

I: LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI- INDO-PAK WAR, 1965

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A member of Mahatma Gandhi's noncooperation movement against British government in India, he was imprisoned for a short time (1921). Upon release he studied in the Kashi Vidyapitha, a nationalist university, where he graduated with the title of *shastri* ("learned in the scriptures"). He then returned to politics as a follower of Gandhi, was imprisoned several more times, and attained influential positions in the Congress Party of the state of the United Provinces, now Uttar Pradesh state.

Shastri was elected to the legislature of the United Provinces in 1937 and 1946. After Indian independence, Shastri gained experience as minister for home affairs and transport in Uttar Pradesh. He was elected to the central Indian legislature in 1952 and became union minister for railways and transport. He gained a reputation as a skillful mediator after his appointment to the influential post of minister for home affairs in 1961. Three years later, on Jawaharlal Nehru's illness, Shastri was appointed minister without portfolio, and after Nehru's death he became prime minister in June 1964.

INDO-PAK WAR, 1965

The 1965 war between India and Pakistan was the second conflict between the two countries over the status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The clash did not resolve this dispute, but it did engage the United States and the Soviet Union in ways that would have important implications for subsequent superpower involvement in the region.

The dispute over this region originated in the process of decolonization in South Asia. When the British colony of India gained its independence in 1947, it was partitioned into two separate entities: the secular nation of India and the predominantly Muslim nation of Pakistan. Pakistan was composed of two noncontiguous regions, East Pakistan and West Pakistan, separated by Indian territory. The state of Jammu and Kashmir, which had a predominantly Muslim population but a Hindu leader, shared borders with both India and West Pakistan. The argument over which nation would incorporate the state led to the first India-Pakistan War in 1947-48 and ended with UN mediation. Jammu and Kashmir, also known as "Indian Kashmir" or just "Kashmir," joined the Republic of India, but the Pakistani Government continued to believe that the majority Muslim state rightfully belonged to Pakistan.

Conflict resumed again in early 1965, when Pakistani and Indian forces clashed over disputed territory along the border between the two nations. Hostilities intensified that August when the Pakistani Army attempted to take Kashmir by force. The attempt to seize the state was unsuccessful, and the second India-Pakistan War reached a stalemate. This time, the international politics of the Cold War affected the nature of the conflict.

The United States had a history of ambivalent relations with India. During the 1950s, U.S. officials regarded Indian leadership with some caution due to India's involvement in the nonaligned movement, particularly its prominent role at the Bandung Conference of 1955. The United States hoped to maintain a regional balance of power, which meant not allowing India to influence the political development of other states. However, a 1962 border conflict between India and China ended with a decisive Chinese victory, which motivated the United States and the United Kingdom to provide military supplies to the Indian Army. After the clash with China, India also turned to the Soviet Union for assistance, which placed some strains on U.S.-Indian relations. However, the United States also provided India with considerable development assistance throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

U.S.-Pakistani relations had been more consistently positive. The U.S. Government looked to Pakistan as an example of a moderate Muslim state and appreciated Pakistani

assistance in holding the line against communist expansion by joining the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and the Baghdad Pact (later renamed the Central Treaty Organization, or CENTO) in 1955. Pakistan's interest in these pacts stemmed from its desire to develop its military and defensive capabilities, which were substantially weaker than those of India. Both the United States and the United Kingdom supplied arms to Pakistan in these years.

After Pakistani troops invaded Kashmir, India moved quickly to internationalize the regional dispute. It asked the United Nations to reprise its role in the First India-Pakistan War and end the current conflict. The Security Council passed Resolution 211 on September 20 calling for an end to the fighting and negotiations on the settlement of the Kashmir problem, and the United States and the United Kingdom supported the UN decision by cutting off arms supplies to both belligerents. This ban affected both belligerents, but Pakistan felt the effects more keenly since it had a much weaker military in comparison to India. The UN resolution and the halting of arms sales had an immediate impact. India accepted the ceasefire on September 21 and Pakistan on September 22.

The ceasefire alone did not resolve the status of Kashmir, and both sides accepted the Soviet Union as a third-party mediator. Negotiations in Tashkent concluded in January 1966, with both sides giving up territorial claims, withdrawing their armies from the disputed territory. Nevertheless, although the Tashkent agreement achieved its short-term aims, conflict in South Asia would reignite a few years later.

II: INDHIRA GANDHI, INDO-PAK WAR, 1971

The Congress Party came to power when her father took office in 1947, and Gandhi became a member of its working committee in 1955. In 1959 she was elected to the largely honorary post of party president. She was made a member of the Rajya Sabha (upper chamber of the Indian parliament) in 1964, and that year Lal Bahadur Shastri—who had succeeded Nehru as prime minister—named her minister of information and broadcasting in his government.

On Shastri's sudden death in January 1966, Gandhi was named leader of the Congress Party—and thus also became prime minister—in a compromise between the party's right and left wings. Her leadership, however, came under continual challenge from the right wing of the party, led by former minister of finance Morarji Desai. She won a seat in the 1967 elections to the Lok Sabha (lower chamber of the Indian parliament), but the Congress Party managed to win only a slim majority of seats, and Gandhi had to accept Desai as deputy prime minister.

INDO-PAK WAR, 1971

Indo-Pak War 1971 Background

- At the time of Indian independence from Britain in 1947, the country was also partitioned into India and Pakistan, the latter as a Muslim country.
- At that time, Pakistan was composed of two units, West Pakistan and East Pakistan which was the Muslim-dominated part of the erstwhile Bengal province. Soon after the formation of Pakistan, however, the Bengalis were under-represented in the national government and there were said to be racial tensions between both groups.
- Bengalis felt that their culture was being belittled by the national government. There were movements for the declaration of Bengali as an official language in Pakistan along with Urdu.
- Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, the premier Bengali nationalist leader, had announced his six-point programme for provincial autonomy for East Pakistan.

- In the 1970 elections in Pakistan, Mujibur's party East Pakistani Awami League won a landslide victory losing only 2 out of the 169 seats in the East Pakistan Assembly. This victory also gave the party a simple majority in the central Pakistani Assembly.
- The West Pakistani establishment, instead of allowing Mujibur to form government, called upon the military to crush dissenters in East Pakistan.
- There were protests in East Pakistan in support of Mujibur and a brutal crackdown was initiated by West Pakistan led by Tikka Khan in March 1971. His army let loose a reign of terror in East Pakistan engaging in widespread atrocities against dissenters. He thus earned the nickname 'the Butcher of Bengal'.
- During this time, Mujibur had been arrested and taken to West Pakistan. Several Awami leaders had fled to India seeking protection. There was also a huge inflow of refugees to India and this was proving to be an economic strain on India.
- On 26 March 1971, Major Ziaur Rahman, a veteran of the Pakistani army declared the independence of Bangladesh on radio.
- The government of India under Indira Gandhi was outspoken in its support of the nationalist leaders of East Pakistan and appealed to the international community for help in the crisis.
- GOI also supported the Multi Bahini or the people's army in East Pakistan. India was giving training to the East Pakistani Bengali nationals in the refugee camps.
- The state governments of West Bengal, Tripura, Bihar, Assam and Meghalaya set up refugee camps along the border.
- On 3rd December 1971, Pakistan launched pre-emptive strikes on Indian airfields including in Agra. That same evening, Indira Gandhi declared on radio that the strikes were seen as a declaration of war against India. This was India's entry into the war.
- That same night, India responded with retaliatory air strikes against Pakistan.
- There were coordinated air, land and sea assaults on Pakistan from all fronts. The intent in the eastern front was to capture Dhaka as it was the nerve-centre of the action. The objective on the western front was the prevention of Pakistanis from entering Indian soil.
- The war lasted only 13 days and it ended with the surrender of the Pakistani army on the Eastern front on 16 December 1971.
- The Instrument of Surrender was signed between the commanding officer of the Indian Eastern Command Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora and his Pakistani counterpart Lieutenant-General A.A.K. Niazi.
- After the surrender, over 90000 POWs were taken by India, the largest surrender since the Second World War. Among them also included some Bengali nationals who had been loyal to West Pakistan.
- The war was a decisive victory for India and it established the military dominance of India over Pakistan.
- Pakistan suffered a humiliating defeat and it also led to the country being stripped of over half of its population. The new country of Bangladesh was established. Pakistan released Mujibur who became the first President of Bangladesh.
- In 1972, the Shimla Agreement was signed between India and Pakistan by which in lieu of the return of the Pakistani POWs, the Pakistan government would recognise the independence of Bangladesh.
- In July 2011, the Bangladesh government posthumously bestowed the Bangladesh Freedom Honour to Indira Gandhi.

III: EMERGENCY AND DOMESTIC REFORMS

The Bangladesh war raised Prime Minister Gandhi to virtual “mother goddess” stature at home. She was viewed as a brilliant military strategist and diplomat, and her popularity was never greater than in the years immediately after that brief December war. By late 1974, however, Gandhi’s golden image had tarnished, for, despite her campaign rhetoric, poverty was hardly abolished in India. Quite the contrary, with skyrocketing international oil prices and consumer-goods inflation at home, India’s unemployed and landless as well as its large fixed-income labouring population found themselves sinking deeper into starvation’s grip and impossible debt. Student strikes and mass protest marches rocked Bihar and Gujarat, as Narayan and Desai joined forces in leading a new Janata Morcha (“People’s Front”) movement against government corruption and Gandhi’s allegedly inept leadership. The mass movement gathered momentum throughout the first half of 1975 and reached its climax that June, when the Congress Party lost a crucial by-election in Gujarat and Gandhi herself was found guilty by the High Court in Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh) of several counts of election malpractice during the last campaign for her Lok Sabha seat. The mandatory penalty for that crime was exclusion from holding any elective office for six years from the date of conviction.

Opposition leaders threatened a civil disobedience campaign to force the prime minister to resign, and many of her oldest cabinet colleagues and Congress Party advisers urged her to step down pending an appeal to India’s Supreme Court. Following instead the advice of her ambitious and energetic younger son, Sanjay, on June 26, 1975, Gandhi persuaded President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed to declare a national emergency, which empowered her to do whatever she considered best for the country for at least six months. The elite Central Reserve Police force, the prime minister’s palace guard, was ordered to arrest Desai and the ailing and aged Narayan, as well as hundreds of others who had worked with her father and Mohandas Gandhi in helping India to win its freedom from British rule. She then blacked out the entire region of Delhi in which the press was published and appointed Sanjay as her trusted personal censor of all future news leaders and editorials. Her minister of information and broadcasting, Inder K. Gujral, immediately resigned rather than accept orders from Sanjay, who held no elective office at the time but who clearly was becoming one of the most powerful persons in India. “India is Indira, and Indira is India,” was the call of Congress Party sycophants, and soon the country was plastered with her poster image. Practically every leader of India’s political opposition was jailed or kept under house arrest for almost two years, and some of India’s most prominent journalists, lawyers, educators, and political activists were muzzled or imprisoned.

Gandhi announced her Twenty-Point Program soon after the emergency was proclaimed, and most points were aimed at reducing inflation and energizing the economy by punishing tax evaders, black marketers, smugglers, and other real criminals. Prices did come down, production indexes rose dramatically, and even the monsoon proved cooperative by bringing abundant rains on time for two years in a row. At the same time, however, popular discontent was fostered by some of the emergency acts, such as a freeze on wage increases, pressure for increased worker discipline, and a birth-control program initiated by Sanjay that mandated sterilization for families with more than two children. It was perhaps because of the economic gains that the prime minister decided early in 1977 to call general elections, but she may also have believed what she read about herself in her controlled press or feared a military coup had she simply refused to seek a civil mandate for her policies. Most political prisoners were released, and Narayan immediately joined Desai in quickly revitalizing the Janata movement, whose campaign warned Indians that the elections might be their last chance to choose between “democracy and dictatorship.” In the elections, held in February, Indira lost her Lok Sabha seat, and Sanjay lost his bid for one. Most of their loyal followers also lost their electoral contests, and the Congress Party was reduced to just 153 seats, 92 of

which were from four of the southern states. The Janata Party's 295 seats (of a total 542) gave it only a modest majority, but opposition candidates together represented more than two-thirds of the Lok Sabha membership.

IV: OPERATION BLUE STAR

On 13th April 1977, the head of The fake Nirankaris, named Gurbachan led a procession in Amritsar. Earlier he had declared that "If Guru Gobind Singh can make five beloved one's, he will make seven stars". The fake Nirankaris are strongly associated with the Arya Samajis and other such organizations which came out of efforts to reform Hinduism, they were seeking to free Hinduism from its age old superstitions and rituals—the same rituals that Guru Nanak had rebuffed even in his childhood. However, instead of targeting the common Hindu awash in such ritualism, this movement's individuals spearheaded their efforts towards the Sikhs.

The fake Nirankaris, and another group of the same ilk, the Arya Samajis, wanted the Sikhs to shave off their beards, doff their turbans and doubtless shear their long hair, losing many of their ties to Guru Gobind Singh's 5 Kakars, and assimilate into Hinduism (or Hinduism, **as they saw it**, with such rituals as "Havan"). So on the occasion of Vasakhi, the very day that the Khalsa was born, the same day of the Jallawalian Bagh massacre--Gurbachan Nirankari had the unmitigated gall to lead an armed mob right through Amritsar, to the Holy Takhat (for Sikhs the Eternal Throne of Akaal Purack.)

Jarnail Singh Bhindrenwale was, at this time, a little known preacher, who would visit villages and preach to youngsters to reaffirm the essential credos of their Gurus and return to Sikhi. The Akhand Kirtani Jatha (an Akali group with a totally opposing viewpoint, to say the least), with its leaders, set out from the Akal Takht to stop Gurbachan Nirankari for his inflammatory, "Creating five stars" boast, a non-to-suttle suggestion that he would **best** Guru Gobind Singh ji. Gurbachan and his armed accomplices opened fire on the Akalis and, one by one, a total of 13 Akalis were killed.

After this incident, Bhindranwale's reputation as a young Lion of Lions, a potentially powerful Sikh leader, rose tremendously in the Sikh community and in Sikh political circles. From 1977 until 1983, Bhindrenwale led his agitation against the Arya Samajis and other fanatic Hindu organizations who were working against Sikhi and concept of Punjabiati. There were, as well, many Sikhs who opposed him for his fanatical views. Many of his followers were young rural Sikhs, who had been disappointed with both the state and central government due to unemployment, poverty and other problems. After a long trail that dragged on for 3-4 years, Gurbachan Nirankari, was acquitted by an Indian court, even though more than 10 persons identified him as one of the murderers and testified so in court, it was clearly evident that there were political heavy weights behind him as well as behind Bhindrenwale.

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