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INTRODUCTION

India-Pakistan relations may be described as “one long war”, waged almost continuously ever since their independence. Since their emergence as independent states from the detritus of the British Indian empire, the relationship between India and Pakistan has witnessed unceasing hostility, suspicion and rivalry, resulting in four major armed conflicts between the two. In 1947-48, almost immediately after their independence, they entered into a long battle over the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1965, armed clashes broke out between the Indian and Pakistani forces at Rann of Kutch. It was a prelude to a broader conflict few months later, which was again fought in Jammu and Kashmir. In 1971, India was forced by circumstances to intervene in a civil war like situation in East Pakistan that led to yet another round of Indo-Pakistan war and ended with the creation of a new state of Bangladesh. The Indian and Pakistani forces fought once again in 1999, in the mountains of Kashmir at Kargil. In addition to these wars, the two countries have intermittently endured crises and confrontations that sometimes brought them close to war. Most notable was the 2002 crisis, which almost brought both the countries to fight another war. Even after the dawn of the new millennium, despite recurrent attempts at rapprochement, the two countries remain entangled in seemingly unending rivalry.

The United States policy towards these conflicts fluctuated and varied depending upon its national interest, Cold War dynamics, prevailing geo-strategic considerations, and the existing bilateral relationships of New Delhi and Islamabad with Washington. In the post-Cold War era, the altered international security scenario and the nuclear factor influenced the American policy towards the India-Pakistan rivalry. Similarly, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the issue of international terrorism has been a
major determinant in the American foreign policy towards South Asia. The US-led global war against international terrorism and Islamic extremism, the fearful prospect of India-Pakistan nuclear war and above all, the changing equations between the US and India, and the US and Pakistan have led to a distinct shift in the American approach to the India-Pakistan hostilities. The shift is significant in the sense that the US policy response has become more balanced, neutral and pragmatic than ever before. According to some scholars this has helped in the transformation of India-Pakistan relationship towards a better path of accommodation and peaceful co-existence.

Before India and Pakistan could settle down to their independence, they became locked in a military and diplomatic confrontation over the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is, in Dennis Kux’s words, “the unfinished business of partition.”¹ Unlike most other Princely rulers, the ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh chose to accede neither to India nor to Pakistan under Mountbatten’s partition plan. Hari Singh wanted to establish an independent Kashmir, an aspiration that turned out to be short-lived. With chaotic condition prevailing in many parts of Kashmir and Hari Singh’s control over the situation rapidly crumbling, hordes of Pathan tribesmen from Pakistan with apparent support of their government invaded Kashmir on 22 October 1947. They easily overwhelmed the ill-equipped militia of Hari Singh. As they threatened to capture Srinagar, Hari Singh called for India’s military assistance and acceded the State into India on 26 October 1947. Soon the Indian troops were airlifted to Kashmir, who successfully resisted the

advancing tribal militia. As the conflict aggravated Pakistan sent its regular troops leading to the first Indo-Pak war over Kashmir.

As soon as fighting broke out, Washington avoided any direct involvement in the war but imposed arms embargo on both the contending parties. Preoccupied with more pressing matters arising out of the Cold War, Harry S. President Truman devoted relatively inadequate attention to what seemed initially a “mere legal controversy” in one of the world's most remote areas.² The US was also apprehensive that its direct involvement in the conflict might attract undesirable Soviet attention to it, making any solution more difficult. The US, however, cooperated with the British when the Kashmir issue came before the United Nations Security Council. Both Washington and London agreed that there was but one realistic solution to the conflict: a cease-fire and a free and fair plebiscite under the UN supervision. Though the Truman Administration initially avoided playing an overt role in the settlement of the conflict, it gradually realized that it could no longer avoid deeper involvement in the state of affairs. Finally, on 1 January 1949, the war in Kashmir came to an end, and a cease-fire was declared. The activism and commitment by the Truman Administration to Kashmir settlement ultimately played a vital role in bringing to an end the first Indo-Pakistan armed conflict. Washington took more or less a neutral stand and the American position during the entire period of fighting in Kashmir right up to the cease-fire, cannot be described as tilting in favour of either India or Pakistan.

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The India-Pakistan rivalry over Kashmir took a new turn when Pakistan joined the Western-sponsored military alliance systems in the 1950s and received American military aid, in the process becoming America's "most allied ally." Claiming that such developments had changed the ground situation, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declared that the issue of plebiscite was no longer relevant, and backed out of his earlier commitment to hold plebiscite in Kashmir. At this juncture, the former Soviet Union changed its own views on Kashmir dispute and adopted a pro-Indian stance on the issue. Due to Moscow's veto, the issue of Kashmir plebiscite remained in a deep freeze at the UN till 1962. The situation changed in the wake of Sino-Indian border clash in 1962. In the aftermath of the border clash, the Kennedy Administration announced substantial military aid package to India. At the same time, it pressed New Delhi to initiate bilateral talks with Islamabad to break the Kashmir deadlock. Consequently, the Indian and Pakistani Foreign Ministers held six rounds of talks on Kashmir issue between 27 December 1962, and 16 May 1963. But the talks ended without any major breakthrough. By the beginning of 1965, the Indo-Pakistan relations had reverted to their habitual state of acrimony and rivalry. There was also a rapid increase of political tensions and disturbances in Jammu and Kashmir. Around this period, the Pakistani leadership appeared to have concluded that the Shastri government was about to face so many internal problems that it would not be able to respond effectively to a crisis in Kashmir.

After making such calculations, Pakistan decided to exploit the situation and launched an adventurous course of action initially at the Ram of Kutch and

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3 *Asian Recorder* (New Delhi), vol. 1, no. 65, 24-30 March 1956, p. 746.
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subsequently in Kashmir, which led to the second Indo-Pak armed conflict in September 1965.

Initially, on 9 April 1965, clashes broke out between India and Pakistan in the marshy land of Rann of Kutch, over which both had overlapping border claims since 1954. Fighting broke out when Pakistan sent military patrols into the disputed area north of the Rann to assert their territorial claim. When fighting broke out, Britain backed by the US pressed both India and Pakistan for cessation of hostility and holding of talks to resolve the dispute. It resulted in a formal cease-fire agreement on 27 June 1965. Following the Rann of Kutch episode, Pakistan launched another scheme, Operation Gibralatar, to capture Kashmir by infiltrating thousands of Pakistani trained guerrillas across the Cease-fire Line. As a result, a full-scale war broke out between India and Pakistan on September 1965. On 6 September, when Indian troops marched towards Lahore, the Pakistani President, General Ayub Khan presented the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Walter P. McConaughy with an aide-memoir that called upon Washington to uphold the 1959 US-Pakistan bilateral agreement and act immediately to suppress and vacate the Indian aggression. But the US refused to act accordingly and did not come to Pakistan’s rescue. Washington maintained that Islamabad did not consult her before entering into war with India.

Initially Washington abstained from diplomatic intervention to put an end to the fighting, as it feared that any action in favour of one would definitely alienate the other. President Johnson preferred to entrust this job to the UN

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4 Under the terms of this agreement, the US would view any threat to the security, independence, and territorial integrity of Pakistan with utmost gravity, and would take effective action to assist Pakistan to suppress aggression.
while playing a “supporting role” in the world body’s deliberations. However, as the hostilities escalated and even Beijing threatened to intervene in the war on behalf of Pakistan, the Johnson Administration reacted with “alarm” and could no longer stay away from the conflict. While urging for an early end to the fighting, Washington suspended all military and economic aid to both India and Pakistan. Through arms embargo, Washington hoped to influence Islamabad to agree to an early termination of hostilities, since almost all of Pakistan’s military hardware was of US origin. Some analysts argue that the Johnson Administration was intensely opposed to the Pakistani behaviour and blatant aggression over Kashmir, when the US military was involved in the Vietnam War. The arms embargo against Pakistan may be seen as a punishment for its belligerence in Kashmir. Finally, due to the US efforts, the fighting came to an end on 22 September 1965. Both India and Pakistan accepted the UN Security Council cease-fire resolution. After the cease-fire, Washington ironically supported the Soviet mediation to settle the conflict, reversing its decade old policy of preventing any Soviet role in South Asia. The Tashkent Conference between Prime Minister Lalbahadur Shastri and President Ayub Khan took place on 4 January 1966, formally ending the conflict. The US position on the 1965 war pleased neither India nor Pakistan and in a way, alienated both. India was upset because the US failed to prevent Pakistan from using American arms against India, despite repeated promises that Washington would do so. The Pakistanis were even bitter in their reaction. Washington, with whom they had established military alliance, not only refused to help but also imposed arms embargo at a crucial juncture. It is to be noted that although the US was still aligned with Pakistan through
military alliances like SEATO and CENTO, the Johnson Administration immediately dismissed the notion that it owed anything to Pakistan in a conflict with India.

The spirit of Tashkent proved to be short-lived, as India-Pakistan relations soon reverted to their usual state of mutual hostility and suspicion. In December 1970, Pakistan went to polls marking an end to martial law and prolonged military rule. The election results went in favour of Awami League Party, which was fighting for the cause of greater autonomy for East Pakistan. Although the League won the election with a majority, the Punjabi elite of West Pakistan could not reconcile to the fact that the East Pakistanis would be occupying the treasury benches in the National Assembly. When the negotiations for a political solution on the autonomy issue failed, Pakistani President, Yahya Khan outlawed the Awami League, arrested its leader Mujibur Rahman and ordered a military crackdown in East Pakistan. It led to a massive exodus of refugees numbering in millions to India. Serious economic and security constraints resulted from the refugee crisis and eventually provided a basis for Indian intervention. New Delhi hesitatingly decided to support the resistance movement in East Pakistan and trained and armed the Mukti Bahini, a guerrilla force constituting the Bengali resistance forces, which took up arms against Pakistani occupation. Washington ignored the gross human rights violations by the Pakistani security forces and considered utter chaos and turmoil in East Pakistan as internal matter of Pakistan. President Richard M. Nixon’s sympathy for Yahya Khan stemmed from the latter’s help in establishing the China connection. Meanwhile, apprehensive of the gradual emergence of a US-Pakistan-China axis, India
signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the former USSR in August 1971. President Richard M. Nixon came to regard India as a Soviet client after the signing of this Indo-Soviet treaty. Finally, the simmering hostility in India’s eastern border with Pakistan took the form of an Indo-Pak war, when Pakistan Air Force attacked the Indian airbases in the western sector on 3 December 1971, and the very next day declared war against India.

When the fighting began, the Nixon Administration perceptively hardened its stance towards India and accused it of inciting the conflict. Significantly, one day before Pakistan declared war, Washington suspended all military sales to India. Later it also froze all the economic assistance. The Nixon Administration held India responsible for the conflict and branded it as “aggressor.” The US also took the initiative in convening the Security Council meeting where it strongly supported Pakistan. It introduced a resolution urging for an immediate cease-fire. It was vetoed by the Soviet Union. When Pakistan began to lose the war in eastern front, the Nixon Administration suspected that Indian Army might move against West Pakistan. India’s denial of any such plan against West Pakistan failed to convince Washington. Thus, to deter New Delhi and also to put pressure on it, President Nixon dispatched a naval task force led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise from the Far East to Bay of Bengal on 10 December 1971. Its stated mission was to aid in the possible evacuation of the US personnel from embattled Dhaka. But its real objective, in Kissinger’s words, was “to give emphasis to our [the US] warnings against an attack on West Pakistan.”5 Whatever its intended mission, the Enterprise did not play any decisive role in ending

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5 Henry A. Kissinger, White House Years (Boston, 1979), p. 905.
hostilities. Neither could it save the dismemberment of Pakistan. Once the Pakistani troops in East Pakistan surrendered and India's military objectives were achieved, New Delhi announced a cease-fire on 19 December, bringing to an end the seventeen-day war. During this period, the US played a role somewhat similar to that of the Chinese in 1965 Indo-Pak war. The dispatch of the Enterprise clearly showed the distinct US tilt towards Pakistan.

The US perceived the 1971 conflict in terms of its international implications. Apart from other consideration, Nixon and Kissinger believed that a policy of overt support for Pakistan was essential at that critical juncture in US-China relation to demonstrate Beijing, its willingness and ability to stand by an ally in a crisis, and also to maintain the credibility of the US commitments to its allies. Although the outcome of the war was not to the liking of the US, there was a perceptible change in the US policy towards Indo-Pak rivalry. Since then, Washington kept harping on resolution of Indo-Pakistani disputes on the basis of the Shimla Agreement and in the spirit of healthy bilateralism.

After the 1971 war and creation of Bangladesh, Pakistan came into terms with the hard reality that it could not take away Kashmir by force. Thus since 1989, Islamabad took resort to the strategy of low intensity conflict to bleed India indirectly through a strategy of “thousand cuts” and achieve its ultimate objective of taking Kashmir away from India. Under this plan, Pakistan initiated cross-border terrorism against India by arming and training the militants, providing them with political, economic and military support and finally, sending them to Kashmir to carry out subversive activities in the State. The Pakistani decision to launch the low intensity conflict and proxy war against India could be analyzed in the context of the decade-long Afghan
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crisis, which continued from 1979 to 1989. In Afghanistan, both the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the US and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan cooperated to arm and train the mujahideens in conducting special trans-border operations and guerilla warfare. It helped Pakistan in developing infrastructural facilities for undertaking cross-border terrorism in India later. The arms meant for the mujahideens to fight the Soviet forces were also transferred to the militants in Kashmir and Punjab after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. After a decade-long proxy war against India failed, Pakistan decided to undertake another misadventure in Kashmir in 1999. As part of this plan, hundreds of Pakistani intruders, including Army regulars, infiltrated through the gaps across the LoC and clandestinely occupied some strategically located mountain heights inside the Indian territory at Kargil. In response, the Indian Army launched Operation Vijay on 26 May 1999, against the Pakistani intruders at Kargil. It led to a limited-scale war between the Indian and Pakistani forces, without it being so declared.

Initially the US did not respond to the reports of clashes, assuming them as part of the fighting as usual between the Indian forces and Kashmiri "insurgents" along the LoC. But when the use of Indian Air Force and increased artillery fire from both sides escalated the conflict, Washington became seriously concerned over the possibility of outbreak of a full-fledged war between the two countries, which had overtly gone nuclear about a year ago. Thus it tried hard through political and diplomatic means to ensure that the conflict did not escalate out of control. When Islamabad questioned the validity of the LoC, Washington rejected it by maintaining that LoC had been clearly demarcated over the years. The US not only urged Pakistan to
maintain the sanctity of the LoC but also thwarted its attempt to internationalize the “Kashmir dispute” in the midst of the Kargil conflict. By maintaining that India was a victim of aggression, the Clinton Administration bluntly told Islamabad to pull back its forces from across the LoC. When the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Washington, President Bill Clinton made it clear to him that Islamabad should unconditionally and immediately withdraw its forces from Kargil. Moreover, he said that Shimla Agreement and Lahore Bus Diplomacy of 1999 provided the best forum for resolving all disputed issues between India and Pakistan. Clinton also sent a two-member delegation to Pakistan, which consisted of General Anthony Zinni, the Commander-in-Chief of the US Central Command, and Gibson Lanpher, the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. Its purpose was to persuade Islamabad to abandon its Kargil misadventure by withdrawing the Pakistani intruders from the Indian side of the LoC. Besides putting political pressure on Pakistan, Washington was also in touch with China to make sure that Beijing did not encourage Islamabad to continue the Kargil conflict. Succumbing to the intense American pressure, Pakistan finally drew back the “intruders” from Kargil and the eight-week long fighting came to an end.

Kargil conflict marked a distinct shift in the US response to India-Pakistan hostilities. For the first time in the history of Indo-Pak rivalry, the US gave up the doctrine of equal culpability and made Pakistan solely responsible for violating the LoC. It was also for the first time that the US took a clearly pro-India stand, which was in sharp contrast to the “infamous” pro-Pakistan tilt of 1971. The US position shattered one of Pakistan's principal assumptions in embarking on the Kargil misadventure that Washington would intervene in
the Kashmir dispute on its behalf. Clearly, the new realities of the post-Cold War era and the increasing convergence of Indo-US interests shaped the US response to the Kargil conflict. Moreover, the US was also deeply concerned at the fearful prospects of Kargil conflict escalating into a nuclear showdown between India and Pakistan.

The terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001, have had significant consequences for the American policy towards South Asia. It transformed both the US-Pakistan and Indo-US relations. In the aftermath of 11 September attack, Pakistan has emerged as a key ally of the US, in the war against terrorism. At the same time, there is increasing convergence of interests and understanding between India and the US on the issue of terrorism. Washington seemed to agree with New Delhi that support to terrorism can never be justified on any ground at any part of the globe. Moreover, Washington has begun to realize that Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir had been a major hurdle in the India-Pakistan rapprochement, and it undermined the regional stability and security. Thus, Washington has begun to step up its pressure on Islamabad to give up its support to cross-border terrorism and proxy war against India. It could be discerned from the US response towards the India-Pakistan standoff in 2002, when both the countries came close to war.

India-Pakistan hostilities touched new heights when Pakistan-sponsored terrorists attacked Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly complex on 1 October 2001, and the Indian Parliament complex on 13 December 2001. Enraged by the terrorist attacks, New Delhi recalled its High Commissioner from Islamabad and cut off all communication links, including road, rail and
air traffic with Pakistan. India also gave an ultimatum to Pakistan to end cross-border terrorism and extradite twenty Pakistan-based terrorists wanted by India. Along with these steps, India made full-scale mobilization of its Army, Navy and Air Force, along the western border and Arabian Sea. Such mobilization was the largest since 1971 war. Pakistan also mobilized its troops along the border, apprehending an Indian attack. Moreover, Pakistan threatened a nuclear attack on India in case of war. All these developments heightened the tension and took both the countries to the brink of war.

As the tensions mounted, the US emerged as the principal intermediary in the international effort to diffuse tensions in the subcontinent. Concerned by the fearful prospects of a devastating war with the possible use of nuclear weapons and the consequent repercussions on its ongoing war against terrorism in Afghanistan, the US acted swiftly and decisively to prevent the impending conflict. The visits of US Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of State and Assistant Secretary of State to South Asia in quick succession, reflected the urgency of the Bush Administration to remain actively engaged with India and Pakistan and dissuade both the countries from going to war. Ultimately, the US activism and its concerted efforts succeeded in averting another war in the subcontinent. After intense diplomatic pressure by the US, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf announced a major policy shift on 12 January 2002. By declaring that Pakistan would no longer be a base for foreign terrorism, Musharraf implicitly pledged to end Islamabad's support for cross-border terrorism against India.6 India took steps towards de-escalation of military confrontation with Pakistan and de-mobilization of its

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troops in early June 2002, after getting categorical assurances from Washington that the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf had agreed to put an end to cross-border infiltration on permanent basis. New Delhi was also assured that Washington would hold Islamabad accountable for any continuation of cross-border terrorism.

From the above analyses it is abundantly clear that the US, more than any other country, has actively involved itself for the resolution of the Indo-Pak conflicts. Indeed, the US Policy response played a crucial role in determining the course of these conflicts both in the past as well as at present. With the solitary exception of the 1971 war, it was largely the US initiative, which was instrumental in ending the Indo-Pak conflicts in 1947-48, 1965 and 1999. At present, the US is deeply involved with Pakistan in prosecuting the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. In the process, Washington has acquired unprecedented leverage over Islamabad. At the same time, the Indo-US relations have also improved significantly. Now the US is in a unique position to play an effective role in facilitating India-Pakistan rapprochement.

In this context, the present study of the US policy response towards the India-Pakistan armed conflicts assumes considerable significance. The focus of the study is the American policy response towards the four Indo-Pak armed conflicts, which has been discussed above. Accordingly, the thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and the last chapter is the conclusion. Each of the remaining four main chapters makes a brief analysis of the background of the conflict, the description of the actual conflict and the US policy towards the conflict. The study critically analyzes the continuity and changes, along with their underlying determinants, in the
US policy decisions towards Indo-Pak conflicts at different points of time. The overall emphasis is to examine how the American response had impinged on these Indo-Pak wars.