

FORUM:	Security Council
ISSUE:	Situation in Pakistan
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POSITION:	Head President of Security Council

Introduction

Since gaining independence through a violent and tumultuous separation from India, Pakistan has never been able to install a stable democratic government. Its various administrations have often begun with promises of increased equity and representation before developing into functioning dictatorships. Numerous armed groups whose main agenda generally always involves dissatisfaction with the government have sprung up as a result, further destabilizing the nation. Finally, an appalling humanitarian crisis has emerged, further compounded by extreme temperatures, limited healthcare access, and rampant displacement.

Background

In August 1947, British lawyer Cyril Radcliffe drew a line down a map of the British Raj, splicing what was formerly India into two separate nations, India and Pakistan (Malik). On August 14, the two nations formerly declared independence. Prior to that moment, Britain itself had undergone a momentous change when Winston Churchill's government was replaced with a Labor government headed by Clement Attlee. Bearing a focus on post-war social reform and large-scale nationalization, Attlee's Socialist government was more than ready to leave India, where many nationalist protests had erupted over World War II (Burrows). Britain soon dispatched a diplomatic mission headed by William Pethick-Lawrence to hold negotiations with India's two dominating political parties, the Muslim League and National Congress—the former, headed by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the latter by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Ultimately, the talks were unsuccessful; Jinnah and Nehru were unable to reach a compromise that they perceived as fair for Muslims and Hindus,



Figure #1: Cyril Radcliffe, the man who decided how British Raj would be divided



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the groups that they respectively represented. The final decision was to divide India into two separate states (Burki and Ziring). Initially, the timeline for this to happen was several years long. But because of the unrest caused by persistent nationalist riots, the British viceroy Lord Louis Mountbatten shortened the timeline to a matter of months (Malik). The Indian Independence Act, commonly called Partition, created the state of Pakistan, which consisted of two parts—one towards the west of India, and one to the east. Partition, already a traumatizing event for the people of both countries, left Pakistan with the less profitable and developed land, setting India off at a greater advantage and superior geopolitical location. India also chose not to split their financial and military resources with the new nation (Burki and Ziring).

In its first years, then, Pakistan grappled with much political unrest and turmoil, for the security and stability found in military, economic, and industrial power rested with India. One prominent problem

Partition of India in August 1947

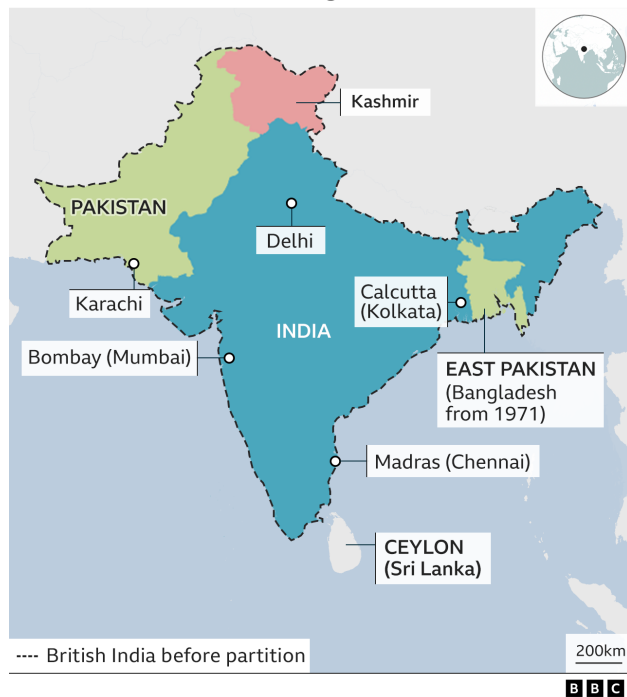


Figure #2: British Raj after Partition

that resulted directly from Partition was that of the disputed region of Kashmir, formerly a princely state and after Partition given the choice to merge with India or Pakistan. The region was Muslim-majority but ruled by a Hindu maharaja, Hari Singh.

Geographically speaking, Kashmir was an attractive region, located at the intersection of India, Pakistan, and China, while also offering close access to Russia. Both nations began to put immense pressure on Singh to merge with them; Pakistan, in fact, even encouraged civilian riots to that end in Kashmir. This turned out to be a mistake, however, as Kashmir turned to India for military aid to quell the increasing violence. India gladly offered its resources with the caveat that Kashmir would accede to them. The mutual

understanding behind the accession was that Kashmir would eventually hold a UN-mediated plebiscite in which the Kashmiris would decide their homeland's future. That plebiscite never happened. Neither India nor Pakistan agreed to the preconditions of the Security Council resolution drafted to organize the plebiscite, and the result was that Kashmir became a disputed territory and tinderbox for clashes between both sides (Connah). The Line of Control (LoC), established in 1972 by the Simla Agreement, divided Kashmir into two administrative zones, one controlled by India and one by Pakistan. Both nations lay

claim to the entire region. Those who bear the brunt of the conflict are the Kashmiris who live along the LoC (Biswas).

Going back a couple decades, Jinnah, Pakistan's leader at the time of Partition, stepped into the role of British viceroy rather than helping to create a stable national government and distributing power broadly. His forceful, magnetic personality and almost total control over government processes meant that his death just a year after independence created a gaping power vacuum. In the power struggles that resulted afterwards, General Muhammad Ayub Khan came to prominence in 1958. Ayub Khan abrogated the constitution, put the nation under military law, and introduced the idea of "Basic Democracies," which would replace the parliamentary form of government and were composed of members of the military and industrial elite whom he hand-selected. Along with bringing these changes to Pakistan's government, Ayub Khan also sought to implement widespread reforms, both economic and political. Under his reforms, the nation's economic growth per annum doubled. However, the reforms largely impacted West Pakistan. Because of this, tensions between the West and East Pakistan grew. The problems inherent to granting independence to these two distinct regions separated by over 1,000 miles were not only limited to the economic disparity, but also to cultural differences. East Pakistan was populated primarily by Bengali speakers and West Pakistan with Punjabi speakers (Burki and Ziring).

Amidst the call for greater autonomy for East Pakistan in the late 50s, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rose to prominence as a political leader in the Awami League, an East Pakistani political party. In 1965, Ayub Khan's popularity fell to an all-time low after major skirmishes erupted in the Kashmir region. He stepped down from power four years later. Yahya Khan, his successor, agreed to govern the nation until democratic nationwide elections could be held the year later. The 1970 elections resulted in the Awami League gaining majority seats in the National Assembly, which theoretically gave it the right to form the national government. Yahya Khan and West Pakistan responded by postponing the opening of Parliament and arresting Awami members on the pretense of "keeping the peace." When Rahman retaliated by calling for a general strike in East Pakistan, the central government dispatched its troops to the region. What followed was a bloody civil war that massacred anywhere between 500,000 to 3 million East Pakistanis (The National Archives). India, who would naturally benefit greatly if Pakistan were to lose its eastern half, began to deliver



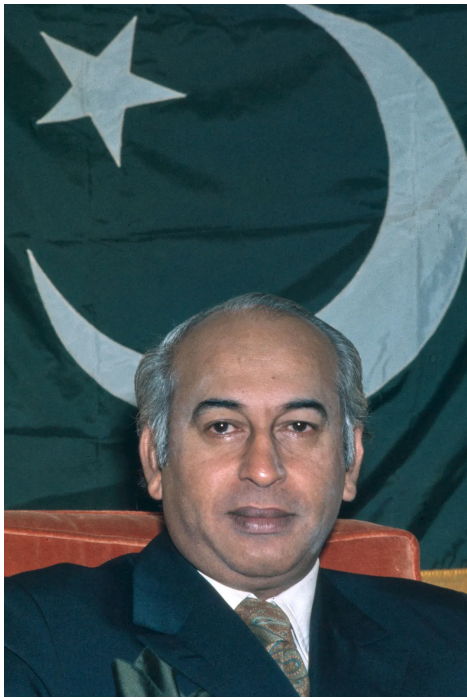
Figure #3: The peace document that would give Bangladesh its independence is signed



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military aid to the Bengal rebels and sponsor a government-in-exile which operated within its borders. West Pakistan, knowing it stood little chance of withstanding the superior Indian military, attacked India from the west, banking on the element of surprise. India's response was swift and decisive. Their troops swept into East Pakistan, demolished the Pakistani troops, who were already low on morale, and seized victory for the region. We now know of East Pakistan as Bangladesh (Burki and Ziring).

Shortly afterward, Yahya Khan transferred power to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, head of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which came in second during the 1970 general election. Though the first



*Figure #4: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,
Pakistan's first democratically elected
president*

democratically elected president, his regime resembled a dictatorship, with the formation of the Federal Security Force (FSF), a police force tasked with the specific purpose of protecting him and eliminating his political enemies. Since his administration, Pakistan has been plagued by similar pseudo-democracies with leaders rising to power via family connections, questionable elections, or military coups; promising a completely new form of government that would take the people's best interests into account; and subsequently deteriorating into a corruption-rife administration little better than a dictatorship (Burki and Ziring). The current president of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, has a long political career and many political connections; his wife, the now deceased Benazir Bhutto, served as Pakistan's Prime Minister from 1993 to 1996 and 1988-1990 and also happened to be the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Wikipedia Contributors, "Benazir Bhutto").

Although his policies nominally aim to strengthen democratic institutions, his administration has cracked down ruthlessly on any political dissent, particularly from rival political party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), whose leader Imran Khan has been imprisoned on charges of money laundering. Along with its tight control over political opposition, the Zardari administration frequently comes under fire for its mismanagement of Pakistan-administered Kashmir (PaK) and exclusion of Kashmiris from political decision-making. The persistent governmental suppression of political dissent has made Pakistan a pressure cooker where militant factions, separatist groups, and the central government are embroiled in sustained conflict at the expense of the people of the nation (As.com).

Problems Raised



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Political Unrest

Because of its diverse ethnolinguistic population, Pakistan's main problem with governance has been the inability to ensure adequate representation. One example includes the Zardari administration's recent decision to abolish 12 Kashmiri refugee seats in the legislative body, plunging into deeper marginalization the already under-represented Kashmiri population (Khawaja). Lack of political diversity has led to the creation of armed militant groups, each with their own political agenda and violent methods to promote it. For example, the Balochs, a unique people group who populate the Balochistan



Figure #5: Baloch insurgents

province, have grievances towards the central government dating back to 1999, when they argued that the army was dominated and subsequently controlled by the Punjabi population. From this group sprouts a separatist insurgency movement that engages in regular skirmishes with the central government. Due to lack of consistent information, it has been difficult to create an accurate picture of the extent and control of

the Baloch separatists (Kupecz). On an entirely different note, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is another extremist group operating in Pakistan, albeit with very different motives. TTP is a conglomerate of extreme Islamist militant groups whose objective is to overthrow the current Pakistani government and replace it with an Islamic emirate reminiscent of the de facto government in Afghanistan (Pandya and Shah; United Nations). The Baloch insurgency and TTP movement are but glimpses into the current political climate of Pakistan.

Instability in Kashmir

As it has been since Partition, Indo-Pak relations are highly strained. Both nations lay claim to the Kashmir region, but neither have actual military and political control over it. As a result, the LoC has become one of the most militarized borders in the world. Previous ceasefires have had some positive effect; a ceasefire beginning in February 2021 led to a wary peace of four years but was ended by new flare-ups in March 2025. Unpredictable cross-firing at the LoC has led to a protracted displacement crisis, which can impact thousands of Kashmiris in times of intense fighting.

Climate Disasters and Humanitarian Need

Although Pakistan contributes to less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, it has borne the brunt of climate related disasters in the past decade. Some parts of the country may reach lethal temperatures of up to 50°C, causing widespread displacement and increasing the risk of heatstroke, which poses a problem to the ill-equipped healthcare providers of Pakistan. Extreme temperatures also



Figure #6: Extreme flooding conditions in Pakistan

exacerbate the flood season and with abnormal amounts of rainfall and subsequent flooding, over 2.9 million Pakistanis were displaced in 2025. The massive displacement crisis compounds a deepening humanitarian crisis, wherein over 60 million people live in poverty. Meanwhile, over 50% of the population do not have access to basic healthcare. The government spends less than 1% of its

GDP to fund healthcare; as a result, individuals must shoulder their own healthcare costs and this puts a strain on households who already make barely enough to cover the cost of living. Many households are then reliant on unsustainable income sources, such as humanitarian assistance (Amnesty International; Ijaz).

International Actions

Ceasefires at Line of Control

Historically, despite India and Pakistan's claims that they acted bilaterally, ceasefires at the Line of Control in Kashmir have been brokered with the help of third parties. The first ceasefire in 1948 was mediated by the United Nations, while the most recent one in 2025 was negotiated with the supervision of the United States and other nations. Although temporary ceasefires have some benefit, they have never resulted in actual consensus reached



Figure #7: Soldiers patrol the Line of Control, one of the world's most militarized borders



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between India and Pakistan regarding the disputed territory. Kashmir essentially serves as the hotspot for knee-jerk reactions to any flare-up in the animosity the two countries share.

IMF-Sponsored Economic Reform Program

In 2024, the IMF agreed to partner with Pakistan in an economic reform program, which included a 7 billion USD loan, to stabilize the economy and hopefully mitigate poverty and improve the government's economic policies. Although the program did help to bring the poverty rate down and decrease inflation, the Pakistani economy remains fragile and many Pakistanis continue to emigrate out of the country in search of better job opportunities (Hussain).

International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan

The International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, held in 2023, espoused the goals of



Figure #8: Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif speaks at the summit

creating a comprehensive framework for Pakistan to recover and build resilience after being besieged by catastrophic floods that year. The summit ultimately produced the Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework (4RF), a document which proposed suggestions regarding aid delivery, policy changes, and infrastructure rebuilding (UN

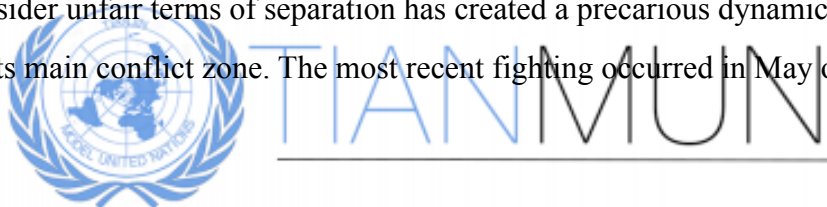
Development Programme). The conference also led to a pledge of 10 billion USD from various members of the international community to be contributed over the

next several years. Although the monetary aid will doubtless bolster Pakistan's efforts to mitigate climate change effects, government mismanagement of funds remains a concern (Hansberry).

Key Players

India

Despite sharing many cultural and religious similarities and living in peace as one nation under the British flag for many years, India and Pakistan are now bitter enemies. The tragedy of Partition along with what many consider unfair terms of separation has created a precarious dynamic, which sees the LoC in Kashmir as its main conflict zone. The most recent fighting occurred in May of this year, when



India fired missiles into both PaK and Pakistan itself in retaliation for a terrorist attack on Indian soil allegedly sponsored by Pakistan. What followed were four intense days of fighting which reached a standstill after the US mediated a ceasefire on May 10 (Grare). Tensions between the two nuclear-armed countries continue to escalate, if sporadically, and the conflict poses a threat to the region at large.

China

China and Pakistan have historically strong ties. In 2013, China announced its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), one of the most massive international infrastructure projects ever conceived. An important component of the BRI was the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a mass of energy infrastructure, port development, and the creation of economic zones.



Figure #9: Sharif pictured with Chinese President Xi Jinping

The project cemented China as Pakistan's strongest ally and the two nations have since maintained close relations, whether that be in agricultural cooperation, pooling defense resources, or railroad links (McBride et al.; Miller). President Zardari has continued to foster this connection and began a 10-day diplomatic tour of the nation in September of this year. Needless to say, whatever shape Pakistan's political or military aspirations take in the near future, China will undoubtedly be a part of it (Raza).

Possible Solutions

Tackling Government Corruption

Addressing the corruption that has existed in the Pakistani government since its birth will be no easy task. Much of the trust between the government and its citizens, especially those in marginalized communities, has already been broken. In order to repair that trust, Pakistan must create transparent accountability systems that make their decision-making processes available to the public. Another way for the people to bolster their political voice would be to encourage the use of Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs) or something similar to provide a channel for people to anonymously report corruption. Given that Pakistan does not currently have much of the capacity needed for anti-corruption efforts, they

should also cooperate with the supervision and suggestions of third parties, such as the United Nations or regional bodies like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Humanitarian Assistance

Currently, Pakistan is generally very responsive to aid efforts; the relevant agencies and organizations at the UN can take advantage of this by streamlining aid efforts and working closely with the government to ensure that aid is used in the most productive way possible. Humanitarian assistance, especially in the form of economic relief, should focus on strengthening Pakistan's existing sectors. For example, UN bodies can focus on training more healthcare workers as a long-term goal instead of merely providing healthcare supplies and temporary services. Economic relief, too, should be focused on policy recommendations and making the economy more resilient as opposed to merely providing funds.

Glossary

Abrogate

Make null.

Advocacy and Legal Advice Centers (ALACs)

A Transparency International initiative that provides safe channels for citizens to report governmental corruption.

Awami League

Major center-left political party in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.

British Raj

Refers to the subcontinent previously controlled by the British Empire that includes India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Muslim League

Political party that at the time of Partition advocated for a separate Muslim state.

National Congress

Oldest political party in India that advocates for freedom and secularism; notable members include Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP)

Democratic socialist party in Pakistan founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.



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Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

Political party in Pakistan formed by Imran Khan that operates from Islamic ideology.

Plebiscite

A special election in which citizens vote directly on a specific issue.

Princely state

Region in the British Raj that served special autonomous functions.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Association that exists to encourage mutual assistance between South Asian nations.

Viceroy

A representative of a monarch who rules on their behalf in another nation.



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