CHAPTER-III

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Emboldened by Chinese encouragement and relying on American weaponry, Pakistan launched an adventurous course of action initially at the Rann of Kutch and subsequently in Kashmir - Operation Gibraltar - which led to a full-scale war between India and Pakistan in September 1965. To comprehend the real causes of the September war, one has to untangle the skein of events from the summer of 1963, when the six rounds of Indo-Pakistani talks ended without any result and Jawaharlal Nehru withdrew the ‘concession’ of settling the Kashmir problem by virtually turning the Cease-fire Line into a permanent boundary.

Background

The India-Pakistan rivalry over Kashmir issue 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.”1 In March 1956, the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru warned that “the American military aid to Pakistan and Pakistan’s membership in military pacts...has destroyed the roots and foundations of the plebiscite proposal in Kashmir.”2 Claming that such developments had changed the ground situation, Nehru declared that the issue of plebiscite was no longer relevant. Thus India backed out of its earlier commitment to hold plebiscite in Kashmir. The development of closer ties between the US and


2 Asian Recorder (New Delhi), vol. 1, no. 65, 24-30 March 1956, p. 746.
Pakistan not only had a perceived direct impact on the Kashmir issue, but also made India look for means and alternatives to meet the emerging challenges. At this juncture, Moscow came forward and changed its own views on Kashmir dispute in India’s favour. The Soviet support was indicated in its voting behaviour at the UN. It vetoed resolutions on Kashmir plebiscite nearly hundred times between 1954 and 1964, effectively putting the issue in a deep freeze at the UN.

When Sino-Indian border skirmish broke out on 20 October 1962, the American strategists argued that if tackled properly, it could enable the US to secure India’s alignment with the West. Although preoccupied by the Cuban missile crisis, which took place around the same time as the Chinese attack on India, the US President John F. Kennedy did not overlook the gravity of the situation. In a letter to Nehru on 28 October 1965, Kennedy wrote, “I want to give you support as well as sympathy.” 3 Even though China pulled back soon, declaring unilateral cease-fire, Kennedy approved a programme of substantial military assistance for India. He also called upon the Pakistani President, General Mohammed Ayub Khan, to play the role of a statesman by offering a unilateral no-war pledge to India, thus allowing New Delhi to shift all of its forces to the Sino-Indian border. 4 In a letter to Ayub Khan, Kennedy pointed out that the Chinese attack on India was a threat to the entire Indian subcontinent. 5 From Washington’s perspective, by making a friendly gesture to India at this critical juncture, Pakistan could lay a solid foundation for a

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4 Kennedy to Ayub, 28 October 1962, ibid. p. 289.
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new era of Indo-Pakistani harmony and regional stability.\(^6\) The Kennedy Administration thus viewed the 1962 Sino-Indian border war as a “one-time opportunity” for bringing about reconciliation between India and Pakistan.

However, Pakistan reacted sharply against the US decision to provide military aid to India without consulting Pakistan. Upset over the US decision, Ayub felt personally betrayed by his American ally. He downplayed the significance of the Sino-Indian border clash and refused to share the US perception that the incident heralded a new phase of Communist aggression. Instead, Ayub predicted that any arms that India acquired for use against China would eventually be used against Pakistan.\(^7\) Similarly, the Pakistani External Affairs Minister, Mohammed Ali Bogra, asserted that the Sino-Indian conflict was not a “major” conflict but “a localized one restricted to the area under dispute” and, therefore, India did not require any military aid from the US.\(^8\) The US posture strained its relations with Pakistan almost to a breaking point. Henceforth, Ayub gradually embraced a policy of limited disengagement from the US and sought to cultivate relations with both China and the former Soviet Union.

Thus after the end of the 1962 Sino-Indian border clash, the geo-political landscape of the region became more volatile. In this context, by mid-November 1962, the Kennedy Administration adopted a three-track policy to deal with the situation. First, it decided to provide India with appropriate military assistance to strengthen its defence build-up. Secondly, it chose to use

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\(^{6}\) Komer to Talbot, 24 October 1962, ibid.


its new leverage with New Delhi to break the Kashmir stalemate. Thirdly, it sought to mollify the Pakistanis with the prospect of a more moderate Indian position towards that dispute, simultaneously warning Pakistan against the consequences of moving closer to the Chinese. To accomplish those ends, Kennedy sent W. Averell Harriman to the subcontinent on a delicate diplomatic-military mission. Kennedy instructed Harriman to assess India’s specific military needs, impress upon Nehru the importance of renewed negotiations with Pakistan, and convince Ayub that cooperation with the US and India would best serve the interests of Pakistan.9

Harriman along with Britain’s Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Duncan Sandys, arrived in New Delhi on 25 November 1962. After carefully assessing India’s urgent military requirements, Harriman conveyed Nehru about the American willingness to provide military assistance to India both in short-term and long-term. He also emphasized the need for India to re-open negotiations aimed at settling the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan. In a subtle manner, Harriman made the US military assistance contingent on India’s effort to seek a rapprochement with Pakistan. A realistic Nehru finally yielded to the logic of the American position and agreed to re-open the long-stalled dialogue with Pakistan over the future of Kashmir.10 Then Harriman went to Karachi for the second stage of his mission. In their meeting, Ayub acknowledged to Harriman that limited US military aid to India was both understandable and desirable. However, he demanded that Pakistan’s interests required tangible progress towards a settlement of Kashmir issue. He also

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9 As cited in McMahon, n. 3, p. 291.
10 Draft cable from Harriman to Rusk, 25 November 1962, ibid., p. 293.
 urged that the US military aid to India should be made contingent upon such progress.\textsuperscript{11}

In its final report, the Harriman mission emphasized the enormity of the stakes involved for the US in the South Asian crisis. It noted that the Sino-Indian border war provided, along with obvious risks, a "unique opportunity for the easing of tensions between India and Pakistan."\textsuperscript{12} The report advised that only a Kashmir settlement could ease those tensions. Thus it recommended that the US continue to press both India and Pakistan to accept a compromise.

President Kennedy closely followed Harriman's recommendations. In December 1962, while announcing an Anglo-American military aid package of $120 million to India, Kennedy along with the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, underscored once again the necessity of breaking the Kashmir deadlock.\textsuperscript{13} In an effort to reassure Ayub, Kennedy stressed the importance of the upcoming Indo-Pak discussions, and said that a Kashmir settlement was the key to the subcontinent's security. Washington sought to convince the Pakistani leaders that Chinese aggression posed "as grave an ultimate threat to Pakistan as to India" and, therefore, the supply of US arms to India to help thwart that threat "should not be made contingent on a Kashmir settlement."\textsuperscript{14} However, in reality, Kennedy's message was a bit disingenuous on that score, as he clearly recognized that American military aid to India was linked to the progress on the Kashmir issue. Even the State Department instructed the US Ambassador to India John Kenneth Galbraith to inform Nehru that "whether we like or not, [the] question of Kashmir is

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\item[13] As cited in McMahon, n. 3, p. 296.
\item[14] Kennedy to Ayub, 22 December 1962, ibid.
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inescapably related to what we can do to assist India militarily. [The] president therefore, will find it difficult [to] justify extensive aid without progress on Kashmir.”

At last, the Anglo-American presentations produced an agreement between the governments of India and Pakistan to renew their efforts to resolve their outstanding differences on Kashmir and other issues so that the two countries could “live side by side in peace and friendship.” They decided to start the bilateral discussions at an early date “with the object of reaching an honourable and equitable settlement.”

But on 26 December 1962, the day before the Indo-Pak negotiations were slated to start in Rawalpindi, Pakistan and China announced the conclusion of a provisional border demarcation agreement. The US policy makers correctly suspected that it would poison the atmosphere for the Kashmir negotiations. Thus to keep the pressure on, the US dispatched a series of senior officials to India and Pakistan. Despite the uproar caused by the Sino-Pakistan border accord, the Kashmir talks began on schedule. Six rounds of ministerial level talks took place between the Pakistani Foreign Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his Indian counterpart Swaran Singh, between 27 December 1962, and 16 May 1963, to pave the way for a summit meeting between Pakistani President Ayub Khan and Indian Prime Minister Nehru. During the initial round in Rawalpindi, both sides reiterated their traditional positions. The US Ambassador to Pakistan, Walter P. McConaughy and his British counterpart,

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15 As cited in McMahon, n.3, p. 296.
16 *Asian Recorder*, 24-31 December 1962; vol. 8, no. 52, pp. 4957-4958.
17 This close contact of Pakistan with China, India's arch-enemy at this juncture, was bound to make the proposed Indo-Pak talks on Kashmir scheduled to begin on 27 December 1962, even more difficult that could otherwise have been expected.
High Commissioner Morrice James kept in close touch with each other and with the two delegations, though they did not directly participate in the talks. This pattern continued throughout the six rounds of negotiations as they moved back and forth from Indian to Pakistani cities over the next five months. In this way, the Kennedy Administration tried persistently to keep the Indo-Pak talks on track, probing both sides at various junctures for possible points of compromise. In late February 1963, Kennedy reiterated his commitment to use all possible American influence to achieve a settlement of Kashmir. Yet no amount of American prompting could bridge the fundamental differences separating the Indian and Pakistani positions. By May 1963, the Indo-Pakistani negotiations had reached a standstill. Despite considerable efforts by the US, the six rounds of Indo-Pakistan talks ended without any major breakthrough. The joint communique issued in May 1963 after the final meeting in New Delhi, recorded in regret that no agreement could be reached on a settlement.

After the breakdown of Indo-Pak talks, the deterioration of their bilateral relations and frequent exchanges of allegations and counter-allegations indicated a further widening gap between the two countries. On 17 July 1963, Pakistani Foreign Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto declared in the National Assembly of Pakistan "an attack from India on Pakistan today is no longer confined to the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan but would also involve the security and territorial integrity of the largest State in Asia."

Though he refused to elaborate, the statement signalled some sort of defence understanding with China.

During the same period, the fast unfolding events inside Kashmir contributed to the rapid increase in political tension within the State and also between India and Pakistan. On 3 October 1963, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, the outgoing Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, announced measures intended to integrate Kashmir into the India Union. Six members of the Indian Lok Sabha would be chosen from the State, and the Sadar-i-Riyasat and the Prime Minister would henceforth be called Governor and Chief Minister respectively, as in the provinces of India. It was also proposed that the Kashmiri representatives in the Indian Parliament, who had hitherto been nominated by the Kashmir Legislative Assembly, should now be elected directly by the people of the State. These proposals contributed towards a deterioration in Indo-Pakistani relations, which was further aggravated by the crisis which broke out in Srinagar on 26 December 1963. On that day, it was discovered that a sacred relic of Prophet Mohammed had been stolen from the Hazratbal shrine near Srinagar. It gave rise to expressions of intense public indignation and communal disorders in different parts of Kashmir, and also outside. Simultaneously, the surcharged atmosphere provided a strong stimulus to the political life of the State. All these gave rise to serious civil disturbances in the valley. President Ayub Khan called the upheaval in Kashmir “a spontaneous referendum” against the Indian hold there.

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22 The Kashmir disturbances sparked off communal rioting and killings in East Pakistan and West Bengal, where communal passions were already running high.
These developments in Kashmir alarmed the Government of India. Not only was it apparent that India was yet to win the hearts and minds of the Kashmiris but also it threatened to produce a Hindu-Muslim discord within India comparable to the great bloodbath of 1947. In 1964, Prime Minister Nehru ordered the release of Sheikh Abdullah, who had been arrested a decade earlier for agitating for Kashmir's independence. Nehru dispatched Abdullah to Pakistan to talk peace with Ayub. Abdullah arrived in Rawalpindi on 24 May 1964. After conferring with Ayub Khan, he announced on 26 May that Ayub and Nehru would meet in New Delhi in June to find out a solution to end the Kashmir dispute. But Nehru's death as a result of sudden illness on 27 May killed the initiative and the whole issue went back into cold storage once again.

The climate for direct negotiations between India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute continued to deteriorate after Nehru's death. By October 1964, Indo-Pakistani relations began to revert to their habitual state of acrimony, even though a series of exchanges took place between General Ayub and the new Indian Prime Minister Lalbahadur Shastri. As Pakistani attitude vis-à-vis Kashmir hardened, New Delhi advanced one step further towards closer integration of the State into India. On 21 December 1964, the extension of Articles 356 and 357 of Indian Constitution to Kashmir, became subject of severe criticism and resentment by Pakistan. Furthermore, on 9 January 1965, the Indian National Congress decided to establish its own branch in Kashmir, which intended to bring the State into the political

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26 These Articles would enable the President of India to impose President's rule in Jammu and Kashmir and legislate there without prior approval by the State Government, which had hitherto been excluded by article 370, which conferred the State a special status. It seemed probable that soon Article 370 would be abrogated, thus completing once and for all the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India.
mainstream of India. On the same day, the Plebiscite Front of Sheikh Abdullah appealed to the Kashmiris to observe 15 January 1965, as a day of protest against the Government's measures to bring Kashmir further within the purview of the Indian Constitution. Huge crowds turned out on that day, resulting in police firings in some places.27

Thus the first months of 1965 saw a rapid increase of political tensions and disturbances in Jammu and Kashmir. Around this time the Indian economy was passing through a difficult phase. For the first time since independence, the Pakistani Rupee stood higher on the free money markets of the world than the Indian Rupee. Indian industrial development had not been matched by a corresponding increase in agricultural output, and a severe food shortage threatened to create popular discontent against the Central Government. Moreover, India was about to face the stresses of regional protest against the government's language policy. At this juncture, the Pakistani Intelligence appeared to have concluded that Shastri government was about to face so many internal problems that it would be reluctant to meet a crisis in Kashmir as well. Thus, it assumed that India might be prepared, after the application of some pressure, to make significant concessions.28 In the backdrop of all these developments, President Ayub Khan visited China between 2 and 5 March 1965.29 He was enthusiastically welcomed in Beijing. In the meeting, China declared its support for the Pakistani position on Kashmir. The Sino-Pakistani joint statement on Kashmir stated:

The two parties noted with concern that the Kashmir dispute remains unsolved, and consider its continued existence a threat to peace and

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27 Burke, n. 23, p. 323.
28 Lamb, n. 21, pp. 113-14.
29 ibid.
security in the region. They affirmed that this dispute should be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir as pledged to them by India and Pakistan.\footnote{As cited in ibid., p. 114.}

In the words of Alastair Lamb, it is against the background of this 'Sino-Pakistani collusion' that the crisis in the Rann of Kutch should probably be viewed.\footnote{Emphasis added, ibid.} Moreover, by 1965, the 500-mile cease-fire line supervised by some forty-five UN military observers had become more of a fire line than an area for peaceful contacts. Border violations had occurred in the past, but they had been rare and were in most cases the result of misunderstandings among local civilians. From the beginning of 1965, however, shots were frequently exchanged between regular Pakistani and Indian soldiers, and accusations of almost daily violations on the Cease-fire Line were being registered with the UN.\footnote{Josef Korbel, Danger in Kashmir (Princeton, 1966), p. 337.}

These were the prelude to the greater crises, which were to erupt first in April 1965, and later in the form of a larger war in August 1965. In an atmosphere so heavily charged with frustration and anger, suspicion and distrust, it needed but an accidental spark to touch off a conflagration. The ignition was provided by the exchange of fire on 9 April 1965, across the disputed border in the Rann of Kutch, and India and Pakistan found them drawn into the first of their two undeclared wars of 1965.

Crisis in Rann of Kutch

On 9 April 1965, serious clashes broke out between Indian and Pakistani forces in the desolate and uninhabited marshy land of Rann of Kutch over which, both sides had overlapping border claims since partition. The Rann of
Kutch separates Sind in Pakistan from Kutch in India. The Rann, measuring 320 miles long and 50 miles wide, is a virtually uninhabited region of mudflats and wasteland with little economic or strategic value. This marshy area gets flooded during the monsoon period and formed the natural border between Kutch and Sind. There was no dispute as regards the fact that the State of Kutch went to India, because its Prince acceded to India on 4 May 1948. But there was some disagreement as to whether the entire Rann belonged to the State, as India claimed, or the northern parts of it belonged to Sind, because this province historically had some influence in those border areas, as Pakistan argued. After partition, Pakistan contested this boundary, arguing that the Rann was really a sea and that the border between Sind and Kutch should follow a middle line. The Radcliff Commission of 1947 made no ruling on the Rann of Kutch, which became the subject of some indecisive Indo-Pakistani arguments later. Already in July 1948, Pakistan raised the matter with India saying that the “Sind-Kutch boundary was still in dispute and must be settled before the question of fixation of boundary pillars could be considered or taken in hand.”33 But the issue remained dormant until September 1954, when Pakistan raised the issue once again. She repeated the same arguments and suggested a conference between the two governments or failing that, an arbitration to resolve the issue. In May 1955, India repudiated all Pakistani claims, maintaining that there was no such dispute.

Since no further negotiations took place between the two sides, the problem had remained quiet until early in 1965, except for some minor incidents. Border incidents began to take place with increasing frequency from January

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1965 onwards, reflecting the deteriorating condition of Indo-Pakistani relations in general. Pakistan began sending military patrols into the disputed area north of the Rann to assert their territorial claim. When the Indian forces countered them, fighting erupted on 9 April 1965. During the next two weeks, the clashes escalated into a brigade size battle between Indian and Pakistani forces. There were violent clashes throughout the month of April, but it never became a real war, both parties seeming to agree that there was no point in further escalating the hostilities.

Each side accused the other of provoking the clash. Though there were claims and counter-claims and also conflict of evidence, it was generally believed that Pakistan wanted to exploit the prevailing unsettled conditions to her advantage. As Russell Brines writes, it was clear that Pakistan used the conflict as a low-cost test of Indian will and capabilities.³⁴ The assault, moreover, was aimed at an area where Indian forces, for logistic reasons, could not assume the offensive and where senior Indian military officials did not wish to fight. Similarly, Mankekar calls the Kutch conflict a probing test on the part of Pakistan “to gauge the mood of the Indian Government and capabilities of the Indian Army. It was a precursor of, and preliminary to, the more ambitious operation scheduled some four months later” when ‘Operation Gibraltar’ was launched.³⁵

On 27 April, the intensity of the conflict subsided after India withdrew its forces rather than risking its forces being cut off from the mainland during the rainy season due to flood. The impression was that the Pakistanis had the better of the affair. In late April 1965, Britain backed by the US, offered her

mediation to resolve the crisis. Accordingly, Indo-Pak discussions were held throughout May and June. Finally, on 30 June, a cease-fire agreement was signed by India and Pakistan, which brought an end to the Rann of Kutch crisis. Both sides accepted an immediate cease-fire and the restoration of status quo as on 7 January 1965. It was believed that this would contribute to a reduction of the tensions along the "entire Indo-Pakistan border". Both India and Pakistan agreed to talk to re-establish the status quo, try to reach a final settlement, and, in the event of no agreement, referring the legal status of the Rann to a tribunal for arbitration.36

The US Policy

In the Rann of Kutch fighting, the use of US-supplied weapons by Pakistan against India raised difficult political questions for the US. In the words of a senior US official, "...The dispute has assumed major political significance in both Delhi and Rawalpindi, and has serious implications for our policies and programmes in the subcontinent. Both parties are seeking to draw us into an emotion-laden dispute at a difficult time in our relationships with both countries."37 Moreover, a State Department analysis noted:

...The fighting in Kutch, particularly Pakistan's probable use of MAP equipment, has propelled us once more into the center of a subcontinental dispute at a moment when our leverage in both countries is at a low point. Our relations with India, already exacerbated by the postponement of Shastri's visit, will be further strained by public charges of Pakistan's use of MAP equipment. Moreover, our problems with the GOI will be complicated by the fact that we have imposed more stringent

36 Blinkenberg, n. 19, p. 208.
condition on Indian use of MAP equipment (i.e. only against Communist China) than the conditions imposed on Pakistan....38

India conveyed its strong protest to the US about Washington’s repeated assurances that it would not allow Pakistan to use the American military equipments against India. Pakistan also admitted using American arms, but justified it on the ground of ‘self-defence’ and accused India of initiating the conflict. Washington was not interested in condemning the aggressor or assessing blame for the misuse of US-supplied weapons, rather, it stressed the need for stopping the crossfire.39 As the crisis persisted, the US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, informed both India and Pakistan that he was prohibiting the use of any US military equipment by either side in the fighting. Pakistan deeply resented the decree, considering it to be grossly unfair, since virtually all of Pakistan’s military equipment was of American origin. Johnson’s stand had little effect on India, since it acquired its military hardware from a variety of sources. Pakistani Foreign Minister Bhutto warned that the US decision would have profoundly negative repercussions on US-Pakistan relations.40

In the aftermath of Rann of Kutch incident both India and Pakistan were annoyed with the US, and their relations with Washington became strained. America’s repeated assurances to New Delhi that it would deter Pakistan from using American weapons against India appeared empty. Similarly, Pakistani leaders had their gravest suspicions confirmed by the US response to the Rann of Kutch fighting. They argued that the previous US pledges about restraining Indian aggression were meaningless. As a result, the US standing with Indians

40 McMahon, n.3, pp. 324-25.
and Pakistanis hit the bottom and Washington lacked sufficient leverage to play even a minor mediator role. Nevertheless, President Johnson took a tough posture towards both India and Pakistan. Convinced that any conciliatory moves could be read as a sign of weakness, he opted instead to intensify American pressure on both the contending parties. Late in April, while the skirmishes in the Rann of Kutch were still raging, he directed that all pending aid decisions regarding the two countries first be cleared with the White House.\textsuperscript{41} As National Security Council (NSC) aide Robert Komer explained, "the President’s reluctance to move forward on India and Pakistan matters stems from his own deep instinct that we are not getting enough for our massive investment in either".\textsuperscript{42} Sensing stagnation in the American approach towards the subcontinent, the result oriented Johnson began to assume an unusual degree of personal control over the policy process. During a meeting on 9 June 1965, he demanded a fundamental rethinking of American strategy and tactics in South Asia. Following the session, Johnson issued a blunt directive to the bureaucracy that "...there be no additional decisions, authorizations or announcements on loans to India or Pakistan without his approval, pending passage of the FY 1966 foreign aid appropriation...."\textsuperscript{43} He also disapproved any advance programme loans to India and Pakistan. Moreover, he requested the State Department and Agency for International Development (AID) to conduct an early full-scale review of all US economic aid programmes to India and Pakistan in order to determine "(a) whether the US should be spending such large sums in either country; and (b) how to

\textsuperscript{41} ibid., p. 325.
\textsuperscript{42} Komer to Bundy, 30 May 1965, as cited in ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Memorandum by the President’s Special Assistance for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy to Secretary of State, Rusk, Secretary of Defense, McNamara and the Ambassador, AID, Bell, 9 June 1965, \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States}, 1964-1968, vol. 25, p. 274.
achieve more leverage for our money, in terms both of more effective self-
help and of our political purposes."

Johnson's tough stand, however, failed to produce the desired result. Finally,
Washington relied on London's initiative to bring about an end to the fighting
in the Rann of Kutch. Such a perception can be inferred from the telegram of
the Department of State to the Embassy in India. It stated:

... We continue [to hope] to see prospect that British effort may
continue for some time with considerable hope for success... We doubt
that US would be in better position than UK to bring Indians and Paks
to agreement on disengagement at this time. In fact, we believe that so
long as British effort continues, our participation in separate initiative
would complicate British Diplomatic task and lessen prospect for their
success. US intervention on this issue in both capitals (particularly in
Delhi) is not likely to be very effective at this time; even our bona
fides are sometimes questioned... In light of above we have reached
[at] conclusion that US should not take up separate initiative on
subcontinent at present time.

The US actually deferred to Britain, which managed to negotiate a cease-fire
agreement, that Ayub and Shastri signed in London on 30 June 1965 ending
the fighting. The Johnson Administration could do little but applaud the
British effort from the sidelines.

Operation Gibraltar

Following the Rann of Kutch episode, India, in the words of William J.
Barnds, became "dangerously frustrated", while Pakistan became
"dangerously overconfident." It encouraged Pakistan to launch another
adventurous scheme, code-named Operation Gibraltar, a gamble to capture

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44 ibid.
Kashmir by covertly infiltrating thousands of Pakistani trained guerrillas across the Cease-fire Line in order to stir an uprising in Kashmir.

Background

The Rann of Kutch battle was but a symptom of the deep-seated canker of Kashmir, which continued to fester and poison Indo-Pakistani relations. At the very moment when a semblance of peace was being restored in the Rann of Kutch, a new crisis was developing in Kashmir. Since the death of Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah had “reverted to the political erraticism, which New Delhi had previously found unacceptable.”\(^{47}\) Due to his increased hobnobbing with China and Pakistan and tough anti-India posture over the Kashmir issue, the defiant leader, whose influence was still predominant in the Valley, was arrested on 8 May 1965, and put under house arrest in South India. It created a stir in Kashmir, leading to protest demonstrations and police firing, and the latent unsettled conditions, which had prevailed since the theft of holy relic from Hazratbal Shrine, now in many places turned into open conflict between the population of the Valley and the authorities. On 5 June, an Action Committee, combining nine Kashmiri opposition groups, launched a Gandhian type non-violent civil disobedient movement campaign, demanding the release of Abdullah and the fulfillment of India’s pledge to let the Kashmiris choose between India and Pakistan.\(^{48}\)

All these indicated an extremely strong surge of popular opinion in Kashmir against the process of the incorporation of the State into Indian Republic, a process that had been going on steadily throughout the first half of 1965.

\(^{47}\) Brines, n. 34, p. 296.

\(^{48}\) Burke, n. 23. p. 327.
Despite the best efforts of the pro-Indian Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq government in Srinagar, the agitation continued with increasing tempo. Also, "in the remote areas of Poonch and Kashmir Province, opposition to integration with India had begun to take the form of armed resistance...."49

However, the growth of an anti-Indian guerrilla movement received considerable support and encouragement from Pakistan. The Cease-fire Line in Kashmir had become a tense borderline and there was a substantial increase in firing and other violations. To quote Alastair Lamb, "the prevailing situation in Kashmir by the middle of 1965 could in some ways be compared to that of the autumn of 1947."50

By early August, it seemed that Pakistan had made up her mind to intervene on a significant scale in the worsening situation in Kashmir, in order to stir up an uprising. According to some observers, "incidents in Kashmir had become so frequent as almost to warrant the description of rebellion or civil war."51 Pakistan felt confident of fishing in troubled waters, since it did not expect that Prime Minister Shastri would adopt any extreme measures towards Pakistani intervention. The Pakistanis could have also wanted to strike in Kashmir before the military odds swung heavily in India's favour. Although in 1965 Indian Army enjoyed numerical superiority, Pakistan had gained a quantitative edge in armour and air power, due to American arms aid. Pakistan feared that it was only a question of time until India, having

49 Lamb, n. 21, p. 119.
50 ibid.,
51 Emphasis added, ibid.,
embarked on a defence build-up after the 1962 border war, would neutralize Pakistan’s superior military equipment.52

General Ayub Khan, it may be noted, had bigger plans for Kashmir. His planning could be traced back to late 1964, much before the Rann of Kutch clashes. In late 1964, General Ayub authorized the Foreign Office, the Army and the Intelligence Services to draw up a plan to ‘defreeze’ the Kashmir situation. A secret – Kashmir Cell – chaired by Foreign Secretary Aziz Ahmed, was also established.53 Alarmed by Indian moves in December 1964 to complete Kashmir’s political integration, Foreign Minister Bhutto and members of Kashmir Cell pressed General Ayub to adopt an aggressive strategy on Kashmir. Influenced by the prevailing fashionable concept of wars of national liberation, especially the success of the Algerians in their struggle against the French, the cell recommended a somewhat similar strategy in Kashmir. The bold proposal called for covertly infiltrating large number of men from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir – called Azad Kashmir – to carry out wide spread acts of sabotage and arson in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The aim was to ignite the flame of what the hardliners believed was an incipient revolutionary situation in the Kashmir Valley. The Pakistani hardliners believed that any harsh Indian military response would spark further trouble inside Kashmir, anger Muslim opinion throughout the world, and provide an excuse for the Pakistani Army to intervene in southern Kashmir to cut off Indian forces in the north. Bhutto, Ahmed and other cell members assumed that, as the situation deteriorated, the US and the

52 Barnds, n. 46, p. 201.
international community would most probably intervene to force serious negotiations for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. 54

What are the factors, which motivated Pakistan to undertake such a potentially dangerous gamble? First, ever since its 1962 war with China, India had seemed a much-diminished country, and it was against this background that the Kashmir Cell thought the strategy made sense. Secondly, Prime Minister Shastri, who succeeded Nehru, appeared to be a weak leader. Thirdly, in military terms, India’s reputation stood at its nadir after its defeat in the Sino-India war, and its “poor showing” in the Rann of Kutch incident. The Pakistanis believed that the Indian forces were not prepared enough to defend against an attack. This assumption was also partly based on mild Indian response to the military provocation by Pakistan in April 1965, when the latter conducted a ‘limited probe’ 55 at the Rann of Kutch area. Strengthened by a decade of US military assistance and training, the Pakistani Army considered itself the equal of India’s larger but less well-equipped forces. New Delhi, however, had embarked on a major defence build-up after the 1962 debacle. Given India’s far larger economic base, it was only a matter of time until Pakistan would lose its military advantage. 56 Bhutto wrote to Ayub in May 1965 that the current “relative superiority of the military forces of Pakistan in terms of quality and equipment” was in danger of being overtaken as India’s defence build-up progressed. 57 Fourthly, there was a perception among the Pakistani leaders that there was widespread popular support for Pakistan

54 Kux, n. 18, pp. 158-59.
55 The concept of ‘limited probe’ has been derived from the work of Alexander George and Richard Smith, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy (New York: Colombia University Press, 1974). This concept calls for an adversary to make a limited and reversible incursion into an adversary’s territory to clarify the latter’s commitment to defend territory.
56 Kux, n. 18, p. 159.
57 As quoted in Morrice James, Pakistan Chronicle (Karachi, 1993), p. 128.
within the Kashmir Valley. They came to this conclusion after Kashmir witnessed a series of restive events in late 1963, leading to serious civil disturbances and communal disorders in the Valley. Finally, President Ayub Khan and Foreign Minister Bhutto mistakenly concluded after an eight-day trip to China in March 1965 that the Chinese would assist Pakistan in the event of a war with India. 58 Emboldened by these factors, and being convinced of the distinct possibility of military success in a short, sharp incursion, Pakistan embarked on, what it called, *Operation Gibraltar*.

In February 1965, when Kashmir Cell put its proposal to Ayub, he out rightly rejected the idea and asked, “Who authorized the Foreign Office and the ISI [Inter Services Intelligence Directorate] to draw up such a Plan?” He said, “All I asked them was to keep the situation in Kashmir under review. They can’t force a campaign of military action on the Government.” 59 However, despite this firm “No”, the Kashmir Cell did not give up and continued to press President Ayub to accept the plan. After India’s poor showing in the Rann of Kutch, the usually cautious Ayub gave the green signal on 13 May 1965. 60

The goal of *Operation Gibraltar* was to “defreeze the Kashmir problem, weaken Indian resolve, and bring [India] to the conference table without provoking a general war.” 61 The initial phase of the plan involved infiltrating thousands of armed men, who would capitalize on the disturbed conditions in

60 ibid.
61 ibid., p. 328.
the State to start a mass uprising against the Indian rule. To quote the then
Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army, General H. J. Mohammad Musa:

Broadly, the plan (code-named ‘GIBRALTAR’) envisaged, on a short-
term basis, sabotage of military targets, disruption of communications,
etc. and, as a long-term measure, distribution of arms to the people of
occupied Kashmir and initiation of a guerilla movement there with a
view to starting an uprising in the valley eventually.62

In the next phase, regular Pakistani troops would move to seize significant
positions in Kashmir, especially in the Valley, in a series of quick, decisive
thrusts. Assuming that the first two stages went as planned, the Pakistan
desired to accomplish all this before the Indian army had a chance to mobilize
against them. Pakistani intention was to present the supposedly rebellious
situation as a fait accompli to the international community and to call for
assistance to the Kashmiris. This plan, the Pakistani decision-makers hoped,
would enable them finally to settle the Kashmir dispute on terms favourable to
Pakistan.63

To give this design a practical shape, a special task force was organized in
Murree, West Pakistan, on 26 May 1965. It was known as “Gibraltar Forces”,
in commemoration of an early Muslim conquest of the Mediterranean
outpost.64 It consisted of around 30,000 strong highly trained and heavily
armed guerilla forces. Major-General Akhtar Hussain Malik, GOC, 12 Pak
Infantry Division, was put in supreme command, and component units of the
new group were commanded by officers of the regular Pakistani Army. The
“Gibraltar Forces” were composed of men from the regular Pakistan Army,
the ‘Azad Kashmir’ militia, the Frontier Scouts Units, the Mujahids and the

63 Ganguly, n. 58, p. 40.
64 Brines, n. 34, p. 301.
Razakars. It consisted of ten “Forces” of brigade-strength each. A “Force” comprised six units and each unit consisted of five companies (110 men to a company). Pakistani Army officer commanded them all, with a Brigadier at the head of each “Force.”\(^\text{65}\) The “Gibraltar Forces” were armed with standard automatic weapons, including light machine guns, mortars, hand-grenades and other explosives and were equipped with wireless sets. They were trained comprehensively for six weeks at four camps in Pakistan, learning guerrilla and sabotage techniques, as well as basic military conditioning. They were instructed, “to destroy bridges and vital roads, attack police stations, supply dumps, Army headquarters and important installations, inflict casualties on Indian forces, and attack VIPs in Jammu and Kashmir.” Prime Minister Shastri informed this fact to the UN. Shastri further added that interrogation of the captured infiltrators and the seized equipment proved beyond doubt that the infiltrators were armed and equipped by the Pakistan Government and operated under their instructions.\(^\text{66}\)

Finally, on 5 August 1965, \textit{Operation Gibraltar} began. The Gibraltar Forces infiltrated into the Indian territory at widely separated points. Almost simultaneously, from the south-western tip of Jammu to Poonch and Uri in the west, Tithwal in the north-west, Guraiz in the north to Kargil in the north-east, armed infiltrators dribbled into the State of Jammu and Kashmir at various points along the 470-mile long Cease-fire Line. Some of the groups had crossed it even earlier.\(^\text{67}\) Though there were conflicting reports of the exact

\(^{65}\) Mankekar, n. 35, p. 60.
\(^{66}\) S/6672, Prime Minister Shastri’s message to UN Secretary-General, 4 September 1965, as cited in Brines, n. 35, p. 302.
\(^{67}\) Mankekar, n. 35, p. 61.
number of such infiltrators,\textsuperscript{68} it was evident that their number was increasing rapidly day by day. As the intruders began their campaign of sabotage, ambush and arson inside Kashmir, the already explosive situation in the State further worsened. Denying its involvement, Pakistan declared that a state of rebellion existed in the State against India. President Ayub spoke about popular revolt and freedom fighters in Kashmir, without mentioning anything about infiltration and confirming Pakistan's pledge to support the people of Kashmir in their struggle for self-determination.\textsuperscript{69} India strongly denied that there was any rebellion and accused Pakistan of committing continuous 'aggression' by dispatching 'infiltrators'. It was said that some of them were Pakistani regular army officers.\textsuperscript{70} Prime Minister Shastri described the development as a "thinly disguised armed attack" on Kashmir. Most impartial sources and observers including the UN Chief Military Observer in Kashmir found sufficient evidence and confirmed Indian version of Pakistan's direct involvement in the crisis. To quote Russell Brines, "the evidence is convincing that Pakistan prepared and launched the guerrilla attack and carefully deployed her mechanised army to gave it maximum support."\textsuperscript{71} The UN Secretary General, U Thant, reported to the UNSC on 3 September 1965, that the then Chief of the UN Military Observer Group, General R. H. Nimmo had indicated to him that:

the series of violations that began on 5 August were to a considerable extent in subsequent days in the form of armed men, generally not in uniform, crossing the CFL from the Pakistan side for the purpose of armed action on the Indian side. This is a conclusion reached by

\textsuperscript{68} Josef Korbel put it at 4000; Alastair Lamb put it at 3000; Lars Blinkenberg and D. R. Mankekar put it at 5000; B. M. Kaul put it at 10,000.
\textsuperscript{69} Korbel, n. 32, p. 340.
\textsuperscript{70} Lamb, n. 21, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{71} Emphasis added, Brines, n. 34, p. 303.
General Nimmo on the basis of investigations by the United Nations Observers, in the light of the extensiveness and character of the raiding activities and their proximity to the CFL... 72

As per their plan, the infiltrators were to arrive in Srinagar on 8 August. They would enter into the capital city undetected by mingling with the crowds coming in to attend the festival of Pir Dastagir, a Kashmir saint, which was being celebrated on that day. The next day, 9 August was the twelfth anniversary of the first arrest of Sheikh Abdullah. On that day, the opposition parties in Kashmir like Plebiscite Front and Kashmir Action Committee had jointly given the call for a demonstration to register protest against Abdullah’s detention. The plan was that the armed intruders were to participate in the demonstration, and in the name of the people, stage a rebellion, storm and capture the radio station and the airfield, and overthrow the Sadiq Government and install a pro-Pakistan regime in its place. 73 The new administration – a pro-Pakistan Revolutionary Council – would then call upon Pakistan for help. Despite the probabilities of widespread fighting and concerted Indian counter-action, regular Pakistan forces were to intervene to support the ‘liberation’.

But before Pakistan could accomplish its mission, Indian troops moved fast and brought the situation under control. The guerrilla strategy failed to work. The Indian forces soon gained the upper hand in most districts. Though the intruders met with some success by indulging in acts of sabotage, their so-called goal to “liberate” Kashmir miserably failed. General Mohammad Musa of Pakistan Army admitted that, “although their performance was not

73 Manekar, n. 35, p. 61.
altogether disappointing, the main aims for which the hazardous missions were entrusted to them were not accomplished.”74 The hope of the intruders to receive the active support from the local Kashmiris was belied. The Kashmiris generally remained passive and did not rise in revolt as Pakistan had hoped for. The Indian forces soon captured many of the intruders and successfully foiled Pakistan’s ‘grand design’.

In sharp contrast to his handling of Rann of Kutch episode, Prime Minister Shastri showed no moderation. He was not only under political pressure but was also impressed upon by the top brass of the Army to prevent Kashmir from becoming another Rann of Kutch.75 He permitted the India Army to stop the infiltration menace by crossing the Cease-fire Line and capturing certain key passes which were the main routes of infiltration. The Indian move was contrary to Pakistan’s expectation. India did not hesitate to respond militarily, the Indian troops crossed the Cease-fire Line (CFL) on 15 August and attacked Pakistani positions in the Kargil sector. It was the first significant crossing of the CFL by Indian forces since the start of the guerrilla attack. On 24 August, the Indian troops crossed the CFL in the Tithwal sector and captured two strategic Pakistani positions there. By 28 August, Indian troops captured a number of strategic Pakistani mountain positions and eventually took control of the key Haji Pir Pass, located at five miles inside Pakistani territory, which was the main infiltration route into Kashmir.76 India’s military success and the failure of the intruders to spark off a so-called ‘war of

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74 Musa, n. 61, p. 36.
75 Lamb, n. 21, p. 121.
liberation’ by encouraging a popular uprise made it clear by late August that
*Operation Gibraltar* was doomed to fail.

**Operation Grand Slam**

The Indian offensives dangerously tightened the pressure on Pakistan. Disappointed by the failure of *Operation Gibraltar* and to forestall a humiliating defeat, President Ayub Khan decided to intervene militarily by launching a major offensive against India, which was code-named as *Operation Grand Slam*. It was a massive thrust, which was intended to be a *blitzkrieg*, charged with a twin task. In the first swoop, it was to capture the strategic town of Akhnoor, on the Chenab, and cut the road passing through it, from Jammu to Rajouri and to Poonch, thereby bottling up Indian forces in the western region of the State. In the second swoop, the column was to take Jammu city and get astride the Jammu-Srinagar highway and isolate the Indian forces north of the Banihal Pass.\(^\text{77}\)

*Operation Grand Slam* began on 1 September 1965, when Pakistan launched a major offensive in the Bhimber-Chhamb area, right at the end of the Cease-fire Line where Jammu touches on West Punjab. After heavy preparatory artillery fire and three infantry probing attacks, Pakistani forces drove into Indian territory with a column of nearly 70 US supplied Patton tanks and two brigades of between 3,000 and 4,000 infantry troops. The Pakistani attack clearly marked the first major escalation of the conflict, a shift from limited infantry action across the CFL to tank operations across new and more vulnerable terrain. India immediately charged that Pakistan also had crossed the international border for the first time and cited this as legal justification for

\(^{77}\) Mankekar, n. 35, p. 91.
its own subsequent violation of the Punjab border. The weight of the Pakistani offensive quickly pushed back the Indian defenders. Consequently, New Delhi decided to use its Air Forces against the Pakistani massive thrust, to halt its progress towards Akhnoor and Jammu town. Accordingly, the Indian fighter planes were put into operation on 1 September 1965. Pakistan retaliated with its own aerial operations the next day. It was the beginning of a rather limited sky war that was fought mostly in or near the front lines. Nevertheless, on 6 September, the fighting escalated rapidly transforming into an open Indo-Pakistan war, when India struck across the international border in Punjab to relieve pressure on Kashmir. This second Indo-Pak conflict continued for twenty-two days.

The US Policy

After intelligence reports indicated the likelihood of the Pakistani attack, the US was deeply apprehensive that the Pakistani offensive would trigger a critical Indo-Pak crisis, which might escalate into a large-scale war. However, considering its rapidly declining influence upon the conflicting parties, the Johnson Administration decided against playing any active mediator role. Instead, it decided to push the UN hard to intervene in the crisis and preferred to supplement the UN efforts to find a settlement. Accordingly, Washington pressed the UN Secretary General U Thant to urge restraint on both sides. On 1 September, U Thant issued an urgent appeal for an immediate cease-fire and for withdrawal of all armed forces behind the previous Cease-fire Line established by the UN. He also offered his services in helping to re-establish peace and in seeking a solution to the conflict. At Johnson’s directive, Arthur Goldberg, the US representative to the UN, immediately endorsed the
Secretary General's appeal. Similarly, expressing deep concern over the fighting, US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk called in the Indian and Pakistani Ambassadors on 1 September, and stated that the US Government strongly supported U Thant's appeal. 78

The sudden outbreak of war posed a series of potentially serious threats to American interests in South Asia and beyond. It was reflected from the message of the US Ambassador to India, Chester Bowles to President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk. Bowles wrote that, "we are face to face with the prospect of disaster in the subcontinent." 79 He also urged for direct US pressure at the earliest on both sides as a follow-up to UN Secretary General's appeal. He interestingly sought Washington's authorization to tell the Indian Prime Minister that if India agreed to a cease-fire and Pakistan refused, Washington would cut off all military aid to Pakistan. 80

For once, all the senior officials of the Truman Administration shared Bowles' fears. From the very inception of the conflict they were worried that the use of US arms by either side would push Washington into an embarrassing centre-stage position. India's repeated protests against Pakistan's use of American tanks and aircraft drove that point home forcefully. Moreover, the US policy makers feared that China might directly or indirectly offer Pakistan military support, thereby transforming the regional conflict into another theatre of Cold War confrontation. The presence of Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi in Pakistan in early September, coupled with China's public condemnation of

79 Bowles to Johnson and Rusk, 2 September 1965, National Security File, as cited in McMahon, n. 3, p. 328.
80 Embassy New Delhi “flash” telegram to the State Department for the President and Secretary, 2 September 1965, as cited in Kux, n. 39, p. 236.
Indian aggression in Kashmir, accentuated those concerns. In spite of these concerns, President Johnson thought that any direct pressure on the two contending parties would likely just further provoke their indignation with the US. The US policy makers were also aware that American relations with both India and Pakistan lacked enough leverage to pressurize them to accept a cease-fire. The Johnson Administration consequently sought to the US place primary reliance on UN peace efforts with Washington playing a supportive role. Thus, the US President rejected the suggestion given by his Ambassador to India. Accordingly, Secretary of State Rusk informed Ambassador Bowles:

Highest level decision taken here not to engage in direct pressure on either Paks or Indian-for time being, but to place primary reliance on UN. Given existing strains on our relations with both parties, we do not believe such further action as threats to suspend military aid along lines you suggested likely to halt fighting at this time. 81

With American support and encouragement, on 4 September 1965, the UNSC adopted a resolution unanimously calling upon both India and Pakistan for an immediate cease-fire and for a withdrawal of armed personnel to the respective sides of the Cease-fire Line. It also requested the Secretary General to report to Council within three days on the implementation of the resolution. 82 Secretary General U Thant visited the subcontinent personally to persuade the Indian and Pakistani leaders to stop fighting by accepting a cease-fire agreement. But his mission ran into expected huddles. Pakistan refused a cease-fire, which would not provide for a plebiscite in Kashmir. India forcefully stated that Kashmir was an integral part of India and that the infiltration, and not plebiscite, was the key issue. Prior to accepting a cease-

81 State Department Telegram to New Delhi, 2 September 1965, as cited in ibid.
fire, India insisted on the necessity to find a way to prevent a repetition of such infiltration. At the end of his mission, U Thant submitted his report to the UNSC. After going through the Secretary General's report, the UNSC unanimously passed another resolution on 6 September. It repeated its appeal for cessation of hostilities and requested the Secretary General to take "all measures possible" to strengthen the United Nations Observers' team. It also decided to keep the issue under urgent and continuous review.83

Notwithstanding the UNSC resolutions and Secretary General’s appeal Indo-Pakistan war continued unabated and with increasing intensity. By 5 September, the Pakistani forces had captured Jaurian and almost reached Akhnur, which controlled Indian communications with Uri and Poonch. They were less than twenty miles from Jammu itself. India, now facing a major setback in Kashmir, found no choice but to cross the Cease-fire Line and attack Lahore and Sialkot sectors in order to relieve pressure around Akhnur and the threatened road to Kashmir. Consequently, on 6 September, the conflict rapidly escalated and entered into a new and more dangerous phase, when four Indian divisions crossed the international border at Punjab and launched a three-pronged offensive against the capital city of Lahore, which lay only fourteen miles from the frontier. Later in another thrust, the Indian forces crossed from near Jammu into the West Punjab and marched in the direction of Sialkot.

On 6 September, when the Indian troops marched towards Lahore, President Ayub Khan along with Foreign Minister Bhutto called in the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Walter P. McConaughy to inform him officially of the Indian

offensive violating Pakistan’s integrity and pleaded for the US support. Ayub presented McConaughy, with an aide-memoire and called upon Washington to take immediate action under the 1959 US-Pakistan bilateral agreement and the 1962 aide-memoire. The Pakistani communication stated, “As Pakistan has become a victim of naked aggression by armed attack on the part of India, the Government of Pakistan requests the Government of the United States to act immediately to suppress and vacate the aggression.” When McConaughy stressed the role of the UN, Ayub countered, “You are on trial. You cannot hedge or hide from this obligation.”

But the US refused to positively respond to Pakistan’s plea. Secretary of State Rusk commented that Washington had looked into the bilateral agreement and found the Pakistani proposal as one which tantamounted to “being invited in on the crash landing without being in on the take off.” Rusk referred here to the absence of Pakistani consultation prior to the infiltration into Kashmir that set off the war. Later, while conveying the official response to Pakistan’s request for US help, McConaughy asserted that Washington was implementing its assurances to Pakistan by supporting U Thant’s peace efforts. The US considered India’s attack across the international border a serious development, but noted that Pakistan had triggered the crisis by infiltrating large number of intruders across the Cease-fire Line in Kashmir.

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84 Under the terms of this agreement, the US would view any threat to the security, independence, and territorial integrity of Pakistan with the utmost gravity, and would take effective action to assist Pakistan to suppress aggression.
86 ibid.
88 As cited in James, n.57, p. 140.
It showed that Washington did not see things the same way as Pakistan did and held the latter more culpable for the initiation of 1965 war than India. Despite the earnest request from its South Asian ally, the US held back from direct diplomatic intervention, continuing to rely on the UN as the main vehicle to stop fighting. Apart from other considerations, the Johnson Administration feared that any action in favour of one would definitely alienate the other.

However, when the conflict became a full-scale war on 6 September, it became difficult for the US to avoid taking any action on the issue. Washington was particularly concerned about the ramifications of a prolonged war, which might induce Communist China to intervene in the sub continental affairs. Accordingly, Washington called on both sides to stop fighting and to cooperate with the UN efforts to find a settlement. On 6 September itself, the US Secretary of State Rusk directed the American Ambassador to India Chester Bowles to convey the potential dangers of the situation to the Government of India. “Continuation of the conflict”, the Secretary said, “is likely to plunge India more deeply into the cross currents of cold war and internal Communist bloc conflicts.” To him, in the end, the Chinese Communists will be the certain winners, and “it is difficult to see how either India or Pakistan could benefit regardless of the outcome.” By sending a similar message to the US Ambassador in Pakistan, Rusk concluded his appeal by predicting “sheer disaster for both India and Pakistan” unless they accepted the UN’s call for immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of troops.
across the Cease-fire Line.\textsuperscript{89} With the conflict rapidly escalating and with increasing criticism of its South Asia policy, the Johnson Administration realized that it could not postpone a decision on US arms supply to the two warring countries for long. In the face of a "volcanic reaction" in the US Congress, the Johnson Administration on 8 September announced the suspension of all military and economic aid to both India and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{90} Pakistan deeply resented the arms embargo. It considered the US decision grossly unfair, since virtually all of its military equipment came from the US, whereas, India acquired military equipment from a variety of sources.

The imposition of arms embargo and the US appeal for cease-fire failed to deter both the warring parties. Yet, the Johnson Administration hesitated to take any stronger action. It is to be noted that though Washington apparently distanced herself from any direct intervention in the war, it was very much concerned about the long-term and short-term strategic consequences of a prolonged Indo-Pak war towards the US national security interests and the regional security. In a memorandum to President Johnson on 9 September, Rusk highlighted the "complex and far-reaching consequences" that a continued war in the subcontinent posed to American regional and global interests. The possibility of Chinese intervention in the war on Pakistan's side was especially troubling. Any Chinese intervention, Rusk warned, could convert the Indo-Pakistani war into a "Free World-Communist confrontation."\textsuperscript{91} Even without Chinese intervention, the continuation of the

\textsuperscript{89} Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in India, 6 September 1965, \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States}, 1964-1968, vol. 25, p. 367.
\textsuperscript{90} State Department telegram to Embassies New Delhi and Karachi, 8 September 1965, as cited in Kux, n. 18, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{91} Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson, 9 September 1965, \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States}, 1964-1968, vol. 25, pp. 375-76.
bitter Indo-Pak conflict for a longer period could still adversely affect “the whole Western power position in Asia.” Prolonged fighting might lead to “collapse and communal chaos” in the subcontinent, seriously jeopardizing the American interests in the region and the US “would face a new situation in many ways as serious as the loss of China.” Moreover, its effects “would be directly felt all along the Asian rim”. Iran and Turkey might conclude that Washington had let down Ayub and begin to question their own faith in American commitments. “Latent Japanese neutralist tendencies could bloom disturbingly in the wake of a major humiliation of India and of what would be seen as a Chinese Communist victory over the U.S.” Chinese involvement in the Indo-Pakistani war, furthermore, would make Pakistan more dependent on its Chinese ally, “while India, feeling let down by the West and its national prestige at stake, would almost certainly go for the nuclear bomb.” Highlighting those potentially catastrophic consequences, Rusk said that the US could no longer afford to remain uninvolved. He noted that whether acting indirectly (through the UN, the UK, or the Commonwealth), or directly, “only the U.S. has at its disposal the essential carrots and sticks to influence the situation in the long run.” He noted that Washington could get both the countries stop fighting and accept the UN’s cease-fire resolution by providing full support and assistance for the negotiation of all outstanding Indo-Pakistani disputes, including Kashmir. Moreover, he emphasised that the US involvement hopefully, “would also improve the chances of keeping both

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92 ibid., p. 376.
93 Emphasis added, ibid.
India and Pakistan reasonably linked to the West and reasonably firm against Chinese Communist encroachment into the subcontinent.\textsuperscript{94}

The National Security Council (NSC) officials who also played an important role, probably more than the State Department, in shaping the Johnson Administration’s policy response to this crisis, essentially agreed with Rusk’s assessment of the multiple threats that the Indo-Pakistani conflict posed to the US interests.\textsuperscript{95} However, they parted company with the Secretary of State on the viability of his proposal for a more direct American intervention to bring the conflict to an end. They recognized that Washington had inadequate leverage over India and Pakistan. Furthermore, they saw little value in making either side’s acceptance of a cease-fire contingent on American promises to help mediate the Kashmir dispute. They apprehended that as in the past, such a venture would almost certainly prove fruitless. President Johnson concurred with the NSC’s assessment and directed that Washington should support U Thant’s efforts to bring about a cease-fire, avoiding assiduously all Indian and Pakistani entreaties for a more direct US involvement.\textsuperscript{96}

Like Washington, Moscow also threw its support behind the UN efforts to stop the fighting, offering its good offices for peace talks at Tashkent. The Soviets, indeed, worked with the US in support of the UN peace efforts — a rare instance of East-West cooperation during the Cold War. However, notwithstanding US-UK-Soviet support, the UN made very slow progress. Despite his numerous visits in September to South Asia, U Thant failed to obtain Indian and Pakistani agreement on a cease-fire.

\textsuperscript{94} ibid.
\textsuperscript{95} McMahon, n. 3, p. 330.
\textsuperscript{96} Department of State Study, "The India-Pakistan War and its Aftermath", pp. 11-13, as cited in McMahon, n. 3, pp. 330-31.
Notwithstanding the UN efforts, Indo-Pakistan fighting continued with increasing ferocity. India widened the conflict on 8 September, by launching an attack from Rajasthan on Gadra-Hydrabad axis. Raids on Pakistani air bases accompanied these offensives. Pakistan retaliated with air attacks and undertook a naval bombardment of an Indian radar station at Dwarka on the Gujarat coast. However, the air and naval wars were rather limited in scale and remained secondary to the land battles raging in Sialkot and Lahore. With each passing day, the fighting became more fierce and desperate, a real trial of strength in which large number of armour were employed by both sides along with heavy concentration of troops. In fact, the war front in Punjab witnessed some of the largest tank battles since World War II. Pakistani armour performed poorly, suffering heavy losses. In contrast to the 1962 war against China and the fighting in Rann of Kutch, the Indian Army gave a good account of itself. But after a series of fierce armour attacks and counter-attacks, the Indian and Pakistani forces bogged down in hard but indecisive combat on the outskirts of Lahore and further to the north near the city of Sialkot. According to Altaf Gauhar, Ayub Khan realized on 11 September 1965, that “for Pakistan the war was over”, after a major counter-offensive south of Lahore failed miserably. In view of the losses Pakistani forces had suffered and growing shortages of ammunition and other supplies, Ayub considered it only a matter of time before his military was defeated. 97 Realizing the ground realities, during a press conference on 15 September, President Ayub took up this issue and appealed for direct US intervention to

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97 Gauhar, n.53, p. 343.
end the war. But President Johnson refused to oblige him, by saying, "We cannot get involved in unilateral approaches" and insisted on continuing to back UN peace efforts.

However, the entire scenario drastically changed when the possibility of Chinese intervention in the Indo-Pak war suddenly loomed larger. On 16 September, China delivered an ultimatum to the Indian Government: If the Indians did not dismantle their 'military structures' and withdraw to their own side of the Sikkim-Tibet border within three days, they would face unspecified 'grave consequences.' Before its expiry, China extended the deadline of the ultimatum till 22 September, but refused the Indian offer for a neutral investigation into the matter.

Although the US intelligence concluded that China would avoid any direct, large-scale military involvement in the Indo-Pakistan war, the Chinese ultimatum caught the Johnson Administration off guard and forced it to re-evaluate the efficacy of its strategy of non-interference in the mounting crisis in the subcontinent. The ominous tone of the Chinese ultimatum alarmed the US policy makers. They feared that it could very well serve as both a prelude to and a pretext for active Chinese intervention. The Johnson Administration, already seeking to contain the Communist threat in Asia with a rapidly expanding contingent of American forces in Vietnam, viewed the possibility of a Chinese military intervention in South Asia with extreme wariness. In fact, in that period, with the beginning of Vietnam crisis, Communist China

98 Embassy Office Rawalpindi telegram to State Department, 15 September 1965, as cited in Kux, n. 18, p. 162.
100 Lamb, n. 21, p. 129.
101 ibid.
had replaced the former Soviet Union as the chief adversary of the US. The Johnson Administration calculated that any Chinese intervention in the Indo-Pakistani war could pose a challenge of global dimensions to American interests and to American credibility.\(^\text{102}\)

In response to this unexpected new twist, President Johnson directed American policy along several parallel tracks. First, he ordered the Defense and State Departments to prepare military contingency plans for his review. Those plans presumably were to focus on US military options in the event that a Chinese attack occurred and Indian security became endangered. Second, he pledged continued diplomatic support for U Thant's efforts to bring about a cease-fire. Washington attached utmost importance to the UN efforts and the urgency of the quick cessation of fighting under the UN mediation. Third, Johnson sought to use whatever influence the US still retained with India and Pakistan to gain their compliance with the UN resolution. In the view of the American policy makers, prompt Indian and Pakistani acceptance of the UNSC directive would serve the US interests by oviating the rationale for Chinese involvement.\(^\text{103}\)

All those efforts resulted in the passage of an all-important resolution by the UNSC on 20 September, which called upon both India and Pakistan to stop fighting by 22 September. The resolution said "an early cessation of hostilities is essential as a first step towards a peaceful settlement of the outstanding differences between the two countries on Kashmir and other related matters." It firmly demanded that a cease-fire should take effect on "22 September 1965"

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\(^{102}\) Department of State Study, "India-Pakistan War and its Aftermath", as cited in McMahon, n. 3, p. 331.

\(^{103}\) ibid.
at 0700 hours GMT”, and also called upon “both Governments to issue orders for a cease-fire at that moment and a subsequent withdrawal of all armed personnel back to the positions held by them before 5 August 1965”. It requested the Secretary General to “provide the necessary assistance to ensure supervision of the cease-fire” and called on all States “to refrain from any action which might aggravate the situation in the area.” The resolution concluded with the expression of hope that, once a cease-fire had been secured, the Security Council would be able to carry out useful exploration of possible settlements to the political problem which underlay the conflict.104

Although India was rapidly gaining success in the battlefield, it readily agreed to accept the cease-fire, whereas, Pakistan initially rebuffed the UNSC resolution. Meanwhile, a Chinese decision to postpone their 22 September ultimatum to India only partially eased the impending crisis. But the Johnson Administration feared that Pakistan’s defiance of the UNSC cease-fire resolution might encourage Chinese intervention yet again. Consequently, Washington instructed the US Ambassador to Pakistan, McConaughy, to forcefully convey President Ayub about the risks he was running. The US Ambassador warned President Ayub that Pakistan now faced a critical choice: if it should directly or indirectly – by failing to agree to a cease-fire – encourage Chinese entry into the conflict, Pakistan would alienate itself from the West, perhaps permanently. McConaughy stressed that it was not a threat, but a reality. If China really intervened in the conflict, the entire blame for that action would be placed in Pakistan’s failure to agree to the cease-fire.105

104 Resolution adopted by the UN Security Council (extracts), as cited in Jain, n. 72, pp. 251-52.
Moreover, Johnson warned Ayub that he would assume collusion if Pakistan rejected the cease-fire and the Chinese moved militarily against India.106

After briefly wavering, and pushed by additional American pressure coupled with military compulsion, a hesitant Ayub finally gave way on 22 September 1965, and reluctantly decided to accede to the UN’s cease-fire proposal. Consequently, at 3.30 a.m., 23 September 1965, South Asian time, the fighting stopped marking the end of the second Indo-Pak armed conflict, which lasted for around twenty two days. Though major fighting stopped on 23 September, the Indo-Pakistan hostilities produced continual tension and brisk, if limited, skirmishes for several months after the cease-fire. Washington ironically supported the Soviet mediation to settle the conflict, reverting its decade old policy of preventing any Soviet role in South Asia. The situation quieted towards the end of 1965 and was controlled, in all outward respects, by the Indo-Pakistan agreement at Tashkent on 10 January 1966, and the subsequent withdrawal of opposing forces to their per-war positions by the deadline of 25 February 1966.

Conclusion
In many respects, the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 was an important landmark in the history of American relations with the Indian subcontinent.

When the war began on 1 September, Washington observed the proceedings with ambivalence. Although the US was still nominally tied to 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. Ever since the original arms deal of 1954,

106 As cited in Kux, n. 18, p. 163.
American leaders had consistently rejected guarantees to Pakistan in the event of conflict with India. Moreover, the US policy makers had serious reservation about the trend of Pakistan's foreign policy. The Americans had no major objection to Ayub's opening to Moscow. Pakistan's leanings towards China, however, constituted a different matter. The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations went into Vietnam largely to contain the Chinese, and neither President thought much of Ayub's cultivation of Beijing. Both Kennedy and Johnson ranked the containment of China as one of the overriding objective of the US foreign policy. Pakistan's China gambit infuriated Johnson, as it had Kennedy, because it threatened to undermine that goal.

Thus when Ayub presented an aide-memoir to McConaughy that called upon the US to uphold the 1959 bilateral agreement on military cooperation and to intervene in the war on behalf of Pakistan, Washington flatly rejected to oblige her ally's request. Rather, it assumed a policy of 'studied neutrality' and gave strong support to the UN's peace efforts. Deeply involved in the Vietnam quagmire, and realizing its decreasing leverage over India and Pakistan, Washington considered that staying out of the vexing Indo-Pak conflict, and playing only an indirect and supportive role to end the conflict would be the best policy option available to her. Washington also abstained from direct diplomatic intervention to put an end to fighting, as it feared that any action in favour of one would definitely alienate the other.

The US policy during 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. In fact, New Delhi perceived that the US arms supply to Pakistan emboldened it to attack India. Furthermore, Washington’s even-handed approach also irked India, because it was Pakistan, which started the war by launching Operation Gibraltar. The Pakistanis were also bitter in their reaction. Ayub Khan, who was the architect of Pakistan’s policy of close security alignment with the US, expected more than the US was willing to offer, and thus remained critical of the role the US played in South Asia. Ayub maintained, as did many Pakistanis, that in return for the use of Pakistani military facilities, the US owed Pakistan military support in all cases, not merely in response to Communist aggression. But Washington, not only refused to help but also imposed arms embargo at a crucial juncture. To Pakistan, it was an “act of betrayal” and humiliation. Since Pakistan was almost entirely dependent on the US for arms, this step by Washington was extremely crucial and meant that Pakistan could not sustain a long-drawn war in which India, because of her size and industrial capacity, including her indigenous military production, was bound to win. It may be noted that the US stance over 1965 war was one of the contributing factors to Pakistan’s decision to close the US communications and intelligence facilities near Peshawar.

But President Johnson and his senior foreign policy advisers recognized the obvious: that the war signaled the frustrating end to a political cycle set in motion with the formation of the Pakistani-American alliance eleven years earlier. Pakistan’s alignment with the US combined with subsequent American efforts to balance its South Asian priorities by pumping massive economic assistance into India during the late 1950s, and military aid as well
after 1962, had been predicated on the belief that the US could cultivate friendly, productive relations with both countries. The US would not have to choose between the two regional rivals, a generation of American policymakers had contended; it could instead help them resolve their differences and in the process transform both into Cold War assets. India, they had calculated, would eventually recognize, as Pakistan had earlier, that its national interests necessitated an openly pro-Western foreign policy. Both India and Pakistan would appreciate, Washington expected, that the real threats to their security emanated not from each other, but from Moscow and Beijing. 107

Now, with both India and Pakistan fighting each other with the US-supplied arms, those illusion lay shattered along with the peace of the subcontinent. With both the parties angry at the US policy and criticizing Washington for the imbroglio, the failure of American policy to achieve its stated objective was vividly manifested. Indeed, the Indo-Pak conflict impelled senior policy planners to begin fundamental re-thinking of US interests and policy priorities in the subcontinent. Even President Johnson, infuriated with the image of self-defeating fratricidal strife presented by the 1965 war, was certain that a different approach to South Asia was long overdue. Convinced that previous Administrations had exaggerated the importance of India and Pakistan to broader Cold War security interests, Johnson directed that the US adopt a lowered profile in the subcontinent and pursue more limited policy objective there. 108

107 McMahon, n. 3, pp. 332-33.
Washington's backing for a Soviet mediation offer revealed how radically the 1965 war had shaken long-held American policy assumption about the region. Following the UN sponsored cease-fire of 20 September 1965, the former Soviet Union offered its good offices to both parties in order to help settle the conflict, proposing Tashkent as a conference site. Washington, which had launched so many of its South Asia initiatives over the past decade because of a perceived need to contain Moscow, ironically welcomed the offer. Consequently, the Soviet-brokered Tashkent Declaration of 10 January 1966, marked the end to another chapter of Indo-Pakistani armed conflict.