middle East before it would extend costly military aid to Pakistan.⁷³

Throughout this period, a structure within which American-Pakistani security relations could develop was lacking. While talks continued between the two countries in 1952,⁷⁴ the State Department decided that a Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) should be created instead of the MEC. Of the seven sponsoring powers, however, only Turkey was a Middle Eastern nation (and a marginal one at that). It was hoped that the MEDO would evolve gradually from a coordinating body to a "fully-fledged defense organization."⁷⁵ This was clearly impossible, however, without the support of other regional powers. Such cooperation was not forthcoming in 1952.

V. 1953-1954: PAKISTAN IN THE "NORTHERN TIER"

The advent of the Eisenhower administration is often cited as the turning point in America's search for effective security arrangements in the Middle East. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles developed the

72. Memorandum of Conversation by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, 18 October 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 6:2220-21; Memorandum of Conversation by Mr. Thomas W. Simons of the Office of South Asian Affairs, 10 October, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 6:2223.

73. Memorandum of Conversation, 18 October 1951, p. 2223; Memorandum of Conversation by the Secretary of State, 17 November, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 6:2228.

74. William J. Barnds, *India, Pakistan and the Great Powers* (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 92.

75. Circular Airgram to Certain American Diplomatic Officers, 30 June 1952, 780.5/6-3052.

“northern tier” concept, which called for a strengthening of the “front-line” states of the Middle East, namely, those adjacent to the Soviet Union. As has been shown, however, the potential links between Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey were perceived by American officials as early as 1951. It had since been presumed that Pakistan and Turkey would provide effective flanks in a Middle East scheme, both prepared to aid the weak middle link, Iran.

The Secretary’s role, though, should not be discounted because this concept did not originate with him. Under Dulles, the idea was given a structure which became a goal in itself, rather than a means by which to achieve a larger grouping including the Arab states and Israel. Moreover, the Secretary’s vigor brought results in little over a year. Dulles worked with the situation he inherited and quickly fashioned an arrangement satisfactory to all concerned.

What assets, then, were at the disposal of the new administration with respect to Middle East defense? Turkey, as a NATO member, was obviously a strong Western foundation. Pakistan, with its ardent desire to be involved in Western military planning and its potential manpower and strategic bases, would be the eastern flank. In between, however, there was “no immediate opportunity to create forces strong enough to be of major significance in the event of global war.” For this reason, the outgoing Truman administration had concluded: “A build-up more rapid than envisaged in present programs would appear to be possible and desirable in Pakistan.”⁷⁶ Even the American Embassy in New Delhi, ever vocal under Chester Bowles in its opposition to the prospect of U.S. military aid for Pakistan, admitted that, for reasons of “geography, history, politics, economics and religion,” the future of Pakistan was closely linked with that of countries to its immediate west. Furthermore, the embassy warned, in face of the Soviet threat, “all of them must sooner or later hang together or assuredly they may hang separately.”⁷⁷

In the months preceding the Secretary of State’s May 1953 trip to the Middle East and South Asia, the Department was repeatedly urged by its embassies in South Asia to make a concrete policy for the provision of military assistance to Pakistan. Positive discussions had been held between Washington and Karachi in late 1952, and Pakistani officials seemed desperate for a closer security relationship.⁷⁸

76. Report to the National Security Council by the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director for Mutual Security, 19 January 1953, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, 2:215.

77. Telegram from New Delhi, 20 November 1952, 780.5/11-2052.

78. Telegram from Ankara, 21 November 1952, 780.5/11-2152; Telegram from Karachi, 22 December 1952, 780.5/12-2252; Telegram from Karachi, 11 January 1953, 780.5/1-1153; Telegram from Karachi, 16 January 1953, 780.5/1-1653; Dispatch from Karachi, 9 February

Subsequent talks between Dulles and Indian and Pakistani leaders during his tour confirmed Washington's views with regard to the Cold War. Indian officials refused to be swayed from a policy of non-alignment and appeared unconcerned by the possibility of Soviet aggression. In Karachi, of course, the Secretary encountered an eagerness for closer (and explicit) strategic relations between the United States and Pakistan.

The most significant result of the Secretary's tour was his first public endorsement of the "northern tier" concept. On June 1, 1953, he stated:

A Middle East Defense Organization is a future rather than an immediate possibility. Many of the Arab League countries are so engrossed with their quarrels with Israel or with Great Britain or France that they pay little heed to the menace of Soviet Communism. However, there is more concern where the Soviet Union is near. In general, the northern tier of nations shows awareness of the danger.

Dulles continued: "There is a vague desire to have a collective security system. But no such system can be imposed from without. It should be designed and grow from within out of a sense of common destiny and common danger."⁷⁹

Because these perceptions were lacking, the MEDO plan would be scrapped in favor of extending assistance to those individual nations that supported America's Cold War stance. Implicitly, the Secretary had approved of a military agreement between Washington and Karachi. Pakistan was a "northern tier" nation which had consistently supported Washington in its Cold War rhetoric. Pakistan was clearly interested in bolstering its military strength, and though its primary concern was India, it would provide the United States with a well-prepared ally in South Asia in the event of a conflict with the Soviets.

What remained for Washington was to forge a link between Pakistan and Turkey which would serve as the initial building block in the construction of a regional defense arrangement. A December 24, 1953 telegram from the State Department to its embassy in Ankara maintained: "one way to minimize political repercussions and maximize the Pakistani area defense contribution might be to link the U.S. aid program with the initiation of mutual defense arrangements between Turkey and Pakistan."⁸⁰

1953, 780.5/2-953; Telegram from Karachi, 11 February 1953, 780.5/2-1153; Telegram from Karachi, 23 March 1953, 780.5/3-2353; Telegram from Karachi, 9 April 1953, 780.5/4-953.

79. *Department of State Bulletin*, 8 February 1954, p. 214.

80. Telegram to Ankara, 24 December 1953, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, 11:1835-37.

This linkage would, the Department reasoned, show that the intent of U.S. policy was to "strengthen area defense against outside aggression rather than take sides in disputes" within the area. This goal could be achieved by bilateral discussions leading to a preliminary agreement between Turkey and Pakistan. Shortly afterward, Pakistan could make a formal request for military aid and the United States would acquiesce, based on the idea of supporting inter-Asian attempts at collective security.⁸¹

This scenario was precisely what transpired from December 1953 onward. On February 19, 1954, it was announced that Turkey and Pakistan intended "to study methods of achieving closer friendly collaboration in the political, economic, and cultural spheres as well as of strengthening peace and security in their own interest as also in that of all peace-loving nations."⁸²

The United States had succeeded in making its "northern tier" approach appear to be the result of a local Middle Eastern initiative. Immediately following the announcement of cooperation between Ankara and Karachi, the State Department commented: "It is evident that the proposal of these two Governments constitutes a constructive step toward broadening the base of the collective strength of the free world."⁸³

With an ostensibly Middle Eastern initiative in hand, President Eisenhower announced in February 1954, that Pakistan's request for military assistance had been approved.⁸⁴ Shortly thereafter a treaty of "political consultation and cooperation" was signed by Turkey and Pakistan.⁸⁵ Finally, with the basis of Middle Eastern defense cooperation in place, the United States and Pakistan signed an MDAA on May 19, 1954, according to which the United States would provide military equipment and training assistance to the Pakistan Armed Forces.⁸⁶

Many critics have accused American policymakers of choosing sides in South Asia, thereby altering the existing balance of power in the region. As should be apparent from an examination of the documentary evidence, however, by 1953 Pakistan had become part of the Middle East Focus of American strategic planning. From this perspective, it was considered a natural eastern flank for the defense of the Middle East. Geography and history notwithstanding, Pakistan fit in perfectly with American Cold War imperatives in that area, and for its part, Pakistan was more than

81. Dispatch from Karachi, 6 February 1954, 780.5/2-654.

82. *Department of State Bulletin*, 1 March 1954, pp. 327-28.

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Department of State Bulletin*, 15 March 1954, p. 401.

85. Barnds, *India, Pakistan and the Great Powers*, p. 97.

86. *Department of State Bulletin*, 31 May 1954, p. 850.

willing to cooperate in Western defense arrangements, enhancing its own overall security position in the process.

Given the requirements of both the U.S. and Pakistan, then, the security relationship which developed was the inevitable culmination of a convergence of strategic thought in Karachi and Washington regarding not South Asia, but the Middle East. American policymakers probably failed fully to understand the ramifications of the agreement, not out of ignorance, but because they had come to view Pakistan as something other than an exclusively South Asian country. In 1954, this attitude seemed entirely logical, and Pakistan — for its own purposes — was prepared to foster the impression, not only for the U.S. linkage and weapons, but also for the broader Islamic connection as well.

American officials did not, then, decide that they needed an ally in South Asia and proceed to cultivate one. Despite requests for extensive arms aid from both India and Pakistan, they avoided any bilateral movement toward a security relationship with Pakistan (or India) until a framework for effective Middle East defense was created, into which a willing Pakistan was fit. For U.S. strategic planners, Pakistan existed as a Middle Eastern nation in the 1950s, and it was as a Middle Eastern country that Pakistan joined the U.S. strategic consensus in 1954.