

A Critical Evaluation of The Mediator Role Played by The United States in The India-Pakistan Conflict

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Abstract

Throughout the Cold War, the US, a strategic ally of Pakistan, forced India to accept the settlement of the Kashmir issue through political will, diplomacy, and economic measures. However, in the post-Cold War era, the US role changed from conflict resolution to crisis management, including defusing tension between the two adversaries. Donald Trump, the president of the United States, has taken up that position and given Pakistan and India a way to end the long-running dispute in Kashmir. As a result, this study concludes that the US's desire to mediate has altered as a result of geopolitical and geostrategic objectives in South Asia, such as the Cold War's strategic conflicts between the US and the Soviet Union and the US's subsequent encirclement of China. This essay also examines the US's attempts at mediation throughout the Cold War and why those efforts were unsuccessful. In addition, how did the US's mediation role affect India's Kashmir policies throughout the Cold War and after? Finally, despite Pakistan's involvement in the US-Taliban peace process in Afghanistan, this study examines the main reasons why the US is politically motivated to end the India-Pakistan conflict.

Keywords: Cold War, Kashmir, Mediation, Plebiscite, Good Offices.

Introduction

The pivotal role that Pakistan has recently assumed in facilitating peace agreements in Afghanistan and South Asia has garnered the attention of the Trump administration, prompting their willingness to extend mediation services in the longstanding India-Pakistan conflict pertaining to Kashmir. During a biennial diplomatic excursion to India spanning duration of two days commencing on the 25th of February in the year 2020, the esteemed President of the United States reaffirmed his commitment to engage in the facilitation of mediation (*Sameer Lalwani, 2020*). During the auspicious occasion of the World Economic Forum on January 22, 2020, the esteemed President of the United States, Donald Trump, engaged in a diplomatic discourse with distinguished Prime Minister Imran Khan. In this exchange of ideas, President Trump graciously extended an offer to mediate the longstanding and intricate Kashmir conflict that has persisted between the nations of India and Pakistan (*The Hindu, January 22, 2020*). In the annals of history, the year that has passed, specifically on the twenty-second day of July in the year 2019, witnessed a remarkable occurrence that left the nation of India in a state of astonishment. It was during this time that the esteemed President of the United States, Donald Trump, displayed an unexpected inclination to intervene in the longstanding and contentious Kashmir conflict. This

surprising turn of events persisted when Imran Khan, the esteemed Prime Minister of Pakistan, engaged in a meeting with President Trump at the esteemed United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in the month of September in that same year (*The Hindu, January 20, 2020*). Throughout history, the United States has employed a diverse array of methodologies, including unilateral endeavors, bilateral undertakings in conjunction with the United Kingdom, and multilateral propositions facilitated by the United Nations, in order to address and seek a resolution for the protracted India-Pakistan dispute pertaining to the region of Kashmir. The Kashmir dispute has been commonly referred to as difficult by a range of esteemed individuals including US government officials, policymakers, scholars, journalists, and private analysts (*Devin T., 2023*).

In accordance with the astute observations of esteemed American diplomat Henry F. Grady, it is incumbent upon the United States to proactively advocate for the amicable resolution of the longstanding discord between the nations of India and Pakistan. British statesmen and diplomats, including the esteemed Nol Baker, fervently advocated for the United States to exercise its diplomatic influence in order to mediate the longstanding and intricate Kashmir dispute. He highlighted the commendable reputation of the United States in both India and Pakistan as a potential catalyst for achieving a harmonious resolution to the longstanding Kashmir dispute (*H.W. Brands., 2008*). During the nascent stages of the Cold War, Indo-US relations were characterized by a notable absence of friction, primarily attributable to the overarching influence of the Cold War itself, the implementation of dollar diplomacy, and the prevailing sentiment of anti-colonialism. However, it is worth noting that this harmonious dynamic experienced a gradual deterioration, primarily stemming from the contentious and protracted Kashmir dispute. At the outset, the United States exhibited a reluctance to engage in the matter pertaining to the region of Kashmir. Even officials from the State Department harbored a sense of skepticism regarding the potential efficacy of the United Nations in successfully resolving the aforementioned dispute (*Denis Cox, 1992*). Nevertheless, it was President Henry S. Truman of the United States who, on the auspicious date of August 25, 1949, ultimately implored Prime Minister Nehru to acquiesce to the proposition of arbitration as a means to resolve the prevailing deadlock concerning the plebiscite (*Ibid, 62*). Having stated that the United States commenced assuming the role of mediator by employing non-coercive intervention. The aforementioned course of action pertaining to US intervention encompassed the utilization of unadulterated mediation, conciliation, problem-solving, and the provision of good offices (*Oliver Ramsbotham, 2005*).

During the epoch of the Cold War, the diplomatic endeavors undertaken by the United States exhibited a certain degree of oscillation in their pursuit of a resolution to the intricate matter of Kashmir, spanning from the year 1948 to 1989. Following the year 1989, a significant insurgency emerged in the region of Kashmir, thereby instigating a notable shift in the involvement of the United States from active engagement to a state of disengagement. The prevailing circumstances arise from the overt engagement of both India and Pakistan in the territorial dispute concerning the region of Kashmir. During the George W. Bush era, the United States prioritized crisis management over resolving the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, a matter that persisted during the waning years of the Cold War (*Howard B. Shaffer, 2010*). During the epoch following the conclusion of the Cold War, the United States exhibited a marked proclivity towards aligning itself closely with the nation of India, while concurrently leveling accusations against Pakistan for its alleged role in fostering terrorism within the region of Kashmir. Through this development, India has acquired a significant degree of influence in the political landscape of Washington, effectively displacing the United States from its involvement in the ongoing Kashmir

conflict. India has assumed the role of a neutral third party, utilizing its diplomatic prowess to mediate and facilitate a resolution to this contentious issue (*Farzna Shakoor, 2001*).

The Clinton administration, during the 1990s, undertook diplomatic efforts to prevent an imminent armed conflict between the nations of India and Pakistan. From the Clinton era to the inception of the Trump administration, the United States' role as a mediator was eclipsed by overt military conflicts, such as the Kargil War between India and Pakistan, leaving the matter unresolved and lingering in the background (*Ershad Mahmud, 2001*). In a parallel vein, it is noteworthy that the Bush administration has aligned itself with India, driven by the United States' strategic considerations pertaining to the capital city of New Delhi. In light of the United States' decision to establish New Delhi as a strategic partner, President Bush exerted pressure upon Pakistan to undertake efforts in combating terrorist organizations operating within the region of Kashmir (*Ahmed Ejaz, 2016*). During the tenure of the Obama administration, earnest discussions pertaining to the Kashmir dispute persisted with the aim of amicably resolving the protracted crisis between the nations of India and Pakistan. In a display of sagacity, President Obama entrusted the esteemed Richard Halbrook, a seasoned diplomat, with the responsibility of fostering a constructive dialogue between the two nations, specifically concerning the intricate Kashmir conflict. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the formidable influence exerted by India's lobby in the esteemed corridors of Washington has undeniably eclipsed the significance of the United States' involvement in the Kashmir matter in the foreseeable future. In 2013, the Obama administration regrettably declined Pakistan's entreaty to address the longstanding Kashmir conflict (*Ibid, 31-32.*).

The involvement of the Obama administration in the Kashmir issue was largely marginalized. In a parallel vein, it can be observed that the initial disposition of the Trump administration towards Pakistan was marked by a sense of hostility. During the esteemed visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to the United States, a noteworthy occurrence transpired as he engaged in a meeting with President Trump. It is of utmost significance to highlight that the esteemed President expressed a profound inclination to reinstate the pivotal role of the United States as a mediator in the ongoing Kashmir conflict. When queried about the involvement of his administration in the Kashmir matter, which commenced on the 22nd of July in the year 2019, during a conversation with the esteemed Prime Minister of Pakistan, President Trump articulated that he had been requested by Prime Minister Modi himself to assume the role of a mediator (*The Indian Express, July 23, 2019*).

The United States Mediation from President Truman to President Reagan

The Truman administration can be credited as the inaugural entity to exhibit a genuine commitment toward the amicable settlement of the longstanding Kashmir dispute. Both the esteemed leaders, President Truman of the United States and Prime Minister Clement Atlee of the United Kingdom, earnestly beseeched the distinguished Indian Prime Minister Nehru to embrace the concept of arbitration as a means to resolve the prevailing deadlock surrounding the plebiscite matter in the auspicious month of August in the year 1949. The formidable tandem of President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson persisted in exerting their influence upon India during the visit of Prime Minister Nehru to Washington in October 1949, specifically with regard to the contentious matter of Kashmir. Prior to Nehru's visit to the United States, Acheson engaged in a meeting with Vijay Lakshmi, the esteemed Indian Ambassador to the US, on the ninth of January in the year 1949. The purpose of this meeting was to graciously accept the recommendation put forth by the United Nations. In light of the aforementioned stages pertaining to the United States mediatory function, it has come to India's attention

that said the role has been perceived as exhibiting a certain degree of partiality against New Delhi while concurrently displaying favoritism toward Pakistan. The Truman administration and officials within the United Nations expressed profound disappointment with India's apparent lack of commitment. In the given framework, the impasse persisted throughout the subsequent tenure of United States President Eisenhower (*Rathnam Indurthy, 2005*).

The Eisenhower administration, spanning from 1953 to 1961, likewise espoused the notion of a plebiscite or the partitioning of the region of Kashmir. In 1953, the United States, leveraging its diplomatic capabilities, dispatched Paul Hoffman, the esteemed leader of the Ford Foundation, to effectively mediate the longstanding deadlock between the nations of India and Pakistan. John Foster Dulles, the esteemed Secretary of State, embarked upon a diplomatic voyage to the illustrious cities of Karachi and New Delhi, where he engaged in profound discussions with the esteemed leaders Nehru and Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra. Their deliberations centered on the intricate matter of partitioning the state, a topic of great significance and complexity. Pakistan exhibited a reluctance to acquiesce to the partition of Kashmir and instead advocated for a plebiscite, whereas Nehru displayed a willingness to embrace the notion of independence. Nehru, in concurrence, assented to the appointment of a plebiscite administrator no later than the year 1954. The diplomatic efforts of the United States successfully facilitated the convergence of Pakistan and India's positions, leading to a mutual agreement on conducting a plebiscite in the region of Kashmir. However, a divergence arose when Pakistan expressed a preference for an American administrator to oversee the plebiscite, a proposition that was ultimately rejected by Nehru. India raised objections to the United States' defense relations with Pakistan in a concerted effort to assert its claim over Kashmir and, consequently, eliminate any potential for a future plebiscite. The United States persisted in its efforts to engage in arbitration in order to seek a resolution to the ongoing conflict. In this pursuit, a resolution supported by Pakistan was presented before the esteemed United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Regrettably, the former Soviet Union exercised its veto power, thereby preventing the resolution from being adopted in the year 1957. In the year 1959, President Eisenhower embarked upon a diplomatic mission to the nation of India with the noble intention of persuading Prime Minister Nehru. Regrettably, despite the esteemed leader's sincere efforts, his diplomatic endeavors were unable to surmount the impasse that persisted between the two parties (*Ibid, 34-35*).

Throughout the tenure of the Kennedy administration, spanning from 1961 to 1963, the United States persistently engaged in the process of mediation as a means to effectively address and ultimately resolve the prevailing conflict. In 1963, President Kennedy dispatched Walt Rostow with the objective of facilitating diplomatic engagement between India and Pakistan. However, regrettably, it appears that his administration exhibited a certain reticence or apprehension when it came to exerting influence over the Indian government (*Dr. G. Serwar Khan, 2004*). Whilst President Kennedy provided President Ayyub with the assurance that he would endeavor to engage in dialogue with Nehru during his visit to the United States in the same year, it transpired that Nehru's visit proved to be exceedingly detrimental for both India and the United States, particularly concerning the contentious matters of Gao, Vietnam, and nuclear tests. In light of Nehru's somewhat unaccommodating disposition towards Kennedy, it is noteworthy that both India and the United States were compelled to engage in cooperative endeavors, primarily driven by their shared apprehension regarding the formidable presence of China (*Yaqoob Khan Bangash, 1983*).

Conversely, the schism in United States-Pakistan relations originated from the provision of weaponry by the United States to India. In an earnest endeavor to preserve the delicate alliance with Pakistan, President Kennedy astutely dispatched a diplomatic mission led by the esteemed Assistant Secretary of State, W. Averell Harriman. This diplomatic endeavor was conducted in harmonious collaboration with a distinguished British delegation, helmed by the esteemed Commonwealth Secretary, Duncan Sandys. The assigned mission entailed the formidable objective of facilitating a harmonious consensus between the nations of India and Pakistan with regard to the intricate matter of resolving the longstanding Kashmir issue (*Punjab Historical Society, 2018*). In light of the United States moderating role, it is evident that India has adopted a progressively stringent stance in its endeavor to integrate Kashmir into its territory. India has undertaken the significant endeavor of amending Article 370 of its constitution, thereby effectuating the integration of the region of Kashmir. The United States' inclination to foster consensus between India and Pakistan remained a subject of ongoing deliberation throughout the tenure of President Lyndon B. Johnson, spanning from 1963 to 1969 (*Timothy W. 2007*).

The United States' position as a mediator in conflicts, with a preference for United Nations resolutions and Pakistan's request for a plebiscite, dissipated during the height of the Indo-Pak War in 1965. The Economic Times has recently unveiled declassified files from the Johnson era, specifically from August 2015, which shed light on Washington's endorsement of Delhi's stance against conducting a plebiscite in the region of Kashmir. The esteemed United States Ambassador to Pakistan, Walter Petrik McNaught, engaged in a diplomatic encounter with President Ayyub, wherein the Johnson administration diligently endeavored to foster a consensus between India and Pakistan regarding the implementation of a ceasefire (*The Economic Times, August 27, 2015*.) Amidst the tumultuous Vietnam War, the onerous task of mediating between the nations of Pakistan and India was deftly assumed by the former Soviet Union, owing to the burgeoning obligations of the United States. The United States, in its pursuit of conflict resolution in the region of Kashmir, did not actively seek to engage and its role as a mediator gradually waned in subsequent years (*Sumit Ganguly, 1990*).

Despite the close diplomatic ties between the United States and Pakistan during the tenure of President Richard Nixon from 1969 to 1974, it was the strategic approach of Henry Kissinger, Nixon's trusted advisor that prompted a deeper comprehension of the complexities surrounding the Kashmir conflict (*Christopher Van Hollen, 1980*). The Anderson Papers have demonstrated, on the contrary, that Richard Nixon's inclination towards Pakistan was emblematic in nature. The Nixon administration adopted a strategic approach that entailed refraining from overtly endorsing Pakistan vis-à-vis India, while simultaneously maintaining a facade of support for Pakistan in order to safeguard its reputation and diplomatic relations with the Chinese (*Rais A. Khan, 1985*). The matter concerning Kashmir has been relegated to a state of lesser importance. Both the United States and Pakistan directed their efforts towards countering the invasion of the erstwhile Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the year 1979.

Consequently, the incursion of the Soviet Union into Afghanistan diverted the focus of the United States from the endeavor of resolving the Kashmir conflict, as the primary objective shifted towards expelling the former from Afghan territory. Pakistan, the United States, and Saudi Arabia provided substantial backing to the Afghan resistance movement in their valiant struggle against the Soviet forces. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) unabashedly engaged in the active recruitment of individuals hailing from the nations of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Algeria. The United States and its allied forces inadvertently fostered a process of radicalization among the local populace, resulting in the emergence of a substantial number of Mujahideen fighters within the region (*Pervez Hoodbhoy,*

2005). They were bestowed with the appellation of 'Sacrosanct Combatants'. Following their triumph over the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, these brave soldiers proceeded to assert their dominance over a significant expanse of Afghan territory, ultimately culminating in the establishment of the Taliban regime in the year 1996. In addition to the ongoing Afghan conflict, it is noteworthy to mention that the Kashmiri freedom fighters also documented a significant anti-Indian uprising in the year 1988. India has attributed the emergence of the insurgency to the actions of Pakistan (*S. Paul Kapur, 2012*). The United States' role as a mediator during that period was markedly distinct, primarily stemming from the absence of intrinsic goals in Pakistan.

The US's role as a peacemaker after the Cold War

The United States' response to the conflict in the post-Cold War era was predicated upon a discerning recognition of the intrinsic value ascribed to the fundamental rights and liberties of the Kashmiri populace. During the nascent years of the 1990s, a momentous insurrection in the region of Kashmir captured the discerning gaze of the United States, effectively redirecting its focus toward the protracted conflict. In the month of March in the year 1990, the esteemed United States Secretary of State for Near East and South Asia, in a display of diplomatic acumen, implored the nations of India and Pakistan to amicably resolve the longstanding Kashmir conflict in accordance with the Shimla Agreement. Subsequently, the distinguished US Ambassador to Pakistan, Robert Oakley, judiciously appealed to both nations to duly contemplate the welfare and aspirations of the Kashmiri populace. In light of the prevailing circumstances surrounding the bilateral relations between Pakistan and India, it is noteworthy that the initial administration of President George H. W. Bush, in a strategic move, dispatched its esteemed National Security Advisor, Robert M. Gates, to the capitals of Islamabad and New Delhi. The primary objective of this diplomatic mission was to effectively mitigate the escalating tensions between the two nations, thereby fostering an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence and regional stability. In addition to his diplomatic endeavors, Senator Alan Cranston undertook the arduous task of visiting both capitals, where he astutely cautioned against the perils of armed conflict. His sagacious insight illuminated the fact that resorting to war would not only prove calamitous but also fail to provide a lasting resolution to the intricate Kashmir conflict. As a result, the Gates mission effectively mitigated the simmering tensions among the nations (*Ershad Mahmud, 2005*).

The inaugural tenure of President Clinton (1993-2001) was characterized by a conscientious examination of the rights pertaining to the Kashmiri populace, with a notable inclination towards fostering a harmonious resolution to this enduring conflict. Clinton and his team astutely observed the flagrant transgressions against human rights and correspondingly dispatched diplomatic communiqués to India, denouncing the egregiousness of their actions. The President of the United States, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly during its annual session, eloquently conveyed the notion that while we are captivated by the potential for newfound tranquility in this era, it is imperative that we acknowledge the grave perils that persist (*Dawn, Sept. 28, 1993*). He meticulously observed the tumultuous conflicts of a violent nature, characterized by bloodshed that unfolded across various regions encompassing Angola, the Caucasus, and Kashmir, encompassing both ethnic and religious divisions, as well as internal civil strife. In response to the Indian critique, Robin Raphael, the esteemed leader of the South Asian Bureau, not only valiantly stood by the President's remarks, but also took it upon her to expound further. She articulated, "The intention behind the statement was to convey that Kashmir occupies a prominent position on our geopolitical awareness, akin to regions such as Yugoslavia,

Somalia, and various territories within the former Soviet Union, including Georgia, where internal strife persists. “We must not underestimate its significance, for within it lays a profound message (*Palit, 2001*). The United States was vigilantly monitoring the prevailing circumstances in the region of Kashmir. Robin Raphel unveiled the United States' apprehensions pertaining to fatalities transpiring within confinement, extrajudicial executions, encounters resulting in death, and the act of rendering individuals vanishing without a trace. Raphel expounded upon the notion that Kashmir stands as a contested region, refuting the validity of the instrument of accession (*Farzana Shakoor, 1994*).

During the latter period of the Clinton administration, the landscape of United States diplomacy underwent notable transformations with regard to the intricate matter of Kashmir. As we delve into the intricate dynamics of the Indian subcontinent, it becomes evident that both India and Pakistan have exhibited a burgeoning reliance on nuclear armaments. This escalating dependence has not only engendered a palpable sense of tension between the two nations but has also precipitated the eruption of the Kargil War, a conflict that further exacerbated the already strained relations. Concurrently, India's decision to embrace economic liberalization has had far-reaching implications, ushering in a new era of economic growth and transformation. Meanwhile, the ascendant power of China in the Asian region has emerged as a salient geopolitical phenomenon, necessitating a comprehensive analysis of its implications on the regional balance of power. In the present milieu, a discernible shift in US foreign policy has come to the fore, wherein the nation has embarked upon a transformative trajectory. A notable manifestation of this paradigm shift is the heightened significance accorded to India across multifarious domains encompassing strategic, political, economic, social, and diplomatic spheres (*Sumit Ganguly, 2011*).

Furthermore, the commencement of the Kargil conflict, a confrontation between two formidable nuclear powers, namely India and Pakistan, served as a catalyst for heightened concern and apprehension within the corridors of power in Washington. India was effectively navigating the realm of international relations, achieving notable triumphs in its diplomatic endeavors and skillfully cultivating a favorable disposition towards its interests in the esteemed capital of Washington. India responded to the Kashmiri freedom fighters in Kashmir by employing military force. The characterization of Kashmiri freedom fighters as insurgents and terrorists by New Delhi within the United States marked a significant juncture in the trajectory of Indo-US relations subsequent to the occurrence of the 9/11 incident.

Upon assuming the esteemed position of the President of the United States, George W. Bush adeptly employed his diplomatic acumen to mitigate the prevailing animosity between the two competing states within the region. The Bush administration's strategic priorities did not align with assuming the role of a mediator. During that period, the Bush administration had advocated for India and Pakistan to address the Kashmir issue through bilateral means, as recommended by the 1972-Shimla Accord. The Bush administration prioritized the normalization of India-Pakistan relations over engaging in direct mediation between these neighboring nations (*Navnita Chadha, 2002*).

The United States' Mediating Role in the Post-9/11 Era

The United States, in its strategic calculus, has deemed India as a potential adversary to China. Consequently, there has been a discernible improvement in the Indo-US relations, while simultaneously witnessing an increasing divide in the Pakistan-US relations. During the period of ameliorating Indo-US relations, a series of violent incidents unfolded in the region of Kashmir, notably the occurrence on October 1, 2001. The occurrence in question resulted in the unfortunate demise of 38 individuals within

the vicinity of Srinagar. India attributed the culpability for this assault to Pakistan. Subsequent to this occurrence, there ensued a series of cross-border artillery exchanges. In the interim, a further lamentable incident unfolded within the hallowed halls of the Indian Parliament House. On the fateful day of December 13, a brazen assault transpired, resulting in the tragic loss of 14 lives. These aforementioned occurrences and various others precipitated a situation where in both states found them in close proximity, necessitating the deployment of their respective military forces along their shared borders. The strategic deployment undertaken by India was primarily intended to elicit a response from the United States, thereby compelling Islamabad to take decisive action in quelling the ongoing insurgency in the region of Kashmir (*Devin T. Hagert, 2003*). Washington concurred with India, thereby prompting the Bush administration to bestow its trust upon India. This consequential development witnessed India's formidable sway over the Bush administration, which, in turn, resulted in the United States relinquishing its position as a mediator and, regrettably, compromising its own regional interests.

The response exhibited by the Obama administration with regard to the Kashmir issue was among the array of potential measures aimed at alleviating the prevailing tensions in the South Asian region (*Dr. Sumaria Shafi, 2010*). President Obama provided assurance that the esteemed capital of Washington shall endeavor to proffer a harmonious resolution to the intricate matter of Kashmir (*Vishal Arora, 2010*). The policymakers of the United States endeavored to promote a resolution to the intricate Kashmir issue, with the noble aim of fostering tranquility in the South Asian region. However, as astutely observed by Bruce Riedel, a distinguished advisor to a former US President, the sagacious American diplomats gleaned from a protracted history of unsuccessful attempts that the Kashmir conundrum proved to be an exceedingly formidable challenge, thus leading them to conclude that it would be most prudent to divert their attention elsewhere (*Saman Zulfqar, 2016*). Former President Barack Obama demonstrated a profound dedication towards the Kashmir matter, deeming it a matter of utmost importance during the year 2008. The diplomatic sojourn to the Indian subcontinent engendered a paradigm shift in the foreign policy of the United States, with the aim of fostering amicable relations and appeasing the Indian nation-state. President Obama articulated the stance that the United States shall refrain from intervening in the Kashmir issue and shall extend its backing towards India's membership in the esteemed United Nations Security Council. Nevertheless, President Obama regrettably overlooked the flagrant transgressions against human rights perpetrated by the Indian-occupied forces in the region of Kashmir (*Arunthadi Roy, 2010*).

Mediation by the United States of America during the Trump Administration

Donald Trump assumed the esteemed position of the 45th President of the United States, effectively supplanting his predecessor, Barack Obama, on the auspicious date of January 20, 2017. The newly inaugurated president has undertaken a comprehensive reevaluation and restructuring of the objectives pertaining to foreign policy, both within the confines of the nation and on the global stage. During the nascent stages of his presidency, President Trump exhibited a degree of disregard towards the prevailing circumstances, wherein the escalating levels of violence within the Kashmir valley failed to capture his attention. In light of the tumultuous circumstances prevailing in the region of Kashmir, the esteemed Trump administration has deemed it necessary to proffer a sagacious advisory to its esteemed citizens, beseeching them to exercise utmost prudence and abstain from embarking upon any voyages to the territories of Jammu and Kashmir (*Fahad Shah, 2018*). In contrast, China, a reliable ally of Pakistan, responded via its esteemed Ambassador, Luo Zhuhai, to India's actions. Ambassador Zhuhai proposed

the idea of trilateral collaboration between India, China, and Pakistan, under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), to the esteemed Trump administration in June of 2018. Regrettably, it seems that the US administration displayed a dismissive attitude towards involving a third party in the resolution of the complex Kashmir dispute. The spokesperson from the State Department reaffirmed the unaltered nature of our stance on the matter of Kashmir. It is our conviction that the velocity, magnitude, and essence of any discourse pertaining to Kashmir ought to be determined by the respective parties involved (*The New Indian Express, June 21, 2018*).

In the month of June in the year 2018, the esteemed United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights brought forth a comprehensive account detailing grave transgressions that have taken place within the region of Kashmir, which is currently under Indian occupation. The spokesperson representing the State Department duly acknowledged the existence of the OHCHR report. In the interim, formal bilateral discussions transpired between the United States and Pakistan, wherein the esteemed Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, and the distinguished President of the United States, Donald Trump, convened on the auspicious day of July 22nd, 2019. President Trump eloquently emphasized the pivotal position of a mediator and astutely acknowledged the protracted nature of the unresolved Kashmir conflict. The recent advancements in the diplomatic ties between Pakistan and the United States have consequently heightened apprehension within the Indian subcontinent (*Anwar Iqbal, 2019*). Conversely, India has rebuffed the notion of third-party intervention and instead asserted that the Kashmir issue is a bilateral matter exclusively involving Pakistan and India. The assertion made by the user regarding New Delhi's denial of President Trump's claim, wherein Prime Minister Modi purportedly requested his intervention in the ongoing conflict with Pakistan, is duly acknowledged (*The Indian Express, July 23, 2019*).

India may have expressed concerns regarding the escalating influence of Pakistan in the peace process of Afghanistan, the resumption of repair and refurbishment of F-16 fighter jets by Washington, and the proposition put forth by General Milly, the esteemed leader of the US armed forces, to forge robust connections with Pakistan. In the given framework, India, in light of the evolving Pak-US relations, has deployed an additional contingent of 25,000 military personnel to the region of Indian-occupied Kashmir. Furthermore, India has taken the decision to nullify Articles 370 and 35(A) of its constitution, thereby revoking the special status previously accorded to the region of Kashmir (*Anwar Iqbal, 2019*). Furthermore, it is imperative to note that India has escalated its belligerent endeavors within the Kashmir valley through the utilization of cluster ammunition. The utilization of cluster ammunition is proscribed by the Geneva Conventions due to its deleterious consequences on individuals not actively engaged in armed conflict. As per the esteemed International Committee of the Red Cross, it is evident that cluster munitions possess the capacity to inflict significant harm upon civilian populations, resulting in both loss of life and injury, while simultaneously engendering enduring socio-economic challenges. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, established in 2008, enforces a comprehensive ban on the utilization, manufacturing, accumulation, and transmission of cluster munitions. Furthermore, it mandates that participating nations take necessary measures to prevent any additional harm or casualties caused by these weapons (*Dawn, August 3, 2019*).

In light of India's escalating military endeavors in the region of Kashmir, coupled with its refusal to entertain President Trump's proposal for mediation in resolving the longstanding Kashmir dispute, the United States State Department has expressed its endorsement for intervening as a mediator between India and Pakistan in this matter. American officials have actively advocated for the promotion of a

productive and meaningful exchange of ideas between the nations of Pakistan and India with regard to the complex and sensitive matter of the Kashmir dispute (*Times of Islamabad, August 2019*). Simultaneously, the prevailing state of affairs witnessed a notable escalation in the tensions between the sovereign nations of Pakistan and India, specifically in the region demarcated by the Line of Control (LoC). On the auspicious date of August 5th, in the year 2019, the esteemed Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres, graciously beseeched the nations of Pakistan and India to exercise the utmost level of self-control and moderation in their actions. Conversely, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) has brought attention to a surge in military operations along the Line of Control (LoC) subsequent to August 2019 (*The Hindu, August 5, 2019*).

US mediation during Biden administration

The Biden administration had expressed interest in promoting stability and cooperation in the South Asian region, including between India and Pakistan. Several factors would probably influence the Biden administration's approach to India-Pakistan relations:

- **Regional Stability:** The United States has a vested interest in promoting stability in South Asia due to concerns about terrorism, regional conflicts, and nuclear proliferation. The administration might work to encourage dialogue between India and Pakistan to reduce tensions and promote conflict resolution.
- **Counterterrorism:** The Biden administration would likely continue to emphasize the importance of both India and Pakistan taking effective measures against terrorism and militant groups that could destabilize the region.
- **Economic Cooperation:** The administration might encourage economic cooperation between India and Pakistan, recognizing that improved economic ties could have positive effects on regional stability and development.
- **Human Rights and Democracy:** The Biden administration has emphasized the importance of human rights and democratic values in its foreign policy. It might engage with both countries to encourage respect for human rights and democratic norms.
- **Kashmir Dispute:** The longstanding Kashmir dispute remains a central issue in India-Pakistan relations. The Biden administration could express interest in seeing both countries engage in dialogue to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict.
- **Afghanistan:** The situation in Afghanistan could also influence US policy in the region. The administration might consider how India's and Pakistan's roles in Afghanistan affect regional stability and how they can contribute to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.
- **Nuclear Security:** Given that both India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed nations, the Biden administration might prioritize nuclear security and stability in the region.

It's crucial to remember that the dynamics of India-Pakistan relations are complex, and the Biden administration's strategy would depend on a combination of diplomatic efforts, dialogue, and engagement with both countries.

Conclusion

The United States assumed a proactive position as an intermediary during the Cold War era, employing Pakistan as a strategic partner in its efforts to contain the spread of Communism. Throughout the tenure spanning from Harry S. Truman to Senior George W. Bush, a concerted effort was exerted upon the

nation of India to address the protracted and intricate Kashmir dispute in collaboration with its Pakistani counterpart. Nevertheless, the United States underwent a significant shift in its policy subsequent to the expulsion of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, thereby fostering amelioration in its diplomatic ties with the nation of India. In the era following the conclusion of the Cold War, the demise of Communism brought about a significant transformation in the strategic dynamics governing the United States' approach to India and Pakistan. Due to the altered policy of the United States, India has assumed a position of strategic significance in order to counterbalance the escalating influence of China within the Indo-Pacific region. From the tenure of President Clinton to the nascent years of President Trump, the United States' influential role in mediation was consigned to the periphery and marginalized as a result of the prevailing pro-India lobby. Nevertheless, Pakistan's pivotal role in safeguarding the United States security interests in the South Asian region has engendered a proclivity towards employing mediation as a strategic instrument in the political realm. The recent development pertaining to the internationalization of the Kashmir dispute has engendered a sense of hope within Pakistan, as it perceives an opportunity to garner support on a global scale. Conversely, India has responded to this development by expressing its disapproval of the actions of the esteemed Washington establishment. In the year 2019, the meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Imran Khan served as a catalyst for the United States to acknowledge the shortcomings of its war strategy in Afghanistan, particularly in relation to safeguarding its security interests. Consequently, President Trump extended an offer to assume a mediating position in the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan. As a result, the shifting geostrategic and geopolitical landscape of South Asia has effectively altered the United States' approach to mediation. Moreover, this transformation has had a profound impact on the overall trajectory of US foreign policy, characterized by a strategic reciprocation that has influenced the prospects of achieving a peaceful resolution to the longstanding Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan.

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