

Committee: DISEC 1

Topic: The Question of Kashmir

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Summary

Kashmir is a region in central Asia, the northernmost region of the Indian subcontinent, bordered by India to the south, Pakistan and Afghanistan to the west and China to the east. Kashmir is a mountainous region that is mineral rich. Ever since the partition of the Indian subcontinent, India and Pakistan have been in conflict over the rulership of the region. Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, in the North and West are administered by Pakistan while the southern and eastern areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are administered by India. Many conflicts have occurred in the region due to the end of British rule, differing cultures, and religions, such as Sikh, Muslim and Hindu, and interest for control over the region by several different countries. This has cost countless lives and has caused irreparable damage to the region. The United Nations has been a key role player in the dispute, with ceasefires and treaties agreed, however the many attempts at peace have been somewhat unsuccessful, meaning the UN has to take action now.

Definition of Key Terms

Sikh - a follower of Sikhism, a monotheistic religion, created in the Punjab region of India around fifteenth century C.E.

Hindu - a Follower of Hinduism, a polytheistic religion, with origins from different areas in India, amalgamated around 200 and 500 B.C.E. It is India's primary religion.

Muslim - a follower of Islam, a monotheistic religion, created in Saudi Arabia around 610 C.E. Islam is the main religion of Pakistan and Kashmir.

Maharaja - translates to 'Great Ruler' from Sanskrit. Was given to nobles during the Indian Empire.

British Indian Empire - the British colonial rule over the India sub-continent from 1858 to 1947

Plebiscite – Referendum on law or political issues

Line of control - established on 2 July 1972, it is a military line between India and Pakistani ruled areas of Kashmir. It is used as the border between the two, although not recognised legally.

Ceasefire - when each side of a war agrees to stop military action, usually because of a third-party mediator, such as the UN.

Background Information

In 1819, the Kashmir valley was conquered by armies of the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh of the Punjab, ending centuries of Muslim reign. The Kashmiri people welcomed the Sikh rule; however, the Sikh quickly implemented many anti-Muslimism laws, leading to mass unrest and immigration. At this time, Kashmir became the second highest earning region in the Sikh empire, as minerals were harvested, and Kashmir shawls were becoming popular in the West.

Kashmir was left as a princely state, under Sikh rule, which was continued after the 1858 British colonization of the Indian Sub-Continent. Kashmir remained under Anglo-Indian rule until the end of British rule in 1947, but Kashmir was still an impoverished area with the Muslim majority population being treated harshly and mainly working as serfs for absentee Hindu landlords.

Tensions escalated when British rule ended and the maharaja decided to not give the land to Pakistan which led to Pakistan launching a guerilla attack on the region, using state sponsored guerilla fighters, meant to scare the maharaja into submission. However, the ruler called upon the British to allow for a return attack on the Pakistanis. Indian soldiers entered Kashmir and forced many Pakistanis to retreat, which led to the Indo-Pakistan War of 1947 or The First Kashmir War.

The UN then stepped in 1949 and created a ceasefire. However when they demanded for a plebiscite, relations between the UN and both Pakistan and India soured.

There were two more wars over the region, with the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 being the first, where Pakistan planned a large-scale invasion on Kashmir with thousands of casualties on both sides. It was around this time that the eastern part of the region also has had disputes when it comes to borders, as China sided with Pakistan on the dispute, which they later acquired land in the area from, after the Sino-Indian border war of 1963. China then helped Pakistan during this war. However, China has given mixed signals on their stance since.

The second of which wars being the Kargil War of 1999, where the Indian army aimed to flush out Pakistani militaries along the line of control, with hundreds killed of both sides. It began on the 3 May and ended on the 26 of July. Kargil is a region on the Line of Control leading it to be a point of conflict.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Government of India - many parts of the Indian government handle aspects in Kashmir, such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, that handles internal security and governance in Jammu and Kashmir, and the Jammu and Kashmir Government that is the local government operating within the Indian-administered region.

Government of Pakistan - Many parts of the Pakistani government also handle aspects in Kashmir, such as the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan that manages Pakistan's administrative affairs, and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Government that governs the Pakistan-administered region.

The United Nations - The UN has played a key part in maintaining the peace in the Kashmir regions, with the goals of being a mediator to allow for action and discussion on the conflict in Kashmir. The now non-existent sub body, The United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan regulated conflict during

the first Kashmir war and was later replaced by the United Nations Military Overseeing group for India and Pakistan, which has a more military focus on keeping both parties under control during ceasefire.

All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) - A political coalition of several pro-freedom parties in Indian-administered Kashmir, with goals of self-determination.

Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) - A political party in Indian-administered Kashmir. The party advocates that Kashmir is firmly a part of India.

Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party (PDP) - a major political party in Indian-administered Kashmir, advocating for self-governance in a peaceful manner with dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Hizbul Mujahideen- a terrorist group stationed in the Pakistan ruled area of Kashmir, mainly made up of Kashmir locals.

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)- a Muslim military group, labelled terrorist by India, the US, and other nations, in Pakistan, with original goals of the liberation of Kashmir from Indian rule.

Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)- another Pakistani terrorist group with similar goals as LeT, which has operated in the modern day

International and National NGOs- organisations such as Human Rights watch, The Red Cross and Amnesty International all supply aid to the region of Kashmir.

Timeline of Events

1819 - Sikh invasion of Kashmir, causing separation between Muslim and Sikh populations.

1858 - British colonization of the Indian Sub-Continent, leading to greater development but more separation between classes.

1947- End of British rule over the Indian Sub-Continent, causing a power vacuum and the escalation of tensions between Pakistan and India of control of the territory.

Indo-Pakistan War of 1947/The First Kashmir War- the first major conflict in the dispute.

1949- UN implementation of a ceasefire between both parties.

1963- Chinese involvement in the region.

1965- The Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, the second major conflict in the dispute.

1999- The Kargil war, the most recent major conflict in the dispute.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

The first Kashmir War- After the passing of numerous Security council resolutions, starting in 1947, The United Nations created the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan in Resolution 47, that allowed for a mediation of the two governments, and then later had power to stop the conflict in the area and decide the terms for a plebiscite. A ceasefire was created in an agreement in 1949. This Commission was then terminated in resolution 80, which also called on India and Pakistan to demilitarise. During this war was when the UN first called for a plebiscite, which failed to be implemented.

Following resolutions and events- The UNSC has implemented numerous following resolutions, however, has not implemented any actions, such as the creation of a new Sub-body or the demand for a ceasefire since the first Kashmir war. UN peacekeepers have been deployed and have remained in Kashmir since the start of the conflict.

Possible Solutions

Bilateral Negotiations - creation of discussion between all parties involved in the dispute can lead to a unanimous and fair solution to be created on the dispute.

Plebiscite - a regional vote for the people on their opinion over control of their region is what the UN has stated is their main goal in past resolutions. This would lead to a democratic solution to the dispute, but also a possibly controversial one.

Territorial changes - Changes in the LoC can ease tensions between the two parties, or changing the LoC to be an international border of the two countries can solve the solution, however in a worldwide diplomatic way.

Joint control over the region - Reaching an agreement between the two nations of joint control can stop conflict, however, leaves the region in a strange space democratically.

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