

Focus

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**Revival of Pakistan's Foreign Policy after
the Debacle of East Pakistan**

Omiamah Khan

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Abstract

This research paper analyses the foreign policy of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. It studies his approaches after the East Pakistan debacle through the lenses of rationality, leadership, and personality models. There have been numerous notable occurrences, for instance, the restoration of diplomatic relations with China, the United States, and the Muslim world, as well as the transformation of the country's infrastructure and industry, which serve as examples of the success of these models. Additionally, it focuses on some psychoanalytic aspects, highlighting Bhutto's sociable, effective, and self-sufficient foreign policy, and his calculated limitation in hostile posturing to advance the domain of nationalism. His psychoanalytic approaches are studied with the concepts of leadership and personality. The severe impact of losing East Pakistan, which scars its borders, as it was in 1971, was an utmost crucial turning point in Pakistan's foreign policy, needing a reshuffle towards priorities and strategies while

* Ms Omiamah Khan is a Research Analyst at the Institute of Regional Studies.

balancing diplomacy to rethink profoundly. It further examines the enhancement of Pakistan's foreign relations policies from a new perspective under Bhutto's regime, assessing how his honest rationality and amiable personality influenced the country's global perception during a period of domestic turmoil and unclear international strategy. Using the dual lenses of rationality and leadership/personality, the study highlights how restoring honour deeply motivated policies of the nation under Bhutto's rule.

Keywords: *Debate of East Pakistan, rationality theory, leadership and personality theory*

Introduction

This paper aims to reflect on Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's foreign policy. To gauge the foreign policy analysis, after the debacle in East Pakistan, the rational model, leadership model, and personality model are applied. The application of the former model is evident in some major events, like the revival of diplomatic relations with the USSR, China, and Muslim countries, and the rebuilding of infrastructure and industrial sectors. Moreover, at the latter stage, the model observes psychoanalytical characteristics, aggressive and gregarious personalities, a predominantly neutral and aggressive foreign policy approach, and at times even the exploitation of some parts of a conciliation approach for national interests. To observe his psychoanalytical traits and neutral aggressive foreign policy under the leadership and personality model, consider the case of the return of Prisoners of War (the Simla agreement) and work on a nuclear program for scientific purposes to rebuild the devastated economy after the debacle.¹

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the torchbearer of Pakistan's foreign policy when the country was in its weakest situation. All

were becoming a great challenge to the sovereignty and integrity of the country. Mr. Z.A. Bhutto at that time turned the fate of the country with his astute leadership and pragmatic, rational approach. His foreign policy analysis has given successive outcomes on the basis of two theories: rationality theory and leadership and personality theory.²

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Vision for an Enhanced Foreign Policy

The aftermath of the separation of East Pakistan in 1971 brought forth a critical stage in the history of Pakistan. This challenge was met by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who came into power with the vision of revamping the foreign policy of Pakistan in order to improve the country's foreign relations and identity. Bhutto emphasised autonomy and self-sufficiency in his strategic policies. This gave rise to the new role of Pakistan in international relations as a regional power that was not highly dependent on a specific power bloc during the Cold War.

His policies sought to deepen the relations with China while improving the image of the country in the West to gain more support from Muslim countries. Bhutto wanted to align Pakistan with the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), and so he ended his efforts towards diversifying the Pakistani foreign alliances into other superpowers apart from the West.³ He made it clear that the primary purpose of engaging with the regional countries was to improve peace treaties while ensuring that the country's sovereignty was preserved in the long run, and ensuring proper progress.

For Bhutto, having a foreign policy that was closely linked to the economic policies of the country, where Pakistan aimed to

enhance tourism and once again strengthen its nuclear capabilities, was essential. With this new policy also came the notion of the new technological and investment-driven diplomacy that he wished to pursue. Alongside all this, Bhutto aimed to capture nuclear power as an impressive stance to showcase the capabilities of Pakistan and position the country as a prominent Islamic state.⁴

Case Study: 1971 Crisis and Policy Gap

When Pakistan lost its East wing in 1971, the country was demoralised and was highly unstable on socio-economic fronts. With the civil war in East Pakistan and the most exceedingly bad administration of that separation issue, most of the counterparts started to show a lack of interest in their attitudes.⁵ At that time, when Mr. Bhutto joined his office as an elected President, he had to come across numerous ongoing challenges. He gradually paved the way for the country's prosperity. His calculated measures, which were not witnessed in the past political history, brought socio-economic development and security. Moreover, Pakistan was facing numerous challenges from the West, but it did not lose sight of its state-building.

To achieve the nation's prosperity, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took a strong approach to Pakistan's foreign policy. Without this, the country's fate would have been dire. The struggling economy, which had suffered a defeat in war, alongside weak security measures, growing social conflicts, a dictatorial foreign policy, and a demoralised public, made it a daunting task to uplift the nation. Additionally, the outcry for prisoners of war, the lack of foreign relations with the USSR, China, and Muslim countries, the obstacles to nuclear enrichment, historically fragile relations with

India, and the prevailing mistrust and anti-American sentiments all posed significant challenges for the country. Nevertheless, Mr. Bhutto, through his leadership, facilitated a paradigm shift in Pakistan's foreign policy and, with his unique abilities, established the country as a sovereign and independent player on the global stage.

Rationality Model

According to the rational model, states act rationally; they look out and opt for a strategy in the world for their own security and survival. The states work in prospect to gain maximum benefits for their national interests that would be helpful in the current as well as in the long run. In the vulnerable situation, where from domestic to international structure was not in favor of Pakistan⁶ Mr. Z.A. Bhutto used a rational approach in formulating the self-reliant foreign policy: that was based on aloofness from the defense alliance to a certain extent. However, to formulate a self-reliant and autonomous, national socio-economic and sovereign society, the country needed to adopt a strong self-interest neutral position.

Thus, keeping this progressive approach in mind, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto turned the tables and shifted the Pakistan's foreign policy into a completely new direction. He improved the country's strategic lines with the communist bloc and effectively built foreign relations with the Soviet Union and China. This move changed the future of the country. The cost of building these ties was very low, with high benefits that the country has still been reaping for some time. Pakistan Steel Mill in Karachi, to Heavy Mechanical Complex, and Pakistan Aeronautical Complex at Kamra are some of the few major examples of what the country

has attained from the cohesive bilateral ties with the former Soviet Union. Moreover, in addition to this, the USSR also helped in the expansion and rebuilding of the defense industry of Pakistan. However, the improving foreign relations of the country under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were another calculated move.⁷ The Chinese waived off around a hundred and ten million dollars loan in Mr. Z. A. Bhutto's 1972 visit. Further, due to his extraordinary negotiation skills and progressive approach, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto managed to gain a package of around three hundred million dollars in economic and military recovery in which Pakistan got T-54, T-59 hundred tanks plus MIG-19 sixty fighter Jets. Further, China supplied around twenty-five per cent of tanks, thirty-three per cent of planes, and ninety per cent of bomber planes, and sixty-five per cent of interceptor bombers. Another pivotal direction with other significant changes which Z. A. Bhutto's foreign policy initiated after the loss of East Pakistan was to balance its status quo in international politics, to play a neutral role, and to work in unity with Muslim countries and to gain their trust. This was the rational choice that he made by simply visiting countries like Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Malaysia, Jordan, and the U.A.E. in search of socio-political and economic support. The alliances that he was building were a mutual security framework that could become not only the country's backbone against Western supremacy but also break the Western dependency, which was bullying the integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan now and then.

Leadership and Personality

Psychoanalytic studies that suggested deviation among people, nonetheless, proceeded to have some impact. This

sometimes took the form of psychobiography or psychohistory, which endeavored to clarify political conduct about early youth experiences or the impact of difficult times in adulthood. Mr. Z. A. Bhutto was born in a political and well-reputed family. From the time of his birth, he had an innate political instinct. He was well educated and well-versed regarding Islam and Muslim history. He was fond of revolutionaries like Mao Tse-Tung and Chou-En-Lai.⁸ The unique trait of Mr. Z. A. Bhutto's political career was that he had crossed all the decision-making levels. He worked diligently as Foreign Minister under a dictator, then later in his political career acquired the position as President and finally served as the Prime Minister of the country.

However, when elected after the debacle of East Pakistan, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto was looking forward to building a weak economy. His immediate focus was on scientific developments and a modern approach. Moreover, his domestic approach was focused on economic developments and fulfilling the needs of the poor masses. However, in regard to his foreign policy, he had opted for a neutral, aggressive approach. Moreover, aggressive leadership can be reflected by specific characteristics, including a Machiavellian inclination to control others, combined with a high requirement for force, a propensity towards suspicion, large amounts of patriotism, and a remarkable ability to start an action solely for the benefit of their state. His pragmatic and courageous approach was majorly seen while working on the nuclear program.

The Simla Agreement: Diplomacy Amid Setback

During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's term, managing relations with India and securing Pakistan's global recognition was a

challenging task following the 1971 war, which saw East Pakistan split into Pakistan and India. His notable Simla Agreement of 1972 addressed Pakistan's significant initial loss, primarily highlighting Bhutto's exceptional deal-making skills by leveraging India's aggression against itself, allowing him to transform mistakes into the foundation of Pakistan's enduring treaty framework. The dynamics of conflict politics need not be elaborated: a trauma-inducing loss on a national scale. Yet, somehow, the blend of practical conflict resilience, strong determination, and assertive thinking enabled Bhutto to emerge victorious.

Gradually, a framework developed, encompassing the key norms of violent domination and defiance against language imposition, surrendering rather than engaging in battling policies between dialogue and unilateral resolutions devoid of dialogue, peace, conflict resolution, and avoiding forceful confrontation. This is what provided Bhutto with the winning card to endure the pressures from both foreign and political scrutiny for democratisation. His practical approach helped mask the necessity for the Pakistani military establishment to soften its stance, alongside engaging India post-war, which still faced challenges that defended Pakistan's honor.

As for Pakistan, the Simla Agreement's "respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity" and commitment "to resolve issues of mutual concern through peaceful means and bilateral negotiations," illustrative of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's strategic foresight to stay clear of conflict for the moment and let his domestic issues settle, showcases his strategic foresight of avoiding immediate conflict and allowing time to consolidate domestic matters.⁹ Furthermore, the Simla Agreement worsened diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan, creating a new

balance of power for these two states that was not fully leveraged. In his portrayal of Bhutto's psychological resilience in defeat to emphasise, he could not escape the circumstances, but had some idea where to turn to find a few hints of sympathy while accepting that power is in fact about conceding without surrendering. From this perspective, it creates a backbone to Pakistan's foreign policy and illustrates Bhutto's inclining leadership amid a period of escalating crisis, demonstrating how strategically complex it could be.

Bhutto's Shift to Assertive Nuclear and Foreign Policy

The initial aim of the nuclear program was for scientific purposes, especially in fields of health, energy, and to promote the country's backbone, an agro-based economy. But, the fate of the country changed due to the security dilemma and the US hegemonic interference to stop Pakistan from achieving nuclear technology. The biased attitude of the US toward Pakistan in regards to India. Whereas, the country was blamed for causing proliferation, and on the other hand, accepting India's test explosion and supporting its claim for peaceful purposes was sheer double standards of the US.¹⁰ Mr. Bhutto stated on that circumstance that: "It is essential for Pakistan to give the best conceivable consideration to atomic innovation, as opposed to permit itself to be puzzled and misled, by an international agreement which limits the deterrence power to the present atomic powers." However, Mr. Bhutto had sensed the threat of India's initiative in regards to nuclear technology, way back, and it was his foresight that he rightly implemented when he came to power. But the United States, at every point, tried to hold back the

country's initiatives, practicing every possible means, from inducing by selling around 120 aircraft to Pakistan or even by pressurising France and others to contain the country from nuclear enrichment for peaceful purposes. Further, the ongoing successes that Pakistan was achieving after all the restrictions and repression techniques became a point of concern for the American policymakers.¹¹ Mr. Z. A. Bhutto's neutral but aggressive foreign policy was becoming unbeatable, and the country was managing to gain further enrichment. Moreover, the situation got so much worse that the US and its allies did not even give Pakistan non-nuclear components. At such a point, the US approach toward Pakistan was unveiled. The sense of anti-Americanism arose within the country. Mr. Z. A. Bhutto had strategically calculated and formulated his aggressive foreign policy, where he did not subject Pakistan's integrity and sovereignty to anyone. Even though Pakistan was going through its recovery process. He turned foreign policy into a new paradigm. However, the policy was not working on the past principles of any mutual defense pacts or dependent economic agreements, which had usually been seen under the previous regimes. It was mainly focusing on an independence and self-reliance systematic approach. Furthermore, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in his era at that time had understood the strategic importance of the country, and he knew how to exploit the US administration and unleash the country from the dependency position. Thus, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto directed and formulated an aggressive foreign policy in a manner that was not subject to the greater powers.

Moreover, when Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto came to power, he faced a dreadful task in the national socio-economic to international arena. His priority was his people. Hence, for his

countrymen he took a step through Simla Agreement with India after the debacle of East Pakistan to save the prisoners of wars without any horrific trial and to get back the country's occupied territories of Sindh and the Punjab he opted for a mixture of aggressive and conciliatory foreign policy at that moment and recognized the former East -Pakistan as Bangladesh and handled the vulnerable situation.¹² Though opting for certain traits, peacemaking foreign policy was not surrender. It was Z.A. Bhutto's vigilant sight to turn the tables and play his cards; the way he wanted to play. The language which was used in the agreement was quite neutral, with the consent of both the leaders, and tactfully framed, which on the face showed the commitment to normalisation of the country's relation with its neighbour; on the other his approach was brilliant towards the agreement without any other compromise. In such devastating socio-economic conditions of the country, he got India onto the peaceful path to resolve all the conflicts through bilateral negotiations. But after returning home, his foreign policy changed 360 degrees towards an aggressive foreign policy, and he started to rigorously work for economic recovery, which further paved the way for scientific advancement and nuclear enrichment.

Conclusion

Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's unique approach and ideology brought the country's sovereignty and dignity back. Due to his policies, the country witnessed a speedy economic recovery. His foreign policy analysis reflects his outgoing attitude, rational approach, and foresight. He was a man of substance who used his well-versed legal and political knowledge and brought reforms

that gave Pakistan an identity, respect, and pivotal position in the international political arena. The separation of East Pakistan in 1971 has been and remains one of the defining problems of statehood in Pakistan. It broke the country's intricate political fabric and severely weakened its economy, demanding a comprehensive restructuring of the country's foreign relations. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto connected his strategic reasoning and captivating leadership skills to advance international relations, first towards China and then to Muslim countries, in a more favourable direction.¹³ It is no surprise that his policies were accompanied by sober consideration of geopolitical context and broad ambitions, merging the ideas of national self-interest, Islamic unity, defense forces, and deterrence. His policies enabled Pakistan not only to recover from the defeat's embarrassment, but also to project resilience and assertiveness, fighting to reshape its identity in the modern world. Such actions were made possible by the implementation of the Islamic Summit alongside accelerating the country's nuclear program and skillfully negotiating the Simla Agreement. Therefore, certain international challenges repeatedly reflected underlying domestic policy issues, making them extremely layered and complex.

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