

Available online at <http://www.ijims.com>

ISSN: 2348 – 0343

Kashmir: A Territorial Dispute

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Abstract

This present work is an attempt to present and discuss informations about Kashmir and territorial dispute. It is believed that this work will add to the existing literature in this context.

Key words: Kashmir , India , Territorial dispute.

Article

Kashmir is not only a territorial disputed area between two important South Asian countries, India and Pakistan but also the longest unresolved dispute in the World. These both nuclear powers have several times involved in fighting for Kashmir, the northern most State in Indian Union. In the past two decades, the region has been witness to a lot of violence which has also created tensions in the relations between India and Pakistan. There have been several rounds of dialogues on Kashmir between governments of India and Pakistan.

Kashmir, is the northern most state in India. Until the mid-19th century, the term Kashmir geographically denoted only the valley between the Great Himalayas and the PirPanjal mountain range. In the present day, it denotes a larger area that includes the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir (which consists of Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh), the Pakistan-administered autonomous territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan, and the Chinese-administered regions of Aksai Chin and the Trans-Karakoram Tract.

Mount Batten Plan is a declaration of the government of Great Britain on 3rd June 1947 that resulted in the partition of India into two states that were granted the rights of dominions, which was published on 3rd June 1947. Subsequently according to Indian independence Act of 1947, British India was divided into two independent countries i.e. India and Pakistan. According to the provisions of the independence act, the rulers of all independent states were given the choice to join either India or Pakistan.

The Princely state of Jammu and Kashmir seemed to be an important region for India as well as Pakistan due to its geographical position. For Pakistan, Kashmir was the state which have a majority of Muslim Population. And for India it is due to its strategic importance.

Hari Singh, the monocratic Maharaja of Kashmir and Jammu, resisted the pressure to join either Pakistan or India expecting to get an autonomy from both the countries. Hence he signed a standstill agreement with Pakistan on August 16, and tried to sign a similar agreement with India.

In September, the rioting trickled into Kashmir against the Muslims. The Muslims in the Western part of Kashmir rebelled against the Maharaja and established their own independent (Azad) Kashmir government. During the same time Pakistan on October 22, 1947, the Pathan-armed tribes of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) invaded Kashmir and got to fifteen miles from the state's capital city, Srinagar.

Panicked by this invasion, Hari Singh pursued India's military assistance, but India refused to help unless the Maharajah signed the instrument of accession, a standard procedure under which other princely states had consented to India or Pakistan. India agreed to the accession after receiving the consent of Sheikh Abdullah, the secular and popular leader of the National Conference (NC) in the state. Singh signed the agreement on October 27 and on the same day Indian armed forces entered Kashmir to resist the invaders.

On January 1, 1948, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as per the advice of British Governor General Lord Mountbatten and different to the wishes of his Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel, blocked a complaint with the UN Security Council appealing for a peaceful settlement of disputes between India and Pakistan.

On January 20, 1948, the Security Council established a three-member UN commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to send them to Kashmir to study the situation and exercise mediation. On April 21, the Council expanded the commission to five and authorized it to restore peace and arrange for a poll after the withdrawal of tribal troops.

Pakistan became frustrated with India's increasing attempts to assimilate Kashmir into its fold. Inspired by a reputed victory against India in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965, Pakistan made plans for "Operation Gibraltar" to recover Kashmir. As it did in 1947, it first sent Pakistani insurgents into the Valley in August 1965 expecting that the Kashmiri Muslims would rise in rebellion against India. Instead, the guerrillas were caught and handed over to the Indian authorities.

On September 1, when Indian troops crossed the international border, Pakistan launched an attack on Jammu. In response, India launched a series of attacks through the state of Punjab toward Lahore, Pakistan, and battled the Pakistani army. The war in brief

was a bitter one. Neither country was a winner. In January of 1966, both Shastri and Khan met in the city of Tashkent (Republic of Uzbekistan) and signed the agreement known as the Tashkent Declaration. On January 10, the agreement was formalized and the conflicts ended followed by the withdrawal of the Indo-Pakistani forces to the previous cease-fire lines.

In 1971 India and Pakistan fought a third war over Bangladesh's Independence in which the Kashmir dispute was only a peripheral issue.

On July 2, 1972, Mrs. Gandhi signed the Simla agreement with Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the first President and later Prime Minister of Pakistan who had succeeded the military dictator General Yahya Khan in 1971.

India always tried her level best to maintain good relationship with Pakistan. In 1998, Pakistan carried out joint nuclear test with India. These test along with the military disturbance that took Pervez Musharraf, Army chief to power. As a result world started worrying, it continued till 1999. By early 1999, both the countries stop their nuclear test.

The Pakistani determination to take Kargil happened after the February 1999 Lahore summit between then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bahari Vajpayee. This conference was believed to have reduce the tensions that had existed since May 1998. The major motive behind the operation was to help in internationalising the Kashmir issue. The interference plan was the brainchild of Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Gen Pervez Musharraf and Lt Gen Mohammed Aziz, the Chief of General Staff.

On May 8th 1999 Kargil War took place, when Pakistani forces and Kashmiri militants were detected over the Kargil ridges and July 14 when both sides had essentially terminated their military operations. By 30 June 1999 Indian forces were prepared for a major high-altitude aggressive against Pakistani poles along the border in the disputed Kashmir region.

The Indian Army detected the interferences between 1999 May 3-12. From May 15 - 25, 1999, military operations were planned, troops moved to their attack locations, artillery and other equipment were moved in and the necessary equipment was purchased. Indian Army's offensive named Operation Vijay was launched on May 26, 1999. Indian troops moved towards Pakistani occupied positions with air cover provided by aircraft and helicopters.

Pakistan's fascination towards Kashmir has continued since independence. National identity is the core question of the Kashmir Dispute. Pakistan created as the homeland of Muslims of South Asia. Hence it believed that Kashmir, by the virtue of being a Muslim majority state, fairly belong to it. But India refused to accept it is seen as the deflation of the existence of the Pakistan and also believed that Kashmir is an unfinished agenda of partition. Since India was laid on the principle of secularism, it discards any attempts of Pakistan to cover-up the issue on religion basis. Kashmir is also important to India because Kashmir is essential for the national security since many land based invasions.

The dispute over Kashmir plays a major role in India Pakistan relationship. Recent times both the countries are making efforts to arrive at settlement on the Kashmir issue.

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