

The Three Images of War and Indo-Pak Conflicts: An Investigation of Causal Factors

Aleem Gillani¹, Syed Waqas Haider Bukhari*², Kanwal Hayat³

¹ Assistant Professor, School of International Relations, Minhaj University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

² Assistant Professor, School of International Relations, Minhaj University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

³ Assistant Professor, International Relations Department, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Corresponding author: aleem_gillani@hotmail.com

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The agenda of decolonization is animosity. Using Kenneth Waltz's three images of war (individual, state level, and systemic), this article thoroughly examines the three major conflicts that have broken out between India and Pakistan. Since both countries gained independence from the British, ties between India and Pakistan, have been tense. South Asian instability directly results from repeated conflicts between the two countries. The dread of a nuclear conflict that could wipe out all human civilization is a new factor in the India-Pakistan conflict, exacerbated by the spread of nuclear weapons in the region. Foreign strategists and actors from both nations have tried to understand what drives tensions between these longtime adversaries. However, only some have looked at the Indo-Pak conflict from three images of war. This research uses Waltz's three images of war as a prism to analyse the wars that have broken out between India and Pakistan and offer suggestions for how the two war-weary neighbors can avert another catastrophic conflict. The article is grounded in qualitative research. It investigates the past to find relationships and causes that have modern-day relevance. Structural Realism (Neorealism), primarily articulated by Kenneth Waltz, serves as the theoretical foundation for this investigation. Additionally, this article speculates the likelihood of future confrontations between India and Pakistan based on Waltz's three conceptions of war.

1. Introduction

The relationship between the two countries has been fraught since India gained its freedom from British rule. South Asian instability directly results from several wars between the two countries. The presence of nuclear weapons in the region has further exacerbated the already dangerous tensions between India and Pakistan, fueling fears of a catastrophic nuclear war (Riedel, 2012). Foreign strategists and actors from the aforementioned countries have probed the origins of the conflict between these long-standing foes. However, only some have examined the Indo-Pakistani conflict through the lens of Kenneth Waltz's three images of war. The study also uses structural realism (Baylis et al., 2023) to analyse India and Pakistan's historical and contemporary rivalry.

Alarms are going out worldwide, and the possibility of a hypothetical nuclear exchange, a catastrophe with international severe repercussions, is the stake in their ongoing fight. National actors and international strategists have examined this ongoing war's historical, social, cultural, and political aspects.

The choice of this subject for academic study was influenced by the ongoing hostilities between India and Pakistan, their rivalry, and the presence of nuclear weapons in the area. This study attempts to address the gap in the existing literature by conducting a retrospective analysis. By looking at three major conflicts through the lens of Kenneth Waltz's three images of war, this study helps to close a gap in the existing literature on the Indo-Pakistani conflict (individual, state-level, and systemic). Waltz's framework has been used to investigate some facets of these conflicts, but a comprehensive study that considers all three is still lacking.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research method by analysing the Indo-Pak conflict in light of Kenneth Waltz's three images of war. To develop a basic understanding of India-Pakistan relations and Waltz's conceptual framework, the methodology included a systematic review of existing literature, including scholarly articles, books, historical documents, and related reports. Then, primary and secondary data from historical archives, diplomatic correspondence, scholarly articles, and various institutional reports are gathered.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study bases its theoretical foundation on structural realism (Neorealism) (Baylis et al., 2023), as defined principally by Kenneth Waltz. This method provides a powerful tripartite lens for understanding India-Pakistan disputes at the individual, state, and systemic levels. The individual-level study looks at the roles and decisions of significant political figures who shaped the outcome of these wars. The state-level approach focuses on the domestic structures and political processes contributing to the ongoing war in India and Pakistan. Finally, the role of international power dynamics, strategic alliances, and geopolitical balances in forming this problematic relationship is investigated at the systemic level. The multi-layered approach of Neorealism provides a complete and nuanced view of the complicated and deep-rooted Indo-Pak conflict.

3.1 Indo-Pak Wars from Kenneth Waltz's Three Images

3.1.1 First Kashmir War

Following their independence, India and Pakistan engaged in a war centred around the disputed region of Kashmir. The leader of the predominantly Muslim area was not himself Muslim and thus faced difficulty deciding whether to align with India or Pakistan. While most of the population favoured Pakistan, the ruler hesitated, creating internal conflict in the strategically important territory. This conflict ultimately led to a full-scale war between India and Pakistan, with the United Nations intervening at India's request. The war ended in a stalemate, but the resulting Kashmir issue has strained relations between the two countries and could spark a nuclear war anytime. (Nawaz, 2008).

3.1.2 First Image

Images of war offered by Kenneth Waltz can be used to analyse the 1948 Indo-Pakistani War. From this perspective, we may see the fundamental causes that led India to war with its much smaller and weaker neighbour. Waltz's opening image makes the case that politicians and other political leaders frequently start conflicts. (Waltz, 2001). Gandhi, Nehru, and Sardar Patel, who is best recognised as an Indian statesman and served as the country's first Deputy Prime Minister, were all powerful political personalities at the time of India's independence in 1947. Nehru and Patel were seen as more moderate than Gandhi, whose opinions were often divisive.

However, both men were prepared to resort to violence to include the princely nations. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, the leaders of Pakistan, were averse to conflict and opposed to resorting to violence to attain their goals. Since Nehru and Patel took a more confrontational approach, the 1947–1948 Indo-Pakistani conflict was exacerbated.

3.1.3 Second Image

“In the first image, theorists argue that good and bad men exist. On the contrary, the second image theorists argue that there are good and bad states. It is either because of their formal governmental arrangements (democratic vs autocratic), or their less formal social arrangements who owns the means of production (Weber, 2005). Waltz's second image contends that the domestic makeup of states causes wars (Weber, 2005). During the war, India received the benefits of stable institutions, a robust industrial base, and a powerful military from its former British rulers. The British had initiated most of the significant infrastructure projects within mainland India.

India's leadership was swept up in a wave of nationalistic fervour, leading them to aggressively annex princely states indecisive about joining India. The Indian National Congress, which was in power, aimed to unify the country under one territorial unit and govern it. Meanwhile, Pakistan struggled with a massive influx of refugees, weak institutions, and a much smaller military than its arch-rival India. The factors mentioned above resulted in a situation where the government, the military and the citizens were not eager to fight India in a conventional war. The Indian side was aware of this strategic mindset in Pakistan and ready to take advantage of it. Hence, at the state level, the factor contributing to war's causation may be attributed to India's internal domestic structure (Schofield, 2000).

3.1.4 Third image

The passage by Waltz illustrates the connections between anarchy, the actions of states, and conflict. (Weber, 2005). “In anarchy, there is no automatic harmony. . . A state will use force to attain its goals if, after assessing the prospects for success, it values those goals more than the pleasures of peace. Because each state is the final judge of its cause, any state may use force to implement its policies at any time. Resultantly all states must constantly be ready to counter force with force or pay the cost of weakness. In this view, the requirements of state action are imposed by the circumstances in which all states exist (Weber, 2005).”

The third image highlights that the international system’s structure leads to conflict by forcing states to act in a certain way (Weber, 2005). This article argues that the role of a systemic level is to be the greater salience in the context of post-colonial India and Pakistan. The globe was still healing from the effects of the World Wars at the time of this conflict. The beginning of the Cold War saw superpowers vying for global influence. This conflict presented an opportunity for the United States and the Soviet Union to gain a foothold in the region and secure allies, making it beneficial to the world powers (Raghavan, 2019).

Furthermore, the world was undergoing decolonization at the time, and territorial conflicts were not uncommon. As a result, big powers did not view this conflict as a serious concern. One may argue that the world’s conditions were favourable for this kind of territorial struggle and, in some ways, even made the war easier to wage. Hence, the systemic level remained dominant compared to the individual or state level in explaining the conflict outcomes between India and Pakistan.

3.2 1965 Indo-Pak War

3.2.1 First Image

Waltz’s first image relates to the contention that wars occur because of the aggressive behaviour of individuals (Suganami, 2001). During the 1965 war, Pakistan was led by the charismatic and able-bodied President Ayub Khan. His economic reforms put Pakistan on a trajectory of progress, with the country’s economy growing at the fastest rate in Asia. Under his leadership, Pakistan embarked on massive infrastructure projects that revolutionized the country’s industrial and demographic landscapes. Dams, canals, a new capital city, and a road network were all constructed during his tenure. President Ayub started modernizing the military to address internal and foreign security issues by reorganizing the army, air force, and navy. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the president’s trusted counsellor as the foreign minister. Additionally, President Ayub started the military’s modernization, reorganizing the army, air force, and navy to address difficulties with internal and external security. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the president’s trusted counsellor as the foreign minister.

On the Indian side, the Congress Party was in power, with Lal Bahadur Shastri serving as Prime Minister after taking over from the strong-willed Jawaharlal Nehru. Mr Shastri faced strong opposition from within his party due to his domestic policies and was considered weaker than Nehru. During the events leading up to the 1965 war, Mr Shastri was influenced by his military as he struggled to make decisions due to his weak position. At this level of examination, one may

contend that the two state's leaders had quite different levels of authority and influence. Ayub was likely swayed by his foreign minister to resolve the Kashmir dispute through military means. At the same time, Mr Shastri came under tremendous pressure to redress the Kutch defeat (Lamb, 1991).

3.2.2 Second Image

Waltz's second image contends that the domestic makeup of states causes wars (Weber, 2005). In 1965, Pakistan was governed by a military leader with immense power. The country was experiencing robust economic growth, and its institutions were effective and well-established. The military played a central role in decision-making processes. President Ayub established the 1962 constitution, which granted unprecedented power to the presidency. The government controlled the media, and no institutions or authorities challenged its authority. Therefore, when Pakistan decided to intervene in Indian-held Kashmir (IHK), there was no resistance, and the way was cleared for the 1965 war.

Prime Minister Shastri of India was ineffective and faced resistance inside his party. The Indian military needed additional power to reinforce itself since it was still dealing with its setback in the Sino-Indian War of 1962. India's military was bold and keen to regain its dignity and honour after the humiliating setback in 1962, despite its failing economy and weak institutions. Wars frequently divert attention away from subpar economic development and bad governmental performance. The Indian military was ready to use local turmoil in Kashmir to justify a full-scale conflict with Pakistan. As a result, India and Pakistan's political institutions were conducive to war, but India had a reason to attack Pakistan militarily.

3.2.3 Third image

The systemic distribution of power played a significant role in igniting the Indo-Pak War of 1965. At that time, the global structure was in disarray due to rising tensions between superpowers, conflicts in developing nations, and underlying apprehensions in the Arab world. The United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in a significant arms race and fomenting political unrest within each other's respective areas of influence (Raghavan, 2019). The U.S. was deeply involved in the Vietnam War, and the USSR supplied arms to Egypt and Syria to counter Israel's threat. Similarly, India was defeated by China and was assisted by the USSR in its rearmament efforts, while the U.S. aimed to bolster India's power to counter China's complete military superiority. Both the U.S. and USSR were competing to increase their circles of influence, particularly in the Third World, and were prepared to engage in proxy wars against each other. It led to a situation where the international environment was conducive to a major conflict in South Asia. As India and Pakistan became primary weapons markets, the U.S. and USSR both profited from the war.

3.3 1971 Indo-Pak War

3.3.1 First Image

According to Waltz's first illustration, some politicians and political figures are frequently to blame for starting conflicts. Indira Gandhi, who ruled India, was flashy, opinionated, nationalistic, and risk-taking. In the wake of India's defeat in the 1962 and 1965 conflicts, she

gained government control. With the assistance of the Soviet Union, she started an ambitious weapons program and reorganized the Indian Army. Indira Gandhi tended to stop Pakistan's parity. An effort was also made to conquer Pakistan's western neighbors to gain regional domination. However, a political impasse between Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People Party and Sheikh Mujib-Ur-Rehman's National Party left Pakistan in ruins. In United Pakistan, neither party was willing to recognize the Prime Minister of the rival party. The disastrous 1971 war was brought on by these leaders' inflexible tactics and the incapacity of Pakistan's President. An ever-weakening Pakistan was eager to be drawn into a fight and given a bloody nose by strong and dedicated leadership in India. In contrast, Pakistan's leadership was helpless and incapable of thwarting India's plans for hegemony.

3.3.2 Second Image

Waltz's second image suggests that the internal structure of states causes wars (Weber, 2005). Pakistan dealt with many challenges in 1971. The isolation and dissatisfaction of the local populace resulted from political upheaval in East Pakistan. Government institutions were ineffective, and the Mukti Bahini controlled large parts of East Pakistan. And it challenged the state's authority. The geographical distance between East and West Pakistan was significant, with India posing a belligerent presence between the two wings. Due to this distance, the Pakistani military could not bolster its garrison in East Pakistan. The situation in West Pakistan was also precarious, with an inept military ruler leading to unrest and political violence. Pakistan's military establishment lost public support, and its credibility was undermined. India, in contrast, was politically stable despite facing an economic crisis. Its army was strong and determined to erase the stains of previous defeats at the hands of China and Pakistan.

3.3.3 Third Image

The international system supported India's goals in 1971. Deeply entangled in the Vietnam War, the United States was on the verge of losing (Raghavan, 2019). The U.S. was under increasing internal pressure owing to escalating casualties and the ethnic black human rights movement, which was at its height. As a result, the U.S. was forced to put domestic issues ahead of international policy for the first time in decades. Due to the animosity between Arabs and Israelis, the Middle East was incredibly unpredictable, adding to the U.S.'s already heavy workload. The power balance in the area had swung in favour of Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, leaving the leading Arab nations weak and unstable. Another massive conflict between Egypt and Israel was perhaps on the horizon.

In contrast, the Soviet Union was succeeding in its proxy conflict in Vietnam and was prepared to help India undermine a significant U.S. ally in the region. China could not support Pakistan if India became aggressive since it was locked in an ideological conflict with the Soviet Union. Due to its anti-imperialist position, the Soviet Union had acquired the upper hand at international fora like the United Nations, allowing it to win support from several vital capitals. This was used by India, who utilized the Soviet Union's clout to defame Pakistan and use the excuse of stopping crimes against humanity in East Pakistan to launch a full-scale war.

India's diplomatic efforts were successful, and Pakistan's alleged breaches of human rights in East Pakistan earned it a bad reputation worldwide. By framing Pakistan's counterinsurgency measures as anti-Bengali programs and charging it with war crimes, India prepared the ground for the annexation of East Pakistan. When the war started, India quickly defeated isolated pockets of the opposition and took Dhaka. Pakistan felt alone and demoralized due to the United States' failure to help it despite its vows to do so (Raghavan, 2019). In West Pakistan, the Pakistani military could fend off Indian offensives, but it could not influence the military environment in East Pakistan. The framework of the international system encouraged India's blatant aggression against Pakistan. Never before has there been such a favourable setting for an Indian attack, and it never would?

The three illustrations of conflict provided by Kenneth Waltz aid in comprehending the causes, effects, and results of this conflict, which resulted in a military catastrophe for Pakistan. The systemic level, however, steadfastly remained crucial in altering the outcome of the conflict. For instance, India had an extremely favourable playing field thanks to the Soviet Union's engagement before and during the conflict. Nixon received a top-secret telegram from the Soviet Union during the conflict in which they sternly warned against U.S. engagement or action (Singh, 2019).

3.4 How Will Kenneth Waltz Three Images of War Help Avoid Future Conflicts in South Asia?

Kenneth Waltz, a prominent realist, presented a thorough explanation of the causes of war by introducing three levels of analysis. These levels of analysis help to comprehend why states participate in wars and identify the factors that create a conducive or non-conducive environment for war. The analysis also gives researchers insights into how to minimize the risk of war. The first level of analysis focuses on the characteristics of individuals who lead nations to conflicts. Throughout history, leaders like Hitler, Mussolini, and Emperor Hirohito, who pursued aggressive policies, have triggered wars. These leaders wield significant power and command large armies, making it challenging to prevent them from pursuing their aggressive policies. Hence, it is crucial to identify such leaders, even in contemporary times, such as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and scrutinize their past behaviour and inclinations towards using violence to achieve political objectives. This approach can assist targeted nation policymakers in anticipating their future actions and formulating a collective strategy to prevent them from escalating tensions and starting a war.

The international community did that successfully in the case of Saddam Hussain during the first Gulf War. Saddam Hussain waged an eight-year bloody war against Iran, ending in a stalemate and more than a million deaths on both sides. Once this war ended, Saddam sought another target to quench his thirst for power and land. During the cold war 1991, the world breathed a sigh of relief. Scholars posited that the world would head towards perpetual peace due to the dominant political and economic system, i.e., democracy and capitalism. Saddam Hussain assumed that the cold war had drained the resources of big powers who would be reluctant and uninterested in the countries of the third world, especially the Middle East. Saddam predicted that

the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait would be met with mere condemnations and minor sanctions. He could not have been more wrong. The international community analysed that if left unchecked, Saddam would continue to act aggressively against his neighbouring state, which might put the entire region at risk of major wars and instability. Moreover, the Middle East was the hub of global oil supply and could not be left at the mercy of a war-thirsty Saddam. What happened next is history.

3.5 Current Status of Indo-Pak Rivalry

After applying Waltz's three images of the Indo-Pak wars, let's discuss the current rivalry between both countries. A situation where Prime Minister Modi is at the helm of affairs. He is the one who resembles Saddam in some ways, but he is much more dangerous and extremist. The fourth-largest force in the world, armed with nuclear weapons, is under PM Modi's command. In addition, PM Modi espouses bigoted, extremist Hindutva ideologies. Using Waltz's first level of analysis, it can be analysed that Prime Minister Modi is willing to flex military muscle to achieve the political objective without considering the repercussions of such an action. For example, after the 'Uri attack' by Kashmiri freedom fighters against an Indian army base, PM Modi boasted of a 'surgical strike' against Pakistan's administered Kashmir militants. India provided no proof of such a strike, and the international community also dismissed these attacks as a 'farce'. Pakistan also offered explanations that no such attack happened, which humiliated India. However, even such false claims of an attack inside an area controlled by a nuclear state could escalate into a full-scale war. PM Modi did not consider this eventuality, pointing to his recklessness and chauvinistic attitude.

Moreover, the Indian Government accused Pakistan of the Pulwama attack conducted inside Indian Held Kashmir by Kashmiri youth. This accusation was followed by a violation of Pakistan's airspace by the Indian Air Force. The tensions between the two neighbors escalated unprecedentedly, and both sides mobilized their armies. Pakistan responded to this aggression by shooting down two Indian aircraft and establishing air superiority. Pakistan's dynamic leadership effectively controlled the further escalation of the crisis; the situation was de-escalated after the release of the captured Indian pilot. This incident showed how irresponsibly Prime Minister Modi was willing to push the world towards a nuclear Armageddon to achieve victory in domestic elections.

On 5th August 2019, India revoked Article 370 of its Constitution, which gave special status to IHK (Pervaiz, 2021). Similarly, the related issues to the Kashmir valley provide an in-depth picture of the study of the challenges posed to human security. This was done at the behest of Prime Minister Modi. India escalated tensions with Pakistan, and the two countries mobilized their forces inside the Kashmir region. The IHK remained under the most extended curfew in world history, and tensions would have stirred up again anytime between India and Pakistan. The first image argues that wars are often caused by the nature of particular statesmen and political leaders such as state leaders (Suganami, 2001). The first image rightly reflects the case of PM Modi. From the Gujarat riots in 2002 onwards, Narendra Modi started characterizing his identity, people, ethnicity and religion (Hinduism). It can be stressed that he has taught the ideas of patriotism and

loyalty with his identity, which comprises ideology and religion. In the general election of 2014 in India, it can be asserted that he provoked his community (Hindu Community) based on “their” national identity. Even in the recent elections of 2019, the Bharatiya Janata Party released ‘Sankalp Patra’ (manifesto). They alluded that India belongs to the Hindu Gods (Hindu Devta) through Ram Temple’s making in Ayodhya (Diplomat, 2019).

The distinguished Indian social psychologist Ashis Nandy reiterated that Modi is a “classic, clinical case” of the “authoritarian personality”, with its “mix of puritanical rigidity, narrowing of emotional life” and “fantasies of violence (Pankaj, 2015).” The Kashmir issue is still stagnant because of Modi’s rigidness as he takes the social identity approach in the decision-making of Indian Foreign policy. Waltz’s level of analysis has helped policymakers and strategists in Pakistan to analyse PM Modi’s behaviour and predict his next moves. It has enabled Pakistan to adopt a proactive strategy to mitigate the threat posed by Modi.

Waltz’s second level of analysis is the states’ domestic structure, which often leads nations into wars. For example, in present-day India, the fascist regime of PM Modi has embarked upon anti-Muslim pogroms and anti-Pakistan rhetoric. The human rights violations inside IHK are systemic and structural and perpetrated at the behest of state institutions such as military and intelligence agencies. The Indian media has also shunned any rose of neutrality and is supporting the Indian government to promote war. The Hindu religious institutions, such as the temples, have gained unprecedented influence in modern-day India. The scholars, academicians, and historians who project and promote extremist Hindutva ideology are being encouraged, leading to religious extremism inside India. What type of power will India become? And how will it demonstrate that power? Modi’s behaviour is anticipated to be under the Hindutva ideologies in these realms. Religion has been a prime factor that dominates the discourse on international politics globally. Still, not much discussion has ever been held on Hinduism and its influence on Indian foreign policy. BJP has always been characterized as a Hindu nationalist party than a fundamental religious party. The Hindutva policy has manifested itself in internal politics, such as the beef ban and education policy. The application of Hindutva ideology is less evident in foreign than domestic policy. But what are the prepositions for foreign policy by the proponents of Hindutva? It is usually concerned with having a muscular approach towards the procedure; however, it is much more complex than it seems (Subrahmanyam, 1974).

The proponents of Hindutva believe that since India remained under the control of Muslims and Christians for hundreds of years, India's synonymous with Hindus must be strengthened by consolidating power and social harmony. Various categories exist, on resonating with the current views is offensive. This view argues that since the world is constantly in conflict, any state’s ultimate way to ensure its security is to extend its control until a universality is achieved. Therefore, as per the idea of the political philosopher Kautilya (c. 371–283 BCE), the more vital state would look for ‘Sarva-bhauma’ or ‘world-empire. The existing Hindutva outlook is restricted to the idea or creation of ‘Akhand Bharat’ or ‘Greater India’, including Bangladesh and Pakistan. Still, it can extend to Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka (Singh, 1998). The modern-day Hindutva proponents view the acquisition of nuclear power as synonymous with the material power to

counter 'Islamophobia' and a generally strict attitude towards the opponents. Another approach also exists in which the outlook on Hindu nationalism is somewhat controlled. Under this perspective, Chanakya Kautilya cautioned that unrestrained expansion could bring less than expected results to control the potential to decline; peace would be preferable to conflict or war (Sisson & E Leo, 1991). More significant stress has been given to dharma (roughly, a combination of moral duty and observance of law), being the primary value incorporated in almost every typical Hindu writing (Fenn, 2017).

3.6 Is there a Future, Unlike the Past?

In pursuing the above discussion, the critical question is whether there is a future, unlike the past. Are the past Indo-Pak wars adequate prognosticators of future conflicts in South Asia? (Ganguly, 1995). The answer, at best, needs to be clarified because some of the prominent normative and structural restraints no longer exist in the current scenario between India and Pakistan. Another critical dimension to consider is the type of military leadership on both sides. The military top brass of both countries from previous generations shared perennial and long-standing ties of their early military training tracing back to British rule (Ganguly, 1995). However, the relationship of a similar bond is not connecting the post-independence era of senior military staff.

Consequently, numerous tacit interwar restraints cannot be designed in the post-independence generation's military top brass. When the Cold War ended, and India and Pakistan's armed forces lost their respective superpower patrons, both countries' armed forces became technologically superior to ever before. For instance, the limited ballistic missile capabilities of India and Pakistan. Another way of looking at the entire situation is that a lack of normative restraints could be far costlier to sustain in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, South Asia's weak communications and intelligence structures, compounded by political turbulence, could inadvertently lead to escalation at a nuclear level between two nuclear-armed states. Finally, the systemic forces' role, especially U.S. involvement in South Asian politics, is significant. The U.S. can be influential in strengthening confidence-building measures in South Asia (Ganguly, 1995). The U.S., the sole hegemon, can effectively compel India and Pakistan to go for a regional arms control regime and ensure that both countries should not cross the nuclear threshold regardless of how odd the circumstances are. Therefore, any confrontation between the armed forces of two countries equipped with modern warfighting military paraphernalia will have far-reaching consequences for South Asia.

Various analysts and practitioners have observed diverging trends. Peace has been witnessed in one region and war in another. It led the scholars of international politics to follow two sets of differences in pursuit of the likelihood of peace and conflict in the Post-Cold War era and the differences within the same region about the propensity toward war between the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. Terms such as "New Europe", "New East Asia," and, even more controversially, "New Middle East" highlights this new perspective (Miller, 2007). The literature on territorial conflicts, prevailing rivalries, and civil and ethnic conflicts have focused on the dyadic level. Still, it fails to address issues on regional levels. In the context of factors responsible

for the causation of war between India and Pakistan, it is essential to first develop proper conversance with the substantive causes of regional peace and conflict. Secondly, it is crucial to trace whether these causes are at the global /systemic level or the regional/ domestic level (Study, 2019).

Realist theory factors will shape regional dynamics if the region experiences a high imbalance between states and nations. Similarly, liberal theories will be more influential if states and nations in the region are in balance. It brings the discussion to the point where it can be safely argued that both realist and liberalist approaches lack an adequate explanation of regional actors' motivation for resorting to violence if such causes are compelled by issues arising from state-to-nation imbalance. Based on the above analysis facts, it can be inferred that the linked factor influencing wars' causation is a state-to-nation imbalance (Study, 2019). Therefore, it disposes of certain regions being more war-prone than others.

4. Conclusion

Given that the various wars fought between India and Pakistan have been analysed through the lens of the three images of war, it is fair to conclude that all three images of war are somehow responsible for these wars. However, in each case, one or more images prevailed, whether in 1948, 1965 or 1971.

When we analyse all the major conflicts between India and Pakistan, the 1971 conflict is the most consequential. A regional-level analysis shows that the disintegration of Pakistan gave birth to Bangladesh, paving the way for India to become a dominant power in the subcontinent. Applying and viewing through the prism of the systemic level image highlights that unenthusiastic US support to Pakistan has had dire consequences for India and Pakistan. Both sides expressed their grievances with the US for its double standards. Indians were angry because of American support for the brutal military regime.

In contrast, the Pakistani side felt that they had been left caught in a conflict with India, which had the full support of the Soviet Union, resulting in Pakistan's breakup. As a result of the war, the Soviet Union turned into a significant external beneficiary. The Soviet Union's alignment of interests with India significantly strengthened Indo-Soviet relations. The 1970s saw strong ties between the two countries until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. By applying the Neorealist framework, one can gain complete knowledge of the Indo-Pak disputes. This understanding highlights the necessity of recognizing and resolving issues at all levels - individual, state, and systemic - to potentially resolve the conflicts.

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