The foreign policy of United States towards South Asia during the time of cold war

(The Work of Arts)

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Abstract

(This research paper is a modest effort to highlight the foreign policy of the United States towards south Asia and its nearby regions during the time of cold war. This research paper is also attempting to show the real motive of super powers in this region & what strategies they employed to achieve their goals.)

Key words: *South Asia, cold war, Indian Ocean, Soviet Union, United States, Great game, Middle East.*

Introduction

Involvement of United States in the region of South Asia has fluctuated, depending upon its intensity and style of competition with other great powers at the global level. In reality, South Asia is an area about which Americans knew little, where they have few interests, and which is always low on the scale of the United States priorities.[1] The United States did not become an imperialist nation in South Asia, but it replaced Britain as the principal Western power of the region and watched with interest as the British played the "Great Game" against Russia, trying to block czarist expansion through the Khyber Pass into South Asia. The United States strategic interests and perspective regarding South Asia, from the very beginning, were strongly influenced by the British who wanted the United States to assume the role of a successor

hegemon in the area but also sought to guide the United States to lead the world and control the strategic zones. Olaf Caroe, the well-known British strategist, admitted that the British advised the United States about the protection of Western interests in the pension Gulf and South Asia.[2] In fact, the United States is not an Asian power and it has no common borders with the countries of South Asia and has no territorial interest in the region. South Asia is not even a major trading partner of the United States and its investment in the area is negligible.[3] The principal determinant of United States foreign policy towards South Asia has been the United States perception of the region's relevance to the pursuit of its global geopolitical and strategic goals. Moreover, the foreign policy of the United States in South Asia has been shaped not so much with reference to the interests of the states of the region but based on United States interests vs. Soviet Union and China. Therefore, the major American interest was to prevent the absorption of the area into the communist orbit. The early thrust was against advancing communism in general; and later, the emphasis was confined to Soviet expansionism after the china and United States rapprochement.

The political involvement of the United States in the region is a relatively recent phenomenon. It started only after Second World War, from which the United States emerged as a leading world power. Before that time, there had been only limited commercial and cultural links dating back to the 19th century. The American Tobacco Company engaged in tobacco trade with the South Asian states, and a number of American archaeologists, anthropologists, students of ancient history, educators and missionaries were attracted by the region's unique cultural, religious and historical aspects.[4] These socio-cultural, religious and academic groups were the main contacts between the United States and South Asia in the early modern period. The end of

the British rule over the world, especially the withdrawal from Afghanistan to East of Suez brought the United States into the region to help its embattled ally, Great Britain, and the area ceased to be European sphere of influence.[5] Their eclipse marked a corresponding rise in status for the United States and the Soviet Union and materialization of a bipolar global power configuration. The combination of the region's natural resources including Gulf oil and its strategic geopolitical position put it squarely in the middle of the ideological political struggle between East and West.

Conclusion

The foreign policy of United States towards South Asia was basically confused, inconsistent and reactive rather than calculated, long term, and innovative due, to internal American factors, including periodic changes in administrations. The factors of oil and Zionist nationalism which involve the United States in the Middle East had no corollary in South Asia. In fact, the absence of material interest has helped to limit American involvement in the region and it has been determined largely by factors extraneous to the area. Moreover, the United States had been guided in its South Asian policy by its global interests and has therefore tended to view regional conflicts largely from a global perspective. Thus, it is also clear that most of the United States actions and reactions were congruent with global considerations; the periodic modification of United States regional policy to suit its global pursuits appeared to local states as a confused policy, lacking clarity and coherence in its declaratory and operational dimensions.

References:

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