

**WAR** *at*  
*the* **TOP OF THE WORLD**

**The Struggle for  
Afghanistan, Kashmir,  
and Tibet**

**Eric S. Margolis**

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# Prologue

*Fight in the way of God against those who fight against you,  
but do not yourselves be aggressors; for verily, God does not love  
aggressors. . . . Fight against them until there is no longer  
oppression and all men are free to worship God.*

HOLY KORAN

KASHMIR. LINE OF CONTROL. 0243hrs.

**T**wo star shells drifted slowly down from the moonless sky, blazing an intense, sharp-edged magnesium light over the pine forests below. Off to our left, beyond the next hill, Indian border guards began firing shimmering volleys of tracer bullets. From somewhere farther behind the fortified Line of Control (LOC) that divides Kashmir, a battery of Indian 81mm mortars opened fire.

Rashid laughed. "They are frightened. The Indians are firing at ghosts again." Indeed, Indian troops guarding the ceasefire line in Kashmir were jumpy and trigger-happy. Small bands of *mujahedin* (holy warriors), were slipping across the hilly, wooded border each night to join the national uprising in the Indian-held portion of Kashmir. The nervous Indians fired at every sound, at anything that moved in the night.

We were huddled down behind a small knoll, shivering slightly as the damp cold of the Kashmir mountains penetrated our olive-drab field jackets. After a few minutes, the firing abated, then ceased completely. The rising wind stirred the tall pines around us. Rashid rose to his feet and began surveying the Indian positions below us through a pair of powerful German field glasses. He had come up to the front line that night to study Indian defenses. I had joined him on the reconnaissance mission, eager to have a close look at the barrier defenses on the Indian side of the Line of Control, a series of strongpoints behind a lethal barrier of thick razor wire, minefields, and delicate sensors that detected movement and sound.

Rashid had made, as I had, a very long, arduous journey to join the *intifada* in Kashmir. At some time in the distant past, Rashid had been an engineering student in Iraq. He showed me an old, dog-eared photo of himself: youthful, beardless, and slim. Now, many years and more

pounds later, the burly Rashid looked the picture of a modern Islamic holy warrior, with his thick black beard, regulation Chitral knitted hat from Afghanistan, green field outfit and combat boots, AK-47 Kalashnikov, and a brace of Chinese-made grenades.

Soon after graduating from university in Baghdad, Rashid went off to Pakistan to join the great *jihad* (holy war), that was being waged against the Soviet army in Afghanistan. For Rashid, and thousands of other idealistic young Muslim men and women, the struggle against the Communists in Afghanistan was not merely a crusade against evil and oppression; it seemed, at the time, a path that would lead the downtrodden Islamic world to renewal and dignity.

Rashid had joined the Islamic International Brigade and fought the Communists for four years in the 1980s in Afghanistan, where he was trained by the CIA as a heavy weapons specialist.

We heard a series of rapid explosions about a mile off to our left. Rashid told me Indian howitzers were firing at a *nullah*, a narrow, dry gully that intersected the border at a right angle, and that provided a sheltered corridor along which mujahedin units slipped across the border between the Indian and Pakistani parts of Kashmir. Indian patrols were either using newly acquired night-vision devices to spot and then bring fire down on a group of holy warriors who were trying to penetrate the minefields and wire along the LOC, or were merely interdicting a known crossing point with random shelling.

The Muslim uprising in the two-thirds of Kashmir occupied by India had been under way for more than four years. After nearly half a century of Indian rule that was as inefficient and capricious as it was corrupt and brutal, Kashmiri Muslims had unexpectedly exploded in rebellion. The uprising surprised everyone, not least the Kashmiris themselves, who had long had a reputation for passivity, and wholly lacked the martial reputation of their other northern neighbors.

But the victory in 1989 by Islamic forces over the mighty Soviet Union and its Afghan Communist satraps had galvanized the entire Muslim world, including the Muslim majority in neighboring Kashmir. For the first time in memory, Muslims had defeated a mighty colonial power, the USSR, which was also the world's leading oppressor of Islam.

The struggle to free Muslim lands from European and Russian colonial rule had been going on for sixty years. In the 1930s, bands of Libyan mujahedin had breached barbed wire and minefields laid by the

Italians along the border with Egypt. Twenty years later, Algerian mujahedin had fought their way across the minefields and electrified wire of the lethal Morice Line, built by the French to halt infiltration and the resupply of the rebel forces. In the 1950s and '60s, Palestinian *fedayeen* had been cut down trying to breach the wire and minefields defending Israel's border. Now it was Rashid's turn to lead his holy warriors across a new line of death on a new jihad.

## 6

## The Kingdom of Sikander

The fabled state of Kashmir lies in majestic isolation amid the towering mountain ranges separating the overpopulated plains of India from the endless steppes and deserts of Central Asia. Kashmir has long been called the jewel of India, the Switzerland of Asia, and the abode of the gods.

The noted nineteenth-century geopoliticians Sir Halford Mackinder and Baron Karl Haushofer described this region as one of the world's primary strategic pivots—the nexus of continents, empires, and civilizations.

Kashmir is surrounded by a great bowl of crags: the Himalayas and Karakoram. Its borders are disputed but Kashmir's total area is approximately 92,200 square miles (239,000 sq. km), roughly the size of Great Britain. With a population of 11 million, Kashmir is larger than half the world's nations. Eight and a half million Kashmiris live in the Indian-held sector, 2.5 million in the Pakistani portion, or Azad Kashmir. Another million people of Kashmiri origin live in the Pakistani-administered Gilgit-Baltistan region, or Northern Territories, an area claimed by Kashmiri nationalists as part of their nation. A further million live in Pakistan, or are scattered in a diaspora around the globe.

The majority of Kashmiris are tall, slender, fair-skinned people of

Aryan, Indo-European origin. A minority, concentrated in Ladakh, the Gilgit Valley, and Baltistan, are Mongol-Tibetans, short, dark-skinned people little different in physical appearance from the tribes of Tibet. Kashmir also has two small groups of nomadic mountaineers, the Gujars and Dards. Culturally, Kashmir's peoples have traditionally looked northward to Central Asia and Tibet, rather than south to India.

Unless you are a yak, or a bird, there are only two ways of getting into the Indian-ruled portion of Kashmir. The first is an interminably long, physically excruciating, and often perilous 435-mile (700-km) road voyage from New Delhi, India, over rising hills and steep mountain passes, which are often blocked by snow or landslides, to Srinagar, Kashmir's lake-girded capital.

A flight into the Kashmir Valley from New Delhi on one of India's internal airlines is also rather risky: their pilots are notorious for drink and incompetence; maintenance is shoddy; and aircraft are old, tired, and often suffering from advanced metal fatigue. Indian air carriers are almost always late; flights are frequently canceled because of mechanical problems or for other, more mysterious reasons.

Weaving and bobbing in a small Indian airliner between snow-capped mountains and around huge banks of cumulus clouds is a grandly hair-raising experience, even for the most phlegmatic or jaded traveler. But however dangerous flying inside India may be, it is quicker and considerably safer to take a plane than to brave the sustained terror and intense discomforts of road travel.

The Pakistani portion of divided Kashmir, called Azad ("Free") Kashmir, can be reached only by a long, tortuous journey over evil mountain roads, a trek that begins at Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, in northern Punjab, where the foothills of the mighty Karakoram range start to rise. Islamabad itself is no easy destination to attain. I had decided to go to Azad Kashmir to follow the new jihad in the Indian-ruled part of the divided state, and to renew my contacts with some of the mujahedin I had met during the Afghan conflict.

• • •

Custom-made capitals are disturbing, sterile places, unnatural creations that are half ghost town, half Potemkin village. Their awkward locations are determined not by the natural evolutionary logic of

urbanism, geography, and trade, but by fear of foreign invasion, desire to escape the evils of commercial contamination, the need to be in friendly tribal territory, or, worst of all, rampant megalomania.

Think of Brasilia, a sort of bureaucratic Devil's Island, preposterously sited in the middle of a vast nothingness, a good 1,000 miles (1,600 km) from the inhabited coastal regions of Brazil. Of Romanian tyrant Nicolae Ceaușescu's monstrous Megalomaniapolis of neo-Stalinist palaces, built on the bulldozed ruins of elegant old Bucharest. Abuja, the new Nigerian capital, fallen into semi-ruin and slipping back into the jungle even before its construction was completed. Or the latest folly of would-be grandeur, the new Kazakh capital at Astana, a windblown former caravan stop on the empty Central Asian steppe.

Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, was created in 1954 for all these bad reasons by its then president, Field Marshal Ayoub Khan, a tough Pathan soldier from the Northwest Frontier. Ayoub sought to remove government from the nefarious clutches of corrupt, wicked Karachi; to move away from unfriendly Sind Province to his political, military, and tribal power base in the north; and, of course, to leave a grandiose monument of his enlightened rule.

Five decades later, Islamabad remains a monument of sorts to Ayoub, with its squat, uniform blocks of banal, white marble government buildings set among leafy trees and lush gardens. Streets are laid out in an eminently logical grid pattern, and numbered, appropriately, like so many office files. The city is whistle-clean, orderly, tranquil, and odor-free, a leafy bureaucratic oasis carefully set apart from the otherwise ubiquitous squalor, tumult, and disorder of South Asia. Islamabad looks and smells nothing like the rest of Pakistan. The capital is a brain detached from the nation's body, floating, as in a B-grade science-fiction film, in a sterile, liquid-filled container called Islamabad.

After two steamy nights in Islamabad, I set off for Azad Kashmir, wedged in the back of a Japanese car whose features included exceptionally bad springs, a struggling motor, and an impaired braking system. My ultimate destination was Chokoti, a village that lies at the apex of a sharp salient along the mountainous ceasefire line between Indian and Pakistani forces in Kashmir. The road to the north is deceptive. You first leave Islamabad along a smooth-surfaced highway with four luxurious lanes, bordered by impressive white curbstones. Once out of sight of Islamabad, however, this Pakistani autobahn soon dete-

riorates into a two-lane pot-holed road that winds laboriously upward to the hill station of Muree, a famous refuge of colonial British from the murderous summer heat of the Indian plains.

Muree, a cluster of low wooden buildings atop a steep hill, has little to recommend it save its 7,500-foot (2,286-m) altitude and panoramic views of the Karakoram Mountains to the north. Any pretense at modern arterial communications ceases at Muree. Beyond, the road hugs the side of Jhelum River, one of the five main tributaries of the great Indus River. The road, by now a narrow strip of intermittent asphalt punctuated by deep potholes, interrupted by water courses, and liberally peppered with fallen rocks and branches, wound down through narrow gorges.

Overladen trucks, threatening to capsize at any moment, careened perilously around blind corners. Animals and pedestrians ambled along the road, as heedless of danger as if it were a country lane. Gaily painted buses, known as "flying coaches," navigated with an equal disregard for safety, as if eager to deliver their tightly packed human cargoes into the hands of Allah the Merciful. In fact, each year numerous flying coaches miss turns and fall into the Jhelum or the even mightier Indus, vast torrents of roiling, vicious, gray water filled with an aqueous avalanche of rocks, boulders, and logs. The unfortunate charabancs and their passengers are ground to unidentifiable bits in this lethal Himalayan slurry.

As the road again rose, the air grew steadily cooler. The torrid heat of the plains below was forgotten as we climbed through thick forests of spruce, beech, and pine. Clouds and mist hung low, gray and moist. Freshets of icy water poured down the mossy sides of the ever-steeper cliffs banking the road and river.

Wet, muddy, and unstable, the road grew more perilous as we progressed. Each hairpin turn threatened either a watery grave in the Jhelum River or instant pulverization by a hurtling truck or bus. Road travel seems to be Pakistan's natural form of population control.

One quickly gets what I call "Pakistani road terror," a condition that combines utter helplessness with panic, flashes of fatalism, and nervous frenzy. It's impossible to close your eyes for a second, even during a twenty-hour ride, lest you fail to see your last moments on Earth. Screaming at the drivers, who keep their pedals to the floor and horns blaring, is pointless. They shrug, laugh at the foolish *farangi*, mutter

curses in Baluchi or some obscure dialect, and go even faster. You cling desperately to the seat back, or straps, brace your battered body and pray to Allah, Vishnu, Buddha, and the Holy Virgin of Santiago that you will survive the next mile.

After six hours of this unrelenting torture, we arrive at Muzaffarabad, the grandly named capital of the third of the mountain state controlled by Pakistan, Azad Kashmir. The city is very far from impressive. It is a dismal collection of moldering concrete buildings and wooden shacks set in a dreary valley, with the usual Indo-Pakistani urban backdrop of broken-down vehicles, stray animals, street urchins, refuse heaps, ugly overhead power lines, and squalid shops lit by a single, dim fluorescent bulb giving off a funereal blue glow. I was not impressed. Could this truly be the gateway to fabled Kashmir?

I was escorted, with much solemnity, to meet the prime minister of Azad Kashmir, a soft-spoken, venerable gentleman with a very white beard, neatly attired in a gray Nehru jacket and a high Karakul fur hat. Very politely, in his gentle voice, he denounced the impious, godless Indians who were raping and pillaging his beloved Kashmir. "You must study the Holy Koran," he admonished me gently, wagging a finger and showing grandfatherly concern for the visiting nonbeliever. "Allah will guide us to the true path in Kashmir, and smite the ungodly." Brave words, but there were some 840 million ungodly Hindus across the border.

The prime minister seemed to have little else of note to say. We exchanged platitudes, and drank milky tea. Known as *chai*, this form of tea is unique to the Asian subcontinent. To make it properly, you must take a battered, blackened, greasy aluminum pan; add contaminated water, two or three tablespoonfuls of insect-infested sugar, raw, unpasteurized milk, and black, perfumed tea; then boil it all up into a sweet white drink that will either cure whatever ails travelers to these parts or, more likely, leave you with a fever, cholera, and assorted parasites. In these parts, tea cannot be refused when offered, which it always is. I discreetly gulped down an antibiotic capsule I had learned to always keep secreted in my pocket for just such social occasions.

I was relieved to bid the venerable prime minister farewell and continue our journey to see the refugee camps in Azad Kashmir and continue on to the front at Chokoti. We left town, and crossed the rushing river over an old, groaning Bailey bridge left over from World War II.

There was a large flag-decked stone arch surmounting its far end, bearing a sign proclaiming "Welcome to Azad Kashmir." We drove through, leaving melancholy Muzaffarabad well behind.

As before, the narrow, wet, crumbling road followed the sinuous gorge hewn by the raging Jhelum River into the heart of the granite mountains, ever deeper into Kashmir. Sprays of water from the raging river washed over the road and our car. Occasional clusters of hovels and orchards clung to the side of the road. Otherwise, we were alone in the great fastness of soaring mountains, rushing water, and winding defiles.

By now, the mountains had become taller and more jagged, so that their serrated peaks seemed to shred the thin white clouds scudding over them. We were awash in green: thick stands of trees and bush; lichen-covered rocks; and broad slopes blanketed with tall, damp, glistening grass. A sea of welcome luscious green after the endless aridity of the dun-colored plains. And everywhere precious water, worth more than human life in the dry south, gushing forth from rocks, running like quicksilver down granite slopes, collecting in sparkling pools, cascading with abandon into the Jhelum River. This seemed an outrageous, criminally extravagant waste of precious water, like gold coins thrown into the sea for the entertainment of children. I recalled an old love poem of the Gujar nomads: "I am thirsty; you are my water..."

At that precise moment, I suddenly understood why Indians and Pakistanis were willing to kill for Kashmir, why they had warred fifty years over this kingdom in the clouds. Kashmir aroused the most ferocious and unique passions in everyone, passions that brooked neither compromise nor concession. The place quite simply was heaven. And no one was about to hand over heaven, of all places, to a hated enemy. To dwellers on the flat, sere, furnace-like plains of north India and Punjab, Kashmir was a dream: inexhaustible sweet water; cool air; lush, dark soil; trees, flowers, fruits; and beautiful, fair-skinned women. No matter that few Indians had actually seen Kashmir. It was truly the jewel of India, the guardian of the holy rivers, the abode of the gods.

To comprehend the importance of Kashmir to the Indian psyche, one must first understand the role played by race in India's ancient culture. Few outsiders understand how important caste and skin color are in Hindu society.

The linguistic origin of the word *caste* comes from the Portuguese and

Spanish term for race, *casta*. Rightly so, because the caste system discriminates by race and enforces social stratification; one of its prime goals in India is to keep the darker-skinned lower orders, in particular, Dravidians, from mixing socially or sexually with the lighter-skinned high castes. The caste system has become so fragmented into subcastes, and so much a part of India's social fabric, that its racist origins have come to be widely ignored or forgotten. India, for example, became a leading foe and constant critic of South Africa's apartheid system, unconscious of the irony that its own caste system was just as racially driven and pervasive as that imposed by the regime it so ardently denounced.

High-caste India, however, was not alone in seeking to maintain the Aryan whiteness of its skin. In neighboring Burma, Thailand, and China, aristocracy and high class were always denoted by fair skin, and remain so today. This is also the case in many parts of Africa, where non-Negroid Hamitic blood, as in the case of Somalia and Ethiopia, or among Tutsis, is deemed a sign of great beauty. Even African-Americans have been accused of this practice, with successful black men picking light-skinned women for girlfriends or wives. Seeing fair skin as more attractive and desirable than dark appears to be a custom practiced around the world.

At the apex of India's caste pyramid are Brahmins, who believe themselves defiled if any of the food they consume has been touched by a lower-caste person, or if even the shadow of such a person falls upon them. Economics reinforces caste for the large numbers of Indian peasants who are condemned to permanent indentured servitude, unable ever to escape the crushing debts and accumulating interest they owe to rapacious moneylenders. Indebtedness passes from one generation to the next, ensuring the permanence of their near-slavery. At the bottom of the caste system are 160 million untouchables, today known as *dalits*, a group whose original function was menial chores and the sweeping up of feces deposited in the street by higher-caste defecators. Some years ago when I was in India, sociologists were amazed to discover an unknown subcaste of untouchables who had never previously been identified because they were not allowed to appear in daylight. These wretches lived exclusively in garbage dumps, where they fed on refuse, emerging only at night to do washing for slightly higher-caste untouchables.

The Brahmin caste has long provided Hindu India's ruling élite. Brahmins and other high castes are generally of Indo-European, or

Aryan, blood. Groups of nomadic Aryan tribes from Western Asia—the progenitors of Europe's Indo-European settlers—came down into north India through the Khyber Pass around 1500 BC, spreading rapidly across the subcontinent as far east as Bengal. The religion of these Aryan tribes, based on the holy books of the Veda with their pantheon of warrior sky deities, spread in the wake of the invaders; by 1000 BC it had developed into Brahmanism, a more complex, nuanced faith, the precursor of today's Hindu faith.

Hinduism divides society into four basic castes: Brahmins (priests), Ksatriya (nobles, warriors); Vaisya (merchants or farmers); and Sudra (workers). Over the centuries innumerable subcastes have developed. The only way for a Hindu to rise from a lower to a higher caste is through the process of reincarnation.

The Aryan Hindus were racially and linguistically akin to the early Germanic tribes that migrated into Europe. This link can easily be distinguished by the word for "king." In Europe's languages, *roi*, *rex*, and *rey* all share the same ancient Aryan linguistic root as the Indian term, *raja*. The Aryans displaced India's indigenous Dravidians, a smaller, dark-skinned people, pushing them down into southern India. Today, skin color and language are the great divide of India: in the north, Hindi-speaking Aryans; in the south, dark-skinned speakers of Dravidian languages such as Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu. A northern Indian from Punjab or Uttar Pradesh is as distinct racially and linguistically as a Norwegian is from a Sicilian.

Brahmins from Kashmir, who held the highest rank on this racial-religious-social scale, are held in great esteem for their fair skin, fine features, and aristocratic ways. To Hindus, Kashmir is a repository of the pure essence of Aryan Hindu culture. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister and founding father, was a Kashmiri Brahmin. Brilliant, haughty, and imperious, Nehru was the embodiment of Hindu hereditary royalty.

Legend has it that the light-skinned peoples of Kashmir, Gilgit, the Hunza Valley, and Baltistan are descendants of the soldiers of Alexander the Great. Those who know Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*, or the superb film that was made of it, will recall how the local tribes awaited the return of Sikander, Alexander's son. There may, in fact, be substance to this charming legend. Alexander fought his way through the Khyber Pass and entered northern India via the

Indus valley in 327 BC. The following year, Alexander won a major battle against the local king at Hydapses, but his army refused to march any deeper into India.

Alexander returned to Persia, but he left behind many thousands of his élite Macedonian troops, with orders to marry local women and found Greek satrapies. In classical times, Macedonians and most Greeks were a fair-skinned, blue-eyed people who showed their Germanic roots—a far cry from today's Hellenes, who are the product of centuries of racial mixing with multiethnic Ottoman Turks, Slavs, and other Balkan peoples.

Cut off in Kashmir from India and Afghanistan by the ramparts of the Karakorams and Himalayas, the Greco-Kashmiri gene pool remained relatively isolated until modern times. The result is a people who appear strikingly different from their neighbors, rather like marooned survivors from a lost ship—wrecked, beached, and forgotten long ago on a strange, uncharted island.

On my way from Gilgit I passed through the fabled Hunza Valley, the ancestral home of the Aga Khans, the powerful hereditary *imam* of one branch of Shiism. Stopping for chai at a tea shop at the crest of a long, winding pass, I saw a blond man in a parka, about 6 feet (1.8 m) tall with very fair skin and blue eyes, and taking him to be British or north German, I addressed him in English. He could not understand me. The shop owner said, "Sahib-sir, he only speaks our local language." I was stunned and abashed. Later, I was to see many natives of Hunza, Kashmir, the Swat Valley, and Chitral who looked as Aryan as the man in the blue parka. The Kafir Kalash, a little-known non-Muslim tribe with the interesting custom of picking the strongest man in the village to mate with all its virgins, look as if they had just flown in from Hamburg. Where did these fair-skinned people come from, if not Alexander's hoplites?

For Muslims, passions over Kashmir run even deeper. Kashmir is the only Indian state that has a Muslim majority; it had been a stronghold of high Islamic culture for centuries. More important, Kashmir's famous gardens, shimmering lakes, snow-clad mountains, waterfalls, beautiful women, and Alpine climate seem to embody the Holy Koran's description of Muslim paradise. For 200 million illiterate but deeply pious Muslims in Pakistan and India, Kashmir is literally heaven on earth.

To politicians and generals on both sides, Kashmir has always been

of such enormous strategic importance that its loss simply cannot be contemplated. To bitter enemies India and Pakistan, Kashmir plays the same inflammatory role as Alsace-Lorraine did between France and Germany from 1870 to 1945, a jealously disputed territory that arouses fierce irredentist hatreds and exaggerated fears in both nations.

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The region today known as Kashmir was a Buddhist kingdom that paid fealty to Tibet until the seventh century AD, when it fell under Hindu rule. Muslim rulers ousted the Hindus in the fourteenth century. The great Muslim Mogul emperor Akbar conquered the valley in 1586 and made it his summer residence. In 1757, wild Afghans overran Kashmir. Then in 1819 came the warlike Sikhs, until they in turn were defeated in the Sikh Wars by the army of the British East India Company, which annexed Punjab and Kashmir.

In 1846, the British East India Company sold Kashmir to Ghulab Singh, the Hindu maharaja of Jammu, giving him the status of an independent princely ruler under the Raj, to which the maharaja paid annual tribute. Supported by the British, Ghulab Singh annexed the neighboring regions of Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar, and Chitral to his kingdom of Kashmir and Jammu, creating the region today termed Kashmir. Muslim Kashmiris rebelled repeatedly against their new Hindu ruler, but the revolts were put down by the maharaja's forces, aided by troops of the British Indian Army.

At the time of India's partition by Britain in 1947, today's Indian-ruled part of Jammu and Kashmir was about 77 percent Muslim, 20 percent Hindus, and 3 percent Sikhs and Buddhists. What was to become the Pakistani portion, or Azad Kashmir, was 100 percent Muslim. The Indian-controlled state was ruled by Ghulab Singh's descendant, Hari Singh. Economically, Kashmir was closely linked to the eastern Punjab, the region that was to become Pakistan after partition. Poor roads, high passes, and landslides made communication with India difficult, even in clement summer weather. The roads leading northwest from Pathankot to Jammu and Poonch in southern Kashmir were often closed by rockfalls, or snow. Srinagar, Kashmir's capital, was four times closer to Islamabad than to Delhi.

Though an independent united India extending from Iran to Burma



was the most cherished dream of the Congress Party, led by Mohandas K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, by the end of World War II it became clear the subcontinent was headed for partition. The leader of the powerful Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, pressed relentlessly for creation of a state for India's minority Muslims that would offer them a haven from frequent persecution by Hindus, and the opportunity to create the world's first nation guided by Islamic thinking.

By the eve of India's independence in 1947, Britain's new socialist government was eager to wash its hands of colonialism and India, and Lord Louis Mountbatten, the British viceroy, hastily agreed to Jinnah's plan to create a separate Muslim state out of predominantly Muslim regions in Bengal, the western Punjab, and Sind, though the latter two areas were separated from the former by an entire continent. Nehru and Gandhi protested bitterly, prophetically warning that the decision to split the British Raj in two (or three) would destabilize the subcontinent and lead to future strife. Mountbatten and his advisors rebuffed these warnings and made few plans to deal with any breakdown of law and order.

India was partitioned on August 15, 1947. Communal violence between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs immediately erupted. In one of modern history's largest population transfers, seventeen million Hindus and Muslims fled their homes. An orgy of mass killing, rape, arson, and looting ensued that the confused British authorities proved powerless to prevent or suppress. Estimates of the number of people who died in the bloodbath range between 500,000 and 1 million.

India's 500-odd princely states, which had formerly been vassals of the British Raj, were left to decide on accession to India or Pakistan. The largest such state, Hyderabad, with a large Muslim population, elected to join India, which surrounded it. But Kashmir, which lay between India and Pakistan, presented a unique problem.

The terrible trauma of partition hit Kashmir with full force: it quickly became the focus of ferocious Indo-Pakistani rivalry. Lord Mountbatten went to Kashmir shortly before partition and advised the maharaja, a reactionary and dissolute potentate, to determine whether his people wished to join India or Pakistan—or whether they preferred a third option, to remain an independent princely state. Gandhi hurried north to Kashmir and convinced the maharaja to accede to India and dismiss his prime minister, who favored independence. Muslim

Kashmiri leaders, notably Sheik Abdullah and Ghulam Abbas, were thrown into prison by the maharaja.

Mountbatten advised that the Kashmiri majority be allowed to choose their own allegiance, and Nehru publicly promised to respect their wishes, but in the end both advice and promises were ignored. Mountbatten's strong-willed wife, Edwina, who was openly carrying on an affair with Nehru, may well have influenced her wavering husband to tacitly favor Indian rule over Kashmir—or, at least, not to impede it.

Britain's socialist government failed to ensure that its pre-Partition assurances were observed. Kashmiri Muslims, who overwhelmingly desired to join Pakistan, were ordered to surrender their arms, and promptly revolted. In September 1947, in the southern Kashmir regions of Poonch and Jammu, which had and still have sizeable Hindu majorities, mobs of Hindus and Sikhs, aided by the maharaja's Sikh soldiers, began slaughtering Muslims. Muslim sources claim 200,000 of the region's total Muslim population of 500,000 were killed, and the rest driven as refugees to Pakistan. Muslim mobs turned against Hindus and Sikhs, slaughtering thousands.

As communal fighting spread across Kashmir, Pakistani leaders organized a "spontaneous" counterattack in October 1947, by Pathan tribesmen from the Northwest Frontier. The war-loving Pathans proclaimed a holy war, and promptly attacked the maharaja's small ragtag personal army of Hindus and Sikhs. The fierce Pathans routed the maharaja's troops, and advanced swiftly to within 19 miles (30 km) of Srinagar, the Kashmiri capital, and were poised to seize its vital airfield, the only one in Kashmir. The panicky maharaja appealed to Delhi for immediate military aid. Nehru agreed to succor the beleaguered Hindu ruler, but only if he would immediately join India. Hari Singh quickly agreed to Nehru's demand, and signed the Instrument of Accession to India on October 26, 1947, but with an important proviso: Kashmiris could decide on the future of their state once the military emergency was over. Lord Mountbatten confirmed this in a letter to the maharaja on the following day.

Meanwhile, in typical tribal fashion, the Pathans delayed their attack on Srinagar and its airfield in order to devote themselves to looting and pillage. This delay allowed India time to mount an air bridge to Srinagar. The Indians used their entire inventory of thirty Dakota military transports to airlift a battalion of Sikhs, blood enemies of the

Pathans, to Srinagar's airfield. A three-thousand-man army brigade was rushed up the terrible roads from the plains to Kashmir. After a month of chaotic fighting, the Pathans and Muslim irregular forces were pushed westward by arriving Indian Army troops. Further inconclusive fighting, which was joined in 1948 by regular Pakistani army units, sputtered on until the United Nations imposed a ceasefire in January 1949 between India and Pakistan.

When the fighting ended, two-thirds of Kashmir was in Indian hands, and a third in Pakistan's. The ceasefire line between the warring forces, known as the Line of Control (LOC), became the *de facto* border, along which both sides constructed field fortifications and deployed large numbers of troops and artillery—and there they remain today, half a century later, in a state of constant skirmishing and occasional major clashes. The lush Kashmir Valley, Srinagar, and mountainous Ladakh remained in Indian hands. In addition to the western third of the Kashmir Valley, Pakistan ended up in possession of the more northern Kashmiri regions of Gilgit and Baltistan, which it terms "the Northern Territories."

The border up to the top of Kashmir, which abuts China and Tibet, a rampart of soaring, snow-capped mountains and the great Baltoro and Siachen Glaciers, was left undemarcated—it was judged that no one could have any possible interest in such an uninhabitable, lethally high range of frozen crags. Such common sense would later fall victim to the poisonous hatred between Indians and Pakistanis, driving them to fight ferociously over utterly remote, absolutely worthless peaks that even mountain goats would not inhabit.

Beginning in 1948, the UN Security Council passed a series of resolutions calling for the status of Kashmir to be decided by a free, impartial plebiscite under supervision of the UN. Pakistan readily agreed, knowing the outcome would favor it. But Delhi refused to accept the UN's will, and set about integrating Kashmir into India. Subsequent UN resolutions reaffirming the original call for a plebiscite were also ignored or dismissed by India as non-binding, irrelevant, and an unacceptable intrusion into India's internal affairs. Pakistan refused to withdraw its forces from Azad Kashmir.

Kashmir has become the oldest, longest-running world dispute before the UN, predating even the Arab-Israeli conflict and the intractable dispute over Cyprus.

After 1949, riots by Kashmiri Muslims were put down ruthlessly, and Kashmiri Muslim leaders were repeatedly jailed, bribed, or intimidated into silence. In 1957, after years of creeping legal and administrative expropriation, India officially annexed Kashmir. Delhi was also subsequently to annex the former Portuguese territory of Goa, and turn the remote, but strategic, Himalayan states of Bhutan and Sikkim into Indian protectorates. Aside from protests by Pakistan, Portugal, and, ominously, China, all three annexations were greeted by the outside world with deep indifference. Few observers at the time noted that India, a vociferous champion of non-alignment and self-proclaimed scourge of Western colonialism, had itself become something of a regional colonial power.

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Another important element in the interlocking conflicts at the top of the world lies in a region deep in the fastness of the Karakorams. Remote Ladakh, known for centuries as "little Tibet," occupies an area on the northern shoulder of Kashmir. It is India's only region with a Buddhist majority. Ladakh's people are of the same ethnic and linguistic group as Tibetans, and in fact form part of historic ethnic Tibet.

Ladakh is one of the Earth's least-known places, a long, lonely series of desolate, arid valleys, girded on the southwest by the Zaskar Mountains, to the northeast by the Ladakh Range and the Karakorams, and the southwest by Kashmir. Geographically, it forms the extreme western end of the Tibetan Plateau.

A single narrow military road, open only six months of the year, leads up from Srinagar, across the Zoji La (*la* means "pass"), at 11,578 feet (3,529 m) to Kargil. Then the road struggles over a series of even more vertiginous passes to the capital, Leh, which lies near the upper reaches of the mighty Indus River, Pakistan's principal source of groundwater. Leh, which has 20,000 inhabitants, resembles a miniature version of pre-1950 Lhasa in culture and language. In fact, today Ladakh looks much more like traditional Tibet than the neighboring Chinese-occupied state. Harsh Chinese rule and immigration by some two million Han Chinese settlers have permanently altered the ethnography and character of Tibet; Ladakh, by contrast, still retains some of its original Tibetan culture, Buddhist-Lamist religion. The

Indians have fortunately taken little action to alter Ladakh's way of life.

Like the rest of Kashmir, Ladakh has been the frequent victim of invasions by neighbors, including Tibet. The Dogra maharajas of Jammu and Kashmir established their rule over Ladakh in the mid-1800s. At Partition, in 1947, India forces occupied Ladakh, keeping on its king as a figurehead. The Chinese occupation of Aksai-Chin, and the 1962 border war between China and India, spurred Delhi to build the military road linking Srinagar to Kargil and Leh, and to deploy large numbers of troops in Ladakh, parts of which are permanently restricted as sensitive military zones. When the Dalai Lama fled to India from Tibet after the Chinese invasion, he sought permission to settle in Ladakh. Fearing his presence would kindle Ladakhi nationalism and pro-Tibetan sentiments, India denied the request.

The failure by the nineteenth-century British Raj to clearly demarcate borders in the Himalayas, the Karakoram, and Kashmir would come back to haunt twentieth-century India, China, and Pakistan. As an Arab diplomat told me, "Most of the problems today in Asia and Africa are the fault of British imperialism." An exaggeration, to be sure, but one that contains an important kernel of truth.

China holds Ladakh to be an extension of Tibet, and thus part of China. Tibetans insist Ladakh is part of their ancient kingdom. Pakistan contends Ladakh is part of Kashmir, which is claimed by Pakistan. India insists Ladakh is part of the Indian union; Delhi has possession, of course, and troops on the ground, to support its claim.

The little mountain state of 130,000 people is of great strategic significance to India: its northwest border runs along the notional cease-fire line with Pakistani-held Baltistan, from the region around Kargil to the enormous Siachen Glacier on the border of Tibet. Its northeast frontier abuts the strategic Aksai Chin plateau, annexed by China in the 1950s. Leh is filled with Indian military personnel, producing an uncomfortable comparison with Chinese-occupied Lhasa.

India has long restricted visits by foreigners and journalists to Ladakh, citing military security. Another reason may be reported unrest by Ladakhis against heavy-handed Indian rule. India is extremely sensitive to potential accusations that it may be suppressing or illegally occupying Little Tibet, just as China suffers international rebuke and protest over its seizure of "Big" Tibet.

Like two other, similar mountain kingdoms, Bhutan and Sikkim,

Ladakh is a historical orphan, caught between two of the world's largest nations, and destined, inevitably, to be absorbed by them.

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While India and Pakistan were fighting over the Kashmir Valley, China quietly took advantage of the confusion to advance its own territorial claims on the remote eastern end of Kashmir. Northeast of Ladakh, abutting Tibet, lies Aksai Chin, another chunk of disputed Kashmir that was of enormous strategic interest to China. Aksai Chin is a vast, arid, almost uninhabited plateau of icy lakes and frozen peaks, averaging 15,000 feet (4,572 m) of elevation, on the western extension of the Tibetan plateau. China seized Aksai Chin in the 1950s because the region offered the only possible route for a planned military road that would provide a vital southern link between Tibet and strategic Sinkiang, China's westernmost province.

Aksai Chin was so remote, Indian intelligence didn't even find out China had driven a strategic road across it until early in the 1960s. Pakistan gave tacit approval to this annexation because it badly needed Chinese political and military aid in its long struggle with India. Delhi insists to this day that Aksai Chin is Chinese-occupied Indian territory. Tibetans say Aksai Chin is part of historical Tibet, which it most likely is. No one has ever bothered to ask the opinion of the few yak herders of Aksai Chin who scratch a precarious living from this vast, forbidding wilderness of clouds, snow, and ice.

## 7

# Revolt in the Mountains

In 1963, growing anger at India's often brutal, corrupt rule over Kashmir, and the theft of a sacred hair of the Prophet from the famous Hazratbal Mosque in Srinagar, ignited widespread protests

and riots by Muslims. The protests raged on for two years, and were brutally suppressed, with heavy bloodshed, by Indian security forces.

The surging violence in Kashmir finally sparked a second full-scale war between India and Pakistan in 1965. The two nations battled for seventeen days before the UN imposed a ceasefire. Each tried to cut off the other's access roads to Kashmir through northern Punjab. Both the Indian and Pakistani armies soon bogged down along the long front from Kashmir to the Arabian Sea, quickly exhausting their inadequate stores of munitions and supplies. Like nearly all Third World armies, neither side could mobilize rapidly enough to sustain or provide logistical support for a fast-moving armored offensive. As so often in Indo-Pakistani wars, blitzkrieg soon turned to sitzkrieg.

Pakistan, which had believed its superior armor, its pilots, and the fighting spirit of its renowned "martial races"—Punjabis and Pathans—would overcome Indian numerical and material superiority, was forced to realize it lacked the military or economic power to decisively defeat seven-times-larger India. In addition, it was clear that, in any conflict, India held the important advantage of strategic depth, which allowed it to trade territory for time to mobilize and concentrate its superior forces. Narrow, wasp-waisted Pakistan had no such luxury.

During 1970–71, India's aggressive leader, Indira Gandhi, emboldened by her new strategic alliance with the Soviet Union, took advantage of an uprising in East Pakistan (today Bangladesh) against harsh rule by West Pakistan. Indira Gandhi had special Tibetan troops of the Indian armies, disguised as Bangladeshi rebels, infiltrate into East Pakistan to begin guerrilla warfare. As the revolt spread, Gandhi sent her rearmed, expanded army to conquer indefensible East Pakistan, which was easily overrun in three weeks by the very able Indian commander-in-chief, General Sam Manekshaw.

Once again, Pakistani forces in the West, supported by heavy air attacks, hurled themselves against Indian deployments in Kashmir, northern Punjab, and the Thar Desert of Rajasthan. After initial dramatic successes, Pakistani attacks petered out. A major Pakistani armored thrust against Pathankot and Jammu threatened to isolate Kashmir from India. But it was halted before its objective. So was a second major thrust toward Poonch, in southern Kashmir. Pakistan lacked adequate air cover, strategic reserves, or supplies to sustain its offensives.

Superior Indian forces, concentrated in two corps commands, coun-

terattacked in the north, driving toward Sialkot, attempting to isolate Azad Kashmir from the rest of Pakistan. In the south, an Indian strike corps thrust into the Thar Desert, with the objective of cutting the narrow, vulnerable 1,000-mile (1,600-km) rail and road lines between northern Punjab and Sind. Intense air and land battles raged as India gradually gained the upper hand. Both sides fought with gallantry and élan, but the tide of war turned relentlessly against Pakistan, which was forced onto the strategic defensive. For a while, it seemed Indira Gandhi would heed calls by nationalists to crush Pakistan once and for all. But heavy American pressure, including threats that the Seventh Fleet, which rushed a carrier battle group into the Arabian Sea off Pakistan, might intervene in the war, the exhaustion of Indian war stocks, and stiffening Pakistani resistance forced negotiations that ended hostilities.

Pakistan had suffered catastrophic dismemberment, losing its eastern half, which became the independent state of Bangladesh, but the impasse in Kashmir remained unchanged. Pakistanis emerged from the war badly shaken, militarily, morally, and politically.

In July 1972, India and Pakistan conducted lengthy negotiations at the old British hill station at Simla, under the aegis of their respective patrons, the USSR and the U.S. Moscow and Washington, concerned they might be dragged into the Indo-Pakistani war, and thus face the risk of a direct clash, pressed Islamabad and Delhi to reach a negotiated settlement.

After much bazaar haggling, India and Pakistan agreed, first, that they would settle all their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations; second, that neither would take any action to upset the status quo, or aid any forces seeking to do so; and, third, that the Line of Control in Kashmir would form the temporary border between India and Pakistan until Kashmir's final status was resolved.

India, basking in its successful war, regarded the Simla Agreement as a final end to the long dispute. Pakistan, in India's view, had accepted the permanent division of Kashmir and recognized Delhi's rule over two-thirds of the state. Equally important, according to Delhi's interpretation, Pakistan had agreed that Kashmir was to remain a wholly bilateral issue, not subject to any outside intervention or mediation, particularly that of the UN. Kashmir was now an entirely internal Indian matter; no UN interference, notably a plebiscite, would be legal under the Simla Agreement. Delhi adamantly maintains this position, to this day.

Pakistan, negotiating from a position of weakness at Simla, portrayed the accords in a different light. Though on rather shaky legal ground, Islamabad held that the pact left the door open for UN intervention, and did nothing to preclude a referendum. Ever since 1972, Pakistan's diplomatic strategy has been to get India to admit that Kashmir remained "disputed" territory, and to involve the UN and friendly foreign powers in the issue. India has just as resolutely used its considerable diplomatic power to keep the United Nations and foreign powers out of the Kashmir dispute.

In effect, Simla resolved nothing. Unrest continued to flare up in the Kashmir Valley; Indian and Pakistani forces skirmished along the LOC. India continued a rapid increase of its armed forces, using new Soviet armor, artillery, and aircraft to develop a much-enhanced offensive capability against Pakistan.

Then, in 1974, India detonated a nuclear device in the Thar Desert, shaking Pakistan to its foundations and forcing Islamabad to embark on a long, covert, financially ruinous nuclear program. Pakistan's fiery leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, announced his people would "eat grass" to pay for the arms race between two of the world's poorest nations. A very senior Pakistani diplomat, who attended a meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Bhutto, told me that Kissinger had warned Bhutto the U.S. would "hold him personally responsible" if Pakistan went ahead with development of nuclear arms. Bhutto supporters were later to call his overthrow and execution by Gen. Zia ul-Haq "Kissinger's revenge." Coincidentally, in the summer of 1988, the USSR used precisely the same phrase, threatening to hold President Zia "personally responsible" for engineering a Soviet defeat in Afghanistan. Like Bhutto, Zia met an untimely end.

After Simla, India's leaders almost convinced themselves the Kashmir problem had been permanently resolved by Pakistan's defeat in 1971. They also believed that continuing opposition by Kashmir's majority to Indian rule was wholly the result of Pakistani intrigues and subversion. Bloody Pakistan's nose, the thinking went, and the Kashmir problem will go away.

But it did not. Behind a façade of tense calm, a spirit of revolt was surging among Kashmiri Muslims. On July 13, 1989, a march in Srinagar by Kashmiris to commemorate Islamic martyrs, including Muslim leaders executed by India, turned violent and was crushed,

with heavy casualties. Five months later, Kashmiri militants kidnapped the daughter of the Home Minister; she was released in exchange for the freeing of five jailed Kashmiri leaders.

This bizarre incident released a wave of nationalist emotion, violent protests, and bloody rioting across Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan were completely surprised by the sudden Muslim "intifada," which, contrary to Delhi's mantras about foreign subversion, was in fact an indigenous, popular revolt by a people who could no longer bear Indian repression. Far from instigating the rebellion, Pakistan's intelligence service (ISI) was sharply rebuked by its political masters for failing to predict it.

On January 19, 1990, India proclaimed a state of siege in Kashmir: the compliant, pro-Indian Muslim Chief Minister, Farouk Abdullah, was forced to resign. Direct federal rule was imposed by Delhi, and the constitution and laws protecting individual rights were suspended in Kashmir. Delhi empowered its security forces to arrest and interrogate Kashmiris at will. Tens of thousands of troops and paramilitary police were rushed to Kashmir with orders to put down the rebellion by any means. Journalists were banned, so they could not report on what was to come.

Indian security forces had gained extensive experience in counter-insurgency and urban guerrilla warfare during the long, bitter battle that took place in the 1980s against Sikh secessionists in Punjab. Sikhs are followers of a warrior religion founded in the sixteenth century by Guru Nanak. Though only 2 percent of India's population, the industrious Sikhs of Punjab produce almost 50 percent of the nation's wheat, and fill many middle and senior positions in the armed forces and police.

In the early 1980s, groups of young Sikh fundamentalist militants began demanding independence from India and the creation of a Sikh state in Punjab, to be known as "Khalistan," which would border rebellious Kashmir to the southwest. Rebellion against Hindu rule spread quickly: Indian security forces were put on the defensive and seriously demoralized by increasingly effective Sikh guerrilla groups and urban street fighters. The militant Sikhs devoted as much energy to killing their own fellow Sikhs who wanted to stay within India as they did attacking Indian security forces.

Delhi was losing the battle against Sikh fundamentalists until Indira Gandhi put an utterly ruthless, highly skilled police general,

K.P.S. Gill, himself a Sikh, in charge of Punjab security. She gave Gill carte blanche, ordering him to smash the Sikh rebels, no questions asked. Gill reorganized the poorly led, disorganized, deeply demoralized security forces, and initiated a comprehensive intelligence program to understand, identify, and then penetrate the various Sikh secessionist factions.

Delhi chose the right man to crush the Sikh rebellion. The Sikh police general was tall, ferocious, and immensely impressive, with his perfectly wound turban, bristling mustache, neatly trimmed beard, and clipped, military speech. When I interviewed him, Gill answered politely enough, but his hard, fierce eyes bored into me, telegraphing the message that all journalists, particularly Western ones, were meddling scum. Gill spoke of eradicating the Sikh separatists as if he were casually discussing exterminating lice. Sikhs are renowned for their bravery, fierceness, tenacity, and love of revenge. Delhi had cleverly set a Sikh to catch its Sikh foes.

The only other man I had met who commanded such instant respect and fear was Pakistan's director general of intelligence, General Akhdar Rahman, who died in 1988 with President Zia in the mysterious crash of their c-130 transport aircraft. Akhdar made people tremble with fear; Gill looked as he was about to rip your skin off.

Gill counterattacked Sikh separatists, using summary executions and mass arrests; routine torture; intimidation of families; informers; and bribery. He flooded Punjab with regular army units and paramilitary police. Thousands of Sikh "miscreants" simply disappeared after being arrested "for questioning." Some were guilty of sedition; many others were innocent. Anyone denounced by informers, or whose name was uttered under torture, was arrested and, in turn, interrogated. Those suspected of being active militants were shot, and their bodies hidden.

In this manner, Gill and his men relentlessly broke each link in the chain of Sikh separatists. Indian security forces also used "false flag" agents, disguised as Sikh militants, to provoke factional battles by attacking other, genuine Sikh militants, or to commit atrocities that were then blamed by the media on the Sikh nationalists.

Gill finally crushed Sikh separatism, trampling on India's constitution, laws, and civil rights in the process. The outside world turned its back on this bloody drama. Canada, where there was a large, very mil-

itant Sikh expatriate community, became embroiled in a covert struggle between agents of India's intelligence service (RAW) and cells of Sikh extremists, one of which may have planted the bomb that destroyed an Air-India 747 aircraft in flight, killing hundreds of people. Canada's security services apparently shared considerable information on Sikh militants with RAW and allowed a large number of its agents to operate in Canada under cover.

But Sikhs, it is said, never forget a wrong, and will always have their vengeance. After the Sikhs' holiest place, the Golden Temple at Amritsar, was stormed by Indian troops, Indira Gandhi's own Sikh bodyguards shot her dead. Death was a fitting retribution, said Sikhs, for her cruel suppression of the Punjab.

Having only recently pacified the Sikhs in Punjab, Indian security forces and the military were totally surprised and dismayed by the 1989 explosion of protests by Muslims across Kashmir. But once over the initial shock, Delhi gradually marshaled its security forces and sent them to Kashmir, where the repressive methods perfected by General Gill in Punjab against Sikhs were immediately put to use against an even more dangerous foe: Muslims.

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Though it was unseen by the outside world, the 1989 revolt in Kashmir had been brewing for decades. Delhi ruled Kashmir through a group of compliant Muslim politicians, just as Moscow ruled over Central Asia by means of local Communist satraps, or "Red sultans." Both ruling groups resembled traditional Mafia organizations, monopolizing illegal business, and subcontracting or franchising out areas of criminal and legal commercial activities. Corruption, extortion, and bribery were rampant, often surpassing even the outrageous levels common to lowland India. India's Muslim henchmen made themselves very rich and deeply hated.

Any Kashmiri who dared agitate for independence or union with Pakistan, including journalists and academics, was quickly jailed, often under the most brutal conditions. Occasional attempts by India to increase the Hindu population of Kashmir by moving settlers into Jammu inflamed Muslim passions, and brought attacks against the Hindu newcomers.

Blatantly rigged elections in 1987 further fanned outrage against Indian authorities. A year earlier, a handful of Kashmiri militants, grandly named the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), had taken to the mountains and begun a modest guerrilla insurrection. The JKLF's academic and intellectual leaders were deeply inspired by the Algerian war for independence against French rule, and sought to emulate the successful guerrilla warfare strategy and patriotic national mobilization achieved by the Algerian Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN).

Muslim Kashmiris were themselves a haughty lot, notoriously rich in self-esteem, and they found Indian hegemony intolerable. Kashmiri Hindus and the proconsular establishment from Delhi treated Muslim Kashmiris with contempt, rapacity, suspicion, and disdain. All the stereotypical hatreds between Muslims and Hindus common to the plains of India became inflated to twice life size in the rarefied mountain atmosphere of Kashmir, and eventually they exploded into violence.

The eruption was a genuine, spontaneous popular protest. Ill-trained Indian security forces panicked, opened fire on crowds, and savagely beat demonstrators. The inevitable result was renewed protests, this time with increased violence, as Muslims began fighting back with the few weapons they possessed.

Delhi rushed divisions of mountain troops and large numbers of paramilitary police to Kashmir. A new proconsul, Grish Saxena, seconded from the intelligence service RAW, was sent up from Delhi in the hope he would become a second K.P.S. Gill. A statewide crackdown began: thousands of Kashmiris were arrested, beaten, and tortured. Some, identified by informers as the protest's ringleaders, were summarily executed. Indian forces looted and burned, treating Kashmir like occupied enemy territory.

India's brutal reaction to popular protests in Kashmir sparked the formation of a number of resistance groups. At first, they amounted to no more than a handful of men, amateur fighters armed with bird guns, pistols, and knives. Some operated in Srinagar and the larger towns; others took to the wooded mountains. The Indian paramilitary forces were cowardly and undisciplined—little more than uniformed thugs; they committed growing outrages against the civilian population: rapes, robbery, arson, beatings. Their savage behavior, driven by

anti-Muslim hatred, alienated more and more Kashmiris, causing many young men, and entire families, to flee across the Line of Control into Pakistani Kashmir.

Many Muslims stayed on in Azad Kashmir as permanent refugees; but a growing number of the young men took military training, and returned to fight Indian occupation forces. Veterans of the jihad in Afghanistan, both native Afghan mujahedin and foreign "Afghani" who had remained in and around Peshawar, went to Kashmir to train and assist the fighters of the new intifada. The Afghan veterans brought the Kashmiri mujahedin a wealth of combat experience and badly needed training in logistics, communications, and planning. Equally important, they infused the Kashmiris with Islamic fervor, and provided living proof that faith, courage, and determination could overcome seemingly overwhelming odds.

In the years from 1990 to 1995, Kashmiri resistance forces were estimated to number between 25,000 and 30,000 fighters, divided into a score of different groups. Some of the rebels received military training in Pakistan from the ISI, and automatic weapons, mortars, and munitions were supplied to them across the border. This assistance, combined with help from Afghan mujahedin advisors, transformed the Kashmiris from a ragtag maquis into moderately effective guerrilla fighters, well able to put Indian security forces on the defensive.

The resistance ambushed Indian patrols, cut up convoys, killed stragglers, and staged frequent grenade and bomb attacks to make life miserable for Indian military personnel in the crowded cities and towns. Mountainous Kashmir was far better suited to guerrilla warfare than largely flat Punjab: its forested hills and high ground offered ample refuge for irregular forces, who easily eluded the slow-moving Indian forces pursuing them. Large-scale anti-guerrilla sweeps by ponderous Indian regular forces proved equally ineffective.

Though India has gained the upper hand militarily in Kashmir, its repression, denounced without cease by Indian and international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Asia Watch, and Physicians for Human Rights, continues relentlessly. Indian authorities have banned many rights groups and journalists from Kashmir, using the excuse that "the time is not right for a visit." India simply does not want the world to see what it is doing in Kashmir.

Pakistan acted similarly in 1971 when its military proconsul, Gen. Tikka Khan, the "Butcher of Dacca," attempted to ruthlessly crush the Bengali nationalist movement in secessionist East Pakistan, later Bangladesh. Pakistan's brutality in Bangladesh was brief and erratic. India's savage behavior in Kashmir, by contrast, has been sustained and unwavering since late 1989.

Indian security forces have adopted the crude expedient of arresting, torturing, and killing anyone suspected of being a militant. Whenever mujahedin activity or unrest is reported in an area, Indian forces stage what they call a "crackdown." Indian troops cordon off an area, then parade its inhabitants before hooded informers. Men identified as militants by the informers are immediately taken away to Indian bases, where they are repeatedly tortured until they divulge information, real or made up. Then they are usually executed and their bodies returned to their families.

Detainees are routinely savagely beaten, often on the feet, a favorite Turkish punishment known as the "bastinado." Feet are a remarkably sensitive part of the body; repeated beating there produces intolerable pain after a short time that courses from the lower extremities to the head. Numerous detainees have had their feet amputated after post-beating gangrene set in.

Indian security also uses heavy wooden or metal rollers on the back of victims' backs and thighs. Muscles are crushed, and kidneys are damaged, releasing toxins into the bloodstream. Suspects are also given electric shock, brought to near drowning in tubs of filthy water; semi-suffocated by wet rags; constrained or suspended in excruciatingly painful positions; burned with cigarettes and lighters, and rectally violated with iron bars, bottles, or pieces of wood.

Suspected militants have been dragged from hospital beds, and even operating tables, by Indian forces. One doctor estimated that 60 percent of all hospitalized Kashmiris suffered from trauma caused by gunshots, explosions, or torture. Other injured suspects in jail are denied even basic medical attention. Many men arrested are simply shot at night and dumped into rivers; others have been doused with gasoline and burned alive.

The appalling brutality of India's security forces, notably the police and paramilitary gendarmes, is not unique to Kashmir, though it is far more intense and widespread in the mountain state. Human rights

organizations have long accused police across India of torture, summary executions, and pervasive violence toward detainees, which has occasionally even included blinding. Muslims and other minorities in particular are victims of India's savage police, who are unconstrained by law, political control, or any notion of decency.

Arson has also become a favorite weapon of Indian security forces in Kashmir, where most dwellings are made of wood. Villages suspected of aiding or having harbored militants are frequently burned to the ground. Villagers suspected of aiding the intifada would be lined up, beaten, and robbed. Homes would be first looted, then burned. Domestic animals were slaughtered; wells were poisoned. Indian reporters and cameramen trying to document such cruelties have been beaten and, in a few reported cases, they, too, were doused with fuel and set alight.

Muslim women became the particular target of the paramilitary, and occasionally the regular forces. Rape became a constant feature of repression. In many cases, all of the young women of villages would be gang-raped, often repeatedly. The Indians understood full well that, in Muslim culture, rape is one of the most abominable crimes possible. A Muslim woman who has been raped is considered permanently defiled and unclean. In Bosnia and Kosovo, Serb forces raped thousands of Muslim women, sometimes even girls as young as nine, in an organized effort to break the Muslims' will to resist, or drive them from their homes. Rape was a double tragedy and curse for Muslim women: not only were they assaulted and brutalized, but afterwards they would be outcasts among their own people. Often, women who became pregnant from the rapes would commit suicide.

I spoke to a survivor of one of India's "crackdowns," a shy middle-aged woman with a deeply lined face and strikingly blue eyes, who had fled to Azad Kashmir after her small village was incinerated by Indian troops. "They took all of our men away and beat them," she told me in a trembling voice. "My husband and son were put into a truck and driven off. I have never heard from them since."

There was more, but her Muslim modesty and deep shame would not allow her tell me. A female journalist traveling with me took her aside and, through an interpreter, over many cups of tea, learned the woman's story. The Indian troops divided the younger women and girls from the older ones. They marched the younger women behind some



stacks of fodder. The Indians, many of whom were drunk, tore off the women's clothing, threw the victims on the ground, and proceeded to gang-rape them repeatedly, including three girls under nine years of age. Those who resisted were beaten, and one was shot. After vaginally raping the women and girls, the Indian paramilitary police raped them again anally, spat on them, and called them "Muslim whores."

After relating her horrifying story, the woman, unable to face us, vanished into a tent, alone with her misery and shame. A Kashmiri man of the camp told me, "She is defiled. No man will ever touch her again after what the Hindus have done to her."

The relentless barbarities inflicted on Kashmiris by Indian troops have not provoked a national outcry in India. The public has ignored frequent reports of such savagery and the protests of Indian rights organizations. The Indian government and press have managed to demonize Muslim Kashmiris, branding them "subversives" and "terrorists." Kashmir is presented as a place where Indian troops bravely try to keep order under incessant attack by heavily armed, well-organized Muslim fanatics, armed and directed by Pakistan and a worldwide Islamic conspiracy. The killing of women and children by Indian forces is excused; these "unfortunates" are said to have been caught in the crossfire of gun battles initiated by terrorists making use of civilian cover. Kashmiri rebels have not helped their cause by detonating large car bombs in Srinagar and Jammu or murdering Hindu civilians.

In the west, the Kashmiri mujahedin groups have been ignored, or regarded as terrorists. The latter view came after a well-publicized incident in which four Westerners, oblivious to political events, went trekking in Kashmir. They were kidnapped by a then unknown mujahedin group, Al-Faran, and have never been seen since. The severed head of one of the unfortunate trekkers was later found on a rock, accompanied by a note from the shadowy Al-Faran. The British and Australian press had a field day with this grisly story and heaped abuse on Kashmiri Muslims. On July 4, 1998, another Kashmiri resistance group, Al-Fateh, told relatives the missing hikers were confirmed dead, and charged that the Al-Faran kidnappers were actually set up and run as a false-flag operation by Indian intelligence to blacken the name of the Islamic resistance.

It is impossible to reach a reliable count of civilian casualties in the Kashmiri intifada. Resistance groups claim at least 50,000 people have

been killed by Indian forces since 1990. Delhi insists no more than a few thousand have died, mostly in crossfire, or, in many cases, at the hands of the "terrorists." Hundreds of Kashmiris deemed collaborators have been killed by the insurgents. In addition, some 200,000 Kashmiri Hindus, mainly from the Jammu region, have fled their homes for the safety of India. Indian military and police casualties are a closely guarded secret, though the number may exceed 10,000.

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As the intifada in Kashmir intensified, Srinagar was transformed from a pleasant, easygoing lakeside vacation resort into a grim, dangerous place, where every alley and corner threatened Indian patrols with ambush or sniping. Indian soldiers and paramilitary troops guarded intersections and high ground from the safety of heavily sandbagged bunkers.

Indian regular troops, untrained in guerrilla warfare, conducted large, usually fruitless sweeps; alerted by civilian supporters, the guerrillas usually had time to slip away. When Indian soldiers managed to close with guerrillas, or encountered surprise attacks, the Indians responded by heavy, indiscriminate firing, often with heavy weapons, killing or wounding large numbers of civilians caught in the crossfire.

Delhi rushed more regular troops to Kashmir. By 1998, their number was to rise to over 300,000, or a third of the army's total force, putting a severe strain on logistics. Units were brought in from the Himalayan border with China and the eastern sectors, where rebellions simmered on in Assam and the remote eastern hill states neighboring Burma.

India's professional regular soldiers were fairly well disciplined and competently led (though as the revolt continued, they committed an increasing number of atrocities). But the large number of paramilitary forces also deployed in Kashmir, today about 300,000 men, became notorious for poor discipline, brutality, looting, and trigger-happy behavior. While regulars manned most checkpoints and guarded important installations, the Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, and Jammu and Kashmir state police took the lead in rooting out rebels and punishing their civilian supporters, real or imagined.

Counter-insurgency operations are always a dirty business. Indian forces in Kashmir found themselves in an alien environment far from their home, surrounded by a hostile population, never knowing when they would be attacked. Demoralized and frightened, the Indians became ever more savage as their hatred for Muslim Kashmiris grew. Muslims who had not favored the intifada were driven into its arms by the increasing violence and ferocity of Indian repression.

Indian intelligence and security forces embarked on a campaign, patterned on operations against Sikh militants in Punjab, to identify, infiltrate, and destroy the urban networks of the various Kashmiri resistance groups. Informers, coerced by threats to their families, torture, or bribery, would single out resistance operatives. They would be arrested and subjected to the most brutal tortures. A favorite torture, developed in Punjab, was ramming a kilo of fiery hot chili powder up a victim's rectum. Children of suspected rebels would sometimes be tortured and raped in front of their parents.

In this manner, Indian security agents relentlessly uprooted the rebels' underground structure. Thousands of suspected militants, including journalists, academics, and intifada supporters, were arrested and many executed; their bodies were secretly buried. Amnesty International called, in March 1999, for India to end the "nightmare" of disappearances, which the London-based organization claimed had amounted to eight hundred people since 1990, including children, the elderly, and those with no known links to secessionist groups.

Indian human rights groups and international rights organizations vigorously protested the widespread abuses of human rights in Kashmir, but to no avail. India rejected all protests and refused to allow foreign observers into Kashmir. Journalists, both Indian and non-Indian, who wrote about India's rights violations were barred from Kashmir. India's widely disrespected judicial system bowed to political pressure, refusing to rule against the government's violation of the nation's constitution and laws.

By the end of 1995, the Indian Army had managed to seal the long Line of Control with Azad Kashmir by implanting dense belts of antipersonnel mines, listening devices, motion-detectors, and barbed wire along the border. Large numbers of troops were permanently stationed on the LOC in fortified positions. Israeli counter-insurgency advisors secretly aided the Indian Army in creating a lethal barrier along

the entire length of the frontier, which reduced to a trickle the previous flow from Pakistani territory of fighters, munitions, and supplies. The mountainous, forested terrain still permitted some small mujahedin bands to slip across, but the fighting effectiveness of the resistance was seriously degraded by India's intensified security measures along the border with Pakistani Kashmir.

By 1996, the virtual sealing of the LOC, and ruthless repression inside Kashmir, brought the insurgency to its lowest ebb since 1990. According to the Indian Army, by then no more than four thousand insurgents were still active in the field, through the true figure was almost certainly higher. India maintained its exaggerated claims that most of the mujahedin in Kashmir are foreigners, meaning volunteers from other Islamic nations or Pakistani mercenaries.

Meanwhile, the various insurgent groups, some advocating continued struggle, others favoring a negotiated settlement, increasingly battled among themselves, and murdered Muslims deemed to be traitors. Indian intelligence agents, advised by KGB experts from Afghanistan, skillfully played on these divisions, as they had learned to do with feuding Sikh militants in Punjab, by staging false-flag attacks and spreading fake documents to provoke fighting between mujahedin factions. Indian casualties dropped sharply.

The state was literally blanketed by huge numbers of Indian security forces: in 1997, there was one Indian soldier or paramilitary policeman for every thirteen Kashmiris. The urban infrastructure of the various mujahedin groups had been shattered by torture, executions, and mass arrests. In the field, the Indian Army developed more effective and aggressive counter-insurgency techniques, abandoning mass, non-productive sweeps in favor of small-unit hunter-killer missions, supported by air surveillance and the extensive use of helicopters with night-vision devices. Indian military and security forces learned to cooperate and to share information. The mujahedin were everywhere on the defensive. By mid-1997, Delhi felt sufficiently confident to proclaim that the end of the insurgency was in sight.

But it was not.

event that would also leave Pakistan the dominant military power on the subcontinent.

China, India's other powerful rival, would be no less happy to see the Indian union dissolve into a patchwork of weak, feuding states. China's cautious official position has been that long-strained relations with India are gradually improving. But in private, China regards India's growing military capability with mounting concern. India, for its part, has raised alarms over the alleged threat of strategic encirclement by China, and used the issue to justify its nuclear tests.

Chinese military intelligence expressed just such concerns about India in deep background talks with me in 1983, at a time when China was principally focused on the strategic threat from the Soviet Union. I had been invited to Beijing to exchange views with Chinese strategic analysts because of my close relations with the Afghan mujahedin, who were resisting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. In exchange for my assessment of the various Afghan resistance groups and the general course of the war, the Chinese shared with me some of their strategic thinking about India and the Soviet Union. Shortly after, China began discreetly supplying weapons and munitions to the Afghan resistance.

The Chinese security officials told me that they anticipated a military clash with India in the Himalayas or Karakoram early in the twenty-first century, or perhaps even sooner, as part of either an Indo-Pakistani war or a struggle to control Tibet or Burma.

Chinese strategists, who take a far longer view than their Western counterparts, believe India will eventually come under serious centrifugal strains that may cause it to splinter. China's leadership is probably torn between encouraging this process, with all the risks that involves, and attempting to postpone what they see as an inevitable clash with India until after Beijing has completed its lengthy process of military modernization at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

The view expressed to me in Beijing, and subsequently repeated by other Chinese military sources, is that the growing power of India and China will be unlikely to coexist in harmony. The two great powers, divided by an uncertain mountain border and small, unstable states, must eventually fight for mastery of Asia.

## 10

## The World's Most Dangerous Border

Chokoti, the last village on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control, was a cluster of dilapidated wooden buildings, shacks, and teahouses that bore evident scars of frequent Indian shelling. The LOC lies a couple of miles east of Chokoti. The invisible line snakes between heights held by entrenched Pakistani and Indian forces, their ultimate positions when the 1949 ceasefire came into effect. The Jhelum River, heedless of politics or war, cuts a right angle across the LOC, flowing east toward the city of Barmula, just behind Indian lines, and then, a mere 25 miles (40 km) farther east, to Srinagar.

At first, the mighty Jhelum Gorge, surrounded by steep, scrub-clad hills and clumps of trees, was silent save for the rushing of the gray waters below. A vast panorama of mountains with distant snow-capped crags beyond them offered a tourist-brochure scene of idyllic Kashmir. A Pakistani army camp in a sheltered depression was the only sign of human habitation. A group of subalterns of the 180th mountain brigade sat around a green table, playing bridge, sipping lemonade, and complaining in clipped English accents about the terrible heat. They could have been bored young officers of the British Raj in the Queen Empress's army a century ago.

"Be careful," they warned cheerily, "the bloody Indians are shooting again. Keep your heads down!"

We climbed up a very steep ridge over broken rocks and scree, sweating profusely in the blistering 120° F (49° C) weather. A heat wave had struck northern India and Pakistan, killing hundreds on the plains below. Our military escort ordered us to keep low and stay alert. As we reached the top of the ridge, a series of sharp reports echoed around the valley, sending flocks of birds into panicked flight. A stream of tracer bullets sprayed over our heads. From somewhere across the valley, a medium machine gun had opened up on our position.

"Take cover, take cover," yelled the Pakistani captain who was

guiding us. We dove into a line of sandbagged trenches, and headed into the shelter of a large bunker. Mortars on the Indian side began firing at our position, and other points along the LOC. Pakistani machine guns and mortars returned fire.

The heavy exchange continued for about five minutes. After the guns fell silent we observed the Indian bunkers and trenches across the valley through field glasses, but detected no sign of movement. Off to our right, beyond our field of vision in the direction of Poonch, Pakistani and Indian artillery began to exchange salvos of 122mm and 155mm shells. Two of the world's poorest nations had just expended tens of thousands of dollars' worth of ammunition, for no better purpose than to vent the hatred, frustration, and boredom of the front-line soldiers on either side.

Indian and Pakistani troops have been skirmishing along the LOC since 1949. They usually snipe at one another's positions and lob occasional shells. But, from time to time, particularly when tensions rise sharply between Delhi and Islamabad, the fighting becomes generalized along the LOC, as brigade- or even division-sized units go into action. When this occurs neither side knows for certain whether the bombardment is merely another demonstration or the opening of a major offensive. As a result, nerves stay frayed; both sides keep their forces on the alert along the LOC, and supporting divisions in a state of high combat-readiness farther behind the front.

I watched the two sides trade fire, wondering if the exchange marked the beginning on an all-out Indian invasion of Azad Kashmir. Tensions between India and Pakistan were running high in the spring and summer of 1992. Both sides were at hair-trigger readiness after two months of mounting threats. India had massed a number of new divisions in Kashmir behind the LOC. Just south of Kashmir, in Northern Punjab, elements of two Indian armored "strike corps" were concentrating between Pathankot and Amritsar for what could become a major offensive against the strategic Pakistani city of Sialkot, the gateway to southern Azad Kashmir.

Frustrated and enraged by the rebellion in Kashmir, India was loudly threatening to "teach Pakistan a lesson." Reserve units were being activated and mobilized in India and Pakistan. Troops were moving into forward positions, and behind them long truck convoys of war supplies, Indian armor, and artillery had left their cantonments and

adopted offensive deployments. Indian and Pakistani airbases were on high alert, with aircraft armed and fueled up, many prepared to take off on two or three minutes' notice. Both air forces had gone to war-readiness reconnaissance and combat air patrols.

Reports were coming from South Asia and abroad that India had deployed a number of nuclear weapons to forward airbases near the Pakistani border for its precision-strike Jaguar fighter-bombers. Pakistan, it was rumored, had a number of F-16s with nuclear bombs ready to take off at a moment's notice at Chaklala airbase. Though Delhi and Islamabad denied they had nuclear weapons, and thus had not gone to full nuclear alert, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was later to report to Congress that the two foes had in fact been activating their nuclear arsenals.

This confrontation over Kashmir was the closest the world had come to a full-scale nuclear war since 1973, when Israel had armed and deployed its top-secret arsenal of nuclear-tipped missiles and nuclear bombs, and was getting ready to use them to destroy advancing Syrian and Egyptian armored divisions on the Golan Heights and in Sinai. Fortunately, the Egyptian and Syrian attacks both petered out before the panicky Israelis had unleashed their nuclear weapons. The Syrians, in fact, deliberately halted their advance just before reaching the western edge of the Golan Heights, not wishing to give Israel any excuse to launch a nuclear attack.

Standing in a bunker in the middle of what might become a general, or even a nuclear war, was not a comfortable feeling. Having covered some ten wars or conflicts, I was used to being under fire. From the relative safety of a bunker, it was even rather entertaining. But the idea that a nuclear war might actually occur, with me sitting at ground zero, was unsettling. Wars often begin as much by mischance and miscalculation as by plan. Localized clashes that got out of control could quickly escalate into division-level, then corps-level fighting, then to all-out war along the 1,000-mile (1,600-km) front from the Arabian Sea to Tibet. And, according to the CIA, the Indo-Pakistani border, on which I was currently positioned, was the most likely place for a nuclear war to erupt.

Fortunately, India decided not to attack Pakistan. The highly professional generals of India's armed forces restrained the war fever of their civilian masters, who, like politicians everywhere, misjudged or

misunderstood the implications, conduct, and true costs of war. Fighting in Kashmir's mountainous terrain would be primarily infantry combat, and much of it World War I-style frontal attack, allowing the defending Pakistanis to fight from strong, prepared positions on high ground. India would not be able to make use of its considerable advantage in armor, artillery, and aircraft. A stalemate was likely to ensue after bloody, inconclusive combat.

But even a military stalemate presented great danger, for Indian generals would then be driven to seek victory by broadening the scope of their operations to other sectors, where India's mobile forces could be used to better profit. To decisively defeat Pakistan, India would have to attack farther south on the plains of Punjab, and strike across the great Thar Desert of Rajasthan into Sind, just north of the great port city of Karachi. This would mean a total war between the two huge nations, with the possible threat of a nuclear exchange. India's leaders wisely declined the battle. Still, it was a close-run thing, and a harbinger of what might come in the future.

Movements by Kashmiri rebels across the LOC heightened these simmering tensions. Pakistani forces often give mujahedin units covering fire when they run into Indian patrols, or come under fire from Indian positions. Indian generals repeatedly warn they may exercise the right of hot pursuit to follow the mujahedin back to their bases in Azad Kashmir, or even launch offensives to destroy the insurgents' bases there. The widely held belief among Indians that the Kashmiri intifada would crumble if its roots in Pakistan were torn out constantly tempts Delhi to launch a punitive attack into Azad Kashmir, just as Turkey's generals have considerably degraded the combat-effectiveness of Kurdish PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) guerrillas by repeatedly mounting air and ground offensives against their operating bases in northern Iraq.

Hot pursuit of rebels into Azad Kashmir by the Indian Army could quickly escalate into a bigger war, particularly if the attackers were threatened with Pakistani counterattacks. To rescue the stalled attacking force, Indian commanders would have to rush in reinforcements, initiate diversionary assaults at other points on the line, or, if these measures failed, open a broader offensive in northern Punjab. Such actions could spark an all-out war along the entire 1,000-mile (1,600-km) front from the Siachen Glacier to the Arabian Sea.

Pentagon war-gamers consider this possibility to be the most likely

scenario for triggering a major Indo-Pakistani conflict, one that neither side wants, but from which they could not withdraw without serious political and military loss. One senior Pentagon official described the hot-pursuit scenario as "our constant nightmare."

A full-scale war with India would threaten Pakistan's very existence, and present its general staff with the almost impossible task of defending their strategically vulnerable nation. Pakistan resembles Egypt: a great river flows down from remote mountains, on whose banks, and great southern delta, live the majority of the population. On the map, both nations look large; but when desert, arid land, and unpopulated areas are deducted from the picture, what remains is a relatively small nation clinging precariously to a narrow river valley.

Pakistan's population and defenses are concentrated in two important provinces, Sind in the south, and Punjab in the north. Its other regions—the Northwest Frontier, the Northern Territories, and Baluchistan—are geographically remote. Between the southern port of Karachi and the Punjab's most important northern metropolis, Lahore, lies about 600 miles (1,000 km) of desert and scrub on either side of the Indus valley.

Halfway between these two cities is a large salient that juts into Pakistan. From this point, Indian mobile forces need race over only 50 miles (80 km) of flat terrain to reach the cities of Sukkur, Rahimyar Khan, or, farther north, the important Bawalalpur-Multan nexus, in order to sever the road and rail lines that link Punjab and Sind. If these vital spinal communications were cut, Pakistan would be divided, isolated, and paralyzed. Indian forces could isolate Punjab, preventing Pakistani reinforcements from moving south, while they conquered Karachi and Hyderabad at their leisure.

Keenly aware of Pakistan's strategic weakness, India's defense planners have created a group of highly mobile "strike corps," composed of powerful armored and mechanized units, supported by mobile artillery and highly capable units of engineers. Much of the army's strength—1,400 modern T-72 tanks, BMP-1/2 armored fighting vehicles, and modern, self-propelled or mobile guns—is concentrated in these strike corps, which are deployed in Punjab, the Thar Desert, and above the marshy Rann of Kutch, just north of the Arabian Sea coast. Their mission, in time of war, is to penetrate deeply into Pakistan, sever its communications, and defeat the divided Pakistani army.

On paper, India's forces on its western front appear to be only slightly stronger than Pakistan's. While confronting Pakistan, India must also maintain large numbers of troops on the borders with Chinese-ruled Tibet, and garrison rebellious Kashmir, Assam, and the tribal states of India's far eastern border with Burma. In wartime, India's huge, million-man paramilitary forces could perform some of these functions, relieving army troops for duty on the front with Pakistan. But the very real threat that China might threaten India's northern borders in support of its ally, Pakistan, forces India's high command to maintain substantial air and ground forces to cover the remote north.

This strategic drain on troops leaves India with a significant but hardly overwhelming superiority on its western front. There, India deploys three armored, four mechanized, and thirteen or so infantry divisions or division equivalents (two of them armored), as well as large numbers of artillery formations. In Kashmir, India fields at least five of its nine mountain divisions.

Pakistan, by contrast, need only use light infantry units to watch its borders with Afghanistan and Iran, concentrating its best forces on the Indian front. Pakistan can deploy two armored divisions, and about fourteen or fifteen infantry divisions or division equivalents.

In armor, Pakistan is outnumbered 3 to 2 by India; in artillery, 3 to 1. Pakistan's artillery is less modern, and has a shorter range than India's. The bulk of Pakistan's tanks, old U.S. M48s and Chinese Type-59s/69s/ and 85s, are obsolescent, undergunned, and poorly equipped, particularly compared with India's more modern family of Soviet-supplied T-72 tanks. The three hundred modern T-80UD tanks Pakistan bought from Ukraine have been offset by equally effective new armor that India has been acquiring from Russia.

In the air, India long ago outclassed Pakistan's air force, which has been crippled by a long, punishing American embargo of arms and spare parts. India not only outnumbers Pakistan's air force by nearly 2 to 1, its state-of-the-art Russian MiG-29s and Su-30s and French Mirage 2000s technologically outclass Pakistan's only fairly modern fighters, a handful of 32 F-16s. The rest of Pakistan's 410-combat aircraft force consists of elderly French Mirages, and a collection of obsolescent J-6 and J-7 Chinese fighters, modernized versions of the venerable MiG-21, and Chinese Q-5 ground attack aircraft, based on the late '50s model MiG-19.

The military embargo imposed on Pakistan by the United States at

the end of the Afghan war in 1989–90 seriously weakened Pakistan's air force: it could not obtain the new F-16s it badly needed, spare parts for its existing American-made equipment, or AWACS capability for the command and control of modern air combat. As a result, the combat capability of the once formidable Pakistan Air Force was cut in half. Pakistan was compelled to shop the world's arms markets for used equipment, finally acquiring from France, after many delays, a batch of old, refurbished, 1960s-vintage Mirage-vs.

Pakistan's air force still produces better pilots than India's air arm, which has one of the world's highest accident rates, but modern Russian equipment, advanced electronics and radars, and improved command and control have lessened Pakistan's once substantial qualitative edge.

India's other advantage is that its economy is almost six times larger than Pakistan's. In three previous Indo-Pakistani wars, both sides quickly ran out of munitions and war supplies, but over the past twenty years India has ensured this failure will not happen again by developing a powerful military-industrial base and an extensive chain of well-stocked military depots close to the Pakistani border, designed to support sustained offensive operations by its mobile strike corps.

By contrast, Pakistan lacks this strategic logistic base, and must import from abroad many of its war stocks, spares, and basic supplies. In time of war, this grave imbalance means Pakistani forces would soon run low on armor, aircraft, missiles, engines, electronics, spare parts, and heavy munitions, while Indian forces would be able to sustain combat for a considerably longer period—perhaps long enough to attain decisive victory. In fact, India's logistic supplies and spare parts reserves give it the capability of fighting for eight to twelve weeks longer than Pakistan.

Once hostilities began, India's powerful navy, which includes modern submarines and one aircraft carrier (with a second under order), would immediately blockade Pakistan's only two seaports at Karachi and Gwadar in Baluchistan, cutting off all of Pakistan's maritime trade. The only way beleaguered Pakistan could obtain strategic supplies of oil, heavy weapons, and munitions would be from Iran, by means of a vulnerable, extremely difficult, 1,000-mile (1,600-km) supply route across the vast deserts and mountains of Baluchistan. In time of war, once Pakistan had exhausted its reserves of fuel and munitions, it

would be unable to replenish its vital war stocks because of an effective blockade by the Indian Navy. Pakistan's smaller navy would challenge the Indian blockade, but would be unlikely to actually break it and reopen maritime trade.

India also has the advantage of size. With few targets of strategic importance in the border areas, India could comfortably withdraw before any Pakistani offensive without risking defeat, then counterattack, and cut off over-extending Pakistani forces. India, like Russia, is simply too large to conquer. The only way for Pakistan to win a strategic victory would be to surround and destroy all of India's mobile strike corps along the border in under ten days of sustained combat. But such an outcome is most unlikely, given Pakistan's weakness in armor, logistic support, and air cover.

In a war with India, Pakistan would be much more likely to remain on the strategic defensive: its best hope would be to grab and hold portions of Indian territory along the border to be used as bargaining chips when the war had ended. However, Pakistan's logistical weakness means that, in a lengthy war of attrition, India would be bound to win. Delhi's refusal to be intimidated by the U.S. embargo imposed after its nuclear tests suggests strongly that India might be equally resistant to foreign diplomatic and economic pressure to quickly end a war against Pakistan.

For Pakistan, in the event of a major war, simply defending the long line from Kashmir to Karachi will be an almost impossible task. All of Pakistan's cities, large towns, and communications between Islamabad and Karachi are compressed into the Indus Valley. Modern, mechanized warfare demands ample maneuver space, and fluid defense in depth. Having the advantage of the strategic offensive, India can choose where and when to launch its powerful strike corps, concentrating them for inevitable breakthroughs where Pakistani forces are stretched thin, or are absent. After slicing through brittle Pakistani defenses, India's mechanized forces could then defeat the Pakistanis in detail, opening the way to the great port city of Karachi, and to Lahore.

India has another important advantage that becomes crucial in desert warfare: spy satellites that can deliver fairly rapid data on the location of Pakistani forces to the Indian high command in Delhi. During the Iran-Iraq War, data secretly supplied to Baghdad by U.S.

reconnaissance satellites played a decisive role in the conflict. According to reliable intelligence sources, the U.S. actually gave Saddam Hussein's regime a ground station through which it could receive real-time downlinked data from American recon satellites.

In the 1991 Gulf War, Iraqi units in Kuwait's deserts were under constant microscopic examination by U.S. spy satellites. Thanks to its fast-developing space program and growing high-tech computing technology, India too will soon be able to monitor from space all Pakistani military movements. Pakistan has no satellites and, at least for now, no access to space recon data from friendly nations. India's spy satellites will not, however, be able to detect Pakistani missile launches.

If a full-scale war erupts, and Pakistan is unable to prevent its defenses from being torn open, Islamabad's last recourse may be to fire tactical nuclear weapons at the advancing Indian armored corps, and the logistic bases that support them. This, of course, would cause India to retaliate, possibly with a nuclear attack on cities such as Lahore, Multan, Karachi, and Islamabad. Pakistan would use its new medium-range ballistic missiles to strike Delhi, Amritsar, Bombay, Jaipur, Ahmadabad, and even as far south as Bangalore.

As previously noted, a Rand Corp. study estimated that an India-Pakistan nuclear exchange would cause 2 million immediate casualties, and a further 100 million in ensuing weeks.

Adding to the risk of nuclear war, India has repeatedly threatened air and missile strikes against Pakistan's nuclear reactors, weapons assembly facilities, and bases from which nuclear-armed aircraft or missiles can be launched. Indian strategists were greatly impressed by Israel's destruction of Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981, and have reportedly been encouraged by Israeli advisors to "surgically" remove Pakistan's nuclear capability. Israel has been actively aiding India's secret nuclear program since the 1980s, and sending counter-insurgency specialists to aid Indian forces in Kashmir.

Any Indian attacks on Pakistani nuclear plants would invite immediate retaliation by Pakistan. Even without the danger of enemy attack, India's eleven reactors devoted to production of weapons-grade uranium-233 and plutonium-239 are ticking time bombs, often denounced by critics as little Chernobyls, because of their poor maintenance and a shoddy safety record.

An attack on Pakistani or Indian reactors would release clouds of

radioactive dust and debris that would blanket southern Asia, spreading, eventually, around the globe. The explosion of just one nuclear reactor would pollute the groundwater and food chain in the region for many decades. The proximity of Indian and Pakistani reactors to heavily populated areas makes a potential "reactor war" all the more dangerous.

The recent introduction by India and Pakistan of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles configured to carry nuclear warheads sharply increases the reach of any potential nuclear exchange. The missiles have a flight time to target of as little as three minutes. Recent nuclear tests conducted in India in the Thar Desert were designed to validate new tactical nuclear warheads for its missiles, air-delivered bombs, and 155mm artillery, as well as a precursor thermonuclear, or hydrogen, bomb.

India's acceleration of development of an intermediate version of the Agni-II is clearly designed to strike targets on the Tibet Plateau and deep into western China, including the important industrial cities of Chengdu, Wuhan, Kunming, and Chongqing—and even Hong Kong and Shanghai. In April 1999, India tested the new, solid-fueled, two-stage Agni-II, which can deliver a one-ton conventional or nuclear warhead over a distance of 1,554 miles (2,500 km), making it a true intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM). Indian defense officials claimed Agni-II would eventually be deployed on rail cars.

Pakistan responded only three days later by test-firing its 1,430-mile (2,300-km) Ghauri-II IRBM, and a new, single-stage missile, the 466-mile- (750-km-) range Shaheen.

While Delhi and Islamabad rattled their missiles, India's then defense minister, George Fernandes, warned, "With today's launch, we have reached a point where no one from anywhere will dare threaten us." "Anywhere" clearly meant China and even the United States.

Development of strategic arms by India's Defense Research and Development Organization will not end with Agni-II. The DRDO is expected to introduce the 2,175-mile- (3,500-km-) range Agni-III in the year 2000, a version capable of striking targets anywhere in China.

India is also developing a true intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), likely by adding a third solid-fuel stage to Agni-III. This 3,728–4,350-mile (6,000–7,000-km) missile will be capable of reaching parts of North America, Japan, and Europe. In addition, DRDO is work-

ing on a submarine-launched ballistic missile, Sagarika, and an air-breathing cruise missile. These long-range systems have alarmed not only China, but all of Asia and even American defense planners.

Equally worrying, neither India nor Pakistan has effective surveillance systems capable of giving early warning of enemy missile launches. As a result, their new ballistic missiles create a hair-trigger, use-them-or-lose-them situation—meaning that they might be launched on warning, under fear enemy missiles were incoming, or after a false report of nuclear attack. The necessary civilian and military command-and-control authority to effectively handle nuclear weapons and, in extremis, to decide on their use or non-use, are lacking in both India and Pakistan, though the two nations are working to create such strategic organizations.

Right now, the nuclear arsenals of India and Pakistan are under a complex, even uncertain, chain of command that could break down in a crisis, or even produce a false warning of an enemy nuclear attack.

Chronically poor telecommunications and frequent breakdowns in command-and-control on both sides create a further threat of unauthorized or mistaken launches. Agreement by India and Pakistan to advise their neighbor of test launches has in no way lessened this danger. In South Asia, telephone communications are so poor, most senior government officials rely on cell phones. In the event of war, even primitive jamming techniques by the enemy would disrupt the radio transmitters and relay stations on which cell phones depend to function, as well as other radio and microwave transmissions. The fog of war would thicken, then grow opaque: in this dangerous miasma, Indian and Pakistani leaders might have to make nearly instant decisions that could mean death for millions of their citizens and a catastrophe for the entire Earth.

A more dangerous situation cannot be imagined—and Kashmir could very well be the fuse that ignites a nuclear holocaust on the continent.



# 11 Paradise Lost

## SRINAGAR

**A**fter the usual harrowing flight north from Delhi, I arrived at fabled Srinagar. Kashmir may be the jewel of the subcontinent, but Srinagar is rather disappointing. In spite of its legendary lake-side setting, quaint wooden buildings, clusters of houseboats, and Mogul gardens, Srinagar has the same overcrowded, scruffy, haphazard air as most other South Asian cities. Traffic jams, heaps of refuse, and a miasma of polluted air belie the beauty that surrounds this city of 450,000. Spoiled by the steady influx of tourists for the past century, Srinagar's natives have gained a well-deserved reputation for fleecing, harassing, and abusing visitors. Even the famous houseboats that ply Dal Lake are infested with rats and armies of roaches that are almost as aggressive and annoying as the swarms of touts that incessantly cajole and importune tourists.

Before the uprising, Srinagar's narrow streets, dark, winding alleys, and colorful bazaars offering spices, fruits, and handicrafts had some exotic charm. But the intifada turned the once vibrant, colorful city into a semi-ghost town. As I walked through the grim, deserted streets I met wary patrols of Indian Army, police and paramilitary troops. Sandbagged Indian checkpoints, manned by nervous, trigger-happy troops, guarded important intersections and government buildings. I had seen a similar pall of fear and raw tension fall over other cities at war: Beirut, Luanda, Algiers, San Salvador, Bogota, Kabul. Srinagar was clearly a city under siege.

At dusk, a curfew went into effect, leaving the streets empty and sinister. Indian troops in jeeps and light trucks scanned the wooden buildings, their automatic weapons at the ready, on the alert for any movement on the roofs that might mean snipers. The Indians never knew when a grenade would be tossed at them or, worse, an RPG rocket fired at one of their vehicles. Any unusual or unexpected activities after dusk could trigger volleys of fire from the edgy Indian soldiers; they would shoot first and investigate later. The large number of innocent civilians shot by accident were simply classified as "terrorists," or "caught in crossfire."

Outside Srinagar, security was even more tenuous. Roads to the once-popular tourist resorts at Gulmarg and Pahalgam were often closed by small bands of mujahedin. Military and police vehicles were routinely ambushed, forcing the Indians to travel in large convoys. The heavily wooded slopes along the roads and narrow defiles provided ideal guerrilla cover, where even the amateur fighters of the various mujahedin groups could operate with some measure of effectiveness.

Wars fought among civilian populations are always a dirty, bloody business. Guerrilla wars, in which the insurgents often receive support from the local populace, are even more so. As the French discovered four decades ago in Algeria, the most effective way to crush guerrilla forces is to separate them from the civilians who sustain them.

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Is there a solution to the problem of Kashmir? Half a century of wrangling between India and Pakistan, two wars, and a national uprising have so far changed nothing. Until 1998, the outside world was content to regard Kashmir as a festering, but strategically contained bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan. Like Afghanistan, the area was so remote, so little known, that it was impossible to rouse international public opinion over its travails, even among Islamic nations. Even the United Nations, which had originally called for a referendum to settle the state's future, lost interest in the seemingly intractable issue, and skillful Indian diplomacy thwarted Pakistan's attempts to internationalize the problem.

While other remote conflicts, like East Timor or Tibet, attracted enough media attention to cause popular indignation in the West, the suffering and aspirations of Kashmir's people were largely ignored. The distorted but widely held view that all Muslim liberation movements are terrorists, or at least dangerous troublemakers, contributed to the general lack of concern for Kashmir. Human rights groups that raised the issue received scant attention. Desultory efforts by the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union to resolve Kashmir soon petered out after being overtaken by more pressing matters. Leave bad enough alone was the world's view of Kashmir.

This international nonchalance abruptly changed in mid-1998 when India detonated five nuclear devices. The nuclear tests, intended

to bolster India's security, backfired on Delhi by shocking the outside world and focusing its attention on long-neglected Kashmir. The immediate result for India was opprobrium and temporary financial sanctions. Badly needed foreign investors were scared off, China and Pakistan were deeply alarmed, and the world was furious at India. Pakistan's riposte—a nuclear test of its own—deepened international concern and forced the entire matter of Indo-Pakistani relations and Kashmir onto the diplomatic docket—precisely what India had so long labored to avoid.

Alarm bells began to go off from Washington to Tokyo, as strategists who had previously written off Southwest Asia as an unimportant geopolitical backwater abruptly realized that two deeply inimical nuclear powers, at scimitars drawn over Kashmir, could very easily get themselves into an advertent, or accidental, nuclear war that would kill millions and pollute the planet with radioactive fallout. The dirty secret everyone had chosen to ignore was suddenly out in the open.

Delhi, stunned by unexpected international condemnation, attempted to furiously backpedal, claiming its nuclear explosions were merely a response to threats from China, a contention few believed. India's conditional offers to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty did little to allay concern that the subcontinent was at the edge of a nuclear abyss.

Kashmir could no longer be safely forgotten. Without a settlement of the dispute, which focuses and magnifies all the historical, religious and political hatreds between the two estranged sister-nations, the dangerous impasse would persist indefinitely, subject to perilous escalation at any time.

The confrontation came just as the United States was rapidly expanding its influence into energy- and resource-rich Central Asia. A second Great Game was afoot in the vast steppe and mountain region stretching from China to the Caucasus. Whereas in the nineteenth century, railroads had been the conduits of trade and empire building, at the very end of the twentieth century, oil and gas pipelines had become the new arteries of geostrategic power projection and economic exploitation. A long list of countries, including Russia, the United States, Pakistan, India, China, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Japan, South Korea, and Europe were all vying to grab a portion of the new oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Basin and, further west, in the semi-

independent former Soviet republics. It looked like the world's next gold rush.

The festering civil war in Afghanistan blocked the shortest pipeline routes south and forced the U.S. to alter its bitterly hostile policy toward Tehran and seek accommodation with Iran, through whose territory lay the next best export route for Central Asia's riches. Just as a laboriously achieved détente was beginning to develop between the U.S. and Iran, there was a new upsurge of hostility between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan; Kashmir, the focus of Indo-Pakistani rivalry, suddenly intruded into the Central Asian issue, threatening to create a second Afghanistan and possibly draw China and India into direct conflict.

While the need for a comprehensive settlement is evident, the means remain elusive. Neither India nor Pakistan will allow the other to dominate a unified Kashmir, and the majority of Kashmir's people, for their part, strongly reject Indian domination and aspire to the right of self-determination enshrined in the United Nations Charter. After the bloody intifada, and India's ruthless repression, it seems unlikely most Kashmiris would voluntarily consent to continued direct rule by India.

India insists that the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir problem is an internal matter, in which outside powers and the UN have no business. (The Jammu portion of Kashmir has a Hindu majority and thus will opt for continued union with India.) Pakistan has never been troubled by outsiders questioning its continued possession of the Northern Territories, but that may change if the Kashmir issue comes under international arbitration. In fact, it could open a diplomatic Pandora's box, raising the vexing questions not only of the Northern Territories, but also of Gilgit-Baltistan, Indian-held Ladakh, and the Chinese annexation of Aksai Chin.

In spite of these daunting diplomatic rigidities, the original fifty-year-old UN plan for a supervised referendum in Kashmir still remains the best possible solution. There is no political, demographic, or economic reason why Kashmir could not exist as a viable independent state, with the proviso that, as a buffer between India and Pakistan, it would have to establish and maintain absolute neutrality.

An honest vote in a referendum, of course, would produce a majority in favor of accession to Pakistan or independence. India has long understood this fact, and, accordingly, is determined at all costs to

block any vote it cannot control and, inevitably, rig. Only intense international political and economic pressure, or a massive upsurge in the insurrection, could change Delhi's mind, though even this seems unlikely. India's politicians, particularly the BJP's Hindu chauvinists, have staked their fortunes on crushing the revolt in Kashmir, and would be turfed out of office by angry Indian voters who would see any settlement over Kashmir as a sellout to the hated Muslims, and even more fiercely hated Pakistan. Losing Kashmir would fly in the face of the BJP's loudly stated ambitions to re-create the old Raj under Hindu rule, and negate the party's very *raison d'être* as the spear-point of Hindu revivalism.

If independence is unachievable, and union with Pakistan impossible, what about genuine autonomy within the Indian union? Delhi claims Kashmir already has full autonomy under the local state government run by Dr. Farouk Abdullah. Few believe this canard, not even apparently Dr. Abdullah, who is reportedly considering giving up being an Indian satrap and returning to his residence in the peaceful English countryside. Real autonomy would imply a right to secede from India; or at least, to elect a state government that is closely aligned to Pakistan. Delhi would accept neither. A truly autonomous government in Kashmir might quickly spark calls for more autonomy from other restive regions that chafe at Delhi's controls and taxation, such as Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, or worse, even big states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, which might choose to emulate independent-minded Russian regions like Tatarstan, Krasnoyarsk, or Udmurtia, by keeping their taxes at home, selling resources and exports directly to foreigners, and refusing to any longer subsidize poor regions of the country.

Every potential solution is replete with problems and dangers. But Kashmiris have made plain they will no longer accept the status quo. Their efforts to cast off Indian rule, and India's savage response, threaten war daily between India and Pakistan. A way of cutting through this modern Gordian knot must be found before the world's most populous region stumbles into nuclear conflict. The world can no longer afford to close its eyes to this half-century-old dispute.

India's ambition to attain a seat on the UN Security Council, and gain international respectability as a democratic, mature great power, is being undermined by its continued repression in Kashmir, one of the

worst examples of human rights violations. Ironically, while the world condemns China for its harsh repression in Tibet over the past decade, India has been responsible for even more political killings and tortures during the same period in Kashmir.

India would probably be better off without its portion of strife-torn Kashmir. Keeping the mountain state in the union by force is costing Delhi huge sums of money it can ill afford, wearing down the Indian army, and damaging India's reputation.

But the Indian government has got itself stuck in the mountains of Kashmir: it is unable to go either forward or backward, as the voices of its moderate politicians are increasingly drowned out by the rising clamor of Hindu fundamentalism and chauvinism. No Indian politician dares risk being accused of having surrendered the glorious earthly paradise of Kashmir to the hated Muslim enemy. Muslim Kashmiris cannot abide Indian rule. Everything must change; but nothing, it seems, will.

In April 1999, a new and ghastly potential solution to the endless Kashmir dispute became suddenly and horrifyingly apparent. Half a world away, the Serb regime of Slobodan Milošević chose to solve a similar, seemingly intractable problem—Kosovo—by first unleashing ethnic and religious warfare against its restive Albanian citizens, then expelling them from the country.

The ethnic terrorism Serbs had inflicted on Croatia and Bosnia was only a prelude to the full-scale horror of the depopulation of Kosovo, the worst crime against humanity in Europe since World War II.

Like some of India's more extreme Hindu fundamentalists, Serbia's latter-day ethnic Fascists were determined to restore the ethnic Slav purity of their region, to "drive the Muslim hordes back to Mecca" and exact pitiless revenge for historical grievances that dated back five hundred years or more. The Serb Orthodox Church played a major role in whipping up anti-Muslim, anti-Albanian hatred, just as some of India's extremist Hindu priests incited violence against Muslims and Christians. To Serbs, the Kosovar Albanians and the Slav Muslims of Bosnia were "Turks"; to Hindu fundamentalists, the Muslims of Kashmir, of India itself, and of Pakistan were all latter-day "Moguls" who defiled the sanctity of Mother India.

Serbia, a small but fanatically determined nation of only ten million, defied the world community and the wrath of NATO. In a matter

of weeks, Serbs drove one million Albanians out of Kosovo, dumping them like human garbage in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, putting the rest into internal flight. Kosovo was made Albanian-*rein*, or purified of the Muslim *Untermensch*.

Hindu fundamentalists and even some senior Indian leaders cannot but have noted Milošević's attempt to inflict a "final solution" on the Muslims of Kosovo, not to mention the West's dilatory and tardy response to this monstrous crime.

What if India unleashed its army of paramilitary thugs against the recalcitrant, rebellious Muslim civilians of Kashmir? The idea is horrifying to contemplate. Driving a large portion of Muslim Kashmiris over the border into neighboring Pakistan would rid India once and for all of their vexing presence, crush the intifada, and conclusively cement India's rule over Kashmir. India would then be free to import Hindu settlers to repopulate Kashmir. What could Pakistan do to prevent a tidal wave of refugees from being driven across the Line of Control? Its only option would be an all-out war against far more powerful India, a war that it would surely lose. The example of Kosovo also provides a lesson to India in how it might destabilize hated Pakistan by sending a flood of millions of Kashmiri refugees across the border. It could even lead to Pakistan's collapse.

The bestial actions of a faraway Balkan dictator had suddenly introduced an ominous new element into the already explosive crisis over Kashmir.

## P A R T T H R E E



# War in the Death Zone