

BACKGROUND GUIDE



UNSC

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

The situation in the Indian subcontinent 1971



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

On behalf of the Executive Board, it is our pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you to this simulation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). As delegates of the UNSC, you will engage in critical discussions, negotiate resolutions, and tackle pressing global issues that mirror the challenges faced by the international community today. Throughout the conference, we encourage you to leverage your diplomatic skills, research insights, and strategic thinking to contribute meaningfully to the debate. Your unique perspectives and proposed solutions are integral to fostering consensus and advancing collective action on complex global issues. Please familiarize yourself with the background provided to ensure productive and engaging deliberations during committee sessions. However, this background guide is not intended to be exhaustive, rather a starting point for your research. We are confident that your participation will enrich the conference and contribute to its success. We look forward to witnessing your leadership, collaboration, and innovative solutions during the simulation of the UNSC. Together, let us strive to embody the spirit of international cooperation and diplomacy that the United Nations represents.

All the best,

Chairperson
Ayush R

Vice Chairperson
Ishaan Poddar

Rapporteur
Aarav Sethi

ABOUT THE UNSC

The Security Council (SC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN). It has been tasked with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security – which is its primary objective. It is composed of fifteen members in total, five of whom are permanent and the other ten being non-permanent. All Member States of the UN are obligated to comply with decisions of the SC. The SC has the responsibility to determine the existence of threats to or breach of international peace and security or act of aggression and also the power to take appropriate action to nullify such threats. It is widely considered the most powerful body of the United Nations.

The UNSC holds a pivotal role within the UN framework, primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Its mandate, powers, and functions are governed by the UN Charter, particularly Chapters V, VI, and VII. However, the exercise of these powers and the interpretation of its mandate involve adherence to broader international legal principles and norms.

MANDATE OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

The primary mandate of the UNSC is articulated in Article 24 of the UN Charter, which entrusts it with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. This responsibility entails the authority to investigate any situation threatening international peace, recommend methods of adjustment, and take action to prevent aggression.

The Security Council is uniquely empowered among UN organs to make decisions that member states are obligated to implement under the Charter. This binding nature of its decisions underscores the Council's central role in the UN system's collective security mechanism.

POWERS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Determining Threats to Peace

Under Article 39 of the UN Charter, the UNSC has the authority to determine the existence of any threat to peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression. This determination empowers the Council to decide on appropriate measures to address the threat.

Enforcing Peace and Security

The UNSC's powers to enforce peace and security include a range of actions from diplomatic and economic sanctions to military interventions. These powers are exercised under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Measures not involving the use of armed force include economic sanctions, arms embargoes, and travel bans. When these measures are deemed inadequate, the Council can authorize military action to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Economic sanctions are a frequently used tool, intended to apply pressure on a state or entity to comply with the Council's directives without resorting to military force. These sanctions can target various sectors, including trade, financial transactions, and arms imports. By imposing such measures, the UNSC aims to isolate the offending state or entity economically and politically, thereby compelling it to alter its behavior.

Military interventions, authorized under Chapter VII, represent the most forceful action the UNSC can take. Such interventions are typically multinational efforts carried out by member states, often in cooperation with regional organizations.

Legislative Powers and Limitations

While the UNSC possesses significant authority to maintain peace, it is not empowered to enact general and abstract rules of law (legislation) for the entire international community. This limitation is rooted in the lack of specific provisions in the UN Charter granting such legislative authority. The Council's actions must align with general international law, including peremptory norms (*jus cogens*), and the principles and purposes of the UN Charter.

FUNCTIONS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Maintaining International Peace and Security

The core function of the UNSC is to maintain international peace and security. This involves:

1. Investigating Disputes: The Council can investigate any situation that may lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute. It aims to determine the existence of a threat to peace and recommend appropriate actions.

2. Mediation and Negotiation: The UNSC can recommend methods for peaceful settlement of disputes, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and judicial settlement.

3. Sanctions and Enforcement Measures: When peaceful means fail, the Council can impose sanctions or authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The Council's investigative role is crucial in preempting conflicts. By understanding the underlying issues and dynamics of a potential conflict, the UNSC can recommend effective preventive measures. These investigations often involve sending fact-finding missions to conflict zones, engaging with stakeholders, and collaborating with other UN bodies and regional organizations.

Mediation and negotiation are essential functions that allow the UNSC to facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties. The Council often appoints special envoys or mediators who work to bring parties to the negotiating table. Successful examples of mediation efforts include the resolution of conflicts in East Timor and the peace processes in various African nations.

Sanctions and enforcement measures are tools of last resort, employed when peaceful means are insufficient to resolve a conflict. The imposition of sanctions is designed to apply pressure on parties to cease hostilities and comply with international norms. Enforcement measures, including military intervention, are considered when there is a need to protect civilians, prevent atrocities, or restore peace and stability.

Interpreting and Applying International Law

While determining threats to peace, the UNSC must follow the rules of interpretation of treaties outlined in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Despite the UN Charter being signed before the Vienna Convention, the rules of the Convention are considered customary international law and guide the Council's interpretation of its mandate and powers.

The application of international law by the UNSC involves balancing the principles of state sovereignty with the need to maintain international peace. This balance is often challenging, as actions taken by the Council may infringe on the sovereignty of states. The Council's decisions must therefore be carefully justified, ensuring they are consistent with international legal standards and the purposes of the UN Charter.

Acting in Good Faith

The UNSC is bound by general international law and the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. It must act in good faith, ensuring that its decisions align with international legal standards and the overarching goals of the UN. This obligation underscores the Council's responsibility to act within the bounds of its legal mandate and to respect the sovereignty and rights of member states.

The principle of good faith requires the UNSC to ensure that its actions are transparent, consistent, and justifiable under international law. This principle is critical in maintaining the legitimacy and credibility of the Council's decisions. When the Council's actions are perceived as arbitrary or politically motivated, it undermines trust in the international system and the UN's ability to maintain peace and security.

AGENDA: SITUATION IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT, 1971

Introduction

In modern times, winning a war is often more about diplomacy than sheer combat power. World War II serves as a prime example, where the Allied powers successfully forged an alliance to defeat formidable adversaries. While Germany and Japan had an Axis alliance, there was minimal coordination between them, in stark contrast to the understanding and cooperation demonstrated by the Allies. Similarly, the Indian victory in the 1971 War was as much a feat of Indian military prowess as it was the result of favorable global circumstances created through diplomacy. The power dynamics involving the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and India played crucial roles in shaping the conflict's outcome. The 1971 War is arguably the most significant conflict in the confrontational relationship between India and Pakistan. It was the international manifestation of the domestic political estrangement between the two halves of the Pakistani state.

From the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, Pakistan was created as a unified Muslim nation with a bizarrely divided geography: dominant West Pakistan was separated from downtrodden East Pakistan by a thousand miles of hostile Indian territory. The two wings of the country shared a common religion but were divided by distance, culture, language, and economics. A strong sense of national identity was absent among the peoples of East and West Pakistan. With political turmoil in 1970 in East Pakistan, the leaders from the Western wing feared losing their grip and brutally suppressed the East Pakistani political uprising, while the United States observed from the sidelines. A domestic political crisis turned into an armed struggle in East Pakistan, followed by an influx of refugees into other nations in the region. India entered the conflict after several months of opposing the Pakistani armed forces and was victorious in two weeks.



India's dramatic victory not only brought Bangladesh into being and reduced Pakistan by half, but it also resulted in the formalization of Soviet-Indian ties in a pre-war treaty. It generated enduring suspicion in US-Indian relations and launched the Pakistani nuclear program, which culminated in its weapons' tests in May 1998. The accord signed between the two combatants in Shimla in July 1972 has been a touchstone of Indian foreign policy for decades, framing interactions with Pakistan as well as relations with external powers.

Although Bangladeshi and several international sources consider the beginning of the war to have been Operation Chengiz Khan, where Pakistan launched pre-emptive airstrikes on Indian airbases leading to India's entry on the side of the Bangladeshi government in exile, there appears to be sufficient evidence to prove India's clandestine support to the Bangladeshi opposition. This war was not just a war of weapons but also one of espionage, with the Research and Analysis Wing (India), the Central Intelligence Agency (United States), and the Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan) providing governments with decisive insights into the activities of adversaries. Signal intelligence had developed to a level where it provided a significant advantage to the side that knew how to use its tools.

Although little is publicized about the atrocities of this war, substantial evidence points to it being one of the greatest human rights crises in Asia in modern times. It had a monumental impact on India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, affecting nearly a sixth of humanity in 1971. In the dark annals of modern cruelty, it ranks as bloodier than Bosnia and by some accounts in the same league as Rwanda. It was a defining moment for both the United States and India, where their humane principles were tested. For the United States, a small number of atrocities are so awful that they stand outside the normal day-to-day flow of diplomacy: the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, Cambodia, Bosnia, and Rwanda.

When American leaders are thought to have failed the test of decency in these moments, it often involves uncaring disengagements, such as Franklin Roosevelt during World War II without taking serious steps to rescue Jews from the Nazi dragnet, or Bill Clinton standing idly by during the Rwandan genocide. But Pakistan's slaughter of Bengalis in 1971 is starkly different. Here, the United States was allied with the killers, with the White House supporting the murderous regime on several fronts. American weapons were used in East Pakistan. There was no question about whether the United States should intervene; it was already acting on behalf of a military dictatorship decimating its own people. As the most important international backer, the United States had great influence over Pakistan. However, at almost every turning point in the crisis, Nixon and Kissinger failed to use that leverage to avert disaster.

India played the role of liberator for Bangladesh, infuriating Pakistan and the United States immensely, making relations with Pakistan worse than ever before. The India-Pakistan dynamic has moved no closer to balance since then; the relationship between a struggling middle power and a potential major power remains a dangerous rivalry rather than a partnership of reconciled neighbors. In addition to these underlying considerations, the 1971 War has become a key facet of the complex lens through which decision-makers in New Delhi and Islamabad view themselves, their bilateral relations, and their interactions with the rest of the world. The 1971 War continues to reverberate today at the highest levels of national policy in South Asia.

CONVENTIONS

PLACE NAMES

For the sake of simplicity, place names are given in the form most common in 1971, as the same names will be used during the simulation: thus Dacca (Dhaka), Bombay (Mumbai) and Calcutta (Kolkata). Two of the major rivers in East Pakistan/Bangladesh have dual names: the Ganges is also called the Padma, and the Jamuna carries the name Brahmaputra for the part of its course.

UNITS

Having evolved from the British Indian Army, the Indian and Pakistani armies have followed a British style regimental system and used British designations for the echelons of command since independence. Infantry battalions, approximately the same size as their US counterparts, are given a numerical designation within their regiments such as the 4 Sikh (4th Battalion, the Sikh Regiment). Battalions of India's Gorkha Rifles make a small exception, being identified by two numbers indicating battalion and Gorkha regiment: 5/5 Gorkha Rifles is thus the 5th Battalion of the 5th Gorkha Rifles. Armored and artillery "regiments" are equivalent to US battalions: 40-50 tanks and 18 artillery pieces respectively. Note that both countries have a Punjab Regiment on their rolls. Similarly, subunits within armored regiments are called squadrons and troops after British practice rather than the US terminology of companies and platoons. Ranks are likewise based on the British system: brigadiers rather than brigadier generals in the armies, and the system of squadron leaders, air marshals, etc. In the air forces .



THE PARTITION OF BRITISH INDIA (1947)

In the months and years immediately following the Second World War, leaders on all sides were losing control and were keen on striking a deal with their colonies before they descended into chaos. Immediately after the war, India was ravaged by the impact of the Great Depression, bringing mass unemployment. This created tremendous tensions exacerbated during the war by inflation and food grain shortages. Rationing was introduced in Indian cities, and Bengal faced a major famine in 1942.

The resulting discontent was expressed in widespread violence accompanying the Congress party's 'Quit India' campaign of 1942—a violence only contained by the deployment of 55 army battalions. With the cessation of hostilities, the battalions at the disposal of the government in India were rapidly diminished. At the same time, the infrastructure of the Congress Party, whose entire leadership was imprisoned due to their opposition to the war, had been dismantled.

The Muslim League, which cooperated with the British, had rapidly increased its membership, yet still had a very limited grassroots level organization. This was dramatically revealed on 16 August 1946, when Jinnah called for a 'Direct Action Day' by followers of the League in support of the demand for Pakistan. The day dissolved into random violence and civil disruption across north India, with thousands of lives lost. This was interpreted by the British as evidence of the irreconcilable differences between Hindus and Muslims. In reality, the riots were evidence as much of a simple lack of military and political control as they were of social discord.



Further evidence of the collapse of government authority was seen in the Princely State of Hyderabad, where a major uprising occurred in the Telangana region, and with the Tebhaga ('two-thirds') agitation among share-cropping cultivators in north Bengal. A leading role was played in both by the Communist Party of India. Elsewhere, the last months of British rule were marked by a naval mutiny, wage strikes, and successful demonstrations in every major city. In all of these conflicts, the British colonial government remained aloof, as it concentrated on the business of negotiating a speedy transfer of power.

Independent Pakistan inherited India's longest and most strategically problematic borders. At the same time, 90% of the subcontinent's industry and taxable income base remained in India, including the largest cities of Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta. The economy of Pakistan was chiefly agricultural and controlled by feudal lords.

Furthermore, at the division of India, Pakistan received a poor share of the colonial government's financial reserves. With 23% of the undivided landmass, it inherited only 17.5% of the former government's financial assets. Once the army had been paid, nothing was left over for economic development.

The great advantage enjoyed by the Indian National Congress was that it had worked hard for 40 years to reconcile differences and achieve some cohesion among its leaders. The heartland of support for the Muslim League, however, lay in central north India (Uttar Pradesh), which was not included within Pakistan. Muslims from this region had to flee westwards and compete with resident populations for access to land and employment, leading to ethnic conflict, especially in Sindh.

The agreement to divide colonial India into two separate states—one with a Muslim majority and the other with a Hindu majority—is commonly seen as the outcome of conflict between the nations' elites. However, the creation of Pakistan also reflected the deep-seated divisions and mutual suspicions that had grown over decades. The creation of Pakistan as a homeland for Muslims is often questioned, particularly because more Muslims were left in India than were incorporated into the new state of Pakistan.

This state was split into two halves: East Pakistan and West Pakistan, separated by 1,700 kilometers of Indian territory. It is plausible that Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, intended to use the demand for a separate state as leverage to secure greater power for Muslims within a loosely federated India.

The chaotic manner in which India and Pakistan gained independence is attributed to the hurried nature of the of the British withdrawal. This withdrawal was announced shortly after the Labour Party's victory in the British general election of July 1945. The realization that Britain, devastated by war, could not afford to maintain its over-extended empire hastened the decision. An act of parliament initially proposed a date for the transfer of power in June 1948, but this was abruptly moved up to August 1947 by the last Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten. This expedited timeline left many issues unresolved at the end of colonial rule.

Viceroy Mountbatten exacerbated difficulties by focusing primarily on Jinnah's Muslim League and the Indian National Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru. Although the representative status of these parties was established by the Constituent Assembly elections of July 1946, it fell short of universal franchise. Pakistan celebrated its independence on 14 August, and India on 15 August, yet the border between the two new states was not announced until 17 August. The hurriedly drawn border by British lawyer Cyril Radcliffe, who had little knowledge of Indian conditions, used outdated maps and census materials. This delay in announcement managed to absolve the British from responsibility for the ensuing violence and mass migration.

The establishment of India and Pakistan set a precedent for the negotiated winding up of European empires elsewhere. However, as self-governance was attained, many found themselves on the wrong side of the border.

The event led to violence and tremendous loss of life. Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims had to abandon their homes and move towards their new designated sides. What followed was one of the largest mass migrations in human history, involving some 18 million people. As many as one million civilians died in the accompanying riots and local-level fighting, particularly in the western part of Punjab, which was bisected by the border.

THE KASHMIR WAR, 1947

At the time of independence, Jammu and Kashmir, with a geographical area of 222,870 square kilometers, was the largest princely state in India. This extensive area included 39 towns and thousands of small villages, with an estimated population of about 4 million in 1947. The main mountain ranges—the Karakoram, Great Himalayas, and Pir Panjal—divided the region into three geographical sections: Jammu and the outer hills, the valley of Kashmir, and the high mountainous regions of the north. The state had a Muslim majority but a Hindu monarch.

Jammu and Kashmir, like the other nearly 600 princely states, was given the option to join either of the two independent dominions of India and Pakistan or remain independent. Most rulers had no real choice: geography and demographics made the decisions for them, but the case of Kashmir was different. Integration into the respective dominions was crucial due to its strategic significance and its geographical location. It was a critical demonstration of India's secular ideals. Pakistan viewed Kashmir as vital to the two-nation theory that was used to justify the creation of the Muslim state of Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir's most influential politician, Sheikh Abdullah, opposed India's partition, but once divided, he strongly advocated for Kashmir's independence. Jammu and Kashmir, along with Hyderabad, decided to remain independent, but standstill agreements were made with both nations to keep basic supplies and communications flowing.

Jammu and Kashmir couldn't remain isolated from the ghastly communal violence that engulfed Punjab in August 1947. Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan and Muslims from India began to pour into the state. By September, bands of raiders started carrying out harassing raids and looting of Hindu villages and refugees at Kotha, Chak Haria, and Ranbirsinghpura in Jammu. Infiltrations into Poonch had also begun.

Meanwhile, Pakistan, retaliating to Kashmir's resistance to Muslim raiders, placed a loose economic blockade on Jammu and Kashmir. It halted traffic on the only railroad going into Kashmir, confiscated Kashmiri trucks, and blocked the importation of essential staples and fuel into Kashmir. But like all economic blockades, this didn't yield fast results either. Pakistan therefore devised a plan for a faster and more decisive resolution to the problem.

Operation Gulmarg was one of the first large-scale military operations undertaken by Pakistan, featuring a tactic that Pakistan has allegedly used repeatedly afterward: non-state actors. The operation was conceived at the Pakistan Army HQ in Rawalpindi soon after independence. According to the plan, lashkars (militia) of 1,000 Pathans were raised by every Pathan tribe. Once recruited, they were concentrated at Bannu, Wana, Peshawar, Kohat, Thal, and Naushera by the first week of September 1947. They were armed by the Army, but the paperwork reportedly acknowledged them as regular Pakistani Army units. Forward ammunition dumps were established at Abbottabad and later moved to Muzaffarabad and Domel.

The invasion force was led by Major General Akbar Khan. All lashkars were instructed to travel by civil buses at night and concentrate at Abbottabad by 18 October 1947. The main force of six lashkars was to advance to Srinagar from Domel on the Muzaffarabad-Uri-Baramulla-Srinagar road. A force of two lashkars would provide flank protection to the main force by moving to Gulmarg via the Haji Pir Pass. Another force of two lashkars was to capture Handwara, Sopore, and Bandipur by crossing the Nastachun Pass beyond Tithwal. A force of ten lashkars was earmarked for the Bhimbar, Rawalkot, and Poonch areas with the objective of capturing Rajouri and Poonch and then advancing on to Jammu. The 7th Infantry Division of the Pakistan Army was asked to concentrate in the Murree-Abbottabad area by last light on 21 October and be ready to move into Jammu and Kashmir to support the tribal militia. One Infantry Brigade was put on readiness at Sialkot for moving on to Jammu. The D-Day for Operation Gulmarg was 22 October 1947.

This invasion and the ensuing first Kashmir War of 1947–48 set the stage for the complex and fraught relations between India and Pakistan that continue to this day. The war ended with the establishment of the Line of Control, which still divides the region and remains a flashpoint for conflict. The international implications of the partition and the Kashmir conflict have had lasting effects on the geopolitics of South Asia and beyond, influencing diplomatic, military, and political strategies in the region.

The raiders launched a frontal assault along the Jhelum Valley Road, capturing the Lohar Gali and Ramkot outposts with the aid of 200 civilian lorries. The Muslim company of the 4th Kashmir Infantry joined the raiders. The Dogra picquet, stationed at a school ground in Muzaffarabad, held out for a while, inflicting heavy damage on the raiders. However, by nightfall, the Battalion HQ of the 4th Kashmir Infantry at Domel and its outposts were overwhelmed. Two detachments of over 9,000 refugees managed to retreat to Bagh and Srinagar. On the evening of 24 October 1947, the Government of India received an emergency telegram from Srinagar informing them about the invasion and urgently pleading for Indian troops.

The raiders entered Baramulla on the evening of 26 October 1947 and indulged in mass pillage and looting. On the same day, the Governor General of India received a letter from Maharaja Hari Singh, and the Instrument of Accession was signed by him in Jammu, merging Jammu and Kashmir with India. The first Indian troops flew from Delhi to engage the tribal lashkars on 27 October, with Lt. Col. Ranjit Rai leading the operation. The orders were to land in Jammu if Srinagar was overrun by the tribal fighters. Immediately after landing the first elements of the unit at Srinagar airfield, the troops set out along the Baramulla road to cut off the enemy as far from Srinagar as possible. They made contact with the Pakistani fighters 50 km from Srinagar, suffering heavy casualties.

On 31 October, Nehru sent a telegram to Liaqat Ali Khan assuring the withdrawal of troops once peace and order were restored, leaving the future of Kashmir to the state's people. He reiterated the same through a broadcast on 2 November 1947. After the fighting on the outskirts of Srinagar, the tribals advanced towards the city. From this position, they

could have fired mortar shells at the airfield and deterred Dakotas bringing in reinforcements and supplies from landing. The Maharaja had to flee Srinagar for Jammu. To save the airfield, recently landed companies of the 1st and 4th Kumaon Regiment occupied a defensive position at Badgam along a ridge, stopping the Pakistani advance, suffering many casualties in the process.

Meanwhile, reinforcements rushed in, and the tribals were forced to withdraw. The airfield at Srinagar remained under Indian control. Subsequently, the momentum of the Indian counterattack forced the Pakistani forces into full retreat, allowing elements of the 161st Infantry Brigade to retake Baramulla and Uri. Despite early successes, the Indian army suffered setbacks due to logistical problems. Land routes joining Kashmir with the rest of India were blocked by snow, disallowing the flow of supplies except by air. Furthermore, a lack of combat experience in cold and high-altitude environments allowed the Pakistani army to gain an upper hand. Meanwhile, Gilgit and Chitral were captured by Pakistani forces, elements of which simultaneously laid a siege on Poonch. On 25 November 1947, Mirpur was captured by Pakistan. However, as more Indian troops became available, the Indian army continued to thwart attempts by Pakistan to recapture Uri.

By this time, India had enough time to plan its campaign, stabilizing the war with a significant chance of prolongation over a large period. On 31 December 1947, India approached the Security Council. In a letter, the Government of India wrote:

“... But to avoid any possible suggestion that India had utilized the State's immediate peril for her own political advantage, the Government of India made it clear that once the soil of the State had been cleared of the invader and normal conditions restored, its people would be free to decide their future...”

A day later, India submitted its complaint to the United Nations. In the spring of 1948, the Indian side mounted another offensive to capture ground it had lost, recapturing Tithwal. Pakistani regulars were introduced into the conflict a few months later, in May, targeting the city of Jammu. In November, Poonch was finally relieved after a siege of over a year. The fighting from the spring through December 1948 was widespread as Pakistani forces conducted operations in both the north and south.

A ceasefire went into effect on 1 January 1949. The resolution proposing the ceasefire required Pakistani troops to withdraw while maintaining a small number of Indian troops to preserve law and order in the state. A plebiscite was also proposed to determine the territory's future. In all, 1,500 soldiers died on each side during the war, and Pakistan acquired roughly two-fifths of Kashmir, establishing it as Azad Kashmir. In 1954, Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India was ratified by the state's constituent assembly. In 1957, it approved its own constitution, modeled along the Indian constitution.

THE INDO-CHINA WAR (1962)

The Indo-China War (1962) Sino-Indian relations from 1950-59 were notably warm. India hastily recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, becoming the second nation to do so. This led to the establishment of a cooperative environment with the PRC at a time when many nations were recognizing the Republic of China. India's existence as a socialist state allowed for greater cooperation with communist China, as it did not come into direct conflict with Maoist ideology like the United States.

However, this environment of diplomatic cooperation would be challenged by China's policy of reclaiming historical possessions. The 1950 invasion of Tibet by the PRC began to strain the relationship. The Seventeen Points Agreement of May 1951, wherein India recognized China's historical sovereignty over Tibet while preserving Indian economic and social interests in Tibet, temporarily eased tensions. Nevertheless, the issue of defining China's borders with India in the Northeast and North gradually gained momentum.

Nehru's vision that regional powers of Asia could contradict traditional balance of power politics was embodied in the Panchsheel Agreement of 1954 between the two nations, which stressed:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Non-interference in each other's domestic affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful coexistence

By 1957, China had started moving towards its historical conception of Sino-Indian borders south of the McMahon Line, established by the 1914 Simla Convention between China and British India. India firmly believed in the borders inherited in 1947 and dismissed Chinese insistence on border negotiations in 1954. Nehru asserted, "the McMahon Line marked their border with China, where was the need?" China, having never signed the Simla Convention, did not consent to any bilateral agreement between Tibet and Britain as it violated their sovereignty.

India's intransigence on negotiating a mutually acceptable border led the PRC to act independently in areas south of the McMahon Line. China justified this by asserting that in the absence of mutually negotiated borders, the true national boundary was a line of actual control represented by the extent of either nation's ability to administer the territory. This practical assertion became evident to India when Indian patrols discovered an all-weather road constructed in the Aksai-Chin Plain connecting Xinjiang and Tibet. The Indian government launched diplomatic protests, asserting a violation of their territorial integrity.

In 1959, Tibet rose up in a massive revolt against Chinese authority. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) moved in to suppress the rebellion by breaking the popular will in Lhasa. On March 31, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet for India, where he was granted political asylum. Chinese officials chafed at India's meddling in their domestic affairs by granting asylum to the Dalai Lama, thereby violating the Panchsheel Agreement.

The rebellion drastically soured relations between the two nations, and their border dispute widened due to a change in Indian military strategy. Reportedly, India began constructing forward posts behind the Chinese claim line and in strategic locations to flank Chinese military positions in the Ladakh region, threatening the Xinjiang-Tibet road. By 1962, similar posts were built even beyond the Chinese claim line in Tibet, including four posts beyond the McMahon Line. This resulted in an inability to claim that these posts were simply to defend Indian territorial integrity. The Panchsheel Agreement was not renewed in 1961 due to these growing tensions.

When Marshal Chen Yi and V.K. Krishna Menon, leaders of the Chinese and Indian delegations to the Geneva Conference on Laos in the last week of July 1962, met, Zhou Enlai sent a telegram to the Chinese delegation: Peaceful coexistence between China and India would soon be replaced by long-term armed coexistence. In September, all Indian forward posts and patrols were given permission to fire at any armed Chinese who entered Indian territory after a 60-strong PLA unit descended the Thag La Ridge into Indian territory.

China launched a general offensive along the boundary in the eastern and western sectors on October 20, 1962. Two days later, it announced it would no longer respect the “illegal McMahon Line.” Another two days later, Zhou Enlai sent a message to Nehru proposing a ceasefire, pull-back from present positions, and a meeting of the two Prime Ministers. The offer was rejected by an enraged Indian public. The offensive resumed.

In mid-November, the relative lull in military activity was broken by fighting in the Walong area in the extreme east of the boundary, and thereafter at Sela Pass in the western section of the eastern boundary. Chushul airfield in Ladakh came under attack. On November 21, the Chinese declared a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal of their forces from December 1. A curious aspect of this war was that neither party employed air or naval forces.

In December 1962, the leaders of Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Indonesia, Ghana, and the United Arab Republic met in Colombo and finalized proposals for presentation to China and India, proposing a restoration of the status quo as it existed on September 8, 1962. India announced its acceptance of the Colombo Proposals on January 27, 1963. China declared that it had accepted the proposals “in principle” for talks between India and China. China continued to insist upon direct talks, while India maintained that accepting the Colombo Proposals was a necessary precondition.

Despite diplomatic efforts, the relationship between India and China remained strained, with the border issue unresolved. The 1962 conflict left a lasting impact on Sino-Indian relations, influencing their geopolitical dynamics and military strategies in the following decades.

THE INDO – PAKISTAN WAR (1965)

The 1965 war between India and Pakistan, also known as the Second Kashmir War, was a culmination of skirmishes that took place between April and September 1965. This conflict was the second major clash between the two countries over the status of Jammu and Kashmir. The war began with Operation Gibraltar, designed by Pakistan to infiltrate forces into Jammu and Kashmir to produce a long-standing insurgency and destabilize Indian rule in the area. In response, India launched a full-scale war, employing heavy armor and air capabilities, leading to some of the largest tank battles since World War II. Pakistan relied on American Pattons and Chaffees, while India used Centurions and Shermans.

As part of Operation Gibraltar, the Pakistani Army's 50th Airborne paratroopers and guerrilla groups infiltrated into Kashmir, disguised as locals. These groups targeted several locations in Kashmir, but the operation was detected by Indian forces, prompting India to cross the ceasefire line on August 15. India initially met with successes, but Pakistan overcame early setbacks to occupy strategic locations such as Uri, Tithwal, and Poonch, areas it had focused on during the 1947 War.

On September 1, Pakistan launched a counterattack, Operation Grand Slam, with the objective of capturing Akhnoor to intercept the supply and communication routes of Indian troops. India, suffering heavy losses, brought its air force into combat, inflicting significant damage on Pakistani troops. Concurrently, India decided to start combat operations in Pakistani Punjab, forcing Pakistan to relocate troops to protect Punjab and leading to the failure of Operation Grand Slam. Indian forces crossed the international border on September 6, moving towards Lahore, while Pakistan made advances towards Rajasthan, capturing Munabao on September 10.

The war saw extensive aerial warfare between the Indian and Pakistani air forces, with both forces participating in offensive and defensive operations. The Pakistani Air Force flew over 2,300 sorties, while the Indian Air Force flew close to 4,000 sorties. Although both nations made contradictory claims about their losses, independent sources estimate Pakistani losses to be around 20 to 40 aircraft and Indian losses to be about 60 to 100 aircraft.

On the ground, the battles were intense and widespread. The Indian Army's advance towards Lahore was a significant thrust, aimed at pressuring Pakistan into a defensive stance. The battles in the Punjab region were characterized by fierce tank engagements, with the largest tank battle taking place at Asal Uttar. Here, the Indian Army managed to halt the Pakistani advance despite the initial setbacks, causing considerable losses to the Pakistani armor.

In the Kashmir sector, the Indian Army's efforts were focused on repelling the infiltrators and securing key positions along the ceasefire line. The mountainous terrain posed significant challenges, but Indian forces managed to reclaim much of the lost territory through determined offensives and strategic planning.

The naval operations during the 1965 war were limited but notable. The Indian Navy targeted the Karachi port, aiming to disrupt Pakistan's supply lines and naval capabilities. The operations were primarily aimed at exerting pressure on Pakistan and diverting their resources.

Throughout the conflict, both sides attempted to gain international support. The United States and the Soviet Union were engaged diplomatically, urging both nations to cease hostilities and negotiate peace. The involvement of these superpowers highlighted the global implications of the conflict and the strategic importance of the South Asian region.

The war eventually led to a United Nations–mandated ceasefire on September 22, 1965. The ceasefire brought an end to the hostilities, but the underlying issues regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir remained unresolved. The war resulted in significant casualties and losses on both sides, with neither country achieving a decisive victory.

In the aftermath, both India and Pakistan sought to rebuild and rearm, leading to increased military expenditures and a persistent state of tension along the border. The war underscored the volatility of the Kashmir issue and set the stage for future conflicts between the two nations. The engagement of the United States and the Soviet Union during the war also had lasting implications for regional and global politics, influencing the strategic alignments and foreign policies of both India and Pakistan in the ensuing years.

BEFORE THE LIBERATION WAR

East Pakistan, the eastern wing of Pakistan, shared a long border with India and had a population of 75 million people living in terrible poverty. It was known as a place for significant development work, attracting some of the best poverty-fighting economists and experts who focused on boosting crop yields and combating cholera. In contrast to West Pakistan, where many languages were spoken with Urdu being the most common, almost everyone in East Pakistan spoke Bengali. Despite Pakistan being an officially Islamic nation, East Pakistan had a sizable Bengali Hindu minority. While West Pakistan nursed grudges against India, the Bengalis in East Pakistan showed little interest in this feud.

Maintaining Pakistan as a united nation was a challenge. Civilian leaders attempted to mandate Urdu as the national language, infuriating the Bengalis. This situation worsened with the imposition of martial law in 1958, stifling the country by banning political parties and silencing Bengali grievances. Demographic realities also complicated Pakistani democracy. West Pakistan had a population of around sixty-one million, while East Pakistan had seventy-five million people. The Bengalis demanded proper democratic representation, but the west feared losing control, leading to a deadlock in constitutional negotiations.

By the time Yahya Khan came to power in March 1969, East Pakistan was in constant turmoil. Bengali street protestors frequently clashed with the army, and economic resentments had been simmering for too long. The 1965 war with India exacerbated these tensions, as many Bengalis resented being asked to take risks for the distant cause of Kashmir. However, Yahya was not initially seen as an anti-democratic leader. He began working to end martial law, aiming to transfer power to a newly elected government, and announced historic elections.

Scheduled for December 7, 1970, the elections triggered a lively campaign across the country. However, a catastrophic incident disrupted the political momentum. On November 13, a massive cyclone devastated East Pakistan, with gales reaching 150 miles per hour and tidal waves over twenty feet high. American agencies estimated that at least 230,000 people died, constituting 15 percent of the affected area's population. The central Pakistani government's response was feeble, with the international response from countries like the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain being much more visible. Yahya flew to East Pakistan to take personal command of disaster relief, but this did not change public opinion, occurring just over two weeks before the election.

Bengali politicians criticized Yahya's government for ignoring their people in their time of need. The most prominent of these leaders was Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman, who led the Awami League, a mainstream Bengali nationalist party. By 1966, Mujib had articulated Bengali grievances into "Six Points," calling for democracy and autonomy for both wings of a federal country, with the central government responsible only for foreign affairs and defense. The Awami League campaigned vigorously for these "Six Points" and was very visible during the cyclone of November 1970. Mujib supervised relief efforts personally and criticized the central government's inadequate response.

West Pakistani rulers were suspicious of the Awami League, questioning whether Mujib truly wanted autonomy or if the Six Points were merely a step toward secession. Pakistani intelligence reportedly captured Mujib stating, "My aim is to establish Bangladesh." Simultaneously, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a former foreign minister leading the Pakistan People's Party, campaigned for dramatic change in West Pakistan. Bhutto aimed for a leftist vision of Pakistan with a strong central government and a foreign policy opposing India. He was firmly anti-American, which strained relations with the Nixon administration.

On December 7, 1970, millions of Pakistanis went to the polls, though some areas in East Pakistan delayed voting until January due to cyclone devastation. This was the first direct election in Pakistan's twenty-three years of independence, allowing all adults, including women, to vote. The people were to choose a Constituent Assembly tasked with drafting a new constitution. The elections were fair, without signs of voter intimidation or violence.

The Awami League won decisively, taking all but two seats in East Pakistan and securing an outright majority in the National Assembly. Yahya's military dictatorship was humiliated, as the election results showed a clear rejection from both the east and the west. Bhutto won a significant margin in West Pakistan, but Mujib's victory in the more populous East Pakistan meant he won almost twice as many seats as Bhutto. This outcome was seen as blocking Bhutto's path to power. Despite being rivals, Yahya and Bhutto were united by their hostility toward India and fear of losing East Pakistan.

After the elections, negotiations between Yahya, Bhutto, and Mujib yielded no results. Under pressure from Bhutto, Yahya postponed the National Assembly opening indefinitely on March 1, which had been scheduled for March 3. For the Bengalis who had voted decisively for the Awami League, this appeared as outright electoral theft, sparking protests throughout East Pakistan. On March 6, Yahya addressed the nation, accusing the "forces of disorder" of engaging in looting, arson, and killing. He declared that the National Assembly would now open on March 25 and emphasized the duty of the Pakistan armed forces to ensure the integrity, solidarity, and security of Pakistan.

On March 7, Mujib addressed a massive gathering at the Dacca Race Course ground, detailing the political deadlock and declaring, "The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation! The struggle this time is the struggle for independence!" Clashes ensued in East Pakistan, with widespread civil disobedience. Bengalis launched a general strike, halting normal life. Shops were closed, and streets filled with Bengalis chanting "Joi Bangla."

East Pakistan teetered on the brink of anarchy. With the March 25 deadline for the National Assembly opening approaching, the three main Pakistani leaders continued bargaining, but signs of a political breakthrough were scant. Meanwhile, Pakistan flew in more troops to East Pakistan, fortifying Dacca airport. Yahya replaced the moderate governor of East Pakistan with Lieutenant Tikka Khan, known as the “Butcher of Baluchistan” for his harsh repression of a West Pakistani uprising, further terrifying the Bengalis.

On March 15, Yahya arrived in Dacca for more negotiations with Mujib amid reports of violence between civilians and the military at Jaydevpur. Bhutto, who had been absent from the negotiations, arrived in Dacca on March 22. At a press conference, Bhutto announced that Yahya and Mujib had reached a general agreement, promising a basis for future negotiations. However, on March 24, about a thousand people died in clashes between protestors and the military.

The volatile situation continued to escalate. The economic and political grievances of the Bengalis, coupled with the recent natural disaster and the inadequate response of the central government, fueled the unrest. The Awami League’s demand for autonomy and the fair democratic process highlighted the deep-seated issues within the Pakistani state structure. The increased military presence and the aggressive stance of the government indicated an impending crackdown.

As March 25 approached, the tensions reached a boiling point. The negotiations failed to bring any meaningful resolution, and the military’s preparations suggested that they were ready for a decisive move to suppress the Bengali uprising. The growing fear and uncertainty among the Bengali population led to a heightened state of readiness for confrontation.

The events leading up to the Liberation War were marked by a series of missteps, misunderstandings, and miscalculations. The aspirations of the Bengali people for greater autonomy and representation clashed with the central government’s desire to maintain control.

The devastation caused by the cyclone and the subsequent inadequate response only served to deepen the divide. The democratic aspirations of the Awami League, as represented by their overwhelming electoral victory, were thwarted by the central government's reluctance to cede power.

The situation in East Pakistan was dire. The Bengali population felt betrayed by the central government and emboldened by their electoral victory. The increased military presence and the appointment of a known hardliner as governor indicated that the central government was preparing for a significant crackdown. The failure of the negotiations and the ongoing violence pointed to an imminent conflict that would have far-reaching consequences for the future of Pakistan.

The Liberation War was the culmination of these tensions and grievances. It was a struggle for autonomy, democracy, and the right to self-determination. The events leading up to the war highlighted the deep-seated issues within the Pakistani state structure and set the stage for a conflict that would reshape the region's political landscape.

MARCH 25, 1971 AND THEREAFTER

On March 25, 1971, in Chittagong, thousands of Bengalis attempted to prevent the unloading of a cargo ship laden with weaponry and ammunition destined for the Pakistani military. The army responded by sending in five hundred troops who eventually opened fire on the crowd, killing at least fifteen people. With alarming swiftness, Yahya Khan abandoned the negotiations and flew out of Dacca for West Pakistan. Foreign journalists were tracked down and arrangements made for their deportation; they were soon put on planes to Karachi via Ceylon. Operation Searchlight began that night.

According to reporters present in Dacca, the targets of the Operation were clear:

1. Bengali military—men of the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles, police, and paramilitary Ansars and Mujahids.
2. Hindus, who formed about 13 percent of East Pakistan's population.
3. Awami Leaguers: All office bearers and volunteers down to the lowest link in the chain of command.
4. Students, particularly those in college and university, including some militant girls.
5. Bengali intellectuals such as professors and teachers, deemed "militant" by the army.

The Operation was launched simultaneously across East Pakistan with a greater focus on Dacca. Internal and external communications were cut off. Truckloads of Pakistani troops drove through Dacca, only barely slowed by barricades erected by students and other Awami League supporters. M-24 and PT-76 tanks reportedly led some of the troop columns. In Dacca University, students were slaughtered in the hundreds that night. Residential halls were searched for signs of Bengali resistance, and students and faculty, mostly Hindus, were shot. Print media establishments like Ittefaq and The People, strong Awami League supporters, were attacked without warning.



Mujib was arrested on the night of March 25, the Awami League was banned, and a severe curfew was imposed. Before his arrest, Mujib reportedly prepared a message to be broadcast throughout Bangladesh:

“This may be my last message, from today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved.”

The attacks on the unarmed population continued. Cities like Khulna, Chittagong, Comilla, Jessore, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Syedpur, and Sylhet experienced similar brutality. On March 26, Yahya denounced Mujib and the Awami League as treasonous enemies of Pakistan, asserting that the army would hold the country together. Soon, C-130s carrying massive reinforcements began landing in cities with airfields. Many of Mujib’s supporters reportedly fled to the border. Yahya wrote to Nixon, claiming that East Pakistan was under control and normal life was being restored.

The military action on March 25–26 spurred a wave of mutinies among Bengali officers and men in the army and police forces, leading to the birth of a rebel movement comprising Bengali military-men, who would soon form the Muktibahini. On March 27, Major Ziaur Rahman spoke from a captured radio station in Chittagong:

“Major Zia, Provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Bangladesh Liberation Army, hereby proclaims, on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the independence of Bangladesh. I also declare, we have already framed a sovereign, legal Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the constitution. The new democratic government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace. I appeal to all Governments to mobilize public opinion in their respective countries against the brutal genocide in Bangladesh. The Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the sovereign legal

Government of Bangladesh and is entitled to recognition from all democratic nations of the world.”

On March 31, both houses of the Indian parliament unanimously condemned “the atrocities now being perpetrated on an unprecedented scale upon unarmed and innocent people.” The military action was followed by mob violence, with Bengali mobs attacking Biharis or West Pakistanis wherever they held the upper hand until army units secured the area. Mujib’s idea of Bangladesh needed Biharis to be protected and respected, but they soon became involved in the violence as retaliation to other incidents of Bengali attacks on Biharis. Areas that initially fell into the hands of Bengali rebels were secured by the Pakistani military using all means necessary. The Pakistani Air Force played an extensive role, using F-86 Sabre fighter jets to eliminate resistance, with reports of napalm use. The Indian press reported that 300,000 had died within the first week.

As the army moved to secure more territories, initial resistance by Bengali rebels was disorganized and amateurish, while the army’s reaction was overwhelming. The army shot at “anything that moved” and torched rebel areas. However, the resistance soon found safe havens in India, including an alleged supply of arms and training. Throughout April and into May, the army continued to bring rebel-held areas under government control. From the beginning, India had kept its borders open to refugees, and rebels often used this to evade army attacks. For many Indians, the bloodshed demonstrated the profound national crack-up in Pakistan—a historic failure of the ideal of Pakistan as an Islamic nation uniting Muslims in both wings of the country. Tikka Khan was replaced by Lieutenant General A.K. Niazi on April 7.

Meanwhile, the Hindustan Times questioned why the United States would condemn the mistreatment of Soviet Jews but stay silent about the Bengalis. India had taken up the painstaking task of offering refuge to those who managed to flee East Pakistan. The mounting demand for food, shelter, and medical care was more than India could handle. By late April, with the monsoons looming, the rush of refugees became a public health disaster. India frantically built camps, each holding about forty thousand people, and although it was impossible to count the exact number of refugees, in May India estimated sheltering about two million,

with fifty thousand arriving daily. Indian reporters rushed to the borders, shocking their readership with gruesome coverage of the refugees' harrowing ordeals.

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India also provided tremendous political support to the Bangladeshi resistance. Under India's guidance, the resistance, now led by M.A.G. Osmani became organized and started resembling a long-term rebellion. However, the resistance's demands for recognition of Bangladesh were not met. The government in exile was formed by Awami League members who managed to flee the slaughter, in Calcutta, and formally proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh on April 17. Soon, the Swadin Bangla Betar Kendra, a propaganda media for the resistance, found itself in Calcutta too.

The war began with individual military officers leading their forces in their areas without any central planning or coordination. It was only after the government formally took oath on April 17 that the process of consolidating the rebellion began, starting a massive coordination effort to make the rebellion impactful with fewer casualties. Military officers fighting independently were invited to attend a Sector Commanders conference in Calcutta. The conference lasted from July 11 to 17 and saw attendance from Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, Col. M.A.G. Osmani, Lt. Col. M. A. Rab, Major Ziaur Rahman, and several other key figures, totaling 15 men actively involved with the liberation war. Lt. Col. Rab was

appointed Chief of Staff. The conference focused on demarcating sector boundaries, dividing the area into 11 sectors, organizing guerrilla forces, and structuring the regular army. Various strategies to be employed by the liberation forces were also discussed.

On August 3, Yahya announced that Sheikh Mujib would be tried by a special military court for “waging war against Pakistan.” A statement by the Headquarters of the Chief Martial Law Administrator echoed this, stating that the trial would commence on August 11 in camera and its proceedings would be secret. The Indian Minister of External Affairs speculated in the Lok Sabha on August 9 that the declared court martial of Mujib might result in execution. On the same day, India and the Soviet Union entered into a treaty of peace, and on August 12, the foreign ministers of the two nations met to discuss security matters concerning East Pakistan.

An operation in August 1971 by naval commandos in Chittagong port was one of the notable results of the rigorous planning by the Sector Commanders. Sector Commander Rafique directed the first naval commando operation, called Operation Jackpot, on ships anchored in Chittagong. A group of sixty naval commandos, tasked with destroying ships, barges, and vessels of the occupation forces in the Bay of Bengal and the river Karnaphuli, took part in this operation.

By September, world governments could speculate, and in many cases verify, the casualty numbers in East Pakistan. ABC Television’s Bob Clark interviewed Aga Hilaly, the Pakistani ambassador, who responded to a question with, “Foreign diplomats were in Dacca—they did not see people being killed on ‘this’ scale anywhere.” Al Hawadith from Lebanon gave a graphic description of the situation:

“The Pakistani officer stood in one of the small villages of East Pakistan and told the hungry public gathered around him: ‘My men are wounded and I want some blood, I want volunteers.’ Before waiting for a reply, the soldiers rushed forward, selected some young men, threw them on the ground, and pricked them in the arteries. Blood began to flow and continued flowing until the young men died.”

Echoing the will of the Bangladeshi refugees in India, British MP Peter Shore spoke to The Times, saying that the British MP Peter Shore spoke to The Times, saying that the British Government should not resume consortia.

According to Indian sources, on 26th August Indian troops crossed the East Pakistani border to engage Pakistani forces in Hilli. The communication center of Bogra is approachable from Hilli, and is one of the key centers for the Pakistani military.

INSIGHTS ON DIPLOMATIC STANCES TO THE SITUATION

Soviet

The response of the Soviet Union to the situation in 1971 was conditioned by its general policy with regard to Asia, which involved growing involvement to contain America's expanding influence in the region. This policy was increasingly directed at the diplomatic, military, and ideological advance of China, which the Soviets saw as their principal rival in the Third World. The Soviet Union's desire to present its credentials as an Asian power and counter American, Japanese, and Chinese expansionist schemes led to its launch in 1969 of a campaign for a system of collective security in Asia.

The Soviet Union's close ties with India also significantly shaped its response. An amiable working relationship had prevailed between the two countries since 1955, and these ties were further bolstered by the mid-1960s after India's defeat in the 1962 war with China and the worsening Sino-Soviet relations. As a dominant power in the South Asian subcontinent, India could be built up as an effective counterpoise to China, containing Beijing militarily and diplomatically. The stability and security of its ally, India, were of paramount concern to Moscow. East Pakistan might have been a fringe responsibility concerning the Soviet Union's Indian interests, but the Soviets were one of the first nations to criticize Pakistani military action and American support at the world stage.

The apparent convergence of Chinese and American policies regarding the Bangladesh issue in 1971 increased Soviet fears in this respect and likely further hardened their resolve to back Indian assistance to Bangladesh. In August 1971, the Soviet Union and India signed a treaty of "peace, friendship, and cooperation." The most crucial part was an article declaring that if either country was attacked, the other would consult to "remove such a threat" and "take appropriate effective measures to ensure the peace and security of their countries."

Analysts argued that the treaty would make India a Soviet colony, pointing out that Hungary and Czechoslovakia had similar treaties before being crushed by Soviet tanks. The Americans perceived India's strategy as serving as a counter to the Sino-US pincer against India. Indira Gandhi's government emphasized that the treaty would bolster its position of non-alignment. However, with the White House opening its doors to China and now India's Soviet treaty, the Cold War enveloped the subcontinent.

Sri Lanka

Meanwhile, India-Sri Lanka relations were sailing through stormy waters. Going back to their independence in 1948, Sri Lanka had radically changed its constitution, de-recognizing Tamil as one of the national languages and declaring Sinhalese as the sole national and official language of the country. This change deprived Tamils of several benefits, including positions in the government, which was seen as a pretty unfair deal for the large ethnic Tamil populace. The Indian government under Indira Gandhi had already decided that once Pakistan was dealt with, India would focus on using diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka to ease the situation in the region. The Sri Lankan government knew that if India won the war, India would have greater leverage at the negotiating table. It feared that the Tamil-dominated Northern Jaffna region might even be carved out and made into a new country, which is why it aided Pakistan. Pakistani aircraft destined for East Pakistan flew over the Arabian Sea via Sri Lanka after Indian skies were declared a restricted airspace. Sri Lanka even allowed Pakistani aircraft to refuel at the Bandaranaike airport. Although this didn't make much of a difference, it proved the direction the Sri Lankan government chose to take, which led to considerable turmoil and a civil war over the years.

Pakistan

Pakistan had developed as America's closest Asian ally in recent years under the Nixon administration. Nixon's vision of an alliance with China led to Yahya Khan's important role as a middle-man. In return, military and economic aid to support Pakistan's economy and population were provided.

Even when Yahya Khan's party failed to win a substantial majority in the 1970 elections, the American administration put its weight behind Yahya, hoping he would be able to cope with the political turmoil that would inevitably follow. The Americans played the role of non-interfering bystanders as Yahya started tearing the nation to pieces.

March 1971 was a chaotic time for the Pakistani administration. With protests erupting all over East Pakistan to put the Awami League into power, Yahya Khan realized that he was ruling a population that had rejected him. He wasn't entirely undemocratic, but succumbing to a power struggle and desperate to keep his country's integrity constant, he approved the military operations of late March. What he hadn't anticipated was the outstanding resilience of the Bengali population. Taming them was not going to be an easy task. Shielded from international criticism and supplied with weapons and supplies by allies such as China and the United States, Yahya continued the crackdown on the civilian populace of East Pakistan, which he called an internal situation, forcing them to flee the nation.

The Bengali resistance had grown within a month of the crackdown, and Pakistan was firmly convinced that India had a tremendous role in their advances. The military operations in East Pakistan grew more aggressive with the growing rebellion. Hot pursuits often resulted in confrontation with Indian soldiers at the borders, the areas around which were reportedly used as training centers for the Muktibahini, managed by the Indian army. The Pakistani objective was to eliminate the rebellion before it gained enough arms and political support from the Indian government, supported by the Soviets. Another threat to Pakistan was India's direct entry into the conflict, to deter which Pakistan had demanded assistance from China and the assurance that it would enter such a conflict on Pakistan's side.

China

Communist China was one of Pakistan's chief allies and was now warming up to the United States through Yahya Khan. China sought to expand its influence throughout Asia and therefore saw the Soviets as prime adversaries. It thus aligned itself with the United States to gain the political and military upper hand. Henry Kissinger had allegedly made a secret visit to Beijing in 1971, where he met Zhou Enlai, the Chinese statesman. In a conversation, Zhou said, "In our opinion, if India continues on its present course in disregard of world opinion, it will continue to go on recklessly. We, however, support the stand of Pakistan." Kissinger's trip was successful.

When the reports of killings in East Pakistan reached the world, the Chinese, along with their newly found American allies, categorically denied classifying the suppression of "internal issues" as genocide. This essentially gave Pakistan the license to continue its rampage in East Pakistan. On the contrary, China continued to provide aid to Yahya's government. The Chinese possessed the military might to counter an Indian offensive against Pakistan, having already defeated the Indian army in 1962, which is why Pakistan counted on Mao's word to protect Pakistan from the Indian military. If such a thing were to happen, India would be facing an overwhelming three-front war.

Bangladesh

When the Awami League secured almost all seats in Pakistan in 1970, signaling that the next government would likely be led by them, it shocked the western wing of Pakistan but was anticipated by the people in East Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a charismatic leader, had garnered significant trust among the Bengali population with his promises of autonomy and equality.

However, as it became evident that the election results were being disregarded and power was slipping away from the Awami League, protests erupted across East Pakistan. Dacca echoed with cries of "Joi Bangla" as rallies and demonstrations filled the streets. Between March 10th and 13th, Pakistan International Airlines canceled international flights to transport Pakistani soldiers to Dacca.

The turning point came on March 25th, when a large-scale military operation was launched in Dacca, shocking the people of East Pakistan. While the increasing military presence had been noted, the extent of the brutal crackdown and the scale of atrocities unleashed by the Pakistani government were unprecedented.

Sheikh Mujib was arrested on March 25th and taken to West Pakistan, effectively decapitating the Awami League leadership in East Pakistan. Spontaneous uprisings erupted throughout Bangladesh as calls for independence reverberated. Besides the Mukti Bahini, several other resistance groups such as the Kader Bahini of Tangail, Latif Mirza Bahini of Sirajganj, and Akbar Hossain Bahini of Jhinaidah were formed. The Pakistani government, bolstered by paramilitary forces like the Razakars, intensified its campaign of terror and violence against the Bengali population.

On March 27th, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed full support for the Bengali freedom struggle. India opened its borders to provide safe refuge for the tortured and panic-stricken Bengalis fleeing the violence. Subsequently, a government in exile was established in Calcutta with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the President in absentia. In his absence, Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed coordinated war operations from the makeshift capital. The radio station "Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra" continued to broadcast patriotic programs throughout the "War of Liberation" to inspire freedom fighters.

The Mujibnagar government's primary tasks included organizing civil administration, arming and training freedom fighters, and mobilizing international support through intense diplomatic efforts, particularly with India's assistance. One of the government's key demands was diplomatic recognition from India, which held back formal recognition until the resistance gained substantial control over Bangladesh.

United States

The year 1971 marked a climactic period in Pakistan's history, characterized by unparalleled violence and unbridled cruelty reminiscent of the partition era in 1947. In the late 1960s, Pakistan enjoyed favorable international relations, particularly with China, and appeared more stable than in previous years. Pakistan had maintained a close relationship with China for an extended period, and President Nixon of the United States did not view China as an American adversary. Nixon, in an uncommon move, sought avenues to establish relations with Mao's China, eventually choosing Yahya Khan as the intermediary for this crucial introduction.

In July 1971, Nixon's National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, reportedly made a secret trip from Pakistan to Beijing, signaling a potential visit by the American President to China. Richard Nixon perceived Pakistan as the gateway that would remain open to China, viewing Yahya Khan as a close ally. Moreover, with growing American concerns that India was leaning towards the Soviet Union, especially following the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Pakistan's membership in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) necessitated American support. When Yahya Khan suffered a resounding defeat in the 1970 elections, the United States showed minimal interest in upholding the electoral results, fearing the loss of its Cold War ally. Despite initial State Department considerations of warming up to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Nixon rejected the idea, fearing it would be interpreted as support for secession.

As Pakistan faced internal turmoil, deploying 30,000 troops to East Pakistan to quell a rebellious population of 75 million, Nixon chose not to intervene, following advice from his National Security Adviser. Although the State Department and public opinion were critical of Nixon's support for Yahya, cables from the American consulate in Dacca detailing the violence were largely disregarded in Washington. Instead, the Nixon administration continued to morally, politically, and economically support Pakistan. Simultaneously, the American government provided aid to both India and East Pakistan to address the refugee crisis, insisting it treated both countries equally.

However, Nixon faced significant opposition from Congress members, notably Senator Edward Kennedy, who argued that the United States had a moral obligation to act against the conflict, especially since Pakistani forces were using American weapons in their operations. On April 7th, for the first time, the US government urged a peaceful resolution to the crisis, with Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco describing it as Pakistan's internal matter. As criticism of American arms sales to Pakistan intensified in the media, Nixon eventually decided to halt arms shipments, although several consignments reportedly reached Yahya's forces indirectly through Middle Eastern allies.

Relations between India and the United States soured over the crisis, particularly as American intelligence suggested India was preparing for war with Pakistan. Mutual distrust between the two governments culminated in the failure of Indira Gandhi's November 1971 visit to Washington

India

Pakistan's democratic experiment in 1970 initially intrigued India. The Pakistani military's electoral defeat delighted the Indian population, seen as a rejection of Pakistan's founding ideology as a Muslim state. The Indian government welcomed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's call for friendship and peaceful resolution in Kashmir, hoping that a democratic Pakistan, particularly under the Awami League warm to India, would usher in a peaceful era in bilateral relations. Even as negotiations between Bhutto, Yahya, and Mujib strained, the Indian government remained optimistic that a resolution would prevent a crisis or military crackdown. Meanwhile, Indian diplomats in Dacca reported mass mobilization by Mujib among the Bengali populace. "Bengali nationalism has deeply permeated the minds of the people," one report noted. As Yahya traveled to Dacca for negotiations, the Indian government observed developments with cautious optimism.

Amidst these developments, India faced a dramatic act of terrorism. On January 30th, separatist Kashmiri Indians hijacked an Indian Airlines plane to Lahore, where it was subsequently destroyed in a fiery explosion. The Indian government immediately blamed Pakistani agents for the hijacking. In response, Indira Gandhi's administration suspended all Pakistani flights over Indian airspace, severing links between the two parts of Pakistan. Yahya later accused India of complicity in the hijacking to justify its decision, a claim vehemently denied by Mujib.

By mid-March, the Indian government estimated Pakistan had more than doubled its military presence in East Pakistan. When the massacre began, India was horrified. The Indian press and Parliament condemned the atrocities, with estimates suggesting nearly 300,000 Bengalis killed within the first week alone. Across India, newspapers and politicians accused Pakistan of genocide and criticized Gandhi's perceived inaction, urging her to recognize an independent Bangladesh. The strongest protests emanated from West Bengal, where Bengalis were deeply affected by the violence in East Pakistan.

On March 31st, both houses of the Indian Parliament unanimously condemned the atrocities in East Pakistan, prompting Pakistan to denounce it as unwarranted interference in its internal affairs. India worked closely with the self-declared Bangladeshi government in exile, allowing it to establish itself in Calcutta and formally recognizing Bangladesh as a sovereign democratic republic on April 17th.

India's gravest security threat arose from the massive influx of refugees. By April 21st, the number of refugees had swelled to a quarter of a million, primarily in West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, and Tripura. By May 6th, the number had risen to 1.48 million, escalating to 6 million by July and 9 million by November. Pakistan had forcibly expelled 8-10% of East Bengal's population into India, transforming what was initially Pakistan's internal security problem into India's internal crisis.

As India struggled to manage the refugee influx, it provided resources and training camps for the resistance groups, although it officially denied any direct involvement. Reports surfaced in Indian newspapers about activities in border areas, detailing engagements with rebel groups, which the Indian government refuted.

In early June, Indira Gandhi warned that if the international community did not act promptly, India would consider "other solutions" to the problem. In September, External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh emphasized at the UN General Assembly that a political settlement acceptable to the people of East Bengal was the only viable resolution. During her six-nation tour in November, Indira Gandhi reiterated India's stance on the early and acceptable return of refugee

FREEZE DATE 4TH DECEMBER, 1971

For this simulation of the United Nations, the committee is set on 4th December 1971. The agenda adopted for this meeting is "The recent deteriorating situation which has led to armed clashes between India and Pakistan." Please note that only events that occurred up to this date can be taken into account.



QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

Below are some questions that we expect to be answered by the end of this 3-day conference. Answering these questions will require an in-depth understanding of the issue at hand as well as your own foreign policy.

1. Should a cease-fire be imposed on the involved parties? If yes, why? If not, why not?
2. Was India's involvement in the Bangladesh independence war justifiable? If yes, why? If not, why not?
3. How can the refugee crisis be best dealt with?
4. Can the people of East Pakistan be considered to be oppressed? If yes, what can be done to help them? If not, why not?
5. Should West Pakistan be forced to withdraw its forces from East Pakistan? Why or why not? (Keep in mind the legal consequences of both situations.)
6. Can the situation in East Pakistan be considered as Pakistan's internal affairs? Why or why not?

Please keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive, and you will need to understand a lot more to do well in this committee.