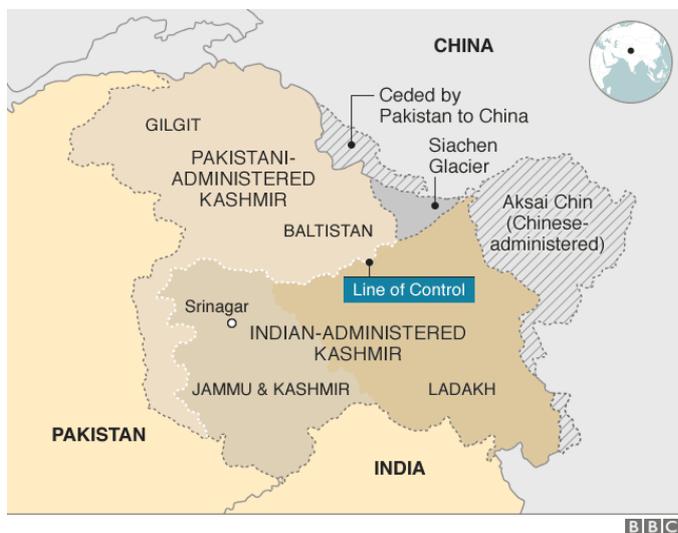


Introduction

Jammu and Kashmir, a region at the Western end of the Himalaya has a rich history. Especially in the last century, it experienced one catastrophic event after another. The region, which is divided into an Indian, a Pakistani and a small Chinese part, has witnessed three indo-Pakistani wars since 1947. It is bordered by the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang to the North East and the Tibet Autonomous Region to the East, both parts of the People's Republic of China. To the South we find India, Pakistan to the West and Afghanistan to the Northwest. Throughout the three conflicts there were many allegations of human rights violations and this despite the UN having been present in the region from



the first minute. When India gained its independence from Great Britain after the Second World War its first Prime Minister, Nehru, took the question of the Kashmir region to the UN. Eventually he promised the regional leaders of the Indian part of Kashmir the right to Right to Self Determination. However he never kept his promise and laid the foundations to a long-lasting conflict.

History

The relationship between India and Pakistan, who share a 3,323 km border, has always been dominated by the sentiment of antagonism and aggravated by the fact that both states reached nuclear capabilities (India in 1974 and Pakistan in 1998). Since 1947, the two nations have fought three major wars and many skirmishes. The first war between India and Pakistan was fought in 1947 over Kashmir and ended in 1948, Kashmir being divided along the so-called Line of Control, also known as the Berlin Wall of Asia. However, both states claimed sovereignty in the region. The next war occurred nearly 20 years later, after India had performed poorly in the India-China war. The result of this war was the Chinese occupation of the Eastern part of Kashmir called Aksai Chin in 1962, of which they are in control of to this day.

This loss against the Chinese made Pakistan underestimate India's military capabilities, resulting in Pakistan's defeat in 1965. Numerous skirmishes broke out along the border from 1984 - 1995. In 1999 another battle for Kashmir erupted, but as opposed to previous battles Pakistan was now also a nuclear power. This led to weeks of escalation with the threat of a nuclear war looming over the conflict. At this point the United States intervened and the two parties were convinced to deescalate. In 2001 they came close to war once again, and occasional shots are still fired across the border. Both states say

their military intentions are purely defensive, but since the distrust between the two parties runs deep, neither will back down any time soon.

Recent Developments

On the 5th of August 2019 the Indian government revoked the autonomy of the region of Jammu and Kashmir (of that part which had remained under their authority), which it had been granted in 1947 for joining the Indian Union. Furthermore the Indian officials maintained a curfew over the region. Traveling had become impossible and many Kashmiri leaders had been put under house arrest. This may seem comparable to our situation here during the Covid 19 crisis but additionally internet and phone coverage were cut in the valleys of Kashmir. These actions had repeatedly been justified by asserting that these were the most effective measures in order to counter the terrorism. Suspending the internet was an unprecedented act in the war against terrorism and strongly opposed not only by human rights organisations but also by big players of the Indian economy. Eventually India's supreme court ordered the government to review all restrictions, arguing that the indefinite suspension of the Internet amounted to an abuse of power and a violation of human rights (10 Jan. 2020). Hope for an improvement of the crisis sparked, just to be swept away by an avalanche of violence and actual avalanches causing a lot of damage in an already crippled region. The situation was exasperated by a new bill introduced by Narendra Modi, India's prime minister. The citizenship amendment bill seeks to grant Indian nationality to migrants from bordering countries. This move was marketed by Modi's party as offering a helping hand to persecuted religious minorities. However, it includes an implicit but quite obvious discrimination of Muslims, as they are the only religious group not included in the bill. More and more protests have erupted all over India and it is a horrible *deja-vu* for the UN.

Strategic Motives

The Kashmir conflict is due to national pride on the one hand, but is also fueled by strategic motives. If India completely controlled Kashmir, it would have access to central Asia and share a border with Afghanistan. If Pakistan had full control, it would share a border with China, which would strengthen the alliance of these two countries, a development India would of course like to prevent. A further issue that aggravates the conflict is water security. The Indus, which originates in Himalayan Tibet, passes through the Indian territory of Kashmir before entering Pakistan. The Indus provides water to two-thirds of the country, which is important for its cotton industry and many other sectors of the economy. In the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 Pakistan and India agreed to share the waters, an agreement they have stuck to throughout all of the conflict. However, climate change may lead to the water supply diminishing and claiming the entire Kashmir region could secure Pakistan's water supply.

Conclusion

The last wave of demonstrations led to two reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights both stating multiple human rights violations including extrajudicial killings. The Corona crisis has put virtually everything on a hold but this conflict is so deeply ingrained in the minds of the People it will survive the virus. Hence the UNSC shall give this topic no less than it's undivided attention.

Further reading:

- [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Development](#)
- https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IN/KashmirUpdateReport_8July2019.pdf

Useful video: [The conflict in Kahmir, explained](#)

Bibliography

- [In its struggle to subdue Kashmir, India is stripping it of liberties](#)
- [Five killed in Kashmir's deadliest day since losing special status](#)
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50826419>
- Marshall, Tim (2015). *Prisoners of Geography*. Chapter 7: India and Pakistan
- [Indus Waters Treaty](#)
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