U.S. Initiatives for the Settlement of Kashmir Dispute in Cold War Period

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Since the Cold War controversies were stretched to South Asia, U.S. maneuvered its security policy in the region. Pakistan supported the U.S. intentions of building a security system in the region and became part of it but India was very critical of it. Thus the US security strategies could not attain objectives in a security deficit and divided South Asia. The Americans did not eradicate India from the U.S. strategic milieu in the region. They always intended to retain both South Asian powers on board. Thus United States, emphasizing an integral South Asian regional strategy, promoted a policy to prevent the crisis between India and Pakistan and induce them to reach a peaceful and equitable resolution of the Kashmir problem, a bone of contention between Pakistan and India. The U.S. is the only extra-regional power that has a long record of contributions to scale down the aggressiveness over Kashmir and always encouraged for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. This paper is an attempt to trace the U.S. efforts made during the Cold War time in and outside the United Nations to seek a peaceful channel for resolution of Kashmir dispute.

Introduction

The worth of U.S.-sponsored collective security in Asia was based on harmonious relationship between India and Pakistan. Divided South Asia could never be supportive to the U.S. security strategy in the region. Thus United States constantly tried to push India and Pakistan to improve their relationship through the resolution of all contentious issues, Kashmir in particular, that has blocked all channels to reduce animosity between the two countries. The U.S. played a intermediary role in resolution of Kashmir dispute and it made efforts in and outside the United Nations. These U.S. endeavors though did not pave way for resolution of the dispute, they effectively functioned to avoid crisis over issue and also thwarted India’s policy for further maneuverings over Kashmir.
**Initiatives at UN**

In early 1948 as the dispute was presented before the UN Security Council, the United States moved the ‘basic’ resolution of April 21, 1948, proposing for a free and fair UN supervised plebiscite in Kashmir to decide its future in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. The resolution was of crucial importance because under the recommendation of this resolution, the subsequent UN intermediary efforts through the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) and the individual UN representatives were carried out. The United States played an active role in UNCIP. The U.S. support for plebiscite in Kashmir caused resentment in India. The Indians called it an unfriendly line of action against their country.¹ The Indian government argued that the formation of UNCIP guaranteed the U.S. objectives in Kashmir.² The UNCIP intermediary efforts made the cease-fire effective in the Kashmir region between India and Pakistan on January 1, 1949. The further implementation on the UN resolutions of the 1948 and 1949 for demilitarization of the Kashmir state and holding of plebiscite was barricaded due to India’s ill response.

The obstructionist policy of India thwarted the U.S. mediatory endeavors through UN and diminished the hope for settlement of the Kashmir issue. However, the United States continued with its quest for an amicable solution of the dispute.³

The U.S. policy makers became convinced that India was responsible for the failure of the UN efforts towards the peaceful solution of the problem.⁴

Amid the UN peace efforts, the security situation between India and Pakistan flared up South Asian region in beginning of 1951. It happened in the backdrop of Indian Policy of incorporating the Indian-controlled Kashmir into the Indian Union through the India-sponsored constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported that escalating tense situation between India and Pakistan could probably turn in to an armed clash that would not remain limited to the Kashmir border.⁵

In an attempt to defuse the situation, United States sponsored a resolution in the UN Security Council, in March 1951, which disapproved the Indian plan of determining the future status of Kashmir by constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir and reaffirmed that the future of Kashmir state should be “decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspicious of the United Nations.”⁶ India rejected it.⁷

Indian provocative attitude went worst when India unilaterally incorporated the state on November 17, 1956 through the constitution adopted by the India-
The Indian move flouted all Security Council endeavors for peaceful and amicable settlement of the future of Kashmir. The United States declared the Indian action as invalid and also a violation of the international charter for self-determination. The Security Council adopted a resolution on January 24, 1957 which reiterated, rejecting the Indian attempt action that: 'The final disposition of the state of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.' The U.S. representative in the Security Council Cabot Lodge commented on the matter.

The United States introduced a resolution in the Security Council on February 14, 1957 which called for reintroduction of UN mediator and use of the UN forces in connection with demilitarization of the Kashmir region.

The Soviet Union vetoed the resolution in favour of Indian stand. However, the resolution confirmed the U.S. support for the right of self-determination of Kashmiris.

In November 1957, when the Security Council resumed debate on Kashmir, the United States categorically reiterated its policy on Kashmir. Along with Britain, Australia, Colombia and Philippines, it forwarded another resolution that recalled that the demilitarization of Kashmir region was an important goal and put emphasis on renewal of the UN mediatory efforts to secure the agreement of India and Pakistan for the settlement of the dispute, on the basis of the resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949. The resolution was adopted on December 2, 1957.

Following this resolution, the U.N. mediator frank P. Graham was dispatched to South Asia in a final attempt to seek some way to settle the dispute, on the basis of the U.N. resolutions, but he again failed due to the intransigent of India. Commenting on Indian attitude to block the UNCIPs, The New York Times stated: “India does not wish to have the Kashmir question settled through the offices of the UN.... India’s intransigence is no longer directed against Pakistan. It is directed against the United Nations itself.”

After forcible annexation of Goa, in December 1961, the Indian leaders, drawing parallel to the annexation of Goa, threatened to capture the Kashmir.

Indians’ provocative statements had created an agitated situation in Pakistan. The UN Security Council again resumed debate on Kashmir in June 1962 and through a resolution reminded India and Pakistan to move to seek peaceful settlement of Kashmir within the frame of resolutions of 1948 and 1949. US heavily supported the resolution but Soviet Union vetoed it. The U.S. mainstream
newspaper, *New York Herald Tribune*, in its editorial entitled “India hides behind Russia’s Veto”, commented that “Self-determination as expressed by a plebiscite is approved by India for others, but not for itself.”

Discarding all UN Security Council resolutions, the Indian intentions for gaining a permanent control of the disputed Kashmir state finally came to surface in December 1964. The presidential order of the Indian government in December 1964 ended the special status of Jammu and Kashmir State and merged it completely into the Indian Union, by assigning it the status of a province. Pakistan bitterly resented this move. Inside the state, Kashmiris themselves vociferously voiced against the amalgamation of their state into the Indian Union. January 15, 1965 was observed as a ‘protest day’ throughout the state. The tense situation between India and Pakistan turned into an open war on September 6, 1965. The ‘Second Kashmir War’ fully endangered the regional peace and security. The United States was alarmed at this intractable security problem in the area. The United States, however, threw her weight behind the UN efforts to secure a cease-fire and avoided any direct intervention on its own. President Johnson advised both combatants to opt a peaceful way to resolve their differences, through the UN good offices. He pledged for the American support to UN, “every step by action and words.” In a bid to avoid further worsening of the conflict, the United States accelerated its efforts in the Security Council to secure the end of war, through the resolution of September 20, 1965.

The war demonstrated that unresolved Kashmir dispute would continue to create tensions between the two neighbours and that it was a main source of regional tensions.

The Tashkent summit between President Ayub Khan of Pakistan and Prime Minister Shastri of India from January 4 to 10, 1966 through the Soviet Prime Minister Alexi Kosygin’s good offices was an attempt to pave a way to resolve the Kashmir dispute but it was far from being resolved at Tashkent. US appreciated the agreement as a step towards peace between India and Pakistan.

However, the agreement could not change much and the relations between the two signatories moved on deteriorating pitch. The result of 1970 general elections in Pakistan breaded the civil war situation in the eastern part of the country. India exploited the situation which finally exploded in December 1971 and both neighbours went to a large scale war that resulted in separation of East Pakistan. The U.S. role in the conflict was not different from the previous one it played in 1965 war. It continued arms embargo and pressed the governments of India and Pakistan to refrain from any further action that could exacerbate the security environment. The U.S. preferred the UN channels to end the conflict. The fighting was mostly limited to East Pakistan (East-West Bengal border) but the Kashmir border along the Ceasefire Line was also accentuated. During the war, when the
Indian forces tried to violate the Kashmir Ceasefire Line and enter Azad Kashmir, the United States cautioned India to halt its advance across the Ceasefire Line. The U.S. representative in the UN Security Council George Bush warned India that if it took any step to “annex Pakistani territory and change the status-quo in Kashmir contrary to UN resolutions, it will be responsible for injecting a new and serious dimension to the risks and hostilities in the sub-continent.” After war, the Simla agreement was signed between the two states in July 1972 that emphasized bilateral efforts to resolve the contentious issues, including the Kashmir problem.

**Persistence for bilateral negotiations**

Apart from its initiatives at the United Nations, the United States also made diplomatic efforts to persuade India and Pakistan to adopt a reconciliatory approach to help end complications that had obstructed solution of the Kashmir issue. The noteworthy gesture of this U.S. policy was President Truman’s letters to Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, urging both leaders to accept the arbitration of Chester Nimitz to uphold the efforts of UNCIP. Likewise in early 1952, when the UN mediator Dr. Frank P. Graham had been conducting his unsuccessful negotiations with Pakistani and Indian officials, the U.S. ambassador to India, Chester Bowles, realizing that the negotiations carried on by Dr. Graham were leading nowhere, made a personal attempt for settlement of Kashmir. He recommended a plan regarding troop proportions to be left in Kashmir after demilitarization under which India was to retain its 15000 regular troops and 6,000 Kashmiri militia, while Pakistan was to keep 7,250 troops (including Azad Kashmir forces and northern scouts). He held talks with Pakistan’s Prime Minister Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din in June 1952 and presented this plan. Khawaja Nadim-ud-Din was found lenient who, in return, asked for immediate establishment of a plebiscite administrator in Kashmir. Later, when Bowles communicated this proposal to Nehru, he gave a cold response. In Bowles’s words: Nehru was acting in a wholly unreasonable manner. The U.S. State Department commended Bowles’s initiative and reckoned the proposal reasonable.

The Republican administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower realized the need for a quick solution of the Kashmir dispute, introducing a strategy of military alliance in Asia. The State Department was instructed to search for avenues for which the United States could make contribution to resolve the issue. After a careful examining of the different reports submitted by UN missions and U.S. representatives, the State Department suggested the direct negotiations between India and Pakistan as the most practicable approach to create a pleasant atmosphere suitable for settlement of the Kashmir’s status. Eventually President Eisenhower sent Paul Hoffman, President of the Ford Foundation to South Asia. Hoffman as special envoy of President Eisenhower visited South Asia in 1953. He held talks with Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan and urged them to initiate direct talks over the dispute. Consequently, Prime Ministers held three rounds of
talks in June-August 1953 which were concluded with an optimistic affirmation in which Nehru agreed with Bogra that the future status of Kashmir state would be settled in accordance with the wishes of Kashmiris. Nehru soon stepped back from his commitment mentioned in joint communiqué of his talks with Bogra, with respect to free voting in Kashmir, and used Pakistan-United States maneuvering for strategic alliance as pretext.

In April 1959, President Muhammad Ayub Khan, a staunch supporter of U.S.-Pakistan alliance, offered Indian government for a joint defense arrangement based on presumption that the military cooperation would provide a rational ground to both countries to abandon hostility against each other and finally establish a conducive environment for the settlement of outstanding security conflicts. Ayub’s proposal of joint defence was principally subject to the resolution of the Kashmir problem. Ayub stated: “…prerequisite to such a pact (joint defence) is the solution of big problems like Kashmir and Canal-Waters. Once these are resolved we could look forward to this proposal.”

Ayub’s idea was fully supported by the Americans because it closely harmonized their scheme for a mutual India-Pakistan security relationship. As New Delhi was not prepared to give any concessions on the settlement of Kashmir issue, Nehru ruled out the possibility of any concept of common defence between India and Pakistan and said that the “common defense was not the real issue at all but something else-the Kashmir issue.”

The climate of trust and goodwill was improved when in later half of 60s, both the states signing mutual treaty on September 19, 1960, agreed to end the canal waters dispute amicably through the World Bank mediation. The settlement of this longstanding canal waters issue was regarded as an “event of great historic significance” for India and Pakistan and for the whole world. The United States described this bilateral understanding “a major step towards genuine amity.”

The Americans viewed this improved climate as the ‘high time’, which could help find an amicable solution of the Kashmir dispute. Accordingly in January 1962, President Kennedy counseled Ayub and Nehru to come to terms over Kashmir in this unique atmosphere of goodwill, and suggested Eugane Black, President of the World Bank, as mediator. Pakistan’s response to the Kennedy’s proposal was positive while India, as usual, out rightly rejected it. Meanwhile in view of India-China rivalry, India was underlined as an important country to thwart the Chinese communist activities. Thus for a solid counterpart to China, United States wanted India and Pakistan to come on a same page. It was necessary for both countries to abandon their aggressive designs against each other and for it there was a need of a fair settlement of Kashmir dispute.
So the U.S. made an attempt for solution of Kashmir. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Averell Harriman and British Commonwealth Secretary Duncan Sandys visited Pakistan and India in November 1962. They convinced the Nehru and Ayub and consequently their Foreign Ministers held six rounds of talks on Kashmir from December 27, 1962 to May 16, 1963. The talks were failed. Failure did not affect the U.S. Policy towards India.

The issues of Vietnam and North Korea minimized the U.S. focus on South Asian affairs. However, Kashmir retained the attention of U.S. policy makers. The Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) Philip Talbot said in October: “Kashmir is only one aspect, of course, of our large interest in the subcontinent of South Asia” After the second Kashmir war of September 1965, the United States re-evaluated its South Asia policy which conditioned the termination of arms embargo on India and Pakistan to the joint promise to secure peaceful coexistence.

The Americans estimated that the economic cooperation could pave the way to political cooperation between the two tense neighbors. Accordingly they presented an idea of India-Pakistan joint economic ventures. Subsequently in June 1966, the United States resumed the full-scale economic aid to India and Pakistan, with a strong hope that both neighbours would fall in line with its idea for economic cooperation. However, the U.S. proposal made no headway because Pakistan and India could not come to terms with each other because of their sharp differences on the Kashmir dispute.

Accordingly Tashkent summit also failed to make some possibility for resolution of Kashmir dispute.

The East Pakistan crisis further deepened relations between Pakistan and India. The United States viewed the East Pakistan crisis as an internal affair of Pakistan. Washington asked Islamabad to bring about a political settlement of the crisis. Nixon administration also persuaded Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi not to exploit the situation and work for maintaining the peace and stability in the region. American policy makers employed ‘preventing war’ diplomacy to diminish the risk of war and preserve peace in the area. It ceased the supply of arms to both warring parties. With a view to halt Indian aggression, the United States took further measures like suspension of economic aid to India worth $ 87.6 million on December 7, 1971. The U.S. measures could not work successfully to diminish the possibility of war.

Riding on the friendship with Soviet Union, India’s response was not accommodating. India carried on its plan for exploiting situation in East Pakistan for settling the “score in Kashmir” and destroying the power of West Pakistan. Seeing the Soviet intensions of increasing its sea power in the Indian Ocean, the
U.S. government dispatched its naval task force headed by nuclear aircraft carrier-Enterprise- to Bay of Bengal, which reached the area on December 15, 1971.\textsuperscript{42} It was a clear demonstration of the U.S. commitment to the territorial integrity of West Pakistan. It checkmated Indo-Soviet designs against Pakistan and restrained the Soviet Union from frustrating the UN efforts to bring about a cessation of hostilities between India and Pakistan and retaining the Soviet Union from converting the Indian Ocean in to a Russian Lake.\textsuperscript{43}

The fighting was mostly limited to the eastern wing of Pakistan (East-West Bengal border) but the battle was also fought around the cease-fire line. When India seemed determined to besiege Azad Kashmir, the United States demonstrated its active support for the right of self-determination of Kashmiris. The United States warned that India would be responsible for a “new and serious dimension to the risks and hostilities in the sub-continent” if she took any step to “change the status quo in Kashmir contrary to the UN resolutions.”\textsuperscript{44}

New diversion in the U.S. security policy in Southeast Asia and Gulf regiondeviated the attention of the American policy makers, but they had not totally closed their eyes to South Asian security matters. During President Nixon’s visit to Beijing in February 1972, Kashmir issue was specially referred. In the joint communiqué, Nixon and Chinese Prime Minister ZhouenLia urged both India and Pakistan to take some concrete steps towards normalization by withdrawing their forces from alert positions and deploying them behind their own frontiers and the Ceasefire Line in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{45} Simla agreement signed between India and Pakistan on July 3, 1972 converted the Ceasefire Line in Kashmir into the Line of Control (LoC) and restricted both parties to respect it “without prejudice to the recognized position of either side.” The agreement called both signatures to work on bilateral level for the resolution of all issues including Kashmir issue. The agreement was hailed all over the world. The United States welcomed the bilateral process of Simla agreement as an excellent beginning.\textsuperscript{46}

The Indian nuclear explosion in May 1974 faded the overall spirit of re-orientation nurtured at Simla. Nuclear blast introduced a new factor of far reaching implications in the region.\textsuperscript{47} The Indian accusation on Pakistan for backing the Khalistan movement and combat on Siachen Glacier in the Kashmir region in 1980s added new dimension to the already deteriorated relations between their countries.

In the backdrop of Khalistan movement and Kashmiris’ resistance against the Indian policies, the regional security environment had been worsened causing serious speculation about the Indian attack on Pakistan’s nuclear facilities.\textsuperscript{48} The situation emerged as a serious matter of concern for the United States that came to believe that Pakistan as a ‘front line state’ was under threat both from the Soviet
Union and India. Nevertheless, Washington repeatedly assured Islamabad for full support in case of any attack on Pakistan.⁴⁹

Over time, the security situation in South Asia took a turn to the worst. In the later years, the scares of war between India and Pakistan overshadowed their relations. The United States intermediary role aimed at defusing the military standoff situation and encouraging both countries towards peace dialogue. The U.S. ‘crisis preventing diplomacy’ successfully functioned in 1987 and 1990 when both rivals had reached on the brink of war. Washington urged both New Delhi and Islamabad to consider CBMs. However, parleys between the two sides could not bring forth any positive result. Afterward suspicions and diverse perceptions dominated the relations.

The core dispute of Kashmir became increasingly more contentious and it hardened the attitudes of both countries. Afghans’ resistance against the Soviets’ occupation of their country gave the Kashmir movement a new lease of life. Since 1989, the Kashmir movement entered a new phase of resistance. With the deployment of more than 800,000 Indian military and paramilitary forces in Kashmir to keep the people in bondage and servitude, the Indian authorities used all measures for repression, oppression and persecution to break the will of Kashmiri people. Kashmir gave the most glaring example of the persistent violations of the human rights, which included firings on civilians, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, tortures, burning of houses and gang-rapes.
Notes and References


7 Ibid, 182.


10 For extracts, see K. Arif, ed., *America-Pakistan Relations*, Vol. 11, 82-83.

11Ibid., 85.

12 *Asian Recorder* (Weekly), New Delhi, December 1957, 1288.


19 It is notable that it was second attempt of Bowles. Earlier in beginning of 1952, Bowles had recommended an idea of partitioning of Kashmir between the claimants, but idea could not be worked out because the U.S. State Department did not back it up. The State Department feared that support to Bowles’s scheme might be inconvenient to Graham Mission. See Chester Bowles, *Ambassador’s Report*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1954), 253.


27 *Dawn*, February 14, 1960

28 *Dawn*, September 20, 1960
29 The Pakistan Times, January 12, 1960


31 S.M. Burke and Lawrence Ziring, Pakistan Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis, 237.


33 S.M. Burke and Lawrence Ziring, Pakistan Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis, 280.

34 Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Pakistan, China and America, (Karachi: Council for Pakistan Studies, 1980), 119.


37 Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Pakistan, China and America, 143-145.


42 Ibid.


44 The Americans knew that Indian occupation of Azad Kashmir would deprive Pakistan not only of control of that territory but also of her sole common border with China. See Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXV,

45 *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, (First Quarter, 1972), 132.


United States time and again made efforts to defuse tension between India and Pakistan and bring them to dialogue for a peaceful settlement of contentious issues, Kashmir dispute in particular whose spillover as a nuclear flash point has put South Asia at risk of a nuclear conflict. The Americans never deemed this situation as advantageous for U.S. security interests in the area. Though the U.S. security policy in South Asia fluctuated time to time in consistent with its interests in the region, Kashmir dispute always shared the U.S. security agenda in the region. If Pakistan able to got whole Kashmir we can say that yes, Pakistan win the war and we lost Kashmir but this was not possible because of our great and brave Indian army. 

All the kashmir conflict can be solved during the period of 1947–48 as the Maharaja of state Shri Hari Singh was ready to accept the terms of Indian IOA (Instrument of Accession) but Nehru only concern was his Sheikh Abdullah and he came with Article 370 temporary provision but now it has effectively became permanent. 

In fact Pakistan started the Kashmir campaign when Kashmir was still NOT part of India. It's only when maharaja Hari Singh asked for help in view of the Pakistani foray into Kashmir that India insisted that he first sign the instrument of accession. A peaceful settlement of Kashmir issue with Pakistan could have been possible but for the interference and aggression by the Anglo-American powers. However, the Russians vetoed the resolution on February 20, 1957 in favor of India against the Anglo-American bloc. Instead of taking note of Pakistani aggression in Kashmir, the US blamed India for the use of force. India, however, resisted the US attempt to equate India and Pakistan together on the Kashmir affairs. Wars were brought to the door steps of India which in turn disturbed both India and Pakistan as they waged three major wars between them. Secondly, the US military aid to Pakistan upset the military balance in favor of Pakistan.