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## INDIA-PAKISTAN CONFLICT: RECORDS OF THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT, FEBRUARY 1963-1966



Over 16,000 pages of State Department Central Files on India and Pakistan from 1963 through 1966 make this collection a standard documentary resource for the study of the political relations between India and Pakistan during a crucial period in the Cold War and the shifting alliances and alignments in South Asia.

**Date Range:** 1963-1966

**Content:** 15,387 images

**Source Library:** U.S. National Archives

### Detailed Description:

Relations with Pakistan have demanded a high proportion of India's international energies and undoubtedly will continue to do so. India and Pakistan have divergent national ideologies and have been unable to establish a mutually acceptable power equation in South Asia. The national ideologies of pluralism, democracy, and secularism for India and of Islam for Pakistan grew out of the pre-independence struggle between the Congress and the All-India Muslim League, and in the early 1990s the line between domestic and foreign politics in India's relations with Pakistan remained blurred. Because great-power competition—between the United States and the Soviet Union and between the Soviet Union and China—became intertwined with the conflicts between India and Pakistan, India was unable to attain its goal of insulating South Asia from global rivalries. This superpower involvement enabled Pakistan to use external force in the face of India's superior endowments of population and resources.

The most difficult problem in relations between India and Pakistan since partition in August 1947 has been their dispute over Kashmir. Pakistan's leaders did not accept the legality of the Instrument of Accession of Kashmir to India, and undeclared war broke out in October 1947. It was the first of three conflicts between the two countries. Pakistan's representatives ever since have argued that the people of Kashmir should be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination through a plebiscite, as promised by Nehru and required by UN Security Council resolutions in 1948 and 1949. The inconclusive fighting led to a UN-

arranged cease-fire starting on January 1, 1949. On July 18, 1949, the two sides signed the Karachi Agreement establishing a cease-fire line that was to be supervised by the UN. The demarcation left Srinagar and almost 139,000 square kilometers under Indian control and 83,807 square kilometers under Pakistani control. Of these two areas, China occupied 37,555 square kilometers in India's Ladakh District (part of which is known as Aksai Chin) in 1962 and Pakistan ceded, in effect, 5,180 square kilometers in the Karakoram area to China when the two countries demarcated their common border in 1961-65, leaving India with 101,387 square kilometers and Pakistan with 78,387 square kilometers. Starting in January 1949 and still in place in 1995, the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan was tasked with supervising the cease-fire in Kashmir. The group comprises thirty-eight observers—from Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Uruguay—who rotate their headquarters every six months between Srinagar (summer) and Rawalpindi, Pakistan (winter).

In 1952 the elected and overwhelmingly Muslim Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, led by the popular Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, voted in favor of confirming accession to India. Thereafter, India regarded this vote as an adequate expression of popular will and demurred on holding a plebiscite. After 1953 Jammu and Kashmir was identified as standing for the secular, pluralistic, and democratic principles of the Indian polity. Nehru refused to discuss the subject bilaterally until 1963, when India, under pressure from the United States and Britain, engaged in six rounds of secret talks with Pakistan on "Kashmir and other related issues." These negotiations failed, as did the 1964 attempt at mediation made by Abdullah, who recently had been released from a long detention by the Indian government because of his objections to Indian control.

Armed infiltrators from Pakistan crossed the cease-fire line, and the number of skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani troops increased in the summer of 1965. Starting on August 5, 1965, India alleged, Pakistani forces began to infiltrate the Indian-controlled portion of Jammu and Kashmir. India made a countermove in late August, and by September 1, 1965, the second conflict had fully erupted as Pakistan launched an attack across the international line of control in southwest Jammu and Kashmir. Indian forces retaliated on September 6 in Pakistan's Punjab Province and prevailed over Pakistan's apparent superiority in tanks and aircraft. A cease-fire called by the UN Security Council on September 23 was observed by both sides. At Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in January 1966, the belligerents agreed to restore the status quo ante and to resolve outstanding issues by negotiation.

### *The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965*

In mid-1965 Pakistan sent guerrilla forces into the Indian part of Kashmir in the hope of stirring up a rebellion that would either oust the Indians or at least force the issue back onto the international agenda. Pakistani forces did not find as much support among the Kashmiri population as they had hoped, but fighting spread by August, and a process of escalation culminated in a full-scale Indian offensive toward Lahore on September 6. Fighting, frequently very bitter, continued until a UN-sponsored cease-fire took hold on September 23. Both sides had tacitly agreed not to let the war spread to the East Wing of Pakistan.

The war was militarily inconclusive' each side held prisoners and some territory belonging to the other. Losses were relatively heavy—on the Pakistani side, twenty aircraft, 200 tanks, and 3,800 troops. Pakistan's army had been able to withstand Indian pressure, but a continuation of the fighting would only have led to further losses and ultimate defeat for Pakistan. Most Pakistanis, schooled in the belief of their own martial prowess, refused to accept the possibility of their country's military defeat by "Hindu India" and were, instead, quick to blame their failure to attain their military aims on what they considered to be the ineptitude of Ayub Khan and his government.

Pakistan was rudely shocked by the reaction of the United States to the war. Judging the matter to be largely Pakistan's fault, the United States not only refused to come to Pakistan's aid under the terms of the Agreement of Cooperation, but issued a statement declaring its neutrality while also cutting off military supplies. The Pakistanis were embittered at what they considered a friend's betrayal, and the experience taught them to avoid relying on any single source of support. For its part, the United States was disillusioned by a war in which both sides used United States-supplied equipment. The war brought other repercussions for the security relationship as well. The United States withdrew its military assistance advisory group in July 1967. In response to these events, Pakistan declined to renew the lease on the Peshawar military facility, which ended in 1969. Eventually, United States-Pakistan relations grew measurably weaker as the United States became more deeply involved in Vietnam and as its broader interest in the security of South Asia waned.

Iran, Indonesia, and especially China gave political support to Pakistan during the war, thus suggesting new directions in Pakistan that might translate into support for its security concerns. Most striking was the attitude of the Soviet Union. Its post-Khrushchev leadership, rather than rallying reflexively to India's side, adopted a neutral position and ultimately provided the good offices at Tashkent, which led to the January 1966 Tashkent Declaration that restored the status quo ante.

The aftermath of the 1965 war saw a dramatic shift in Pakistan's security environment. Instead of a single alignment with the United States against China and the Soviet Union, Pakistan found itself cut off from United States military support, on increasingly warm terms with China, and treated equitably by the Soviet Union. Unchanged was the enmity with which India and Pakistan regarded each other over Kashmir. The result was the elaboration of a new security approach, called by Ayub Khan the "triangular tightrope"—a tricky endeavor to maintain good ties with the United States while cultivating China and the Soviet Union. Support from other developing nations was also welcome. None of the new relationships carried the weight of previous ties with the United States, but, taken together, they at least provided Pakistan with a political counterbalance to India.

#### *U.S. State Department Central Files*

The U.S. State Department Central Files are the definitive source of American diplomatic reporting on political, military, social, and economic developments throughout the world in the 20th century. Each part of the Central Files contains a wide range of materials from U.S. diplomats in foreign countries: special reports on political and military affairs' studies

and statistics on socioeconomic matters' interviews and minutes of meetings with foreign government officials' full texts of important letters, instructions, and cables sent and received by U.S. diplomatic personnel' voluminous reports and translations from foreign journals and newspapers' and countless translations of high-level foreign government documents.

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There are thousands of pages arranged topically and chronologically on crucial subjects: political parties and elections, unrest and revolution, human rights, government administration, fiscal and monetary issues, national defense, foreign policy-making, wars and alliances, religion, culture, trade, industry, natural resources, and more. The files of the American ambassadors to India and Pakistan during this time and their staffs provide convenient access to thousands of official records on the conflict and competition between India and Pakistan during a key period in the Cold War era.