

Pakistan's Foreign Policy Motivations in Sending Troops Abroad

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Tughral Yamin¹

Abstract

Ever since the establishment of the United Nations Organization (UNO), international community has resorted to peacekeeping operations to bring about peace in global conflict zones. The UN does not have a standing army and therefore it relies on troop contributions from member states for peacekeeping operations. Pakistan has been sending its troops abroad to participate in UN peacekeeping operations since 1960. The decisions to undertake such dangerous assignments are influenced *inter alia* by factors such as nation's foreign policy, availability of troops, security concerns, public opinion and the sense of fulfilling international obligations. Arguably, foreign policy motivations in most cases dominate the Pakistani state's decision to send its soldiers abroad. The underlying strategic decision making process remains the preserve of the official bureaucracy, both civilian and military. Decision making is easy for military governments; difficult in times of weak political governments and an assertive military; and long winded and chaotic when the matter is referred to the parliament. This paper promulgates Pakistan's foreign policy motivations for providing troops for overseas deployments and reinforces the thesis that states like Pakistan lend their forces for international ventures, when they foresee clear cut strategic advantages.

Keywords

Pakistan, foreign policy motivations, force deployments overseas

¹Tughral Yamin Ph.D. is Associate Dean at the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan.

E-mail: adeancips@nipcons.nust.edu.pk

Why Peacekeeping?

International peace and stability is one of the foremost goals enshrined in the UN Charter. Peacekeeping is one way of fulfilling this mandate. Traditionally, the UN requisitions multinational troops for international peacekeeping operations from member states because it does not have a standing army of its own. The idea of a permanent UN force has a long history. Article 43 of the Charter was intended to provide the constitutional authority for standing forces at the disposal of the UN Security Council (UNSC) to protect international peace and security (Woodhouse, 2010). Till the time that UN does not have an army of its own, member states make available to the UNSC troops for peacekeeping in international trouble spots (A United Nations Standing Army). Currently, there are more than 97,000 UN uniformed personnel, soldiers and police, from over 110 countries are serving as peacekeepers. Typically, UN peacekeepers monitor disputed borders and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas; provide security across a conflict zone; protect civilians; assist in-country military personnel with training and support; and assist ex-combatants in implementing peace agreements that they are party to.

Peacekeeping operations in conflict zones began soon after the world body was established at the end of the Second World War. The first peacekeepers were sent to Palestine in 1948 to keep the warring parties apart and to monitor the truce (UNTSO). Pakistan's engagement with UN peacekeeping began in 1949 (Malik, 2013), when the UN Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was first deployed in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) to supervise the ceasefire between India and Pakistan (Wirsing, 2003). Peacekeeping has since then evolved from simply observing ceasefire violations to active enforcement of the peace, sometimes under the new concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) (Annan, 2012).

A number of actors are involved in the business of peacekeeping. Raising troops for the mission requires considerable 'behind the scene' negotiations for obtaining four kinds of political consents i.e., for the mission, for the mandate, for the force commander, and for the troops to be deployed (Rubenstein, 2008). The warring parties in the conflict zone (Annan, 2012), the countries providing troops and those funds for the operations, and the UN machinery in New York have to be on board. Once the UN is convinced that peacekeepers are needed to prevent a humanitarian

crisis, the UNSC passes a resolution to that effect. A demand for peacekeepers is floated and member states opt for missions that they consider suitable for their forces. Sometimes the host nation may actually refuse peacekeepers from a certain country or a region. An important question is: what motivates the member states to offer their troops for peacekeeping missions?

Peacekeeping as ‘Humanistic’ Approach

Clearly, UN peacekeeping is different from defending one’s own country. A soldier’s basic training differs from his job description as a peacekeeper, wherein he or she has to carry out policing duties, and act as a “negotiator, intelligence gatherer, mediator, observer, listener, humanitarian worker, helper, and social worker” (Jelusic, 2004, p.35). As the nature of peacekeeping has evolved over the years, the peacekeeper is no longer a silent observer in the conflict zone. A peacekeeper is now more actively involved in keeping the lid on the conflict. The emphasis now is to protect civilians by establishing ‘robust’ peacekeeping missions with explicit protection mandates. This transformation can be pegged to the UNSC Resolution 1270 adopted in 1999 to provide the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with an explicit mandate to protect civilians. Since then, peacekeepers have been regularly tasked to protect civilians from physical harm (Hultman, 2014).

It follows therefore, that the blue helmeted soldier now needs higher motivation to kill or get killed in order to save lives of civilians in a conflict that may have no alignment with his/her country’s national policies (Blocq, 2009). The motivation to serve on UN missions differs from country to country. Quite naturally given the differences in culture and ethos, an Asian soldier may perceive a UN mission in a completely dissimilar manner as compared to a European (Hedlund, 2011). A study identified eight kinds of motivations for soldiers forming part of the Norwegian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan. These include adventure and excitement, acquiring experience, improving career prospects, economic benefits, fulfilling professional commitments, sense of comradeship, feeling of achievement and the elation in doing something good to others (Stabell, 2012). For the German soldiers it is about comradeship, good salary and an endurable length of deployment as worthwhile motivations. The Germans with little exposure to actual war fighting consider a UN deployment as a peacekeeper a ‘rite of passage’ to become a ‘real soldier’. Younger

soldiers from Slovenia find this an international recognition for their small country. For the Italians it is adventure, economic reward and a sense of doing something important in life. The Swedish conscript soldier considers this an opportunity to seek adventure and do something worthwhile in life (Hedlund, 2011). For a number of those opting for UN mission there is always the personal incentive of getting a better pay package, while serving overseas (Malik, 2013). In a random survey conducted by the author none of the veteran Pakistani peacekeepers cited pay as the top motivation. The uppermost choices were sense of duty, loyalty to the country and serving humanity. Only one of them cited a good pay package as an incentive and that too as the least likely temptation.

Ideological appeal has often been used to motivate soldiers for expeditionary missions. During the Middle Ages, Pope Urban II raised a European force to liberate the holy land by launching a series of Crusades. He appealed to the Christian kings to join forces for this noble cause. The Crusades were fought intermittently from 1095 CE through the next two centuries (Asbridge, 2010). During the nineteenth century, Napoleon Bonaparte's Grande Armée (1805-1809) held a transnational appeal for soldiers of multiple nationalities. Among the rank and file were fifty thousand Austrians, Prussians and Germans. 20,000 were Poles, and just thirty five thousand Frenchmen (Zamoyski, 2004). The soldiery was attracted because of better pay prospects and greater share in the war booty that seemed assured in the wake of Napoleon's exorable victory march. Quite naturally these men were motivated by personal gains rather national or ideological inspirations.

In the colonial era, soldiers from the Indian subcontinent served the King Emperor and British crown in distant lands. In the First World War alone, India (including areas that are now part of Pakistan) provided 1.27 million men, effectively one tenth of the entire British war effort. The French also made use of 450,000 troops from their African colonies (Koller, 2014). Many of the Muslim soldiers from Asia and Africa actually fought against the Ottoman Turks, who were their co-religionists, in the Middle East (Fawaz, 2015). During the Great War Gandhi, later the icon of non-violence was in the forefront to recruit Indians to fight for Britain. His effort was largely to bolster the cause of Indian independence (Ghosh, 2013). 75,000 Indian soldiers died in action in various theatres of war. The supreme sacrifice to support the allied effort was made in the hope that it would provide the Indians with a bargaining tool to achieve greater autonomy or self-governance after the War. Unfortunately, the colonial masters treated them as ready and willing cannon fodder and gave few concessions, to

their Indian subjects after the War. This betrayal added impetus for the demand of independence (Khuhro, 2015). The elusive dream for independence would only be fulfilled after the Second World War, when Britain was no longer in a position to hold on to its foreign colonies (Pierce, 2009).

In the post-colonial era it is difficult to justify such devotion for a foreign cause. Those in favor, invoke genuine national interests and foreign policy gains to explain international interventions outside the physical scope of national defense (Williams, 2013). Arguably, a country willingly to send its military for foreign missions that do not correspond to its national aims and objectives risks being labeled a mercenary nation (Chaudhry, 2014). Some countries have learnt bitter lessons from their militarist past and are extremely cautious of foreign deployments. In modern times, two countries with strong pacific sentiments are Germany and Japan. At times their restricted military presence was a requirement that was imposed on them by the victors e.g. for ten years after the Second World War, Germany was not allowed to have an Army. The Bundeswehr or the Federal Army was created in 1955, when NATO wanted reinforcements during the Cold War. German soldiers were deployed abroad for the first time after Second World War in January 1996 (Lantis, 2002). They first established a military hospital in the Croatian port of Split. This was followed by the active deployment of combat troops in Kosovo (Borger, 2012). German soldiers have more recently participated in the NATO led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Article 9 of the Japan's post-World War II constitution outlawed war as a means of settling international disputes. This self-imposed restriction has been reinterpreted by the lawmakers to allow the Japanese Self-Defence Forces, to defend its allies in a limited role in conflicts abroad (Ripley, 2015). There has been a lot of internal opposition to this reinterpretation of the Japanese constitution (Gilsinan, 2015).

Usually countries signing up for a UN peacekeeping mission do it for the sake of winning respect and credibility. Sometimes it is a matter of regional politics e.g., Koreans compare themselves with the Japanese and the Chinese, when it comes to calculating their peacekeeping contribution (Ko, 2015). For smaller nations, this is their chance to play a meaningful role in the big league international politics. They willingly contribute troops for UN deployments because richer nations would rather fund such an enterprise instead of sending their own

troops (Monitor, 2013). A thin veneer covers the hard fact that UN forces are only sent, where the UN Security Council (UNSC) with the five powerful permanent members permit them to go. Syria is a classic example of international neglect and apathy to a bloody conflict that has no end in sight and which has triggered a mass international exodus. A UN peacekeeping mission comprising unarmed observers under a Norwegian General was set up in Syria, but did not last longer than a few months (Smith, 2012). A meaningful deployment in Syria would probably require the consent of both USA and the Russian Federation. International acceptance, notwithstanding, whenever a country put its soldiers in harm's way, it takes a calculated risk. This requires serious cost and benefit analysis. In some cases factors such as security, trade and prestige outweigh the others (Gegout, 2009). It also provides soldiers from rival countries like Pakistan and India, the rare opportunity to work together on foreign soil (Sidhu, 2016).

Pakistan's Contribution as Peacekeepers

Pakistan to date remains one of the largest troop contributing countries in the world (Peacekeeping, 2015), and it has paid dearly in terms of human lives. It has so far lost 150 soldiers. This roughly comes to about 10% of troops sent abroad under the UN mandate (PR236/2012-ISP, 2012). 25 of these men lost their lives on one single day on June 5, 1993 in Mogadishu, Somalia (UN, 2015). There have also been instances of peacekeepers being made hostage in a conflict zone (Mogato, 2015). Human losses on missions that are actually not in the defense of the homeland are difficult to justify. However, there are no known reports of relatives of Pakistani soldiers complaining about deaths in foreign lands. There can be a number of reasons for such stoic attitude. First and foremost, in our country there is an element of fatalism in accepting God's will. Secondly, the effect of the tragedy is often softened by the hefty UN compensation and the army pension; and last but not the least, the feeling that the soldier is duty bound under the official oath to go, wherever his country tells him to go by land, air, or sea, 'even to the peril of his life.' (The Pakistan Army Act, 1952).¹

At the policymaking level, a range of motivations is discernible in case of Pakistan with regards to overseas military deployments. The decision to commit troops abroad is not always an easy choice. Pakistan has been under a lot of pressure from various quarters

¹ See: The Pakistan Army Act 1952, <http://pja.gov.pk/system/files/Army%20Act%201952.pdf>

including the US to become part of the international military coalition against so-called Islamic State (IS) or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), but it has been managing to steer away from this crisis in the Middle East (Gishkori, 2015). It even withstood the exhortation of its long time benefactor Saudi Arabia in this regard (Yousaf, 2015). The Saudis were more stringent in making demands on the Pakistanis to join the fight against the Houthi insurgents in Yemen (Khan, 2015). They were so certain that Pakistan would sign up as a partner that they displayed the Pakistani flag in the initial press briefings by their military spokesman (Baabar, 2015). The domestic public opinion was against such an involvement. The advice from the Pakistani ambassador on ground (interview with Mr. Shami, Pakistan's ambassador to Yemen at the time of the Houthi uprising, April 15th, 2015), the public sentiment, and the parliamentary decision combined forced the government to opt for neutrality (Hussain, 2015). One former foreign minister has stressed that 'impartiality in the inter-Arab disputes' has been the cardinal principle of Pakistan's foreign policy (Kasuri, 2015).

The purpose of this paper is to examine what motivates the policy planners in Pakistan to send its forces abroad and why in certain cases they are reluctant to do so. It further aims to find out if there is a consistent pattern to this thinking process.

Foreign Policy Motivations

Pakistan at the time of its independence was embroiled in a number of teething problems. Not only did the new state lack essential resources and institutions to run the new country, it was swamped by millions of refugees pouring in from India and it was simultaneously being sucked into a war in Kashmir. The Army was in disarray. It needed to be re-organized into new all Muslim units (Arif, 2010). It was woefully short of senior leadership and the arms and equipment that was its due under the terms of the division of assets had been blatantly denied by India (Rizvi, 1969).

Under the pioneering spirit that became the hallmark of the newly independent nation, Pakistan was able to overcome these initial hurdles with a great deal of resourcefulness and aplomb. New institutions and organizations were created literally from a scratch and the existing ones were reorganized as best as they could be under the circumstances. The armed forces of Pakistan, as an organization, was quickly able to find its feet and became a first rate military force in a

very short course of time. So much so that the first time that the young state of Pakistan was tempted to send its troops abroad under the UN flag during the Korean War (1950-53) just a few years after independence. The US had sugar coated the deal by promising to equip a brigade size force with weapons, in case Pakistan became part of the US led UN forces against the North Koreans (Burke, 1973; Amin, 2011). Pakistani leadership decided against becoming involved in the Korean War because they were not able to garner enough security guarantees against arch rival India during the overseas deployment of its troops. India incidentally sent an airborne ambulance unit to participate in the Korean War (Muthiah, 2006). Despite Pakistan's non-participation in the Korean War, it drew close to the US. Both Pakistan and the US found their legitimate security concerns and foreign policy objectives converging at the onset of the Cold War. US wanted an ally in the region to shore up its containment policy against international communist forces and Pakistan wanted to be part of an alliance system to balance the Indian threat (Haqqani, 2015).

American military aid to Pakistan formally began in 1954 (Chhabra, 2011). Pakistan subsequently joined the Baghdad Pact (renamed Central Treaty Organization/CENTO) in 1958 and South East Asian Treaty Organization SEATO (Khan, 1964). Pakistan sent its first peacekeepers to the Congo in 1960 (Findley, 2002). It is ironic indeed that Pakistani troops are still being sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as blue helmets (Nations, 1996). The motivation to send troops in the early days was due to an urge to be counted as a mature and responsible state, one that was willing to pay heed to the call of the international community. In October 1962, Pakistan sent 1500 soldiers as part of the UN Security Force to West Guinea/West Irian (Lall, 1964). This territory was under Dutch control and its fate had remained unresolved after the independence of Indonesia in 1949. India was earlier earmarked for this duty, but Indonesia preferred Pakistan (Wicaksana, 2013). This was the first instance for preference of Pakistani troops by a host country.

Pakistani soldiers have proven themselves trustworthy and dependable in overseas deployments. In 1966, in an abortive assassination attempt, the Sultan of Muscat and Oman was saved by the Pakistani commandant of the Dhufar Gendarme (Peterson, 2004). Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Sakhi Raja, on loan from Pakistan Army was grievously injured, in gunshot wounds caused by a native staff sergeant. A Pakistani second lieutenant died in the failed attack (Reporter, 1966). Brigadier Zia ul Haq (later Chief of Staff Pakistan Army and President), in his capacity as the military adviser to the king

of Jordan, was instrumental in crushing the PLO inspired Black September (1970-71) movement in Jordan (Daudpota, 2013; Ali, 2014).

In times to come, Pakistani soldiers would often be the first choice for UN missions on the basis of their high quality professionalism and demonstrated track record. In the 1990s, it was actually the Pentagon that suggested that Pakistan be included in the peacekeeping mission to Somalia. The participation in the UN mission in Somalia saved Pakistan from being included in US State Department's list of states sponsoring terrorism (Nasr, 2014). Pakistan at that time was isolated in the international community because of the alleged nuclear proliferation activities of A.Q. Khan. The decision of the government of Pakistan not to abandon the UN operations in Somalia after it lost 25 peacekeepers on a single day, confirmed its credentials as a dependable nation. Pakistan's participation in the peacekeeping missions from then on expanded in a big way and helped it get rid of the pariah tag.

Pakistan has been very careful in employing its forces outside its borders and does so only when it suits its legitimate national interests. For many years Pakistani trainers and Special Forces were involved in training the Sri Lankan forces to defeat the Tamil insurgents (Sharma, 2011). Sri Lanka has been a vital communication link for Pakistan during the civil war in East Pakistan in 1971. Pakistan needed its influence in the island state after the intervention of the Indian peacekeeping forces (IPKF) from 1987-1990 (Bullion, 1994). This it did by supplying the Sri Lankan military with much needed arms, ammunition and military training.

Ever since its inception, Pakistan followed a policy of friendly relations with fellow Muslim countries. In line with this policy, it signed a number of defence cooperation protocols with several Muslim countries such as Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan and Libya and played a leading role in training their armed force (Kasuri, 2015). Since the 1960s, Pakistani soldiers have been routinely deployed in these countries as trainers, advisers, planners, experts, logisticians and as combat troops. Arab countries needed military training as they began to come of age and they had the money to pay for services rendered. It was within this happy framework of friendship and cooperation that Pakistani soldiers, advisers, trainers and support personnel helped build the Arab militaries as these. Officers from Arab nations were trained in Pakistani military academies to prepare a crop of future leadership. An armored brigade was deployed in the northern Saudi city of Tabuk

during the 1980s (Amin, 2000). Its purpose was to keep a check on the external threat from Israel and to act as a deterrent against internal dissent and avoid the repeat of the 1979 incident. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the Saudis did not want Pakistani Shiite soldiers to serve in the kingdom. There was a strong resentment against such a condition within the army and Government of Pakistan had to prevail upon the Saudi authorities to accept soldiers irrespective of the person's sect (Waheed, 2011). Under the bilateral 1982 Protocol, combined military exercises have become a periodic fixture. From 2004 there have been a series of Al-Samsaam (sharp sword) joint military exercises (Hyder, 2015). In 1968, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, asked President Ayub Khan for assistance in training defense personnel to take over command when British officers left. The first five Air Chiefs were from Pakistan. Defense cooperation with Kuwait began in 1968, with Bahrain in 1971, and formalized with Qatar in the early 1980s (Hyder, 2015). Under the terms of Agreement to buy Gwadar from Oman in 1958, Oman Army was allowed to recruit Baloch soldiers. It still carries out regular recruitment drives in Baluchistan for this purpose (Baloch, 2014).

In the 1973 Arab-Israel War, Pakistani fighter pilots volunteered to take part in combat mission out of a sense of duty to side with their Muslim brothers in their time of need. They flew Syrian jet fighters and actually shot down Israeli airplanes in aerial combat (Alvi, 2015). In the 1979 occupation of the Holy Kaaba, there are reports suggesting that Pakistani Special Forces were deployed to clear the Grand Mosque from the occupiers (Mandaville, 2007). There is apocryphal evidence of the Saudi defense minister Prince Sultan desperately exhorting his soldiers to defend the House of God or else he would 'bring in Pakistanis' to fight in their place (Trofimov, 2007). Pakistanis have been involved in Middle East fighting even before the Arab Israel war. In the first Gulf War in 1991, Pakistan sent its troops to Saudi Arabia to participate in Operation Desert Storm but refrained from actual combat. General Aslam Beg called it strategic defiance (Naseem, 2007). In distancing himself from the policy of his prime minister, Gen Beg earned the ire of the Saudis (Amin, 2011). His independent policy brought to the fore the fact that the military leadership was not always on the same page as the political leadership. At that time, Nawaz Sharif was the prime minister and was the one who had sent the forces to KSA. This was not the first time that Nawaz Sharif and his military commander would not trust each other on a major decision involving the deployment of troops.

The chink in the civil-military relations would become clearly visible during the Kargil conflict in 1998 (Aziz, 2009). Pakistan was conspicuously involved in supporting the Jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Pakistan was under an existential threat and it started providing aid to the Afghans even before the US stepped in with their huge resources in money and arms. With the dedicated support of Pakistani planners, advisors and trainers and the material help of the US, the Mujahidin were able to defeat the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Yousaf, 2001). The defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan was a major turning point in contemporary history. The US achieved its strategic aim to destroy the Soviet Union but failed to stop the storm that would blow over once they left Afghanistan without ensuring that peace and stability returned to this troubled nation. Pakistan would suffer grievously because of this faulty policy and the US itself would come under attack by Al Qaeda operatives being provided refuge by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has avoided contributing troops to missions, where the public opinion did not support it e.g., it did become part of the war in Iraq that was hugely unpopular at home (Malik, 2013). However, Pakistan resisted Western pressure to send forces to Iraq after the US invasion of that country in March 2003 (Rizvi, 2006). It again avoided becoming part of the forces fighting the IS/ISIS in Syria and Iraq and specified that it would only support multilateral action authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Alexandrova, 2015). The most prominent case of Pakistan actually declining to come to the help of long-time friend and ally Saudi Arabia happened, when the Saudis demanded aircraft, ships and boots on ground against the Houthis (Hourel, 2015). Opinion was divided at home about getting involved in the conflict in Yemen. Caution was advised by the fiercely independent media and politicians echoed the popular sentiment by suggesting recourse to the parliament or an all parties' conference to obtain a consensus on such an important national decision. There were worries about the unending insurgency at home and the possibility of becoming entangled in a Shi'ite-Sunni conflict, which was definitely not in Pakistan's best interests. There was a great deal of support from the religious lobby, who promised to protect the holy places if the army was not sent to Saudi Arab (Reporter, 2015). This in any case was taken as rhetoric by a clergy that receives its funding from KSA and sundry Gulf states.

Table 1: Pakistani Motivations for Foreign Military Deployments

| Year | Foreign War /Conflict | Pakistan's Decision | Foreign Policy Objective | Remarks |
|------|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1950 | Korean War | Not to send troops | No security guarantee against India | Pakistan sent consignment of wheat grain to show solidarity with the UN forces |
| 1991 | Gulf War I | Forces sent but did not participate in combat action | The Army Chief wanted to show strategic defiance against the US led Operation Desert Storm | Civil and military leadership not on the same page |
| 1992 | UN Mission to Somalia | Participate in the mission | To come out of the international isolation and become part of the world community | Pakistan able to re-connect with the rest of the world |
| 2015 | Houthi Rebellion in Yemen | Remain neutral. Not become part of the Arab coalition against the Houthis. | The conflict did not concern Pakistan | Saudi Arabia annoyed. Pakistan tries to make amends |

The resolution passed by the parliament to remain neutral unless the holy sites were threatened did not go down well with the Arabs and the Pakistani leadership felt the heat of their displeasure. Pakistan is deeply indebted to the desert kingdom for its largesse in bailing it out in difficult economic times. The prime minister himself is in gratitude to the ruling family for the refuge they granted him during his time in the political wilderness. The nation and the political leadership were weighed down by the moral obligation to respond to the Saudi request. Saudi Arabia wanted fellow Sunni-majority Pakistan to provide ships, aircraft and troops for the campaign to counter the Shiite Iran sponsored Houthi rebellion in Yemen. The matter was referred to the national assembly. After a five day debate the parliament decided not to send troops and expressed the desire to maintain neutrality so as to be able to play a proactive diplomatic role to end the crisis (Mukashaf, 2015). The only exception to Pakistan's involvement in conflict, the parliament insisted, should be in case the two holy places in Saudi Arabia were threatened. The Saudis were not pleased by the decision of

the Pakistani parliament. The prime minister wanted to make amends. He flew into Saudi Arabia with his military brass to take stock of the situation. He then instructed his naval chief to enforce the naval arms embargo on the Houthis, under the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) passed 14-0 in April 2015, calling for such an action (Syed, 2015). From the chart, it is clear that four factors have been foremost in influencing the thought processes of the Pakistani decision makers in deciding to send the troops for foreign deployments. These are: national interest, security concerns, public opinion, and international recognition. One or more of these factors were influential in arriving at a decision.

Another aspect that cannot be ignored is the nature and the character of the leadership. It has always been easy for governments during military rule to make such decisions quickly. It has always been convenient for a Chief of the Army, in his capacity as the president of the country, to decide on security related matters on the basis of his operational knowledge and his personal assessment of the worldview. The international actors wanting Pakistan to contribute troops have also found it convenient to engage with the generals rather than the politicians. Once the army is in favor of a deployment, the civilian leadership usually goes along. One notable exception of the decision makers being decisively divided was in case of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and General Aslam Beg on the subject of the Gulf War. The two were not on the same page on taking part in operation Desert Storm in 1991.

This was not the case, when the Saudis demanded that Pakistani troops be sent to fight the Houthi tribal militias in Yemen. This time around both the civil and military leadership had the same opinion. It was strongly felt that there was no meaningful foreign policy advantage in sending troops to Yemen and in fact such an enterprise could become a liability in the future. The Saudis were not amused. They had been bailing Pakistan out from tricky situations by injecting much needed cash into its economy and providing oil on deferred payment when it was sanctioned after the nuclear explosion or when the third time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif found the treasury empty. The Prime Minister also had a personal debt to repay for being granted refuge by the Saudi monarchy after he was removed from power by General Pervez Musharraf in 1999. The UAE foreign minister Ahmed Gargash hurled an innuendo, warning Pakistan that it would be suitably penalized for its ambiguous stand (Haider, 2015).

There are nearly two million Pakistanis living in Saudi Arabia, who alone contribute \$4.73 billion in foreign remittances for the financial year 2014 (Shakil, 2015). A lot of remittances flow in from the Gulf countries. According to conservative estimates, in 2015 the volume of monies sent back from abroad crossed the \$15 billion mark (Sherani, 2015). The Government of Pakistan realized that they had to placate the Arabs so as not to be deprived of the foreign exchange earnings through the expatriates. The leadership both political and military, therefore, made emergency visits to the Kingdom to reiterate Pakistan's fealty. Once the UNSC applied the arms embargo on the Houthis, the Prime Minister immediately ordered Pakistan Navy to join the embargo enforcing forces (Hussain, 2015).

Conclusion

This is not the first or last time that Pakistan has been asked to contribute troops for a foreign mission. Decision making in these matters is likely to vary from case to case. Theoretically, the mechanism to deal with such requests is well laid out. In case of UN deployments, the standard operating procedures have over the years been streamlined. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) sends the demands for requisitioning of troops to the permanent representative at the UN in New York. The envoy in New York, usually a top diplomat, is aware that such kind of request is in the pipeline and seeks prior advice from the Foreign Office (FO). A formal request on receipt is routed through the FO to the GHQ in Rawalpindi. The case for UN deployments is handled by the Military Operations (MO) Directorate, GHQ. Depending on the size and scope of the deployment a chain of actions is initiated, once the demand is acceded to. Troops are earmarked and equipment set aside for UN deployment. Pre-deployment training is carried out locally and the troops are moved by air or sea as per the requirement of the UN. In case of police personnel, the request is sent to the Ministry of Interior. At times the FO is not satisfied with the merits of the case e.g., they were not very keen to accede to the troop request for the AU-UN hybrid mission in Darfur in 2007 because Pakistan did not want to spoil its good relations with Sudan, a friendly Muslim country and a fellow member within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Ultimately, the troops were sent in face of strong international urging. Parliament was not involved in this decision making process. In fact such decisions are rarely routed through the parliament. The two prominent exceptions, where parliamentary debate took place were in

case of Somalia, after the deaths of our soldiers and in case of Iraq, after the US invasion (Malik, 2013).

Spontaneous requests outside the established norms of international peacekeeping are examined on merit. Naturally, clear policy guidelines are needed from the political leadership to respond to such requests by civil and military staffs. These are fleeting opportunities but require in-depth analysis and an unambiguous response. Sometimes it is in the interest of the nation to offer troops unilaterally, but such occasions are remote. The Government of Pakistan has various forums to obtain inputs for such decisions, such as the Cabinet Committee on National Security, the parliament, the parliamentary committees on defense related matters, all parties' conference, and a council of eminent people like veteran statesmen, diplomats and generals. If time permits the opinion of the common citizens can also be obtained through online opinion polls. No matter what is the nature of the advice received from various quarters, the ultimate decision is that of the prime minister. At the end of the day, it is the national interests that count before troops are sent abroad.

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