

Editorial

India-Pakistan relations have been fraught with tension since their emergence as independent nations in 1947. Even before the new states could overcome the trauma of Partition and the large-scale killings that followed, Pakistan chose to capitalise on the dithering on part of the Maharaja of Kashmir to join either of the two successor states. The tribal invasion into Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in 1947–48, with the active support of the newly created state of Pakistan, made the Maharaja sign the instrument of accession with India, thus making J&K an integral part of the latter. This led to the first Indo-Pak war on the issue of sovereignty over the state. In the six decades and more since independence, India and Pakistan have fought four wars in total, in 1947–48, 1965, 1971 and 1999. The Kargil conflict in 1999, albeit a relatively localised affair, is the most resonant today, being, as it were, the first India-Pakistan conflict to have virtually been fought on our television screens. Popular memory tends to recall the 1971 war as being *the* event that changed the geopolitics of the subcontinent, irreversibly modifying the post-Partition map of South Asia, and leading to the birth of the new nation of Bangladesh. India fought a war with China in 1962, which had an immense impact on the psyche of the nation as well as its armed forces. The war of 1965, however, tends to be relegated to the background most of the time although it was in its own way a significant event in modern Indian history.

In August-September of 2015 we will observe the 50th anniversary of the 1965 India-Pakistan War. The *Journal of Defence Studies* has put together a special issue covering some aspects of the war. The issue attempts to provide a broad overview of the war by covering a range of actions and events spanning the tactical and strategic space, with the additional scope of relating them to the present conditions prevalent with Pakistan. The articles cover Operation Gibraltar that kick started the war, the battles of Haji Pir and Dograi, the air campaign, and the diplomatic backdrop as well as lessons for today. This is, therefore, not merely a retrospective but also a perspective issue with current relevance.

The war officially began with the infiltration attempts under Operation Gibraltar on 5 August 1965. Yet, it was the culmination of a series of events that began earlier that year in April in the Rann of Kutch. Since January 1965, Pakistani patrols started moving into Indian territory in the area, which eventually led to attacks by both Indian and Pakistani armed forces on each other's posts on 8 April. In June of 1965, both countries accepted British mediation suggested by Prime Minister Harold Wilson, and set up a tribunal to resolve the issue. Pakistan then decided once more to reclaim what it considered to be the disputed Kashmir valley, its leadership being quite sure that the local population was discontented with Indian rule and would rise up against it given the opportunity. It therefore launched Operation Gibraltar, infiltrating a large body of troops disguised as tribals into the region across the Cease Fire Line (CFL) of 1947–48—now known as the Line of Control. The endeavour was unsuccessful and Indian forces retaliated and by the end of August had captured the strategic Haji Pir Pass. By early September, both sides had captured some territory of the other across the CFL but were essentially locked in a stalemate. Pakistan, however, had Operation Grand Slam up its sleeve and this was launched on 1 September 1965 to capture Akhnoor in Jammu district with the aim to cut off supply lines to the Indian Army in J&K. Indian forces were initially caught off guard but called in the Indian Air Force (IAF) to blunt the Pakistani attack. The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) was then called into action and retaliated by attacking Indian forces and air bases. India took the decision of diverting Pakistan's attention and assets to Punjab, thus taking some of its military's attention away from Kashmir. India's crossing of the International Boundary on 6 September, moving to cross the Ichhogil Canal with a view to threaten Lahore, more or less marked the official declaration of war.

The 1965 war lasted some two and a half weeks and an eventual ceasefire was accepted by both parties on 22 September following a UN Security Council resolution. Both parties acceded to the post-war negotiations at Tashkent under the aegis of the Soviet Union. Tashkent is remembered most for India's great loss of its wartime leader Lal Bahadur Shastri. However, both the 1965 war and Tashkent did much to bolster both the case of the Indian military—which bounced back from the debacle of 1962—and the state itself. The CFL's inviolability was assured as was the reversion to pre 5 August 1965 territories. Importantly, both

parties gave assurances that they would not use force for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The impact of 1965 was also seen six years later in the war of 1971, which, till date, is the most decisive post-independence victory for the Indian armed forces.

Shruti Pandalai sets the agenda with 'Recounting 1965: War, Diplomacy and Great Games in the Subcontinent'. She contends that the terms often used to describe 1965—'stalemate', 'futile', 'forgotten'—do great injustice to its profound impact on the history of the Indian subcontinent. The war altered the fates of India and Pakistan both politically and militarily, and officially began the new great game for Asia. For India, it became a test of leadership post Nehru and an opportunity to banish the demons of 1962. For Pakistan, it was about Kashmir and testing India, playing roulette with the superpowers, and sealing its friendship with China. Fifty years on, the article attempts to understand the myriad motivations of this war and focuses on the political conversations and intense diplomatic manoeuvring that New Delhi undertook to emerge on the right side of history. Approached from an oral history perspective, conversations have been pieced both from India and Pakistan, to study the flash-points of a war, often underscored in its importance in the annals of history.

P.K. Chakravorty and Gurmeet Kanwal contribute an article on 'Operation Gibraltar: An Uprising that Never Was'. Launched in early-August 1965, Operation Gibraltar was designed to infiltrate several columns of trained and well-armed Mujahids and Razakars, led by Pakistan Army Majors into J&K. While the columns managed to infiltrate the CFL under the cover of fire provided by the Pakistan Army deployed there, they failed to create large-scale disturbances and did not receive support from the people. In fact, locals often provided information about the columns to the Indian Army, which led to the intruders being captured or neutralised. The Indian Army concluded its counter-infiltration operations successfully by the third week of August. Trans-CFL operations were then conducted to capture the Haji Pir Pass and important heights in the Kargil sector. Chakravorty and Kanwal revisit Operation Gibraltar, the thinking behind it and the tasks set, the execution of the operation, the Indian response and the lessons learnt.

In 'Battle of Haji Pir: The Army's Glory in 1965', P.C. Katoch discusses in detail the all-important effort to capture the strategically important Haji Pir Pass. Operation Gibraltar, the infiltration attempt

into J&K was followed by a planned capture of Akhnoor Bridge under Operation Grand Slam. Katoch says that while Operation Gibraltar was bold from the point of view of multi-directional infiltration, it was largely based on the Pakistan President Ayub Khan and Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's utopian dream that the people of J&K would side with them. The Indian reaction to the infiltration was swift and included the epic capture of the strategic Haji Pir Pass at a height of 2,637 metres (m) on the formidable Pir Panjal Range that divided the Srinagar valley from the Jammu region. The pass has been a constant source of problems since Pakistan-trained militants have been sneaking into the Kashmir Valley and the Poonch and Rajouri districts. Despite the heroic action that led to the capture of the pass, it was returned to Pakistan under the Tashkent Agreement.

In 'Indian Army's Continuity and Transformation: Through the Prism of the Battle of Dograi', Rahul K. Bhonsle opines that the process of Indian Army's evolution in the plains of Western India can be charted from the lessons learnt from key episodes of the 1965 War. The Battle of Dograi was one such feat which, though restricted to action by a single infantry battalion—3 Jat—provides unique perspectives of the manner in which continuity and transformation has occurred in the Indian Army. It also shows how the lessons learnt can be applied effectively to current operational dilemmas, ranging from Cold Start to countering Pakistan's battlefield nuclear capable missile, Nasr.

Arjun Subramaniam's is the first of two articles on the participation of the air forces of the two countries in 1965. In 'Critical Analysis of Pakistani Air Operations in 1965: Weaknesses and Strengths', he tracks the evolution of PAF into a potent fighting force by analysing the broad contours of joint operations and the air war between IAF and PAF in 1965. Led by aggressive commanders like Asghar Khan and Nur Khan, the PAF seized the initiative in the air on the evening of 6 September 1965 with a coordinated strike from Sargodha, Mauripur and Peshawar against four major Indian airfields, Adampur, Halwara, Pathankot and Jamnagar. The IAF riposte to PAF strikes came early next morning at dawn on 7 September. Over the next 10 days, IAF surprised an overconfident PAF with its tenacity and individual combat proficiency. In the article, Subramaniam offers a critical analysis of the operational performance of PAF in the conflict and an objective qualitative comparison with the performance of the IAF.

Ramesh V. Phadke contributes the article 'Air Power in 1965 Indo-Pakistan War: An Assessment' to the special issue. India was in the midst of a major military expansion when the 1965 Indo-Pak War began. The government authorised the use of IAF combat aircraft on 1 September 1965 after hostilities had broken out, but the action remained localised to the Chhamb area for five days. Again, this was primarily because of India's desire to avoid all-out war. IAF was used for counter air, air defence, and in support of the ground forces. However, the campaign was marred by poor communications with the Army, lack of joint planning, and an almost total absence of early warning and ground controlled interception (GCI) radars, all of which meant that the overall performance of the IAF was sub-optimal. Despite these self-imposed restraints, India succeeded in thwarting Pakistan's efforts to grab J&K by force, and to that extent the war did become a limited victory for India.

In 'The 1965 Indo-Pak War: Through Today's Lens', Ali Ahmed analyses the lessons of the 1965 Indo-Pak war that are applicable today. He finds that the current army doctrine, Cold Start, has some similarities to the opening round of the 1965 war, and argues that even the attritionist strategy adopted in 1965 may have more to give today than the manoeuvre war approach of its more famous successor, the 1971 war. In particular, the article appraises Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's firm political control during the war and finds that it was ably reinforced by the prime ministers who were at the helm in India's later wars. Knowing when to stop is key to avoiding nuclear thresholds, and in that the 1965 war, which stopped short of decisive victory, serves as a suitable precedent to potential future conflicts.

Finally, we carry a contribution by M.A. Zaki who recalls his participation in the war. In 'An Infantry Combat Leader's Memoir of the 1965 War', he attempts to bring out how the war was conducted at the tactical level. Charlie Company, commanded by Zaki, was involved in several skirmishes, company and battalion level attacks as part of 19 Maratha Light Infantry. The unit was part of 7 Infantry Division and fought on the Punjab front. The article covers the run up to the war and the battles, bringing out the human element and tactical level aspects of conflict, some of which continue to be relevant 50 years on. It is a worm's eye view of war, with an emphasis on combat leadership.

S. Kalyanaraman contributes a review essay on Stephen P. Cohen's recent book *Shooting for a Century: Finding Answers to the India-Pakistan Conundrum*.

We hope that the special issue would find an eager audience and draw attention, albeit in a small way, to the fiftieth anniversary of a decisive, yet often neglected, event in modern India's history. Our thanks to the contributors who agreed to write for the special issue. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the IDSA GIS Lab, especially Vivek Dhankar who re-drew the maps that appear in the issue.