

ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol. 04 No. 02. October-December 2025. Page# 889-913

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



History of the Line of Control

Muhammad Ansaar Mehsood

International Islamic University Islamabad

Ahmed Raza

National University of Modern Languages Islamabad

Kamil Hussain

International Islamic University Islamabad

Alishba Zahra

International Islamic University Islamabad

Samra Rani

Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

Arooj Fatima

International Islamic University Islamabad

ABSTRACT

The Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan in the region of Jammu and Kashmir represents a complex boundary born out of historical conflicts between the two neighboring states. This research paper explores the evolution of LoC from its origin to its present status. The research paper explores the transformation of the Ceasefire Line (CFL) that was established under the Karachi agreement of 1949 following the first Indo-Pak war into the Line of Control (LoC) under Simla agreement in 1971. The paper examines military and political development that shaped the LoC. The origin of LoC can be traced back to the first war between India and Pakistan on Kashmir, which resulted in the formation of Ceasefire line. The demarcation of CFL was monitored by the United Nation Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). In Simla agreement, the CFL was modified and renamed as Line of Control. The paper also involves the analysis of territorial gains and losses by both countries during Indo-Pak wars which affected the LoC. It also covers the conflicts or ceasefire violations after the formation of LoC. Through historical analysis, this research aims to understand how the LoC came into existence and has influenced the Indo-Pak relation till now.

Keywords: Line of Control (LoC), Indo-Pak Relations, Kashmir Conflict, Ceasefire Agreement, Border Dispute

Introduction

The Line of Control (LOC) is one of the most militarized border in the world, divide the Indian administrated Kashmir from Pakistan administrated Kashmir. It was originated from the partition of British India in 1947, which led to the creation of two new nations India and Pakistan and the beginning of territorial dispute over princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. After one year since independence, both states engaged in a war over Kashmir which lead to the formation of United Nation mediated Ceasefire Line (CFL) in 1949 under Karachi agreement. This boundary survived the war of 1965 and transformed into Line of Control in 1972 under Simla agreement. In 1972, this line was not only renamed but also re-demarcated in specific areas.

The history of LoC is not just about geography but it reflects decades of conflict between the two neighboring states. Unlike international border, the LoC is just a de-facto boundary, has no legal status under international law. Despite this, it holds significant military and political importance for both India and Pakistan. It has witnessed several wars, ceasefire violations, high level of militarization, cross border skirmishes and fragile peace efforts. This research paper aims to study the origin and transformation of LoC keeping the chronological order in view by analyzing the important historical events that shaped the LoC.

EVOLUTION OF THE LINE OF CONTROL

International boundaries around the globe are established in a number of ways that depict other levels of political agreement, confrontation or concession. Borders between countries aren't always simple lines on a map they come in different forms depending on history and politics. An International Border is the most straight forward and it's a clear line that both countries agree on and recognize. It's peaceful and official. A Working Boundary is more complicated one side may treat it like a regular border, but the other doesn't officially accept it, often because of a dispute. Then there's the Line of Control (LoC), which isn't an agreed border, but more like a line that separates two sides after fighting or war. It's controlled by the military and often tense. Finally, the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is even less clear¹. There's no fence or marker, just two countries patrolling areas they both claim, which can lead to misunderstandings or clashes. In South Asia the roots of present day territorial disputes especially in Kashmir can be traced back to colonial era arrangements and princely state.

The line of Control (LoC), which defines the administrative area between Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir and the administrative regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan is not only a naturally progressed boundary but is an outcome of historical change of political regime. Its origins are layered in the imperial borders of Sikh Empire (1840s) where Ranjit Singh generals under Gulab Singh expounded Sikh impact on Kashmir, Ladakh and Baltistan. The region had no partition at this time and it was one region or united Himalayan frontier. Those regions were united by the Dogra rulers into the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, where the same power remained united till 1947. British Lease of Gilgit (1935) opened up new administrative frontier, which was used later by Gilgit Scouts and Tribal Forces. Poonch and Mirpur were captured by tribal

¹ > Malcolm Anderson, *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 14–17.

invasion and also Dogra forces were forced out of Gilgit-Baltistan by Gilgit Scouts. Such swings resulted in 1949 UN- mediated Ceasefire Line that put territorial reach into two parts Pakistan- controlled West and Indian-

controlled East which led to establishment of Modern LoC which has been one of the most militarized and disputed borders worldwide.

In the early nineteenth century, the Sikhs found more strategic and political incentives to be attracted to Kashmir besides the aesthetic aspect of the place. Having secured Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh perceived Kashmir as an important part of his empire security playing a role as gateway of his empire to Afghanistan, Central Asia and China.

The area had existed under incompetent Afghan rule and with the conquest in the year 1819, Sikhs halted Afghan power and ensured their vulnerable frontier. There were also huge economic benefits in Kashmir; rich forests, productive lands and booming shawl business promised consistent income. Conquering of Kashmir was not all about adding prestige to Ranjit Singh it was an act that safeguarded his empire and fortified it internally. Recently conquered regions such as the Muzaffarabad, Baramulla and Poonch areas which are now on the Line of Control were Malwa was annexed and governed by Lahore-based governors who were part of the Sikh Empire. Though there was no LoC then, this expansion laid the groundwork for later Dogra rule, and the eventual political and religious tensions that turned these very areas into a frontline of conflict decades later.

The Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1846) controlled the Punjab and extended into the Himalayas. By the late 1830s Gulab Singh then general under Ranjit Singh had included the Ladakh and Baltistan regions under Sikh suzerainty. We can say the Sikh realm enclosed parts of modern-day Baltistan (northern Pakistan) and Ladakh (IIOK). During the Sikh rule, the area that is now the Line of Control (LoC) was not a defined boundary. Instead, the entire region of Jammu, Kashmir, Gilgit, Baltistan, Ladakh, and parts of Poonch, Mirpur, and Muzaffarabad were part of a unified territory under the Sikh Empire, and later under Dogra rule after 1846². After the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–46), the British East India Company defeated the Sikh Empire. Through the Treaty of Lahore (March 9, 1846), the Sikhs were forced to cede the region of Kashmir to the British. The British, in turn, sold Kashmir to Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu for 7.5 million rupees, formalized through the Treaty of Amritsar (March 16, 1846). The Treaty of Amritsar (1846) played a foundational role in shaping the territorial and political structure that ultimately led to the division of Jammu and Kashmir and the creation of the Ceasefire line (CFL) in 1949³.

The Treaty of Amritsar turned Kashmir into a commodity, sold to a ruler without regard for its people, leading to decades of political injustice, territorial disputes, and identity struggles. These unresolved issues triggered wars, divided families, and turned Kashmir into one of the most volatile regions in the world.

> ² P. N. K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political, Social, Cultural, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New Delhi: Metropolitan Book Co., 1994), 397–400.

> ³ Sir Walter Roper Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir* (London: H. Frowde, 1895), 5–10

The Dogras came into power in 1846 when the British, through the Treaty of Amritsar, sold the territory of Kashmir to Gulab Singh, effectively turning the princely state into a hereditary possession under a Hindu monarchy. Areas now along the Line of Control like Poonch, Muzaffarabad, and Mirpur were treated more like colonial possessions than equal parts of the state. Taxed, ignored, and denied basic rights, the people of these regions lived under economic hardship and political exclusion. While the palaces of Srinagar and Jammu grew in grandeur, the frontier districts remained poor and angry. By the time Partition came, the seeds of rebellion had already been sown, and the old Dogra kingdom split along lines of grievance, geography, and gunfire eventually becoming the Line of Control we know today.

The Kashmiri Pandits in the Kashmir Valley were the backbone of the Dogra rule in Kashmir state bureaucracy. Educated, well-connected, and culturally close to the Dogra rulers, they occupied key positions in administration, law, and education⁴. While the majority Muslim population faced marginalization and heavy taxation, the Pandits often acted as the face of authority in the valley. Though not the rulers themselves, they benefited from the system and were often seen by the masses as part of the elite.

During the Sikh and Dogra rules in Kashmir, the lives of ordinary people especially the Muslim majority were marked by poverty, repression, and exclusion. Under the Sikhs, religious freedoms were tightly controlled: the azan was banned, and even Friday prayers were monitored. The economy was drained through taxes on everything from food to funerals. When the Dogras took over in 1846, they ran the state like a feudal kingdom, concentrating power among a Hindu elite and marginalizing the local Muslim population politically, economically, and socially. In areas like Poonch and Muzaffarabad now along the Line of Control resentment ran deep. People were forced into unpaid labor, taxed heavily, and denied even basic rights like education and land ownership. These long-standing grievances eventually exploded into uprisings and rebellion by 1947, setting the stage for war, partition, and the permanent division of Kashmir along the LoC.

So, Prior to the 1949 Ceasefire Line, Kashmir was a Dogra-ruled, undivided princely state that stretched from Srinagar to Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, and Poonch in the west, and from Gilgit-Baltistan in the north to Jammu in the south. There was free movement between districts and cultural and economic ties throughout the region. People maintained close social, commercial, and familial ties in spite of political repression, particularly against the Muslim majority in western regions. Later, these areas were divided by the Ceasefire Line, upsetting identities, lives, and historical continuity⁵.

> ⁴ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar, 1846–1947: A Study in Socio-Cultural Change* (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2002), 59–61.

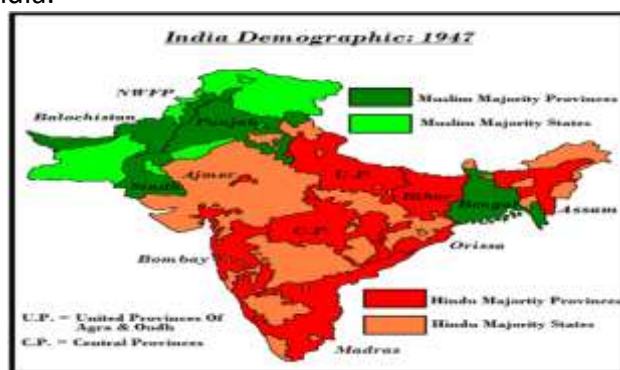
> ⁵ Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846–1990*, Roxford Books, 1991.



Map 1: Kashmir before Partition

The Broader Context: Partition and the Radcliffe Line

The Partition Plan was introduced by Lord Mountbatten on June 3, 1947, and offered princely states the choice to join either side, India or Pakistan, or remain independent. Geographical proximity to Pakistan, the region's Muslim majority, and popular will all supported Jammu and Kashmir's admission to Pakistan. However, the Radcliffe Award, settled under extreme time hindrances, gave the Muslim-majority district of Gardaspur to India, enabling land access to Kashmir. This controversial decision facilitated India's intervention in Kashmir has been widely criticized. Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, along with other Pakistani leaders and officials, strictly criticized the Radcliffe Award as extremely unjust and biased in favour of India. The above map shows the provinces of British India and also the areas covered by the Princely States. In addition to that it also shows the religious demographics of India.²



Map 2

² <https://pakun.org/kashmir-at-the-un>

<https://pakgeotagging.blogspot.com/2014/10/partition-of-punjab-in-1947.html>

As historian Hector Bolitho noted, this allowed India to "occupy and later maintain her illegal hold over the valley." As The Pakistan Times reported on July, 1948: "The tearing of the Muslim area of Gurdaspur district from Pakistan had been precisely so devised as to facilitate and ensure India's communications with Jammu and Kashmir." In another report from The Pakistan Times on July, 1948: "Without Gurdaspur, India would have no practical land access to Kashmir, and its vacillating Hindu Maharaja, Hari Singh, would have had no choice except to link Kashmir's destiny to Pakistan." Historian Hector Bolitho wrote in *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan*: "The Muslim-majority areas of Gurdaspur provided India with a road link to Kashmir, which helped her occupy and later maintain her illegal hold over the valley."

On August 1, 1947, just before the Partition of British India, the British administration handed over the Gilgit Agency to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. The Maharaja aimed to integrate this strategically critical region into his state and declared it a frontier province. As part of a broader militarization strategy, orders were issued to deploy only Dogra (non-Muslim) forces in the northern areas, while all Muslim officers and soldiers were removed from the units. These policies were also enforced in Srinagar.

The Kashmir conflict of 1947–1948 was shaped by strategic decisions, regional geopolitics, and hastily drawn borders following the end of British colonial rule in India. The region of Gilgit-Baltistan, which was initially handed over to the Dogra Maharaja by the British, became the focal point of a military and political upheaval that played a decisive role in shaping the modern territorial boundaries between India and Pakistan.

The Kashmir conflict of 1947–1948 was shaped by strategic decisions, regional geopolitics, and hastily drawn borders following the end of British colonial rule in India. The region of Gilgit-Baltistan, which was initially handed over to the Dogra Maharaja by the British, became the focal point of a military and political upheaval that played a decisive role in shaping the modern territorial boundaries between India and Pakistan.³

In Kashmir, tribal lashkar and Mujahideen forces from Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province entered the region in a bid to assist the Muslim uprising. These groups included Afridi and Mahsud tribesmen and operated with tacit support from Pakistani sides. Their early victories included Muzaffarabad, Domel, Bagh, Rawalakot, and parts of Poonch. The Poonch Brigade was founded in Poonch as a result of a rebellion headed by World War II soldiers. Although they lacked centralised command, other factions, including the Hyderi Column and Mujahideen Home Front, carried out attacks in Kupwara and Uri. Due to inadequate coordination and delays in Baramulla plundering, the tribal forces were unable to take Srinagar. India was able to seize the airfield and transport troops to Srinagar as a result, halting additional rebel advances. The overall insurgency suffered from the incapacity to hold onto territory that had been taken and from the absence of a coherent command.

³ <https://www.belfercenter.org/research-analysis/escalation-gone-meta-strategic-lessons-2025-india-pakistan-crisis>



Map 3

On November 1, 1947, officers of the Gilgit Scouts, in collaboration with Muslim personnel from the 6th Battalion, arrested Ghansara Singh and declared the independence of the Gilgit Agency. By mid-1948, the Gilgit Scouts had control of Skardu, Kargil, Dras, and Zojila. Map shows the Front line of Gilgit Scouts after successful clashes at Skardu, Dras and Zojila. However, their advanced toward Leh and further areas was checked by a large Indian reinforcement in June, forcing withdrawals from Gurez and Tragbal.



Map 4

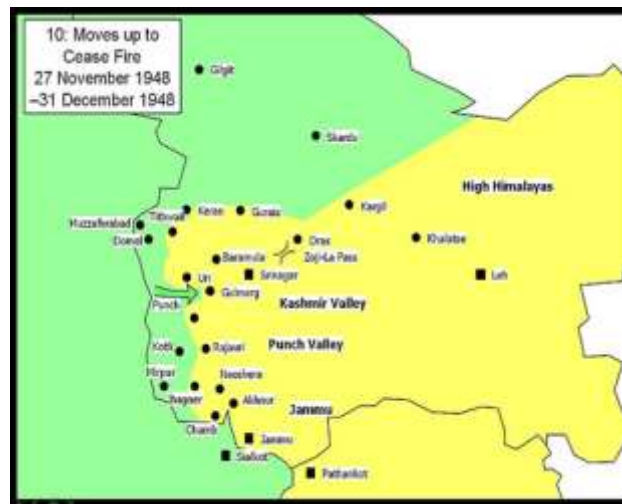
By the end of 1948, Pakistan held control over Gilgit-Baltistan and parts of western Kashmir, including Muzaffarabad and the northern Poonch region. However, India retained control over the Kashmir Valley and southern Jammu. The failure to hold Zojila, Dras, and Kargil marked a turning point, illustrating how leadership transitions, lack of heavy weaponry, and misjudgments of Indian capabilities undermined early Pakistani gains. The resulting Line of Control has since remained a contested and militarized boundary, shaped by the decisions and miscalculations of that pivotal year.



Map 5

The Forging Frontiers: The 1947–49 Kashmir War and the Birth of the Ceasefire Line

The closing chapters of the First Kashmir War (1947–48) were marked not just by military engagements but by the drawing of a boundary that would solidify a contested reality for decades to come. By late 1948, military operations had shaped what would soon become the Ceasefire Line (CFL)—a cartographic trace of a battlefield stalemate that froze the war without resolving its causes. Pakistan consolidated its control over the Northern Areas, while India launched daring high-altitude operations to reestablish its hold over Ladakh, and frontlines hardened around Poonch, Uri, and Kargil. These developments ultimately dictated the contours of the 1949 ceasefire agreement.



Map 6

Following the Gilgit Scouts' revolt in October 1947, Pakistan was able to leverage local support to take control of the Gilgit-Baltistan region—an area crucial for access to the Karakoram corridors. The situation intensified in August 1948 when Skardu fell, severing India's traditional route to Leh and isolating Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir (Sinha, 1977: 201–205). In response, India mounted Operation Bison in November 1948—an involving the use of tanks across the Zoji La Pass at 11,575 feet, a feat that defied both geography and logistics (Prasad & Pal, 2005: 178–183). This operation reopened the vital Srinagar-Leh route, just weeks before the ceasefire came into effect on 1 January 1949. By December 1948, battle lines had solidified into impassable positions. Pakistan held the Jhelum Valley Road, ensuring strategic access to Muzaffarabad, while India controlled key high ground such as the Uri heights and the Kargil corridor.

As the war dragged into 1948, India appealed to the United Nations Security Council on 1 January 1948 under Article 35 of the UN Charter, framing Pakistan's tribal invasion as a threat to international peace (UN Doc. S/628, 1948). The resulting diplomatic apparatus—the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP)—was established through Resolution 47 in April 1948. However, it quickly became mired in the irreconcilable positions of both states: India insisted on the withdrawal of Pakistani forces as a precondition for any plebiscite, while Pakistan demanded the plebiscite first (Korbel, 1954: 179–183).

The UNCIP Resolution of 13 August 1948 (UN Doc. S/1100) laid out a phased plan: first a ceasefire, then a truce, and finally a plebiscite. However, disagreements over implementation sequencing led to further delays. It was only with the 5 January 1949 revision (UN Doc. S/1196) that both sides agreed to cease hostilities, which formally took effect at midnight on 1 January 1949 (Ganguly, 2002: 37–39). The delineation of the Ceasefire Line (CFL) under the 1949 Karachi Agreement was an exercise in military cartography and political compromise. The section of the line extending from Manavjaït to the southern bank of the Jhelum River near Urusa (inclusive to India) was established based on mutually agreed factual positions. Where consensus had not previously existed, the agreement laid out detailed sectoral boundaries. In the Patrana region, the village of Koel was assigned to Pakistan, while the line proceeded northward along the Khuvjala Kas Nullah to Point 2276 (inclusive to India),

then onward to Kieni (inclusive to India). Specific strategic features—such as Khambha, Pir Satwan, Point 3150, and Point 3606—were confirmed as under Indian control, with the line continuing toward the actual Indian-held positions at Bagla Gala and Point 3300. Conversely, in the area south of Uri, Pakistani control was acknowledged over Pir Kanthi and Tedi Gali.



Map 7

North of the Jhelum River, the CFL ran from a point opposite Urusa (grid reference NL 972109), tracing the Ballaseth Da Nar Nullah (inclusive to Pakistan) up to NL 973140. It continued northeast to Chhota Kazinag (Point 10657, inclusive to India), before proceeding through NM 010180 and NM 037210 to Point 11825 (NM 025354, inclusive to Pakistan). A unique arrangement was made at Tutmari Gali, which was to be jointly controlled with posts placed 500 yards on either side. Further, the line extended northwest through Burji Nar to the north of Gabdori, then westward to Point 9870 and along a black line north of Bijildhap and Batarasi, before veering south of Sudpura and reaching the Katha Kazinag Nullah. It followed the Geangnar Nullah to Kajnwala Pathra (inclusive to India), crossed the Danna Ridge and reached Richmar Gali (inclusive to India), moving northward to Thanda Katha Nullah and finally to the Kishanganga River. Following the river, the line extended from between Jargi and Tarban to Bankoran, northeast to Khor, and subsequently through features such as Point 8930, 10164, 10323, Guthur, Bhutpathra, and NL 980707. The CFL then followed the Bugina Nullah to its junction with the Kishanganga River at Point 4739, tracing the river to Keran and onward to Point 4996 (NL 975818).

From this point, Pakistani control was established over a series of coordinates including Jamgar Nullah to Point 12124, Katware, and through a sequence of terrain features leading up to Point 11812. East of this, Indian control resumed from Point 13220, crossing the river to Point 13449 (Duhmat), and further through Points 14536 (Anzbari), 13554, and the 45th milestone on the Burzil Nullah. The CFL then proceeded east to Ziankal (Point 12909) and southward across a series of ridgelines and coordinates, including Points 1114, 12216, 12867, and 11264, reaching Karq (Point 14985), and continuing to Point 14014 and Point 12089.

The ceasefire line passed through high-altitude locations such as Retagah Chhish (Point 15316), Points 15889, 17392, and Marpo La, which was to be shared. It continued through Points 17561, 17352, 18400, and 16760, culminating at Dalunang, marked as Indian territory. From Dalunang eastwards, the line followed general topographical features including Ishman, Manus, Gangam, Gunderman, Point 13620, Jukkar (Point 17628), Maemak, Natsaer, and Ezingruth (Point 17531), and eventually crossed Chorbatt La (Point 15700) and Chaluma on the Shyok River, before reaching Khor. The line was formally recorded to continue “north to the glaciers,” leaving its final demarcation to future definition based on positions held as of 27 July 1949. This language, vague in its uppermost segments, was pivotal to future disputes—most notably in the Siachen region—where the undefined nature of “north to the glaciers” sowed the seeds for territorial ambiguity.

Crucially, the Karachi Agreement, signed on 27 July 1949 under UN supervision (UN Doc. S/1430/Add.1), translated the battlefield lines into a formal Ceasefire Line (CFL). Rather than following historical or ethnographic contours, the line was demarcated according to actual positions held by forces at the time (UNCIP Report, 1949: Annex 26). The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was deployed to monitor violations. However, it had no authority to demarcate disputed territories permanently, leaving areas like the glacier zone beyond NJ9842 vulnerable to future conflict (Schofield, 2003: 92–95).

The Karachi Agreement remains a technical milestone and a cartographic compromise. Indian Brigadier S.H.F.J. Manekshaw and Pakistani Colonel A.M. Khan signed the agreement using a 1:1 million-scale Survey of India map, where pink and green ink demarcated Indian and Pakistani positions, respectively (§B.2, Karachi Agreement, 1949). While southern sectors were mapped with relative precision—such as the path “north via Ballaseth Da Nar Nullah to Chhota Qazinag”—the document resorted to ambiguity in the northern reaches: “thence north to the glaciers” (§B.2(d)). This open-ended phrasing, according to legal scholar A.G. Noorani (2011: 72), planted the seeds for future discord, turning a cartographic blank spot into a “geopolitical time bomb.”

The 1949 UN Map (UN Doc. 500/Add.2), hand-drawn using pre-independence survey data, left glacier regions—especially the Siachen Glacier—as unmarked voids. Military cartographers later acknowledged the limitations of this map: its scale of 1 cm = 10 km failed to depict crevasse fields, tributaries, or strategic heights crucial for future military operations (Kapadia, 1999: 48–51). In essence, the CFL was not drawn on the terrain—it was drawn over it, with its blind spots destined to erupt in conflict decades later. While the 1949 agreement ostensibly froze positions, ground realities evolved subtly. Both India and

Pakistan fortified their positions. India extended infrastructure in Ladakh and northern Kashmir; Pakistan integrated Azad Jammu and Kashmir under a semi-autonomous setup and developed administrative centers in Muzaffarabad and Gilgit. There were minor skirmishes and occasional artillery exchanges, particularly in the Uri and Poonch sectors. UNMOGIP continued to record violations on both sides. British records indicate that terrain difficulties limited the effectiveness of monitoring, particularly in dense forests and high-altitude ridges [6]. The undefined area beyond NJ9842 remained a silent anomaly. Its geographical neglect in the 1949 agreement later sowed the seeds for conflict over the Siachen Glacier. Yet during this period, it was simply marked as “uncontrolled mountain terrain.”

The CFL did not resolve the Kashmir dispute; rather, it institutionalized it. By 1949, Pakistan had entrenched its control over Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Northern Areas (now Gilgit-Baltistan), gaining de facto control over the Indus headwaters and the Karakoram Highway corridor—linkages that would later underpin Sino-Pakistani strategic alignment (Wirsing, 2003: 63–67). Meanwhile, India held onto the Kashmir Valley, Jammu, and parts of Ladakh, though its grip on the latter remained fragile.

1. Loss of Western Ladakh: Pakistan's control of Skardu severed India's traditional access to the Siachen Glacier and Shaksgam Valley. From 1949 onwards, Indian patrols could only reach these areas via the treacherous Nubra Valley, a route both longer and more vulnerable (Kapadia, 2010: 29).

2. Kargil-Drass Vulnerability: The CFL's jagged edges left India's NH-1A highway exposed to Pakistani artillery positions on Tololing Ridge and Hajipir Pass—an exposure that would later be brutally exploited in the Kargil War of 1999 (Malik, 2006: 117–121).

3. Recurrent Conflict Flashpoints:

- Siachen War (1984): The ambiguity beyond NJ9842 triggered a scramble for the Saltoro Ridge.
- Kargil Conflict (1999): Pakistani soldiers occupied ungarded peaks overlooking Indian supply lines.
- 1965 War: India's offensive to capture Hajipir Pass demonstrated its importance in severing Pakistani infiltration routes into Poonch and Uri.

Each of these flashpoints underscores a stark truth: in the Himalayas, terrain is strategy. The glacial chokepoints of Siachen, razorback ridges of Kargil, and riverine corridors of the Neelum Valley are not mere geographical features—they are battlegrounds. The CFL transformed these landscapes into permanent theatres of militarized vigilance, making peace contingent on topography rather than diplomacy.

LoC and 1965 War

Kashmir Conflict is old and considered as disputed territory which is considered as a major bone of confrontation between the two nuclear-armed states since they got partitioned that resulted to fought many wars and violation along LOC. 1965 war is one of the blooded war that effected the territory of Kashmir. In this research paper the 1965 war is taken as case study to shed light on the Kashmir specific regions and status of LOC that shifted to ceasefire line. Moreover, the pre-war events that fired up the war, operations conducted on Kashmir Territory and geographical changes in Kashmir during 1965 war would be discussed.



Map 8

Different complicated events shaped the 1965 war. Soviet Union vetoed resolutions on Kashmir in UN Security Council in 1962 to support Indian administered Kashmir while on the other hand Sino-India war also declared the position of US in support of India that was threat and strategy to depress the voice of Kashmir. However, in addition UN reaffirmation with Pakistan didn't prove advantageous to settle Kashmir issue. Moreover, ongoing water dispute also emerged threat. Moreover, in March 1963 the theft of the sacred hair of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) from Hazratbal Mosque path led a massive protests by Muslims in Kashmir that fired up war situation. 1965 war considered as failure of UNSC on resolving Kashmir issue by pushing back steps resulted, Pakistan to launch Operations against India to clear the position of United Nations alliance with specific state and to reecho the voice of Kashmir in united nation that was forgotten. Moreover Pakistan aimed to defreeze the Kashmir issue, by creating maximum turmoil in Indian Held Kashmir, while forcing India to use its maximum forces to fight the uprising, thereby, exposing its claims of peace in Indian Held Kashmir. Thereafter,

at an opportune moment liberate Kashmir. India. By an active use of Indian conventional forces retain control over Indian Held Kashmir.

ZONES OF OPERATIONS in Kashmir territory at LOC are:

- GIBRALTER Operation comprise of six different zones as follow:
- Northern zone Operation converted north of Srinagar, extending from general line Kel and Wullar Lake to Dra's approach to Srinagar valley.
- Handwara zone bounded by line Kel-Wullar Lake in the east, River Jhelum in the south and Cease Fire Line in North West. Also includes Srinagar zone. General areas included are Baramulla, Gulmarg, Islamabad, and Srinagar. The main infiltration routes into this Zone originated from the area of Bedori Bulge.
- Naushera zone secure Naushera, Rajauri and Poonch Valleys, which were interconnected. Jammu zone also included Udhampur, Jammu, Samba and Katha, where locals did not allow guerrilla operation. While Areas of Pir Panjal Pass, Riasi and Ramban which provide access against enemy's strategic at line of communication. ammu Zone. Areas of Udhampur, Jammu, Samba and Kathua in which affiliations of the locals did not allow large-scale guerrilla operation. ammu Zone. Jammu Zone included Udhampur, Jammu, Samba and Kathua in which affiliations of the locals did not allow large-scale guerrilla operation.

The 1971 War and the Simla Agreement: From CLF to LoC (1972)

India and Pakistan entered into war again in 1971, which not only resulted in the separation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) but also impacted the Ceasefire Line (CFL). While the 1971 war is often remembered because of events in East Pakistan, it is important to note that the conflict also involved the western front. The western confrontation began on 3 December 1971, when Pakistan launched airstrikes on Indian airfields. This marked the beginning of full-scale hostilities between the two rival states on the Western Front. Both countries adopted different military strategies. Pakistan's doctrine held that the defense of East Pakistan lay in West Pakistan.⁴ That's why Pakistan adopted an offensive approach in West Pakistan and a defensive one in East Pakistan. On the contrary, the Indian approach is defensive in the West and offensive in East Pakistan to fulfil their desire to dismember Pakistan.

The Western Theatre resulted in intense actions in several sectors along the Ceasefire Line (CFL), leading to modifications of the CFL. The major operations along the CFL took place in the following areas. In the northern areas of CFL, the attack was started by Indian forces on the night of 8 December.⁵ Later, on 14 December, they

⁴ Maj Gen (R) Syed Ithar Hussain Shah, *Indian Military Threat And Pakistan Army: From 1947 to 2017* (Islamabad: Auraq Publications, 2021), page 191

⁵ John H. Gill, *An Atlas of the 1971 India-Pakistan War: The Creation of Bangladesh* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2003), 39

captured Chalunka, Tutuk was captured by 17 December, and Tyakshi and Thang were captured after the ceasefire on 18 December (see Map 9). The capture of these four villages paved the way for India's later access to the Siachen Glaciers through the Saltoro Range in 1984.⁶



Map 9

On 3 December, Pakistan launched a major offensive in the Chhamb Sector by attacking the Indian positions. Resistance was offered by the enemy, but Pakistan captured the Chhamb and went across the River Tawi. Due to the information relayed by the GHQ that the large Indian tank and infantry force was moving towards Jaurian, they decided to withdraw on 10 December. The new task was to defend the line of the River Tawi. The capture of Chhamb was the only significant territorial gain that Pakistan retained after the war.

Pakistan launched an operation on Poonch from 3 December that continued till 6 December to capture Poonch, but did not gain the desired results and returned to their side of the CFL on 7 December.⁷ However, the Tangdhar and Uri sectors on the northern part of CFL have only minor skirmishes due to logistical constraints and harsh geographical conditions. That's why no significant territorial changes occurred here.

In the Kargil sector, India gained some area in the north of Kargil. The operation was conducted between 7 and 17 December with the main goal of clearing Pakistani troops from heights that were crucial for overlooking the Dras-Kargil-Leh road. The territory captured by India during the operation caused a change in the CFL later.

When the ceasefire was declared on 17 December 1971, both India and Pakistan had altered the Ceasefire Line (CFL) at specific points. Following the ceasefire, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 307 on 21 December 1971, and asked immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of armed forces of both countries to respect

⁶ Brig (R) Imran Haider Jaffri, *Western Theatre: 1971 War* (Islamabad: Army Institute of Military History, May 2025), 5

⁷ Maj Gen (R) Syed Ithar Hussain Shah, *Indian Military Threat And Pakistan Army: From 1947 to 2017* (Islamabad: Auraq Publications, 2021), page 195

the ceasefire line of 1949 and return to the pre-war positions. However, neither India nor Pakistan withdrew from the positions they had secured during the war. As stated in UNSC Resolution of 1971:

*“Demands that a durable cease-fire and cessation of all hostilities in all areas of conflict be strictly observed and remain in effect until withdrawals take place, as soon as practicable, of all armed forces to their respective territories and to positions which fully respect the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir supervised by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan.”*⁸

Following the ceasefire, both countries initiated diplomatic talks, culminating in the Simla Agreement in 1972. 1972 was the major turning point in the history of LoC as it changed the status of the ceasefire line (CFL) that was established by the Karachi agreement to the Line of Control (LOC). This agreement was signed on July 2, 1971, between Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistan's President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The Simla agreement clause 4 stated as:

*“In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line.”*⁹

This clause conveyed that the military positions held by both countries on 17 December 1971 would now be considered the Line of Control. It was not an international border, but a de facto border between India and Pakistan. In this agreement, both sides agreed to respect the LoC and not to alter it unilaterally. They also agreed to resolve all disputes bilaterally without the intervention of a third party. Following the Simla agreement, the representatives of the Army headquarters of both countries were given the responsibility of re-demarcation of the LOC. They have agreed that only those parts would be re-demarcated that were involved in the hostilities during the Western confrontation based on the ceasefire of 17 December 1971. 19 maps were finalized and exchanged between both countries on 11 December 1972.¹⁰ Some issues emerged during this re-demarcation, but later on, both countries, with some military advantages and disadvantages, re-demarcated the LOC that exists today. However, the United Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UMOGIP), which was established to monitor the CFL, continues to observe the LoC from the Pakistani side. Otherwise, India no longer recognizes the UMOGIP mandate after the Simla agreement.¹¹

⁸ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 307 (1971), adopted December 21, 1971.

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/307\(1971\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/307(1971))

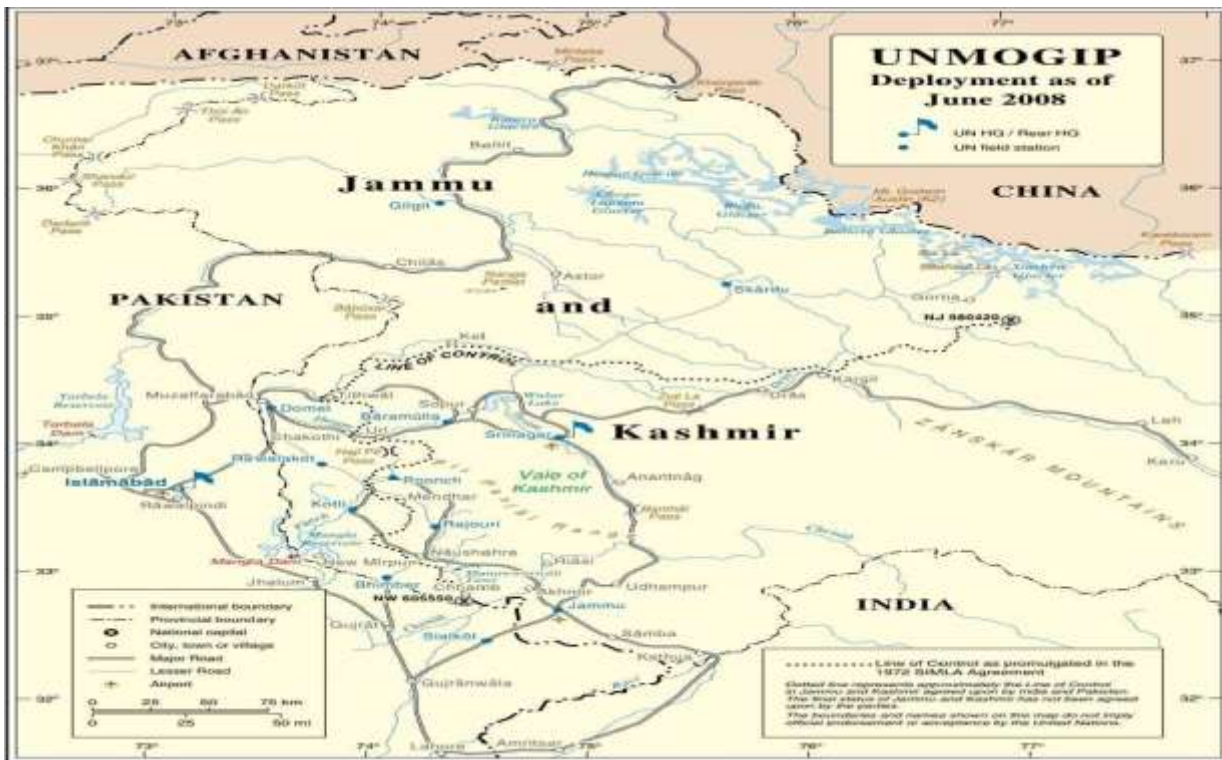
⁹ Government of India, Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan, July 2, 1972, Ministry of External Affairs

<https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/PA72B1578.pdf>

¹⁰ P. R. Chari, “Kargil, LoC and the Simla Agreement,” Commentary No. 210, Institute for Peace & Conflict Studies (IPCS), 23 June 1999.

¹¹ Robert G. Wirsing, War or Peace on the Line of Control?: The India-Pakistan Dispute over Kashmir Turns Fifty, Boundary and Territory Briefing, vol. 2, no. 5 (Durham, UK: International Boundaries Research Unit, University of Durham, 1998), 14.

<https://books.google.com.pk/books?id=CqsA-YVuV2UC>



Map 10

LOC: POST SIMLA TILL KARGIL

After the end of the Indo-Pak war in 1971, Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi signed the Simla Agreement on July 2, 1972. By transforming the 1949 Ceasefire Line into the Line of Control (LoC), both nations promised to maintain the integrity of the LoC and handle bilateral calls in a peaceful way. Nevertheless, the agreement did not end the fight in Kashmir or stopped armed conflicts further. The Line of Control (LOC) formally created by the Simla agreement in 1972 has been a volatile boundary between India and Pakistan and is a defined characteristic of South Asian geopolitics. From a military point of view, LOC has been one of the world's heavily militarized borders, where around 200,000 soldiers are facing each other along the 740 km in a continuous state high-alert.¹² While smaller territorial adjustments were made, the demarcations of pre-1971 remained the same to a large extent. This agreement did not resolve the Kashmir issue, especially the basic status of Kashmir, which will prove to be the basis for future clashes and frequent skirmishes along the LoC.

¹² Cheema, Zafar Iqbal. "Pakistan's Nuclear policy under Z.A. Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq: An Assessment." *Strategic Studies* 14, no. 4 (1992): 5–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45182065>

A profound shift in Pakistan's strategic priorities emerged after the Indian 1974 nuclear tests. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto initiated a determined push for Pakistan's nuclear program.¹³ In the late 1970s, Pakistan's attention notably shifted from direct confrontation over the Kashmir issue in order to develop a nuclear bomb to deter Indian threat. This strategic policy shift led to a decline in direct traditional military conflicts along the LoC. However, Pakistan was still dependent on the proxy war by helping militant groups, a strategy that got prominent after the Afghan Jihad.

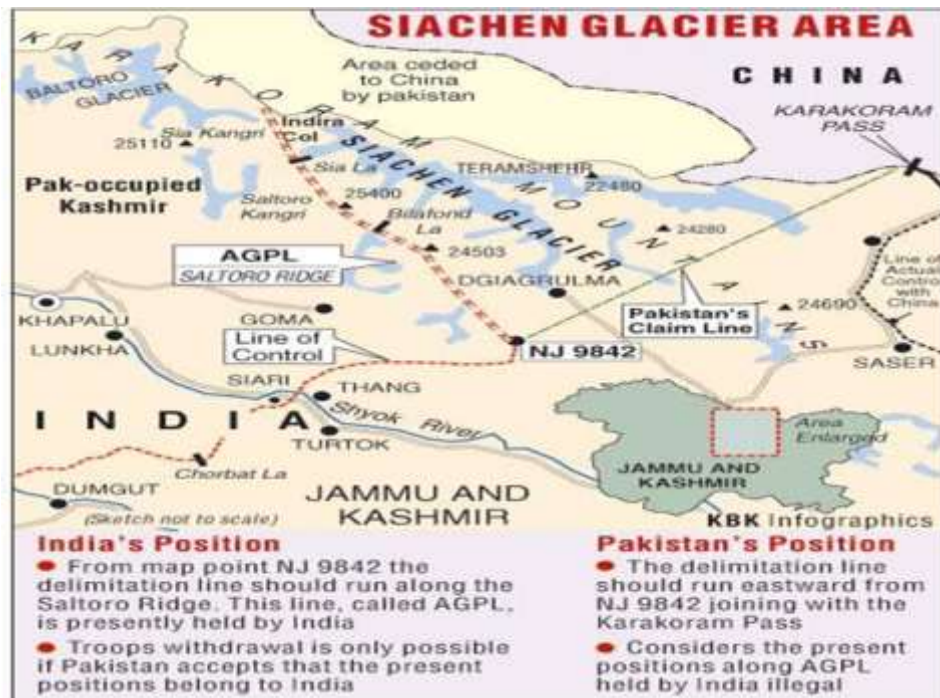
In 1975, the Indira-Abdullah agreement was signed between Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah that allowed Abdullah to return as chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir after more than two decades. The agreement marked Abdullah's demand for a referendum on Kashmir's future, to accept the state's integration with India in accordance with Article 370, while granting limited autonomy and the right to undergo some laws imposed after 1953.¹⁴ Pakistan rejected this Agreement, viewing it as the undermining of Kashmiris right to self-determination, and this rejection helped increase support for separatist groups along the Line of Control. This Agreement reduced international pressure on India about Kashmir, allowing New Delhi to consolidate control over occupied Kashmir.

In 1979, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan started, and this war had far-reaching consequences which indirectly affected the LOC. Pakistan became an important American-backed hub for jihad against Soviet invasion. The redirection of resources to train the Mujahideen resulted in a reduced focus on Kashmir. As a result, in the early years of war, the period was relatively calm along the LOC. However, the militant networks that were forged and strengthened in the Afghan war would later be redirected towards Kashmir in the 1990s, setting the stage for a new phase of rebellion. The emergence of terror networks and the proliferation of weapons in Pakistan-administered Kashmir increased infiltration and violence across the LoC. The influx of trained militants and arms from the Afghan conflict zones emboldened Pakistan-based groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba to escalate attacks on Indian positions along the LoC, leading to frequent ceasefire violations and deadly skirmishes. This militarization and cross-border militancy resulted in a cycle of retaliation and heightened tensions.¹⁵

¹³ Bukhari, Syed Hammad. "The Indira-Sheikh Accord: A Step-by-step Historical Breakdown." The Kashmiriyat, December 7, 2024. <https://thekashmiriyat.co.uk/the-indira-sheikh-accord-a-step-by-step-historical-breakdown/>

¹⁴ Marwat, Fazal-Ur-Rahim Khan, and Parvez Khan Toru. From Muhajir to Mujahid, Politics of War Through Aid: (a Case Study of Afghan Refugees in NWFP). 2005.

¹⁵ Paul, Amit Krishankant. "The Siachen Story: The Inadvertent Role of Two German Explorers in Starting the Race to the World's Highest Battlefield." orfonline.org , April 8, 2024.



Map 11

A significant escalation occurred in April 1984, in Siachen when India started Operation Meghdoot, taking control of Saltoro Ridge and other important mountain passes at Siachen Glacier. It was a preemptive operation done after the intelligence reports suggested Pakistani intentions of taking control of this glacier. Despite being outside the delineated Line of Control (Point NJ9842), the operation resulted in a fierce military reaction from Pakistan and started a high altitude battle that is still ongoing today. At a height of more than 18,000 feet, both forces have set up permanent stations, causing severe logistical difficulties and significant loss of life on both sides due to harsh weather and terrain.¹⁶

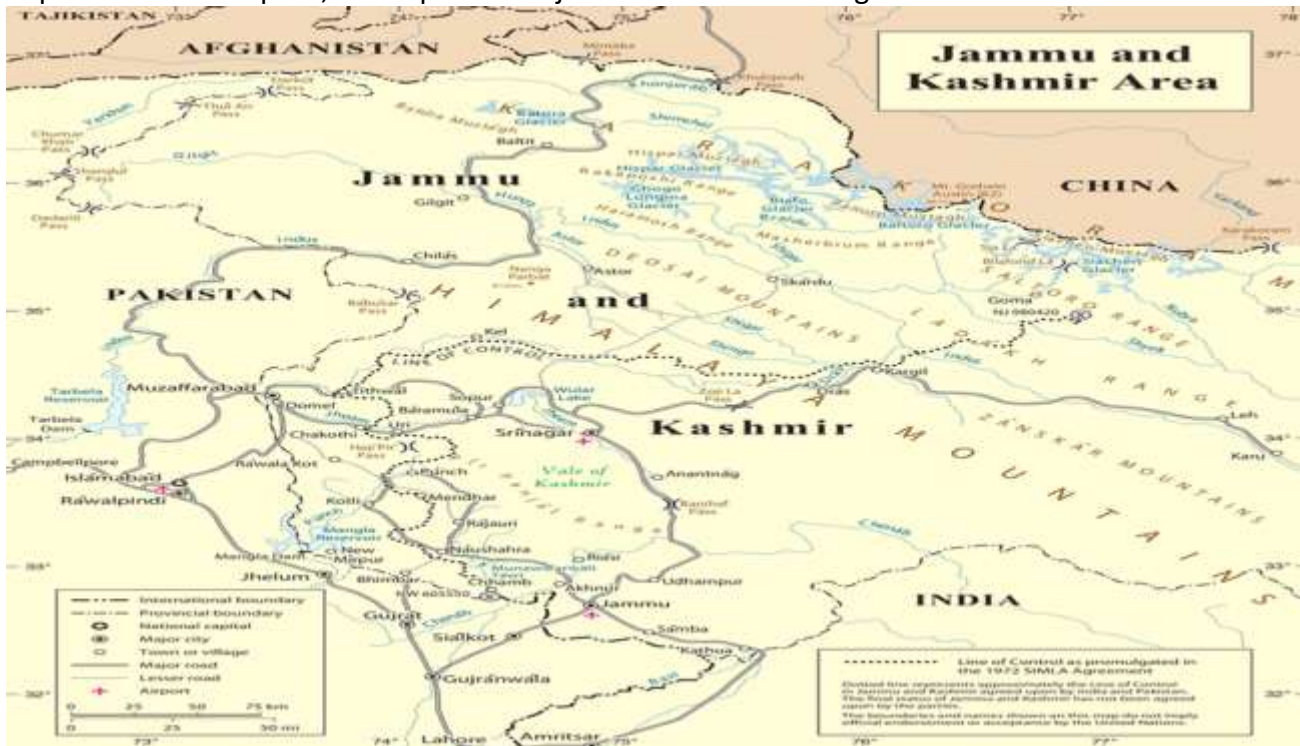
In 1987, elections in Indian Occupied Kashmir gave rise to increased militancy along the LoC. Widely regarded as rigged, the 1987 election for the legislative assembly of Jammu and Kashmir caused widespread political disillusionment, especially among the young Kashmiris. Armed extremism emerged as a result of this disillusionment. In 1989, violent acts were initiated by organizations such as the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). A transition from political activism to full-fledged rebellion was indicated by the rebellion.

In the early 1990s, the Hindu minorities in Kashmir valley, the Kashmir pandits, were the victims of targeted assassinations and systematic violence. Around 100,000 Pandits fled to refugee camps in Delhi from Jammu

¹⁶ Joshi, Prateek. 2017. "The Battle for Siachen Glacier: Beyond Just a Bilateral Dispute." *Strategic Analysis* 41 (5): 496–509. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2017.1343271>.

after hearing the calls for ethnic cleansing and growing threats¹⁷. The departure changed the demographic makeup of the valley and gave a new angle to the conflict. In 1993, the UN and international human rights organizations began to take into account the claims of human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir. Along with insurgent crimes, reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International emphasized enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings and abuses in custody of security forces. As a result of these reports, international pressure on both administrations increased.

In 1996, tensions across the LoC heightened as there was a surge in militant activity and infiltration in the Districts of Kupwara and Baramulla. The Indian army discovered cross-border support facilities, including supply depots and launch pads, and reported major confrontations along infiltration routes.



Map 12

¹⁷ Evans, Alexander. "A Departure from History: Kashmiri Pandits, 1990-2001." *Contemporary South Asia* 11, no. 1 (2002): 19–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0958493022000000341>.



Map 13

Since the Siachen dispute of 1984, both countries were in a race to control these high peaks. And in 1999, the Kargil conflict took place between India and Pakistan along the LoC. The fighting was intense and conducted in extreme challenging conditions, with combat taking place at a height of 16,500 feet (5,000 meters), where soldiers faced steep terrain, freezing temperatures and thin oxygen levels. The war began when Pakistani troops infiltrated the Indian side of the LOC in the Kargil region between May and July and captured strategically high positions across several key mountain peaks such as Tiger hills and other, whose aim was to cut the important Srinagar-Leh highway and to separate Ladakh from the rest of India. In response, India reclaimed the seized peaks with Operation Vijay. After international diplomatic intervention, especially by the United States, the conflict, which claimed over 1,000 military lives, came to a conclusion. Thousands of civilians were displaced by the conflict, and the LoC was now a hot point between the two states, whereas problems for the civilians across the border increased.

In March 2000, the Chattisinghpura Massacre took place, where unknown shooters killed 35 Sikh men in the village of Chattisinghpura in the Anantnag district. It was suspected that the incident was an attempt to internationalize the Kashmir issue because it took place during US President Bill Clinton's visit to India. Public skepticism was further exacerbated by further clashes and a suspected staged execution of 5 locals by the Indian forces. This incident highlighted the problems of innocent civilians of Kashmir who face staged executions by the hand of armed forces as a result of any militant attacks or border tensions.

On December 13, 2001, five extremists with heavy weapons attacked the Indian Parliament in New Delhi, killing nine people, including security guards. Two terrorist organizations in Pakistan (Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed) were identified as the assailants. During a 10-month standoff, India mobilised around 500,000 soldiers on the border as part of Operation Parakram. At the same time, high tensions were observed along the LoC.

In order to ease tensions across the LoC, on November 26, 2003, India and Pakistan arrived at an agreement to halt hostilities along the entire Line of Control. This historical agreement resulted in reduced short-term violence, which opened a window for normalcy. Groundwork was established for upcoming confidence-building measures (CBMs), and cross-LoC shellings decreased dramatically. This period saw an increase in trade activities along the border. The Composite Dialogue Process dialogue resumed in 2004, which covered eight topic areas such as confidence building, cross-border terrorism and Kashmir. CBMs were put into place, including Samjhauta Express's reopening, the Poonch-Rawalakot Bus Service and Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Bus Service.

On October 8, 2005, a powerful 7.6-magnitude earthquake devastated both sides of Kashmir and killed more than 80,000 people. To enable relief, India and Pakistan temporarily opened five LOC crossing points as part of their humanitarian cooperation. The catastrophe showed that despite long-standing mistrust, cooperative crisis management is possible.

Cross-LoC Commerce was opened in 2006. At first, this Cross-LoC trade was limited to bartering 21 items on certain days.¹⁸ The routes between Poonch and Rawalkot and Srinagar and Muzaffarabad were used for trade. Despite being symbolic, this action promoted economic engagement and interpersonal connectivity. But peace didn't last too long across the Line of Control and on February 18, 2007, Samjhauta Express was a scene of twin blasts where 68 people were killed, mainly Pakistanis. The attack, which was ascribed to Indian extremist elements, revealed the internal security aspect of the LOC dispute and threatened to sabotage bilateral developments. The following year, ten militants from Pakistan conducted a coordinated attack in Mumbai from November 26 to 29, killing about 170 people. Lashkar-e-Tabiba was associated with the attacks. International pressure mounted on Pakistan to destroy such groups while India suspended diplomatic contacts.

In 2010, the tension in the disputed area further increased after the killing of local youth in fictitious encounters. This led to widespread protests in the Kashmir Valley. More than 100 civilians died as a result of the security response. These events brought to light the unstable combination of lack of accountability, militarization and political alienation. These extrajudicial killings of the civilians highlighted the problems of Kashmiris living along the Line of Control.

In 2011, During infiltration efforts along the LoC, a number of militants were taken into custody. Satellite phones, GPS units, and weapons of Pakistani origin were among the recovered items, confirming the existence of active support.

2013 was the deadliest year since 2003. Since the ceasefire agreement in 2003, this year saw more than 200 ceasefire violations along the LOC. During this time, both countries suffered a number of military and civilian casualties. In Poonch, Kupwara and Uri, the civilian population was hit by small arms and heavy artillery. There was significant displacement and closure of schools. From July to October 2014, hundreds of people were displaced and more than 20 civilians were killed due to continuous gunfire between the Line of Control.

¹⁸ BBC News. "India and Pakistan Blame Each Other Over Kashmir Shelling," October 21, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50120613.amp>.

The civilians on both sides suffered greatly as a result of the LoC conflict . Shelling, landmines and militant warfare claimed thousands of lives and injured thousands more. Villages near the Line of Control saw regular relocation, loss of infrastructure, disruption in healthcare system, education and economy. Many villages got divided in half during tensions across LoC and cases were reported where one family became a part of India while other relatives became part of Pakistan. Limited emergency access and psychological stress develops into long-term problems. Residents have to deal with uncertainty, poverty and limited mobility. Ordinary lives are always at risk due to ceasefire violations, infiltrations and military repression and extraordinary killings. Apart from the effects of tension across LoC, human rights violations and abuses occur on a daily basis in occupied Kashmir. Till now the Kashmir remains the bone of contention between both Pakistan and India.

Overall Analysis:

The history of the Line of Control (LoC) is more than just a record of moving boundaries; it also reflects the unsolved political, territorial, and sectarian issues that have formed the subcontinent for nearly two centuries. The foundations of exclusivist administration and political estrangement were formed early, beginning with the Sikh Empire's conquest of Kashmir in the early nineteenth century and continuing with the Dogra authority established by the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846. These kings regarded the region as a personal estate rather than a cohesive state, ignoring the socio-religious fabric in favour of political and economic power. Early divisions in the region's unity were brought about by the systematic marginalisation of the primarily Muslim populace, and these divisions eventually played a pivotal role in the larger Kashmir dispute. Confusion and dispute were further exacerbated by the British colonial government, especially through their boundary-drawing efforts such as the 1947 Punjab Boundary Commission. Hasty judgements about princely states like Jammu and Kashmir and the rushed and unclear Radcliffe Line failed to take historical, cultural, and demographic realities into consideration. The Maharaja's decision to accede to India in October 1947 under pressure and threat, combined with Pakistan's military response, laid the ground for the first war and, subsequently, the Ceasefire Line of 1949 an early precursor to the present day LoC.

Although this line, which was drawn through UN mediation, was never meant to be a permanent border, it became the de facto border that separated natural areas, ethnic communities, and families. Instead of settling the conflict, the 1965 war strengthened the division, and the 1972 Simla Agreement, which followed the 1971 war, changed the name to "Line of Control" but did not address the fundamental problem. The long-standing animosity between India and Pakistan is reflected in the LoC's continued militarisation, intense surveillance, and political instability throughout the years. An important turning point in this historical trajectory was the Kargil battle in 1999. There was fierce combat after Pakistani forces and irregulars crossed the Line of Control (LoC), despite the fact that both nations are nuclear-armed and have signed agreements to uphold its sanctity. The brittleness of peace negotiations and the ongoing strategic uncertainty surrounding the LoC were made clear by this occurrence. It demonstrated how both sides' patriotic rhetoric and military calculations are still influenced by history. The LoC is essentially a lived, contested, and bleeding reality that resulted from colonial legacies, tribal politics, and nationalist aspirations rather than just being a geographical boundary. The history of the LoC shows a continuum of power struggles and unresolved grievances, from the Dogras' feudal policies

to contemporary military conflicts. It remains one of the most dangerous fault lines in South Asia, with its origins deeply rooted in the past and its implications shaping regional stability today.

Way Forward:

The Line of Control (LoC), a volatile and heavily militarized boundary embodying the unresolved Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, demands a multifaceted approach to de-escalate tensions and foster sustainable peace. To achieve stability, both nations should recommit to the 2003 ceasefire agreement through regular high-level military dialogues and establish a joint hotline for sector commanders to prevent escalations, while exploring a limited role for UNMOGIP or a neutral third party to monitor compliance in high-conflict zones like Poonch, Uri, and Kupwara. Expanding cross-LoC trade and travel routes, such as the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot bus services, alongside digital platforms for family communication, can foster economic interdependence and rebuild social ties. Joint humanitarian initiatives, like those seen during the 2005 earthquake, and cultural exchanges, such as festivals or academic collaborations, can reduce mistrust and humanize the “other.” Gradual demilitarization in less volatile sectors like Tangdhar and Uri, paired with joint patrolling, and bilateral talks to address the Siachen Glacier dispute through demilitarized zones or environmental monitoring, can mitigate the human and ecological costs of conflict. Engaging Kashmiri civil society in Track-II dialogues and addressing human rights violations through transparent investigations are critical to rebuilding trust. Diplomatically, resuming the 2004 Composite Dialogue Process, leveraging SAARC for regional cooperation, and considering discreet third-party facilitation by neutral actors like Norway or Switzerland can break deadlocks. Pakistan must dismantle militant networks, while India should address governance issues in Jammu and Kashmir to curb insurgency. Acknowledging the growing role of external powers like China, trilateral talks could address overlapping border disputes in Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan. Long-term, exploring autonomy models like the Åland Islands or Northern Ireland and revisiting the UN-mandated plebiscite in a modern context, perhaps through a phased referendum on autonomy, could address Kashmiri aspirations. These steps, grounded in pragmatism and cooperation, aim to transform the LoC from a line of conflict into a bridge for peace, prioritizing the voices and well-being of Kashmiris.

References

1. Malcolm Anderson, *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 14–17.
2. P. N. K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political, Social, Cultural, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New Delhi: Metropolitan Book Co., 1994), 397–400.
3. Sir Walter Roper Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir* (London: H. Frowde, 1895), 5–10
4. Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar, 1846–1947: A Study in Socio-Cultural Change* (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2002), 59–61.
5. Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846–1990*, Roxford Books, 1991.
6. <https://pakun.org/kashmir-at-the-un>

7. <https://www.belfercenter.org/research-analysis/escalation-gone-meta-strategic-lessons-2025-india-pakistan-crisis>.
8. Maj Gen (R) Syed Ithar Hussain Shah, *Indian Military Threat And Pakistan Army: From 1947 to 2017* (Islamabad: Auraq Publications, 2021), page 191
9. John H. Gill, *An Atlas of the 1971 India-Pakistan War: The Creation of Bangladesh* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2003), 39
10. Brig (R) Imran Haider Jaffri, *Western Theatre: 1971 War* (Islamabad: Army Institute of Military History, May 2025), 5
11. Maj Gen (R) Syed Ithar Hussain Shah, *Indian Military Threat And Pakistan Army: From 1947 to 2017* (Islamabad: Auraq Publications, 2021), page 195
12. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 307 (1971), adopted December 21, 1971. [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/307\(1971\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/307(1971))
13. Government of India, *Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan*, July 2, 1972, Ministry of External Affairs
14. <https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/PA72B1578.pdf>
15. Cheema, Zafar Iqbal. "Pakistan's Nuclear policy under Z.A. Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq: An Assessment." *Strategic Studies* 14, no. 4 (1992): 5–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45182065>
16. Bukhari, Syed Hammad. "The Indira-Sheikh Accord: A Step-by-step Historical Breakdown." *The Kashmiriyat*, December 7, 2024. <https://thekashmiriyat.co.uk/the-indira-sheikh-accord-a-step-by-step-historical-breakdown/>
17. Marwat, Fazal-Ur-Rahim Khan, and Parvez Khan Toru. *From Muhajir to Mujahid, Politics of War Through Aid: (a Case Study of Afghan Refugees in NWFP)*. 2005.
18. Paul, Amit Krishankant. "The Siachen Story: The Inadvertent Role of Two German Explorers in Starting the Race to the World's Highest Battlefield." *orfonline.org*, April 8, 2024.
19. Joshi, Prateek. 2017. "The Battle for Siachen Glacier: Beyond Just a Bilateral Dispute." *Strategic Analysis* 41 (5): 496–509. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2017.1343271>.
20. Evans, Alexander. "A Departure from History: Kashmiri Pandits, 1990-2001." *Contemporary South Asia* 11, no. 1 (2002): 19–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0958493022000000341>.
21. BBC News. "India and Pakistan Blame Each Other Over Kashmir Shelling," October 21, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50120613.amp>.