OVERTHROWING TASHKENT: THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET-AMERICAN CONSENSUS OVER THE ASIAN SUBCONTINENT FOLLOWING THE SECOND KASHMIR WAR

by

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(Under the Direction of John H. Morrow, Jr.)

ABSTRACT

The partition of India of 1947 brought British imperial rule of the subcontinent to an end, creating two new states, the republics of India and Pakistan. Simultaneously, the United States and the Soviet Union, the preeminent military, political and economic powers of the postwar world, continued to expand their influence into the postcolonial nations of Asia and Africa. This thesis examines the efforts to incorporate India and Pakistan into the rival power blocs of the United States and Soviet Union, and the consequences those efforts had following the Second Kashmir War of 1965. Its findings demonstrate the complex power relationship that existed between the nuclear powers and the postcolonial nations moving into the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, in which both the United States and Soviet Union abandoned their previous position of mediation between India and Pakistan, instead tacitly endorsing the third Indo-Pakistani War.

INDEX WORDS: India, Pakistan, United States, Soviet Union, Kashmir, Bangladesh, Cold War

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CHAPTER 1

THE BREAKDOWN OF CONSENSUS

The question posed here—"What factors led to the transformation of Soviet and American positions in the Indo-Pakistani conflicts of 1965 and 1971?"—carries with it issues not limited to those two nations. The histories of India and Pakistan, born of the same Indian Empire under the British Raj, remain closely intertwined amidst irredentist conflicts like Kashmir or the secession of East Pakistan. In the middle of the Cold War, their ongoing conflict was only briefly paused by the diplomatic settlement at Tashkent, following the Second Kashmir War of 1965. Encouraged by the international community, India and Pakistan spent the next six years seeking diplomatic, rather than military, solutions to numerous contentious issues. When they resorted to conflict in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, the international community had also changed.

This political shift has its roots in a worldwide interest in the future of the postcolonial India—commonly labeled part of the "third world" though here referred to more specifically as the Asian subcontinent and defined as the postcolonial states that rose from the ashes of British colonial Asia following the Second World War. The lion's share of this territory went to the new states of India and Pakistan, which themselves were immediately characterized by certain geographic and cultural circumstances that would come to define their politics. Outside that region, four nations in particular became involved in the region. In the most general sense, these were the United Kingdom, whose overseas empire had collapsed to form the independent states in question; the United States, the most powerful postwar economy that positioned itself as an

informal successor to the past British Empire in the region; the Soviet Union, a rising superpower that had limited influence in the subcontinent in the course of Second World War; and the People's Republic of China which, like the Soviet Union, saw itself as a revolutionary champion of the postcolonial world but had expanded its economic and political ties with the subcontinent after impendence.

These four nations shared certain issues in common, particularly the need to reevaluate the state of India and Pakistan in the wake of the transformation of their independence. The Tashkent Declaration, as a political settlement, represented this new approach—proposed by one nation, endorsed by two others and ignored by a fourth. The issues that the Tashkent Declaration sought to address could be thought of geographically, divided between three tiers. In local geography, the treaty sought to create a stable situation where irredentist conflicts, like those in the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, could be ended and hopefully avoided in the future. In regional geography, the treaty indirectly addressed a grander problem: the nature of India's separation of the two regions of Pakistan, east and west, and the hope to foster neighborly conduct between their governments. Should that be successful, the constant suspicion resulting from India dividing Pakistan by thousands of kilometers of its own territory might be addressed. Finally, in world geography, the treaty represented the influence of foreign powers. It was presented by the Soviet Union, whose southernmost borders came within tens of kilometers of both Pakistan and the disputed Kashmir territory, yet had a comparatively weak level of influence in subcontinent politics, especially compared to its Cold War rival. From distant North America, the United States had consistently shaped subcontinent politics by both its military strength and its economic superiority. Even outside the context of the Cold War, it is possible to

understand the undesirability among Soviet leadership of remaining at such a disadvantage so close to home.

The diplomatic summit takes its name from the city of Tashkent, itself a demonstration of industrialization and, after the violent 1966 earthquake, a symbol of Soviet cosmopolitan culture and living. In a matter to be elaborated on further, they were able to coax the stalwart leaders of Pakistan and India to the city and convince them to come to an agreement on a permanent end to the fighting in Kashmir. But the Tashkent Declaration was not intended just to answer the Kashmiri question, nor was the region the only point of contention between India and Pakistan. It was naturally thought that the public promise to rely on diplomacy rather than military incursions to resolve disputed territories, while respecting sovereignty over internal affairs, could bring about an end to all Indo-Pakistani conflict eventually. With the abrupt rise of the crisis of East Pakistan—an internal issue that rapidly became an external one through the associated refugee crisis—Tashkent was intended to address both aspects, and brought it to the attention of all the powers that had participated.

Studying the change in international relations in the subcontinent, historians have mentioned the United States and the Soviet Union as being traditionally in opposition to one another, as part of the Cold War narrative. The conflicts between the new postcolonial states of Pakistan and India are often framed against this, both as a longstanding regional conflict and another theater of the global Soviet-American rivalry. The disparate foreign objectives of the Soviet and United States governments are more easily distinguished, even during the period of détente, which was characterized by a greater agreement between Moscow and Washington on many matters in the world.

With the emergence of India and Pakistan as independent nations after 1947, the Asian continent had a source of repeated armed conflict for a number of decades. Particularly before the end of the 20th century, periodic warfare was interrupted by peacetime that itself carried the expectation of resumed hostilities. Between the middle of 1965 and the end of 1971, the diplomatic aspirations of the United States and the Soviet Union, as leaders of their own international alliances, strongly modified their positions on Indo-Pakistani warfare. In the Second Kashmir War in 1965, they had stunned the world by joining in an active international role to combat animosity between Pakistan and India. By the end of 1971, they had clearly abandoned that position. Instead, they favored public endorsement of their respective allies in the region: the Soviet Union with India and the United States with Pakistan. In effect, the two nations undid the considerable work they had accomplished just a few years earlier.

Although it is popular to divide much of the world into spheres of influence of the United States and of the Soviet Union, Indian and Pakistani relations should in part be understood as possessing intrinsic features in the 1960s, when the differences of governments between Delhi (later New Delhi) and Karachi (alter Islamabad) grew more pronounced. Having shared nearly identical forms of government immediately after independence, Pakistani and Indian domestic and foreign politics diverged sharply through the 1950s. One major development in the historiography is the common tendency to treat Indian and Pakistani foreign politics as a two-way street with other, more powerful nations. After 1960, Indian and Pakistani leaders began to exert pressure more effectively on their international partners—the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the People's Republic of China—rather than only receiving it as they relied heavily on international assistance.

Immediately following independence, both India and Pakistan enjoyed positive relations with China. In the two decades that followed, India's amiable relationship with China had yielded to animosity, suspicion and eventual conflict, with India's defeat in the 1962 Sino-India border dispute.[1] By 1965, the changes brought about by the short war on Indian politics had reached maturation. The infusion of arms from the United States and to a lesser extent, the Soviet Union, brought about a response in Pakistani politics as well. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964 further erased the old lines of communication that had predated independence, widening the gap between Indian and Pakistani leadership.

The second half of the 1960s did not just include a major conflict, the Second Kashmir War of 1965, but also saw the developments leading to another war in 1971, the revolution in East Pakistan and the Bangladesh Liberation War. Indian historians in particular have shown a tendency to consider both Indian and Pakistani outlooks of the time period, though they tend to gravitate towards the former. In *The Making of India*, Ranbir Vohra has composed a wide-reaching history of the subcontinent, reaching back to pre-historical Indian civilization. His primary focus, however, is India since the establishment of British direct rule. In discussing the independent state after 1947, he gives great importance to the political dynasty of Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi, which lasted from 1947 to 1984. Within that period, he focuses on the political transformations faced by Indian foreign relations following the Second Kashmir War, a period of the slow but sure decline of Nehru's controversial nonalignment philosophy.[2]

The decline of the central ideology of India's first prime minister left a vacuum that Vohra analyzes. India's worsening relationship with the United States in the late 1940s is a major

[1] Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia: Indo-Pakistani conflicts since 1947* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 76.
[2] Ranbir Vohra, *The Making of India: A Historical Survey*, (London: M. E. Sharp, 2001), 210 – 211.

topic, tied to the country's continued exchanges with China, a major American enemy. Complicating this further is the continued animosity towards Pakistan, an up-and-coming American ally. The work streamlines American perspectives on the subcontinent: following the Korean War of 1950 to 1953, Aerica's overriding policy was to oppose all communist states, regardless of India's preferences. "Nehru's nonalignment policy (dubbed 'immoral' by Secretary of State Dulles) was wholly unacceptable to the United States, which had made its crusade against communism the basis of its entire foreign policy."[3] The hardening of American policy against any communist state put relations on a poor footing, especially as India came to appreciate the benefits from its negotiations with Beijing and Moscow. But Washington's attitude was not wholly "all or nothing," as Vohra makes clear:

> Despite all the misgivings about Nehru in Washington, America and India had no direct clash of interests. The friction was over the vastly differing attitudes the two states had toward other countries such as China and Pakistan, which was ill-disposed toward India, and had placed itself firmly on the side of America by joining the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the South East-Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which constituted the central segments of the arc of America's communist-containment cordon.[4]

India presented an obvious irregularity in the worldwide containment system that the United States hoped to establish around the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Indian policy objectives in the postwar world did not reflect American concerns, instead focusing on multilateral relations with the Soviet Union and China. The consequence was "…the American view that Pakistan was a friendly country and India was an unfriendly one, though not an enemy."[5]

Vohra emphasizes that, while India and the United States were not friends, the two countries were not enemies either. The sudden reversal of Sino-Indian relations in 1961 and

[3] Ibid., 210.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 211.

1962, coinciding with the worsening of relations between Moscow and Beijing, exposed the weaknesses of nonalignment as far as Indian national defense was concerned. Assistance provided to the Dalai Lama in 1959 and unresolved territorial claims had soured Sino-Indian dialogue, though Nehru did not consider war a possibility.[6] When China did declare war in 1962, quickly withdrawing after "humiliating" India on the battlefield and announcing a unilateral ceasefire, Nehru's nonalignment policies suffered a major setback on the international stage from which they never fully recovered.[7] Vohra suggests that nonalignment was largely abandoned and Indian foreign policy soon became defined by reactionary responses to its security: when Pakistan sought to capitalize on Chinese aggression, India turned to the Soviet Union for military assistance in the form of new MiG-21 aircraft in 1963, alongside continued American support.[8] This remained the case until Nehru's death in 1964, when the juggernaut of Indian politics and "the country's most beloved son" passed on, along with an era of foreign policy.[9]

After the Nehru era, the Gandhi era defines Indian policy. Alongside other historians, Vohra argues Indira Gandhi would shape Indian politics for nearly two decades until her death in 1984. The "fairly strong democratic structure" established under Nehru—universal suffrage, elections, parliamentary government, and a free press—would continue to exist and shape the world's perception of India, but was in fact often hollow and weak when applied domestically.[10] Indira Gandhi entered the office after the death of her predecessor, Prime Minister Shastri, at the pivotal Tashkent Conference. The new head of government had to consolidate power: "In 1966, Indira Gandhi's position appeared to be quite tenuous; by 1970, her power was unassailable."[11]

[6] Ibid., 212.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 213.
[10] Ibid., 217.
[11] Ibid., 221.

Vohra describes Gandhi as having cemented unofficial "One-Person Rule" lasting from 1970 and 1977, before moving on to foreign policy.[12]

When Gandhi moved on to foreign politics in 1971, she strengthened her domestic position further. Pakistan faced an enormous secessionist calamity with the outcome of the 1970 elections. The victories of East Pakistan's Awami League in the 1970 elections were unacceptable to the seat of power in West Pakistan, which responded with a violent crackdown, and Gandhi was confronted by a Pakistani crisis that was rapidly escalating into an international dilemma. Vohra describes it as the defining moment of Indian foreign policy in the years following Nehru's death:

> This put India in an awkward predicament. If India intervened, and the situation demanded that it do so, it would have to be a military intervention. India, however, could not afford to go to war with Pakistan because that could provoke a reaction from America and China, the allies of Pakistan and its arms suppliers. This triangular relationship was more than confirmed when, at the height of the East Pakistan crisis, the national security advisor to President Nixon, Henry Kissinger, flew from Pakistan to Beijing on a secret mission to work out a rapprochement with China that resulted in the July 16 announcement that Nixon would visit China in early 1972...[13]

Vohra splits the international shift faced by India into two eras: first, events beyond India's control prior to 1971, as Pakistan, China, and the United States sought common ground with one another. Those efforts came to fruition with the Sino-American rapprochement championed by Richard Nixon. Second, those developments within India's control from 1971 onwards, when Gandhi countered those events "with several very wise moves," particularly the twenty-five year Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty and her international tour of Western Europe to counter Pakistani charges of an Indian conspiracy to dominate the subcontinent.[14]

[12] Ibid., 225.
[13] Ibid., 226 – 227.
[14] Ibid., 227.

Vohra argues that when India came to the aid of East Pakistan in the Bangladesh Liberation War, and ultimately went to war with Pakistan in December 1971, Gandhi had assumed a position of political dominance that surpassed her father. She had created an arrangement that was practically one-party rule through the use of previously democratic institutions that were now "empty of their democratic content."[15] As far as India controlled its foreign relations, Indira Gandhi controlled them directly. More broadly, Vohra argues through the 1960s, the Indian government had become more able to steer its own foreign relations, and immediately capitalized on that fact, setting half of the stage for the breakdown of the Tashkent consensus. The other half of the breakdown was due in large part to the reconciliation between China and the United States, arbitrated by Pakistan. Accordingly, India and Pakistan had a large though not exclusive hand in the breakdown of the international consensus that Tashkent had tried to formalize. Nixon's momentous visit to China did the rest.

Vohra's interpretation resembles other academic narratives. In particular, the theme of powerful leaders solidifying their power bases in order to try and gain an upper hand, however temporary, over the machinations of the major powers in the subcontinent is very common when describing the breakdown of democratic traditions in both nations. In the second edition of *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, Indian historian Sugata Bose and Pakistani historian Ayesha Jalal examine both nations in the early post-independence period.[16] They distinguish between the emergence of a "democratic and secular India" and of an "authoritarian and Islamic Pakistan," emphasizing that both countries still encountered regional dissidence from 1947 to the East Pakistan crisis.[17] At the same time, the breakdown of consensus between the United States and Soviet Union on the subcontinent in 1971 is attributed largely to

[15] Ibid., 228.
[16] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 167.
[17] Ibid., 168.

both India and Pakistan capitalizing on already existing friction in their preparation for another conflict following 1965.

The Tashkent Declaration, while described as a momentous event in other sources, had minimal impact beyond immediately resolving the "Kashmir problem" for Indian and Pakistani leadership, while doing little to address other causes of animosity between both nations.[18] Pakistan's military bureaucracy, firmly in control until after 1971, continued to pursue its goal of careful international planning in preparation for conflict with India.

> Taking advantage of tensions with India and their carefully nurtured nexus with the centers of international capitalist system in London—and after 1954 in Washington—senior military leaders and bureaucrats opted to consolidate state authority by dispensing with the political process altogether…The decision to depoliticize Pakistani society was a momentous one.[19]

When speaking of London and Washington, both authors refer to the various alliances and pacts led by them, which had in time been extended towards the new postcolonial states, particularly on the basis of anti-communist cooperation. Pakistan's confidence in its western allies was one of the few things that remained consistent in the country's government, as the military government under Field Marshal Ayub Khan was brought down from within by rival political factions. The succeeding military government, under General Yahya Khan, was left to manage the crisis developing in East Pakistan, while keeping the United States as close as possible.[20] According to Bose and Jalal, the greatest consequence of rising international pressure was the breakdown of the few remaining democratic traditions in Pakistan, already justified by the crisis in East Pakistan: "The internal battle for supremacy combined with the regional threat from India and pressures from the international capitalist system during the Cold War era to put the autonomy of

[18] Ibid., 174.
[19] Ibid., 178 – 179.
[20] Ibid., 179.

the political process at a serious discount in Pakistan."[21] The inertia of the major alliance systems, both east and west, was used to the benefit of political elites in both India and Pakistan by the end of 1971. In doing so, they demonstrated how far the democratic processes championed by Nehru and his Pakistani counterpart, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had declined by the time the Awami League was deprived of its victory in the 1970 elections by the West Pakistani establishment.[22] Indian nonalignment and Pakistani cooperation with both east and west in the Cold War were intended to reflect populist fears in the new nations, but as they matured, they became a matter of convenience and advantage at the highest levels of government, and not necessarily of Washington and Moscow's doing. The leaders of India and Pakistan allowed the situation to escalate, ignoring the resolutions from Tashkent.

A similar narrative is presented in the chapter dedicated to the 1971 War in Mushtaqur Rahman's *Divided Kashmir*, a post-Cold War analysis of the unresolved Kashmiri situation between India and Pakistan. Despite addressing the issue from the perspective of a local population torn between India and Pakistan, Rahman pays considerable attention to the role of China, the United States, and the Soviet Union with the internationalization of the Kashmiri dispute after the 1965 War. Between Washington's fears of Pakistan moving closer to China and Moscow's anxiety over conflict that had "...flared up in a region immediately adjacent to the frontiers of the Soviet Union," Indo-Pakistani disputes had been transformed.[23] Kashmir, and by extension future conflicts between India and Pakistan, had become international issues, not merely regional ones. It closely links the possibility of a lasting peace between India and Pakistan to the generation of leaders who attended the Tashkent conference, leaders who were

[21] Ibid., 178.
[22] Ibid., 180.
[23] Mushtaqur Rahman, *Divided Kashmir: Old Problems, New Opportunieis for India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiri People*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 112.

soon dead or forced from power.[24] Politicians playing to popular opinion would soon undo the meaningful work that ended the Second Kashmir War. Rahman depicts Indian politicians as playing tough politics with their Soviet ally by 1971, when the major Indo-Soviet Treaty was drafted, just a few weeks prior to Indian intervention in the Bangladesh Liberation War:

> The Indians told the Soviets that within a few months they would use military force to solve the East Pakistan problem if a satisfactory political solution had not been achieved. The Soviets expressed concern over this plan and urged India to continue to explore other options before resorting to force. The Indian government assumed that the Soviets would support them in the event of hostilities.[25]

As such, the breakdown of the peace at Tashkent resulted from multiple deliberate moves by both Pakistan, which was under violent political transformations, and India, whose confidence increased as it observed those transformations.

Perspectives of the subcontinent's affairs as a whole are not limited to authors from the region itself. Stanley Wolpert, a leading American historian of India, has written multiple histories of the subcontinent. Most recently, *A New History of India: Eighth Edition* attempts to cover Indian history going back as far as the Indus Valley Civilization. In examining the years of 1947 to 1964 and 1964 to 1977, referred to as the "Nehru and Collective Leadership era" and "Indira Raj era" respectively, he offers a view of the international shift not entirely dissimilar from his Indian and Pakistani counterparts.

Wolpert notes first Nehru's commitment to nonalignment, characterized by his willingness to negotiate with China, still a pariah in the west, over unresolved territorial issues in Tibet, followed by the swift end to friendly relations and the Sino-Indian War.[26] Nehru, severely compromising his vision of nonalignment, remained committed to his policy of an India both in

[24] Rahman, *Divided Kashmir*, 116.
[25] Ibid., 127.
[26] Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 384.

the British Commonwealth and engaged in extensive negotiations with nations like the Soviet Union and its allies.[27] By comparison, he describes Pakistani civilian leadership in the same period as showing weaknesses and instability: founder Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah's death in 1948 left the Pakistani constitution unfinished. His deputy, Liaquat Ali Khan, was able to negotiate with Nehru but was assassinated in 1951 in Rawalpindi, home to the Pakistani military's headquarters. Subsequent leaders did little to reinforce the Pakistani civilian government, and were unable to force the compromises needed to secure civilian government between East Bengal's majority population and West Pakistan's Sindhi and Punjab leaders who dominated the national government:

> The political tensions and frustrations…so weakened Pakistan's central government that it fell easy victim to martial coup in 1958. General Muhammad Ayub Khan, a Sandhurst-trained Pathan, who led the coup, moved swiftly from commander in chief of Pakistan's army to prime minister, self-appointed president of his nation as well as its first field marshal.[28]

For Wolpert, Pakistan's commitment to its American alliances and its dependence on "lavish" military aid—"modern Patton tanks and F-86 Sabre jets" to be manned by the "martial race"—were some of the few consistent things about the government in Karachi. It could not easily extract itself from its commitments. Similarly, it psychologically relied on the belief in superior military technology and tradition to India's more numerous military forces in the event of another showdown in Kashmir or elsewhere.[29] Even with these two advantages, and with the belief it had America's backing, Ayub Khan attempted one last round of negotiations to resolve the Kashmir issue in 1964, sending his "Berkeley-and-Oxford educated" foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to negotiate unsuccessfully with his Indian counterparts. [30]

[27] Ibid., 385.
[28] Ibid., 393.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 393 – 394.

While Pakistan was of great strategic value to the United States prior to the war, the Second Kashmir War itself was too short to consolidate American assistance. Wolpert does not focus much on the role of the international powers at Tashkent, besides the chairing of the conference by the Soviet head of government, Kosygin. With Indira Gandhi's rise to power in 1966, she personally endorsed the consensus at Tashkent. "We would encourage the Tashkent spirit…We should have peace at home and abroad, if possible," Gandhi declared as India was forced to confront domestic issues that had been postponed by the war, particularly ongoing famines.[31] Indo-American relations actually improved from their pre-war standing as the new prime minister negotiated for substantial American aid to coincide with expansive domestic development plans.[32]

Even as Indo-American relations improved, Gandhi played to the Indian public, criticizing the Vietnam War and engaging in negotiations with Nasser of Egypt and Tito of Yugoslavia. Her ambitions for "the international mantle of her father's Third World leadership" put her more and more at odds with the Tashkent Declaration, while still advocating it.[33] As she moved further to the left domestically, Washington resumed arms and equipment shipments to Pakistan, having postponed them in 1965. Just a few years after the war ended, "…a new South Asian arms race began, the spirit of Tashkent was buried. India now refused to sign the Treaty on Nuclear Nonproliferation proposed to the world at Geneva..."[34] By then both nations had deliberately moved away from the compromises made at Tashkent, and the rebellion in East Pakistan set the stage for the Bangladesh Liberation War and India's involvement. Above all,

[31] Ibid., 397.
[32] Ibid., 398.
[33] Ibid., 399.
[34] Ibid., 401.

Wolpert's narrative suggests India had made calculated decisions regarding its international standing:

> On August 9, 1971, Mrs. Gandhi signed a twenty-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation with the Soviet Union, stipulating that if either party were "subjected to an attack or a threat thereof," the two would "immediately enter mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries." It was the "great power" support she required on the eve of India's third war with Pakistan. The roots of Indo-American friendship and cooperation had been poisoned by Nixonian diplomacy, and Nehru's policy of nonalignment, which had, in fact, always depended heavily on Anglo-American assistance and good will, was scrapped by his daughter in favor of a new Indo-Soviet alliance.[35]

The "Nixonian diplomacy" consisted largely of continued American military aid to Pakistan, even as American eyewitness reports of the violence in Dhaka, Chittagong and other Bengali cities reached the United States. Wolpert offers a view of American diplomacy in the middle of the Bangladesh crisis that is largely missing from Indian and Pakistani historical accounts of the same period. In particular, he cites Nixon and presidential advisor Henry Kissinger's use of Yahya Khan as a middleman in the planned resumption of talks with China as their primary concern at the time.[36] Besides the United States, each nation is described as weighing the benefits and costs of commitment to its own "bloc"—India and the Soviet Union, Pakistan and the United States—and allowing the situation to escalate despite the provisions made at Tashkent, with the hopes of securing a beneficial outcome.

Other American observers have looked at the subject extensively: historian Robert McMahon, best known for his Cold War focus, examines American foreign policy in the subcontinent in *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan*. Intended as an American Cold War study extending into South Asia, he sets forth in his preface:

[35] Ibid., 409 – 410.
[36] Ibid., 409.

"How and why, I wanted to know, was the Cold War extended into the Third World? How and why did the infant nations of India and Pakistan, situated in a corner of the globe long consigned to the margins of international affairs, became intense objects of superpower competition?"[37]

McMahon delves into Washington's relationship with both India and Pakistan since independence. He outlines the reasons for a rising distrust between the United States, one of the two champions of the postwar world, and the new state of India. His conclusion is similar to Vohra's:

> If Indo-American relations had been spared some of the tensions present since independence, perhaps U.S. officials would have been less willing to run the risks associated with choosing Pakistan as an ally. If a stronger pro-India lobby existed in the United States, perhaps it could have brought more pressure to bear on the Eisenhower administration.[38]

The pro-India lobby in the United States was depleted by Nehru's own criticism of American foreign policy. Indian relations had been grounded in pessimism since independence, only to be strongly amplified by Nehru's nonalignment, which further offended American leaders. "When the chips were down [in Korea], India was not there," and "Why do Indian leaders sometimes talk as though the United States was as great a threat to peace and freedom as Soviet Russia?" were common accusations heard in Washington from governors and congressmen from across the political spectrum.[39]

India's Cold War posture, independent of its animosity with Pakistan, remained offensive to many in the United States until Nehru's death in 1964. The early 1950s were characterized by India and the United States periodically butting heads over not military but trade considerations, thanks to India's commerce with the Soviet Union and China of industrial materials prohibited by

[37] Robert McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: the United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), ix.
[38] McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 179.
[39] Ibid., 179 – 180.

the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1951.[40] McMahon presents a long list explaining why relations between the United States and India remained poor and unlikely to improve. Amplifying this effect was the rising friendship between Pakistan and United States, a constant source of suspicion among the Indian leadership. At the same time, Pakistani leaders remained unconvinced of American commitment.[41]

Publicly however, Pakistan remained a stalwart American partner: McMahon describes its adherence to two anti-Soviet defensive alliances, SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, as not having gone unappreciated.[42] Still, Pakistan's actual utility was limited: "Only during ritualistic appeals to Congress for a continuance of the military assistance program did [Eisenhower] administration spokesmen even make reference to plans for Pakistan supplying troops to help defend the Middle East."[43] It was the country's geography, ideal for military bases or intelligence-gathering sites, which convinced enough officials in Washington to keep the alliance intact and to pay the cost in regards to India.[44]

In a chapter aptly titled "Reaping the Whirlwind, 1963 – 1965," McMahon describes the series of unfortunate events that owed themselves to American decision-making in the region, along with a few Soviet diplomatic victories, leading the United States to be far more embroiled in the region than initially intended. In 1963, the Lyndon Johnson presidency resulted in an American president personally frustrated with India while on friendly terms with Pakistan. In negotiations with the subcontinent, Johnson seemed to hit it off with Ayub Khan as well as he

[40] Ibid., 181.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 212.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 213.

had before being president, while reinforcing his already negative impression of Nehru.[45] "By all accounts, the two men got along famously. According to one of his aides, the vice-president considered the vigorous Ayub 'very much a man's man'—Johnson's ultimate compliment. 'It is seldom that I have been so very much impressed by a man,'…"[46] Likewise, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, commander-in-chief of the Pakistani Air Force immediately before the Second Kashmir War, seems convinced of a good report between the first American president to work with Ayub Khan, Dwight Eisenhower, and his successors.

> The Republican administration of President Eisenhower, and indeed every administration since, has been well disposed towards dictators and Ayub Khan was well known to them. Since assuming his responsibilities as the commander-in-chief of the Pakistani army he had been a frequent visitor to Washington, where he went almost every year. He had good contacts with the people in the Pentagon as was well known to Allen Dulles, the head of the CIA and brother of John Foster Dulles, the US secretary of State.[47]

While making it clear he did not think Ayub Khan's takeover was owed to the CIA, a strong case could be made for the deep relationship between Ayub Khan and his American counterparts, supporting McMahon's claim.

Even this goodwill was partially undone by American anger at Sino-Pakistani cooperation under Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. To Washington, it was "an egregious provocation."[48] McMahon suggests when Ayub Khan and Zhou appeared in close company on television worldwide, discussing economic and political cooperation, America found itself seriously reevaluating its complex system of commitments to pro-Chinese Pakistan. All the

[45] Ibid., 305. Altaf Gauhar also frequently notes Johnson and Ayub Khan's interactions in *Ayub Khan: Pakistan's First Military Dictator.*
[46] Ibid., 306.
[47]Mohammad Ashgar Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History Pakistan: Politics and Military Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17.
[48] McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 308.

while, Washington had done little to overcome the serious damage already inflicted upon its relationship with Delhi.[49]

Reconciliation came after the 1965 War. When the Soviets obtained their diplomatic coup by presiding over the negotiations at Tashkent, the United States, seeking a lower profile in the region, backed the Soviet proposal. Not only was the United States seeking a way out in the short term, McMahon explains, they saw their long term goals now shared by others:

> By the end of 1965, Rusk, Ball, and other leading foreign policy advisers calculated that Soviet and American interests in South Asia now ran along parallel lines. Both superpowers, they reasoned, were most anxious to end the present hostilities and to promote long-term Indo-Pakistani amity; both, moreover, saw China as the most destabilizing force in the region and consequently ranked the containment of Chinese influence as an overriding policy objective.[50]

It is not made clear to what extent Soviet goals coincided with American ones, but nonetheless, McMahon makes a very convincing case for American policymaking having failed in the subcontinent, both in its own goals and from the perspectives of Pakistan and India. Attempts at easing tensions with both states came to an end right before the Bangladesh Liberation War. When talks with Beijing became the overriding concern in 1971 under Nixon, foreign policymakers "…magically transformed Pakistan once again into a strategic asset."[51] According to McMahon, Washington determined the course of its friendships in the subcontinent, rather than the other way around, but putting its political goals in Asia first. They just happened to lead back to Pakistan rather than India.

Another American author, John Garver, helps fill in some of the gaps of China in the same period, a rising, if not established, superpower that enjoyed animosity from both Soviet and American governments. Writing about the longstanding rivalry between India and China, he

[49] Ibid., 311.
[50] Ibid., 334.
[51] Ibid., 346.

gives due treatment to Pakistan as a component in that relationship: India's most reliable enemy and China's most reliable ally. Literature from the Indian and Pakistani writers both point to a similar phenomenon: the comparative absence of China in the wake of Tashkent, especially in light of Indian diplomatic victories through their ties with the Soviet Union. Garver sums it up concisely: "China's response to this bold Indian move was somewhat paradoxical. Although the geopolitical stakes were considerably higher in 1971 than they had been in 1965, China's response was far weaker. Whereas China in 1965 was apparently prepared for some level of military activity against India, China's support in 1971 never approached that level."[52] The country had obviously not vanished from the international scene: Beijing considered the ongoing "American-Soviet-Indian combination to stifle China's emergence" with utmost seriousness, but the simultaneous Cultural Revolution forced a serious contraction of Chinese overseas influence, at least in the subcontinent.[53] Aside from honoring its existing commitments to Pakistan, a major ally and partner in diplomatic normalization with the United States, by all accounts China treaded much more lightly in the face of domestic disorder and Cold War tensions.

McMahon and Garver are not alone in considering South Asian conflicts from the perspective of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. In *South Asia's Cold War*, Rajesh M. Basrur addresses the structural relationship that emerged between India and Pakistan following independence, "a typical strong versus weak state pattern," ultimately being merged with Cold War proxy rivalries.[54] Despite the suggested economic and military gap between the two countries, indecisive outcomes in the First and Second Kashmir Wars demonstrated the limits to which both countries could project their military powers. The first

[52] John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 207.
[53] Garver, *Protracted Consensus*, 207 and 356.
[54] Rajesh M. Basrur, *South Asia's Cold War: Nuclear weapons and conflict in comparative perspective*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 49.

change to this came in late 1971, when India demonstrated a clear victory over Pakistan in its intervention into East Bengal, what Basrur terms the last authentic "war" between the two states, after which both engaged in smaller skirmishes.[55] The weaknesses Pakistan faced, particularly economically, are cited as the reasons for its integration into American alliance systems over many years, while a stronger India relied on less formalized aid from the Soviet Union. The Cold War became a point of access for both nations to address their own concerns following their violent separation with independence. Both wars were an opportunity for them to attempt to address their differing weaknesses, which overruled efforts to reconcile, and Soviet-American rivalry offered a variety of ways to do just that.[56] Basrur presents a "two-way street" narrative similar to other Indian historians, for both India and Pakistan.

The existing historiography leaves a few areas empty, particularly in the lack of perspectives from 1965 to 1971 from the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, there are some consistent arguments, such as the notion that the diplomatic shift after Tashkent was deliberately planned by governments, rather than purely spontaneous. The shift was finished by the time the East Pakistan crisis entered the equation. Some argue the shift was brought about by the United States, in the role of a world superpower leveraging its control in the region. Other histories argue that the United States took on a more observatory role, siding with its traditional ally Pakistan as India escalated the situation leading up to Bangladesh Liberation War. It is a conclusion that meshes with the shared argument that India and Pakistan, while still young nations, understood the importance of the outside world in their continued development as major states within Asia. Similarly, the Soviet Union, China, and even the United States maintained close observation of the politics that rose out of the British Raj, increasingly known to them as a

[55] Basrur, *South Asia's Cold War*, 50.
[56] Ibid., 51 – 52.

populous powder keg of communal violence and unresolved colonial conflicts over territories and borders.

A number of different regional two-sided conflicts and rivalries existed simultaneously between the worldwide Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Certain antagonisms defined a half-century of Soviet-American engagement throughout the world: particularly obvious examples include East and West Germany and North and South Korea. However, other examples do not follow that particular trend, such as the often amicable relationship between North and South Yemen. Still others, like the long struggle between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China in Taiwan to define which would represent the legitimate Chinese nation, had roots in conflict that predated the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War. The engagement between predominantly-Hindu India and majority-Muslim Pakistan resembles that situation, having its earliest origins prior to 1945. Like the two Chinas, Pakistan and India's rivalry was based on a long history, ultimately pulled into the political currents of the bipolar international system engaged in conflict. But by 1965, that same international system pronounced the desire for an arbitrated peace between the two antagonists in an inconclusive war. By 1971, seemingly still committed to peace, the United States and Soviet Union took a back seat as Pakistan and India engaged in a decisive conflict that permanently altered the political situation in the subcontinent. What brought about this abrupt change in position in a short half-decade? In a situation where both India and Pakistan were increasingly engaged with the major world powers—particularly the Soviet Union and United States, but also China—what groups possessed the agency when the two nations went from a planned, long-term reconciliation to an even more costly and violent war?

CHAPTER 2

THE ROAD TO THE PARTITION

The Asian subcontinent—the regions of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma—was home to different populations and cultures with their own rivalries and conflicts prior to the colonial period. These issues remained with the rise of the British Empire into the world superpower of the 19th century. In the same time period, the British Raj (from the word for "reign" in Hindustani) presided over the Indian Empire—the name given to the political union of directly-administered British India with the more autonomous principalities. Together, it represented the pinnacle of Britain's imperial rule in Asia, during its height of power. However, in the decades following the First World War, the British administration found it progressively more difficult to reconcile its imperial interests with rising ideological aspirations, particularly nationalistic and democratic, which seemed increasingly insuppressible. A realm within a realm, the Indian Empire long confounded ruling British ministers and governors, as well as their European, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh proxies, as to how to remain a unified political entity.[1]

Ruthless displays of violence by the British, like the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, alongside the rise of political agitation, demonstrated British weaknesses alongside the fragility of the Indian Empire across sectarian lines. Among the most famous agitators were Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mohandas Gandhi, known as the Mahatma, a Sanskrit honorific meaning "Great Soul." Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign, which would gain worldwide renown, demonstrated anger not just over philosophical debates of freedom but

[1] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 83.

obvious practical grievances like British mismanagement: his famed Salt March of 1930 demonstrated how the very legal code the British most prided themselves for, the glue of the Indian Empire, did so much to harm the population as a whole.[2] Even then, Gandhi preached unity across religious lines as much as he rallied against British rule. The question remained: could Gandhi or anyone else keep India unified through a political revolution?

To the British, the most obvious divisions were between Hindus and Muslims, whom they had played off one another during times when "divide and rule" seemed more fitting, but now attempted to reconcile to maintain the Empire's polity. Some were optimistic in the late 1920s that the deep-rooted Hindu-Muslim divided could be overcome. Among them was Nehru, a disciple of Gandhi and later the first Prime Minister of independent India.[3] The decade that followed, however, also saw the strengthening of a Muslim political consciousness, which many feared would only cause trouble in a unified state with a Hindu majority. Popular Muslim statesmen like Jinnah had revitalized the Indian Muslim League, encouraging greater participation by "untouchables" and other marginalized groups.[4] During 1936 and 1937, through effective campaigning, propaganda, and enfranchisement, the Indian National Congress, Indian Muslim League and other new political parties fundamentally transformed the subcontinent's political landscape.[5] Many historians have pointed to the years following the 1937 political campaigns as the influential childhood, though not the birth, of the idea that would become independent Pakistan, separate from India.[6]

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[2] Ibid, 149. In one of his most famous demonstrations, Gandhi and his followers walked the 388 kilometers from Ahmedabad to Dandi on the coast, and in full view of an interested public, took salt from the beach, in clear defiance of the British laws protecting their salt monopoly.
[3] Ibid., 147.
[4] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 340.
[5] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 156.
[6] Ibid., 161 and Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 341 and Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 142 – 143.

The British did not go quietly. As old social restraints were broken down, the rising tide of violence and disorder served as confirmation in some minds of British superiority—that they alone could hold together the Indian Empire, Muslim and Hindu.[7] The sight of the British bureaucrats of the Indian Civil Service forced to salute newly-elected Indian ministers, clad in traditional *khādī* cloth popularized by Gandhi and standing before the new Indian tricolor flag, disgusted British military officers while exhilarating the masses.[8] In no mood to "quit India," the British effort to regain control of the situation would be shaped by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

The split between Muslims and Hindus in the Indian Empire became more severe by the end of 1939. In control of the Indian Muslim League, Jinnah had restyled his political party after the Indian National Congress, with the hopes of representing Muslims in an Indian coalition government. Between 1936 and 1938, membership had increased by more than 600%.[9] Nehru, who had succeeded Gandhi as leader of the National Congress, saw this in conflict with his own secular political agenda, and encouraged defections from the Muslim League to his own ranks. Confronted by what he saw as political extinction, Jinnah was forced to abandon pan-Indian nationalism, which he had shared with Nehru, in favor of Muslim political agitation.[10]

The Second World War heralded both the end of the Indian Empire as British but also as unified between Hindus and Muslims. With the beginning of the war in September 1939, Britain moved to mobilize Indian peoples and economies with the rest of its empire. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, even when under pressure from American President Franklin Roosevelt to extend at least some of the rights of the Atlantic Charter to hundreds of millions of Indians,

[7] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 343 – 344.
[8] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 157.
[9] Ibid., 158.
[10] Ibid., 159.

remained true to existing British policy. He showed no intention of relinquishing control of India, regardless of what the Atlantic Charter promised. The charter, in Churchill's words, applied to Europeans under German occupation, not Hindus or Muslims under British rule.[11] Despite this callous response, the British were not oblivious to reality. They would see their precarious situation when the successful Japanese overran the supposedly impregnable British fortresses of Singapore and in Burma, taking with them large numbers of Indian prisoners-of-war.[12]

The popular ideological discourse of the war—the Atlantic Charter's cry of democracy versus fascism and militarism—forced the British to enter India into the war not as a British colony but as its own democratic state under the British flag, at least formally. Nehru and the National Congress made clear their anger at British control of India's foreign policy.[13] On a more populist level, the news of Britain fighting for freedom and democracy in Europe while denying them to their own subjects in Asia did little to improve the reputation of the Allies as a whole in India. The British matched the anger with a renewed campaign against subversion and huge numbers of arrests of anti-war agitators, including Gandhi's followers. No matter the challenge, Japan's entry into the war in December 1941 had only solidified British resolve to use any means, however coercive, to maintain control of India for the war effort.[14]

By 1943, the British had a disaster on their hands. The animosity and agitation of the prewar period was joined by three more crises: the rise of Gandhi's "Quit India" movement, the mobilization of the Indian National Army by the Japanese Empire, and the disastrous Bengal famine. For Gandhi and his supporters in the Indian National Congress, the backdrop of the war

[11] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 351.
[12] Ibid., 163.
[13] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 346.
[14] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 128.

was as good a time as any to ratchet up their prior campaigns. Japanese victories over the British Empire in Southeast Asia did not change their minds. In 1942, they drafted a resolution calling on the British to quit India or "be prepared to take the risk of violence" to end "the great calamity of slavery."[15] Japan's aggressive expansion through British Asia led to the first chances for Indian politicians to consider policy independent of the British. Enough in the Indian National Congress believed they could separately negotiate with Japan should the need arise. In the Quit India campaign, Gandhi was prepared for the British to leave India "to anarchy or to God." Nehru and the remainder of the Congress adopted a modified version of his resolution in 1942.[16] As Gandhi had warned, as disgust with British rule grew stronger, sectarian violence grew. This was not without precedent: in the 18th century, the subcontinent had seen its share of religious enmity, but it could not be confused with the far more engrained and overarching sectarian animosity labeled "communalism" in the twentieth century.[17] Communalism was in part a consequence of British divide-and-rule policies, and even the constitutional two-state solution offered by sympathetic British politicians seemed to further encourage already existing communal politics to boil over.[18]

The British endeavored to placate India in 1942 by appointing a new viceroy, the famed socialist War Cabinet minister, Sir Stafford Cripps. When it quickly became apparent that all of Cripps' promises—dominion status for India in the Empire, a constituent assembly to guarantee new rights—were only to come after the war ended or were entirely insufficient, he was rejected by all political parties. Gandhi labeled the British offers "a post-dated cheque on a failing

[15] Ibid., 131.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 44 and Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 434.
[18] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 82 – 83.

bank."[19] The British responded by arresting tens of thousands of Gandhi's supporters and members of the Congress and with an exceptionally vigorous crackdown by more than 50 army battalions and five cases of aerial bombardment, along with the usual shootings and public floggings.[20] In a demonstration of the rift caused by communal antagonism, the Muslim League chose to publicly denounce the uprising, to little effect, while Jinnah consolidated his supporters in the provinces that would eventually become Pakistan.[21]

Despite the Muslim League, the independence movement erupted further, derailing trains, attacking police stations, post offices and other symbols of British authority throughout the Empire. Simultaneously, the Japanese successfully organized and armed their Indian prisoners-of-war into the Azad Hind Fauj, or Indian National Army, under the command of Subhas Chandra Bose. Bose was a leftist Bengali revolutionary who had benefitted from Japanese endorsement and support after failing in his original plan to secure assistance for his cause from the Soviet Union. For his founding of the INA, Bose would be a legendary figure in the consciousness of an independent India. The INA, along with the Singapore-based Azaz Hind, the Provisional Government of Free India, would have limited military and political consequence due to its operational dependence on an already-stretched Japanese military. Its greatest impact was what it represented ideologically:

> 40,000 to 45,000 Indian soldiers of the British Indian Army who had surrendered at Singapore had volunteered to the join the army of liberation. To the professional core of ex-prisoners of war were added civilian recruits from Indian plantation laborers in Malaysia, petty traders in Burma and shopkeepers in Thailand. Punjabi Muslims, Sikh and Pathan professional soldiers mingled with Tamil and Malay workers in a national army led by a Bengali. An overwhelming majority of the two million Indian expatriates in South East Asia responded with

[19] Ibid., 164.
[20] Ibid., 163 – 166.
[21] Ibid, 167.

> great emotional fervor to Bose's cry for 'total mobilization', his battle-cry 'Chalo Delhi' and his national greeting 'Jai Hind'.[22]

For a short time the INA and Free Indian Government represented the greatest Hindu-Muslim harmony in the face of a common objective, which would not be matched by the Quit India movement back home. It would later be celebrated by Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus alike.[23] The INA was defeated in the conflagration of the Pacific War by numerically superior British forces and Chinese guerillas in Burma, but its legacy survived longer. After the war, the British intended to try survivors as traitors, and made the technically correct but politically unwise decision to simultaneously prosecute three INA officers—a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Sikh—for treason, thereby condemning themselves in the eyes of all three groups.[24] The National Congress shrewdly mounted a defense with a high-powered legal team led by celebrated lawyer and freedom-fighter Bhulabhai Desai assisted by Nehru himself. The National Congress got its unofficial victory in the trial, and the Indian National Army, militarily vanquished but ideologically victorious, remained as much a headache to the British after the war as it had been during it.

The annoyance of a pan-Indian army of liberation led by a Bengali general might have had some hand in the callousness of the British response in the third crisis, the Bengal Famine of 1943. It was not the first of its kind in predominantly-Muslim Bengal by any means: an estimated one-third of the population of Bengal died in the 1770 Famine, shortly after the beginning of the East India Company's rule of India.[25] However, it did demonstrate the continued harm inflicted by the British colonial administration during wartime. It has been argued that actual food production did not decline, and a rise in consumption thanks to military forces had

[22] Bose and Julal, *Modern South Asia*, 132.
[23] Ibid., 133.
[24] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 1971.
[25] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 43 and Vohra, *The Making of India*, 54.

been expected and prepared for. Instead, the catastrophe resulted from a breakdown of exchange entitlements between the rural population and urban military and civilian populations, the latter considered most crucial to Bengal by the British with the threat of the Japanese.[26] Wartime inflation had been a major grievance of the Quit India movement, and food remained most vulnerable to inflation. British military actions compounded the effects, with both grain and grain transports being seized in the midst of the crackdown. In particular, internal transport of grain became extremely difficult, and what was not transported was bought up by speculators.[27] It's possible that the British, aware of the crisis, rejected American grain offers, "…apparently because they were not averse to punishing the troublemaking Bengalis."[28] The total human cost is still difficult to calculate—some estimations put it at between one and three million,[29]others a solid three million,[30] and other still between 3.5 to 4 million lives.[31] Above all, the effect was disastrous and turned apathetic Indians in the civil service and military against the British administration.[32] East Bengal would remain familiar with famines and catastrophes, and the region remained a bellwether for political revolutions after the end of British rule.

When the British did respond, the crisis seemed to decline. The commander-in-chief of the army in India, Field Marshal Archibald Wavell, was appointed to the post of viceroy in October 1943, and curbed the famine with impressive military efficiency.[33] Wavell additionally released Gandhi from arrest on medical grounds, though the latter's efforts to open dialog between London and Delhi ended in failure.[34] Gandhi's setbacks coincided with the rising

[26] Ibid., 130.
[27] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 353.
[28] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 167.
[29] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 353.
[30] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 167.
[31] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 131.
[32] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 167.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 167 - 168.

prestige of Jinnah and the Muslim League, whose political maneuverings had secured the dominant position in the heavily Muslim regions of the empire. Jinnah could now publicly define the territories that would constitute the new Pakistan, including Punjab, Assam, Bengal, Sind, and Baluchistan. Partitioning India along religious lines became a political assumption in the Muslim League, to Gandhi's horror. Ultimately the Mahatma was forced to acknowledge the reality of the vivisection. Seeking a compromise after his release in 1943, Gandhi accepted the formation of a Muslim state after the end of the British Raj encompassing Muslim-majority districts in the northwest and northeast of India, but wished for certain matters, particularly foreign affairs and military defense, to be administered centrally. The talks failed when Jinnah refused to accept a Pakistan that lacked total sovereignty, while Hindu and Sikh minorities in Punjab condemned Gandhi for his compromise.[35]

With the end of the war in both Europe and the Pacific in 1945, disunity in India showed no signs of abating. Indeed, despite the surrender of Japan, it was widely apparent that the government in London had little strength to retain its hold on India after six years of bloody warfare throughout the world and offered few colonial solutions to the situation.[36] In the spring of 1946, the British sent out a cabinet mission to discuss the terms and nature of what seemed like inevitable Indian independence and an end to the British Raj.[37] In a last-ditch effort, they organized conferences in Shimala to be attended by the leaders of both the Indian National Congress and the Indian Muslim League. By inviting both parties, the British established their supposedly final position of the Indian National Congress and the Indian Muslim League as being equal parties in the future of India. Otherwise, the British had little power over the

[35] Ibid., 168.
[36] Wolpert, *A New History of India,* 357.
[37] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 134.

situation, as the conferences ground to a halt between an inflexible Nehru and an equally inflexible Jinnah against a backdrop of a chaotic, violence-plagued India.

In a matter of months, the end seemed near. To their credit, the British under Field Marshal Wavell preached what they termed "constitutionalism" along with moderation and cooperation while wrestling with different plans, all theoretical, to allow for a nonviolent transfer of power within the Indian Empire between British and Indian leadership.[38] Wavell, seemingly honest in his desire to act in India's best interest, was widely confounded as to what those best interests would be—unsurprising given the inability of the National Congress and Muslim League to reconcile. Just as he seemed committed to parity between Hindu and Muslim political leaders, Lord Wavell was forced to bow to pressure from the more numerous National Congress. Jinnah and the Muslim League, observing this perceived turnabout in British policy, were infuriated and left in despair. Constitutionalism, a lofty goal, had become synonymous with an apparent selling-out of Muslim political interests at the negotiation table. "We have exhausted all reason…There is no tribunal to which we can go. The only tribunal is the Muslim Nation," Jinnah lamented. Desperate in the face of what seemed like an end to British impartiality, the Muslim League abandoned the negotiating table and brought their case directly to the population, proclaiming August 16, 1946 "Direct Action Day" in Calcutta.[39]

It is easy to look at Direct Action Day as a single chaotic outbreak of violence that punctuated the end of the British Raj, perpetrated by a desperate Muslim League. In actuality, communalism and sectarian violence had already racked India for years before and during the Second World War. Sectarian violence was occasionally joined, but not interrupted, by moments of joint Hindu-Muslim violence and resistance to the British Raj, such as the Indian National

[38] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 360.
[39] Ibid., 361 – 362.

Army. They had been practically guaranteed by British colonial policy for decades and particularly emphasized prior to the end of the war, when British attention was torn between multiple crises across the globe. Colonial policies of noninterference meant the suffering or outright death of the poor in a time of crisis, while the well-off survived or even flourished. Intervention, on the other hand, might save lives at the aggravation of the more affluent at their raised taxes. Frequently, both groups were divided along religious and ethnic lines. Communalism had become a matter of everyday life and everyday violence.[40] Communalism was one of the most obvious arguments, used by Muslims and Hindus alike, as to why a unified Indian Empire, with or without the British Raj, was doomed. It remained a reality after the demise of the empire, when India and Pakistan found themselves staring across the new demarcation lines.

In Calcutta, Direct Action meant an organizing and directing of already existing violence and hatred. The 'Great Calcutta Killings', as they came to be called, began August 16 and continued to August 20, claiming thousands of lives, Hindu and Muslim. The rest of the subcontinent watched and soon emulated: Muslim peasants led by demobilized soldiers attacked Hindu landlords and merchants throughout Bengal. In neighboring Bihar, Hindus retaliated on the Muslim minority with greater brutality. With the subcontinent tearing itself apart in an even faster pace, any British efforts at arbitration or Muslim and Hindu politicians debating seemed laughable. The efforts of anti-communalists like Gandhi to mediate in light of the rising violence were insufficient and unpopular—when he extended a hand of sympathy to Muslims in Bihar,

[40] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 130 – 131.

preaching against Hindu-perpetrated violence against the Muslim minority there, he was labeled by many a traitor to his own faith.[41]

The British watched communalism, and India's self-destruction, and frantically sought a way out: in February 20, 1947, Prime Minister Clement Attlee announced the British would depart from India by the end of June 1948, leaving it "to anyone capable of maintaining the peace."[42] At the eleventh hour, Wavell was replaced by Lord Louis Mountbatten, the dashing Admiral of the Fleet. Apparently swayed by Mountbatten, Nehru warned that the Muslim League would sabotage any British efforts at taxation—Gandhi countered by warning that the only way to end communal violence was to remove Nehru and invite Jinnah to replace him. Mountbatten refused to entertain the suggestion and, with an outraged Nehru, had unproductive discussions in Delhi while prosperous Punjab burst into rioting and killing. Communal violence was not limited to Muslim fears of domination by a Hindu majority: in Punjab, Sikh politicians rallied for a Sikh nation to be called Sikhistan.[43]

By April 1947, both the National Congress and the Muslim League had come to accept a partitioning, however practically difficult. Nehru, once cold on the idea, publicly announced that the creation of Pakistan would be agreed upon on the condition that the state could not include unwilling provinces of India, a position Jinnah could hardly dispute on principle. Forewarning of future catastrophes, Huseyn Suhrawardy, premier of the province of Bengal, now proposed "a sovereign, independent and undivided Bengal," only to be rejected by both the Muslim League and the National Congress. Gandhi alone opposed the division of the subcontinent, but now held little clout among the negotiating parties. Warnings of a rushed partitioning turning communal

[41] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 365.
[42] Ibid., 365 – 366 and Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 150.
[43] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 364.

violence into a humanitarian disaster were ignored by parties seemingly desperate to rid themselves of this long headache.[44]

On July 15, 1947 the British House of Commons signed off on the creation of two separate dominions from the Indian Empire, to be concluded in a month. This deed accorded with the opinion of Lord Mountbatten, described as a man who saw the matter of portioning the subcontinent as a task to be dealt with in all due haste, and rushed through it accordingly.[45] The plan called for the division into three main parts: the first consisting of Sind, Baluchistan, and Muslim-majority districts of Punjab, and the second, consisting of Muslim-majority districts of Bengal. They would form West and East Pakistan respectively, two halves of the same nation separated by thousands of kilometers. The remainder of the empire, including the Hindu-majority areas of Bengal and Punjab, would constitute India.[46] Sir Cyril Radcliffe was appointed head of the boundary commission, on the basis that an impartial expert was needed—Radcliffe's claim to impartiality was that he had never set foot in India before, and after drawing his borders, he would never return. Radcliffe was assisted by eight judges appointed by the League and Congress, who bitterly contested the decisions in complete secrecy. No indication was given of the actual boundaries until the matter was already law, giving affected minority populations little time to plan.[47]

As the House of Commons had planned, the Indian Empire was dismembered on August 14 – 15, 1947. The first few days of planned celebration and congratulations in New Delhi and Calcutta were followed by further communal carnage. In Pakistani Punjab, the communal rage

[44] Ibid., 366.
[45] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 178.
[46] Ibid., 179.
[47] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 366 – 367 and Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 155.

had never abated.[48] Neither of the new governments nor the departing British were prepared for the catastrophe that rapidly followed. Communal violence had been a constant reality since the end of the Second World War, swaying the pro-unity Indian National Congress from its dreams of a unified India and convincing both them and the Muslim League of the need for an immediate, separate solution.[49] Now that the borders had been established, communal violence grew exponentially worse. As with the Bengal Famine, the human cost remains difficult to calculate: certainly hundreds of thousands of innocent Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were slaughtered as they attempted to flee across the borders, just part of the millions who were forced to become refugees in their own lands.[50] Perhaps as many as ten million fled rather than be trapped in a new nation that communalism seemed to guarantee would be hostile to them, with as many as a million never reaching their destination.[51] Winston Churchill, now leader of the opposition in the House of Commons, called the hasty British evacuation a "shameful flight."[52]

At an enormous human cost, the subcontinent had split, with the births of independent India and Pakistan. The death of the British Raj remained a cause for celebration on both sides, even in light of the enormous suffering generated by a hasty division and communalism which had spread like a fever across the subcontinent. At midnight of August 14, 1947, the Union Jack was lowered over Delhi and India's tricolor raised in its place.[53] Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, both celebrated and warned crowds in New Delhi, "Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in

[48] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 179 – 180.
[49] Ibid., 177.
[50] Ibid., 179, Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 155 and Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 367 – 368.
[51] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 368.
[52] Ibid., 369.
[53] Wolpert, *Roots of Confrontation in South Asia*, 113.

full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom…The past clings to us still."[54]

Muhammad Jinnah remained governor-general of independent Pakistan and was now called Quaid-i-Azam, Urdu for "Great Leader." He spoke of similarly noble sentiments in Karachi, Pakistan's capital until the completion of the city of Islamabad:

> It will be our constant endeavor to work for the welfare and well-being of all communities in Pakistan. The tolerance and goodwill that great Emperor Akbar showed to all the non-Muslims is not of recent origin. It dates back to thirteen centuries ago when our Prophet not only by words but by deeds treated the Jews and Christians, after he conquered them, with the utmost tolerance and respect for their faith and beliefs. The whole history of Muslims, wherever they ruled, is replete with those humane and great principles which should be followed and practiced.[55]

Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, declared the father of Pakistan, would die in 1948, the same year as the death of the father of India, Mahatma Gandhi. While Gandhi had been pushed aside politically, like Jinnah, he represented an elder statesman practically inseparable from the nation he helped create, a hero to tens of millions of his countrymen. But in 1947, he mourned the death of a unified India by himself in Calcutta.[56] And while Jinnah and Nehru called for moderation and an end to the lawlessness and killing, the failure of the partition to effectively account for many autonomous princely states—including that of Kashmir and Jammu, a Muslim principality with a Hindu prince—was masked by the humanitarian catastrophe that was already underway. Those unresolved complications, and many others, would come to plague India and Pakistan in the future—whether it be in years, as was the case with Bengal, or in a matter of weeks, with the First Kashmir War.[57]

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 114.
[56] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 155.
[57] Vohra, *The Making of India*, 179 and Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia*, 42 – 43.

CHAPTER 3

RETURNING TO KASHMIR

Besides resulting in the destruction of the Princely State of Kashmir and Jammu, and the prolonged division of the territory between Indian and Pakistani military zones, the First Kashmir War of 1947 was not particularly conclusive. It began in October of that year, when unresolved tensions over Jammu and Kashmir escalated to outright hostilities, another obvious testament to the failure of the partition to stably divide the Indian Empire. Politically unstable thanks to its Hindu Raj ruling over a predominantly Muslim population, the British-era princely state was promptly enveloped by both its neighbors, the majority going to India following a year-long war by 1 January 1949.[1] Both Indian and Pakistani Kashmir remained states governed by elites unrepresentative of substantial religious minorities—two major causes of past communal animosity and violence. Both states were home to independence movements which sought the creation of a new state separate from either Pakistan or India.[2] If the irredentist issue had not come up in Kashmir, it seems highly likely that it would have surfaced elsewhere, and then led to war between India and Pakistan in the same time period.[3] In particular, the reality of East and West Pakistan being divided by much of northern India remained a constant source of concern and suspicion on both sides.[4]

[1] Rahman, *Divided Kashmir*, xiv.
[2] Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia*, 52.
[3] Ibid., 53.
[4] Ibid.

After bringing the matter before the United Nations, India succeeded in forcing Pakistan to accept a ceasefire, but failed to secure a definitive ruling in its favor.[5] Peace only came with the assumption that a plebiscite would be held over the whole of Kashmir to determine its allegiance—neither side intended to walk away with nothing from the dispute. In West Pakistan, anger over India "stealing away" a majority Muslim population that "properly belonged" to Pakistan, an act that threatened the very completeness of a state based on the notion of Muslim-majority populations, would cause animosity for decades to come. Further compromise with India would discredit the *raison d'etre* of the Pakistani state.[6]

The plebiscite never happened. Through 1947, India cited the continued Pakistani military presence in Jammu and Kashmir, against the terms of the ceasefire. Pakistan argued the justness of its actions and Indian demonstrations of poor faith.[7] The "solution" of an independent region only raised irredentist tension between Delhi and Karachi, in much the fashion that "solutions" to communal conflicts in the form of British constitutional compromises before independence only further aggravated the situation in the long term. Indian policies remained shaped by the secular philosophy championed by Nehru and his colleague who had so dominated the early National Congress party. Aside from further distinguishing Pakistan's Muslim League from the ruling party in India, secular philosophy left India even less sympathetic to Pakistan's religious claims to Kashmir. All this was further complicated by Nehru's own Kashmiri background, which he had cited alongside his secular agenda in policy against the Kashmiri Muslim establishment.[8]

[5] Wolpert, *Roots of Conflict in South Asia*, 117.
[6] Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia*, 60.
[7] Ibid., 61.
[8] Ibid., 43.

In the two decades that followed, an unsteady ceasefire between India and Pakistan did stand, characterized by continued population exchanges on both sides. Confronted with the continued migrations and the severe weaknesses in their respective nations, the two republics endeavored to maintain that stability. The success of the founding of Pakistan seemed to suggest that both regional loyalties and the power of religious communalism were still substantive forces when applied on the political level. While both nations contended with these issues, both benefiting and suffering for it, domestic politics in Pakistan and India began to differ more and more. It appeared as though, in India, the political norms established by the National Congress in the years before 1947 secured the role of a secular political tradition, joined with nominally democratic processes.[9] The efforts by the existing government to expand the electorate in a meaningful manner across provinces, excluding Kashmir, gave strength to the parliamentary process.[10] Instead, between 1947 and 1953 Kashmir remained nominally ruled by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the leader of the dominant Kashmiri National Conference party, due to a political bargain made with Nehru. In 1953, the compromises fell apart, but Kashmir continued to enjoy some autonomy guaranteed by the Indian constitution. These guarantees were slowly whittled down in the time leading up to Nehru's death in 1964, setting the stage for further Kashmiri-Indian conflict.[11]

Nehru's death left the National Congress vulnerable to rivalries between party bosses and oligarchical politics in general. In fact, Pakistan had been confronted by a similar problem, with the death of Jinnah almost twenty years earlier. The liberation of Jammu and Kashmir, as a complete territory, remained a goal in the eyes of his successors, but the means to do so were unclear. The 1947 war had been halted in part by the incomplete division of military assets

[9] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 167 – 169.
[10] Ibid., 170.
[11] Ibid., 174 – 175.

between India and Pakistan, more resembling a civil war than an international conflict.[12] The subsequent decade of unifying the new country demanded a strong central government, as it did in India. But the decade was troubled: in 1951, Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination in the very heart of the military establishment set a disturbing precedent. A refugee politician from a Muslim minority province in India before the partition, Pakistan's first prime minister had been resented by armed forces establishment.[13] By 1958, as Pakistan had positioned itself as an important component in the United State Cold War strategies, the top echelons of the military ensured their power with the ascendance of their top general, Muhammad Ayub Khan, to the office of president.[14] The consolidation of power by elites played out very differently in Pakistan than in India, both as a consequence of the earlier loss of a crucial "father of the nation" political leader, and the matching military demands confronted by a substantially smaller nation. By 1964, a conspiracy between military and civilian leadership was well established in Karachi.

As to be expected, the 1965 War was preceded by aggression on both sides. During the first half of 1965, the United Nations Kashmiri peacekeeping mission reported more than two thousand ceasefire violations, an "alarming" rise in the number of cease-violations. India charged Pakistan with training and arming guerilla units to infiltrate Kashmir, while Pakistan adamantly denied any hand in what it labeled "a spontaneous war of liberation against Indian Imperialism."[15] On September 1, India's military response to these infiltrators was promptly met by regular units of the Pakistani Army, triggering the Second Kashmir War. On the field of battle, India had almost four times the manpower of Pakistan, and was armed with American weapons intended to be used against a Chinese invasion.

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[12] Ibid., 177.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 178.
[15] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 394 – 395.

Early in the short war, Pakistan enjoyed some success over India—it would ultimately lay claim to practically three times the area of India that India claimed over Pakistan.[16] However, it had overestimated its advantages. An international arms boycott meant both sides could not sustain the war effort for long, and the Indian Army, to Pakistan's surprise, enjoyed some impressive victories over Pakistani armored divisions. The loss of 450 tanks alone in the defense of the city of Lahore left the Pakistani Army in a very precarious situation, even after its initial victories.[17] Short of fuel and ammunition, both sides bowed to international pressure and took the offer from Moscow to negotiate a settlement at Tashkent, capital of Soviet Uzbekistan. In the war, India had come out quite well: the dark horse Indian Army had surprised the world by its viability as an opponent to Pakistan, and the war had served to unite the population and direct its attention away from domestic issues and conflicts. But there were few real gains in Kashmir itself, and both India and Pakistan deferred to outside powers for a resolution.

The war did return the subcontinent to the attention of the international community once more. Years earlier, with independence and British exhaustion, the United Kingdom's monopoly of outside influence over Pakistan and India ended. However, many in Pakistan considered the Muslim League's cooperation with British authorities during the war, its criticism of the Quit India movement, and its negotiations with Mountbatten, as deserving of British goodwill and support. In the First Kashmir War, Pakistan was left sorely disappointed with the inadequacy of British support after the fighting began.[18] Accordingly, Pakistan looked elsewhere for a powerful ally, and found one in the nation that had taken on many British responsibilities after the Second World War, the United States. After a series of successful negotiations and missions, relations

[16] Ibid., 395.
[17] Ibid., 395 and Vohra, *The Making of India*, 220.
[18] Raghunath Ram, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1983), 25.

were normalized in a matter promising to Pakistan's leaders.[19] Initial relations were centered less on Pakistan's regional concerns and more on the escalating specter of communist influence in the Cold War. For its part, the United States Information Service in Pakistan was instructed to highlight Pakistan's progress as a new nation and use against Soviet aggression.[20]

For the Soviet Union, foreign policy dealt primarily with the rapid worsening of relations with the United States and the United Kingdom. In dealing with the Asian subcontinent, past Soviet thinkers had been consistent in their dismay at the British handling of the partitioning of the Indian Empire, making public their agreement with Mahatma Gandhi's case that the decision was a flawed one, made for poor reasons and with corrupt objectives in mind. Their reasoning was based in part on a Marxist historical view of Britain's dwindling empire: in the words of one Soviet expert, "Since the partition of India, both Dominions continued to be actually dependent on Britain, economically, politically, and militarily; and British capital has retained and is increasing its dominating position in the economy of India and Pakistan."[21] Moscow also pointed at the painfully obvious reality that the partition had not created a homogenous Muslim state separate from India, as intended. They had criticized the Muslim League for its lack of participation in the Quit India movement, a stance they considered counterrevolutionary and soft on imperialism, setting them for poor terms with Jinnah's independent Pakistan.[22]

The Soviet Union watched the growing closeness between Karachi and Washington with considerable dismay. While the Soviet Union made slow, small diplomatic gains with each effort, the United States enjoyed good rapport with Pakistani leadership, as revealed by declassified American memos from both the State Department and from the White House itself.

[19] Ibid., 26.
[20] Ibid., 28.
[21] Ibid., 10.
[22] Ibid., 8.

Before its abrupt end, the Kennedy government had repeated engagements with Ayub Khan and exchanged a number of letters. Naturally, many memos sent through the State Department involved matters like congratulations on the successful spaceflight of John Glenn or President Kennedy thanking Ayub Khan for the kindness demonstrated towards his wife during her visit to Pakistan.[23]

However, others dealt more directly with the high-level cooperation between Kennedy and Ayub Khan that would extend to President Lyndon Johnson after Kennedy's death. The nature of the alliance between the United States of America and the Republic of Pakistan is outlined in a declassified memo from early 1962, intended for the Kennedy White House in the wake of India's acquisition of the MiG-21 aircraft:

> We have maintained a close and for the most part friendly alliance with Pakistan since 1954. We and Pakistan have mutually benefited by this alliance, although they and we view it from a different perspective. Recent strains on both partners have caused both to re-examine the value of the alliance. Despite indications that the various causes of strains will not be easy to eliminate, it seems clear that this it is in the best natural interest of both the U.S. and Pakistan to continue the Alliance.[24]

It was clear that the United States valued its relationship with Pakistan, even in light of very real difficulties and disagreements, particularly on the matter of China and India. It was expected that Pakistan felt the same way, and subsequent memos from Ayub Khan suggested as much. Later in 1962, he appealed to diplomatic assistance from Kennedy in bringing the matter of Kashmir before the United Nations for a ruling, citing the "deep concern felt by the people of Pakistan as a result [of] threatening statements made by Indian leaders accompanied by military moves of

[23] Outgoing Telegram, Department of State. "Pakistan: General, 1962." John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, 2012.
[24] Memorandum for Mr. McGeorge Bundy, the White House. "Pakistan: Security, 1962." John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, 2012.

ominous character."[25] When Kennedy refused to make major moves in favor in Pakistan at the time, Ayub Khan would attempt to force the issue after the Sino-Indian War led the United States to further arm India.

In 1963, replying to letters sent to him by President, Ayub Khan returned to the topic of Pakistan's considerable security concerns. He made clear that they could only be relieved through continued cooperation with the United States. Downplaying the likelihood of continued Sino-India hostility since the fighting of 1962, he requested Kennedy curtail continued military assistance to India from the western powers.

> The trend of the exchanges between Beijing and New Delhi as well as the recent statements of Prime Minister Nehru clearly indicating his intention of reaching a negotiated border settlement with Communist China, would seem to confirm our own conclusions as to the deeper reasons behind India's request for massive military assistance from the West.
>
> Ambassador McConaughy has informed me of the extent of your immediate program of supply of arms to India which you and Prime Minister MacMillan consider necessary to meet India's minimum requirements of defense. You have made it clear that this program is not contingent on a Kashmir Settlement…Only a speedy and just Kashmir settlement can give us any assurance that the contemplated increase of India's military power is not likely to be deployed against Pakistan in the future.[26]

Ayub Khan's case was clear: the western arming of India against potential Chinese aggression was further destabilizing the subcontinent. As he would continue to claim, China's position as the primary enemy of the United States was an inherently unstable situation, when placed against the backdrop of the unanswered Kashmir dilemma. Ayub Khan concluded, "No country in the world has so much in its power to promote a just and peaceful solution of the Kashmir dispute as the

[25] Incoming Telegram, Department of State. "Pakistan: Security, 1962." John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, 2012.
[26] Letter to the President from President Ayub of Pakistan. "Pakistan: Security, 1963." John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, 2012.

United States."[27] He could not have predicted the sort of settlement that would be later forged at Tashkent. Nowhere in the letter was the Soviet Union mentioned. Both Ayub Khan and Kennedy were quick to frequently emphasize the need to continue cooperation and existing commitments in other areas, particularly economic and industrial ventures, even if an agreement could not be forged on Kashmir.

Given its nominal dependence on the United States for solutions to security problems, it is not surprising that Pakistan would share its own assumptions of the Indian government with both the White House and the State Department. State Department officials enjoyed an inside view of Pakistani difficulties in negotiations with India, in April 1965, before the war:

> Pakistan has told the British it will reply to their latest proposal after the return of the U.K. High Commissioner to Pakistan. He has gone to Delhi today to assist in negotiations with the Indians regarding the British proposals…Ambassador Bowels has proposed that we tell both governments we will cut off military aid unless they accept the British cease-fire proposal.[28]

Cooperation was not limited to high-level diplomacy. Pakistan made extensive use of loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Its reluctance to initiate agrarian reforms as India had, proximity to Soviet borders, and the possibility of American air bases in Kashmir all alarmed Soviet leadership but did not upset the United States.[29] Early Soviet attempts at a thaw were hampered by criticism in the Soviet media of Pakistan's religious irredentism. It would take the death of General Secretary Josef Stalin, the defining force of Soviet foreign policy, to take Soviet focus from Europe and towards the subcontinent. Diplomatic efforts yielded more rewards on the matter of India: unlike their counterparts in the Muslim League, the National Congress in the late 1930s had regarded the Soviet Union as a

[27] Ibid.
[28] Roedad Khan, *The American Papers: Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965 – 1973* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6.
[29] Ram, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan*, 28 – 29.

successful model for implementing radical social and economic programs from a new central government over a wide population.[30]

The catastrophic devastation experienced by the Soviet Union in the Second World War severely limited the desire of Soviet leaders to attempt possibly dangerous inroads into the former colonies of the British Empire. Moscow still considered postcolonial states to be subject to the whims of their former masters, particularly the United Kingdom. As such, since they could not be counted to be for the Soviet Union, they were to be regarded as being against it. Soviet diplomacy made few gains until Stalin's death caused a number of political shakeups in the government.[31]

Understandably the United States enjoyed a stronger and more influential position in the subcontinent. Its relationship with India was still shaky: by 1953, India's nonalignment philosophy and trade with China and the Soviet Union were causes for suspicion. American newspapers naturally discredited any hope of turning the populous new Asian nation into a bulwark for American-led containment of communism, so long as Nehru remained in power.[32] Still, it was widely understood in the United States that India's trade relations with Washington were much more mature than those it had with Beijing, and far more than it had with Moscow.[33]

In a major editorial in the *New York Times*, C. L. Sulzberger predicted that India, with its ancient traditions and new government, would inevitably become a major component in any effort opposing the spread of communism. "Unwilling to Bind Herself to Either Side, She May Yet Stand or Fall as Barrier to Communist Expansion," he wrote in a byline. A "Communist India" would be a huge political gain for the Soviet leadership, both strategically and

[30] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 126.
[31] McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 217.
[32] Robert Trumbell, "Both India and China Want Closer Relations," *The New York Times*, January 18, 1950, 4.
[33] "India's Foreign Trade with U.S. is Highest," *The New York Times*, June 12, 1952, 4.

economically, but also as a rallying point for the hearts and minds of millions in Asia. The American position of carefully treading water and avoiding rocking the boat on issues like Kashmir was costing them the chance of securing a major victory in India. The situation demanded a radical response from the United States government, comparable to that made in Western Europe, where the battle lines had been clearly drawn between the Soviet Union and United States. Sulzberger revealed the impatience that many in the press felt towards India, which still could not be counted as a friend to the United States in its containment plans.[34]

The United States' real breakthroughs came in Pakistan. Unlike Delhi, a more beneficial understanding existed between the governments in Karachi and Washington. Before 1965, this had been demonstrated by Pakistan's formal entry in American-devised strategic alliances aimed at the containment of Soviet influence. In his memoirs, Mohammad Ayub Khan proudly asserted that he had a "good deal to do with" the decision to join the Baghdad Pact.[35] With that decision, relations with the Soviet Union remained underdeveloped. Ayub Khan reported the dismay the Soviet Union expressed at Pakistan's joining of the alliance.

> The Soviet Union reacted when, in 1955, Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact (now called CENTO). Up to that time, the Soviet Union had maintained a neutral stand on the Kashmir dispute. Its representatives had abstained from voting whenever this issue came up in the Security Council. The Soviet Union charged that by joining the Baghdad Pact, Pakistan had become a member of "an aggressive Western alliance," and she responded by radically altering her stand on Kashmir. Thenceforth, the Soviet Union began to subscribe to India's claim that no plebiscite was possible or necessary in Kashmir and that Kashmir was an "integral" part of India.[36]

In 1961, Ayub Khan still did not concern himself too much with the Soviet Union—when appearing before the National Press Club in Washington, he dismissed concerns of the threat

[34] Cyrus Sulzberger, "India's Role is Vital in East-West Struggle," *The New York Times,* November 30, 1952, 3.
[35] Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Pakistan Perspective* (Washington: Embassy of Pakistan, 1965), 104.
[36] Ibid., 20 -21.

presented by Soviet propaganda on the Pakistani population, and made it clear that Pakistan was firmly in the American camp.[37]

Like its Soviet archenemy, the United States still found itself kept at arms' length by Nehru's nonalignment policy, even with continued aid to India. In that respect, Washington was at one disadvantage compared to Moscow: Nehru's nonalignment came as a slap in the face to both American politicians and media in the face of an ongoing effort to contain the Soviet Union, while Moscow, having discarded Stalin's rigid conservatism in the region, saw it as an opportunity to make the inroads they had so clearly lacked compared to the American competition. In 1955, having already visited the United States, Nehru accepted an invitation to the Soviet Union, to the widespread dismay and criticism of the American media. Many in the media interpreted it as an utter betrayal of Nehru's anticolonial struggles for which he had been famed. Still others termed it a huge coup for the Soviet Union diplomatically, despite his earlier visit to the United States.[38] Indian émigré associations in the United States defended the prime minister's actions, instead claiming Nehru's negotiations with the Soviet Union were major steps towards normalization between east and west.[39] While hard to imagine at the time, such proposals were not that unrealistic: in ten years, the United States would endorse a Soviet proposal for peace in the subcontinent.

Leading up to 1965, there were few things to suggest that the Soviet Union was dominating any part of the subcontinent, especially when compared to the elaborate system of alliances into which the United States had successfully integrated Pakistan. Just weeks before the

[37] Rais Ahmad Jafri, edit., *Ayub Soldier and Statesman: Speeches and Statements of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan & A Detailed Account of the Indo-Pakistan War* (Lahore: Mohammad Ali Academy, 1966) , 175
[38] "Mr. Nehru and the Soviets," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1955, 36.
[39] J. J. Sigh, "Nehru's Visit to Russia: Benefits to Free World From Prime Minister's Trip Evaluated," *The New York Times*, July 20, 1955, 26.

Second Kashmir War began, Ayub Khan did pay a notable visit to the Soviet Union, his first, in an attempt to improve stagnating relations. His information secretary Altaf Gauhar considered the trip largely fruitless, especially when compared to the negotiations after the Tashkent conference.[40] By contrast, Indian observers later felt that it was a major breakthrough for Pakistan, even though the statements made were deliberately kept vague in order to avoid upsetting either side.[41] The visits, while establishing a friendly repertoire between Ayub Khan and the new Soviet head of government, Alexei Kosygin, could not compare to the longstanding compacts that linked Pakistan and the United States.

Three years before the Second Kashmir War, one event did push America away from Pakistan and closer to India, from a Pakistani perspective: the brief Sino-Indian War of 1962. The war could not have caught the United Nations at a worse time: despite Soviet efforts, the People's Republic of China remained unrecognized and the permanent Chinese Security Council seat remained in possession of the Kuomintang government that had fled to Taiwan in 1949.[42] Within the United Nations it was understood that practically any Asian initiative, and many worldwide initiatives like nuclear disarmament, would be seriously hampered by an inability to call upon Chinese government support. Simultaneously, countries from the Philippines to Australia to the United States opposed recognition of the Beijing government in the United Nations for a variety of reasons. If previous United Nations moderation over Pakistan and India had enjoyed limited success, there was virtually nothing the body could do concerning the border clashes on 20 October that had led to the short Sino-Indian conflict. A vote of 42 in favor

[40] Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan: Pakistan's First Military Ruler* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 291.
[41] Jain, *Soviet Relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh*, 131.
[42] *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1962* (Lake Success: UN Department of Information, 1963), 114.

(including Pakistan and the Soviet Union) and 56 against barred the resolution, while the United Nations made little formal effort to address what had happened.[43]

Instead, the United States took the position against China, taking strong action that had longstanding ramifications on the subcontinent. Ayub Khan wrote that the war, in which Pakistan did not participate, was a watershed development for both India and Pakistan:

> Until the fall of 1962, however, the policy of the United States continued to distinguish somewhat between a "non-aligned" India and the American ally, Pakistan. Although under a mutual Defense Assistance Agreement signed in 1951 (reaffirmed in 1958), India also was receiving certain military aid from the United States—without accepting any of the obligations that devolve on an ally—American policy continued to generally maintain, in the matter of *direct* military aid, a substantial difference between an ally and a neutral. An ally was qualified to receive military assistance on a scale that the United States considered justified in the light of that country's obligation under the alliance; a neutral, by and large, was not entitled to receive military aid on any commensurate scale. However, this remaining distinction between Pakistan and "non-aligned" India also disappeared last fall when the border clashes between India and China flared up into an armed clash.[44]

The American response to the Sino-Indian War—boosting aid to India—was a serious dilemma for Karachi, cited repeatedly by Pakistani sources as harmful to American-Pakistani friendship. Washington justified this as meeting the country's existing obligations to India, an unsatisfactory answer. In a repeat of the Pakistani narrative of India "duping" the western powers, Delhi had "fooled" the America government into believing any weapons delivered would only be used against China. Pakistan fully expected to confront these arms and would be correct in this regard by 1965.[45]

Nonetheless, Karachi could do little directly but strenuously object to American decisions.[46] Indirectly, they followed India's example of diplomatic flexibility: in the United

[43] *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1962*, 115 – 116.
[44] Ayub Khan, *Pakistan Perspective*, 23.
[45] Ibid., 21.
[46] Ibid., 24.

States, Pakistan's growing closeness to China remained a concern, and the *New York Times* reported Pakistan's hinting of Chinese assistance in the event of war with India.[47] Not all responses were as negative—another piece in the same newspaper speculated hopefully that the Sino-Indian War might make India more amenable to Pakistan's position on the issue of Kashmir. By 1964, on the eve of resumption of hostilities over Kashmir, the government of Pakistan was actively wooing the People's Republic of China, with Khan speaking at a banquet in honor of Premier Zhou Enlai, celebrating Pakistan and China's friendship:

> Relations between Pakistan and the People's Republic of China have happily been always cordial. History and geography have provided our two countries with links which provide a sound basis for good-neighborly relations in the interests of our two peoples…Recent developments indicate that we are moving in the direction indicated by our history and the will of our people.[48]

The possibility of a Sino-Pakistani military bloc dominating the Asian subcontinent was enough to convince some Americans that, despite India's nonalignment, accommodating Nehru was an unfortunate necessity.[49]

The post-war cooperation between the Soviet Union and United States on the prevention of another Indo-Pakistani conflict would not go unnoticed. Given the previous animosity between the two major powers, the rapidity in which they had seen eye-to-eye on the matter garnered attention. Indian historian Dinesh Chandra Jha, writing before and after the 1971 War, was understandably pessimistic about the state of Indo-Pakistani relations in 1965, but did believe there were possibilities for change on the international scene.

> What then are the prospects for improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations? All that can be said for the present is that there is no immediate possibility of any marked improvement in their relations. The reason is that suspicion between them is too great, their attitudes have been too hard and inflexible, and public opinion between these two countries is so worked up that the governments are in no

[47] "Pakistan Hints of Red China Aid," *The New York Times,* July 18, 1963, 4.
[48] Jafri, *Ayub Soldier and Statesman,* 202 – 203.
[49] Paul Grimes, "China Invasion Puts Kashmir Crisis in New Light," *The New York Times,* December 2, 1962, 244.

> position to make any sudden or radical change in policies…There are, on the other hand, some factors which may help in bringing India and Pakistan together. First, for the first time in their contemporary history, the USA and the USSR are finding their interests overlapping, rather than competitive, in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent.[50]

Despite the "stumbling block" of an obstinate China, Jha suggested that American-Soviet cooperation over the subcontinent had finally begun, for the better. His added emphasis on how new this situation still was, and the dynamic fluidity of international relations when it came to the Asian subcontinent, led him to suggest it as a revolutionary situation in its own right.

Having witnessed the effects of Tashkent, Jha believed American and Soviet intentions could be further developed into a real force for change in the subcontinent. "It should also be mentioned here that the leverage of the USA and the USSR is quite high in India and Pakistan; both India and Pakistan are very much dependent on the two superpowers for economic aid and assistance as well as for their defense requirements. In these circumstances, it is difficult for both India and Pakistan to defy the joint moves of the Great Powers."[51] The friendship between China and Pakistan was nothing new; however, it was galvanized by the unrelated fighting between China and India in 1962, after which Pakistan saw China as a partner it could count on against India, rare among its friends. That in turn led to India, already humiliated by China, being unwilling to make further concessions.[52] In contrast, further involvement from the Soviet Union and United States would do much to overcome the Kashmir issue and other conflicts between the two nations. Jha cited the radical transformation of Franco-German relations after the Second World War and Soviet-American relations more recently in the Sixties as demonstration of a world system that could better sustain open cooperation than open conflict even in the face of

[50] Dinesh Chandra Jha, *Indo-Pakistan Relations* (Patna: Bharati Bhawan, 1972), 361.
[51] Jha, *Indo-Pakistan Relations*, 360 – 361.
[52] Ibid., 354.

long held animosities, and while Pakistan and India enjoyed their aggressive rhetoric, he did not believe they could impress it on their powerful backers.[53]

Jha was not alone. In its yearbook for 1966, the United Nation noted the work done at Tashkent at the invitation of the Soviet government as promising for peace in the region.

> On the occasion of the signing of the Tashkent Declaration, the Secretary-General sent messages to the President of Pakistan and to India's Minister for External Affairs, saying that the measures agreed upon in Tashkent were an important step towards establishing a stable peace between their countries…He also sent a message to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, congratulating him on his timely initiative in bringing the parties together.[54]

Secretary-General U Thant took the opportunity to remind the two opposing parties that both had renounced the use of force to settle disputes, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Likewise, he was anxious for both nations to follow the deadlines for full withdrawal in late February, as set at Tashkent. Afterward he publicly expected the United Nations India-Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM) to also come to an end. Even as complaints were exchanged between both sides as the withdrawal took place, the top leadership of the United Nations itself seemed content to put trust in the spirit of Tashkent and international moderation, even if it was not necessarily its own.[55]

Ram Gopal, a veteran of the Quit India campaign, observed a similar situation immediately after the war. Wearing his patriotism on his sleeve, Gopal would hardly apologize for India's reaction to Pakistani infiltration at the onset of the war, but his perspective is still helpful. Though London had previously made its positions on Kashmir known, they followed the example set by the major powers when the war began:

> The British Government's silence over the infiltration was found understandable in the context of the silence of the Governments in the USA and USSR. But

[53] Ibid., 362 – 363.
[54] *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1966* (Lake Success: UN Department of Information, 1967), 165.
[55] *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1966*, 166.

> unlike the other two, the British returned to their old attitude on 6 September, when India launched a counter-attack (following the Pakistani advance on the Chamb Area) in Punjab. There was considerable annoyance in India, and some men of the position parties emphatically suggested that India should withdraw from the Commonwealth headed by the British Queen.[56]

British deference towards Pakistan, followed by dismay towards Pakistani infiltration tactics, is cited as the lack of British response to the Second Kashmir War.[57]

The United States was similarly reluctant to act decisively one way or the other, contrary to Chinese accusations that Washington controlled the United Nations. Indeed, the United Nations was described as gridlocked in face of Indian and Pakistani determination to overcome the twenty-year stalemate.

> There was no hope of the violations coming to an end, and when the UN Secretary-General took up the matter again, even India told him that another meeting of the Security Council would not serve any purpose. The violations were taking a fresh toll of human lives, but this did not seem to indicate that there was concern on either side; there was no determined effort to revert to the *status quo*.[58]

Gopal may have overestimated the gridlock of the United Nations—in the short conflict, it presented three resolutions to what it termed "the Indo-Pakistan Question." The first two, issued September 4 and September 6, called for both sides to cease combat immediately and return to their sides of the previously-drafted lines in the Kashmir region, pending a further investigation on the matter.[59] Both were ignored. The third, issued on September 20, was more substantial. It was becoming apparent that both India and Pakistan were having some difficulties waging the continued armored and airborne campaigns. As a Security Council member, the Soviet Union was making some headway in at least convincing leaders from both sides to come to the negotiating table. It called for both sides to abide by the September 4 resolution, and

[56] Ram Gopal, *Indo-Pakistan War and Peace 1965* (Lucknow: Pastak Kendra, 1967), 100 – 101.
[57] Gopal, *Indo-Pakistan War and Peace 1965*, 106 – 107.
[58] Ibid., 147.
[59] Resolution 209 (1965) "The Indo-Pakistan Question." United Nations Security Council Resolutions, 2012 and Resolution 210 (1965) "The Indo-Pakistan Question," United Nations Security Council Resolution, 2012.

acknowledged that a review of the existing agreements on the Kashmir region was necessary and could come after the warfare stopped. The actual Security Council itself was not so badly gridlocked: the first two resolutions were adopted unanimously, while the third was adopted ten votes to none, with one abstention (the Kingdom of Jordan).[60]

The gesture from the United Nations might have come too late, however. It seems clear that Gopal and others saw that by late September the Soviet Union had positioned itself as the authoritative international voice on the Second Kashmir War. Previously, Moscow demonstrated the same reluctance as Washington to rule on whom to blame for the constant infiltrations and failure of the plebiscite. However during the war, Kosygin had met with his counterparts in the subcontinent in early public attempts to arbitrate more personally, independent of the United Nations.[61] According to Gopal the effect, along with other Soviet policies, was profound:

> These comments are abundantly proved by what happened at Tashkent. Unlike the UN, the Soviet Union threw itself between Lal Bahadur Shastri and Ayub Khan as a force whose effect is felt everywhere in the world. The declaration the two leaders made at Tashkent was a differently worded copy of the Security Council resolution of 20 September. Nay, it spoke of the Kashmir dispute also, a point which the Security Council had left out on Indian insistence. The Tashkent Declaration, unlike the Security Council resolution, was to be observed in letter and spirit; and there was no more excuse. The two sides withdrew to the pre-5 August positions without any demur.[62]

The Tashkent Declaration was the major international edict to be delivered on the Second Kashmir War, and was considered the work of Prime Minister Kosygin himself.[63] This would further cement Soviet influence in the postwar situation. Gopal even suggested that the role of Secretary General of the United Nations had passed to the Soviet leader on the matter of

[60] Resolution 211 (1965) "The Indo-Pakistan Question." United Nations Security Council Resolutions, 2012.
[61] Gopal, *Indo-Pakistan War and Peace 1965*, 123.
[62] Ibid., 148.
[63] Though called "Premier" elsewhere, Kosygin was typically called "Prime Minister" in Indian and Pakistani literature, due to his role as Head of Government of the USSR, the office nominally held by the Prime Minister in both countries.

Kashmir.[64] Consistently, Gopal portrayed the Soviet Union as the major factor in any reconciliation between India and Pakistan, even more so than the United States because of Kosygin's hand in the conference. The United States remained unwilling to afford either side a particularly decisive advantage with the continuing Cold War. The evidence presented by Gopal does seem to suggest Tashkent was a genuine, if surprising, compromise between the two superpowers.

Obviously, international pressure was not the only influencing factor in the rise of a consensus at Tashkent. Any examination of the immediate period following the end of the Second Kashmir War demands a close look at Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, Pakistan's president and defense minister of Pakistan for many years before and after 1965, who is now regarded as the first in a series of Pakistani generalissimos. Not only did Ayub Khan shape the nation during the Second Kashmir War, he affected the political transformation that Pakistan underwent from a parliamentary state to a military one from before the 1965 War until after the catastrophes of 1971.

Previously, Pakistan's structure of government had mirrored that of India closely. During the parliamentary period after Jinnah's death until 1958, power remained more widely distributed between the offices of president and prime minister in Karachi. East Pakistan was managed by the west. The last of Pakistan's prime ministers for more than a decade, Malik Firoz Khan Noon, secured a great diplomatic victory over India in his 1958 visit, negotiating the transfer of Berubari—an enclave in East Bengal under Indian control—to Pakistan, alongside other territories.[65] When confronted by hardening relations with India that year, Noon boldly declared "Our people, if they find their freedom threatened by [India], will break all pacts and shake

[64] Ibid., 122.
[65] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, xxv – xxvi.

hands with people whom we have had as enemies. Let there be no mistake about it."[66] Noon believed Pakistan should sever its alliance with the United States should the Americans desire friendship with both nations in the subcontinent. The United States and other Pakistani politicians in the informal ruling group, including Ayub Khan, were disturbed by this ultimatum. Noon was forced to resign and the parliamentary system scrapped by the president and his allies in the government.[67] This shifting of power was labeled by some as a clandestine military coup, due to Ayub Khan's standing in the armed forces.[68] Additionally, Ayub Khan's concessions to certain minorities in Pakistan, like conceding official status to the Bengali language, were seen by Indian observers as taking cues from past colonial rulers, marginalizing and dividing groups that might unite in their opposition to the government in Karachi.[69]

After this shake-up Ayub Khan became both head of government and head of state. He exercised those powers when the Second Kashmir War began, and when India and Pakistan were called to the negotiating table in Tashkent a few weeks later, he represented Pakistan to India's Prime Minister Shastri. The enormous power Ayub Khan wielded in the time period was hardly without criticism after the fact. As Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Khan's foreign minister and later Pakistan's prime minister, recalled to an Indian journalist, "Here in 1957 the assemblies were dissolved and then first President Ayub Khan and then Yahya Khan came. Thirteen years, no assemblies. No politics. An apolitic [sic] situation even. We merely suffocated."[70] Any investigation of the international political climate immediately after Tashkent must include a close look into Field Marshal Ayub Khan, who had cemented his base of power as Pakistan's ultimate authority by 1965.

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[66] Ibid., 40.
[67] Ibid., 50.
[68] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 393.
[69] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 179
[70] Boobli George Verghese, *An End to Confrontation* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1972), 114.

One source is Altaf Gauhar. Before being forced to leave Pakistan, Gauhar, a journalist and writer by trade, was deeply involved in the government in Karachi. He served as deputy secretary for Prime Minister Noon before the post was abolished, and was a closely acquainted with Ayub Khan and many other military and civilian leaders in Pakistan for decades. Finally, he was Ayub Khan's information secretary, a cabinet-level position, before the field marshal's departure from power. His passages on the Second Kashmir War, and the immediate aftermath, are closely focused on his own observations of Ayub Khan at the time, watching the president assume the role of Pakistan's singular hero in the face of Indian retaliation to the Pakistani war plan in Kashmir, Operation 'Grand Slam'.[71]

After the initial, enthralling August victories against India, Pakistan found itself in a precarious situation. The army and air force experienced shortages of everything—fuel, ammunition, spare parts, supplies—which had to be desperately sought from friendly nations to keep the pace of fighting. On the international front, Gauhar saw an Ayub Khan greatly concerned that Pakistan might be approaching disaster, despite its victories:

> …He complained that there was no pressure on India at the international level. The US Ambassador to the United Nations had hinted at the possibility of sanctions being applied against Pakistan…The West, it seemed, had only one worry and that was the fear of Chinese intervention. Ayub said that the Americans and the British wanted a subdued Pakistan and their major anxiety was to forestall any Chinese intervention. Ayub was talking as if the war was already over…He then talked about the growing tension between the US and China: 'This tension will continue to grow for another fifteen years. The US cannot destroy the determination of China where 700 million people are united like one man.' He mentioned how little assistance Pakistan could hope to get from sources other than the US.[72]

[71] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 224.
[72] Ibid., 230 - 231.

According to Gauhar, Ayub Khan and the whole of Pakistan counted on American support, which was insufficient in the face of dwindling assistance from the likes of Turkey and Iran, who refused to supply armor-piercing ammunition for Pakistani tanks.[73]

A wary Ayub Khan sought peace, unwilling to jeopardize everything with a single error at an inopportune time. "These days I read about military strategy. The lesson is that one blunder and the whole operation is lost," Gauhar recorded him as saying.[74] Immediately after the ceasefire, Ayub Khan departed secretly for Beijing, in order to get a better bearing on his situation.

> Ayub was accompanied by Bhutto and they had two long meetings with Zhou Enlai and Marshal Chen Yi. Ayub explained the military situation and how the Indians, because of their superiority in numbers, were beginning to strengthen their hold, and how Western powers were giving full diplomatic support to India while persuading the Soviet Union to assume the role of mediator…Zhou Enlai said: 'And don't forget that we will be maintaining our pressure all the time.' Zhou Enlai looked straight into Ayub's eyes and said, 'For as long as necessary, but you must keep fighting even if you have to withdraw to the Hills.' Ayub did not know how to respond to this offer of unconditional support.[75]

Ayub Khan may have been able to count on further Chinese support, though he was unwilling to gamble what gains he had secured. He argued that "Cease-fire at this point will not mean any loss of face for Pakistan. It might, indeed, be seen as an act of statesmanship…Pakistan was faced with a critical choice, complete alienation from its traditional Western allies and an uncertain future."[76]

Feeling abandoned by the United States, the United Kingdom, and uncertain of the effectiveness of Chinese assistance, Ayub Khan came to the negotiating table, having received

[73] Ibid., 230.
[74] Ibid., 231.
[75] Ibid., 236 – 237.
[76] Ibid., 238.

Kosygin's offer of the Soviet Union as neutral ground.[77] Still with firm control over the apparatus of government in Pakistan, he had begun to see the Soviet Union as the best vehicle to ensure the gains he had made in the war were not totally lost, either to Indian diplomacy at the settlement, or international mediation from the British or the Americans, which he increasingly distrusted. He was not alone: Indian commissioners, meeting with their Pakistani counterparts in London in earlier negotiations, made it clear they rejected any sort of British mediation, particularly on the subject of Kashmir.[78] Arbitration from the traditional sources—London and then Washington—had been largely rejected.

In Karachi, the cutting of all US military aid to India and Pakistan, and a withholding of economic aid, weighed heavily. The military was forced to rely on Chinese assistance, such as Chinese-built MiG-19 aircraft, and it was grateful for the small numbers it could obtain.[79] Even Turkey, which had reaffirmed its solidarity with Pakistan, refused requests for twenty-four jet aircraft, on the basis that any equipment from NATO could not be diverted to Pakistan. The end of assistance weighed heavily on the country in a time of war. As Indian rhetoric hardened, Gauhar described "much gloom" coming over Pakistan, despite the perception in the public that they had won the war.[80]

The Soviet Union had followed the situation closely. Earlier on August 20, Kosygin had written to both Ayub Khan and Shastri, asking them to avoid an escalation of the conflict. He wrote again on September 4, calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and reciprocal withdrawal of troops behind the cease-fire line, and offered the Soviet Union as a host for the negotiations. This offer rejected, he wrote a third letter on September 17, once again offering the

[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 244.
[79] Fazal Muqeem Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 1973), 236.
[80] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 245.

Soviet Union as neutral ground, whether it be in Tashkent or any other Soviet city, as well as his own personal mediation. Ayub Khan found it disturbing that the United States and United Kingdom had dragged their feet on the topic of effective mediation, focusing instead on making demands of Indian and Pakistani leadership before coming to the table. The Asian subcontinent, traditionally an area of British influence, would now be subject to Soviet influence, and he was left wondering if the superpowers had come to some secret understanding that allowed the Soviet initiative. Karachi was aware of the convergence of strategic and political interests in the face of expanding Chinese influence and the difficult US position in Vietnam. It seemed logical that both the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed upon building up India as a counterweight to Chinese power. But he did not believe the Soviets could exert too much pressure on India, a move that might cost them their friendship with Delhi.[81]

It seems clear that Ayub Khan agreed to Soviet proposals with no great enthusiasm—suspicious of foreign initiatives, he saw the Soviet offer as more acceptable than the American or British offers, and safer than Chinese recommendations. Despite his considerable power, Ayub Khan deferred some decisions to Bhutto, who encouraged taking the Soviet offer before India did. Traveling to Moscow, Bhutto told the Soviet press that he was optimistic for the prospects of peace and that the ball was "…now in India's court."[82] He returned from Moscow a firm advocate of negotiating at Tashkent, calling his talks with the Soviets on the Kashmir dispute, a previously unheard of path of negotiation, "useful and profitable."[83] An anxious Ayub Khan agreed Pakistan would enter negotiations at Tashkent unconditionally, to great surprise. He must have done so with the belief that Soviet deference towards India would not force him into an unwinnable position or even another war over Kashmir. As far as its president was concerned,

[81] Ibid., 246.
[82] Ibid., 247.
[83] Ibid.

Pakistan counted on at least the appearance of equitable friendship on the part of the Soviet Union, and American acceptance of the same fact, for the negotiations.

Ayub Khan made one last approach to the western powers, meeting both Prime Minister Wilson in London and President Johnson in Washington. He made his case: India now had three-to-one military superiority over Pakistan; and the West had bought the great hoax that India needed a vast army to meet any Chinese threat, when it had demonstrated any Indian Army would be used against Pakistan.[84] Wilson was unmoved: China still remained foremost in his mind, which he characterized as far more expansionist than the Soviet Union or India, even as Ayub Khan refuted his suspicions of Beijing. The discussion went nowhere, though Wilson noted Pakistan's relationship with the Soviet Union had improved at this point.[85]

Undeterred, the field marshal moved next to Washington. He met with President Johnson whom had kind words for him. "We are very good friends and there is no one whom I admire more than Ayub and I deeply cherish his friendship," he claimed Johnson had said. Ayub Khan pointed to a rift that had grown between the two nations as of late, but suggested that any rift could be overcome by their shared security concerns in the world.[86] Johnson responded in international terms: he predicted the fall of regimes in Rhodesia and Indonesia, the apparent stability and conservatism of the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev. Then he spoke of Vietnam, and how the United States remembered the lessons of the Korean War—that things would only get worse before they got better. The US commitment in Vietnam was unquestionable, even with the rise of a small but vocal dissenting minority in the United States. What Johnson was getting at, Ayub Khan recalled, was that the United States would never develop friendships at the cost of old ones. This was consolation for the convergence of

[84] Ibid., 249.
[85] Ibid., 250 – 251.
[86] Ibid., 255.

American and Soviet interests with those of India. Ayub Khan assured Johnson that Pakistan would do nothing inimical to US interests, and felt that the United States would intervene in the event of unfair treatment of Pakistan in negotiations. Johnson wished him the best of luck at Tashkent, saying "I regret that we did not meet a year or two years ago." According to Gauhar, Ayub Khan still believed the United States had been "suckered" into supporting India, and could only hope that US support of Pakistan would be more cemented in the future. Giving up on his goal of encouraging the United States and the United Kingdom not to give up initiative to the Soviets, he prepared himself for Tashkent, deeply disappointed.[87]

Near the time of Ayub Khan's meeting with Johnson, officials in the United States State Department covertly circulated memos concerning this recent dilemma. A confidential report from the Quaker-affiliated American Friends Service Committee outlined the problem: Washington had known Kashmir would be a potential point of conflict for years, and had continued arming both nations out of unrelated concerns, particularly the expanding influence of China. The American media incorrectly believed the war to be one between brothers, when it was actually one between historically disparate populations.[88] The United States government had operated on these incorrect assumptions, contributing to an increasing disillusion and even distrust among previously cooperative Indian and Pakistani leaders towards Washington.[89] Above all, it had been seriously mistaken in terms of arms shipments to both sides, conducted in the atmosphere of the Cold War. "Two American reporters in Karachi and Delhi state identical views: 'I consider the most stupid, the most immoral actions the United States has ever taken were to give these two nations guns and ask them not to shoot each other.'…" the report made

[87] Ibid., 257.
[88] Khan, *The American Papers*, 80.
[89] Ibid., 84.

clear.[90] The earliest mentions of a conference at Tashkent were regarded with disbelief in late 1965, in light of Soviet weaknesses in the region and the refusal of India and Pakistan to negotiate.[91] Little more was said about Tashkent until the conferences had already begun.

The State Department memos supported the message given to Ayub Khan in person. The conclusion he reached after returning from the United States was telling: that more than anything else, the West dreaded a polarization of power, between the Soviets and Indians on one side and the Chinese and Pakistanis on the other, and that they saw the Soviet Union itself as the single best actor to prevent that from happening. The United States remained preoccupied with the Vietnam War and the Soviet Union had no interest in any conflict with China.[92] The international powers had looked at the situation and decided against polarization. Desiring impartiality, they deferred to Kosygin, who appeared to define Soviet interests in the region, and his activism.

For their part, the Soviets endeavored to disappoint no one. They took enormous pains to give equal treatment to Indian and Pakistani delegations arriving in Tashkent, the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan. Both delegations were housed in comfortable villas, both driven there on routes bedecked with the same number of national flags. The crowds were perhaps less impartial, and as they cheered both leaders, they chanted "Little Lenin" at short, scholarly-looking Prime Minister Shastri.[93]

In the subsequent negotiations in the first week of January 1966, Ayub Khan would meet with Kosygin and Andrei Gromyko, the Byelorussian foreign minister of the Soviet Union, on multiple occasions. Of the numerous objectives that Kosygin hoped to accomplish at the

[90] Ibid., 86.
[91] Ibid., 87.
[92] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 258.
[93] Ibid., 259 – 260.

conference, the most important were to draw up a framework that would actively discourage both sides from resuming hostilities and to replace deliberately vague United Nations resolutions on the territory with new agreements. Included among those, besides the obvious issue of Kashmir, were of the presence of the Pakistani military in Indian territory and of the Indian military in Pakistan, particularly the presence of Indian troops outside Lahore.[94] The extent to which these goals could be met remained to be seen in the meantime. Kosygin presented drafts of the Soviet proposal for peace to both leaders, inviting them to suggest alternatives and saying he did not wish for it to be treated as a purely "Soviet" document. In private, Kosygin told Ayub Khan that the Soviet Union had exhausted most of its goodwill with Shastri in convincing the Indian prime minister to agree to a direct mention of Jammu and Kashmir in the document—a moral victory for Pakistan and an unpopular item in India. After Kosygin departed, Bhutto and Ayub Khan agreed that the inclusion of Jammu and Kashmir was an achievement they should not pass up, but the document would still be a tough sell back home.[95]

The next day, January 7, Ayub Khan and Bhutto continued to review the Soviet draft, in good spirits. Nonetheless, it seemed apparent that one of Kosygin's greatest desires—that Tashkent would not just allow peace between India and Pakistan but also create the machinery that would finally resolve the Kashmir dispute diplomatically—would not be fulfilled. Peace could come, but not if the Kashmir issue was pressed in search for a lasting solution.[96] As talks seemed at risk of breaking down, Foreign Minister Gromyko met with his Indian and Pakistani counterparts, while the three heads of government attended a concert held by Uzbek musicians that included many works in Urdu and Hindi. Kosygin sat between Ayub Khan and Shastri, and

[94] J. P. Jain, *Soviet Relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1974), 80 – 81.
[95] Ibid., 263.
[96] Ibid., 263 – 265.

according to Gauhar, managed to convince them once more not to yet give up hope on reaching an agreement.[97]

The next day, Kosygin took Khan on a tour of one of Uzbekistan's aircraft factories, some of the largest in the Soviet Union. During the tour, Kosygin explained to Ayub Khan his theories: even as Soviet factories manufactured huge quantities of weapons, tanks, and aircraft, the days of conventional warfare were coming to an end. The two superpowers, and their allies, had developed the ultimate destructive weapons, and nations like India and Pakistan, who could only fight brief, conventional wars, must understand it was madness to try and emulate their past behavior. According to Kosygin, 70,000 German tanks were still embedded in Soviet soil from the last catastrophic war. The developing nations should learn from the horrific experiences of the developed world. Ayub Khan was deeply impressed by Kosygin's philosophy.[98]

Kosygin had one last meeting with Ayub Khan, on the evening of January 9. As Ayub Khan and Bhutto expressed their discontent with the wording of the treaty, he was apparently able to browbeat the two—in a "calm and studied manner" from the Pakistani perspective—into agreeing that the ongoing propaganda war, where Pakistan had attempted to demonize India in international opinion, had to be ended like the war itself. Ayub Khan and Bhutto relented. Both sides accepted the treaty the next day. The Tashkent Declaration included no secret protocols, appendices, or letters, and was apparently taken at face value by the parties involved.[99] A banquet followed, with Ayub Khan and Shastri saying their goodbyes to the attending dignitaries. It came as a shock when the Indian prime minister, exhausted from the week's work, died in his sleep from a heart attack a few hours later. With surprising efficiency, all parties cooperated on this matter. India received permission from Pakistan to fly Shastri's body over

[97] Ibid., 265.
[98] Ibid., 266.
[99] Ibid., 267.

their airspace. Soviet officials worked through the night, lowering every flag on the six kilometer route to the conference to half-mast. Kosygin and Ayub Khan paid their respects to Shastri at the airfield, the later convincing the former to join the loading of the coffin. The images of Ayub Khan as Shastri's pallbearer infuriated some in Pakistan, but the conference had already finished nonetheless. The Tashkent Declaration's unpopularity in Pakistan would come from other causes.[100]

Gauhar described the immense effort to bring the antagonistic parties of India and Pakistan to the negotiating table and the ambitions of the Soviet government, with the apparent blessing of the United States. In at least this case, the United States believed that the Soviet Union was acting in interests aligned with its own, and the reality of the position the Soviets enjoyed—appearing to be the most impartial world power on hand to act—meant that passing up such an opportunity was wasteful. The Soviet government, for its part, seemed to meet those expectations: as in other accounts, Kosygin was shown using the powers at his disposal to forge some sort of clearly agreed upon peace, however imperfect, between India and Pakistan. The considerable media coverage of the event, "the eyes of the world upon the city of Tashkent," the unfortunate death of Prime Minister Shastri, and the considerable effort put forth by the parties involved, made Tashkent a prominent symbol of peace.

The part of the United States, as repeatedly described, was careful and reserved during the war and nearly inconsequential during the peace negotiations, matching McMahon's description of an American government deliberately seeking "a dramatically low profile in the subcontinent."[101] The State Department noted the deliberations at Tashkent, particularly the

[100] Ibid., 268 – 269.
[101] Wolpert, *The Cold War on the Periphery,* 335

"moves" made by Shastri and Ayub Khan during the process.[102] Shastri's death came at a very inopportune time, forcing the Pakistani delegation to gamble on a cooperative successor to continue the work began at Tashkent.[103] Walter McConaughy, the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, had a number of productive visits with Foreign Minister Bhutto immediately after the conference. Reporting of the discussion in a memo,

> …I remarked Tashkent Declaration appears represent considerable achievement and reflect real statesmanship. I extended my congratulations and noted Tashkent conference seemed to have come off better than appeared possible only few days previous [sic].[104]

The ambassador was naturally wary of the Soviet Union attempting to capitalize on the "diplomatic coup," as Bhutto called it, who likewise praised Kosygin's management of the affair. Some self-satisfaction from Tashkent's Soviet hosts was to be expected. Likewise, Bhutto was not surprised when Soviet media presented Tashkent as a victory over Kashmir, a conflict they traditionally labeled a legacy of imperialism, or "taking a poke" at the Chinese leadership for failing to cooperate.[105] The opinions expressed in the United States press were similar, with articles making note of Kosygin's shuttling between the two delegations[106] and eulogy to Shastri.[107] The press noted the impressive effort put on by the Soviet government and even the desire for "Tashkent-style negotiations" to be managed by the major powers in other parts of the world, as Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban suggested.[108] Those rejecting the accord, such as certain right-wing parties in India, remained very much in the minority.[109]

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[102] Khan, *The American Papers*, 93.
[103] Ibid., 100.
[104] Ibid., 103.
[105] Ibid., 104.
[106] J. Anthony Lukas, "Kosygin Rejoins Tashkent Talks: He sees Ayub and Sahstri in Turn Because of Impasse," *The New York Times*, January 10, 1966, 2.
[107] "Shastri, 61, dies after he signs pact with Ayub: Nanda Sworn in," *The New York Times*, January 11, 1966, 1.
[108] "Israeli Talks of Tashkent Type," *The New York Times*, January 25, 1966, 9.
[109] J. Anthony Lukas, "Hindu Rightists Call on Indians to Reject Accord with Pakistan," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1966, 8.

The peace, crafted by the Soviets, agreed upon by the parties involved and endorsed by the Americans, would last only five years. At the time, however, it seemed the greatest likelihood for peace between the two states since they had come into existence from the old Indian Empire. Historians on both sides have since lauded the event, praising the Soviet commitment to the whole affair, their deliberate impartiality, and their raising of the "Tashkent spirit."[110] In his memoirs, Ayub Khan noted that Pakistan's position in the region had become more multifaceted. "Barring our relations with our Indian neighbor, the last year saw an improvement of our relations with our other neighbors: China, the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon."[111] His willingness to consider the Soviet Union a friend of Pakistan comparable to China was a considerable shift from the animosity between both nations he described earlier.

The state of diplomacy following the end of the Second Kashmir War was an evolution, not a revolution, from the situation immediately prior to it. A greater transformation in the alignment of the major power blocs, and their influence in the subcontinent, appeared in the decade prior to the Second Kashmir War than after it. On the broadest level, well before 1965 the Soviet Union and China had begun to diverge on matters not just of policy toward the subcontinent, but on a wide variety of issues. After 1965, that divergence had not lessened—if anything, it had grown. This, in turn, impacted the perception of the Soviet Union in Pakistan, a Chinese ally, as well as India, now a Chinese enemy. However the Soviet Union had not become an enemy of Pakistan, even when considering the poor relations that existed when the Islamic Republic was founded.

[110] Ram, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan*, 143.
[111] Ayub Khan, *Pakistan Perspective*, 76.

Following the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, India stood as a potential ally of the new China, through many issues such as their shared commitment to postcolonial cooperation and a positive start to border negotiations. By the end of the decade, it had become China's most likely regional rival and enemy, thanks to still unresolved border issues, animosity over the status of Tibet, and China's military and industrial assistance to Pakistan. China as a threat to India had become an unfortunate reality well before 1965, and China's obstinacy during Tashkent supported this view. The status of the Soviet Union as an increasingly viable diplomatic alternative—to India seeking a counterweight to China, or Pakistan seeking a diplomatic alternative to China—was cemented with the need to end the Second Kashmir War. The Soviet Union's status as a viable partner in the rivalries of the subcontinent was not guaranteed, and only came with significant modifications to Soviet post-war foreign policy; it took considerable effort from Kosygin, and would be easily relinquished. The Tashkent Declaration was by no means perfect, but both sides at least stated having every intention of holding the other to the spirit of the document Kosygin had drafted, and would viciously accuse the other of failing to abide by it in time.[112]

As the Soviet Union became an intermediary, rather than partisan, power in the region, the position of the United States had also transformed. As elsewhere in the world, in the immediate post-World War period, the United States enjoyed considerable influence over both India and Pakistan. The case could be made that such power was in part due to the United States' inheriting some of the responsibilities of its closest ally, the United Kingdom. As India and Pakistan stabilized as independent states from the British Raj, at least some decline from that highpoint of influence in the region was inevitable and even desirable. Both of the great powers

[112] *Muqeem Khan*, Pakistan's Crisis in leadership, 11.

came to their shared standing on the matter of Kashmir and the subcontinent as a whole, thanks to trends dating from before the Second Kashmir War. This status quo would change, but not as a consequence of the Kashmir itself.

It is necessary to develop a reasonably consistent understanding of the Second Kashmir War. It is not just enough to assume that the superpowers, two decades after the end of the Second World War, simply decided to exert their will on two comparatively new nations with a shared history of animosity. The United States and Soviet Union had obvious differences in their relationship to the Asian subcontinent. One of the few things both nations seemed to genuinely agree upon was the desirability of negotiating an end to the Second Kashmir War, along with attempting to address the numerous grievances between India and Pakistan. The efforts at impartiality towards the disparate parties—Karachi and Delhi— were also a result of Kosygin's efforts to avoid a stall in negotiations after both sides were brought to the table. Accordingly, the breakdown that followed, the end of the "Spirit of Tashkent" not just by India and Pakistan but also by the Soviet Union and the United States, was not necessarily a certainty, even in light of the worsening relations between India and Pakistan.

CHAPTER 4

CHANGING FRONTS

The political climate in the Asian subcontinent, post-Tashkent, was tense but not disastrous. Compared to the situation immediately prior to the Second Kashmir War, there were reasons for optimism in both Pakistan and India. Although the matter of Jammu and Kashmir remained unsettled, both parties seemed open to the idea of negotiations over the subject combined with international mediation and enforcement. The consequences of British partitioning had become an international affair, with multiple nations calling for restraint from the parties involved. Nonetheless, multiple groups—Indian historians, Pakistani politicians, Soviet scientists and American analysts—had long warned that the partition had left a multitude of issues unanswered from the Indian Empire's bloody communal past, of which Kashmir was just one. Before the Second Kashmir War, the political dissatisfaction of the Bengali population of East Pakistan and the desire for an independent Bengal state, separate from the Islamic Republic, had remained in the background.

Irredentism, like communalism in the Indian Empire before it, remained part of the political reality of the nations. While irredentist sentiment remained present in India, Pakistan's dilemma was characterized by unique and severe problems: East Pakistan now accounted for a higher population than West Pakistan, the political center; and both were separated by considerable distances of northern India.[1] The geographic distance was exacerbated by the deep-rooted cultural differences between the politically dominant Punjab community of the western

[1] Mohammed Ayoob and K. Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1972), 1 – 2.

provinces and the Bengali majority of the eastern provinces, increasingly as severe as those between Hindus and Muslims a few decades earlier.[2] In 1966, however, international moderation over the issue of Kashmir established irredentism elsewhere as a matter of interest among the major powers. The settlement at Tashkent—praised by the world, but increasingly seen as insufficient—had reinforced the notion among many that India and Pakistan were bound by their origins to exist as uneasy neighbors, as they had for twenty years.[3]

The causes of antagonism were changing. The ugly face of communalism remained a painful memory and a source of prejudice and suspicion on both sides, as did the irredentism it caused. After 1965, however, it had been increasingly superseded by "security" and the desire to maintain it for both nations. The notion of security became the new, unanswerable question of the subcontinent, replacing the old specter of communalism while dividing the region along well-established lines. Like communal hatred, the need for security fit into the existing framework of hostility between the two countries. Shortly after the war, President Ayub Khan made the case that the Pakistan's could count on its neighbors for stability, with one notable exception:

> I can only express the hope that world opinion, and the saner elements in India, will assert themselves and make the Indian government come to a reasonable and honorable settlement with us. If not, the arming of India and her aggressive action in proposing to integrate Jammu and Kashmir will continue to pose a serious threat to our security.[4]

The inconclusive outcome of the Second Kashmir War would only highlight the expansion of the role Pakistan expected the international community to take in ensuring peace in the subcontinent. Like communalism, security concerns easily lent themselves to existing suspicions. Indian academic D. C. Jha observed, "Security for Pakistan has meant, according to the Pakistanis, security against India." At the same time, Pakistani historian and parliamentarian I. H. Qureshi

[2] Ibid., 5.
[3] Jha, *Indo-Pakistan Relations*, 1.
[4] Ayub Khan, *Pakistan Perspective*, 76.

noted, "The problem of Pakistan's defense in the eyes of the Pakistanis is mostly the problem of defense against India. The danger of communist infiltration or an actual communist attack have been subordinate factors, because compared to the Indian threat, they have always looked remote and indirect."[5]

This philosophy among the leadership, according to Jha, led to a pervasive tendency of "Pakistan to seek political and military support from whichever quarter possible and to strive for such friends which can support it against India. Such Pakistani thinking, on the other hand, has made India apprehensive of Pakistani intentions."[6] India was further dismayed by rhetoric in Pakistan's legislature suggesting that the country would never accept a nonaggression pact at any time, even "a hundred years from now." [7]

Some in Pakistan likewise feared the pursuit of security would, in a cyclical fashion, aggravate relations with India, in turn leading to security being lost, rather than gained. As suggested by the first Defense Secretary after the 1971 War, F. Muqeem Khan, "The normalization of Pakistan-China relations added to [Indian] fury and she quoted it as a proof of Pak-China collaboration to destroy India. The old Pakistan bogey was revived in more urgent vehemence."[8] When the United States resumed military sales very shortly after Tashkent, limiting itself to spare parts rather than full weapons systems, India's objections were noted by the *New York Times*. "India has informed the United States that the supplying of American arms to Pakistan would be regarded as 'a very serious threat to the security of India.'"[9] Security had become a major issue, even taking precedence over communalism-inspired religious and political confrontations between Muslim nationalism and Indian secularism—without security, the

[5] Jha, *Indo-Pakistan Relations*, 11.
[6] Ibid., 14.
[7] Ibid., 15.
[8] Muqeem Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership*, 4.
[9] J. Anthony Lukas, "India Warns U.S. on Supplying Arms to Pakistan," *The New York Times*, August 10, 1966, 12.

perception became, such issues could not be addressed in the first place. The United States State Department was certainly aware of these concerns of security, as demonstrated in pre-1971 War analyses of the subcontinent, as were government bodies in the Soviet Union.[10]

The concerns of security, and the perceived undermining of security, fit naturally into the framework of the twenty-year-old Cold War. And just as communalism had not existed in a vacuum—the issue in the Indian Empire was dependent in part on the actions of the British Raj—security was not defined only as an international issue (between India and Pakistan and eventually, India and China). It had become normal to consider it a matter that should be addressed on the international, rather than domestic, level ever since the international commitment made to the region at Tashkent, particularly by the Soviet Union and the United States. President Ayub Khan had publicly called for the United Nations Security Council to institute "meaningful procedures" the November before leaving for Tashkent. Without them, a continuation of war could not be prevented. Later he would add "There is recognition also among the members of the Security Council of the dangers implicit in the present situation in the subcontinent, the Security Council is earnestly debating the vital issues involved."[11]

At the time, the Tashkent summit was still remembered in India as a major diplomatic breakthrough in the subcontinent, the combined efforts of not just the nation that hosted it, but other third parties who had advocated an attempt to redress Indo-Pakistani grievances through a political forum rather than sporadic warfare. Given that the next showdown between the two nations came over East Bengal, not Kashmir, they may have been correct in some regards. Cautious optimism had brought the parties to the table in the first place, and after the death of Prime Minister Shastri, it remained present. In the words of his successor, Indira Gandhi,

[10] *United States Foreign Policy 1969 – 1970: A report of the Secretary of State* (Washington: Department of State Bulletin, 1971), 92.
[11] Jafri, *Ayub Soldier and Statesman,* 159 – 160.

"Though the Soviet Union and India have long been friends, any reference to that country today instinctively recalls Tashkent. I know it was Shastri's hope that the Tashkent Declaration would herald a new era in our relations with Pakistan. This certainly has been my desire. I see no purpose or any good in the present strained relationship between India and Pakistan."[12]

By contrast, Tashkent garnered a different response in Pakistan. The decision of the Soviet Union, which had abstained from the 1948 – 1949 voting decisions in the United Nations on Kashmir, to directly address the current Kashmir crisis by arbitrating and hosting peace talks, was commended extensively by Pakistani leaders and the government press.[13] However, the actual outcome of the Tashkent Conference was soon repudiated by the public. Ayub Khan, who had gone to great lengths to consolidate his power as the country's foremost leader, had personally handled the negotiations at Tashkent. Shastri's shocking death at Tashkent had turned him into a martyr among his countrymen. Ayub Khan had no such saving grace, and those dissatisfied with the treaty held him directly responsible for it. In particular, his military credentials, his rank as field marshal, his assumed responsibility for the operations in Kashmir that led to war and his inability to secure a clear victory, were all held against him in the public.[14] Unlike in India, where power was still dispersed officially and unofficially, Pakistan's leadership had been concentrated in one man, who alone was held responsible for both the lingering disappointments of Tashkent in the general population and for the rising security dilemma among the military high command. Toleration of Ayub Khan's style of leadership declined when he failed to deliver in those respects. His accomplishments, such as putting the country on a better standing economically before the war and implementing needed reforms in some areas,

[12] *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1971), 327.
[13] Jafri, *Ayub Soldier and Statesman,* 227 – 228.
[14] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, iiv.

were insufficient given the power he wielded.[15] He would fall from power in 1969, two years before Pakistan's next major crisis.

Accordingly, between 1965 and 1969, Pakistani foreign relations contended with three major obstacles to the established leadership: the rising security concern that mirrored India's; the severe public backlash in some parts of the country to the work done at Tashkent; and Ayub Khan's fall from power. In the face of protests, Ayub Khan justified his decisions to the different branch commanders-in-chief with the same reasoning he had brought with him to Tashkent: the Soviets had offered their assistance because of a rising fear of a political realignment throughout Asia. The Soviet Union was well-aware of Pakistan's friendship with China, Ayub Khan argued. They believed an escalation of the sort of hostilities seen in Kashmir could ultimately lead to a war with the Soviet Union backing India against Pakistan and China, a situation they desperately wanted to avoid. After American endorsement of the Soviet endeavor, to walk out on Tashkent would be inviting Moscow to use its veto against any initiative on Kashmir in the United Nations. In Ayub Khan's analysis, no better alternative existed. [16]

Ayub Khan counted on the Tashkent Declaration to present Pakistan with a new, safe opportunity to gain an upper hand diplomatically both in Kashmir and in future issues with India. Accordingly, the president expressed concern about how Pakistan appeared to the world: while in East Pakistan the public reaction to Tashkent had been largely positive, in West Pakistan, particularly Punjab, people agitated against the treaty. "We must deal with them firmly…carrying out any agreement with the Hindu is not easy, but we must give the Tashkent Declaration a trial. There must be no bad faith from our side." [17] Soon after the treaty negotiations, American State Department officials privately noted the different responses to the

[15] Jafri, *Ayub Soldier and Statesman*, 21.
[16] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 272.
[17] Ibid., 273.

Tashkent accords in Pakistan, stating in a memo "Trouble with Tashkent Declaration is it presupposes good faith on both sides, but [Pakistani] people have no confidence in Indian good faith. East [Pakistanis] much less aroused by Tashkent then West wing." The State Department memo outlined how public emotion against the summit could further upset the stability of government as a whole.[18]

They were correct: in Lahore, the same month the treaty had been signed, police opened fire on students and other demonstrators against the treaty. By January 14 all educational institutions in Pakistan were closed.[19] Those students were joined by the political right in their opposition: at a conference that February, all opposition parties except the leftist Awami League of East Pakistan adopted a resolution condemning the treaty as detrimental to Pakistan's interests.[20] Ayub Khan could not present a unified Pakistan to the world when American vice-president Hubert Humphrey arrived in Islamabad for talks, but nonetheless promised publicly Indo-Pakistani ministerial talks would start in Rawalpindi on March 1.

As Ayub Khan's powerbase began to unravel, there was one issue the country remained united on: Pakistan's friendship with China. Pakistani peoples both east and west were grateful for the Chinese commitment expressed during the war. However, the Chinese leadership had lost considerable faith in their Pakistani counterparts when they agreed to Tashkent. Simultaneously, Ayub Khan had to reassure Soviet leaders that Pakistan was committed to Tashkent and American leaders that he would not create a situation between China and India that would drag all of Asia into a war. He could no longer control foreign relations as easily as he had previously. In a sign of problems to come, East Pakistan had been left to fend for itself during the whole of the war, with all military engagements happening in the west. Local leadership now demanded

[18] Khan, *The American Papers*, 146.
[19] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 274.
[20] Ibid., 275.

East Pakistani defense be factored into any future war. While other issues faded, East Pakistan's demands for equal treatment within the Islamic Republic remained a source of domestic dispute until the region's departure from the nation.[21]

Going into the 1966 Indo-Pakistani ministerial conferences, future security concerns dominated the agenda. Foreign Minister Aziz Ahmed crafted the outline for the conference, expecting an Indian plan to build a façade of friendship with Pakistan behind which they could bury the Kashmir issue. Ahmed suspected the United States to be compelling India to settle by denying economic and military aid, a turnaround of conventional foreign policy thinking up to the Second Kashmir War that had always assumed sanctions harmed Pakistan more than India.[22] As Ahmed prepared for the conference, his warnings of international hostility towards Pakistan in the Kashmir dilemma spread further through the government. Many came to believe that the Pakistani negotiating position was already weakened: if India realized what Pakistan believed to be the case, they would have no reason to enter into any agreement, public or secret, with them on Kashmir.[23] The ministerial conference turned out to be as unproductive as Ahmed had feared, ending some of Ayub Khan's hopes for a post-Tashkent follow-up.[24]

While Ayub Khan continued to address domestic and foreign matters, his position continued to weaken through 1967 and 1968. Efforts to manage politics using methods from before the war were ineffective—each shakeup to ensure a loyal administration cost him reliability in some other area of government. Some headway was made in his October 1967 visit to Moscow, brought on by the American decision to postpone the resumption of full military aid. Having negotiated already with China, Ayub Khan met with General Secretary Brezhnev,

[21] Ibid., 276.
[22] Ibid., 277.
[23] Ibid., 278.
[24] Ibid., 279.

Chairman of the Presidium Nikolai Podgorny, and Kosygin in Moscow. Ayub Khan hinted at giving the United States notice of closing American bases in Pakistan, to which the Soviets responded very positively and the American ambassador conveyed "great disappointment."[25] It was a major step towards developing Soviet-Pakistani relations, which had not advanced substantially since Tashkent.

Nonetheless, foreign affairs took a back seat to domestic issues. East Pakistani grievances continued to surface and Ayub Khan was unable to address them, leaving the whole of Pakistani leadership looking more and more defensive. In the winter of 1967, a visit to East Pakistan was called off when an attempt to blow up the president's aircraft was reported by security services, leftover agencies from the colonial administration that were of questionable effectiveness.[26] In 1968, twenty-eight people were arrested on charges of conspiring for East Pakistani independence, including three senior members of the civil service, a naval officer, and a number of noncommissioned officers and seamen. The whole investigation was handled by the increasingly influential chief of staff, General Yahya Khan.[27] Despite the president's expressed suspicions that the whole conspiracy was blown out of proportion, Ayub Khan remained pessimistic about the east. Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan, was supposed to have had a secretariat and legislature for the eastern half of the country, as guaranteed by the constitution, but had neither. Problems had to be managed from Islamabad, the new western capital, instead. Ayub Khan warned Gauhar, then Information Secretary, "Listen, my dear fellow, I gave them the second capital because they are going to need it one day. They are not going to remain with us."[28]

[25] Ibid., 293.
[26] Ibid., 283.
[27] Ibid., 284.
[28] Ibid., 285.

The leader who had so closely controlled Pakistan, and Pakistan's foreign policy even more so, was starting to decline. Gauhar, close to the president in his last months in office, observed that Ayub Khan was known for his attention to his own health, his careful diet, and exercising regularly. Having just turned sixty-one, he was struck by a fever, and his health rapidly declined. Pneumonia had left him confined to his bed. He seemed to recover shortly, but a relapse was followed by a serious heart attack. According to the information secretary, a quiet coup d'état began to take shape, with military doctors watching over the president. It became apparent that a pulmonary embolism, not pneumonia, had weakened Ayub Khan. In the middle of February, his health had improved, and he appeared to have fully recovered by the end of the month. The information secretary later described that, for Yahya Khan and the military, "Power had eluded their grasp, but not for long, they hoped."[29]

What this meant for Pakistan's foreign relations was immediately apparent. The sedatives he relied on when he resumed his work routine left his reactions "tentative" and his decisions "uncertain."[30] He met personally with the governor of East Pakistan. On April 17, Kosygin visited Pakistan, the first visit of a Soviet premier to the country, where he was greeted by warmly by crowds and the president, to the chagrin of American officials in Islamabad.[31] After months of absence, Ayub Khan had returned to the diplomatic scene, and Pakistan continued its negotiations with the Soviet Union. Kosygin's visit was fruitful: after a three-hour meeting with the president, he gave credit to Ayub Khan for the meeting's progress at a press conference. Considerable progress had been made, he claimed: publicly, the Soviet Union agreed to finance a steel mill project in West Pakistan, and tentative plans were drawn up for a nuclear power station

[29] Ibid., 286 – 288.
[30] Ibid., 288.
[31] Ibid., 289.

to be built in East Pakistan. Greater communication between the Soviet Union, Europe, and Pakistan was to be established.[32]

Few were aware that Pakistan had already given the United States formal notice to remove their strategic installation at Peshawar, which had long been a cause of tension between the Soviet Union and Pakistan. The agreement for the base had been signed in 1959 for ten years, to be automatically renewed unless Washington was given twelve months advance notice. Ayub Khan gave notice April 6, eleven days before Kosygin arrived for talks. Compared to the less constructive talks in 1965, which were deliberately vague in order to facilitate at least some opening of relations, these most summit recent produced greater accomplishments.[33] The issue of security in the subcontinent remained in the forefront of Ayub Khan's mind: speaking at a banquet in Kosygin's honor he observed, "Pakistan prizes peace and friendship but it must at the same time be assured of security. It is only when this comes that confidence returns and the path towards reconciliation and cooperation can broaden." [34]

After Kosygin, Ayub Khan had to contend with the scheduled 1970 general elections, where his own candidacy seemed unlikely due to his prior poor health. Pakistan's friendship with the United States seemed clear, but the amount of aid it would receive uncertain. Like the Soviet Union, the United States was publicly committed to peace in the subcontinent, but as the Vietnam War dragged on, Ayub Khan doubted the success of American-led initiatives in Asia. Once again, he became convinced that the United States might drop Pakistan if it felt stretched too thin through the region. He complained that Pakistani diplomats in Washington were "rather timid" when it came to arguing the country's cause and believed the United States was still opposed to Pakistani friendship with either the Soviet Union or China. Thus, Washington would

[32] Ibid., 290.
[33] Ibid., 290 – 291.
[34] Jain, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh,* 95

tell Pakistan to toe the line on India, which Ayub Khan would not accept. In trying to convince the United States that Pakistan was the country's true friend in Asia, he offered to send Pakistani troops to Laos provided that some guarantees could be made for their safety.[35]

Simultaneously, the United States was counting on another ally, Imperial Iran, to pressure Pakistan away from China. Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey had already cooperated on various issues well before 1965, but the nations held deep-rooted suspicions of each other for more modern reasons. When Iran lamented Pakistani friendship with China, Pakistan countered with warnings of an Indian plot to assure Iraqi domination of the Persian Gulf region through mutual cooperation.[36] Like the United States, Pakistan's traditional allies among Muslim-majority nations shared doubts and reservations about Sino-Pakistani cooperation, leaving Ayub Khan particularly insecure about his country's security. He could not negotiate a single treaty that would meaningfully assure Pakistani security without compromising another potential friendship and another way out if the situation turned worse.

Since the catastrophes in 1971, Pakistan's international tribulations and the unending series of domestic problems that plagued Ayub Khan in his last year of power are now considered intricately connected. To many around him, including both Information Secretary Gauhar and Defense Secretary Muqeem Khan, he had been abandoned by lukewarm allies expecting his fall from power. They were joined by even his domestic supporters who had grown dissatisfied with his leadership.[37] As the crisis that would finally topple him—dissatisfaction in East Pakistan—surfaced, he was no longer in a position to negotiation with foreign states. The United States and the Soviet Union watched as the situation grew less and less stable, and remained largely silent on the matter, holding off on further negotiations with Pakistan and its

[35] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 300.
[36] Ibid., 301.
[37] Ibid., 304 and Muqeeum Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership*, 14-15.

leader for the last year. The police crackdown and state of emergency ordered in East Pakistan, alongside other measures, were not effective and simply inflamed the opposition to become further political. The main opposition parties to Ayub Khan's recreated Muslim League, both east and west, united to form the Democratic Action Committee.[38] The DAC called for a general strike on January 12, demonstrating its influence as the country grew increasingly chaotic.[39]

As Ayub Khan shuffled about the country, calling for some semblance of order and being forced to negotiate with the DAC, his cabinet began discussing the need for Yahya Khan and the military to restore order. By February 1969, the DAC negotiated with Ayub Khan as he made promises he did not have the power to keep. After another month of failed negotiations with the opposition, Ayub Khan was confident that enough Pakistanis were similarly tired of the situation and called for martial law across Pakistan. His own regime was now clamoring for military rule.[40]

By now, Ayub Khan seemed convinced that Yahya Khan, his inevitable successor, should be thanked for apparently holding the military back for as long as he had. On March 25 he recorded his abdication to be broadcast throughout the country, in the military leader's presence. His speech finished on a somber note, "There is now no institution except the armed forces which can save the country form chaos and ruin. I have, therefore, asked the commander-in-chief of the army to carry out his legal obligations…May Pakistan live forever."[41] By April 1, he had left the presidential residence. General Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan had replaced Field Marshal Ayub Khan as leader of Pakistan under martial law. As leader, he was charged with protecting the constitution but not actually limited by it in any meaningful way. The tradition of

[38] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 308.
[39] Ibid., 309.
[40] Ibid., 311.
[41] Ibid., 338.

powerful military leaders had not ended in the least, and while the domestic crisis that brought down Ayub Khan prevented him from exercising any meaningful control over foreign affairs for those last few months, Yahya Khan now seemed to wield the enormous power of military rule, provided he could avoid Ayub Khan's fate.

Compared to the ongoing civil disorder that more and more resembled the last days of the British Raj, the transference of executive power in Pakistan between two senior military officers seemed smooth and unremarkable. Declassified State Department records show that Yahya Khan soon sent a telegram to Richard Nixon, extending his warmest regards to the recently-elected U.S. president and hoping for a continuance of American-Pakistani friendship. On the matter of his ascendancy,

> [Your] Excellency on 24th March President Mohammad Ayub Khan addressed to me a letter explaining that since civil administration and constitutional authority in Pakistan had become ineffective, he had no option but to step aside and let the defense forces of Pakistan, as the only remaining effective and legal instrument, take over full control of the country's affairs…Consequently, I have placed the country under Martial Law and assumed all powers as Chief Martial Law Administrator. It will be my earnest endeavor to restore as soon as possible a normal condition in the country as primary to the early restoration of democratic rule and civilian government elected on the basis of adult franchise.[42]

The State Department report on United States Foreign Policy, for 1969 and 1970, matched Yahya Khan's telegram. The regime change itself seemed normal and hardly important compared to the crises that had caused it:

> Three events overshadowed others in Pakistan during 1969 and 1970: the disturbances in early 1969 resulting in the resignation of President Ayub Khan and the succession of President Yahya Khan, the massive cyclonic storm disaster in East Pakistan in November 1970, and the first direct national elections in the country's history in December….Following his assumption of office President Yahya proclaimed martial law..[43]

[42] Khan, *The American Papers*, 267.
[43] *United States Foreign Policy 1969 – 1970*, 93.

That is all the State Department report had to say on the subject. Published in March 1971, it did not mention the political catastrophe that resulted when Yahya Khan refused to accept the Awami League's victory in the 1970 general election.[44] The report did mention the catastrophic flooding of November 1970, and emphasized the planned role of continued United States aid to East Pakistan, shifting from immediate flood relief to more long-term aid.[45] At least here, the United States did not expect the complete secession of East Pakistan from the country into a new state. Pakistan is also mentioned as the only exception to the United States policy of refraining from selling "lethal equipment" in South Asia.[46]

The response of the Soviet government to the sudden rise of Yahya Khan was similarly mild, due to the speed with which it happened. The major newspaper *Pravda* quietly noted the resignation of Ayub Khan and promotion of Yahya Khan with little comment.[47] The Soviet government, and through it the media, knew Yahya Khan as the negotiator in Soviet-Pakistani arms deals, and were not too worried about an abrupt change in policy towards Moscow.[48]

The New York Times also reported the shift in power, declaring in a headline, "Ayub Khan Quits, Places Pakistan in Army's Hands," emphasizing the ongoing disorder. The article mentioned two particular conditions that had overwhelmed the country: first, Pakistan had been thoroughly swept up in mob violence, as in the days of communalism; second, by the next election East Pakistan would likely demand autonomy. Ayub Khan was described as having presided over an impossible situation.[49] However, while the article goes into some depth about the numerous causes that led to Ayub Khan's fall from power, it does not mention Pakistan's role

[44] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War*, 101
[45] *United States Foreign Policy 1969 – 1970*, 93 – 94.
[46] Ibid., 93.
[47] Ram, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan*, 205.
[48] Ibid., 206.
[49] Joseph Lelyveld, "Ayub Khan Quits, Places Pakistan in Army's Hands," *The New York Times*, March 26, 1969, 1.

as a major American ally in the region, or the possibility of that changing with the new leadership.[50] Instead, it paid more attention to the historical grievances, including communalism, dating back to British rule. The article does not take the tone one would expect from the United States but may reflect what McMahon now describes as a deep desire in Washington for a lower profile in Pakistan.

The loss of the military installation at Peshawar in West Pakistan was naturally addressed in the *Times* as well, in a separate article. The choice of language it used is of interest: "On the hot, arid valley floor below the Khyber Pass, a tip of Pakistan close to the corners of China and the Soviet Union, an American eavesdropping installation is being dismantled, a wasted relic of an age of shifting strategic alignments in this part of the world."[51] It mentions Peshawar's history as a U-2 spy plane airfield, then as a monitoring station for Soviet and Chinese military radio transmissions. The "miniature walled city" was still subject to the utmost secrecy and security, and beyond its general uses and the Pakistani decision not to renew its lease to the United States, little was said about the location.[52]

Instead, the article focused more on the suspected reason behind the closing of Peshawar—a Pakistan increasingly "disillusioned" with American policies. As in other articles, it downplayed the increasing cooperation between China and Pakistan, but noted the shift in politics with Yahya Khan. "As for the United States, it appears to have lost whatever influence it had in military diplomacy in the country."[53] This outsider's perspective attributed the decision to close Peshawar to Yahya Khan, not to his predecessor's negotiations with Kosygin in Moscow,

[50] Ibid., 6.
[51] Lawrence Fellows, "U.S. Losing Pakistan Base Amid Shifting Alliance," *The New York Times,* April 7, 1969, 3.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

as Gauhar claimed. Nonetheless, it made a clear case for a Pakistan no longer indebted to the outside powers as it had been in the past.

Later that year, following Nixon's first meeting with Yahya Khan, the *Times* took a more optimistic tone. In "Pakistani Feeling for U.S. Warmer," the article stated the firm belief that relations between the two nations were better than they had been "for years," and at least as far back as the Second Kashmir War. While acknowledging the role of the new American president's visit, it also suggested there were some wider trends at play: "For one thing Pakistani officials find the recent direction of the United States world policy more to their liking than previously."[54] This included American efforts to bring about an end to the Vietnam War, softening of rhetoric towards China, improved relations with the Soviet Union. This included an "[avoiding of] dogmatic attitudes in Asian affairs accorded with Pakistan's general nonaligned outlook."[55]

Nixon's moderate attitude towards Pakistan's neighbors, particularly China and the Soviet Union, was said to be appreciated by Islamabad. Likewise, his decision to increase economic aid to Pakistan had been "…taken as a demonstration of United States faith in Pakistan despite the instability that preceded the overthrow of the Government of Muhammad Ayub Khan." The article offered a cultural reason for Pakistan's diplomatic dilemmas:

> Pakistan is believed to desire good relations with the United States as a counterpoise to the Soviet Union and Communist China. According to political analysts here, Pakistan's Islamic outlook is incompatible with the ideology of the two big Communist powers and limits her closeness with them, making ties with the United States more attractive. [56]

The *New York Times* severely misread Sino-Pakistani relations, especially in the aftermath of the Second Kashmir War, which evidence suggests promoted China as a trustworthy nation in

[54] Tillman Durdin, "Pakistani Feeling for U.S. Warmer," *The New York Times,* August 6, 1969, 11.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

Pakistani eyes. However, its theories on Soviet-Pakistani relations are more plausible: "Moreover, in the case of the Soviet Union, the Pakistanis have tended to see a pro-India bias in Moscow's recent efforts to obtain a regional cooperation arrangement that would require Pakistan to normalize relations with India without obtaining any satisfaction over Kashmir and other major issues in dispute."[57]The article promoted shifting diplomatic considerations as the cause of past tension between the United States, particularly arms sales, rather than a wider overall trend.[58]

In the Soviet Union, various opinions were expressed, a few warning that the policies of Tashkent were overreaching. Foreign Minister Gromyko had been present with Kosygin at the conference and even at the efforts by doctors to revive Prime Minister Shastri after his heart attack. In his memoirs, he would remember Shastri's death sadly, along with the apparent failings of the Soviet-brokered peace. Despite having great confidence in the principles of the Tashkent Declaration, he blamed outside powers for the failure to ensure lasting security for both India and Pakistan:

> However, their relations remained bad. One inflammatory factor was the insidious web into which Pakistan fell almost at the outset of her existence as an independent state. In the West, above all the USA, in order to keep Pakistan within the orbit of their policies, applied a number of political, economic and military pressures. The Soviet Union nevertheless always tried to maintain good relations with Pakistan and, prior to the problems in Afghanistan, even tried to help Pakistan overcome her economic backwardness.[59]

Gromyko claimed the Soviet Union fully intended to give Pakistan an even-handed deal in the period following Tashkent, both economically and politically. He remained committed to the theory that Pakistan was so deeply under American pressure that it was not truly free to make its political decisions in the years following the conference.

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Andrei Gromyko, *Memories* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), 246 – 247.

As a whole, the Soviet government continued to be very careful when treading the ground in the subcontinent after Tashkent. Some Indian intellectuals suggested better rapport between Islamabad and Moscow meant more viable Indo-Pakistani rapprochement and normalization. "Improvement in Soviet-Pakistani relations was one factor which proved healthy for Indo-Pakistan relations. It took Indo-Pakistani relations somewhat out of the Cold War context and prevented the relations from deteriorating further."[60] The notable exception, of course, was military aid: the recent Soviet-Pakistani arms deal, just like American-Pakistani deals, would aggravate tensions and the deep rooted fears of security held by both India and Pakistan.[61]

Like Pakistan, India itself underwent obvious political transformations following the Tashkent summit. The deaths of both Nehru and Shastri meant that the National Congress party and the New Delhi government were both ripe for new leadership. The incoming generation of politicians was not defined by the same experiences of the 1947 partition and the wave of communal violence that had overtaken the whole subcontinent. With the modifications of tensions between India and Pakistan from post-colonial and communal issues to those of greater security in the Cold War, Indian political thought transformed. During the fall of Ayub Khan, the decade-long ultimate authority in Pakistan's military government, India saw the rise of its own strong leadership personality with Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi.

However, the situation in India after the Second Kashmir War was not a complete parallel to that of Pakistan prior to the war. As head of government, Indira Gandhi shared power with the head of state of India, the president. In the immediate post-war period, this office was held by Zakir Hussain, the third president of India and the first Muslim to be elected to that

[60] Jha, *Indo-Pakistan Relations*, 36.
[61] Ibid.

post.[62] While India had long paid tribute to the secular traditions of the Indian National Congress, the step of electing a Muslim to the office of president would be pointed to as a demonstration of commitment to secular statehood, just when Pakistan's own unifying religious identity was being questioned with the growing rift between the east and west provinces. Many Soviet and American perspectives would identify Indian secular government as more flexible than its Pakistani counterpart.

In 1968, the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow observed the visit of President Hussain to the Soviet Union. In their report to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, they mentioned a number of topics, including discussions of Soviet-Indian relations, the current situation between India and Pakistan, and continued Soviet efforts to convince India to sign the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. By 1968, the problems with multilateral cooperation as proposed at Tashkent were increasingly evident, but the Soviet Union and India had not yet signed their cooperation treaty.

According to the Hungarian report, Hussain proposed a series of regular exchanges between their countries' foreign ministers—the influential Andrei Gromyko of the Soviet Union and Indira Gandhi, who held the offices of both foreign minister and prime minister. After almost thirty years as the Soviet foreign minister, the respected Gromyko was elected President of the Soviet Union, while Indira Gandhi steadily became one of India's most powerful prime ministers.[63] The Soviets accepted the invitation, and were "prepared to discuss all those

[62] Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 402.
[63] Gromyko, *Memories*, 341. Gromyko himself calls the position of Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet "President of the USSR." By 1983, Indian writers commonly referred to earlier Soviet heads of state by the same term, as in Ram's *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan.*

international and bilateral problems which currently seem to be topical in Soviet-Indian relations."[64]

At the meeting, the Hungarians believed other issues discussed were the ongoing war in Vietnam, the Middle East, and "the complex problem of European security."[65] The embassy also believed the Soviets sought a chance to express their suspicions at the British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean, which they theorized would lead to another major power, likely the United States or Japan, "aimed at establishing regional blocs of a military, political or economic character."[66] Additionally, they expressed their dismay at the "very shrill propaganda campaign" launched against the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by the Indian government, and sought further opportunities to discuss the treaty with Indian leaders.[67]

Despite these other issues, the majority of the report is dedicated to the topic of relations between India and Pakistan. Moving on from trade disputes between India and various socialist nations, the Hungarians claimed both they and the Soviet Foreign Ministry observed positive developments in several areas, but also moves toward inflexibility between India and Pakistan in others. In particular, the successful demarcation of the border regions was a source of optimism. They also noted Prime Minister Gandhi's public reiteration of Shastri's proposals at Tashkent and her commitment to the nonaggression treaty with Pakistan. At the same time, the Hungarians believed the matter of the Ganges River's water output "…has aggravated the relationship between the two countries." India considered the matter a domestic concern, while Pakistan

[64] "Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to Hungarian Foreign Ministry," Cold War International History Project Digital Archive, 2012. Wilson Center.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

believed the Ganges to be an "international river."[68] This problem was ranked by embassy with the issue of Kashmir, about which Ayub Khan appeared to the Hungarians to be more flexible.

Finally, the recent resumption of arms sales to Pakistan from the Soviet Union had to be justified by Soviet representatives. They did so with the explanation that the sales were intended to encourage Pakistan to "pursue such a more independent and nonaligned policy that would encompass both a reinforcement of relations with the Soviet Union and a realistic and sensible policy toward India."[69] By 1974, Indian observers had noted the validity of the Soviet claim that their move was purely symbolic and intended not to arm but encourage Pakistan away from American strategic cooperation. Also apparent was how cautious and minimal the assistance was compared to that rendered to other nations: $5 to $10 million to Pakistani with that new deal, compared to $600 to $700 million to India in the same period.[70] Nonetheless, the Soviets used the same argument as the Americans, that Pakistan would only use those arms defensively. They even went as far as to claim that, having closed the American base at Peshawar, Pakistan was "no longer active in any sense in CENTO and SEATO." Additionally, they reminded the Indian president that sales to Pakistan were one-tenth that of sales to India.[71]

The report suggested that the Soviets understood continued Indian apprehension towards Pakistan, but like the United States had prior to the Second Kashmir War, believed they could negotiate evenly with both parties. The Soviets seemed to benefit from having a more convincing argument—shipping at least ten times the military equipment to India that they were to Pakistan—and accordingly, their relationship with India grew, rather than diminished, in the years that followed. Even before 1968, the rift between India and Pakistan was reappearing, but

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Jain, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh,* 97.
[71] "Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to Hungarian Foreign Ministry," Cold War International History Project Digital Archive.

from the Hungarian perspective, it would appear that the Soviet Union was either not fully aware of it, or hoped it could be corrected.

Prime Minister Gandhi would later publicly speak of her disappointment at the decisions of both the United States and the Soviet Union to resume arms sales to Pakistan. As India's foreign minister, Gandhi framed the issue as part of the larger security dilemma in the subcontinent in a 1968 speech. "Every nation, whether member of a bloc or not, is trying to assert its own individuality in the conduct of its policies. The USA and the Soviet Union, conscious of the need to reduce the danger of a direct clash between them, are evidently reshaping their policies in accordance with changing conditions."[72]

This was an elegant way of acknowledging the long term position of the two great powers, one of promoting peace in the subcontinent, while still criticizing certain policies. In the speech, Gandhi drew parallels to American military aid to Pakistan, which had been accompanied by American assurances that those arms would not be used against India prior to the Second Kashmir War. The United States was not able to prevent that from happening, nor could the Soviet Union in a future conflict. Thus, appreciation for Kosygin's work in 1965 was married with the rise of the security dilemma—that Pakistan would use new weapons against India, whoever supplied them, and that sales were detrimental to the stability of the subcontinent, the overriding objective of both American and Soviet governments.[73]

Soviet negotiations with the Indian government, while not uniformly positive, did seem towards further cooperation, cumulating with the signing of an extensive treaty between them in 1971. The same could not be said about the United States, even though Washington enjoyed some positive diplomatic developments with New Delhi. The early years of Indira Gandhi's

[72] *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi*, 408.
[73] Ibid., 409.

administration were noted as "a period of major political transition" in the "world's largest democracy," by the United States State Department.[74] Considerable detail was put into explaining how Indira Gandhi, as leader of the dominant Indian National Congress, still depended on political partnerships to secure a majority in the legislature, unlike Ayub Khan. Likewise, the State Department suggested India to be pursuing policies of self-reliance since emerging from drought-related economic slumps.[75] The United States' development programs and aid packages were also mentioned as being the dominant form of U.S. aid to India for the time being.[76]

As of 1970, the State Department noted the closing of "information centers" by both the Soviet Union and United States at the behest of the Indian government, though Washington denied that any sort of improper activity was being conducted at these locations. Additionally, India's response to the resumption of military sales to Pakistan was noted:

> India took exception to the decision we announced in October 1970, to sell a limited quantity of military items to Pakistan as a one-time exception to the policy—adopted as a result of the last clash between India and Pakistan in 1965—of not selling lethal military equipment in the subcontinent. Differences of view have also persisted on other international issues, notably the situation in South Asia…We have, nevertheless, maintained an open dialog with the Government of India on most aspects of foreign policy, including those matters on which we agree.[77]

The State Department report suggested American-Indian relations, while characterized by disagreements on a number of issues, like the Vietnam War, were still subject to ongoing dialog between New Delhi and Washington, and that both sides were open to negotiations. In particular, the previous presidential administration had initiated a series of bilateral talks on the level of foreign minister that were expected to continue into 1971.This resembled the series of bilateral

[74] *United States Foreign Policy 1969 – 1970*, 91.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 92.

talks between the Soviet Union and India a year earlier, as observed by the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow.[78] Though its tone was still optimistic, the report mentions other discontinued programs, such as the proposed Indian-American education foundation negotiated in 1966, for "domestic reasons."[79]

The State Department report also mentioned Gandhi's continued condemnation of the Vietnam War, which increasingly came to define her public speeches on foreign relations throughout Asia. Gandhi had no trouble acknowledging the valued role of American foreign aid, particular in speeches addressing the United States, and appreciation for the American backing of the Tashkent Declaration.[80] Nonetheless, in multiple forums, her criticism of the ongoing Vietnam War would become one of her most vocal talking points in public, second only to the ongoing security dilemma with Pakistan. In the years following 1965, it was not uncommon for her to frame the matter as part a wider security issue which in all of Asia was vested. Speaking to Soviet audiences she declared, "We have put forward our idea for a conference on Vietnam in the same constructive spirit which prompted you to propose the Tashkent Conference. Peace in Vietnam would also go a long way towards bringing about conditions of greater stability in Southeast Asia which, like most other parts of the world, is in a state of flux."[81] Further mention of Vietnam was in speeches intended given in Poland, Indonesia and New Zealand.[82]

Domestically, the need for "a peaceful political settlement in keeping with the wishes of the people of Vietnam and free from all outside interference, as envisaged under the Geneva Agreements of 1954," was identified in speeches as a major component of India's foreign

[78] "Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to Hungarian Foreign Ministry," Cold War International History Project Digital Archive.
[79] *United States Foreign Policy, 1969 – 1970,* 92.
[80] *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi,* 40.
[81] Ibid., 475.
[82] Ibid., 447, 435 and 451.

policy.[83] Gandhi's positions on the Vietnam War were not always anti-American—when speaking in New Zealand, she expressed hope concerning the ongoing Paris Peace Accords.[84] Nonetheless on multiple occasions Gandhi drew attention to both the humanitarian cost of Vietnam and the harm she believed the ongoing war indirectly did to the cause of stability and security throughout Asia. In her framing of regional frustrations and continental troubles in the making, she hammered the point in with China, India's seemingly eternal rival and publicly holding its tongue following its frustration with the compromises at Tashkent:

> China is taking great care to avoid direct military involvement in Vietnam. But China's shadow does fall across South-East Asia. The real threat from China, however, is less military than political and economic. The Chinese influence will be diminished if its neighbours in Asia and the forward-looking nationalist governments dedicated to fulfilling the aspirations of their people…India is militarily holding a two thousand mile long Himalayan frontier against China. India is also fighting this battle in the crucial forum of Afro-Asia which China has sought to use as a political launching pad and as a revolutionary substitute for the United Nations.[85]

There was no real solution to the problem of China, or with Pakistan, without a pan-Asian solution. The security debate between India and Pakistan, more and more, was being framed as an international concern that would determine future relations not just in the subcontinent, but throughout Asia.

[83] Ibid., 333.
[84] Ibid., 447.
[85] Ibid., 400.

CHAPTER 5

LOSING THE EAST

Despite the short time between 1965 and 1971, the second and third Indo-Pakistani wars differed substantially from one another. The causes and considerations that led to the Second Kashmir War, compared to those of the Bangladesh Liberation War and subsequent third Indo-Pakistani War, were as different as the new generation of political and military leaders in control of both nations. Aside from bringing Pakistan to war with India again, thereby undoing the Tashkent Declaration, the conflict in late 1971 was not a repeat of the Second Kashmir War.

As previously mentioned, East Pakistan carried with it a long list of political and economic grievances against the whole of the Islamic Republic, going back as far as the 1947 Partition. A situation existed that was increasingly compared to colonial exploitation, especially among Indians and Bengalis, both Muslim and Hindu. In a region of the world very familiar with the trappings of colonialism, it was easy to point to the inequitable representation of the more numerous East Pakistanis in the civil service, in academia and in the military leadership, and draw comparisons with the situation that had existed under the British Raj.[1] Representation in government was particularly inequitable: organizations that were the direct descendants of the segregated British government bodies, like the Civil Service of Pakistan that followed the Indian Administrative Service after independence, featured similarly unrepresentative membership.[2] No Bengalis had ever been appointed to the major cabinet posts of Minister of Finance, Home, or

[1] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 34 – 37.
[2] Ibid., 34.

Defense.[3] The longstanding arrangement of military rule over all of Pakistan also meant that the democratic institutions that might have helped offset West Pakistani domination of the bureaucracy were not able to do so.[4]

In the armed forces, only one of the fifty army officers promoted to major-general or beyond was a Bengali. Five percent of the army officer corps was composed of Bengalis, and approximately 28% of the navy officer corps. In a state where the armed forces had been long established as the final decision-making body and the central source of political authority even before the 1960s, the Bengali absence from the decision-making machinery of the military was a particularly common grievance.[5] As a top military officer, Ashgar Khan claimed he had mandated efforts to combat this serious problem, but acknowledged that they remained largely uncorrected when he resigned amidst disagreements with Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and other leaders.[6] The officer corps remained dominated by military families from Punjab in West Pakistan. Those issues went hand-in-hand with complaints of the concentration of military defense in the west, which negated one of the most obvious reasons for a continued union and political subordination to Islamabad. This was made particularly obvious after the Second Kashmir War, in the absence of Eastern Pakistani military defense.

Discrimination at the top was accompanied by discrimination at the bottom. There had long been a cultural gap between the two regions of Pakistan. Even Lieutenant-General A. A. K. Niazi, the notorious commander of military forces in East Pakistan during the war, acknowledged it during his retirement in his controversial work, *The Betrayal of East Pakistan*.

> Fate and common religion had tied together in the Muslims of East and West Pakistan…Except for religion there was hardly anything in common between the

[3] Ibid., 36.
[4] Ibid., 37.
[5] Ibid., 38.
[6] Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History*, 24 – 25.

> Muslims of East and West Pakistan. The distance was an impediment, hindering rapport between the two provinces. The language was different. Customs and traditions failed to merge. The diet was different. The dress was not the same. The culture of East Pakistan clashed with the culture of West Pakistan.[7]

The obvious cultural gap was compounded by an economic one. Even with its famed GNP growth of 5% or more each year, one of the highest in Asia, Pakistan was growing more economically disparate.[8] The government of Pakistan itself acknowledged that from 1948 to 1968 the equivalent of $2.6 billion in resources moved from east to west.[9] It also understood that in the ten year period from 1959 to 1969, the gap between east and west in per capita income at least doubled from 32% to 61%, not accounting for higher living costs in East Pakistan.[10] East Pakistan consistently exported a large portion of the goods than West Pakistan, at approximately 60% to 40%. However, approximately 66% of economic aid from the United States was spent in West Pakistan, with only 33% going to the east.[11] While Pakistan's own five year plans did include development in the east, they tended to fall well short of projects in the already more developed west.[12] Towards the end of the union, the rise of a capitalist free market throughout Pakistan was accompanied by the ascent of a small number of major business families, none of them Bengali.[13] Even the agricultural "green revolution" that had revolutionized food production in Asia seemed to pass East Pakistan by, lowering export prices rather than benefitting the population substantially.[14]

Economics and politics, both military and civilian, had widened the rift between the two halves of the Islamic Republic. In the 1954 elections, political mismanagement from Karachi

[7] Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, *The Betrayal of East Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 33.
[8] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 40.
[9] Ibid., 39.
[10] Ibid., 41.
[11] Ibid., 43.
[12] Ibid., 44.
[13] Ibid., 45.
[14] Ibid., 47.

was attributed to the Muslim League, which was routed in East Pakistan's ballot boxes, despite efforts of its regional branch to act on behalf of its constituency. This political defeat, which would be repeated in 1971, led to the rise of the local Awami Muslim League, a direct political rival to the establishment Muslim League, under Bengali socialist politician Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.[15]

The Awami League, like all political parties in Pakistan, was banned in the wake of Field Marshal Ayub Khan's declaration of martial law in 1958.[16] With his consolidation of power in the same year, both east and west were politically subordinate to his own clique of supporters and his personal power. Ayub Khan regularly downplayed the periodic bursts of local opposition in East Pakistan as unfortunate but largely inconsequential, "…a burst of public disorder because the people's emotions got the better of their reason."[17] However, it appeared as though the central leader was observant of the rising political tide that would further separate the east and west. Having personally witnessed striking students in Dhaka, the president returned to Karachi with the decision to draft the country's first formal constitution and end martial law. East Pakistan would have half of the 80,000 "Basic Democrats", Pakistan's new electoral college, firmly subordinate to the office of the president. When political parties were revived in 1962, with a new Muslim League under Ayub Khan's control, the Awami League returned as a secular, pro-Bengali alternative, with the same grievances and demands.[18] For the time being, Ayub Khan proved masterful at the art of distraction, as the new Basic Democrats led to an electoral college of leaders indebted to him both the east and west, ensuring the sort of majorities he needed to give his government an air of legitimacy.

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[15] Ibid., 53.
[16] Ibid., 61.
[17] Ayub Khan, *Pakistan Perspective*, 49.
[18] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War*, 63.

The system was in place when in 1965, Pakistan and India fought their 22-day-long war over Kashmir. Despite the warnings of Pakistani politicians, India waged no major campaign against East Pakistan, and the conflict was concentrated in Kashmir and western border. Indian, Pakistani and Bengali observers noted the same situation: the short war demonstrated just how little planning the military state had done in the matter of defending East Pakistan, situated precariously between China and India, from potential attack. In the future, Pakistan might not be so fortunate that India would just ignore its whole eastern province and more than half its population. Defense Secretary Muqeem Khan, in his post-war condemnation of his government's leadership, suggested Karachi's apathy transferred to the new capital of Islamabad in late 1970, when cyclones ravaged East Pakistan.

> The complete absence of West Pakistan political leaders and the high ranking civilian officers of the Center at the scene of the tragedy did not in any way help matters. Their absence was taken as an added proof of East Pakistan's isolation from West Pakistan, and the Center and West Pakistan's indifference towards it. Some of the 100 odd foreign correspondents at the time in Dhaka added fuel to the fire and focused their entire attention on East-West Pakistan relations, highlighting the disadvantage of dependence on the Center and West Pakistan.[19]

Lieutenant-General Niazi also noted the government's inability to guarantee East Pakistan's military defense:

> After the 1965 War, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made a statement in the National Assembly which caused a furor. He said that East Pakistan had been 'saved by China'. This was not a simple statement, but one which had far reaching consequences…It began to appear to [Bengals] that if the bulk of the forces were located in West Pakistan, and there were hardly any troops in East Pakistan to defend it, then the union with Pakistan had no practical advantages…The Bengalis were convinced more than ever before that they were being neglected. To a certain extent their anxieties were not unfounded.[20]

[19] Muqeem Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership*, 44.
[20] Niazi, *The Betrayal of East Pakistan*, 35.

Sympathetic Indian observers at the time argued that these failures of 1965 served to galvanize the already strong feeling among Bengalis that West Pakistan was sacrificing the east, economically, politically, militarily, for its own benefit, such as the "futile struggle over far away Kashmir." It highlighted not just the need for a quota of Bengali representation in the military leadership, but also the differences in the public response to the Tashkent Declaration, hated in the west but celebrated in the east.[21] The public outcry to the treaty, so closely associated with Soviet influence and prestige, may have played a part in steering Moscow's publicly expressed sympathies for the Bengal uprising against Islamabad in early 1971, before Washington or Beijing.[22]

The Awami League and anti-government movement continued to gain momentum, particularly following Ayub Khan's incapacity due to illness in 1968 and his eventual resignation. Sharing the suspicion of many that sickness might take the president's life, both movements went above ground in full force in East Bengal's cities that year, bringing the province into a full state of emergency by November 1968.[23]

The state of upheaval across Pakistan was a major factor in Ayub Khan's fall and his replacement by General Yahya Khan. Accordingly, in addition to the martial law campaign, Yahya Khan launched a series of consultations with provincial leadership from throughout the country. The conclusion he reached was that there was no consensus to be had on the Pakistani constitution, but that there was agreement to modify the electoral system to reflect a "one man, one vote" philosophy, which would afford East Pakistan representation in the legislature based on population.[24] In a masterful stroke, the generalissimo managed to accomplish multiple goals:

[21] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 65 – 66.
[22] Jain, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh*, 170.
[23] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 72.
[24] Ibid., 82.

he slowed down the separatist movements in both east and west by offering a political compromise, in particular acknowledging East Pakistan's larger population, and secured the military government some breathing room that it had lacked under Ayub Khan. As of the census 1961, East Pakistan accounted for 54% of the total population. By the end of the decade that number was at 56%.[25] The issue of East Pakistani autonomy would be decided by the parties of the new National Assembly.[26]

Publicly positioning himself as a strictly provisional leader, Yahya Khan was also able to guarantee outside support for his new government, as East Pakistani separatism transformed from a purely domestic matter to an international one.[27] Yahya Khan remained something of a mystery to the governments of the world, having rapidly replaced Ayub Khan, the juggernaut of Pakistan for a decade of the young country's history. New Delhi initially took an optimistic approach, with Indira Gandhi's dispatching of a letter to the new president, suggesting the possibility of a nonaggression pact between the two, and the belated resolution of issues of trade, shipping, and air travel. In his response, Yahya Khan insisted that any such agreement was only possible if the two countries could overcome the same security dilemmas that had haunted them since 1965, particularly in the area of the Kashmir and the Ganges River. In this area, Yahya Khan remained consistent with his predecessor.[28]

The traditional Indo-Pakistani peacetime antagonism did not necessary extend to other states. In the Soviet Union, Yahya Khan was also largely an unknown quantity at first. He was known principally for negotiating the largely symbolic resumption of military sales to Pakistan a year earlier. The shipments' arrival coincided with Yahya Khan succeeding Ayub Khan. Having

[25] Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History*, 25.
[26] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 83.
[27] Ibid., 80.
[28] Jain, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh,* 104.

consolidated his own power, Yahya Khan began to take the necessary public postures in regards to the United States, China, and the Soviet Union. As president, he defined his position internationally as a "policy of bilateralism" with "friendly and cordial relations with all the three major powers."[29] Speaking before the Iranian parliament on October 30th, 1969, he emphasized the importance of Pakistan's relationship with its traditional allies of China and United States, but also its relations with the Soviet Union:

> With the Soviet Union, our relations in the 'Fifties were under strain because of our membership of defense alliance which they regarded as directed against them. Pakistan's position is now better understood and our relations with the Soviet Union have steadily grown in depth from the mid-Fifties.[30]

Yahya Khan's belief that Pakistan-Soviet dialogue had transformed with the evolution of the Cold War rivalries throughout the world accords with observations from other perspectives, particularly when considering the relaxation of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. At the same time Washington was changing its impression of Beijing, the Soviet Union's leadership made repeated efforts that it hoped would decrease the likelihood of an international split among the major powers over India and Pakistan. After Yahya Khan's fall from power, Pakistan would facilitate the normalization of relations between the United States and China, another transformation in diplomacy.

In the meantime, Yahya Khan did not deviate substantially from Ayub Khan's post-1965 posture with the Soviet Union. Before the end of 1969, the two countries concluded a trade agreement over goods valued at more than a hundred million rupees for the incoming year. In particular, Soviet tractors, cars, and construction equipment were valued, along with Soviet expertise in civilian atomic energy. The following year, the president visited his counterparts in

[29] Ibid., 109.
[30] Ibid., 110.

the Soviet Union, seeking military and economic assistance. He failed in the former area, finding that the Soviets were opposed to expansion of arms sales. Economically, Pakistan secured $200 million for financing equipment for a massive new steel mill in Karachi, and additional Soviet consideration for future projects. The Soviet ambassador in Pakistan noted that with these new agreements, "…trade between the two countries will grow by 6 – 7 percent annually."[31] In the midst of these negotiations, Moscow publicly reaffirmed its commitment to the Tashkent Declaration and the solving of disputes through bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan. To Indian observers, though, even modest Soviet military assistance was suspect, though many argued hopefully that it was purely symbolic, an effort to free Pakistan from its Chinese military backer. The Soviet Union was actively pursuing a policy of wooing Yahya Khan's government from Chinese influence, and secretly engaging in what some Indians saw as violations of the accords at Tashkent.[32] The spirit of Tashkent, and the promise to negotiate openly and in good faith to bring about stability in the subcontinent, was steadily being broken down by leaders for political gain even as many continued to praise it.

Of India, the United States, and the Soviet Union, it seems clear that the United States understood the newcomer Yahya Khan the best when he first came to power. In a confidential memo to the Secretary of State from the Director of Intelligence and Research, he appeared among a list of "who's who" in the martial law government in 1969. Agha Muhammed Yahya Khan was identified as an up-and-coming officer, who had passed over several rivals to become commander-in-chief of the Pakistani Army in 1966 and "…is given much credit for the only really successful Pakistani maneuver during the 1965 conflict with India." He was a member of the Shi'a Muslim minority in the country, and had an unsavory reputation:

[31] Ibid., 111.
[32] Ibid., 111 – 112.

> He more than occasionally drinks heavily and is accused (probably with justification) of "womanizing," including the reported exercise of *droit de seigneur* with wives of his military subordinates. The Muslim fundamentalists will be unhappy with him but they are unhappy with any westernized figure, including Ayub.[33]

The general's penchant for alcohol and women was also mentioned by Air Marshal Asghar Khan, who claimed that considerable quantities of both had begun to dull the military dictator's initially sharp mind.[34] President Yahya Khan remained in contact with his American counterpart, Richard Nixon, from the beginning of his military government, and expressed his intentions to resolve the matter of East Pakistan in a timely manner.[35] According to a State Department foreign policy report, he did just that, leading up to the pivotal December elections of 1970, which saw the Awami League win its majorities.[36] The United States was also well informed on major leaders in both east and west, and monitored them extensively. The American consulate in Dhaka kept the State Department informed on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who had risen with his Awami League as the dominant political force in East Pakistan. The party's six point plan for autonomy—calling for a new constitution, federated government, separate currencies and financial systems, and a dedicated militia for East Pakistani defense—addressed the numerous grievances that had emerged in the region since 1965, and ensured popular support among its constituency in disaffected East Pakistan while its rivals struggled at the polls.[37] In early 1970, the American consulate expressed its belief that Rahman's confidence in future elections was warranted, and considered his foreign policies:

> If he achieves a position of power, Sheikh Mujib will pursue a policy of friendship with all major powers. He would take possible steps to restore full trade and commercial relations with India…He fully realized that foreign

[33] Khan, *The American Papers*, 265.
[34] Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History*, 28.
[35] Khan, *The American Papers*, 267.
[36] *United States Foreign Policy 1969 – 1970*, 43.
[37] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War*, 66 – 67.

> assistance would be needed in tackling the water problems. Sheikh Mujib would try hard to reach a settlement with India on the Kashmir issue. As he saw the problem, it might be settled either by partition or by independence. Mujib would seek international mediation as a means of achieving Indo-Pakistani agreement on the problem…One of Sheikh Mujib's objectives if he came to power would be to cut defense expenditures. He saw SEATO and CENTO as dead.[38]

Despite these radical positions, the consulate's report mentioned Sheikh Mujibur's positive impression of the United States since his 1958 visit, and his desire to visit the United States again. Additionally, should his government fail to create a satisfactory constitution in the specified period of 120 days, the Awami League leader acknowledged that separation of east and west might be necessary.[39]

The United States' involvement in the subcontinent had only increased, despite what some termed efforts to move away from entanglements leading up to the Second Kashmir War. The Vietnam War remained a pressing issue, as did checking Indian "flirtations" with Hanoi.[40] Remaining Pakistani's major military supplier required a delicate balancing act in light of not just India, but also China and the Soviet Union, to ensure continued shipments of high-tech weapons, particularly fighter jets and tanks.[41]

Active American negotiations with the Pakistani leadership continued to the pivotal 1970 elections late that year. As it became apparent to all that the Awami League was poised for major victories, its political rivals either factionalized or discredited months before, the US State Department found itself in a difficult position. Its sources were unable to discern "…the attitude of Punjabi-dominated military towards possibility of near-autonomous Bengal as Mujib assumes

[38] Khan, *The American Papers*, 317.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 321.
[41] Ibid., 323.

stature as prospective prime minister…" and suspected the central government might cancel the elections.[42]

The military government, under Yahya Khan and six other generals who had ruled since the declaration of martial law in 1969, delayed the 1970 election in response to catastrophic flooding in East Pakistan, but did not cancel them. That December, the momentous general election promised for years finally happened, thirty-three months into Yahya Khan's administration as chief martial law administrator. The result was a disaster for the ruling West Pakistani political elite. More than twenty years earlier, the Bengali vote had been mobilized overwhelmingly in support of the Indian Muslim league, guaranteeing its political viability as the leadership of the provinces that would become Pakistan. The subsequent years were characterized by military rule and a political arrangement even some West Pakistani leaders acknowledged resembled "a colony that was being trained for the art of self-rule by a benign colonial power," punctuated by the disaster of the 1970 Bay of Bengal cyclones and the government's response to them. The population once again rallied overwhelmingly at the ballot box for a single political party, the Awami League.[43] In contrast, the remainder of parties, including those in West Pakistan, remained fragmented and divided. In the National Assembly vote, the Awami League won 160 of 162 seats in East Pakistan, and none in the west. Its closest rival, the Pakistan People's Party under Z. A. Bhutto, won 81 seats in the west. If Yahya Khan had been counting on an insufficient majority in any party, unable to challenge military rule, it would not be the case.[44]

Following the Awami League's celebration of their victory, Yahya Khan traveled to Dhaka to personally meet Sheikh Mujibur and Admiral S. M. Ahsan, military governor of East

[42] Ibid., 328 – 329.
[43] Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History*, 31 – 32.
[44] Ibid., 29.

Pakistan. Speaking on amiable terms, Mujibur outlined his "Six Points" political platform, and offered to propose Yahya Khan become the first president under the new constitution of Pakistan. He was willing to soften his positions if it meant keeping Pakistan united. Satisfied, Yahya Khan agreed with Sheikh Mujibur's positions, and upon returning to Islamabad, referred to him as the next prime minister of Pakistan.[45]

It seemed entirely possible that Pakistan would be saved through democratic elections and government reform, as the United States and other outside observers had anticipated. What happened next still varies somewhat depending on the perspective. Both Pakistani and Bengali sources agree that the unified government, post-election, depended on a triangle forged between the victorious Awami League, the second-place Pakistan People's Party, and the Pakistani Armed Forces.[46] Ayub Khan's own Convention Muslim League, having floundered in the elections, was divorced from the structures of power, and with the ex-president's fall from public life, the commitment of the government, particularly the armed forces, to the Tashkent accords he had negotiated evaporated.[47]

How the triangle turned on itself is debated. General Niazi, commander of the forces that would fight against independence, claimed that Yahya Khan, unable to sway the victorious Sheikh Mujibur, feared for his presidency and "flew into the waiting arms of Bhutto."[48] Air Marshal Ashgar Khan claimed Yahya Khan betrayed his promises to Sheikh Mujibur, as he and Bhutto refused to surrender the power owed to the Awami League.[49] Indian and Bengali historians suggested Yahya Khan believed that the leading parties were unable to reconcile their politics in preparation for the new government, and decided Bhutto's Pakistani People's Party

[45] Ibid., 35 – 36.
[46] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 100 and Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History*, 35 – 36.
[47] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 101.
[48] Niazi, *The Betrayal of East Pakistan*, 39.
[49] Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History,* 36.

was the lesser threat to the military junta already in place and "very logically" brought it into the confrontation on his side.[50] Whatever the case, with tensions rising between the parties over the expectation of a new government, President Yahya Khan made the fateful decision to postpone the new National Assembly early in 1971, dissolving his original civilian cabinet.[51]

What ensued was familiar ground in the subcontinent, as Yahya Khan took the preparations to ensure a full military campaign could be waged against the secessionist population in East Pakistan. On March 1, the same day Yahya Khan announced the further postponement of the new assembly, massive rallies were held in Dhaka. The Awami League's leadership planned a city-wide strike the next day and a province-wide strike the day after. Sheikh Mujibur called for massive civil disobedience. Admiral Ahsan, charged as a "pliable tool in the hands of the Awami League" by Bhutto, resigned as both chief martial law administrator and commander of military forces in East Pakistan. He was replaced by Lieutenant-General Tikka Khan, who would later be labeled "the butcher of Bengal."[52] West Pakistani soldiers fired on crowds and strikers. After a failed visit to Dhaka to negotiate, Yahya Khan had exhausted whatever credibility as a meditator he might have had and escalated the military campaign. By March 25—the planned initiation of the first National Assembly—there was no turning back for either side. Soon millions of Bengali refugees would cross over into India. The Bangladesh Liberation War had effectively begun.

The international powers observed the situation closely, particularly the refugee crisis. With Sheikh Mujibur's March 15 announcement of the Awami League taking over the administration of East Pakistan on the basis of electoral mandate and declared the founding of

[50] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 100.
[51] Ibid., 109 – 111.
[52] Ibid., 114 – 115.

Bangla Desh.[53] The American State Department ruled out the chance of an enduring, unified Pakistan the same day. The decision became whom to support in the Liberation War. It noted that Bhutto, the political leader of the western provinces, might attempt a similar move as Sheikh Mujibur, declaring his own government, but believed it unlikely in light of the military's hold on its base in West Pakistan.[54] The position of the United States was still to be widely debated, and the State Department itself clearly preferred a "wait and see" approach, as it had before it ruled that Islamabad could not hold onto East Pakistan.

The Soviet Union's initial responses were likewise tempered. Earlier when Yahya Khan had ascended to power to counter the crisis, Podgorny, as Yahya's counterpart in the Soviet government, cautiously advocated a "political solution" to the violence, one that would hopefully keep more radical elements from rising to the top of politics in East and West Pakistan, which the Soviet Union particularly feared. A more secretive memo from Kosygin seemed to suggest the same, stating the Soviet opinion that a compromise was needed while still endorsing Pakistani unity. Both leaders were dismayed by the increasingly bloody military crackdown that Yahya Khan had continued from his predecessor's government.[55]

As Pakistan entered crisis following the outcome of the 1970 elections, India consolidated its previous gains. It struck a substantial bargain with the Soviet Union: the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, signed in August of 1971, as Pakistan was turning increasingly bloody. The provisions of the agreement, with the escalating situation in East Pakistan, meant that the Soviet Union was increasingly obligated to share the positions of India on that particular issue. Immediately after the agreement was signed, the joint Indo-Soviet Statement of August 11 repeated the earlier position, that there existed "no military solution" and

[53] Literally "Free Bengal Nation"
[54] Khan, *The American Papers*, 152.
[55] Ram, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan*, 211 – 213.

"urgent steps" had to be taken to end the violence in "East Pakistan."[56] The wording of the declaration was notable—it made no mention of Bangladesh, and did not even imply that the solution had to be acceptable to the Awami League. As such, to Pakistan it appeared as a move away from Kosygin's earlier recommendation of a fair deal between both sides. To Indian observers, the deliberate choice in vague language and tacit endorsement of a unified Pakistan suggested skillful diplomacy, as Moscow watched the situation unfold. The Soviet ambassador to the United Nations opposed convening on the matter of East Pakistan, which would have brought the issue before the world community, on the basis that it was Pakistan's responsibility to handle. This had been India's earlier position as well.[57]

The coordination between Moscow and New Delhi was not missed in the United States. News of the Indo-Soviet Treaty made the rounds the day after in publications like *The New York Times*. With the Nixon administration hinting at rapprochement between the United States and China, it was not hard to see the twenty-year treaty as an effective strategic move to further push the United States out of Indian politics. Framing political partnerships in Asia as a zero-sum game, the Soviet government had gained the upper hand on the United States in the midst of the Bangladesh Liberation War. As noted in the *Times*,

> But the moving factor for the Indians is certainly their desperate sense of isolation as the Pakistani civil conflict threatens to spill over their borders—a conflict in which both Chinese and American policies appear to favor the Pakistani government. The incredible United States' decision to keep supplying arms and other aid to Pakistan in spite of the ruthless Pakistani crackdown on autonomy-seeking Bengalis, and especially on Bengali Hindus, has handed Moscow a major foreign policy coup.[58]

The same article deduced that the United States was not the only loser in this arrangement: Pakistan had lost as well. The treaty would discourage any attack on India made with the

[56] Ibid.
[57] Jain, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh*, 128.
[58] "Soviet-Indian Pact," *The New York Times*, August 10, 1971, 30.

endorsement of the Chinese government, a plan that, as East Pakistan burned, was less and less realistic. On the opposing side, it was feared that Moscow's formal backing might encourage India to ratchet up support of what were now called the *Mukti Bahini*, or freedom fighters of Bangladesh. The only chance for peace was for Moscow to "counsel restraint"—which coincided with what the Soviet government had publicly done immediately after the treaty was signed.[59]

The public statement aside, what the Indo-Soviet pact would mean for the escalating crisis was not immediately clear. Even as the Soviets issued their joint statements with Indian approval calling for restraint and a halt to the military campaign, New Delhi had other priorities. Sheikh Mujibur had been arrested and moved to West Pakistan, to the anger of Prime Minister Gandhi. The Pakistani campaign against the Mukti Bahini, dubbed Operation 'Searchlight', had led to one of the greatest refugee crises in human history. Even before the operation had been consolidated, by May 1971 there may have been as many as three and a half million refugees in India.[60] By the end of August, the first month of the operation, that number had risen to as many as nine million refugees.[61] The US State Department Foreign Relations report for 1971 mentioned an "unprecedented outflow of refugees from East Pakistan" as further antagonizing India towards Pakistan.[62] An early confidential memo to the State Department in August 2 gave an educated guess in its report on Dhaka:

> PERSECUTION OF HINDUS. Most blatant forms of persecution of Hindus appear to have ceased. No recent mass slaughters or unprovoked burning of villages. Important factor in decline in persecution is drastic decrease in number of Hindus available to persecute. Latest estimate puts six million East Pakistani Hindus in India.[63]

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War*,170.
[61] Jain, *Soviet Policy towards Pakistan and Bangladesh*, 129.
[62] *United States Foreign Policy 1969 – 1970: A report of the Secretary of State* (Washington: Department of State Bulletin, 1972), 114.
[63] Khan, *The American Papers*, 625.

Most memos remained focused on analyses of the military leadership or the moves of India and the Soviet Union, rather than resistance in Bangladesh. One notable exception is the famous "Blood Telegram." Sent to the State Department by diplomat Archer Blood from Dhaka, it warned of grievous crimes being committed by the Pakistani Army. "…With the conviction that U.S. policy related to the recent developments in East Pakistan serves neither our moral interests…nor our national interests…numerous officers of AMOCOGEN Dacca, USAID Dacca, and USIS Dacca consider it their duty to register strong dissent…Our government has failed to denounce suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities."[64] The memo, confidential like its counterparts, took a position that was a rarity among messages to the State Department.

In time, the sheer magnitude of the refugee crisis prompted India to take a harsher stance towards Pakistan. Just providing assistance to the Mukit Bahini was insufficient, and New Delhi came to believe in the necessity of a full military solution. It was not necessarily one they had made easily: most obviously, the actual cost of feeding as many as ten million Bengali refugees was more costly than any war.[65] Severe fears still existed among the Indian leadership of the possibility of China coming to Pakistan's defense, hinted by Yahya Khan's claims in the media and Beijing's general silence on the Bangladesh Liberation War.[66] Even the status quo—Pakistani and Indian armies staring at each other across borders, but not actually at war—seemed less and less tolerable.[67] Prior security concerns, which had brought those armies there in the first place, were aggravated by the spiking animosity over Bangladesh and ongoing refugee crisis, which New Delhi squarely blamed on Islamabad.

[64] "Blood Telegram," George Washington University National Security Archives, accessed June 19, 2012, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/BEBB8.pdf.
[65] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,* 170.
[66] Ibid., 187 – 188.
[67] Ibid., 200.

In the American media, the refugee crisis was a minor addendum to the narrative of Cold War power plays, particularly involving Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In the Soviet Union, news was slow as well: editorials in the major newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* blamed the Pakistani military for the spiking bloodshed, but still considered the crisis "…undoubtedly strictly an internal affair of that state."[68] Soviet leaders had now begun directly blaming Islamabad for the millions of refugees forced to India, alongside provoking "the hotbed of tensions" in the subcontinent. [69]

When India began poising itself for its massive intervention into the Bangladesh Liberation War, certain editorials in the American media made clear their condemnation of what they termed "Indira Gandhi's war." Joseph Alsop, a conservative pundit and acquaintance of Dr. Kissinger, charged the prime minister with "kicking a man when he is down" and delivering a "swift kick in the groin," while Pakistani's "only crime" was refusing to "surrender one-half of their national integrity."[70] Less provocatively, a *Washington Post* article demonstrated how far India and the United States had split in the last few months, since the East Pakistan crisis began, when reporting on Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's ultimately fruitless visit to India to assist in negotiations.

> Gromyko's visit comes at a time when Indian-American relations are very strained because of continued U.S. arms shipments to Pakistan and what is officially described here as "the prestige being used at the highest levels of the State Department and White House to shore up and back up the Pakistani regime." India has said the arms shipments amount to a "condonation [sic] of genocide" by Pakistani army troops seeking to quell the independence movement…[71]

The two countries were increasingly at odds over what India portrayed as a moral decision—the accusation of genocide in East Pakistan conducted with American military equipment—and what

[68] Jain, *Soviet Relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh,* 125.
[69] Ibid., 131.
[70] Joseph Alsop, "Saintly Sellout by India," *The Washington Post, Times Herald,* November 15, 1971, 19.
[71] "Gromyko in India for 'Peace'," *The Washington Post, Times Herald,* August 9, 1971, 1.

the United States argued was a political and moral obligation to support its longstanding ally, particularly against what some suggested was an Indian conspiracy to force Pakistan into Indian vassalage. All this happened in an atmosphere of a clearer understanding of anti-American sentiment in India than before the Second Kashmir War, just a few years earlier. American editorials noticed Soviet ambitions to turn India into a further counterweight against China, as the United States was attempting to finally normalize relations with Beijing, even if it meant India "killing" its own principle of nonalignment.[72] Despite years of improved relations with the Soviet Union, the politics of the subcontinent were still highly suspect to being manipulated by Moscow. As famed conservative political commentator Robert Novak elaborated in an editorial,

> What is not appreciated outside high government circles is that the fruits of India's military victory may not be limited to the detachment of East Pakistan from Pakistani central government as the independent state of Bangla Desh, in permanent vassalage to India…the present Soviet leaders would have fulfilled the Czar's ancient dream of penetration deep into Southwest Asia.[73]

In the media, what to do about East Pakistan, and how to confront India in its intervention, remained a political issue, rather than the humanitarian one as framed by New Delhi. A few exceptions existed, like liberal politician Chester Bowles. Bowles, former ambassador to India, cited the ruthlessness of Operation Searchlight and British condemnation of Pakistan's tactics.[74] Such opinions were cast in the media as having been unduly influenced by Indian rhetoric or worse in the media. The general opinion was shared by the State Department. In August, when discussing the refugee crisis, a meeting between President Nixon, Kissinger, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Thomas Moorer, and multiple deputy Cabinet members was called to

[72] Lee Lescaze, "India Claims Soviet Pact caused by Lack of U.S. Sympathy," *The Washington Post, Times Herald* , August 21, 1971, 16.
[73] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Dismembering of Pakistan," *The Washington Post, Times Herald,* December 13, 1971, 23.
[74] Chester Bowels, "U.S. Arms to Pakistan: A Tragedy of Errors," *The Washington Post, Times Herald,* August 15, 971, 5.

discuss the issue. The notes of the meeting offer three points of interest: first, an Indo-Pakistani war would harm the "new China relationship"; second, India could not be allowed to "use the refugees as a pretext for breaking up Pakistan"; third, "No one knows what the USSR wants."[75] The American leadership was aware of the likelihood of war, and valued the current Pakistani government for facilitating headway with China. But Soviet intentions leading up to their treaty with India were unclear, and India's case for an intervention due to the refugee crisis was unacceptable.

General Yahya Khan still held diplomatic as well as military power. According to Air Marshal Asghar Khan, who was in contact with the chief of the general staff, Gul Hussan Khan, as an Indian intervention became more likely many in the military leadership saw themselves on the precipice of disaster. In a conversation he had with his old friend and classmate,

> General Gul Hassan, who had an odd sense of humor, said, 'the only answer is to start a war.' 'Why?' I asked. 'In order to have a ceasefire,' he replied. In retrospect, I think that perhaps Gul Hassan was voicing the thoughts of the Junta and Yahya Khan. In the desperate situation that they had gotten themselves in, they had begun to believe that should open hostilities start with India, they would be bailed out by the United States.[76]

Yahya Khan had successfully established himself personally as a major factor in Sino-American rapprochement. Previously, China had advocated Pakistani confrontation of India in wartime. But some of his own commanders suspected he had lost control by late 1971; at least one suggested Yahya Khan might be removed in a coup d'état in the event of war. General A. A. Niazi, charged with military command in East Pakistan against India, recalled the possibility of such a coup when he was discussing troop requisitions before hostilities officially started. According to Niazi, "Only two battalions reached us. The rest of the units never arrived.

[75] Khan, *The American Files*, 659.
[76] Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History*, 49.

Apparently [the chief of the general staff] had misled us to fulfill his nefarious designs of a coup d'état to facilitate transfer of power to Bhutto."[77] Yahya Khan would resign a month later, shortly after the surrender of the East Pakistani military commander in Dhaka.

Both sides prodded each other with covert insertions and small battles, like the lead up to the 1965 War. The one action that might conceivably avert war—the release of Sheikh Mujibur as repeatedly requested by Gandhi—was rejected. General Niazi pointed to November 21 as the day India's infiltrations began in earnest into East Pakistan.[78] However, to the rest of the world the third Indo-Pakistani war began two weeks later, on December 3, after it became apparent that the a full UN intervention—sought by both the United States and Pakistan—into the subcontinent would be unlikely.[79] A decisive Pakistani first-strike, styled after the past performance of the Israeli Air Force and intended to severely limit India's ability to conduct strategic military operations, was launched with Operation 'Chengiz Khan'. Several Indian airfields on its western border were targeted and the Pakistani Air Force encountered only Indian ground fire, with no losses. Simultaneously, even as they cratered numerous airfields, they failed completely to knock out Indian aircraft even with three assaults. Insufficient aircraft—only two or three hitting each airfield—combined with poor intelligence that was not aware of Indian aircraft being housed in concrete pens meant that, according to Indian Major-General D. K. Palit, "By the evening of 4 December, the [Indian Air Force] had established air superiority."[80]

United States State Department memos had little to say about the Pakistani strike and the Indian counterstrike. Far more attention was paid to the ongoing visit of Bhutto, the likely head of any post-Yahya Khan civilian government. Bhutto, having departed for New York in

[77] Niazi, *The Betrayal of East Pakistan*, 108 – 109.
[78] Ibid., 118.
[79] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War*,216.
[80] D. K. Palit, *The Lighting Campaign* (New Delhi: Thomson Press, 1972), 78.

November to shore up support for Pakistan in the coming showdown, remained in close contact with American leaders, where he openly discussed the his plans to force an Indian withdrawal and his plans for Bangladesh.[81]

The American media paid some notice to the short war. *The New York Times* noted the American government's policy of urging restraint from both sides, calling it "even handed."[82] They also reported on Pakistani Foreign Ministry claims that Soviet crews were staffing the highly-effective Indian Navy and Soviet pilots were participating in the huge number of aerial sorties over Pakistani targets, along with Pakistani hopes of Chinese assistance.[83] Arbitration was not a major concern by on December 16, the twilight of the war. The *Times* confirmed that a naval task force, led by the nuclear-powered U.S.S. *Enterprise,* along with 2,000 marines, was steaming from the Gulf of Tonkin to the Bay of Bengal, on a mission whose objective was not publicized by Washington but could be speculated on widely by all parties.[84] During the peace settlement, C. L. Sulzberger surmised in an editorial that the purpose of the naval task force was to ensure Indian and Soviet clarity as to American intentions in the subcontinent. Additionally, he offered the theory that with Beijing and Moscow to their own leftist supporters in Dhaka, the United States would become the only real ally of the new nation "…apart from Mrs. Gandhi."[85] This was not a sentiment echoed by Bangladeshi authors, who fretted over the presence of the *Enterprise* and labeled the Soviet Union as a major ally, not the United States.[86]

[81] Khan, *The American Files*, 738 – 740.
[82] "India and Pakistan at War," *The Washington Post, Times Herald,* December 4, 1971, 18.
[83] Henry Kamm, "Pakistan Says She Is Checking Reports of Soviet Fliers in India," *The New York Times,* December 10, 1971, 17.
[84] Tad Szulc, "Enterprise is Flagship," *The New York Times,* December 16, 1971, 1.
[85] Cyrus Sulzberger, "The Policy of Enterprise," *The New York Times,* April 21, 1972, 39.
[86] Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War,*284.

The Pakistanis treated the naval taskforce as a desperately needed reprieve. With defeat in East Pakistan seeming certain, Asghar Khan claimed the military, alongside the West Pakistani public, incorrectly placed their hopes:

> The armed forces had also been led to believe that the United States' Seventh Fleet and the Chinese would come to their rescue. They had been assured that Pakistan had stanch allies who would see it through this mad adventure, that so important was Pakistan to their existence that they could not possibly see it go under.[87]

Accurate or not, the Pakistani leadership remained deeply convinced that the United States would not allow them to slip into disaster at this point.

For its part, the State Department confidentially weighed its options, especially in regard to military aid, which was not suspended as it had been in 1965, and decided among three options. First, the United States could adopt a "business as usual" approach, with no change to the military sales program, at $20 million US annually. Second, it could enact sanctions against the Pakistani government for its actions, particularly "…its policy towards East Pakistan." Such a move, the State Department reasoned, would ingratiate the United States with the new state of Bangladesh but greatly alienate Pakistan, and despite the considerable importance of American aid, the State Department did not think it would result in a major modification of Islamabad's war plans. The third option, admittedly difficult, was to remain in contact with both East and West Pakistan, to the possible "unhappiness" of both sides. [88] The tone of the situation changed after a catastrophic Pakistani defeat seemed the most likely outcome. According to State Department memos, shortly before returning to negotiate the peace in Pakistan, Bhutto repeatedly drew close connections between the Soviet government's role in the short war with Indira Gandhi's administration, repeating the wild claim that Soviet personnel had manned vessels supplied to the

[87] Khan, *We've Learnt Nothing from History*, 53.
[88] Khan, *The American Files*, 534 – 536.

Indian Navy and claiming that Gandhi would "…rue the day she had gone to bed with the Soviet bear."[89]

After the war, the American media occasionally took a harder tone on Washington's decisions, particularly as news of the extent of violence during Operation Searchlight and the democracy-suppressing maneuvers undertaken by General Yahya Khan became more apparent. In a *Times* article sympathetic to the British charges of Pakistani wrongdoing, liberal pundit Anthony Lewis noted,

> The position of Sheik Mujib is another revealing matter. The United States never criticized his arrest, apparently believing that Yahya Khan had no political alternative. But now the former commander-in-chief of the Pakistani Air force, Ashgar Khan, a politician who is hardly an Indian stooge, has said that Yahya should never have arrested Sheik Mujib and could have made a political settlement with him.[90]

Only partially aware of the careful dealings Washington had during the war, but generally focusing on the apparent inactivity of the United States to act in response to Operation Searchlight, some in the American media criticized the government's handling of the short war.

Likewise, Soviet media and government in Moscow had moved towards a more decisive position. Having faithfully carried both Indian claims of violence in the east and Pakistani claims of Indian violations of its airspace, Soviet newspapers echoed the public positions of Kosygin and Podgorny that a political solution true to the "spirit" of Tashkent was still viable.[91] In time, this became an impossible position to hold. The Soviet Union finally relented when confronted by Sheikh Mujibur's arrest, by placards in Pakistani streets declaring "Crush India!" and other

[89] Ibid., 772 – 774.
[90] Anthony Lewis, "Not to be Forgotten," *The New York Times,* December 20, 1971.
[91] Jain, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh,* 129 – 130.

evidence of the pervasive anti-Indian propaganda in Pakistan.[92] Still, Moscow feared leading Islamabad further into the arms of its rival, Beijing, as Washington had led New Delhi to them.

After the Pakistani air campaign began in December, the Soviet government threw its full support behind India, complete with the threat of a veto at the United Nations for proposals demanding an immediate ceasefire in Bangladesh.[93] The publication *Sovetskaya Rossiya,* the official newspaper of the Russian Republic's Communist Party, denounced American and Chinese statements of support for Pakistan as aiming to fulfill their own "neocolonial designs" for Asia. An article in *Pravda* accused Beijing of "profound indifference" to the revolutionary nature of the resistance in Dhaka to the Pakistani military, in the face of the Soviet government's public and materiel support.[94]

The Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 was a decisive but short end to the long struggle for Bengali independence, a deep-rooted conflict between Pakistan's east and west provinces that had never fully subsided in the country's short history. But crucially, India's intervention served as a powerful demonstration of the country's willingness to fly in the face of major international powers—particularly China and the United States—and ignore the pressure they exerted when it came to Pakistan. Simultaneously, the unfair treatment of the Bengali majority in Pakistan was not a new development, but even in the face of a catastrophic refugee crisis, Islamabad made the conscious decision to act against American recommendations and preemptively strike Indian military installations in a risky gamble to avoid a repeat of the inconclusive Second Kashmir War. The 1971 War ended with the humiliating surrender of Niazi's Eastern Military Command in Dhaka before a victorious Indian Army and its Mukti Bahini allies, broadcast on live television for the world that had watched the crisis unfold so closely. The consequences of the

[92] Ibid., 133.
[93] Ibid., 136.
[94] Ibid., 140 – 141.

Soviet Union's endorsement of India's military intervention and the United States' decision to continue supplying Pakistan with military hardware were now available for all to see, a clear obliteration of the multilateral promises made just six years earlier at Tashkent.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: FROM TASHKENT TO DHAKA

Between the spring of 1965 and the end of 1971, the Cold War continued escalating in some areas while diminishing in others. Just weeks before the Second Kashmir War began, the United States formally committed ground troops to fight in Indochina.[1] The marked antagonism between the Soviet Union and China turned into a brief border skirmish in 1969.[2] Political shifts in the United Kingdom heralded a normalization of relations between London and Moscow and the resumption of high-level talks.[3] President Nixon, with the assistance of Pakistan's government, pursued efforts to establish diplomatic ties with China, and Beijing famously invited the U.S. Table Tennis Team to compete in April 1971, amid Pakistan's Operation Searchlight.[4] When compared to the rapid worsening of relations between the major power blocs, particularly the United States and Soviet Union, that ensued in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the decade following the twentieth anniversary of both India and Pakistan saw east-west relations waver back and forth, as the major powers sought common ground in some areas and competitive advantages in others.

The same could not necessarily be said about Pakistan and India. The two postcolonial nations demonstrated willingness to come to blows over the issues that remained since the British Partition in 1947, Kashmir among the most obvious. In a period where the nuclear powers sought common ground in areas where compromise was not seen as that

[1] McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 334.
[2] Gromyko, *Memories*, 250 – 253.
[3] Ibid., 161.
[4] *United States Foreign Policy 1971*, 62.

disadvantageous, the Asian subcontinent was a promising candidate for informal and formal compromise. Kashmir became an opportunity for new Soviet leaders like Kosygin to demonstrate new Soviet polices and expand their government's influence. It was also a chance for American leaders to voice their concerns—such as the development of a Balkans-like situation that might drag a whole continent into war—among other likeminded nations as the conflict in Vietnam dragged on without end in sight.

Many Indian and Pakistani observers understood that their region of the world had, by both chance and history, become home to different opportunities for the "great powers." Their political antagonism came to depend on technological support from their allies for a definitive edge: Soviet frigates, American fighters, British bombers and Chinese tanks. For war-making as well as industrial development, the "lesser powers" sought assistance from the greater ones. Having been led by culture and historical antagonism to maintain military parity, India and Pakistan committed themselves to the nuclear states. Peace came in 1965 not just because of the difficulty in sustaining a high-tech war by industrially-undeveloped countries, but also because of Soviet and American insistence that the fighting stop. When war returned in 1971, the United States and Soviet Union, now less concerned with peace, allowed it to unfold and even escalated their support, a notion unthinkable just six years earlier.

But where did agency actually lie? Rather than just assume that the nations of the subcontinent became the pawns of the great powers, it appears that influence and power traveled both ways. When Ayub Khan and Bhutto went to Uzbekistan, they did do so under pressure from the international community. However at Tashkent, both Ayub Khan and Shastri forced the "good offices" of the Soviet Union, and Kosygin himself, to travel back and forth, arbitrating, encouraging, even browbeating, in the pursuit of a peace the Soviet Union had indiscreetly

promised to the world. Not only did Ayub Khan bow to Soviet pressure, he also insisted that certain concessions be made to the Pakistani position, if not materially than ideologically, such as the direct mentioning of Kashmir in any prospective treaty. Shastri and the Indian delegation did the same, forcing their Soviet hosts to come to a deal they would find acceptable. For this reason, when the declaration at Tashkent was finalized, it was lauded publically by the parties involved as a major breakthrough—even as they understood it was unfinished and were prepared to back their own national interests against it if necessary.

For the United States and the Soviet Union, overstepping the Tashkent Declaration does not seem particularly remarkable, given the rapidly shifting politics of the period. The United States was about to pursue previously unthinkable reconciliation with China, while the Soviet Union would soon sign a twenty-year treaty with a former member of the British Commonwealth. But the willingness of Pakistan and India to carefully maneuver around the provisions of the treaty, even as they continued to directly cite it in international discussions, demonstrated at least some agency on their part. In the years between 1965 and 1971, a period of comparative stability for the United States and Soviet Union, India and Pakistan were subject to substantial domestic changes. Regrettably, the changes did not decrease the likelihood of another Indo-Pakistani war. They altered some of the major causes for antagonism in the region—from communalism and ethnic hatred to the insatiable need for security—but did not diminish it.

What did this mean for the contest for influence in the subcontinent? In some respects, the shift eroded some of the advantages enjoyed by the great powers. Even with the enormous political and military power they enjoyed in the years following 1970, they could not change the minds and actions of tens of millions of people in the subcontinent. Indeed, with their attention divided among multiple concerns including China, Vietnam, and nuclear nonproliferation, they

could not always pressure India and Pakistan to follow their lead as they had in the past. The United States made the rapid change from an intense suspicion of China as a Pakistani ally to a desire to use Islamabad as a way to initiate Sino-American *détente*, even at the cost of alienating New Delhi. The Soviet Union, sometimes a victim of its own success, had gained unprecedented access to the subcontinent, but now had to balance itself carefully between its longstanding cooperation with India and its efforts to nudge Pakistan out of the American bloc. Both nations had to conduct their objectives with the other in mind, leading to a complex guessing game of what actions might provoke more drastic reactions.

As this happened, Indian and Pakistani officials and academics were able to observe or otherwise infer about the ongoing "great game" in the subcontinent. They continued to speculate extensively as the East Pakistani crisis began. Indian and Pakistani authorities were more deeply involved Bangladesh Revolution than the outside world, which responded the crisis slowly and remained reluctant to allow it to shape policy. When they failed to react effectively, the "Spirit of Tashkent" was hastily pushed aside. American officials, who had previously endorsed the treaty, valued Pakistan's help with China more than their worsening relations with India or peace in the subcontinent. Soviet politicians, who had gone to such great lengths to propose the treaty and maintain good relations with both nations, feared appearing unreliable to their Indian allies and unsympathetic to the revolutionary cause of the leftist Awami League. To varying degrees both sides condemned the bloodshed of Operation Searchlight, but were not planning on intervening as Indira Gandhi soon did.

Even with their minds focused on East Bengal, India and Pakistan were careful with their actions as the world watched them. Yahya Khan made promises for democratic elections that he did not honor, while Indira Gandhi continued to insist East Bengal remained a domestic,

Pakistani problem until the winter of 1971. However, one can now see that both nations exercised real agency and influence over both the great powers, and particularly the one most closely aligned to them in this crisis. Particularly enlightening is the sense of weakness present in certain State Department memos, as Nixon, Kissinger, and other officials debated again and again how to respond to the Liberation War. Similarly, the Soviet Union's deference to shifting Indian positions—going swiftly from framing East Bengal as a domestic affair to officially endorsing Indira Gandhi's call for a military intervention—conflicts with the assumed relationship between world powers and regional ones, particularly regional powers that continue to depend enormously on greater ones for the means to engage in military operations. India and Pakistan, and ultimate Bangladesh as well, clearly demonstrated agency as they effectively mobilized the attentions given to them by the major states to their own causes.

The fear of losing a partner to the political opposition in the Asian subcontinent, in turn leading to a polarization of the whole region into a starting point for a major war, had some appreciable effects on the major powers. Given that, in spite of everything happened, the United States and Soviet Union did not find themselves fighting in religious or irredentist conflicts themselves, their greatest fears may have been averted after all. The consequence of that was agency in the hands of the less powerful states who simultaneously avoided "closing" any diplomatic doors with the great powers. India would not remain an American pariah after the liberation of Bangladesh, and Pakistan continued diplomatic exchanges with the Soviet Union after the catastrophe of 1971.

Unanswered questions remain: in the Soviet Union, where the government had mandated an even-handed approach to both sides in the subcontinent, what led both official and unofficial voices to express support for an increasingly aggressive India, could be clearer. The United

States, despite considerable effort monitoring the situation in East Pakistan, seemed indecisive in its actions as the rebellion escalated, as when it ignored the infamous Blood Telegram. More extensive examination of the Soviet press in the second half of 1971 might have revealed additional influencing factors. Also beneficial would have been more information from United States agencies that were torn between numerous issues—China, Vietnam, the ongoing arms race—and often treated the distant rebellion in Pakistan as a peripheral concern. Bangladeshi narratives have said much about the role of the general population in challenging the influence of major nations, at least through the engine of the Awami League. Outside that region, the Liberation War is still treated primarily as a matter of top-level political intrigue, involving more backroom deals and high-level exchanges over the refugee crisis, rather than rallies in the streets and the refugees themselves.

Between the years of 1965 and 1971, influence over confrontational politics in the subcontinent appears as a zero-sum game. It seems clear that the great powers as well as other major nations—with the notable exception of China—sought peace in the region, even at the cost of unresolved, highly contentious issues between India and Pakistan and within their populations. Whether it was communalism, security, or secessionism, the great powers, dealing with the possibility of atomic warfare and the specter of the Second World War, sought to avoid fighting whenever possible. That position was insufficient, and agency moved from their leaders to those of India and Pakistan. The existing treaty framework, that may have otherwise bound Pakistan to the United States and India to the Soviet Union, obligated the great powers to continue their support of local initiatives, or risk dissolving the whole arrangement. The first signs of this appeared perhaps as early as the beginning of 1966, when Indian and Pakistani leaders were still at the negotiating table in Uzbekistan. On January 8, diplomacy had stalled and an increasingly

haggard Kosygin sat between President Ayub Khan and Prime Minister Shastri when Uzbek musicians performed in Hindi and Urdu for the delegations. Ayub Khan's information secretary noted that one particularly comedic line in Hindi left the theater in raucous laughter: *Hai Ram, mujh ko budda mil giya*, or "Oh god, how did I get hitched to this old man!" Sometime during that same evening, Kosygin was able to convince the two to each concede certain points, and to resume negotiations the next day. The day after, both leaders formally signed the Tashkent Declaration.[5]

As the Soviet prime minister played the part of host, he may have appreciated the Hindi play personally: he and his government had endeavored to inject the Soviet Union into the Asian subcontinent as a grand peacemaker. In the process he had bound his own country, just over forty years old at that point, to a number of conflicts and rivalries, some of which were centuries in the making. He had spent the previous week running back and forth between Indian and Pakistani delegations, sometimes personally, to convince two leaders to sign a treaty preventing conflict that many confidentially suspected would fail to address the ancient problems at the root of conflict. Even if it is assumed that Kosygin had a genuine, strong faith in the promises made at Tashkent, he and other still might have seen the first signs of its own demise.

Between 1965 and 1971, much of the world seemed to appreciate the uneasy truce between two rivals with the clear capability, via nuclear weapons, to obliterate human life. The subcontinent did not sleep easy, but instead took a mere breather between conflicts, formalized in the Tashkent Declaration. Existing animosities, integrated on many levels into the Cold War as a whole, did not enjoy the Cold War's détente, even as those supreme military powers proactively sought to use their influence to extinguish, rather than inflame, suspicions and rivalries. The means of preventing another Indo-Pakistani war may have been beyond the capabilities of great

[5] Gauhar, *Ayub Khan*, 264 – 266.

powers, as they attempted to reshape the world stage according to their own ideologies. In doing so, they remained committed to conflicts they might have otherwise had the opportunity to avoid or ignore, and became subject to the ambitions of countries and leaders far removed from the more commonly understood battlegrounds of the Cold War.

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